

# *Austria Becomes Latest European Country to Ban the Burqa*

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Vienna, February 1 (RHC)-- Austria's coalition government, in an ironic move to curb the rise of the far-right Freedom Party, has confirmed its implementation of several far-right measures, one of which includes a full ban of the burqa in public places.

The announcement came alongside a plan to tighten security around asylum-seekers and increase funding for German language and so-called "integration" classes, as part of an agreement between the center-right Austrian People's Party, known as OVP, and the Social Democratic Party, or SPO.

"We are committed to an open society, which also presupposes open communication. A full-face veil in public places stands in its way and will therefore be banned," the coalition announced.

Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz added that "anti-social symbols" will help Austria "better integrate those migrants who are allowed to stay." The government is also considering a wider ban on the hijab and other religious symbols among state employees.

Elsewhere in Europe, France became the first country to implement a burqa ban, followed by Belgium and Bulgaria.

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