

## **Invitation to Online Meeting of Initiatives and Activists on 2nd of September**

Dear all, dear fellow activists,

We need your support against the impending introduction of a discriminatory payment card ("Bezahlkarte") for refugees in Lower Saxony!

Therefore, we as the Refugee Council of Lower Saxony cordially invite you to an online meeting of initiatives and activists:

**When: On Monday, 02 September, 7 pm to 9 pm in the evening**

**Where: Via zoom using this link:**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82027686008?  
pwd=MIIHODUvQnM2dkk3NE9oRGZ6YXdQdz09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82027686008?pwd=MIIHODUvQnM2dkk3NE9oRGZ6YXdQdz09)

Meeting-ID: 820 2768 6008

Kenncode: 754213

We would like to come together to discuss and develop ideas for activities to prevent the further discrimination. We would also like to think about how we can support refugees in solidarity if the payment card is actually introduced.

### **We propose the following agenda:**

1. Exchange on actions against the discriminatory payment card, e.g:
  - a) Petition to the state government of Lower Saxony, see here: <https://www.openpetition.de/petition/online/niedersachsen-sagt-nein-zur-diskriminierenden-bezahlkarte-fuer-gefluechtete>
  - b) Motions in local councils prohibiting the introduction of a discriminatory payment card
  - c) Support of lawsuits against the discriminatory payment card by those affected / call for plaintiffs
  - d) Further ideas
2. Experiences with the payment card in Hamburg: input from an activist of the solidarity network from Hamburg
3. Ideas for solidarity and support in Lower Saxony, similar to the voucher exchange campaigns

### **Background:**

On 20 June, the Prime Minister's Conference, with the approval of Stephan Weil, head of the state of Lower Saxony, decided to introduce a nationwide "payment card" for refugees who receive benefits under the Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act (AsylbLG). In future, these payment cards are intended to limit the payment of cash and other restrictions, such as preventing money transfers abroad and restricting cashless payment transactions to certain goods,

services or providers. The card should also make it technically possible to restrict payment transactions to certain postcode areas.

The federal states have agreed that only 50 euros in cash should be paid out per person per month. A discriminatory payment card was already introduced in Hamburg in February. It is already the practice there that only 50 euros per person per month is granted in cash. A lawsuit against this, supported by Pro Asyl and the Gesellschaft für Freiheitsrechte (Society for Civil Liberties), was at least successful before the Hamburg Social Court, [see here](#).

The discriminatory payment card has serious consequences for refugees:

Shopping in second-hand shops, at flea markets or small shops will not be possible or only possible to a very limited extent. There will be no cash for school materials or the children's school trip, an ice cream in town, the use of a public toilet or similar everyday situations. A "Deutschlandticket" (cheaper train ticket which requires a subscription), a club membership, paying a lawyer or even a fine - all of these things will be complicated and difficult, possibly impossible, with the payment card. If those affected have to submit applications to the social welfare offices for every payment that exceeds the 50 euro pocket money and cannot be realised with the payment card, this is degrading for the refugees and unnecessarily burdensome for the administration.

You can find more information on the planned discriminatory payment card on [our website here](#).

### **Registration:**

Please let us know in an informal **email to [anmeldung@nds-fluerat.org](mailto:anmeldung@nds-fluerat.org)** whether you will be attending the online meeting on 2 September.

Please let us know by 26 August if you need a translation into a specific language. We will try to organise an appropriate interpretation.

We look forward to your participation!

Greetings in solidarity  
Your Refugee Council of Lower Saxony  
(Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen e.V.)