

# AUTONOMES ZENTRUM KÖLN

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## AZ USERS GUIDE

### Welcome to the Autonomous Center Cologne!

The Autonomous Centre is what we make of it. It is open to anyone who wants to come together in an emancipatory setting, get to know one another and take action themselves. If we look after ourselves and everyone else, this is the place to realise our needs for self-determination, solidarity and a better life.

Anyone can organise events and thus bring the AZ to life. The AZ is a meeting place for organised and non-organised people from a wide variety of social, political and cultural backgrounds. It offers a non-commercial space for exhibitions, information events, group meetings, concerts, parties, a pub, food, cinema and much more. Where possible, these activities are free of charge or at least as affordable as possible. However, the AZ is not a cheap alternative to other cultural offerings. At the AZ, non-party politics and culture are pursued alongside emancipatory goals. Here, collective forms of coexistence and collaboration can be tried out, reflected upon and further developed.

To ensure that everyone at the AZ can contribute equally, there should be no formal hierarchies. Similarly, there is a commitment to identifying and dismantling informal hierarchies as well. Decisions are made collectively by consensus. This encourages discussion and allows controversies to be resolved. A majority does not have the power to impose its interests on others. This can only be achieved if everyone feels confident enough to get involved and participate in the planning and running of activities. The success of events and the continued existence of the AZ depend on responsible visitors who always see themselves as active participants rather than passive consumers.

A society in which all people can live with dignity requires respectful and appreciative interaction with one another. At the AZ, sexist, racist, anti-Semitic, anti-queer, anti-trans or anti-gay behaviour, and other forms of oppressive or exclusionary conduct, will not be tolerated. The AZ strives to create a relatively safe space in which no one is discriminated against on the basis of attributed or chosen attributes, and where those affected can find support in the event of an assault.

Social conditions are reflected in personal behaviour and are reproduced through it. Anyone wishing to challenge these conditions must continually reflect on their own behaviour towards others, as well as on the exclusions and hierarchies within their own structures. The AZ offers the opportunity to develop structures, ways of acting and practices for a free society. Because power relations cannot be overcome individually, the AZ creates a collective perspective that extends beyond the state, capital and patriarchy.

The AZ provides a space from which society can – and must – be intervened in. It is the starting point for challenging restrictive and oppressive social conditions.

All this means a lot of work – and a lot of fun. Are you in?

**If you want to get involved: come to the events, get in touch with the AZ groups, check [az-koeln.org/mitmachen](http://az-koeln.org/mitmachen) or email us at [unsersquat@riseup.net](mailto:unsersquat@riseup.net).**

**See you at the AZ!**