

# **Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe**

## Muslim social welfare in Austria and Germany today

### Editorial

by Dr. Sören Hoyer, Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe

The issue of Muslim social welfare is more relevant than ever in both Germany and Austria today. Both countries have a Muslim population of currently more than five percent, a figure that continues to rise as a result of the current influx of refugees. Among this group are many who need a kindergarten for their children, have young children in school, are in need of care or will at some point need to spend time in hospital. And of course their wish is for these social services to take their cultural and religious needs into account. This means for example, that older Muslims in nursing homes need food that is in keeping with their religious dietary rules. Caregivers who speak their clients' native language and are familiar with their personal hygiene culture are also part of such culture-sensitive services.

Social services that are designed to better meet the needs of their clients are more likely to be used. Social services of this type thus encourage social participation and integration. For Muslims who have lived in Germany and Austria for years, but also for the many refugees from Muslim backgrounds, culture- and religion-sensitive social services are therefore of great importance in terms of participation in society.

Both in Austria and in Germany, religion has traditionally played an important role in the field of social services. Caritas and Diakonie are the two great Christian welfare associations that provide social services in both countries and, as umbrella organisations, represent the interests of their institutions, from kindergarten to hospice.<sup>1</sup> In both countries public debate has intensified in recent years about how social services can be made more religion- and culture-sensitive – especially with regard to Muslims as a target group. Some of the much debated issues are: How can existing services and facilities open up to this target group? How can Muslim institutions be supported who wish to offer Muslim-oriented child care or nursing services? What are the prerequisites for a Muslim umbrella organisation based on the model of the established organisations?

This newsletter of the Observatory looks at the topic on the one hand from the perspective of the relevant ministries: the German *Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth* and the Austrian *Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs*. On the other hand, the *Islamic Faith Community of Austria* will also be presenting its plans to set up an independent organisation for social work with refugees along the lines of Caritas and Diakonie. From Germany, an article about the *Forum for culture-sensitive elderly care* will also shows how the intercultural

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<sup>1</sup> In Germany there is also a Jewish-oriented welfare association – the Central Welfare Office of Jews in Germany – to represent the interests of Jewish communities and institutions.

opening of institutions and welfare associations is progressing. Indeed, in addition to specific Muslim social services, the intercultural opening of already existing services is an important part of the debate. The study presented by the *City of Vienna* shows that older migrants often wish for care facilities that are open to all but allow services targeted at specific groups.

The present newsletter builds on previous work done by the Observatory. A **Working Paper** by Sören Hoyer presents Muslim organisations in Austria and the Netherlands and describes the fields in which mosques and Muslim associations do social work. In April 2016, experts from Germany, Austria, England and the Netherlands discussed **success factors of emerging Muslim umbrella organisations**. The experts also looked into how and under what conditions the state could and should promote the development of umbrella structures.

## Muslim social welfare in Germany

An article by Dr. Matthias von Schwanenflügel, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Head of Department 3 – demographic change, senior citizens, welfare services

Muslim social welfare in Germany – this is a relatively new issue in social policy. The German Islam Conference, established in 2006 as a forum for dialogue between policy-makers and Muslims in Germany, has been active in this field since 2014. Why? There are several answers to the question. On the one hand, Muslims in Germany wish for social services that are sensitive to their religious and cultural requirements. And they have a right to expect them, much like Jews or Christians in this country have access to welfare services that suit their particular needs. In addition, however, availability of and resort to social services is undoubtedly a positive factor contributing to integration: one aspect of being and remaining an integral part of any society is the ability to take advantage of social services and the fact of actually doing so. This means that the availability of Muslim social welfare services can even have an effect the country's internal security. And of course, the topic has also greatly gained in importance in view of the historically unprecedented high number of migrants from predominantly Muslim countries who arrived in Germany last year.

The basic nature and the functions of the German non-statutory welfare system have been defined by the German Islam Conference in cooperation with Muslim organisations. This cooperation has also included regular dialogue between members of the Federal Association of Non-Statutory Welfare (BAGFW) and its umbrella member organisations as well as representatives of the competent government departments at federal, state and local level together with the Muslim representatives of the German Islam Conference. Federal Minister Manuela Schwesig has highlighted two important aspects: on the one hand no one should be excluded from the negotiation and development process, while on the other, the Muslim representatives need to be in contact with one another and speak with one voice wherever this is important – irrespective of the diversity of Islam.

Under this premise, the practical issue now being faced is how to bring mosque congregations closer to the system of non-statutory welfare. This path of action is being supported by the Federal Government.

Since the spring of 2016, for instance, the Federal Government has been cooperating with five Muslim associations represented in the German Islam Conference in a refugee assistance project. The idea is to promote the establishment of common structures for Muslim congregations to assist refugees by encouraging the professionalisation and networking of volunteer refugee helpers within the congregations. Ultimately a cross-regional and cross-association network of Muslim refugee helpers can be set up – people who, on the basis of their own migration history, will help those refugees in their integration efforts who are likely to be allowed to stay. Another goal besides inte-



gration work is the improvement and professionalisation of the work being done in the mosques, mostly by volunteers.

A regional pilot project for the “Professionalisation of Muslim and Alevi welfare was launched in spring 2016. Under the umbrella of the non-statutory welfare organisation “Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband” in North Rhine-Westphalia and in cooperation with the State Ministry of Integration, the two-year project will begin by describing the scope and priorities of social work in seventeen mosques and two Cem communities in Cologne and Wuppertal. The project hopes to enhance the quality of child and youth welfare, elderly welfare, assistance for people with disabilities or volunteering work through training, networking, and the provision of work tools. The results of this expert support can be made available to other Muslim and Alevi communities around the state and nationwide.

In addition to the establishment of Muslim social services (which, like all other social services, must be characterised by basic openness to all), what is also needed is greater intercultural opening of the established non-statutory welfare organisations. Whether this process will result in the creation of a separate Muslim welfare organisation or in an expansion of the range of services offered within the existing structures of non-statutory welfare – or any other solution – is completely open. In any case, the Federal Government is hoping to join forces with Muslim organisations and the umbrella organisations of non-statutory welfare in exploring options and identifying ways of increasing the social participation of Muslims in Germany in this area.



## Muslim social services in Austria

An article by Verena Grünstäudl and Martin Kienl, Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

In September, the Islamic *Faith Community of Austria* (IGGÖ) announced its intention to found a Muslim charitable welfare organisation modelled on the Catholic Caritas or the Protestant Diakonie.<sup>2</sup> The IGGÖ explained that it was motivated to do so by its experience in the field of taking in and supporting asylum-seekers or refugees and by the need to better coordinate these activities. In addition to wanting to professionalise services that had previously been informal and more spontaneous, the IGGÖ also explicitly mentioned as a motivation the lack of knowledge among the general public regarding the charitable work already provided by Muslim associations. Creating more visibility for existing Muslim charitable activities therefore seems to be a further goal in addition to establishing the envisaged organisational unit.

This is not the place to delve into the importance of the Christian organisations mentioned above or of other similar charitable organisation. But they are in any case examples of structures that show what enormously positive role religions can play in fostering social cohesion. The success of these organisations will therefore be the yardstick against which future Muslim institutions will be measured.

One of the principles of Austria’s integration policy – “religion as part of the solution” – acknowledges the contribution that religious communities can make to the integration process, without negating the problems associated with this approach. Religion is an essential feature of the identity of many migrants to Austria. It often provides support in a new environment, among people who are still strangers and whose habits are unfamiliar at first. A comprehensive integration policy therefore has to include religion.

Although Austria no longer keeps statistics of how many Muslims live in the country<sup>3</sup>, most experts agree that the figure now stands at roughly 650,000.<sup>4</sup> The exact age distri-



- 2 <http://derislam.at/?f=news&shownews=2046&kid=1>.
- 3 The last official census took place in 2001. It registered 338,998 Muslims living in Austria (4.2% of the total population).
- 4 The 2001 figures were last updated in 2012. At that time, about 570,000 Muslims were estimated, or roughly 7% of the total population (Arslan et al. (2013): *Muslimische Alltagspraxis in Österreich. Ein Kompass zur religiösen Diversität*: p. 20, in German). Taking into account the massive influx of asylum-seekers, particularly in 2015 (about 88,000), the current estimate is approximately 650,000. There are no exact figures on the number of Muslims among the asylum-seekers or the proportion of those ultimately awarded a protected status (roughly 50% of the claims).

tribution of Muslims in Austria, which could serve as an important basis for planning, is unknown.<sup>5</sup> It can be assumed, however, that more and more Muslims in Austria will soon be reaching retirement age, especially among the generation of former “guest workers”. Current studies<sup>6</sup> also show that migrants increasingly wish to spend this phase of their life in their new home country. Transnational family constellations or outright return to the country of origin are increasingly rare.



These developments pose new challenges for Austrian social services. Current studies<sup>7</sup> show that Muslims make less use of elderly care services than non-Muslims, including day-care facilities, full or partial in-patient services and 24-hour assistance services. There are multiple reasons for this. Many Muslims have a negative impression of in-patient care services, often because of concerns about possible communication problems and a lack of sensitivity to Muslim beliefs and traditions.

On the basis of these findings, Austrian policy-makers have been looking more closely at the issue of cross-cultural competence and religion-sensitive services within the social welfare scheme. For instance, the Federal Association on Non-statutory Welfare [Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Freie Wohlfahrt, BAG] has, since 2012, been running a project called “Migrants Care” to motivate migrants, especially Muslims, to consider going into nursing or other care professions.<sup>8</sup> Since 2013, the BAG has also been targeting particularly hard-to-reach groups with information sessions about care services. Cooperation with Muslim associations and courses offered in the main languages of migrants are part of this strategy.

Another Austrian example is the low-threshold project MiMi health guides, launched in 2012, which encourages well-integrated migrants to disseminate information about care services within their communities. Experience so far has shown that the project is being well received among Turkish migrants, who are often Muslim.

Even though issues such as diversity and cross-cultural competence may have gained significance among nursing and care providers in recent years, ad-hoc solutions are often still the order of the day. In addition to increased numbers of training courses and publications on these issues, there is also a growing trend towards making greater use of the existing expertise of employees (language, cultural understanding) as a resource and – where possible – to ensure a suitable language match.

These measures, mentioned here as examples, have the ultimate goal of making the social welfare scheme “fit for integration”. Where possible, the specific needs of migrants, particularly Muslims, should be taken into account. One piece in the mosaic has certainly been the 2015 amendment of the Islam Act<sup>9</sup>, which states, inter alia, that the dietary rules of religious groups are to be taken into consideration in medical institutions, care facilities, nursing homes and similar institutions (§ 12 (2) and § 19 (2)).

In addition to these approaches within the existing social welfare scheme, Muslims wish to set up their own welfare services. As already mentioned, the establishment of a Muslim charitable welfare organisation is an IGGÖ priority. These efforts are not starting at zero. The IGGÖ already operates a three-year Islamic College of Social Education (IFS) to encourage Muslims to engage in professions such as kindergarten teaching or nursing. Following these courses, students can attend the School of Remedial Education, the Vocational School for Geriatric Services and Care or courses for home care.



More details or concrete plans of what such a welfare organisation would look like have not yet been worked out. Again and again, the need for a Muslim nursing home comes up in discussions. It is still unclear at this stage whether Muslims would choose such a faith-based institution over a public institution. What is certain is that these efforts are still in their infancy. As much as the desire for professionalisation is to be welcomed,

5 According to the 2001 census, only about 3% of Muslims were older than 60. (Arslan et al. (2013): p. 22, in German).

6 ICMPD (2015): *Betreuungs- und Pflegebedarf älterer MigrantInnen: Bedarfsabschätzung und Herausforderungen* (in German).

7 MA 24 (ed.) (2016): *Einfluss der Migration auf Leistungserbringung und Inanspruchnahme von Pflege- und Betreuungsleistungen in Wien* (see also the article in this Newsletter below) and ICMPD (2015).

8 How many Muslims there are in nursing and care professions was recently the subject of public debate in Austria. This prompted several care providers to comment that although the number of Muslims in nursing and care professions may not be systematically collected, it is nevertheless not negligible. With regard to Vienna for instance, Caritas reported 130 persons who voluntarily stated that they are Muslim.

9 <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/integration/the-austrian-islam-law>.



there are still question marks in terms of feasibility. Nevertheless, we would here like to point out a few of the fundamental opportunities and problems.

While having greater numbers of welfare providers is of course a good idea, this basic congruence of specifically Muslim interests and interests relating to society as a whole should be viewed in the face of possible pitfalls. These non-targets might seem obvious to the actors involved, but the overall social context must be kept in sight. The fear that such a project might encourage the establishment of structures of a parallel society needs to be dealt with proactively. This is undoubtedly an obligation on the part of Muslim office-holders. Muslim-only welfare organisations under the motto “by Muslims for Muslims” are not desirable from the point of view of integration policy. Indeed, Muslim organisations must also have client needs as their top priority regardless of religion or ethnicity – as is already the case with existing welfare organisations. Most existing (Christian) providers reject the concept of ethnically or socio-culturally homogeneous institutions, group homes or floor assignments because they believe that these categories are not essential for high-quality care and service.

Muslim-run structures in other areas, for instance education, are not necessarily suitable models in this case. In Austria, some kindergartens and schools run privately by Muslim organisations are definitely not sufficiently heterogeneous in terms of the children’s religion and ethnicity, a long-term disadvantage in terms of equal opportunities. The legal equality of Islam with other religious communities and the subsequent opportunities that this represents (e.g. religious kindergartens and private schools) can often lead to quite the opposite in terms of (educational) output.

Nevertheless, interaction with Muslims and their aspirations in the field of social welfare services will continue to shape the integration debate in the coming years. Not only do we need to integrate promising projects and initiatives into the social welfare scheme, but we must also look ahead to meet future demographic challenges.

## Towards a Muslim version of “Caritas”? – the professionalisation of IGGÖ refugee work

An article by Carla Amina Baghajati, Islamic Faith Community of Austria

The Islamic Faith Community of Austria (IGGÖ) has its roots in the “Muslim Social Service” association, which was created in the 1960s when the first labour migrants arrived in Austria from Turkey and the former Yugoslavia. This shows the religious significance for Muslims of providing services for people in need. IGGÖ, which has the status of a public corporation, has been the official representative of the religious affairs of Muslims in Austria since 1979. The Islam Act of 1912, which was created as a guarantee for the approximately 600,000 Muslim Bosnians annexed by Austria-Hungary of the legal recognition of their religion, was amended in 2015. It now provides greater legal certainty for specific needs, especially in the area of pastoral care.

Muslims in Austria therefore enjoy particularly positive conditions: legal recognition facilitates participation in many areas, and the educational sector is particularly well developed. For instance, more than 70,000 students take part in Muslim religious instruction offered in public schools and organised by IGGÖ. This participation helps Muslims in Austria move beyond the mere fact of legal recognition towards greater social acceptance. Meanwhile, the concept of social cohesion has been growing in importance – especially in these times of greater uncertainty fuelled by distribution fears and unease about an increasing pluralism where one’s own identity seems to be put in question. Muslims are aware of the fact that their commitment to the common good needs to become more visible, and that this could help dissolve fears and prejudices against them. At the same time, however, they find themselves in conflict with their own religious conscience: Islam requires that good deeds be done in such a manner that the good intention is not compromised by vain showcasing.



To be sure, the concept that “integration is when you can help” has proved to be particularly true in the context of the refugee crisis, and this certainly deserves more publicity. Mosque associations and Muslim individuals have become very active, not only in the provision of first assistance and interpreting services. Above all, they have been providing guidance by sharing their own experience and practical tips for life in Austria. They are much more than linguistic interpreters: they are also something like “cultural mediators”, demonstrating their own successful integration story and inspiring confidence that integration is possible.

The Islamic Faith Community has organised activities of its own, but mainly it has acted as a networking and coordinating partner, and thus as link to Muslim associations and their services. This shows once again that a convergence of forces is a desirable path to take. Muslim associations invest a great deal of resources, particularly in volunteer work. Stronger cooperation and networking would lead to an enormous increase in efficiency. Dr. Fuat Sanac, IGGÖ chairman from 2010 to June 2016, already tried to set up a separate organisation within IGGÖ specifically dedicated to humanitarian concerns – HILAL –, but his efforts met with several obstacles. Towards the end of his tenure, he commented drily that the associations probably tend to think along the lines of “small, but my own”. He outlined the challenges involved in promoting a convergence of humanitarian effort among Muslim associations.

The new chairman, Ibrahim Olgun, who has been in office no more than a number of weeks, has now launched a new attempt; as he presented his programme, he generated a certain amount of hype by saying that what he hoped to create was a kind of “Muslim Caritas”. In his various inaugural visits, he was received with interest by political representatives. Within the scope of a restructuring of the Islamic Faith Community he is confident of being able to create more awareness that it is in the interest of all if resources are better networked and that an umbrella structure would make the work more efficient. Just as there is already a functioning interreligious exchange structure in the field of hospital chaplaincy, Muslim associations should seek to benefit from the experience of other religious humanitarian organisations and do not see themselves as “competition” but rather as a new player on the scene that hopes to make a positive contribution in these times of great social challenges.

## Raising awareness for culture-sensitive elderly care in Germany – a nationwide Forum

An article by Dr. Sören Hoyer, Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe, in collaboration with Anna Luise Vey of the German Red Cross

The [Forum for culture-sensitive elderly care](#) brings together welfare organisations, migrant groups and organisations as well as institutions working in the field of elderly care and migration. It was founded in 2007. Its members’ goal is to encourage an inter-cultural opening of social services and facilities. The Forum and its members promote equal access to elderly care services, support and counselling for elderly migrants and call for more cultural sensitivity of thought and action in facilities offering these services. The Forum defines culture-sensitive elderly care as a system that ensures the “equal participation of elderly migrants”, which means that “individual needs and requirements” are being met by elderly care services (Memorandum: 3).

On this basis, the work of the Forum deals with three key issues:

- How can institutions for the elderly be motivated to reach out to new target groups, to try out new approaches and actively involve native speakers of the main migrant groups?
- How can we ensure that migrants feel well informed and take advantage of elderly care services?
- How can awareness and therefore (financial) support for culture-sensitive elderly care be raised among policy-makers and politicians?

The intention of the Forum is to provide elderly care institutions with information and ideas so that they can then take structural measures to make their everyday activities more intercultural. Furthermore, institutions and counselling centres should inform elderly migrants in easily understandable terms about their rights and opportunities in the area of elderly care. For all these tasks, the Forum considers the cooperation of political leaders, institutions for the elderly and migrant organisations to be crucial.

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The four regional groups of the Forum provide concrete advice to municipalities and institutions in order for them to implement intercultural opening. One of the tools the Forum offers are the so-called **information kits** for culture-sensitive elderly care that can be borrowed by institutions and organisations. On the one hand, the kits and the materials they contain are designed to assist organisational development. There are, for example, guidelines and checklists of what institutions should consider when they begin the process of intercultural opening. The kits also include multilingual information about the long-term care insurance scheme and various health issues that are of interest to elderly migrants.

The Forum seeks to increase awareness and networking among politicians and policy-makers in order to promote intercultural opening. So far, the Forum has been able to sensitise some municipalities and state governments to this topic. In Berlin, for instance, people from migrant backgrounds have been included in the State Council for Senior Citizens since 2007. Funding is also available to provide intercultural training for care personnel in elderly care facilities. The city of Munich commissioned a study on the needs of elderly migrants and, in 2014, it launched a model project to promote intercultural opening in long-term care.

The Forum's activities are based on its "Guide to culture-sensitive elderly care" and on the "Memorandum for culture-sensitive in elderly care". The Memorandum calls on politics and society to ensure that all elderly persons living in Germany have access to elderly care institutions irrespective of their social, ethnic and cultural origin, and to guarantee that the professional activities of these institutions are culturally sensitive. The guide describes many examples of good practice of how these goals can be successfully implemented.

The Memorandum identifies seven so-called "milestones towards culture-sensitive elderly care".

- Barriers for users must be reduced. A decisive factor for this to be successful is networking in elderly care and migration work. This can ensure that migrant seniors are actively addressed. Migrant organisations play an important intermediary role in this regard.
- The individual needs of the elderly must be kept at the forefront. For this to be possible, care personnel must be trained in intercultural awareness and empathy. It is only with training that they can identify their clients' individual needs and act accordingly.
- Elderly care facilities, organisations and institutions should see intercultural opening as a process that should be integrated into their organisational development.
- The degree of intercultural opening of an institution is critically dependent on its human resources and team development, an area that should be consciously steered by the institution's management. Training courses, time for team reflection and an appreciative approach to diversity are important factors.
- Culture-sensitive care is already an integral part of care education, but it must be recognised by educational institutions as a cross-disciplinary issue and not just as part of individual training courses.
- Intercultural opening as part of organisational development is something that requires funding. The necessary resources should be recognised as part of regular funding.
- Migrant organisations are important partners to ensure that services are more culture-sensitive. This also means that they should be taken into account in the distribution of funds and participate in committees.

The Forum operates at national and regional levels. At the federal level, a so-called coordination group elaborates conceptual standpoints and encourages networking among federal policy-makers. There are also four regional groups that then apply the Forum's demands and objectives at regional and local levels. At the same time, these groups contribute their local experience to the coordination group. The parties involved work on a largely honorary basis, since there is currently no funding for coordination and management.

## Current study on resort to care services by migrants in Vienna

An article by the Department of Health and Social Planning of the City of Vienna

In awareness that certain groups of Vienna residents make below-average use of care services, the Department of Health and Social Planning of the City of Vienna commissioned a study to explore the reasons for this situation. The main part of the study consisted of a survey of 429 Vienna residents originally from Turkey, Iran, Bosnia, Serbia and Poland. The survey results are part of a structural analysis of the elderly population of Vienna which also contains good practice examples, a contextualization of the topic by experts and recommendations for action.

During the interviews, the migrants were asked about their level of information regarding care and support services, about their criteria for an attractive care facility, their expectations in respect of care personnel, their attitudes to ageing and their resources. Expectations were analysed not only by country of origin, but also according to a variety of other characteristics, for instance the social environment of the respondents.

Some of the key findings are:

- 56 percent of respondents definitely want to spend their old age in Vienna, while only 8 percent do not.
- The attractiveness of housing for the elderly is defined primarily on the basis of socio-emotive factors (well-being, good company) and less on cultural traits (origin, language, religion).
- Universal expectations (respect, empathy, etc.) in regard to caregivers dominate while native-language services and similar ethnic backgrounds are less important.
- Experiences of discrimination and fear of loneliness are named as important negative aspects of live-in facilities.
- Care expectations must be seen in the context of the living environment of the respondents and not on the basis of their country of origin.
- Preferred care facilities are those that are open to all, but possibly allow ethno-specific sub-groups.

The study, only in German, can be found at the following link:

<https://www.wien.gv.at/gesundheit/einrichtungen/planung/soziales/migration.html>

## News from the Observatory

The Observatory analyses sociopolitical developments in Europe and considers their potential impact on Germany. It carries out research and studies – often comparative analyses of the general European context –, monitors European developments and organises international conferences. Its aim is to link stakeholders so as to promote European exchange and encourage mutual learning.

*Focus on Family and Reconciliation*

One of the focal points of the work of the Observatory in 2017 will be how European countries help their populations to **better reconcile work, elderly and child care.**





On this subject, the [Observatory](#) has already drawn up an Overview of how European countries support **family carers**. This overview includes information on when employees can take care leave and whether they can receive financial support for the care of their relatives. Charts and summaries provide a quick overview of how family carers can reconcile work and care commitments in 14 European countries.

### Gender Equality

Some European countries are trying to improve the **political participation of women** by means of parity laws. The Observatory analyses the impact of these laws in France, Spain and Sweden. Results will be available early in 2017 at the [Observatory website](#).

The **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW) calls on states to increase the visibility of women's rights in the justice sector so that they can apply in national judicial practice. States Parties are obliged to report regularly on the status of implementation. The Observatory [Working Paper](#) compares reporting cycles in France and Germany and shows where the judicial system needs to improve its knowledge and application of CEDAW.

With Agenda 2030, the United Nations have declared gender equality as a goal for a sustainable development. Among other demands, **care work** should be better recognised. At the same time the UN want to ensure that women and men share responsibilities **equally** within the household and the family. Estonia, Sweden and Germany are currently working on national strategies to achieve these goals. These national strategies are at the center of a comparative analysis which will be available [here](#) in early 2017.

In a [short expertise](#) (in German only), the Observatory describes the economic situation of single parents after **separation or divorce** and what rights they have. A comparison between Austria and Germany shows a slight advantage for separated or divorced persons living in Austria.

### Policies for senior citizens and care

Violence towards dependent people with dementia is often a taboo subject. European experts have exchanged views on this subject at an Observatory workshop in early December, discussing what can be done to prevent **violence in home care contexts**. The workshop documentation will include best-practice examples and information about approaches in France, Scotland, Austria and Switzerland. More information on this subject will be available by joining our [mailing list](#) and, as of March 2017, [here](#).

**24-hour care** means that persons in need of home care are assisted around the clock by professionals. Austria has passed specific laws to regulate this form of care; in other countries, labour law is applied. An overview drawn up by the Observatory shows the differences between countries. [Results](#) will be published in spring 2017.

### Social services in Europe

The Observatory has analysed the migration patterns of **Eastern European care workers** to western EU countries, particularly to Germany. The [Working Paper](#) describes migration flows and identifies push and pull factors.

Stay tuned and subscribe to our mailing list. You will then receive our Newsletter regularly as well as additional information about our work. Register [here](#).

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