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Integration Council

## Courage to promote the mother tongue

### Integration Council supports the demand of the State Integration Council

On the occasion of the International Mother Language Day on 21 February 2024, the Chairman of the Integration Council of the City of Bocholt, Juan Lopez Casanova, appeals to politicians to recognise the potential of multilingualism and to take the necessary steps to promote natural bilingualism across the board in all areas of education.

"The educational plight in Germany is becoming ever clearer, and there is no end in sight. The poor performance of young people with an international family history, which the PISA study once again laments, is part of this misery", says Lopez Casanova. "Numerous studies show that multilingualism promotes cognitive advantages and intercultural competences. Children who speak several languages learn new languages more easily, have a better memory and are more creative."

Multilingualism is the "key to educational success" and social participation. Promoting multilingualism is therefore not a question of integration, but an investment in children's education and future. In a globalised world, people with several languages are needed who can understand "different cultures and communicate with people from other countries."

The Chairman of the Integration Council supports the demands made by the State Integration Council:

- The consistent implementation of existing laws and political objectives to promote multilingualism in all areas of education.
- The nationwide expansion of heritage language teaching and the improvement of the quality of the programmes.
- The valorisation of heritage languages and the recognition of multilingualism as a resource in society.
- Raising public awareness of the importance of multilingualism and promoting tolerance and mutual respect.

"The multilingualism of our society is an enrichment and a valuable asset that we can show off", emphasises Lopez Casanova. "It is our task to favour the potential of all children and young people and give them the best opportunities for their future. The International Mother Language Day is a good opportunity to draw attention to the expansion, simplification of the application process and improved information provided by the Borken District Education Authority, particularly in the area of heritage language teaching."

The International Mother Language Day, introduced by UNESCO in 1999, celebrates global linguistic diversity and emphasises the importance of mother tongues for people and societies. Researchers estimate that around 100 languages are spoken in schools in Germany. However, these are valued differently. Mother Language Day is therefore an occasion to celebrate the importance of linguistic diversity and to support the promotion of multilingualism in all areas of life.





*Juan Lopez Casanova is Chairman of the Integration Council of the City of Bocholt  
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