



Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG)
ZVR-493207207 | Postfach 0042, 1060 Wien

PART ONE: COVER LETTER

FORMAL COMPLAINT TO ESOMAR

Submitted via: <https://standards.esomar.org/about>

Attn: Professional Standards & Compliance Office

Burgemeester Stramanweg 105-D, 1101 AA Amsterdam The Netherlands

Date: 24 April 2026

Complainant: Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG Think Tank)

ZVR: 493207207 | Postfach 0042, 1060 Wien

www.turkischegemeinde.at

FORMAL COMPLAINT TO ESOMAR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Subject: Formal complaint concerning the Integrationsbarometer 2025 and the adequacy of national self-regulatory review

Dear ESOMAR Professional Standards Committee,

We respectfully submit this formal complaint concerning the Integrationsbarometer 2025, a state-funded opinion research study commissioned by the Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF) and conducted under the professional responsibility of Dr. Peter Hajek Public Opinion Strategies GmbH. The study was publicly presented as being conducted in accordance with ESOMAR standards. The report itself states that Peter Hajek Public Opinion Strategies operates in accordance with ESOMAR guidelines and is a member of both VMÖ and VdMI.

Before turning to ESOMAR, we pursued the national professional route. On 7 January 2026, TKG submitted a formal complaint to the VdMI and simultaneously addressed the VMÖ. After more than ninety days, the VdMI issued a written response dated 8 April 2026, to which the VMÖ subsequently gave its full agreement. In our respectful assessment, that response did not amount to a convincing substantive review of the issues raised. On the contrary, the VdMI expressly acknowledged that the exact wording of the questions and the complete questionnaire were missing from the public documentation and were necessary in order for the public to assess validity, while at the same time issuing a final exoneration of its member.

We therefore now turn directly to ESOMAR as the competent international standards body.

This complaint is not based on abstract disagreement, political discomfort, or mere criticism of results. It concerns concrete and reviewable issues under the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025. We respectfully ask ESOMAR to examine, in particular, four core matters:

1. A category design that places a constitutionally protected religious identity (“Muslims / non-Muslims”) on the same evaluative scale as legal-administrative status groups such as refugees, migrants, and displaced persons.
2. A selective long-term monitoring structure in which only one religious community appears to have been tracked over many years as a separate coexistence problem category.
3. The use of the undefined term “Political Islam” as a central measurement instrument and communication element, despite the absence of an operational definition in the published report.
4. A final professional clearance issued although the core verification document — namely the complete questionnaire and exact wording of questions — had not yet been available for proper review.

In our respectful view, this case also raises a wider structural question. If ESOMAR standards are publicly invoked as indicators of quality, legitimacy, and trustworthiness, but are not meaningfully applied when a formal complaint requires scrutiny, then confidence in professional self-regulation is weakened.

This concern becomes particularly serious where publicly funded research affects the public standing of a constitutionally protected minority community and is subsequently used in political communication.

We therefore respectfully request that ESOMAR:

- conduct an independent substantive review of the Integrationsbarometer 2025 under the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025;
- assess whether the national review by VdMI and accepted by VMÖ met the standard of credible professional self-regulation;
- determine whether a final exoneration is compatible with acknowledged gaps in the material necessary to assess validity;
- clarify whether public invocation of ESOMAR standards entails real accountability where formal complaints are brought.

Please find attached the Executive Summary and the Full Evidentiary Annex, containing relevant quotations, documents, screenshots, source references, procedural chronology, and supporting material.

Yours faithfully,

Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG Think Tank)
Vienna, Austria
24 April 2026

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION OF MATERIAL NEW FACTS

(Developments after the initial complaint of 24 April 2026)

Since the filing of the present complaint, a highly material new development has occurred.

On or about 26 April 2026, the Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF) replaced the previously published version of the Integrationsbarometer 2025 with a substantially modified new version. According to documented comparison, the report expanded from 40 pages to 48 pages. The newly published version included, inter alia:

1. the late insertion of the previously missing full questionnaire;
2. additional methodological explanations and technical wording;
3. amended text passages affecting interpretation of findings;
4. altered numerical values and graphical presentations in certain sections;
5. structural changes through newly inserted annex pages.

No clear public designation as “revised version”, “updated edition”, “correction notice”, “version 2”, or formal erratum appears to have been provided.

In the respectful view of TKG, these developments materially reinforce the original complaint.

First, the later insertion of the questionnaire confirms that a core verification instrument was indeed absent when both the study was publicly debated and when the national associations issued their final professional clearance.

Second, subsequent textual and numerical amendments raise further questions concerning transparency, traceability, version control, and the reliability of the originally published document. Third, if material elements required for proper assessment were added only after criticism and after the national review process had concluded, serious doubt arises as to whether the prior exoneration was premature. Fourth, where a publicly funded research report is altered after publication without explicit revision marking, public trust may be significantly undermined.

TKG therefore respectfully asks ESOMAR additionally to examine:

1. whether post-publication silent modification of a publicly cited research report is compatible with the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025;
2. whether later insertion of the questionnaire confirms that prior review occurred on an incomplete basis;
3. whether amended figures, text or graphics required transparent correction notices;
4. whether this sequence of events reveals deficiencies in the national self-regulatory handling of the complaint.

A full comparative dossier documenting the two published versions has been prepared and can be submitted immediately upon request.

<https://www.turkischegemeinde.at/wp-content/uploads/Die-Aenderungen-Integrationsbarometer2025-P.Hajek-Ab-26.04.pdf>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FORMAL COMPLAINT TO ESOMAR

Complainant: Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG Think Tank)

Date: 24 April 2026

1. Purpose of this complaint

This complaint concerns the Integrationsbarometer 2025, a publicly funded opinion research study commissioned by the Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF) and conducted by Dr. Peter Hajek Public Opinion Strategies GmbH.

The study was publicly presented in Austria as professionally grounded research and explicitly linked to ESOMAR compliance. It later became part of a broader public and political controversy affecting Austria's Muslim community.

2. TKG respectfully submits that the matter raises not only methodological concerns, but also a broader issue of professional accountability. Where ESOMAR standards are publicly invoked as a mark of trustworthiness, it must also be possible to determine whether those standards are meaningfully applied when a serious complaint is filed.

Why TKG now turns directly to ESOMAR

TKG first pursued the national self-regulatory route. On 7 January 2026, a formal complaint was submitted to the VdMI and addressed to the VMÖ. On 8 April 2026, the VdMI issued its written response. In that response, the VdMI expressly stated that the exact wording of the questions and the complete questionnaire were missing from the published documentation and were necessary so that the public could assess the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data. Nevertheless, the same letter concluded that no breach of professional standards had occurred.

In our respectful view, this creates a central procedural inconsistency. If the material required to assess validity was acknowledged as missing, a final professional exoneration appears premature.

We therefore now turn to ESOMAR because, in our assessment, the national process did not provide a sufficiently convincing substantive review of the central issues raised.

3. Four concrete findings requiring review

Finding 1: Category design involving religious identity

The published study places “Muslims / non-Muslims” on the same rating scale as categories such as refugees, migrants, and displaced persons. TKG submits that this design risks placing

a constitutionally protected religious identity in the position of a measurable social problem category.

This raises serious concerns under principles relating to harm minimisation, responsible categorisation, and misleading presentation.

Finding 2: Selective long-term monitoring of one religious group

The study presents a multi-year time series specifically concerning coexistence with Muslims. No equivalent long-term series appears to be presented for other religious groups.

TKG submits that such selective design may structurally single out one protected community and contribute to the impression of permanent exceptionalism or recurring suspicion.

Finding 3: Undefined central term

The term “Political Islam” is used prominently in findings and public communication, yet no clear methodological definition appears in the report.

TKG submits that where a central measurement concept remains undefined, neither respondents, readers, nor reviewers can reliably determine what was actually measured.

This raises concerns under standards of transparency, clarity, and supportability of conclusions.

Finding 4: Exoneration before evidence review was complete

The VdMI expressly acknowledged that the complete questionnaire and exact wording of the questions were needed for validity assessment, yet nevertheless issued a final exoneration.

TKG respectfully submits that a final professional clearance cannot convincingly stand where the key verification instrument was acknowledged to be unavailable.

4. Why this exceeds a routine national dispute

This case does not concern a minor academic disagreement. It concerns a publicly funded research product presented in a governmental context, later used in public and political communication, and affecting a constitutionally protected minority community.

TKG submits that such a context requires heightened standards of methodological transparency, careful separation between measured perceptions and interpretation, and visible accountability.

The case also concerns legitimate public reliance on professional standards. If ESOMAR standards are cited publicly when trust is sought, but ineffective when accountability is requested, confidence in self-regulation is weakened.

5. What TKG respectfully asks ESOMAR to review

TKG respectfully asks ESOMAR to:

- conduct an independent substantive review of whether the Integrationsbarometer 2025 complies with the relevant provisions of the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025;
- determine whether the absence of the complete questionnaire and exact wording is compatible with a final exoneration;
- assess whether the review carried out by VdMI and accepted by VMÖ met the standard of credible self-regulation;
- clarify whether public invocation of ESOMAR standards entails practical accountability when formal complaints are made;
- consider whether this case reveals a broader structural gap between public branding of standards and real enforcement.

6. Requested outcome

TKG respectfully asks ESOMAR not merely to acknowledge receipt, but to make an independent determination on the substance of this complaint.

In particular, we ask ESOMAR to assess whether a final exoneration can stand where key methodological material was missing, central concepts remained undefined, category design raises substantial concerns, and the study had documented public consequences.

In our respectful view, this matter goes beyond one Austrian dispute. It concerns whether communities, complainants, and the public can reasonably rely on ESOMAR standards when those standards are publicly invoked in sensitive, state-funded research.

WHY WE TURN DIRECTLY TO ESOMAR FROM VIENNA

Dear ESOMAR Professional Standards Committee,

According to ESOMAR's official Professional Standards platform, professional standards form an essential part of the sector's self-regulation. They are intended to support accountability, complaint handling, trustworthy research practices, and public confidence in the profession.

As the national procedures involving VdMI and VMÖ did not provide, in our respectful view, a sufficiently convincing appearance of independent and substantive review in this matter, we now submit this case directly to the competent international ESOMAR body.

We hereby lodge a formal complaint concerning Dr. Peter Hajek Public Opinion Strategies GmbH, a member of both VdMI and VMÖ, two Austrian associations that publicly refer to the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025 as a central professional benchmark.

The complaint concerns the Integrationsbarometer 2025 (report file: OEIF_Integrationsbarometer_2025-02.pdf), a publicly funded opinion research study commissioned by the Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF) and conducted under the professional responsibility of Dr. Peter Hajek. The study was publicly presented together with the Federal Integration Minister and later became part of a broader political and media controversy concerning Austria's Muslim community.

We submitted a formal professional complaint to the VdMI on 7 January 2026. After more than ninety days, we received the VdMI response dated 8 April 2026. In our respectful assessment, that response amounted more to an exoneration than to a fully substantive

professional review. On 9 April 2026, we submitted a detailed written reply. We now turn to ESOMAR because the national self-regulatory process has, in our view, not functioned in the manner that public confidence would require.

PUBLIC RELIANCE ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

At the outset, we respectfully draw attention to an issue extending beyond the present case: legitimate public reliance on professional standards.

The published Integrationsbarometer 2025 states on page 11 that Peter Hajek Public Opinion Strategies “conducts its work in accordance with ESOMAR guidelines” and “is a member of both the VMÖ and the VdMI.” It further states that the common standards developed by these associations form the substantive basis for the work of their member institutes.

Such references are naturally presented to the public as indicators of methodological quality, professional accountability, and trustworthiness. If standards are publicly invoked when credibility is sought, yet appear to have no effective consequence once substantial complaints are raised, confidence may be weakened not only in the study concerned, but also in professional self-regulation itself.

For that reason, the present complaint concerns broader questions of public trust and the practical credibility of professional standards. In our respectful view, this case may also indicate the possible need for an independent review mechanism for opinion research in Austria, separate from association structures, where conflicts of interest or perceptions of partiality may otherwise arise.

Where significant public funds are invested in studies capable of shaping public debate and political narratives, visible, credible, and independent oversight becomes especially important.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

- 18 December 2025: Public presentation of the Integrationsbarometer 2025.
- 7 January 2026: Formal complaint submitted by TKG to VdMI and addressed to VMÖ.
- 8 April 2026: Written VdMI response issued.
- 9 April 2026: TKG submitted detailed written reply.
- 24 April 2026: Formal complaint submitted to ESOMAR.

CENTRAL QUESTION FOR ESOMAR

The essential question raised by this case is straightforward: Can a study publicly associated with ESOMAR standards receive final professional clearance where the complete questionnaire and exact wording of questions were acknowledged as missing for purposes of validity assessment? If not, then independent review appears necessary.

REQUEST

We therefore respectfully ask ESOMAR to review the substance of this complaint, the adequacy of the prior national handling, and the broader implications for public confidence in professional standards.

Yours faithfully,

Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG Think Tank)
Vienna, Austria, 24 April 2026

PART TWO: FULL EVIDENTIARY ANNEX

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE ANNEX

This Annex is submitted in support of the formal complaint filed by the Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG Think Tank) concerning the Integrationsbarometer 2025 and the adequacy of the national self-regulatory response by VdMI and VMÖ.

Its purpose is to provide documentary support, procedural chronology, relevant quotations, methodological concerns, and the specific grounds upon which independent review by ESOMAR is respectfully requested.

This submission does not ask ESOMAR to decide political questions or to endorse any ideological position. It asks for a professional assessment under the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025 of whether publicly invoked standards were meaningfully applied in a sensitive, state-funded research project and in the complaint process that followed.

The case concerns four central issues:

- category design involving a constitutionally protected religious identity;
- selective long-term monitoring of one religious community;
- use of an undefined central measurement term;
- final exoneration despite acknowledged absence of material necessary for validity assessment.

These matters are examined below with reference to publicly available documents, direct correspondence, and the wording of the national response.

PROCEDURAL TIMELINE

18 December 2025

The Integrationsbarometer 2025 was publicly presented in Austria in an official governmental context. The study entered public debate immediately and generated political, media, and civil-society reactions.

7 January 2026

TKG submitted a formal written complaint to the Verband der Markt- und Meinungsforschungsinstitute Österreichs (VdMI) and simultaneously addressed the Verband der Marktforschung Österreich (VMÖ).

The complaint raised concerns regarding category construction, transparency, methodological supportability, minority impact, and compatibility with the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025.

4 March 2026

VMÖ indicated that the matter would be handled together with the VdMI.

8 April 2026

The VdMI issued its written response.

That response acknowledged that the exact wording of the questions and the complete questionnaire were missing from the public documentation and were required so that the public could assess validity, while nevertheless concluding that no breach of professional standards had occurred.

9 April 2026

TKG submitted a detailed written reply contesting the adequacy of that assessment and requesting reconsideration.

24 April 2026

Formal complaint submitted to ESOMAR.

WHY THIS ANNEX IS NECESSARY

The national process resulted, in our respectful view, in a conclusion without sufficient engagement with the core methodological and ethical issues raised.

Where a complaint concerns a publicly funded study affecting the social standing of a protected minority community, professional review should be especially careful, transparent, and substantively reasoned.

For that reason, this Annex sets out the issues in structured form.

SECTION I: PUBLIC PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC CONSEQUENCES

The Integrationsbarometer 2025 was not circulated merely as an internal technical survey. It was publicly presented with governmental visibility and entered national political communication.

This is relevant because publication context matters. Under widely recognised research ethics principles, the responsibility attached to a study does not end with data collection. It also includes the foreseeable manner in which findings are framed, communicated, and relied upon publicly.

Where a study is publicly associated with professional standards and institutional credibility, members of the public are entitled to assume that heightened standards of methodology, neutrality, and responsible presentation have been observed.

In the present case, the report itself referred to ESOMAR standards and to membership in relevant professional associations. This increased the appearance of reliability and accountability.

TKG respectfully submits that such public reliance strengthens, rather than weakens, the need for meaningful review when serious concerns are later raised.

SECTION II: FOUR CORE FINDINGS REQUIRING INDEPENDENT REVIEW

Finding 1: Category design involving religious identity

The published study places “Muslims / non-Muslims” on the same evaluative scale as categories such as refugees, migrants, and displaced persons.

TKG respectfully submits that these are not equivalent categories. Refugee status, migration status, and displacement are legal-administrative or socio-political classifications. “Muslim / non-Muslim,” by contrast, concerns religious identity and therefore engages heightened principles of equality, dignity, and freedom of belief.

When a protected religious identity is inserted into the same problem-evaluation framework as administrative status groups, the resulting design risks communicating that the identity itself is a measurable societal burden or challenge.

Even where such meaning was not intended, category construction can itself create harmful framing effects.

This is particularly sensitive where the community concerned is a long-established minority population within Austria.

The issue raised here is therefore not disagreement with outcomes, but whether the chosen category architecture met standards of careful design, fairness, and foreseeable harm minimisation.

Finding 2: Selective long-term monitoring of one religious group

The study presents a multi-year trend line specifically concerning coexistence with Muslims.

No equivalent long-term coexistence trend appears to have been presented for other religious communities.

TKG respectfully submits that repeated singular tracking of one protected group over many years may contribute to the public impression that this community constitutes a standing or recurring exceptional issue.

Longitudinal repetition can amplify framing effects because it converts a temporary debate into a continuing narrative.

Where only one religious community is measured in this manner, the burden of symbolic scrutiny falls asymmetrically.

This concern is intensified where the results are publicly communicated in politicised contexts.

The question for review is therefore whether selective long-term monitoring of one faith community is compatible with principles of proportionality, neutrality, and responsible presentation.

Finding 3: Use of an undefined central term

The term “Political Islam” appears prominently in findings and public communication associated with the study.

However, no clear operational definition appears in the report explaining what respondents were intended to understand by that term, how it was delimited, or how answers could reliably be interpreted.

TKG respectfully submits that where a central measurement concept remains undefined, serious methodological uncertainty arises.

Respondents may understand the term differently. Some may interpret extremism, others party politics, others religious conservatism, others immigration, and others general unease.

If a key term can carry multiple meanings, aggregated responses may not measure a single coherent concept.

This raises concerns regarding clarity, supportability of conclusions, transparency, and interpretive validity.

Where undefined concepts are later used in public discourse, the risk of overreach increases further.

Finding 4: Final exoneration before review material was complete

The VdMI expressly acknowledged that the exact wording of the questions and the complete questionnaire were missing from the public material and were needed so that validity could be assessed.

Nevertheless, the same response concluded that no breach of professional standards had occurred.

TKG respectfully submits that this is the most important procedural issue in the case.

Where the questionnaire wording is unavailable, reviewers cannot fully assess:

- 1-wording effects;
- 2-order effects;
- 3-contextual priming;
- 4- category framing;
- 5- response option structure;
- 6- whether conclusions are supported by what was actually asked.

Without the complete questionnaire, the core verification instrument is absent.

A final exoneration under those circumstances appears premature and materially weakens confidence in the review process.

SECTION III: NATIONAL SELF-REGULATORY REVIEW – CENTRAL CONCERNS

TKG wishes to state clearly that professional associations can play an important and valuable role in maintaining standards.

This complaint does not challenge the legitimacy of self-regulation as such.

Rather, it concerns whether self-regulation in the present case functioned credibly, independently, and substantively.

TKG identified several internal inconsistencies in the national response, including acknowledgement of missing questionnaire material, recognition of transparency gaps, and simultaneous final exoneration. These issues materially contributed to the loss of confidence in the adequacy of the review.

Three concerns arise. First, the review appears to have reached a final conclusion while acknowledging missing material necessary for validity assessment.

Second, several central concerns raised by TKG were not addressed in a sufficiently detailed analytical manner, particularly category construction, minority impact, and the use of undefined concepts.

Third, the outcome may create the public perception that standards are visible when credibility is sought, but less effective when accountability is requested.

Even the appearance of such imbalance can damage trust in professional self-regulation.

SECTION IV: PUBLIC RELIANCE ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

This case also concerns legitimate public reliance on professional standards.

The report expressly referred to ESOMAR guidelines and to membership in VdMI and VMÖ. Such references are naturally understood by readers, journalists, institutions, and policymakers as indicators of methodological seriousness, ethical discipline, and external accountability.

That public meaning matters.

Professional standards do not operate only inside associations. They also operate externally as trust signals.

Where standards are publicly invoked to strengthen credibility, the public may reasonably expect that meaningful review mechanisms exist if substantial concerns later arise.

If, however, standards are visible in branding but uncertain in enforcement, confidence may be weakened not only in the study concerned, but also in professional self-regulation more broadly.

TKG respectfully submits that this wider dimension is relevant for ESOMAR because ESOMAR standards are internationally relied upon precisely as markers of trustworthiness.

SECTION V: HEIGHTENED DUTIES IN PUBLICLY FUNDED RESEARCH

The Integrationsbarometer 2025 was publicly funded.

That fact does not automatically imply wrongdoing. However, it increases the level of responsibility attached to the project.

Where public money finances research that can shape narratives, influence policy discussions, and affect the standing of minority communities, heightened standards of care are appropriate.

These heightened standards may reasonably include:

- transparent methodology;
- availability of key documentation;
- careful category construction;
- avoidance of foreseeable stigmatizing effects;
- clear separation between data, interpretation, and political messaging;
- meaningful complaint review where concerns are raised.

TKG respectfully submits that publicly funded research should be held to higher standards of accountability, not lower ones.

SECTION VI: WHY THE QUESTIONNAIRE MATTERS

The missing complete questionnaire is not a minor technical omission.

In survey research, exact wording often determines meaning. Small changes in phrasing can materially affect responses.

Likewise, sequence matters. A question asked after emotionally charged items may yield different responses than the same question asked neutrally.

Response categories matter. Forced choices may produce different outcomes than scaled or open formats.

Definitions matter. Undefined terms invite projection by respondents.

For these reasons, the complete questionnaire is often the central verification instrument for evaluating whether conclusions are methodologically supportable.

Where reviewers themselves acknowledge that the questionnaire and exact wording were needed for validity assessment, the absence of that material becomes central.

TKG therefore respectfully submits that no convincing final professional exoneration should precede review of that core instrument.

SECTION VII: SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES AND FORESEEABILITY

This complaint does not ask ESOMAR to police politics or suppress uncomfortable debate.

Democratic societies must allow open discussion on migration, integration, extremism, religion, and public policy.

However, research ethics and free public debate are not contradictory. They address different questions.

Public debate asks what may be discussed. Professional standards ask how research should be designed, framed, and communicated responsibly.

Where a study repeatedly singles out one minority community, employs undefined central concepts, and is launched in a politically charged environment, foreseeable social effects become relevant.

Those effects may include:

- reinforcement of stereotypes;
- normalisation of suspicion toward one community;
- misuse of findings beyond their methodological limits;
- diminished trust in research among affected groups.

TKG respectfully submits that foreseeable consequences do not determine truth, but they do form part of responsible professional assessment.

SECTION VIII: WHY THIS CASE MATTERS BEYOND AUSTRIA

Although this complaint arises from Austria, the issues are broader.

Many countries increasingly rely on polling, sentiment studies, and social research in political communication.

If professional standards can be publicly invoked without meaningful accountability review, then standards risk becoming symbolic rather than substantive.

Conversely, if independent review exists and is visibly serious, confidence in ethical research practice is strengthened.

For that reason, this matter may be relevant beyond one national dispute. It concerns whether internationally cited standards retain practical force when tested by controversy.

SECTION IX: RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE COUNTERARGUMENTS

TKG anticipates that it may be said this complaint merely reflects disagreement with unwelcome findings.

That is not the basis of this submission.

The present complaint does not ask ESOMAR to endorse any political position, suppress any conclusion, or decide whether public attitudes are favourable or unfavourable.

The concerns raised are different and narrower:

- whether category construction was professionally appropriate;
- whether a central measurement term remained undefined;
- whether key verification material was unavailable;
- whether a final exoneration was therefore premature;
- whether publicly invoked standards were meaningfully applied in review.

It may also be argued that professional associations enjoy discretion in handling complaints.

TKG accepts that associations necessarily possess discretion.

However, discretion is not the same as immunity from scrutiny. Where standards are publicly invoked and relied upon, complaint handling should remain reasoned, coherent, and credible.

It may further be argued that the study addressed legitimate public concerns.

That may be so. Legitimate subject matter does not remove the duty to use careful methodology, proportionate framing, and transparent documentation.

Even important topics must still be researched responsibly.

SECTION X: REQUESTED REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ESOMAR

To assist efficient examination, TKG respectfully proposes the following review questions:

1. Is it compatible with the ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025 to issue a final professional exoneration where the complete questionnaire and exact wording were acknowledged as necessary for validity assessment but unavailable at the time of review?
2. Does placing a protected religious identity on the same evaluative scale as legal-administrative status groups raise concerns under principles of fairness, harm minimisation, and responsible presentation?
3. Is use of a prominent but undefined term such as “Political Islam” methodologically sufficient for reliable interpretation when no operational definition is disclosed?
4. Does selective long-term monitoring of one religious community raise concerns regarding neutrality and disproportionate framing?
5. Did the national review process appear sufficiently substantive and independent to sustain public confidence?

6. What accountability implications follow where ESOMAR standards are publicly cited in connection with a disputed study?

SECTION XI: DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL PROVIDED

The accompanying materials include, where available:

- the published Integrationsbarometer 2025 report;
- the formal complaint submitted on 7 January 2026;
- the VdMI response dated 8 April 2026;
- the TKG reply dated 9 April 2026;
- publicly accessible references to ESOMAR standards by relevant associations;
- public sources demonstrating political and media context;
- supporting analytical notes and chronology.

TKG has sought to organise the material in a manner enabling efficient review.

SECTION XII: GOOD FAITH OF THIS SUBMISSION

This complaint is submitted in good faith and with respect for ESOMAR, for professional associations, and for the importance of credible research standards.

TKG recognises the value of polling, social research, and self-regulation when properly functioning.

The purpose of this submission is not to discredit the profession, but to request that publicly invoked standards be applied seriously in a case where confidence has been materially affected.

Independent review, even if critical of some claims made here, would itself strengthen trust by demonstrating that standards are real and reviewable.

SECTION XIII: CONCLUSION

TKG respectfully submits that four matters remain unresolved:

- problematic category design involving religious identity;
- selective long-term scrutiny of one protected community;
- reliance on an undefined central concept;
- final exoneration despite missing material central to validity review.

In addition, the national handling of the complaint did not, in our respectful assessment, adequately resolve those concerns in a manner capable of sustaining public confidence.

For these reasons, TKG respectfully requests that ESOMAR conduct an independent substantive review of both the study and the adequacy of the prior self-regulatory response.

This case concerns not only one report in Austria. It concerns whether communities, complainants, researchers, and the wider public may reasonably rely on professional standards when those standards are publicly invoked in sensitive, publicly funded research.

Respectfully submitted,

Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG Think Tank)
Vienna, Austria
24 April 2026

APPENDIX A: KEY PROCEDURAL EXTRACTS

The following extracts are central to the procedural concerns raised in this complaint.

From the VdMI response dated 8 April 2026, the association stated in substance that the exact wording of the questions and the complete questionnaire were missing from the published material and were necessary so that the public could assess the validity of conclusions drawn from the data.

In the same response, the VdMI nevertheless concluded that no breach of professional standards had occurred. TKG respectfully submits that the tension between these two positions lies at the core of the present complaint.

If material necessary to assess validity was acknowledged as absent, a final exoneration appears difficult to reconcile with a complete substantive review.

APPENDIX B: WHY CATEGORY DESIGN REQUIRES CARE

Survey categories are not neutral containers. They shape perception.

When legal-administrative groups such as refugees, migrants, or displaced persons are measured together with a protected religious identity category, respondents may interpret all listed categories as belonging to one common evaluative frame.

That framing effect may occur regardless of the intention of the researchers.

For that reason, careful distinction between status categories, behavioural categories, ideological categories, and identity categories is professionally important.

TKG respectfully asks ESOMAR to consider whether sufficient care was exercised in the category architecture of the present study.

APPENDIX C: WHY DEFINITIONS MATTER

Undefined concepts may generate unreliable data. Where respondents are asked to react to a term capable of multiple meanings, answers may reflect different mental objects rather than one common construct.

The term “Political Islam” may, depending on respondent understanding, refer to extremism, lawful party politics, conservative theology, foreign influence, migration anxiety, or general unease.

If respondents interpret the same term differently, aggregate percentages can overstate precision.

TKG respectfully asks ESOMAR to consider whether use of such a central undefined term was compatible with standards of transparency and methodological supportability.

APPENDIX D: WHY LONGITUDINAL REPETITION MATTERS

A repeated time series can do more than measure opinion. It can stabilise a narrative.

Where one protected religious community is repeatedly singled out over many years as a specific coexistence object of measurement, public audiences may infer that the group constitutes a continuing special problem. That inference may arise even if not expressly stated.

For this reason, repeated selective measurement deserves heightened professional reflection.

APPENDIX E: BROADER PRINCIPLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Professional standards derive value not only from wording, but from visible application. When standards are cited publicly, they create expectations among readers, journalists, institutions, and affected communities.

Those expectations include:

- that complaints can be brought;
- that complaints will be examined seriously;
- that reasoning will be coherent;
- that missing core material will matter;
- that public trust signals correspond to real accountability.

TKG respectfully submits that this broader principle explains why the present matter extends beyond one disputed report.

APPENDIX F: FINAL REQUEST TO ESOMAR

TKG respectfully asks ESOMAR to:

- 1-acknowledge receipt of this submission;
- 2-confirm whether the matter falls within review competence;
- 3-conduct an independent substantive assessment;
- 4-communicate findings or next procedural steps;
- 5- clarify any further material required from the complainant.

TKG remains available to cooperate fully and to provide any supplementary documents, translations, screenshots, or correspondence that may assist review.

APPENDIX G: CLOSING NOTE

This complaint is submitted firmly, but respectfully.

It is based on the conviction that strong professional standards protect everyone: researchers, institutions, associations, minority communities, critics, and the public alike. Where standards are real, scrutiny strengthens them. Where scrutiny is avoided, trust declines.

For that reason, TKG respectfully asks for independent review.

Sources and References

I. Primary Documents

- VdMI, Stellungnahme vom 08.04.2026 (Per Email) Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG), Formal complaint to VdMI,
- VdMI, 07.01.2026
- Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG), Replik / Formal Reply, 09.04.2026
- Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG), ICC/ESOMAR Mapping (Annex)

- Türkische Kulturgemeinde in Österreich (TKG), List of demands (15 specific points)

- II. Professional Standards and Self-Regulation

- ICC/ESOMAR Code 2025 (maßgebliche englische Originalfassung):
<https://standards.esomar.org/assets/documents/icc-esomar-code-2025.pdf>
- ESOMAR Professional Standards / Complaint Portal:
<https://standards.esomar.org/about>
- VdMI, Werte und Richtlinien:
<https://www.vdmi.at/werte-und-richtlinien/>
- VMÖ, Qualitätsstandards:
<https://www.vmo.at/verband/qualitaetsstandards/>
- ICC/ESOMAR Kodex Deutsch (VMÖ-Download):
https://www.vmo.at/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ICCESOMAR_Code_German_.pdf
- ICC/ESOMAR Code English (VMÖ-Download):
https://www.vmo.at/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ICCESOMAR_Code_English_.pdf

III. Study Materials / Integrationsbarometer

- Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF), Integrationsbarometer 2025, Gesamtbericht:
https://www.integrationsfonds.at/fileadmin/content/AT/Downloads/Publikationen/Integrationsbarometer/Integrationsbarometer_2025.pdf
- Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF), Mediathek / Publikationen:
<https://www.integrationsfonds.at/mediathek/mediathek-publikationen/publikation/oeif-studie-integrationsbarometer-01-2024-1-20200/>

IV. Public and Political Context Sources

- Bundeskanzleramt Österreich – Präsentation Integrationsbarometer / Ministerin Plakolm / Peter Hajek:
<https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzleramt/nachrichten-der->

[bundesregierung/2025/12/integrationsministerin-plakolm-integration-ist-kein-angebot-sondern-eine-pflicht.html](https://www.bundesregierung/2025/12/integrationsministerin-plakolm-integration-ist-kein-angebot-sondern-eine-pflicht.html)

- ORF.at (21.12.2025), politische Reaktionen:
<https://orf.at/stories/3415053/>
- ORF Religion (22.12.2025):
<https://religion.orf.at/stories/3233523/>
- VOL.at (21.12.2025):
<https://www.vol.at/oevp-sorgt-mit-posting-zu-integrationsbarometer-fuer-unmut/9883619>
- Exxpress.at (22.12.2025):
<https://exxpress.at/politik/wir-sind-nicht-so-kritik-an-zusammenleben-mit-muslimen-fuer-marterbauer-unzulaessig/>
- Nachrichten.at (22.12.2025):
<https://www.nachrichten.at/politik/innenpolitik/oevp-verteidigt-umstrittenes-posting-zu-zusammenleben-mit-muslimen;art385,4120601>

V. TKG Publications / Public Record

- TKG, APA-OTS Pressemappe:
<https://www.ots.at/pressemappe/1970/tuerkische-kulturgemeinde-in-oesterreich>
- TKG Website:
<https://www.turkischegemeinde.at/>
- TKG, Sachverhaltsdarstellung:
<https://www.turkischegemeinde.at/sachverhaltsdarstellung-analyse-moeglicher-verhetzung-bezueglich-des-integrationsbarometers-2025/>
- TKG, Formelle Beschwerde:
<https://www.turkischegemeinde.at/tkg-erhebt-formelle-beschwerde-zum-integrationsbarometer-2025-fragen-zur-staatlichen-neutralitaet-und-wissenschaftlichen-sorgfalt/>
- TKG, Kritische Gesamtbewertung:
<https://www.turkischegemeinde.at/integrationsbarometer-2025-tkgs-kritische-grundrechtsbezogene-gesamtbewertung-der-antworten-des-oeif-und-von-peter-hajek/>
- TKG, Antwort auf ÖIF-Stellungnahme:
<https://www.turkischegemeinde.at/antwort-der-tkg-auf-die-oeif-stellungnahme-vom-04-02-2026-demokratische-kontrolle-statt-anwaltlicher-drohkulisse/>

VI. Legal Sources

- Österreichische Bundesverfassung (B-VG), Art. 7 Abs. 1:
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10000138>
- Österreichisches Strafgesetzbuch, § 283 StGB:
<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10002296>
- Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention (ECHR), Art. 9 und Art. 14:
https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/Convention_ENG
- EU-Grundrechtecharta, Art. 21:
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12016P021>
- EU-Rahmenbeschluss 2008/913/JI:
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_framw/2008/913/oj/eng