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Research Article/Araştırma Makalesi

## THE STATE RECOGNITION OF ALEVISM IN AUSTRIA AND THE ASSOCIATED RIGHTS IN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

### AVUSTURYA'DA ALEVİLİĞİN DEVLET TARAFINDAN TANINMASI VE BUNA BAĞLI OLARAK EĞİTİM VE ARAŞTIRMA ALANLARINDAKİ HAKLAR

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#### ABSTRACT

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Alevism is among the religious minorities in Austria. The state recognition of Alevism in 2013 marked a high point in the area of institutional equality. This recognition has not only been a legal achievement but has also had far-reaching implications for education policy, especially in the context of religious education classes and the establishment of Alevi religious education and theology institutions.

The aim of this article is to analyse the state-recognized rights of institutionalized Alevism in Austria with a special focus on the field of education. Both the legal foundations and the practical implementation of Alevi educational work are presented and critically examined. In particular, the aim is to work out the extent to which institutional recognition has strengthened the religious self-determination and visibility of Alevism in the Austrian education system.

Avusturya'daki Aleviler, dinî azınlıklar arasında yer almaktadır. Aleviliğin 2013 yılında devlet tarafından tanınmasıyla kurumsal eşitlik alanında önemli bir dönüm noktası yaşanmıştır. Bu tanınma sadece hukuki bir kazanım olmakla kalmamış, aynı zamanda eğitim politikaları, özellikle din eğitimi dersleri ve Alevi din eğitimi ve ilahiyat kurumlarının kurulması bağlamında geniş kapsamlı sonuçlar doğurmuştur.

Bu makalenin amacı, Avusturya'da kurumsallaşmış Aleviliğin devlet tarafından tanınan haklarını özellikle eğitim alanına odaklanarak analiz etmektir. Bu bağlamda hem hukuki temeller hem de Alevi eğitim çalışmasının pratik uygulamaları ele alınmakta ve eleştirel bir şekilde değerlendirilmektedir. Özellikle, kurumsal tanınmanın Alevilerin Avusturya eğitim sistemindeki inançsal özerkliği ve görünürlüklerini ne ölçüde güçlendirdiği ortaya konulacaktır.

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## 1. Alevis in Austria

Historically, Alevis are mainly rooted in the Anatolian region. However, other so-called Alid communities can be found in Central Asia, the Middle East and on the Balkans.<sup>1</sup> The history of the Alevis in Austria begins with the so-called “guest worker migration” in the 1960s and 1970s. Following the intergovernmental recruitment agreement between Austria and Türkiye in 1964, men and women were recruited to work in Austrian factories via specially established recruitment offices (Kalaycı, 2009, p. 39-40). This is how the first generation of Alevis came to Austria. They were joined by their partners and children through family reunification. The fourth generation is now living in Austria, so the number is estimated at 65 to 80 thousand (Keleş, 2024, p. 132).

## 2. Organizational Development of Alevis

The institutionalization of Alevism began with the founding of the first associations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1989, the Alevi association was founded in the Lower Austrian city of Sankt Pölten. This was followed by the Alevi association in Vienna in 1990 and in Vorarlberg in 1992. These were dedicated to the religious, cultural and social support of the Alevi community. The Sivas massacre in 1993 and the riots in the Istanbul district of Gazi in 1995 were turning points in the organization and the urge to go public (Keleş, 2025, p. 78). Further association foundations followed and at the same time promoted community building in the diaspora and the rediscovery of Alevi rituality in the form of Cem services.

The religious legal situation at the time was such that the Islamic Faith Community in Austria (IGGÖ) claimed to represent all Muslim communities. In reality, however, Alevis did not see themselves represented by the IGGÖ, as it primarily represented the followers of Sunni Islamic doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

This has the following historical background, which dates back to the 19th century. The Treaty of Berlin of 1878 negotiated to resolve the Balkan crisis at the time, subsequently enabled the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. With the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, approximately half a million Muslims belonged to Austria-Hungary for the first time. In order to loosen the ties between Bosnian Muslims and the Sheikh-ul-Islam (the supreme Mufti in the Ottoman Empire), in 1882 the Mufti of Sarajevo was appointed spiritual leader of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims, with the title of Reis-ul-Ulema. The Basic Law of 1867, which also granted freedom of belief and conscience, and the Recognition Act for Religious Societies of 1874 formed the legal basis for the subsequent recognition of Islam through the Islam Act of 1912. The Islam Act of 1912 not only served to better integrate Muslim soldiers from Bosnia-Herzegovina into the army of Austria-Hungary, but was also intended to provide the legal basis for the integration of the Islamic population group as a minority and the province of Bosnia-Herzegovina into the multi-confessional state. It was the first attempt in Europe to legally enshrine the status of Islam. The law's focus on the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina is particularly clear, as the recognition of Islam explicitly referred to the Sunni-Hanafi school of law. The Islam Act granted Muslims essentially the same rights as members of the Roman Catholic Church and other legally recognized religious communities. They now had the right to religious institutions such as religious foundations, to their own hospitals, to public religious practice (military pastoral services and religious education in schools), and were entitled to regulate internal affairs themselves (Kreisky, 2010, p. 11-13). Due to the reference to the Sunni-Hanafi school of law in the 1912 Islam Act and the corresponding orientation of the IGGÖ, Alevis found themselves not represented by the IGGÖ. This was reflected in the refusal of Alevi families to send their children to Islamic religious education classes at Austrian schools, as Sunni Islam is taught there. If they missed the deregistration deadline in the first week of school, Alevi children had to attend Sunni Islamic religious education classes (Erdoğan/Maral, 2024, p. 37-38). Against this background, Alevis decided to start the process of legal recognition as a separate faith community.

This structure finally made it possible to formally apply for recognition as a religious denomination community in accordance with the Federal Law on the Legal Personality of Religious Denomination Communities (1998), whereupon recognition as such was granted in 2010.

<sup>1</sup> These communities are characterized by the fact that the prophet's family, the Ehl-i Beyt, is particularly revered. The Ehl-i Beyt consists of the Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet's daughter Fatima and the first three Imams Ali, Hasan and Hüseyin.

<sup>2</sup> Teaching of the Islamic Faith Community in Austria, retrieved from: <https://www.derislam.at/verfassung>, April 22, 2025

### 3. State Recognition and Legal Implications

In order to be legally recognized as a faith community in Austria, a two-stage procedure must be completed, which is rooted in Austrian religious law.

#### 3.1 The Recognition Procedure in Austria

According to the Federal Act on the Legal Personality of Religious Denomination Communities (BGBl. I Nr. 19/1998),<sup>3</sup> religious groups can first initially be registered as denominational communities without at the same time being granted the status of a public corporation.<sup>4</sup> With this initial registration, the denominational communities receive a kind of seal of approval that makes it easier for their members to exercise their religious freedom (Pötz/Schinkele, 2024, p. 117-118). The group applying for state registration must submit its application to the responsible ministry, stating its statutes. According to § 3 BekGG, these must state the content and practice of the religious confession. Furthermore, the applicant group must consist of at least 300 persons residing in Austria. These persons may not belong to any other religious community. § 4 BekGG stipulates that the religious doctrine presented must differ from that of other denominations and recognized faith communities and that confusion can be ruled out (“exclusivity right”).

In the next stage of recognition as a state-registered faith society, further criteria must be met. These are regulated in § 11 BekGG and in the Recognition Act 1874.<sup>5</sup> § 1 of the Recognition Act stipulates that the religious doctrine of the applicant group, its worship, its constitution and the chosen name must not contain anything unlawful or morally offensive. Additional requirements for recognition under the Recognition Act are described in § 11 BekGG. Accordingly, the applicant denominational community must have existed in Austria for at least 20 years, of which 10 years in an organized form, at least 5 years as a religious denominational community or be integrated organizationally and in terms of teaching into an internationally active religious community that has existed for at least 100 years and has already been active in Austria in an organized form for at least 10 years or be integrated organizationally and in terms of teaching into an internationally active religious community that has existed for at least 200 years. Furthermore, it must have a number of members who make up at least 0.2 percent of Austria's population according to the last census. Currently, an applicant denominational community must have around 18 thousand members.

#### 3.2 Rights of recognized religious communities

The legal recognition of a religious group is the highest status that the Republic of Austria can confer on a faith community.<sup>6</sup> Legal recognition confers the status of a corporation under public law. Such bodies perform tasks in the public interest. In addition to religious tasks, this also includes social and cultural tasks that serve the common good.

Recognition gives a religious community the following rights in particular:

- the right of common public religious practice and the independent organization and administration of internal affairs
- the right to provide religious instruction at public schools or private schools with public rights
- the right to organize pastoral services (e.g. in the military, hospitals and prisons)
- the right to establish its own theological education und research institutions
- Benefits in tax law

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<sup>3</sup> Confessional Communities Act – Bekenntnisgemeinschaftengesetz – BekGG 1998, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10010098&FassungVom=2025-04-22>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> There are currently 12 state-registered religious denominations, see Federal Chancellery of Austria, retrieved from: <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/kultusamt/religiose-bekenntnisgemeinschaften.html>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>5</sup> Recognition Act – Anerkennungsgesetz – AnerkennungsG 1874, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009173>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> There are currently 16 state-registered churches and faith societies, see Federal Chancellery of Austria, retrieved from: <https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/kultusamt/kirchen-und-religionsgesellschaften.html>, April 22, 2025.

- The right to have a say in political and social bodies relevant to religious law.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Recognition of Alevism in Austria<sup>8</sup>

The Alevi Cultural Association in Vienna (Kulturverein der Aleviten in Wien) first applied for state registration under the BekGG on March 23, 2009. However, this attempt was unsuccessful due to the decision of the Office of Religious Affairs (Kultusamt), which stated that the Islam Act of 1912 did not permit any additional Islamic religious communities. One year later, however, the Constitutional Court declared in the so-called “Alevi decision”<sup>9</sup> that this legal opinion was unconstitutional. Not only does the Islam Act not prohibit the recognition of more than one religious community based on Islam, but such a view also contradicts the right to freedom of religion in accordance with Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights ECHR.<sup>10</sup>

This laid the foundation for the group, then still known as the Islamic Alevi Faith Community in Austria, to be registered as a religious denomination the following year (Kowatsch, 2022). As an important first step on the way to recognition as an independent faith community, the Alevis in Austria celebrated their admission as a registered religious denomination on December 16, 2010.<sup>11</sup>

Following the successful recognition as an Islamic Alevi denominational community, the aim was to also be recognized as a faith society. This required proof of a membership of at least 0.2 percent of the Austrian population (around 17 thousand people at the time). In December 2012, the Alevi religious community also achieved this goal and collected the required number of declarations of faith. In April 2013, the review of these declarations by the responsible institutions was completed and it was announced that all conditions and requirements had been fully met. Subsequently, on May 22, 2013, it was announced that the legal procedure of the recognition process had been successfully completed and that Alevism in Austria could enjoy the status of a recognized faith society with immediate effect. With the recognition of the Alevis, Austria has established itself as a global pioneer.<sup>12</sup>

With the ministerial decree of May 22, 2013,<sup>13</sup> the Islamic Alevi Faith Community achieved recognition as a state-recognized faith society with the associated rights and obligations. This step not only meant legal equality with other faith communities such as the Roman Catholic Church or the Islamic Faith Community in Austria IGGÖ, but also a comprehensive institutional anchoring and strengthening.

For the Alevi religious community, this was not only an expression of state legitimacy, but also an important step towards religious self-realization in the sense of a pluralistic social order.

<sup>7</sup> Rights of legally recognized churches and faith societies, retrieved from: [https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/gesetze\\_und\\_recht/religionsausuebung/3/Seite.820015.html#:~:text=Dar%C3%BCber%20hinaus%20haben%20gesetzlich%20anerkannte%20Kirchen%20und,m%C3%96ffentlichkeitsrecht%20abzuhalten%2C%20oder%20Beg%C3%BCnstigungen%20im%20Abgabenrecht.](https://www.oesterreich.gv.at/themen/gesetze_und_recht/religionsausuebung/3/Seite.820015.html#:~:text=Dar%C3%BCber%20hinaus%20haben%20gesetzlich%20anerkannte%20Kirchen%20und,m%C3%96ffentlichkeitsrecht%20abzuhalten%2C%20oder%20Beg%C3%BCnstigungen%20im%20Abgabenrecht.), April 23, 2025.

<sup>8</sup> There is currently one state-recognized faith community of Alevis in Austria, the Alevi Faith Community in Austria-ALEVI. There are also two registered Alevi denominational communities, the Old Alevi Religious Community and the Free Alevi Religious Community. These denominational communities are minorities in terms of numbers and theology. Theologically, both are convinced that Alevism is not an Islamic denomination. As rights in the field of education are primarily described and evaluated, which only recognized churches and religious communities have, I will concentrate on the legal process of recognition and the activities of the ALEVI.

<sup>9</sup> retrieved from: [https://www.vfgh.gv.at/downloads/VfGH\\_B\\_1214-09\\_Bekenntnisgemeinschaft\\_Aleviten.pdf](https://www.vfgh.gv.at/downloads/VfGH_B_1214-09_Bekenntnisgemeinschaft_Aleviten.pdf), retrieved from: April 22, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> retrieved from: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Bundesnormen/NOR12016940/NOR12016940.html>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Decision of the responsible ministry with the ministry’s business figure: BMUKK-12.056/0005-KA/2010.

<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.aleviten.at/die-alevi/geschichte-und-gruendung/>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from RIS - Federal Legal Information System: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/II/2013/133>, April 22, 2025.



#### **4.1 Islam Act<sup>14</sup>**

The latest development in the recognition of rights for the Alevi population in Austria was the new version of the Islam Act 2015<sup>15</sup> and the associated anchoring of the recognized Alevi religious community in that law. The key points of the Islam Act and the rights and obligations are set out below:<sup>16</sup>

- Right of appraisal:

The Religious Society may submit opinions and proposals on matters concerning it to legislative and administrative bodies.

- Protection of the religious designations of religious communities:

In order to protect the name of the faith, names referring to Alevism may only be used with the approval of the Alevi Faith Society.

- Regulation of “pastoral care” in state institutions:

In hospitals, in the armed forces or in prisons, trained and experienced chaplains appointed by the religious community can look after Alevi people.

- Primacy of state law:

For all religious communities, the doctrine, institutions and customs must not contradict the legal regulations.

- Islamic Theological Studies:

Austria is committed to ensuring academic education and research for the next generation of clergy. This means that clergy can acquire their theological knowledge at the University of Vienna.

- Islamic cemeteries:

The law creates legal certainty for future Alevi cemeteries so that individual gravesites may not be dissolved. There are now four Alevi cemeteries in Austria.

- Protection of religious holidays:

Public holidays are to be protected under religious law (not labor law) so that worship events are not disturbed. Five Alevi holidays and days of remembrance are set out in the Islamic Act: a) commemoration of Saint Hızır (3 days), b) birth of Imam Ali (1 day), c) proclamation of Ali as the successor to Muhammad (1 day), d) Feast of Sacrifice (4 days) and e) Aşure (1 day).

- Regulation to prohibit financing from abroad:

The ongoing operation of a religious society must be financed from within Austria (a one-off donation from abroad, such as an inheritance, is not excluded in principle, but the administration of these assets must take place in Austria).

- Food regulations:

Food may be produced in accordance with the rules of belief. The religious dietary laws must be taken into account when providing food for the armed forces, prisons, hospitals, nursing homes and public schools.

With the application of October 27, 2015, the official name of the recognized religious community was changed from “Islamische Alevitische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich” to “Alevitische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich-ALEVİ”.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On the genesis of the Islam Act, see Potz, 2012 and 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Islam Act 2015, retrieved from: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/I/2015/39>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Federal Chancellery: Islam Act 2015 – Summary: [https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:a0466509-1c32-4e9c-82c4-586444068dcc/islamgesetz\\_2015\\_-\\_zusammenfassung.pdf](https://www.bundestkanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:a0466509-1c32-4e9c-82c4-586444068dcc/islamgesetz_2015_-_zusammenfassung.pdf), April 22, 2025.

<sup>17</sup> Erdoğan/Maral, 2024, p. 285.

## 5. Education as a central field of activity

With its entry into the circle of legally recognized religious communities, the ALEVI gained access to extensive rights, particularly in the area of religious education and pastoral care. The following section takes a closer look at developments in the field of education and research.

### 5.1 Alevi religious education in schools

A central element of institutional recognition was the opportunity to offer Alevi religious education in schools. With this recognition, Alevi pupils were able to declare their religion in their schools and thus take part in Alevi religious education.<sup>18</sup> The legal basis for this is the Religious Education Act 1949, RelUG.<sup>19</sup> ALEVI is responsible for Alevi religious education in all public schools in Austria that have the right of public access in terms of content and didactic preparation and teaching. ALEVI has set up a school authority responsible for this. The direct responsibility for Alevi religious education therefore lies with the ALEVI School Board (ALEVI Schulamt). Specialist inspectors are responsible for the direct supervision of Alevi religious education. The teachers are only allowed to take up their duties after being appointed by ALEVI and are obliged to adhere to the religious doctrine advocated by ALEVI.

Since the 2013/14 school year,<sup>20</sup> Alevi religious education has been taught at numerous public and private schools in Austria. Around 1,300 Alevi children and young people are taught by around 50 Alevi teachers at over 100 schools.<sup>21</sup> The content is based on curricula developed by the religious community and the ALEVI School Board and approved by the Ministry of Education.<sup>22</sup> The focus is on Hak (God), Muhammad and Ali, the 12 Imams, the Ocak system, Alevi saints, Alevi ethics, central religious festivals and memorial days, as well as topics such as tolerance, human rights and interreligious dialog in a pluralistic society.

The special feature of Alevi religious education lies in the combination of religious and ethical learning. A student-centered and competence-oriented approach enables an open and dialogical understanding of religion. Alevi religious education does not see itself as a demarcation from other religions, but rather as an invitation to reflect on spirituality, social responsibility and humanity.

### 5.2 Teacher training and the Alevi Institute at the KPH Vienna/Lower Austria

The introduction of religious education also created a structural need for qualified religious educators. In response to this, the Institute for Alevi Religion was established at the University College of Teacher Education of Christian Churches Vienna/Lower Austria (KPH Wien/Niederösterreich). It provides academic and pedagogical training and education for Alevi religious teachers in Austria.<sup>23</sup>

Teacher training is based on several years of study, which includes religious education, didactics and theology.<sup>24</sup> The concept places great emphasis on intercultural and interreligious skills, as Alevi teachers often act as bridge builders between different cultural and religious groups in everyday school life.

The institute cooperates closely with other religious institutes at the KPH, with Alevi associations and other research institutions. The orientation is both practice-oriented and scientifically sound, which makes a decisive contribution to the professionalization of Alevi religious education.

### 5.3 Alevi Theological Studies at the University of Vienna

<sup>18</sup> Bozkaya/Luczensky, 2020, p. 130.

<sup>19</sup> RIS: Religious Education Act 1949 – Religionsunterrichtsgesetz 1949, RelUG, retrieved from: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10009217>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>20</sup> Erdoğan/Maral, 2024, p. 272.

<sup>21</sup> Keleş, 2024, p. 147.

<sup>22</sup> RIS: Curricula - Alevi religious education at elementary school, lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools, lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools, retrieved from: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/NormDokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Anlage=3&Gesetzesnummer=20008767>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>23</sup> KPH Vienna/Lower Austria: Institute Alevi Religion, at: <https://kphvie.ac.at/institute/institut-alevitische-religion.html>, April 22, 2025.

<sup>24</sup> KPH Vienna/Lower Austria: Education - Institute Alevi Religion, at: <https://kphvie.ac.at/institute/institut-alevitische-religion/ausbildung.html>, April 22, 2025.

Another milestone in the academic establishment of Alevism was the establishment of the Department of Alevi Theology at the Institute for Islamic-Theological Studies at the University of Vienna.<sup>25</sup> The legal basis for this was provided by the Islam Act 2015, which made it possible for the first time in the world to study Alevism theologically at university level. Academic research, theological reflection and university teaching take place here in an interdisciplinary framework. The institute sees itself as a place of critical reflection and systematic further development of Alevi teachings in the context of the present.

The central tasks include:

- the academic study of Alevi history, Alevi doctrine, Alevi theopoetry, written sources, Alevi ethics and religious practice,
- the monitoring of religious education issues,
- and participation in the public discourse on religion, education and integration in a pluralistic society.

This academic anchoring not only supports the further development of religious education, but also promotes the social visibility and acceptance of Alevi faith in Austria.

## **6. Challenges and prospects**

Despite state recognition and structural progress, the Alevi Faith Community in Austria- ALEVI faces a number of complex challenges. These concern both internal consolidation and the relationship with the majority society and other religious communities.

A central area of tension lies in the diversity within the Alevi community itself. Different cultural influences, regional identities and degrees of secularism mean that the uniform implementation of educational content or theological positions sometimes encounters tensions. The process of institutionalization calls for internal coherence and clarity in doctrines, without losing the spiritual openness and polyphony of Alevism. The migration process, leaving the village and resettling in cities, as well as the associated individualization and secularization have meant that the traditional Alevi community structure could not be maintained. There is a need to restructure responsibilities within the Alevi community in order to make Alevism more of a point of reference for Alevis.

Another aspect concerns social perception and representation. Despite being recognized as a religious community, Alevism is often unknown to the general public. This sometimes leads to misunderstandings, which can also be reflected in the school context - for example, when Alevi children and young people are marginalized or not understood because of their religious practice. In this sense, the education sector is not only a place of religious education, but also a central space for social enlightenment and recognition.

Tensions within Islam also pose a challenge. The Alevi Faith Community in Austria- ALEVI clearly positions itself as an autonomous and independent community. It demands an independent profile in the discourse on religious diversity in Austria and represents a tolerance- oriented counterweight to orthodox Salafist currents within Islam. State recognition has strengthened this independence and at the same time brought to light the plurality within Islam.

Last but not least, long-term questions of theological education, the promotion of young talent and the distribution of resources are key issues for the future. The establishment of their own academic institutes, the development of qualified teachers and the long-term financing of educational initiatives require both internal community strength and political support. At the same time, Alevi teachers and researchers are being overwhelmed by the high expectations of their own Alevi community. Pedagogical and scientific output is expected. Didactic materials for teaching, the design of textbooks for Alevi religious education, theological analysis of the sources and their preparation, the development of a specifically Alevi religious pedagogy are just a few of the headings in this context.

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<sup>25</sup> University of Vienna: Alevi Theological Studies - Institute for Islamic Theological Studies, retrieved from: <https://iits.univie.ac.at>, April 22, 2025.

### Conclusion

The recognition of the Alevi Faith Community in Austria-ALEVI as a legally recognized faith society represents a significant step towards religious plurality and social participation. Since then, structural changes have been initiated, particularly in the field of education, which go far beyond religious education in schools: The establishment of Alevi educational institutes, the professionalization of teacher training and the inclusion of Alevi theology in university discourse mark key milestones in a still young but dynamic development.

At the same time, it is clear that institutional recognition alone is not enough to guarantee long- term equality. Rather, there is a need for continuous work on social visibility, theological profiling and educational integration. In an increasingly pluralistic society, Alevism with its humanistic ethics, dialogical attitude and spiritual depth offers valuable potential for interreligious coexistence.

The question of how Alevi identity will continue to develop in the field of tension between tradition, migration experience and state institutionalization remains open - and makes the topic a highly topical field of research within theology, religious studies, pedagogical and the social sciences.



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## AVUSTURYA'DA ALEVİLİĞİN DEVLET TARAFINDAN TANINMASI VE BUNA BAĞLI OLARAK EĞİTİM VE ARAŞTIRMA ALANLARINDAKİ HAKLAR

### (Genişletilmiş Özet)

Aleviler Avusturya'daki dinî azınlıklardan biridir. Aleviliğin 2013'te devlet tarafından tanınmasıyla, yasal eşitlik ve dinî özyönetim yolunda en önemli eşik aşılmış oldu. Bu tanınma, yalnızca sembolik ve yasal değişikliklere değil, aynı zamanda ve her şeyden önce, eğitim sektöründe ayrı bir inanç eğitim programının getirilmesinden akademik yapıların kurulmasına kadar uzanan geniş kapsamlı etkilere yol açtı. Avusturya'daki Alevilerin tarihi, 1960'larda misafir işçi göçü olarak adlandırılan göçle başlar. Türkiye ile yapılan anlaşmanın bir parçası olarak, çok sayıda Alevi de dahil olmak üzere birçok işçi, Avusturya'ya geldi. Topluluk, aile birleşimiyle istikrarlı bir şekilde büyüdü. Bugün, Avusturya'da ilk nesilden dördüncü nesile kadar 65.000 ila 80.000 Alevi bulunmaktadır. İlk Alevi dernekleri, 1980'lerin sonlarında ortaya çıktı. Topluluk için dinî ve kültürel faaliyetler sundular. 1993'teki Sivas katliamı gibi olaylar, artan siyasi ve sosyal seferberliğe yol açtı. Aleviler, öncelikle Sünni İslam'ı temsil ettiği için Avusturya'daki İslam Din Topluluğu (IGGÖ) tarafından temsil edilmediklerini savundu. Bu, Alevi ailelerin çocuklarını Sünni İslam din eğitimi derslerine göndermek istememesine yol açtı. Avusturya'daki Alevi örgütleri, kendi dinsel kimliklerini kurumsal olarak güvence altına almak amacıyla devlet tarafından tanınma sürecini başlattılar.

Avusturya din hukukunda tanınma prosedürü, Avusturya'da dinî grupların tanınması iki aşamada gerçekleşiyor: 1. Dini Mezhep Olarak Kayıt. Gerekliklik, başka hiçbir dinî topluluğa ait olmayan en az 300 üyedir. Tüzüğün içerdiği inanç tanımı, mevcut dinî topluluklarınkinden farklı olmalı ve tutarlı bir dinî içerik sistemi gösterilmelidir. 2. Dini Bir Topluluk Olarak Tanınma Nitelik kazanmak için topluluğun en az 20 yıldır Avusturya'da faaliyet göstermesi, 10'unun örgütlü bir biçimde ve beşinin mezhepsel bir topluluk olarak olması veya uzun bir geleneğe sahip uluslararası bir dinin parçası olması gerekir. Ayrıca üye sayısı, Avusturya nüfusunun en az yüzde 0,2'si (yaklaşık 18.000 kişi) olmalıdır. Bu tanıma göre başvuran topluluk, kamu hukuku kapsamında, dinî eğitim, teolojik eğitim, manevi rehberlik, vergi avantajları ve toplumsal konulara katılım ve görüş bildirme hakkı gibi kapsamlı haklara sahip bir tüzel kişilik statüsüne kavuşmaktadır.

Avusturya'daki Alevi inanç toplumunun çizdiği yol, 2009 yılında, Alevi toplumu dinî bir mezhep olarak kayıt yaptırmak için başvuruda bulundu. Bu başvuru, ilk aşamada reddedildi. Ancak Anayasa Mahkemesi, 2010 yılında reddin anayasaya aykırı olduğuna karar verdi. Böylece İslam Alevi İnanç Toplumu, 2010 yılında dinî bir mezhep olarak tescil edildi. 2013 yılında bir sonraki adım da başarıyla atıldı: dinî bir topluluk olarak yasal tanınma. Bu, Avusturya'yı uluslararası bir öncü yaptı. Alevi dinî topluluğu, böylece sadece kiliseler ve diğer dinî topluluklarla yasal eşitlik elde etmekle kalmadı, aynı zamanda dinî, sosyal ve özellikle eğitim çalışmalarını şekillendirmek için kapsamlı fırsatlar da elde etti. 2015 yılında, yeni İslam Yasası, Alevilerin bağımsız bir inanç toplumu olduğunu tescilledi. Adı resmen "Avusturya Alevi İnanç Toplumu – ALEVI" olarak değiştirildi.

2015 Yılında Kabul Edilen İslam Yasası'na Göre Haklar ve Düzenlemeler, İslam Yasası, Alevilere pek çok yeni hak ve düzenleme getirmiştir. Bilirkişi Statüsü: Alevi, siyasi ve toplumsal konularda görüş bildirebilir. Manevi Rehberlik: Alevi inanç görevlilerinin hastanelerde, orduda ve cezaevlerinde çalışmalarına izin veriliyor. Alevi Bayram ve Anma Günleri: Beş Alevi bayramı ve anma günleri yasal olarak tanınmıştır: Sultan Nevruz, Aşure, Kurban Bayramı, Hızır Orucu ve Gadir Hum Bayramı. Finansman: Tüm maddi gelirlerin kaynağı, Avusturya içinde bulunması gerekmektedir. Mezarlıklar: Alevi mezarlıkları konusunda hukuki güvence vardır. Beslenme Düzenlemeleri: Dinî beslenme alışkanlıklarına dikkat edilmelidir. Alevi Teoloji Eğitimi: Üniversite seviyesinde Alevi inanç eğitim hakkı elde edilmiştir.

Eğitim, yapı, içerik ve hedefler çerçevesinde tanınmanın hemen etki ettiği önemli bir alan eğitimi. 2013/14 eğitim yılından bu yana, Alevi inanç eğitimi, çok sayıda kamu ve özel okulda sunulmaktadır. Bunun temeli, Din Eğitimi Yasası'dır. Derslerin içeriği ALEVI'nin geliştirdiği müfredata dayalı olup Alevi öğretisinin temel unsurlarını içermektedir: Hak, Muhammed ve Ali eksenindeki inanç öğretisi Ehl-i Beyt ve On İki İmamlar, Ozanlar ve divanları, Ocak sistemi, Ahlak, edeb, erkân, hoşgörü, toplumsal adalet ve dinler arası diyalog. Amaç, ayırmayan, aksine köprüler kurmak ve diyaloga dayalı, öğrenci merkezli bir inanç yaklaşımıdır. Alevi inanç eğitimi, 100'den fazla okulda yaklaşık 50 öğretmen tarafından yaklaşık 1.300 çocuk ve genç için verilmektedir. ALEVI Eğitim Dairesi, organizasyon, öğretmen ataması ve kalite güvencesinden sorumludur.

Öğretmen yetiştirme ve üniversite yapıları, Din eğitiminin uzun vadeli kalitesini garantilemek için Din Eğitimi Yüksek Okulu (KPH) Viyana/Aşağı Avusturya'da, Alevi İnanç Enstitüsü kuruldu. Burada, Alevi din öğretmeni olarak görev alacak kişiler, din eğitimi başta olmak üzere Alevi inanç öğretisi, didaktik, dinler arası ve kültürler arası yeterliliklere odaklanan akademik eğitim almaktadırlar. Ayrıca, 2018 yılından bu yana Viyana Üniversitesi'ne bağlı İslam Teoloji Araştırmaları Enstitüsü'nde, bir Alevi Teoloji Bilim Dalı kuruldu. Bu, dünyadaki ilk örnektir ve Alevi tarihi, öğretisi, etiği ve pratiği üzerine akademik çalışmalar sunmaktadır. Amaç, Aleviliği akademik olarak daha da geliştirmek ve kamusal ve teolojik alanlarda Aleviliği güçlendirmektir.

Alevi toplumu, büyük ilerlemelere rağmen şu zorluklarla karşı karşıyadır: İçsel Çeşitlilik: Farklı kültürel etkiler ve dindarlık dereceleri, tek tip teoloji ve uygulamayı zorlaştırmaktadır. Kamuoyunun Algısı: Alevilik hâlâ Avusturya kamuoyunda az biliniyor. Alevi çocuklar, okullarda anlaşılabilirlik veya ayrımcılık yaşayabiliyorlar. Diğer İslami İnançlardan Farkı: Alevilik, İslam'ın çoğulcu imgesi içinde bağımsız bir profil talep etmekte ve selefi veya ortodoks tanımlardan uzaktır. Akademik ve Eğitimsel Beklentiler: Öğretim materyalleri, ders kitapları, teolojik araştırmalar ve didaktik gelişime yönelik yüksek bir talep var.

Alevi inanç topluluğunun bir inanç topluluğu olarak tanınması, Avusturya'da inanç eşitliğine doğru tarihî bir adımdır. Özellikle eğitim alanında sürdürülebilir yapılar kuruldu: okullarda inanç eğitimi, akademik eğitim ve üniversite araştırmaları. Ancak, tanınma uzun bir yolculuğun sonu değil, başlangıcıdır: Teolojik profillemeye, toplumsal görünürlük ve dinler arası diyalog üzerinde sürekli çalışma gereklidir. Diyaloga açık duruşuyla Alevilik, çoğulcu bir toplumda, barışçıl bir arada yaşama için büyük bir potansiyel sunmaktadır.

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