EUROPEAN
ISLAMOPHOBIA
REPORT
2017

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

SETA

EUROPEAN
ISLAMOPHOBIA
REPORT
2017

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

SETA

COPYRIGHT © 2018 by SETA
All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, without permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN: 978-975-2459-61-8

Cover and Layout: Erkan Söğüt
Printed in Turkey, İstanbul by Turkuvaz Haberleşme ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., 2018

SETA | FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
Nenehatun Caddesi No: 66 GOP Çankaya 06700 Ankara TÜRKİYE
Phone:+90 312.551 21 00 | Fax :+90 312.551 21 90
www.setav.org | info@setav.org | @setavakfi

SETA | İstanbul
Defterdar Mh. Savaklar Cd. Ayvansaray Kavşağı No: 41-43
Eyüpsultan İstanbul TÜRKİYE
Phone: +90 212 315 11 00 | Fax: +90 212 315 11 11

SETA | Washington D.C.
1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1106
Washington, D.C., 20036 USA
Phone: 202-223-9885 | Fax: 202-223-6099
www.setadc.org | info@setadc.org | @setadc

SETA | Cairo
21 Fahmi Street Bab al Luq Abdeen Flat No 19 Cairo EGYPT
Phone: 00202 279 56866 | 00202 279 56985 | @setakahire

ABOUT EDITORS

Enes Bayraklı

Enes Bayraklı earned his BA, MA and PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna, and conducted research for his PhD thesis at the University of Nottingham in Britain between 2009 and 2010. He was a deputy director at the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in London in 2011-2013. Bayraklı also served as the founding director of the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in Constanta and Bucharest, Romania in August-December 2012. He has been a faculty member at the Department of Political Science and International Relations and the head of the European and International Affairs MA Program at the Turkish-German University since 2013. Currently he is also the director of European Studies at SETA Foundation. His fields of research include Islamophobia in Europe, far-right movements in Europe, the transformation of Turkish foreign policy, foreign policy analysis, and German foreign policy. Email: bayrakli@tau.edu.tr

Farid Hafez

Farid Hafez PhD (Political Science, University of Vienna) is lecturer and researcher at the University of Salzburg, Department of Political Science and Sociology. He is also Senior Researcher at Georgetown University's 'The Bridge Initiative'. Currently, he also lectures at Istanbul Zaim University in Istanbul. In 2017, he was Fulbright visiting professor at University of California, Berkeley and in 2014, he was visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York. Since 2010, Hafez has been editor of the Islamophobia Studies Yearbook, and since 2015 co-editor of the annual European Islamophobia Report. He has received the Bruno Kreisky Award for the political book of the year, for his anthology Islamophobia in Austria (co-ed. with John Bunzl) and published more than 70 books and articles, including in high-ranking academic journals. Moreover, Hafez regularly publishes op-ed's and is frequently interviewed by media outlets. Email: farid.hafez@sbg.ac.at

For more information about the EIR:
www.islamophobiaeurope.com
islamophobia@setav.org

FOREWORD

SETA is pleased to present the third edition of the annual *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) succeeding the reports of 2015 and 2016. This year, 40 prominent scholars and civil society actors from various European countries who specialize in different fields such as racism, gender, and discrimination studies, present 33 country reports. In addition to highlighting the developments of Islamophobia in key fields such as employment, education and politics, they provide precious country-specific policy recommendations to counter this phenomenon and a detailed chronology of events. Since every year it applies the same methodological framework on a large number of European countries, the *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) provides a unique collection of European-wide analyses in regard to anti-Muslim racism in Europe to policy makers, social scientists, and ordinary readers.

Monitoring Islamophobia in Europe became an urgent need in the last few years, since the phenomenon has sensibly increased, following economic recession and the rise of far-right politics. Today, Islamophobia constitutes a serious challenge for European democracies for at least four reasons:

- First of all, Islamophobia is severely impacting the life of millions of European Muslims facing racism at university, in the workplace, the public sphere, etc. In addition to representing a threat to their physical life, this racism undermines their place in society and their sense of belonging in European nation states.

- Secondly, the rise of Islamophobia both reflects and strengthens the normalization of far-right discourse in the political spectrum across Europe. Within a few months, neofascist parties entered the German Bundestag, accessed strategic ministries in Austria, and registered historical results in the French, Dutch and Italian elections.
- Thirdly, Islamophobia poses a problem of internal security as it intensifies tensions between communities, legitimizes hate crimes against individuals, and undermines the European Union ideals of peace and coexistence.
- Finally, Islamophobia represents an obstacle for European international relations, since it mars the EU image of tolerance worldwide and increases tension between EU member states and certain strategic partners, including Muslim countries.

Yet, even if Islamophobia objectively constitutes a threat for European democracies, many European intellectuals and politicians, both left- and right-wing, are still refuting the existence and the validity of the concept. Their worries about terrorist attacks and immigration are preventing them from acknowledging the daily racism that Muslims face in Europe. However, by denying Islamophobia, there is a risk – intended or not – to ignore the inacceptable reality experienced by millions of European citizens.

Based on this observation, as SETA, we decided to annually publish the *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) in order to provide serious – yet accessible – analyses on a phenomenon that remains widely ignored and misunderstood. We hope this will be a vital contribution in the fight against Islamophobia in Europe.

Burhanettin Duran
General Coordinator of SETA

THE STATE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ

This is the third issue of the annual *European Islamophobia Report* (*EIR*) consisting of an overall evaluation of Islamophobia in Europe in the year 2017, as well as 33 country reports which include almost all EU member states and additional countries such as Russia and Norway. This year's *EIR* represents the work of 40 prominent scholars and civil society activists from various European countries.

In a presentation of the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey's selected findings on Muslims, the director of the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), Michael O'Flaherty, stressed that their survey clearly contradicts the claim that Muslims are not integrated into European societies. On the contrary, the survey found that the trust of Muslims in the democratic institutions of Europe is higher than much of the general population. Furthermore, O'Flaherty pointed out that "every incident of discrimination and hate crime, however, hinders their [Muslims'] inclusion and reduces their chances of finding work. We risk that we alienate individuals and their community from us, with all possible consequences."[1]

1. FRA, "Press Release: Muslims in the EU: High Levels of Trust Despite Pervasive Discrimination", Vienna, September 21, 2017.

As the report based on a survey of 10,527 people who identified themselves as Muslims published by the FRA reveals 76% of Muslim respondents feel strongly attached to the country they live in, while 31% of those seeking work have been discriminated against in the last five years. At the same time, only 12% of Muslims say they have reported cases of discrimination. Hence, we can say with certainty that the extent of discrimination Muslims face in Europe is much greater than the numbers revealed in any report on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime in Europe. In other words, one can claim that all the available data and statistics about Islamophobia in Europe show only the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, revealing the comprehensiveness of structural anti-Muslim racism lies at the heart of the *European Islamophobia Report* project, which on a yearly basis analyzes the trends and developments in almost all states in Europe from Russia to Portugal, and Malta to Norway.

However, NGOs and projects like the *EIR* cannot provide a European-wide daily monitoring mechanism given the colossal size of the problem and the funds required. Therefore, we think it is the duty of the nation states to put in place monitoring mechanisms and publish yearly data on anti-Muslim hate crimes in their respective countries. Yet, it is clear that we are far from that goal since there is no official documentation of anti-Muslim hate crime in the overwhelming majority of European nation states. Recently, Germany made an important step by including Islamophobia as a subcategory of "hate crimes" in the official police statistics of "politically motivated criminal acts." We welcome this decision and urge other European nation states to follow suit, since Islamophobia is not only a fundamental threat to the coexistence of different religions and cultures but also a threat to the democratic foundations of Europe. Furthermore, tackling Islamophobia has also become an acute problem given the rise of racist, especially Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-Roma far-right parties and the adaptation of their discourse by mainstream parties in many European nation states.

The first statistics, which were revealed for 2017 by the German State reveal around 71 attacks on mosques and 908 crimes against German Muslims (ranging from verbal to physical attacks and murder attempts). Germany also registered 1,413 attacks on refugees and 93 attacks on aid workers in Germany in the first 273 days of 2017. However, although the German state registered 71 attacks on mosques, the DITIB, which is an NGO, listed 101 attacks on mosques in Germany all throughout 2017. Therefore, bearing in mind also what the FRA revealed about the reluctance of Muslims to report incidents, one can claim that the estimated number of unknown cases might be more than eight times higher. There are various reasons for these phenomena; some of these include:

- Victims may not be aware of the reporting mechanisms.
- The victims' possible social isolation or proximity to the perpetrator.
- The victims' lack of trust in the authorities, due to fears that their claim will not be taken seriously.
- The victims' fear of being victimized again by police officers.

In this regard, the OSCE ODIHR points out to the fact that "governments have a central role to play in ensuring access to justice; from the initial assessment of victims' needs by police officers, to support mechanisms for victims through governmental or nongovernmental institutions."[2]

The denial of the very existence of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism/anti-Muslim hate crime in Europe by many demonstrates the need for an appropriate effort and political will to tackle this normalized racism and its manifestations that are deeply entrenched in European societies, institutions, and states. Intelligence services, such as the German Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, have realized the important role Islamophobia plays for right-wing extremist parties.[3] Still, it is not only the case for extremist groups on the political fringe of the society, but rather far-right discourses have moved to the center of political power. Consequently, it is not only right-wing extremist groups that rely on the means of Islamophobic propaganda and discourse - social democrats, liberals, leftists or conservatives are no longer immune to this form of racism.

The recognition of Islamophobia is of utmost importance in Europe. Therefore, we welcome the Swedish government's decision to launch a National Plan to Combat Racism, which also acknowledges Islamophobia as a problem that needs to be addressed. However, despite this positive step the Equality Ombudsman in Sweden followed the EU Court of Justice in ruling that company policies banning the Islamic headscarf are not discriminatory.

That is also why initiatives such as the report *The Missing Muslims: Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All* by Conservative MP Dominic Grieve, in which the government was urged to adopt a definition of anti-Muslim prejudice along the lines of that adopted in 2016 for anti-Semitism, are so important. Successfully combating Islamophobia requires outspoken and brave initiatives and persons (politicians and activists) who challenge this widespread normalized form of racism.

With the help of the new president of the USA, who defends his "Muslim Ban" by referring to invented terrorist attacks such as the one in Sweden, the imagined figure of the all-time lurking Muslim enemy is kept alive. When Trump tweet-

2. OSCE, "Hate Crime against Muslims", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.osce.org/odihr/373441?download=true.

3. BfV, "What is Right-Wing Extremism?", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/en/fields-of-work/right-wing-extremism/what-is-right-wing-extremism.

ed "You look at what's happening last night in Sweden. Sweden, who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers. They're having problems like they never thought possible,"[4] Swedish officials and reporters were bewildered since there were no major incidents that night. The climate of the age of fake news, which has always been central to the spread of conspiracy theories, is now exaggerated and expanded by leading politicians in the world, while the structural dimension of Islamophobia still exists at the heart of European societies and institutions. This situation requires a need for a clear stance by governing politicians, elites and intellectuals since they are bound by their constitutions and laws, and international and national human rights standards.

In this manner, British Prime Minister Theresa May criticized Trump for reposting material from the far-right Britain First, while the U.S. president answered her with the advice that it would be better if she dealt with the "destructive radical Islamic Terrorism that is taking place within the United Kingdom" rather than focusing on him.[5] It is quite clear that Europe needs more courageous leaders such as Alexander Van der Bellen, the president of the Austrian Republic, who defended the rights of women to wear a headscarf in a country where the far right has become the leading political power.[6]

Combatting Islamophobia on the European and the Supranational Levels

Combatting Islamophobia on national and regional levels is important but not enough. Therefore, there is a need for a concerted effort to combat Islamophobia first on the European level and second on the supranational level. In this regard both the coordination among different NGOs and the involvement of institutions such as the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN are essential. In 2017, there were some initial positive steps on the EU level, however, given the size of the problem there is still a long way to go.

As an NGO coalition statement following the 4th Roundtable on anti-Muslim hatred, which was organized by the European Commission (EC) and chaired by the EU coordinator on combatting anti-Muslim hatred, David Friggieri, made clear, a "stronger and more concrete commitment and actions"[7] are needed to combat

4. Chan Sewell, "Last Night in Sweden? Trump's Remark Baffles a Nation", retrieved December 12, 2017, from https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/19/world/europe/last-night-in-sweden-trumps-remark-baffles-a-nation.html.

5. David Smith, "Donald Trump Attacks Theresa May over Her Criticism of His Far-right Retweets", retrieved February 9, 2018, from www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/nov/29/donald-trump-theresa-may-tweet-uk-us.

6. Farid Hafez, "Austria's President and the Islamophobia Debate: The Courage of One Man", retrieved March 25, 2018, from https://en.qantara.de/content/austrias-president-and-the-islamophobia-debate-the-courage-of-one-man.

7. NGO Coalition Statement following 4th European Commission Roundtable on anti-Muslim hatred, retrieved December 18, 2017, from http://www.enar-eu.org/NGO-coalition-statement-following-4th-European-Commission-Round-Table-on-anti.

Islamophobia. These civil society organizations argue that "there are still some misconceptions by the European institutions with regards to the issue of Islamophobia. With the generalised suspicion against Muslims, it is of utmost importance for EU policy makers not to fall into the trap of treating Muslims as potential problems but rather as human beings whose fundamental rights can be violated. Combatting Islamophobia is not about preventing radicalism or terrorism […] it is about politically addressing structural forms of discrimination and racism affecting Muslims or those perceived as such."[8]

Although the statements of high-ranking politicians such as Frans Timmerman, vice-president of the European Commission, in which he recognized the problem of Islamophobia are positive steps, the European Coalition against Islamophobia still sees a large potential for improvement regarding the fight against Islamophobia on the EU level. According to the European Coalition against Islamophobia, the EU and national legislations provide legal remedies for racist crime and discrimination, yet Muslims still suffer from violence, prejudice and exclusion in Europe.[9] In this context, the FRA recommends better implementation of the relevant EU and national legislation to combat widespread harassment and hate crime against Muslims.[10]

On March 14, 2017, the European Court of Justice (EJC) for the first time made two judgments to rule on non-discrimination at work on religious grounds.[11] The EJC ruled that employers would be able to prohibit the wearing of religious garments by their employees. This was despite the content of Article 9, which secures the freedom of thought, conscience and religion of the European Convention on Human Rights. The EJC ruled that banning visible signs of political, philosophical or religious beliefs is "appropriate" to ensure a "policy of neutrality" if systematically applied as a company policy. Obviously, also observant Jews and other religious minorities will be affected by this as much as Muslim women and men. But the verdict has evolved in the context of the complaints of two Muslim women, one from France and one from Belgium. It will be Muslim women who will suffer from this regulation disproportionately. Amnesty International protested against this decision as potentially propelling increased discrimination on the basis of religious identity, especially against Muslim women. Also, many faith communities and vocal Muslim organizations in Brussels and beyond have objected to what they perceive a step towards further institutionalization of Islamopho-

8. Ibid.

9. European Coalition against Islamophobia, "Strengthening Actions against Islamophobia: Next Steps for the European Commission", retrieved March 25, 2018, from http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/2017_one-pager_ec_islamophobia.pdf.

10. OSCE, "Bias against Muslims", retrieved March 25, 2018, from http://hatecrime.osce.org/taxonomy/term/230.

11. Court of Justice of the European Union PRESS RELEASE No 30 /17 Luxembourg, March 14, 2017, https://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2017-03/cp170030en.pdf

bia. While this verdict made clear that visible signs of political, philosophical or religious beliefs can be banned in private companies, it left many questions open regarding the decisions to be taken in the future.

As Bülent Senay, personal representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, argued during the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2017, on a supranational level, institutions still lack means to fight Islamophobia. Amongst other important recommendations, he called the OSCE states to commit to recording hate crimes against Muslims as a separate disaggregated category. The OSCE ODIHR is also considering the preparation of a guide on hate crimes against Muslims and on the security needs of Muslim communities in the OSCE region. A similar guide has been prepared und published for Jewish communities.[12] We think this would be a positive step to combatting Islamophobia in the OSCE region and, therefore, welcome the preparation of such a guide.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe publishes an annual report on the ECRI's activities, in which Islamophobia is also analyzed under a separate heading. In the last report, which covered the year 2016, the ECRI points to the fact that "Muslims continue to experience discrimination in various areas of social life, including education, employment and housing."[13] The ECRI concludes that the "negative experiences of Muslims in Europe can fuel feelings of isolation within a larger community and hinder inclusive societies."[14] However, we think that the Council of Europe, which consists of 47 states, can play a wider role in the combat against Islamophobia in Europe.

The European Coalition against Islamophobia, which consists of 13 NGOs,[15] has published its suggestion for an action plan for 2018-2019 to fight Islamophobia in the European Union. This plan puts the recognition of Islamophobia at its center and among other important recommendations calls the European Parliament to adopt a resolution on combatting Islamophobia as it did on combatting anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsysism.[16]

12. OSCE, "Understanding Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Jewish Communities", retrieved March 25, 2018, from https://www.osce.org/odihr/317166?download=true.

13. Council of Europe, "Annual Report on ECRI's Activities", retrieved March 25, 2018, from https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/Annual_Reports/Annual%20report%202016.pdf.

14. Ibid.

15. The members of this coalition are the following: European Forum of Muslim Women; Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations; Karamah EU; European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion; European Network against Racism; and the Collective against Islamophobia in France.

16. ENAR, "Strengthening Actions against Islamophobia", retrieved March 25, 2018, from http://www.enar-eu.org/IMG/pdf/2017_one-pager_ec_islamophobia.pdf.

A resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on March 23, 2016 (Resolution 31/16) expressed "concern over violent attacks motivated by anti-religious bias, targeting individuals belonging to religious minorities, as well as religious places, and recommended that states prevent, investigate and punish such acts."[17] Although this is more a general resolution on freedom of religion it is still relevant to EU states which are witnessing an unprecedented rise of anti-Muslim hate crimes in the last decade. More concretely, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance reported that "the fear of terrorism and racist and xenophobic speech often translate into increases in hate crimes targeting Muslims, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers." Like many others, the special rapporteur reiterated the importance of collecting disaggregated data on hate crimes targeting Muslims and others.[18]

The Rise of the Far Right in Europe

Beyond the supranational level, there are observable trends in different European nation states. Firstly, the far-right political camp has moved from the periphery to the center and become integral to the political landscape in Europe. While most far-right parties are still in opposition, some have gained major influence by becoming governing parties such as in the cases of Austria, Bulgaria, and Finland. While others may still be in opposition, their Islamophobic discourse, which is so central to most of them, has become mainstream since their issues have been co-opted by former centrist political parties. In Sweden, for instance, the once marginal anti-Muslim Sweden Democrats became the third or second largest party in opinion polls, pushing most other parties to adjust their policies accordingly. Secondly, we also observe a stronger cooperation of various Islamophobic parties in Europe. For instance, the Czech Freedom and Direct Democracy Party (SPD) organized a meeting of representatives of its partners from the European Parliament in December 2017 in Prague. Politicians such as Geert Wilders (Dutch Freedom Party) and Marine Le Pen (Front National) were amongst some of the participants.

From Sweden to Greece, from Poland to the Netherlands, the rise of far-right parties is a vital threat to democratic order in Europe. What is more dangerous is the mainstreaming and normalization of the far-right policies within mainstream politics. Austria is a wake-up call and the prime example of this horror story which might repeat itself in many European countries if European societies do not seriously tackle this disturbing trend.

17. OSCE, "Bias against Muslims", retrieved March 25, 2018, from http://hatecrime.osce.org/taxonomy/term/230.
18. Ibid.

The Right Wing in Opposition

As mentioned above in the majority of EU countries far-right parties are still in opposition. However, when in opposition, right-wing political parties are even more explicit about their racist utopia and hence speak out in a harsher and more direct way against Muslims. By doing so, they are playing a crucial role in the normalization of anti-Muslim discourse in Europe.

There are many examples of this blatant anti-Muslim racism, some of which will be presented here. In this context, the Northern League's candidate for president of the Lombardy region of Italy warned that there is a "risk that the white race disappears and is replaced by migrants."[19] In Slovenia, right-wing populist and extremist parties are not strong enough to win elections, however they are very active on social media and in the organization of public events and protests. For instance, Nova 24TV in Slovenia broadcasted the following Islamophobic opinion: "Obviously, we do not have enough terrorists, rapists and other criminals in Europe. It seems that leading politicians want to bring even more. Only this can explain their desire for the ever-increasing inclusion of migrants and Muslims in European countries."[20]

In Latvia, numerous pre-election programs of various parties for the 2017 municipal elections demonstrated unambiguous Islamophobic positions. In Riga, the Action Party of Eurosceptics (Eiroskeptiķu Rīcības partija) published the following slogan in their program, "We are not against Muslims, we are against the Islamization of Latvia and Europe."[21] The National Alliance (Nacionālā apvienīb) was even more radical in its program in which it stated that it was "in support of not letting into Liepāja illegal immigrants called 'refugees' – potential criminals, terrorists and idlers! There will be no mosques here!" [22]

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, anti-Muslim bigotry and negative trends towards Muslims were evident mainly in the educational, political and media sectors. The main generators of Islamophobic discourse and anti-Muslim bigotry are the Bosnian Serb political, media and academic policymakers.

For the first time since 1989 a right-wing extremist party managed to enter parliament in Slovakia. The opposition party 'We Are a Family – Boris Kolar' submitted

19. Milano, "Fontana: 'Razza bianca da difendere'. Poi precisa: 'È stato un lapsus'. Salvini: siamo sotto attacco", retrieved March 25, 2018, from http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/politica/18_gennaio_15/attilio-fontana-immigrati-razza-bianca-difendere-candidato-centrodestra-regione-lombardia-bcf74404-f9e8-11e7-b7a0-515b75eef21a.shtml.

20. Nova 24TV, "Levičarske dobre vile muslimanom odpirajo vrata, Evropa pa hudičeva semena še kar zaliva" (The Left Good Fairies Open the Doors of Europe to Muslims, and Europe Still Waters the Devil Seeds), retrieved November 22, 2017, from http://nova24tv.si/svet/levicarske-dobre-vile-muslimanom-odpirajo-vrata-evropa-pa-hudiceva-semena-se-kar-zaliva/.

21. Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, "Eiroskeptiķu Rīcības partija", retrieved December 27, 2017, from http://pv2017.cvk.lv/CandidateLists/CandidateList?candidateListId=8k1v7yBEuCMERyWBkqtfTQ%3D%3D.

22. Centrālā vēlēšanu komisija, "Nacionālā savienīga Taisnīgums," retrieved December 27, 2017, from http://pv2017.cvk.lv/CandidateLists/CandidateList?candidateListId=0zFqpAsLIE456csFZERqxQ%3D%3D.

a bill to amend the laws to enable a ban on building mosques. Eleven members voted for the proposal, 48 against it, while more than a half of the MPs, 77 in total, abstained from the vote.

In Southern Cyprus, a newly established party, the far-right ELAM (Ethniko Laiko Metopo), which is a sister party to Greece's Golden Dawn, has significantly contributed to spreading Islamophobia in the southern part of the island. Although ELAM is a very small party and only managed to enter parliament in 2016 with 3.71% (allowing them 2 MPs), their views are widespread; the archbishop of southern Cyprus often expresses his agreement with ELAM'S positions.

The successful Swiss right-wing party SVP tried to introduce a full-face veil ban in Sweden. Another parliamentary initiative by National Councillor Yannick Buttet (CVP) demanded a "mandatory labelling of imported halal meat at all stages of sales as well as an increase in the price of imported halal meat."[23] Although the National Council accepted the initiative, the Council of States rejected it.

In Switzerland, the parliamentary motion by Lorenzo Quadri from the regional right-wing party Lega, which was adopted in the National Council, instructed the Federal Council to draw up a bill, which, following the rules that apply in Austria, provides a guarantee for the following: "(1) The prohibition of Islamic places of worship and imams who accept funds from abroad; (2) The obligation for Islamic centers to disclose the origin and use of their finances; (3) The duty to conduct sermons in the language of residence."[24]

Meanwhile in the UK, UKIP's election manifesto promised a public ban on "face coverings" and proscribed sharia courts in the UK. In the Netherlands, radical parties such as the Dutch SGP (a radical Christian party) published a manifesto,[25] which argued that "the love offer of Jesus Christ and Muhammad's use of violence are as different as day and night."[26]

Beyond political parties, on the more extreme non-parliamentarian level or the grassroots level, far-right groups, such as the Identitarian movement or ones that function underground, pose a threat to Muslims in Europe, especially in their most violent form. Nationalist groups such as, among others, the Finnish branch of the Nordic Resistance Movement and the "Finland First" movement were active in spreading their ideology of hate.

23. The Federal Assembly - The Swiss Parliament, "Motion 15.499: Import of Halal Meat from Animals Slaughtered without Stunning," retrieved January 18, from https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20150499.

24. The Federal Assembly - The Swiss Parliament, "Motion 16.3330: Islamische Gebetsstätten. Verbot der Finanzierung durch das Ausland und Offenlegungspflicht", retrieved January 9, 2017, from https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/amtliches-bulletin/amtliches-bulletin-die-verhandlungen?SubjectId=41116.

25. SGP, "Manifest islam in Nederland", retrieved January 26, 2018, from https://www.sgp.nl/actueel/manifest--islam-in-nederland/6125.

26. Ibid., p. 2.

The Right Wing in Power

Currently, there are a few governments in Europe, which include right-wing parties that have focused heavily on using Islamophobia as a means of gaining public support and political power. After the general elections in Norway, the Progress Party, which is often regarded as a right-wing populist party and which had an openly Islamophobic election campaign, governs together with the conservatives in a coalition. Consequently, for the first time in Norwegian history, there are government representatives who do not shy away from using Islamophobic discourse. The Progress Party's minister for immigration and integration, Sylvi Listhaug, suggested a prohibition against hijabs at elementary schools, which was not supported by the coalition partner. The party also proposed to ban the circumcision of baby boys, which also found no support in parliament. A third proposal, a national ban of the face veil in schools and institutions of higher education, won broad parliamentary support and is currently being circulated for consultation.

In the Czech Republic, a new party called ANO won the elections. Its leader supported the notorious Islamophobic politician, Czech President Miloš Zeman. The leader of the right-wing populist party Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD), which campaigns continuously for a legal ban of Islam, became vice-chair of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. Although there is a tiny Muslim community in the country, the 2017 national elections were the first in the history of the Czech Republic, during which attitudes towards Muslims were a central issue.

In Bulgaria, a hostile language towards Muslims is winning ground. Especially, during election campaigns, anti-Muslim rhetoric was at its peak. Many extreme right-wing political parties such as ATAKA, NFSB (National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria), and IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization) are part of the current government and form a coalition with the leading party.

In Serbia, there are ministers such as Aleksandar Vulin, minister of defense, and Nebojša Stefanovic, minister of the interior, who attract attention by stirring ethnic and religious hostilities. Today, we can witness a revival of political parties and forces from the 1990s in the political arena. Currently, the strongest parties are those that were the most important players in the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. A rise in nationalism and hate speech targeting Muslims can be seen in the public sphere. Crimes committed against Muslims are glorified.

Co-option of Islamophobia by Centrist Parties

We observe a general trend within centrist political parties to co-opt the Islamophobic discourse of right-wing political parties. The former president of Romania, Traian Basescu, proclaimed in the midst of a debate on a mosque in Bucharest that this was

"a risk to national security," and argued that "part of the Islamization of Europe is building mosques everywhere."[27] During a local council election in Bucharest in June 2016, several leading Bucharest mayoral candidates argued for a referendum on the mosque, amongst them the current mayor Gabriela Firea of the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat – PSD).[28]

In Poland, there is no nominal right-wing political party, but a conservative party in power, which nevertheless allows an unambiguous negative image of Islam to be spread in state institutions. State-funded media outlets seem to carefully select their guests, who spread a stereotypical portrayal of Muslims as "violent," "terrorists," "Jihadists," "sexists," "rapists," "uncivilized," "double-faced," and in general "a threat" to European and Christian values. While a research commissioned by the Commissioner of Human Rights on the attitudes among Polish secondary school students was published in 2017, showing that the majority of the 396 respondents reveal strong anti-refugee, Islamophobic and homophobic prejudice,[29] the Ministry of Education shut down anti-discrimination programs in Polish schools and instead promoted programs supporting patriotism and a national and cultural Polish identity.[30]

In Spain, former president of Madrid and of the senate, and former minister of culture, Esperanza Aguirre, tweeted that January 2 was a glorious day for Spanish women who otherwise would not enjoy any freedom under the rule of Islam.[31] In Slovakia, former president Robert Fico argued that he will "not allow the creation of an integrated Muslim community in Slovakia."[32]

In Hungary, the ruling conservative Fidesz competed in Islamophobic rhetoric with the far right. It finally managed to make anti-Muslim narratives become un-

27. Gandul, "Băsescu nu vrea moschee la Bucureşti şi-l trimite pe Iohannis să se facă muftiu la Sibiu. România trebuie să rămână creştină" (Basescu Doesn't Want a Mosque in Bucharest and Sends Iohannnis to Become a Mufti at Sibiu. Romania Must Remain Christian), retrieved December 26, 2017, from http://www.gandul.info/politica/basescu-nu-vrea-moschee-la-bucuresti-si-l-trimite-pe-iohannis-sa-se-faca-muftiu-la-sibiu-romania-trebuie-sa-ramana-crestina-15154001.

28. Euractiv, "Firea: Moschee în Bucureşti doar după un referendum local/Orban: Nu voi autoriza moscheea lui Ponta" (Mosque in Bucharest Only After Local Referendum / Orban: I Won't Authorize Ponta's Mosque), March 25, 2016, retrieved December 23, 2017, from http://www.euractiv.ro/politic-intern/firea-despre-construirea-uneimoschei-la-bucuresti-doar-dupa-un-referendum-local-3920.

29. Gajos-Kaniewska, Dorota, "RPO: młodzież nie chce uchodźców – wyniki badania wśród uczniów szkół średnich", retrieved January 11, 2018, from http://www.rp.pl/Edukacja-i-wychowanie/309069922-RPO-mlodziez-nie-chce-uchodzcow---wyniki-badania-wsrod-uczniow-szkol-srednich.html.

30. Newsweek, "Patrotyzm – tak, tolerancja – nie. Prawicowa ideologia od września wchodzi do polskich szkół" retrieved January 11, 2018, from http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/koniec-zajeciami-antydyskryminacyjnymi-w-szkolach-edukacja-narodowa-wedlug-pis,artykuly,412809,1.html.

31. El Diario, "Esperanza Aguirre, sobre la Toma de Granada: "Es un día de gloria para las españolas. Con el Islam no tendríamos libertad," retrieved October 24, 2017, from http://www.eldiario.es/politica/Esperanza-Aguirre-Toma-Granada-Islam_0_597390772.html.

32. Juraj Koník, "Premiér Fico je opäť svetový, prerazil výrokmi o moslimoch, ktorých k nám nepustí", *denník N*, (January 8, 2016) retrieved January 8, 2018, from https://dennikn.sk/338314/premier-fico-opat-svetovy-prerazil-vyrokmi-moslimoch-ktorych-nam-nepusti/.

contested and thus realized a support of an overwhelming portion of the population. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán became famous for the alleged conspiracy of George Soros to Islamize Europe with the help of "hordes of migrants raping Europe."[33]

During the national presidential elections in France in 2017, Islamophobia was omnipresent not only in the campaign of the Front National but also in an array of other candidates' campaigns. Also during the national elections in the Netherlands in 2017, there was a race between the right-wing populist party of Geert Wilders (PVV) and the center-right party of Mark Rutte (VVD). Some intellectuals, before the elections, discussed whether the number of Muslims could be reduced by deportation. Prominent Law Professor Paul Cliteur was present during the debate and discussed how this could be made possible legally.

In Denmark, the leader of the Social Democrats, Mette Frederiksen, argued that there is no need for Muslim private schools and that they would be strengthening the isolation of Muslims. Frederiksen argued that "a school with a foundation in Islam is not part of the majority culture in Denmark."[34] Bias against Muslims within the oppositional social democratic party intensified. This is also true for the conservatives in Austria. There, the then-leader of the conservatives and now chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, argued that there should not be any private Muslim kindergartens in the country.

Denying the Suffering

In many European countries, the very existence of Islamophobia itself is denied. In countries like Austria and Norway, leading journalists of editorial boards shift the focus from Islamophobia as a problem to Islamophobia as a "combat term," arguing that the term itself is used by Islamists to delegitimize any debate on Islam and Muslims. Hence, there is a reluctance to use the term "Islamophobia" in the public sphere. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a denial of the anti-Muslim genocide. Nationalist movements and even parts of the Croatian political establishment argue that the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to be territorially divided in order to secure peace and security. Convictions such as in the case of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague fueled Islamophobia within these separatist and nationalist movements. Republika Srpska, continued its separatist policy in 2017 and was supported by visits from abroad, especially members of the right-wing Austrian FPÖ, which now forms a government with the conservative ÖVP.

33. Farid Hafez, "When Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia Join Hands", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/08/anti-semitism-islamophobia-join-hands-170809084731114.html.

34. Andreas Karker and Jacob Friberg, "Mette Frederiksen i brutalt opgør: Luk alle muslimske friskoler", retrieved February 14, 2018, from: https://www.b.dk/politiko/mette-frederiksen-i-brutalt-opgoer-luk-alle-muslimske-friskoler.

The (Mis-)Use of Education and Academia

An unsubstantiated report on an alleged Muslim Brotherhood conspiracy to establish an Islamic State in Sweden was published by a Swedish state agency. The Administrative Court of Appeal later dismissed the report as of "highly limited" value. The author is a senior fellow at the Brussels-based think tank European Foundation for Democracy, which plays a central role in disseminating this conspiracy theory, which helps in defaming Muslim civil society actors. Also in Austria, a report was published on an alleged Muslim Brotherhood conspiracy by another senior policy advisor of the same think tank in cooperation with a state agency. The report had no serious impact, since it was presented a few days before the elections and did not receive major coverage due to other political scandals. The current chancellor of Austria Sebastian Kurz has been central in sponsoring 'studies' on Muslims in Austria (one on Muslim kindergartens, the other on mosques), which would serve his increasingly Islamophobic agenda. Also, Islamophobia is a threat, when good initiatives are legitimized for the wrong ends. Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama defended the need for religious instruction in public schools with the prevention of the radicalization of young Muslims.

Online Islamophobia

Islamophobic groups are especially active on the Internet. Often, the Internet is where right-wing groups emerge before materializing in "real life." Therefore, better regulations are needed in this sphere to combat the spread of Islamophobic content which is the main source in the radicalization of far-right terrorist groups or lone wolves.

Groups such as the explicitly Islamophobic Identitarian Movement that represents the postmodern face of the New Right, is active in countries like Slovenia, Hungary. Malta witnessed the emergence of its first far-right party, the Ghaqda Patrijotti Maltin (Maltese Patriots). While doing poorly in elections, their media campaign and social media advertisements presented many Islamophobic statements. In countries with a negligible Muslim population like Latvia, Islamophobic attitudes are still mostly voiced on the Internet. In Italy, a significant research on intolerance based on an analysis of Twitter realized by Voxdiritti in 2016 ranked Muslims as the fourth most targeted group (6% of all tweets).[35]

Legalizing Islamophobia

Early in 2017, the Austrian government, made up of social democrats and conservatives, passed a law that outlawed the veiling of the face. Romania followed

35. See VOX, "Ecco la nuova Mappa dell'Intolleranza", retrieved March 24, 2018, from http://www.voxdiritti.it/ecco-la-nuova-edizione-della-mappa-dellintolleranza.

with a legislative proposal for the ban of face veiling in educational institutions initiated by the ruling People's Movement Party (PMP). The asserted aim was the prevention of violence and terrorism. The law was launched by 26 MPs from three parliamentary parties. Also, in Latvia, where – similar to Romania – there are nearly no Muslims, a draft law on the restriction of wearing a face veil was prepared by the Ministry of Justice in 2015 and is still under consideration. In Belgium, the parliament voted for limitations on ritual slaughter including the prohibition of Muslim halal slaughter. Also, a debate on a state takeover of the Grand Mosque of Belgium began. In a small village in Hungary, a mayor passed a law to ban the construction of mosques and minarets, the Muslim call for prayer, the chador, niqab, burqa, and burkini. The mayor argued that he wished to set a positive example for other Hungarian municipalities in order to guarantee the 'centuries-old traditions' of local communities in the face of mass migration to the country.[36] After massive protests in the entire country, the mayor had to withdraw the legislation for contradicting a number of basic rights guaranteed by the Hungarian Constitution.[37] In November 2017, however, the local council voted in favor of the same legislation that was amended after merely removing any words referring to Islam from the text. Also, the Dutch Christian-Democrats (CDA) included a ban on the financing of mosques from abroad and were wary of "radical Islam" in their campaign program.

In Finland, a citizens' initiative[38] was launched to amend a law in favor of a "Burka Ban." Among the initiators was Terhi Kiemunki,[39] a former member of the Finns Party, who was convicted of incitement to hatred due to texts on her blog defaming Muslims.[40] A spokesperson of the initiative was Jukka Ketonen, current chairman of the Finnish Defense League (FDL), who proclaims to be fighting against "Islamic extremism"[41] and is known for other smaller initiatives such as demonstrations against "Islamization" before a school. In Denmark, a ban on full-face veils, a so-called "mask ban" (popularly referred to as the "niqab ban") was proposed by the Danish

36. HVG, "Toroczkai odacsap a bevándorlóknak: megtiltják a mecsetépítést Ásotthalmon", retrieved February 5, 2017, from http://hvg.hu/itthon/20161124_toroczkai_asotthalom_muszlim_tiltas.

37. HVG, "Elmeszelte Toroczkai rendeletét az Alkotmánybíróság", retrieved January 9, 2018, from http://hvg.hu/itthon/20170412_alkotmanybirosag_toroczkai_asotthalom.

38. "Initiative submitted by at least 50,000 Finnish citizens eligible to vote and containing the proposal that an act be enacted" as defined in "MOT Eduskuntasanasto," a multilingual parliamentary glossary, prepared jointly by parliament and the Government Terminology Service of the Prime Minister's Office, retrieved January 31, 2018, from https://mot.kielikone.fi/mot/eduskuntasanasto/netmot?UI=fied&height=147.

39. Cf. "Islamophobia in Finland: National Report 2016" in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Istanbul, SETA, 2017.

40. For a detailed description of Terhi Kiemunki's court case, see Ibid.

41. Homepage of the Finnish Defense League, retrieved January 31, 2018, from http://www.fdl.fi/about/.

People's Party following the verdict by the European Court of Human Rights.[42] This initiative was not only supported by the right wing, but also the Social Democrats and the Danish Social Liberal Party, arguing that they would, thus, empower Muslim women. There is also a law prohibiting male circumcision under way in Denmark.

Terrorist Attacks against Muslims

In Europe, the largest number of attacks which could conclusively be affiliated to terrorist organizations were carried out by racists, nationalists and separatist extremists (99), followed by left-wing extremist attacks (27). Nevertheless, Jihadist terrorist attacks (13) and the general Muslim population in Europe associated with it are largely seen as the greatest threat to European societies.[43] Irresponsible politicians and media play their part in supporting this trend.

There are worrying signs of far-right terrorist groups and lone wolf far-right terrorists increasing their activities and targeting Muslims in Europe. Attacks against mosques and Muslim institutions have become a daily routine. For instance, according to the DITIB in Germany there were 101 attacks on mosques throughout 2017. However, the attacks against Muslims, persons who are perceived as Muslims, and persons who are vocal in their support for Muslim or refugee rights are becoming more and more frequent and violent. In Germany, the government registered around 908 hate crimes in 2017 against German Muslims, ranging from verbal to physical attacks and murder attempts. As a result of these Islamophobic attacks in Europe, there are already victims of Islamophobic terrorist attacks who have either been killed or severely injured. Below we have summarized the most important attacks in 2017.

On the night of April 15, 2017, the 22-year-old Egyptian student Shaden Mohamed al-Gohary was killed in a hit-and-run incident in Cottbus, Germany. The most shocking part is that while she lay injured on the street, people started insulting her in racist ways, believing she was a refugee. The attackers eventually came back on foot and said things like "Well, they gotta check the street first, since they don't have streets at home. They should fuck off to their damn country."

In Germany, the conservative mayor of Altena, Andreas Hollstein, known for his welcoming stance towards refugees was stabbed in the neck and seriously injured in a knife attack at a kebab restaurant.[44]

42. Lizzie Dearden, "European Court of Human Rights Upholds Belgium's Ban on Burqas and Full-Face Islamic Veils," retrieved February 13, 2018, from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/belgium-burqa-ban-upheld-european-court-of-human-rights-dakir-v-full-face-islamic-veils-headscarf-a7835156.html.

43. EUROPOL, "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017: European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation 2017", retrieved March 24, 2018, from www.europol.europa.eu.

44. Samuel Osborne, "German Pro-refugee Mayor Stabbed in Politically-Motivated Knife Attack", retrieved March 25, 2018, from https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-pro-refugee-mayor-andreas-hollstein-altena-knife-attack-politically-motivated-angela-merkel-a8079806.html.

In Sweden, three members of the national socialist Nordic Resistance Movement were sentenced to up to eight-and-a-half years in prison. The trio was found guilty of bombings of two refugee housings and a libertarian socialist trade union office in Gothenburg, which severely wounded one person. They were trained in urban guerrilla warfare by a Russian radical nationalist and anti-Muslim paramilitary organization. The perpetrators were influenced by Islamophobic and anti-Semitic discourse, which was clear in a recorded video prayer to All-Father Odin in which they vowed to "retake our land" and "take the fight against you who have defiled our country." "Oh Jew, oh Muslim / We Norsemen have awakened / You should fear us / We are coming after you / The rage of the Norsemen thunder / Be assured / Oh, Jew and Muslim / The Norsemen are coming after you."[45] The fact that Islamophobia goes hand in hand with other forms of racism, such as anti-Semitism in this case, should be a symbolic reminder for those, who are aware of European history.[46] Beyond this example of a right-wing extremist movement, the case of Hungary, where the ruling Fidesz party mobilizes against George Soros while portraying him as a conspirator alongside Muslims to change the European population,[47] reveals again that racism will eventually target every minority.

On September 27, 2017, four members of the banned neo-Nazi group National Action in the UK were arrested on suspicion of preparing and instigating acts of terrorism. According to the UK's Defense Ministry some of them were soldiers serving in the British army.[48]

In Germany, two supporters of a neo-Nazi terrorist group were arrested on January 14 after 155 kg of explosives were discovered in their home.[49] On April 27, a German soldier posing as a Syrian refugee was arrested for allegedly planning a "false flag" shooting attack against politicians that would be blamed on asylum seekers.[50]

On October 17, 2017, 10 far-right militants were arrested by French anti-terrorist police in France. According to the TV station M6, they were suspected of

45. Nationella åklagarmyndigheten, Ansökan om stämning, Ärende AM-8443-17, Inkom 2017-06-09MÅLNR: B 618-17, AKTBIL: 206; Säkerhetspolisen, Huvudprotokoll, dnr 0105-K98-16 0105-K8-17 0105-K9-17, Inkom 2017-06-09.

46. Farid Hafez, "Comparing Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: The State of the Field", *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, Volume 3, Issue 2, Spring 2016, pp. 16-34.

47. Farid Hafez, "When Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia Join Hands", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/08/anti-semitism-islamophobia-join-hands-170809084731114.html.

48. DW, "Serving British Soldiers among Neo-Nazi Terror Suspects Arrested in UK", retrieved March 24, 2018, from http://www.dw.com/en/serving-british-soldiers-among-neo-nazi-terror-suspects-arrested-in-uk/a-40370114.

49. Lizzie Dearden, "German Police Investigating Neo-Nazi Terror Plot after Bomb Branded with Swastika Discovered", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-neo-nazis-right-wing-extremism-terror-plot-attack-refugees-oldschool-society-explosives-a7527116.html.

50. Lizzie Dearden, "German Solider Posing as a Syrian Refugee Arrested for Planning False Flag Terror Attack", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/german-soldier-syria-refugee-false-flag-terror-attack-posing-arrested-frankfurt-france-bavaria-a7705231.html.

planning attacks on French politicians and on Muslim places of worship.[51]

In Russia, between 2012 and 2016, five imams were killed in the Stavropol region. The cases remain unresolved to this today. All the assassinated imams were involved in civic activism and they openly resisted the prohibition of the hijab in the Stavropol region.

On June 19, 2017, a man drove his van deliberately into a crowd of Muslim worshippers leaving the north London Finsbury Park Mosque. As a result of this attack, one person was killed and eleven were injured.

In Poland, a Pakistani Muslim man was severely beaten by a group of men in Ozorków on January 3, 2017. On April 8, 2017, three Pakistani Muslim men were severely beaten in Swidwin Polan.

Threatening the Religious Infrastructure

More than two decades after the Agreements of 1992 between the Islamic communities and the Spanish state, basic rights such as access to religious education or the possibility of burying the Muslim dead in an Islamic cemetery have not been put into practice in most of the Spanish regions; small steps, however, are being taken in this sense. In Malta, there were debates about the legitimacy of teaching Islam to Muslim pupils.

In Slovakia, there has been a parliamentary debate on a draft law that toughened the registration of churches and religious communities and a draft has been submitted by members of the government of the Slovak National Party (SNS). This trend of discrimination against Muslims, who are a small minority in Slovakia and thus directly affected by these amendments, has been noticed by the U.S. Department of State, which in its report on religious freedom in the world noted the disparity in the approach to religious rights in the country. Today, it is impossible for the Muslim community to become an officially registered religious community in Slovakia.

In Greece, three mosques located inside non-governmental organizations belonging to members of the Muslim Turkish minority were closed by the Greek police - one of them had existed for 12 years. Officially, the closures were due to the lack of the necessary permissions to function a house of prayer inside the premises.

In Bulgaria, an indifference from the part of governments to the religious needs of Muslims can be observed. There is a lack of funding by the state be it in the area of religious education, Muslims' attempts to develop a cultural-religious center, or the blocking of Muslims' attempts to regain property ownership of *waqf* properties. Also, many Muslim religious employees, which were formerly and legally paid by the Turkish government, had to leave their jobs because the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria unilaterally cancelled the treaty between Bulgaria and Turkey and did not

51. The Strait Times, "French Police Arrest 10 Far-Right Militants", retrieved March 24, 2018, from http://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/10-arrested-in-france-over-suspected-plot-to-kill-politicians-probe-source.

inform the representatives of the Office of the Grand Mufti, which faced a structural crisis after being informed three months later.

On a European level, the European Citizens' Initiative against Extremism (Stop Extremism) was founded and recognized on June 7, 2017 by the European Commission. Among its initiators are Seyran Ates and Efgani Dönmez, who are known for their notorious Islamophobic positions. Supporters include well-known Islamophobes such as Abdel-Hakim Ourghi, Ralph Ghadban, Saida Keller-Messahli, and Necla Kelek. The initiative, which came under criticism when leaks by the weekly *Falter* revealed that more than 20,000 Euros, the budget specified by the EU Commission, could potentially be used to restrict Muslims' religious activities. Stop Extremism calls for "the introduction of a joint, EU-wide watch list to which individuals and organizations with an extremist background could be added" as well as for the introduction of an "Extremism-free" certification for organizations and businesses.[52] Initiatives like this seem to target specifically Muslims, not extremists, and to restrain their scope of activities, which ultimately reflects already existing restrictions as discussed above.

Steps Forward and Policy Recommendations

The picture presented here shows us that there is an urgent need to counter these developments. And there is room for hope. Critical assessment of the current situation regarding Muslims in Europe is growing within parts of civil society. Not only are there more and more institutions that are working to bring attention to the rise in hate crime towards Muslims such as the Spain-based Observatorio de la Islamofobia en los Medios[53] but there are also favorable developments such as in the Norwegian justice system which has developed positive steps regarding monitoring and convicting cases involving hate speech or discrimination against Muslims. Also, the German Federal Police has made a first important institutional step to combatting Islamophobia by documenting it: for the first time, Islamophobia has been included as a category of hate crime.

There are more and more politicians, who dare to openly speak out against the threat of Islamophobia. President of the Slovak Republic Andrej Kiska stood up for Muslims in his New Year´s speech. Also, Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen took a stance of solidarity with Muslim women wearing the hijab. Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä called people not to respond to "hate with hate"[54] in the aftermath of the stabbings by a Muslim citizen, which led to increased harassment, violent physical attacks as well as acts of vandalism against Muslim properties van-

52. Stop Extremism, "Six Actions That We Demand to Secure a Safer Europe", retrieved March 24, 2018, from https://www.en.stopextremism.eu/about.

53. Observatorio de la Islamofobia en los medios, http://www.observatorioislamofobia.org/.

54. Tuulia Thynell, "Pääministeri Sipilä: Teko oli raukkamainen ja tuomittava, mutta vihaan ei pidä vastata vihalla", retrieved January 31, 2018, from https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9786182.

dalism towards Muslims.[55] These examples of political courage give hope that there still exist reasonable politicians, who look beyond their ephemeral political careers, keeping the good of the whole of society in mind. With an increase of alternative right-wing media and social media bubbles as well as a general swing to the right, hate speech is becoming more and more normalised. In an especially extreme incident in the Czech Republic, children in a primary school in the city of Teplice were threatened with death in gas chambers; the class was comprised predominantly of children of Arab or Romani origin. Such incidents call for an unambiguous reaction on behalf of politicians and opinion leaders.

The authors of every respective national report have suggested specific recommendations regarding the country they have covered. This will support all those forces within European societies, who work towards a more equal society and fight every form of racism. The editors of the *EIR* support the following recommendations which were made by the OSCE ODIHR office, the FRA, the ENAR, the European Coalition against Islamophobia, and other NGOs:

- In the face of the increased and generalized suspicion and marginalization of Muslims in the post-terrorist attacks and migration contexts and the deep impact the former have had on Muslims' lives, including newly arrived migrants, the recognition of the specific form of racism targeting Muslims (or those perceived as such) is crucial.
- The misconceptions and demonization surrounding the fight against Islamophobia and visible Muslims, in general, need to be challenged; data, facts and concrete solutions need to be visible in order to improve the recognition of Islamophobia and influence policy changes.
- This should lead to informed anti-racism/anti-discrimination policies and support the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation on the national and European levels. EU institutions need to recognize and address Islamophobia politically as a form of racism that can lead to human rights violations.
- While the issue of Islamophobia has gained more visibility in recent years at the EU level, there is a clear need for stronger actions that will materialize recognition into concrete political actions.
- Considering their competence on the issue of anti-racism and non-discrimination, EU institutions have the possibility to support progress and change in this area. The appointment of the European Commission's coordinator on combatting anti-Muslim hatred following the European Commission's 2015 colloquium on anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred has created a momentum for the EU to act.

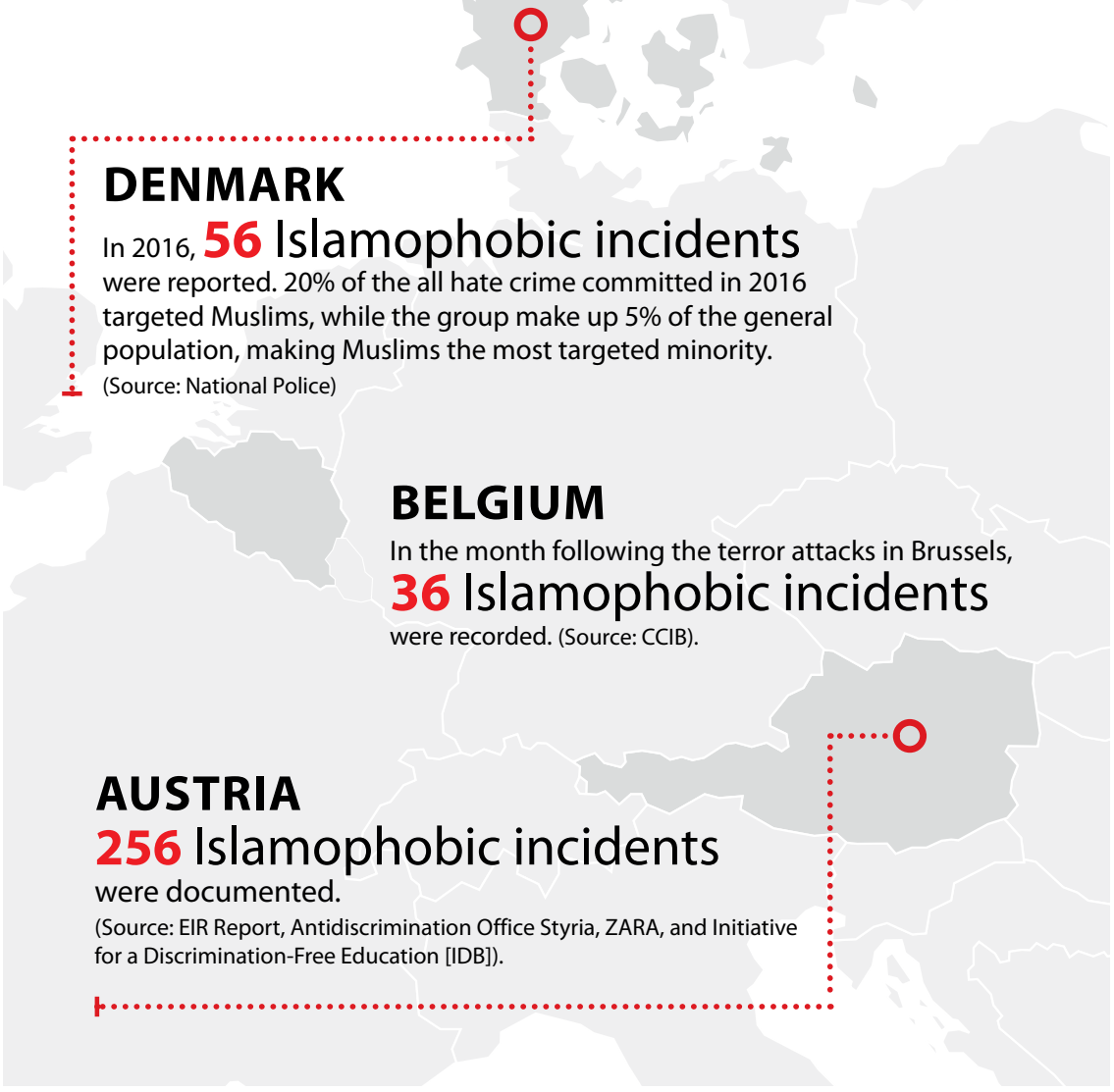
55. Marjaana Varmavuori/Maija Aalto, "16-vuotias somalityttö pahoinpideltiin kotirapussa, parturi uhattiin tappaa – maahanmuuttajat kertovat, että täysin sivullisia uhkaillaan nyt väkivallalla Turun tapahtumien vuoksi", retrieved January 31, 2018, from https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005336689.html.

- The legal and political recognition of Islamophobia is of utmost importance. Therefore, a European-level conference on Islamophobia should be organized with the support of at least one EU Member State or the European Parliament.
- In this context, the European Parliament should adopt a resolution on combatting Islamophobia with concrete policy recommendations and ways forward - as it did to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsysism.
- The adoption of EU standards for National Action Plans against Racism that take into account specific forms of racism, and include specific measures on Islamophobia with objectives and targets is necessary.
- EU member states should adopt national action plans against racism addressing Islamophobia as a specific form of racism.
- The European Commission should develop a roadmap detailing main policy instruments, issues and examples of good practice by Member States. This would function as a standard document that would be the basis for concrete operational objectives and action plans for the EU coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred.
- The European Commission's coordinator on anti-Muslim hatred should develop a clear action plan for combatting Islamophobia.
- A high-level roundtable should be organized with the European Commission's coordinator on anti-Muslim hatred and NGOs on the issue of Islamophobia.
- Europe needs courageous leaders and activists who can confront the Islamophobic discourses and narratives in the age of rising far-right parties.
- A Guidance handbook should be developed on the collection methodology of hate crime data for EU Member States in order to ensure that Islamophobia is dully recorded according to the victims' and witnesses' perceptions and lived experiences; other bias indicators should be included in the data collection as well.
- The recording of anti-Muslim/Islamophobic crimes as a separate category of hate crime by the police is essential to uncover the real extent of this problem and to develop counter-strategies to combat it.
- Muslim women's access to employment should be improved since they are the most discriminated group among Muslims. Gender equality departments and the corresponding committees of EU institutions should give specific attention to situations of discrimination affecting Muslim women by documenting the issue and pushing for specific programs and measures to combat it.
- While protecting free speech, developing good guidelines to tackle online hate speech and considering primary legislation to deal with social media offences and online hate speech are also vital since the Internet plays an important role in the spread of Islamophobic discourses and also in the radicalization of far-right terrorists.

- Discrimination in the workplace should be tackled to address the low level of economic activity among Muslims through targeted interventions at the stages of recruitment, job retention, and promotion.
- Preserving the Human Rights Act and the protection of minority rights including religious slaughter, circumcision and the wearing of religious attire or symbols are imperative for a multicultural Europe.
- Counter-terrorism policies should work with Muslim communities, not against them, in the so-called "de-radicalization" programs. These programs should also incorporate the fight against far-right and far-left terrorist groups and should not only target Muslims.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NUMBERS

- The overwhelming majority of European states do not record Islamophobic incidents as a separate category of hate crime. The recording of anti-Muslim/Islamophobic crimes by the police as a separate category of hate crime is essential to uncover the real extent of this problem and to develop counter-strategies to combat it.
- In the EU, only 12% of Muslims who have been discriminated against report their cases to the authorities. (Source: FRA) The non-exhaustive list that follows hints at the extent of underreporting of anti-Muslim hate crimes in Europe by states and NGOs, which has serious implications regarding the awareness of Muslims and the bureaucracy to tackle these issues.



DENMARK

In 2016, **56** Islamophobic incidents were reported. 20% of the all hate crime committed in 2016 targeted Muslims, while the group make up 5% of the general population, making Muslims the most targeted minority. (Source: National Police)

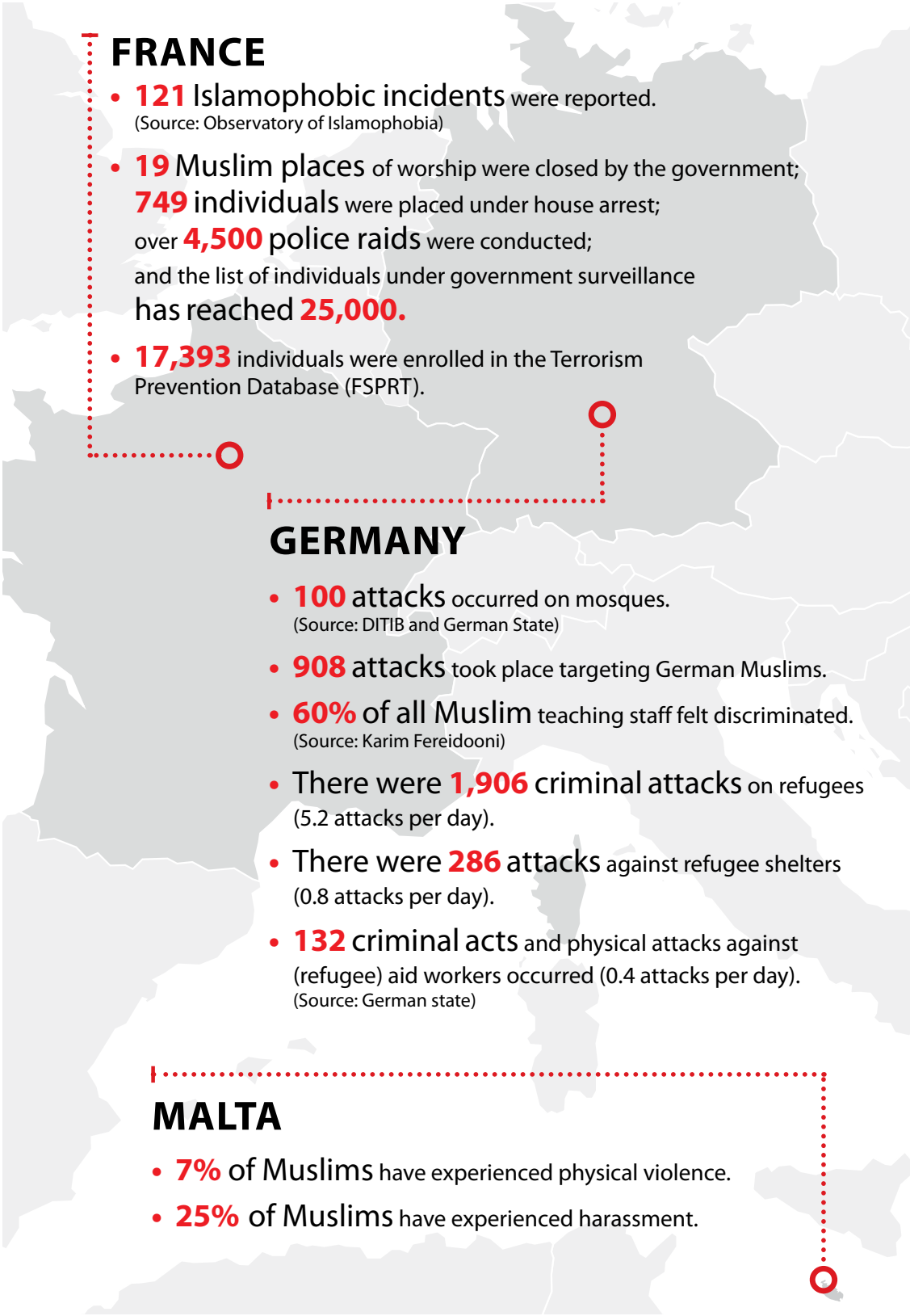
BELGIUM

In the month following the terror attacks in Brussels, **36** Islamophobic incidents were recorded. (Source: CCIB).

AUSTRIA

256 Islamophobic incidents were documented.

(Source: EIR Report, Antidiscrimination Office Styria, ZARA, and Initiative for a Discrimination-Free Education [IDB]).



FRANCE

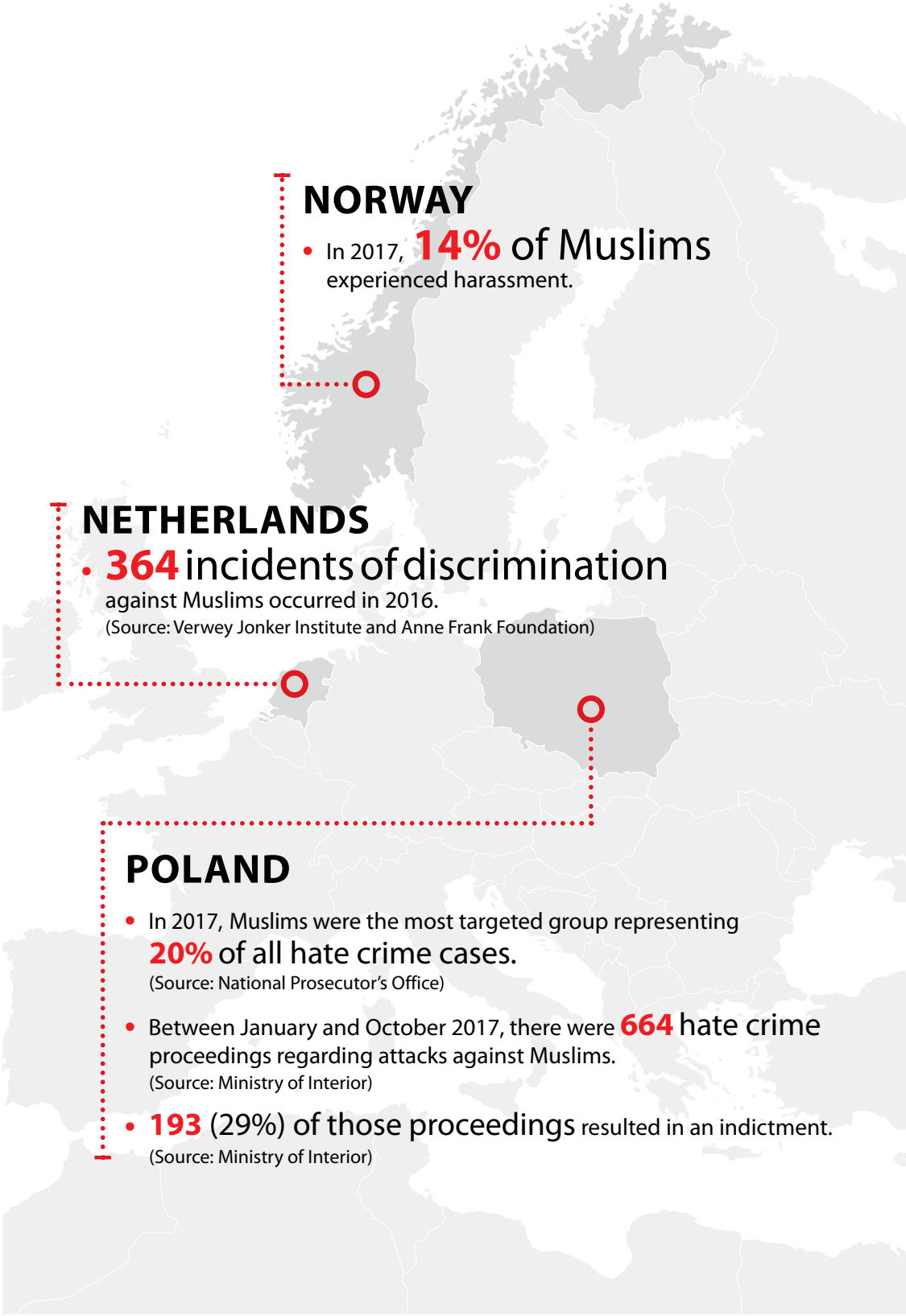
- **121** Islamophobic incidents were reported.
  (Source: Observatory of Islamophobia)
- **19** Muslim places of worship were closed by the government;
  749 individuals were placed under house arrest;
  over **4,500** police raids were conducted;
  and the list of individuals under government surveillance has reached **25,000.**
- **17,393** individuals were enrolled in the Terrorism Prevention Database (FSPRT).

GERMANY

- **100** attacks occurred on mosques.
  (Source: DITIB and German State)
- **908** attacks took place targeting German Muslims.
- **60%** of all Muslim teaching staff felt discriminated.
  (Source: Karim Fereidooni)
- There were **1,906** criminal attacks on refugees (5.2 attacks per day).
- There were **286** attacks against refugee shelters (0.8 attacks per day).
- **132** criminal acts and physical attacks against (refugee) aid workers occurred (0.4 attacks per day).
  (Source: German state)

MALTA

- **7%** of Muslims have experienced physical violence.
- **25%** of Muslims have experienced harassment.



NORWAY

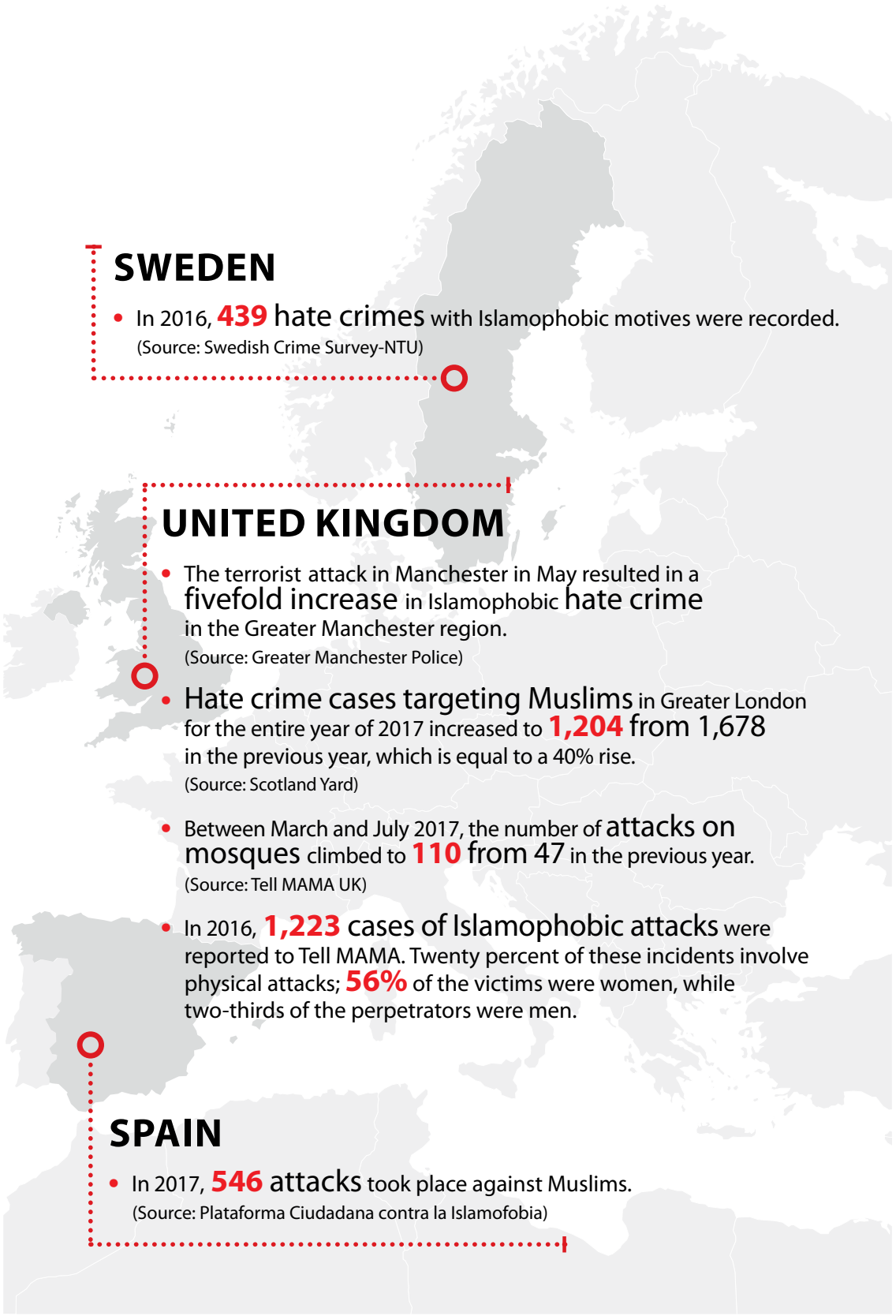
- In 2017, **14%** of Muslims experienced harassment.

NETHERLANDS

- **364** incidents of discrimination against Muslims occurred in 2016.
(Source: Verwey Jonker Institute and Anne Frank Foundation)

POLAND

- In 2017, Muslims were the most targeted group representing **20%** of all hate crime cases.
(Source: National Prosecutor's Office)
- Between January and October 2017, there were **664** hate crime proceedings regarding attacks against Muslims.
(Source: Ministry of Interior)
- **193** (29%) of those proceedings resulted in an indictment.
(Source: Ministry of Interior)



SWEDEN

- In 2016, **439** hate crimes with Islamophobic motives were recorded.
  (Source: Swedish Crime Survey-NTU)

UNITED KINGDOM

- The terrorist attack in Manchester in May resulted in a fivefold increase in Islamophobic hate crime in the Greater Manchester region.
  (Source: Greater Manchester Police)
- Hate crime cases targeting Muslims in Greater London for the entire year of 2017 increased to **1,204** from 1,678 in the previous year, which is equal to a 40% rise.
  (Source: Scotland Yard)
- Between March and July 2017, the number of attacks on mosques climbed to **110** from 47 in the previous year.
  (Source: Tell MAMA UK)
- In 2016, **1,223** cases of Islamophobic attacks were reported to Tell MAMA. Twenty percent of these incidents involve physical attacks; **56%** of the victims were women, while two-thirds of the perpetrators were men.

SPAIN

- In 2017, **546** attacks took place against Muslims.
  (Source: Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia)

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NORWAY
NATIONAL REPORT 2017

CORA ALEXA DØVING

The Author

Cora Alexa Døving is a research professor at the Center for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities in the field of minority studies. Over the past years, she has published on racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and prejudice. She is the leader of the ongoing research project "Negotiating Jewish Identity – Jewish Life in 21st-Century Norway," funded by the Norwegian Research Council. Her publications that are thematically related to the theme of this report are: "Homeland Ritualized: An Analysis of Written Messages Placed at Temporary Memorials after the Terrorist Attacks on 22 July 2011 in Norway" (2017) in *Mortality,* Taylor & Francis, UK; "The Hijab Debate in the Norwegian Press: Secular or Religious Arguments?" in *Journal of Religion in Europe,* vol. 5, issue 2 (2012), 1-2, and "'The Way They Treat Their Daughters and Wives' – Racialization of Muslims in Norway", *Islamophobia Studies Journal,* vol. 3, issue 1 (Fall 2015), 62-77, University of California, Berkeley; and "Position and Self-Understanding of Sunni Muslim Imams in Norway" in *Journal of Muslims in Europe,* 3 (2014), 209-233,

Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the *European Islamophobia Report* are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions. No representation, either expressed or implied, is made of the accuracy of the material in the national reports. The editors of the *European Islamophobia Report* cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The reader must make his or her own evaluation of the accuracy and appropriateness of the material.

To cite this report: Cora Alexa Døving: *Islamophobia in Norway: National Report 2017*, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, *European Islamophobia Report 2017*, Istanbul, SETA, 2018.

Executive summary

Negative stereotypes of Muslims are widespread; 34.1 per cent of the population in Norway displays marked prejudices against Muslims. The Norwegian population does, however, recognize the problem: over 80 per cent believe negative attitudes towards Muslims to be prevalent. Thirty-six percent of the Muslims minority has "often or sometimes" been given the feeling that they do not belong in Norwegian society; 27 per cent have experienced that people behave negatively towards them when they learn of their religious affiliation; and 14 per cent report that they have been directly subjected to harassment. Physical attacks are rare in Norway, but hate speech against Muslims, most often found in commentaries online and especially in social media, have increased.

The minority population is most vulnerable to hate crime: in 2016, the Oslo Hate Crimes unit registered 175 cases, and ethnicity was the most common cause. In other words, people of colour are predominantly exposed. If the cause was stated as "religion", there is an assumed connection with Islam.

Established anti-Muslim/Islamic organizations have increased their activity in 2017, and there has been a steady increase in the number of open Facebooks groups for nationalist and right-wing extremists. Further, Norway's media landscape is seeing an increase in right-wing populist news sources.

The Progress Party's general election campaign, in autumn 2017, included negative stereotyping of Muslims. The post of minister for immigration and integration is held by the Progress Party, represented by Sylvi Listhaug. She has come up with several statements about Muslims that can be characterised as "rhetoric of fear": "We are fully aware that there are wolves in sheep's clothing";[1] and "Fundamentalists who hate our Norwegian system are coming to exploit the boundless Norwegian naivety".[2] It is the first time in Norwegian political history that a member of the government uses expressions close to those found in Islamophobic discourses.

1. ABC Nyheter, "Listhaug foran 500 muslimer: – Vi er fullstendig klar over at det finnes ulver i fåreklær, retrieved December 22, 2017, from https://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/politikk/2017/08/04/195321874/listhaug-foran-500-muslimer-vi-er-fullstendig-klar-over-det-finnes-ulver-i-fareklaer, posted 08.04. 2017.

2. Aftenposten, "10 sitater som viser at Sylvi Listhaug liker å slå med storslegga", retrieved December 23, 2017, from https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/politikk/i/bG1A/10-sitater-som-viser-at-Sylvi-Listhaug-liker-a-sla-med-storslegga.

Sammendrag

Negative stereotypier om muslimer er utbredt i det norske samfunnet; 34,1 prosent av befolkningen viser utpregede fordommer mot muslimer. Dette gjenkjennes i befolkningens egen vurdering, der over 80 prosent mener at negative holdninger til muslimer er utbredt. Trettiseks prosent i den muslimske minoriteten har «ofte eller noen ganger» blitt gitt følelsen at de ikke hører til det norske samfunnet, 27 prosent har opplevd at personer oppfører seg avvisende mot dem når de får vite om deres religiøse tilhørighet, og 14 prosent har direkte blitt utsatt for trakassering. Fysiske angrep er sjeldne i Norge, men det har vært en kraftig økning i hat-uttrykk rettet mot muslimer, først og fremst på sosiale medier.

Minoritetsbefolkningen er mest utsatt for hatkriminalitet: I 2016 registrerte Oslo Politidistrikt 175 anmeldelser, der etnisitet var den vanligste oppgitte årsaken. Hudfarge er utgangpunktet for de aller fleste saker som anmeldes. I de tilfeller der årsaken til anmeldelsen er registrert som «religion» er det en antatt tilhørighet til islam det gjelder.

Etablerte antimuslimske/anti islamske organisasjoner har økt sin aktivitet gjennom 2017, og det har også vært en økning i antall åpne Facebookgrupper av nasjonalistisk og høyreekstrem karakter. Medielandskapet har også endret seg i form av flere høyrepopulistiske nyhetsmedier på internett, såkalte alternative nyhetskanaler.

Fremskrittspartiets valgkampanje, høst 2017, inneholdt negative uttalelser om islam og muslimer. Partiet har ministerposten for migrasjon og integrering, Sylvi Listhaug, og det er første gang i norsk politisk historie at et medlem av regjerningen kommer med uttalelser som ligger nært påstander som sirkulerer i islamofobe diskurser.

Introduction

Statistics Norway estimates that around 200,000 inhabitants in Norway are Muslims (4 per cent of the population). Most Muslims still have an immigrant background, i.e. either they or both of their parents were born outside Norway. Norwegian Muslims are a heterogeneous category in terms of country background, religious tradition, and degree of religiosity. The majority comes from Somalia, followed by Pakistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iran, and Turkey. When it comes to integration in the labour force, the groups have achieved varying levels of success; nonetheless, the integration of Muslims into Norwegian society has generally been successful.

Norway has a coalition government consisting of the liberal Conservative Party (Høyre) and the right-wing populist Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet). The Progress Party is well-known for its anti-immigration policy, especially concerning "Muslim countries". Since 2015, the post of minister for immigration and integration has been held by the Progress Party, represented by Sylvi Listhaug. During 2017, Listhaug was the most prominent governmental voice concerning the issue of Islam, Muslims, refugees, and immigration. Her rhetoric has been criticized by other members of government, politicians from other parties, journalists as well as public debaters for inciting anti-Muslim sentiments in the population.

Annual population surveys show that the majority is positive to having a multicultural society and to immigrants having the same rights as the rest of the population.[3] However, a new population survey on Islamophobia in Norway shows that negative attitudes towards Muslims are quite prevalent in the population; between one-fifth and one-third score high on the various indices.[4]

There is a general reluctance to use the term "Islamophobia" in Norwegian public and political spheres. Attention has, however, been paid to the phenomenon, though by different names, such as "hate crime against Muslims," "xenophobia" or "anti-Muslim sentiments"

Significant Incidents and Developments

Established anti-Muslim/Islamic organizations have increased their activity in 2017. The most active among the more established anti-Muslim organizations are Stop Islamization of Norway, Human Right Service, and Document.no. There has also been a steady increase in the number of open Facebooks groups for nationalist and right-wing extremists. In these Muslims are identified as "the enemy within." Further, Norway's media landscape is seeing an increase in right-wing populist news sources.

3. See the homepage of Integrerings og mangfoldsdirektoratet www.imdi.no

4. Hoffmann, C. and Moe, V. (eds) Holdninger til jøder og muslimer I Norge 2017, rapport fra Senter for Studier av Holocaust og livssynsminoriteter, Oslo 2017.

In the autumn of 2017, a broad-based population survey on attitudes towards Muslims was conducted for the first time in Norway.[5] The survey mapped attitudes based on three dimensions: a cognitive dimension (prejudices), an affective dimension (feelings such as sympathy and antipathy), and one that measures degree of social distance (friends or neighbours).

The findings show that negative stereotypes of Muslims are widespread in Norwegian society. As much as 34.1 per cent of the population displays marked prejudices against Muslims. Forty-eight percent of respondents agree with the statement "Muslims largely have themselves to blame for the increase in anti-Muslim harassment", and 42 per cent agree with the statement "Muslims do not want to integrate into Norwegian society"; 39 per cent agree with the statement "Muslims pose a threat to Norwegian culture" and 31 per cent with the statement "Muslims want to take over Europe". A relatively large proportion of respondents also expressed negative feelings towards and wanted social distance from Muslims: 27.8 per cent dislike Muslims, and overall 19.6 percent would dislike having Muslims as neighbours or in their circle of friends. The incidence of Islamophobic attitudes is higher among men than among women, among older respondents, and among respondents with lower levels of education.

To supplement the attitude survey, the Muslim minority populations were asked about their experiences: thirty-six per cent of Muslims have "often or sometimes" been given the feeling that they do not belong in Norwegian society; 27 per cent have experienced that people behave negatively towards them when they learn of their religious affiliation; and fewer than 14 per cent have been directly subjected to harassment.[6]

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics

The general election (autumn 2017) resulted in four new years with a coalition government consisting of the liberal Conservative Party and the populist Progress Party. Stereotyping of Muslims played a part in the Progress Party's election campaign, and they ended up with 15.3 per cent of the vote. The party's success was due to its focus on immigration as a threat not only to the Norwegian welfare state but also to "our security" and "our values".[7]

During 2017, the Minister for Immigration and Integration Sylvi Listhaug (Progress Party) made several statements that flirt with a fear of Muslims: "We are

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Interview of Anders Jupskås about the causes for the party's success, see: https://forskning.no/moderne-historie-valg-politikk/2015/05/frps-vei-mot-valgtoppen, published May 25, 2015.

fully aware that there are wolves in sheep's clothing"[8]; and "Fundamentalists who hate our Norwegian system are coming to exploit the boundless Norwegian naivety".[9] Such statements are worth mentioning because it is the first time in Norwegian political history that a member of the government uses expressions so close to those found in Islamophobic discourses.

There were three politically initiated debates in 2017 about regulating Muslim traditions. Sylvi Listhaug suggested a prohibition against hijabs at elementary school (on the grounds that they sexualized young girls) but received no support from the other coalition parties. The government also proposed a national ban on the use of niqab in schools and institutions of higher education, which won broad parliamentary support and was based mainly on references to teaching situations rather than on references to Islam as such. The proposal is currently being circulated for consultation. The Progress Party has also proposed banning the circumcision of baby boys as part of its party political manifesto (but has won no parliamentary support).

The current government has made some efforts against hate speech, such as an action plan against radicalisation and extremism, a political plan against hate speech, and the financing of a centre for research on right-wing extremism at the University of Oslo.[10]

Justice System

In 2013, the Oslo Police established a Hate Crimes Unit that registers crimes according to the categories "religion", "ethnicity" and "gender". They have both prosecuted and successfully led cases involving hate crimes against Muslims to conviction. A few such cases involving hate speech or discrimination against Muslims were heard in Norwegian courts of law also in 2017. One such case resulted in a man being sentenced to 18 days in jail for hate crimes after spitting on a woman wearing a hijab.[11] In January, a man was found guilty of harassing a ticket controller on a bus, screaming at him "Can't you read, you bloody Muslim terrorist."[12] Another case that was widely covered in the media involved a hairdresser who in 2016 was convicted of discrimination against a customer who entered her salon wearing a hijab. She told

8. ABC Nyheter, "Listhaug foran 500 muslimer: – Vi er fullstendig klar over at det finnes ulver i fåreklær, retrieved December 22, 2017, from https://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/politikk/2017/08/04/195321874/listhaug-foran-500-muslimer-vi-er-fullstendig-klar-over-det-finnes-ulver-i-fareklaer, posted 08.04.2017.

9. https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/politikk/i/bG1A/10-sitater-som-viser-at-Sylvi-Listhaug-liker-a-sla-med-storslegga, https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/politikk/i/bG1A/10-sitater-som-viser-at-Sylvi-Listhaug-liker-a-sla-med-storslegga, retrieved on December 12, 2017.

10. Handlingsplan mot radikalisering og voldelig ekstremisme, (Justis og beredskapsdepartementet 2016) og Regjeringens strategi mot hatefulle ytringer 2016–2020.

11. Oslo Politikammer: "Rettspraksis i hatkrimsaker, et utvalg saker fra Tingretten 2015-2017", retrieved January 2018, from https://politiet.no/contentassets/17e1eed4775047eca71e9535d33c3181/rettspraksis-i-hatkrimsaker_et-utvalg-saker-fra-oslo-tingrett-20152017.pdf.

12. Ibid.

the Muslim woman that she would not "touch someone like her".[13] The hairdresser appealed against the decision, and in January 2017, the court once again convicted her of discrimination against the customer on the grounds of religious identity. In 2016, a nursing home in Stavanger refused to let its employees wear hijabs, a decision that was deemed illegal by the Equality and Discrimination Tribunal in 2017. On February 2, after a double murder of a white woman and a young Muslim boy, a far right-wing politician was convicted for hate crime after commenting on his Facebook page that it did not matter that Hassan was killed as he would become a terrorist anyway but that it was rather sad about the woman.

The Oslo Hate Crimes Unit's report for 2017 was not available at the time of writing this report, but the number of cases reported during 2016 was three times as high as the 2014 figure.[14] It is reasonable to assume that, similar to previous years, most of the category of "religious" crimes involve Muslims who have been subjected to hate crimes.

Employment

No statistics for 2017 are available on labour market discrimination targeting Muslims in particular. Previous research has shown that applicants with Pakistani- or Muslim-sounding names are 25 per cent less likely than 'ethnic' Norwegian applicants with similar qualifications and work experience to be called in for interviews by Norwegian employers.[15] The Norwegian Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud, reported only one incident in 2017. This involved a woman who had applied for a position as a personal assistant in a municipal institution in Oslo. The day after the interview she received a text message from the institution saying that she could have the job *if* she was comfortable working without a hijab.[16]

Education

An analysis of the coverage of minorities and immigrants in Norwegian school curricula at various levels has shown that these topics are often presented ethnocentrically.[17] However, the national curriculum explicitly states that it is a goal to teach Norwegian pupils to accept differences and to see diversity as something positive.

The Centre against Racism (Antirasistisk Senter) interviewed more than 500 pupils in 2017 and found that schools are the arena in which children and youth

13. VG, "Hijabkledd kvinne ble kastet ut av frisøren: – Det handler om noe mye større enn meg og henne" retrieved January 4, 2018, from https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/religion/hijabkledd-kvinne-ble-kastet-ut-av-frisoeren-det-handler-om-noe-mye-stoerre-enn-meg-og-henne/a/23788718/.

14. Oslo politikammer (2017): Anmeldt hatkriminalitet 2016.

15. Forskning, "Vanskeligere å få jobbintervju med utenlandsk navn", retrieved January 4, 2018, from https://forskning.no/arbeid-ledelse-og-organisasjon/2012/01/vanskeligere-fa-jobbintervju-med-utenlandsk-navn.

16. Likestilling og diskrimineringsombudet: http://www.ldo.no/nyheiter-og-fag/klagesaker/religion/161071-diskriminering-pa-grunn-av-hijab/. Posted 06.02.2017, accessed 06.01.2018

17. Døving, Brandal and Plesner (eds) (2017): Nasjonale minoriteter og urfolk i norsk politikk frå 1900 til 2016 Oslo: Cappelen Damm Akademiske

mainly experience racism.[18] As many as one in four experienced racism, discrimination or unfair treatment regularly, i.e. two to three times every month or more often, at primary school, and as many as 25.6 per cent in middle school. The report points to the problem of lack of knowledge about new forms of racism among teachers. Many of the experiences described in the report show an overlap between colour-based racism and prejudice against Muslims.

Media

Norwegian media is in general very critical of Islamophobic statements. Nonetheless, the media seems to possess an unlimited interest in Muslims, and when Islam is in the news it is very often presented as a political problem that needs to be solved; terrorism, radicalisation, refugees or niqab were the main topics in 2017. Interestingly, this fact is reflected in the population survey referred to above. More than one-third of the population considered negative portrayals of Muslims in the media to be the main cause of prejudice and xenophobia against Muslims in the population.[19]

The extent of public debates that arose after the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) launched a series on the general election (*Fatem tar valget*) hosted by a female presenter wearing a hijab is worth mentioning*:* the news about the hijab-wearing presenter set a record for the number of complaints received by NRK.[20] Several media channels made the complaints a front-page story, generating an increase in Islamophobic comments on social media.

Similar to other European countries, Norway's media landscape is seeing an increase in right-wing populist – sometimes extremist – alternative news sources. The most cited ones are *Document.no*, *Rights.no*, *Frieord.no* and *Resett.no*. These sources usually carry biased stories where Islam or Muslims are concerned.

Physical and Verbal Attacks

The Norwegian government has launched a strategy against hate speech.[21] In this – as well as in the Norwegian public debate in general – there is a tendency to reduce hate speech to a question of individual behavioural problems (driven by emotions and impulses). This makes it difficult to address the problem as a social and structural one. Hate speech that targets women, however, has attracted more attention as a social problem. It has been recognised as a particularly important problem for women from minority backgrounds, as the harassment often refers to gender *and*

18. Linløkken & Berglund Steen (2017): "Vi vil ikke leke med deg fordi du er brun":
– en undersøkelse av opplevd rasisme blant ungdom. Rapport, Antirasistisk senter, Oslo

19. Hoffmann, C. and Moe, V. (eds): Holdninger til jøder og muslimer I Norge 2017, rapport fra Senter for Studeir av Holocaust og livssynsminoriteter.

20. Many of the complaints referred to a previous case about the same channel prohibiting a news presenter from wearing a necklace with a cross.

21. Regjeringens strategi mot hatefulle ytringer 2016 – 2020, rapport utgitt fra barne- og likestillingsdepartementet.

ethnicity, religion or skin colour.[22] Two examples of several young Muslim women active in public debates who have been verbally attacked and harassed several times in 2017 are Sumaya Jirde Ali and Bushra Ishaq.[23]

Fourteen per cent of the Muslim population report that they have been directly subjected to harassment, and 27 per cent have experienced that people behave negatively towards them when they learn of their religious affiliation.[24] Hate speech against Muslims, most often found in commentaries online and especially in social media, is usually characterised by a de-humanising language and claims about Muslims having dishonest motives. Such hatred often contains allegations of conspiracy theories, where Muslims form part of an enemy image threatening the identity of the majority.

The minority population is most vulnerable to hate crime. In 2016, the Oslo Hate Crimes unit registered 175 cases, and ethnicity was the most common cause. In other words, people of colour are predominantly exposed. If the cause was stated as "religion", there is an assumed connection with Islam.[25] Physical attacks are rare in Norway, but in July an Afghan man was attacked on the subway. His nose was broken and he was called a "bloody foreigner". A woman wearing a hijab while shopping was spat upon by a man shouting that all Muslims should be slaughtered.[26]

Internet

Established anti-Muslim/anti-Islamic organisations have used social media for many years, but 2017 saw an increase in the number of openly nationalist Facebook groups *without* a parent organisation. Conspiracy theories constitute an important element of Islamophobia on the Internet. Typical claims selected from such Facebook groups are that Muslims have a built-in desire for occupation; areas in Norway are already ruled by Sharia; Muslims conduct a modern form of warfare by multiplying and using their networks; Muslims pretend to be modern, but hate liberal Norway; Muslims are violent; rape will become an everyday experience if more Muslims are allowed into the country.[27]

22. Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet, CEDAW 2017 Ombudets rapport til FNs kvinnekomité", retrieved from http://www.ldo.no/globalassets/brosjyrer-handboker-rapporter/rapporter_analyser/rapporter_diverse/cedaw2017.pdf.

23. In the book Skal liksom liksom-passet ditt bety noe? (2017, MINOTENK), women with minority background tell their stories about verbal attacks.

24. Hoffmann, C. and Moe, V. (eds): Holdninger til jøder og muslimer I Norge 2017, rapport fra Senter for Studeir av Holocaust og livssynsminoriteter.

25. Oslo politikammer (2017): Anmeldt hatkriminalitet 2016.

26. Oslo Politikammer: "Rettspraksis i hatkrimsaker, et utvalg saker fra Tingretten 2015-2017", retrieved January, 2018, from https://politiet.no/contentassets/17e1eed4775047eca71e9535d33c3181/rettspraksis-i-hatkrimsaker_et-utvalg-saker-fra-oslo-tingrett-20152017.pdf.

27. Døving and Emberland: "Defend Europe & Love Your Folk". An analysis of conspiracism on social media (forthcoming).

A representative example of a new and active open Facebook group is *Slå ring om Norge* (Protect Norway). It defines itself as a patriotic defender of the nation and portrays Muslims and left-wing politicians as "the enemy within". The group had 35,502 followers in April 2017.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

Central hubs for circulating negative images of Muslims are websites like *document.no; rights.no,* operated by Human Rights Service, an organisation led by Hege Storhaug; and *sian.no*, operated by Stop Islamisation of Norway. In addition, several Facebook groups function as active Islamophobia networks. One representative example is *Slå ring om Norge,* that has a clear nationalistic profile. (Fig. 1)

Figure 1: The Facebook profile picture of Slå ring om Norge.[28]

Human Rights Service,[29] well-known for its critique of Islam, crossed a line in the autumn of 2017 when it launched a new project asking readers to submit photos documenting "how Norway has changed". Pictures of Muslims (in black veils, niqabs, etc.) in various public spaces as well as pictures of anti-terror bollards in the streets given the name "Quran-blocks" by the editor ("Koranblokker"), have been published in a series for a long time (Fig. 2). Such a call to document the presence of the minority population drew criticism from the Norwegian public, though not enough to deprive the organisation of state funding.

Figure 2: The first photo submitted as part of Human Right Services documentation project "How Norway has changed", Autumn 2017[30]

28. https://www.facebook.com/slaringomnorge, accessed 12.12.2017

29. Human Rights Service is led by Hege Storhaug, civil society activist and the author of a self-published polemic book titled Islam – den ellevte landeplage (Islam: The Eleventh Plague of the Nation).

30. Human Rights Service, "Koranklosser utenfor Oslo City", retrieved January 15, 2018, from https://www.rights.no/2017/10/koranklosser-utenfor-oslo-city/.

Among the most active organisations is Stop Islamisation of Norway. According to this organisation's website, its purpose is to inform the public about the consequences of the ongoing Islamisation of Norway. For several years now, this organisation has explicitly supported the conspiracy theory of a Muslim "takeover". Its Facebook group has 27,000 members.

Civil Society and Political Initiative to Counter Islamophobia

There are some established organisations that counter Islamomophobia; the most prominent are Minotenk, Antirasistisk senter, Senter for sekulær integrering, and Organisasjon for likestilling, integrering og mangfold. In civil society, counter-demonstrations are usually organised whenever Islamophobic organisations set up public stands and demos.[31] As already pointed to, the government has initiated a national strategy against hate speech, an action plan against radicalisation, and financed a centre for research on right-wing extremism.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Negative attitudes towards Muslims are quite prevalent in the Norwegian population; between one-fifth and one-third score high on the various indices. This is reflected in the Norwegian population's own assessment, in which over 80 per cent assess negative attitudes towards Muslims to be highly or quite prevalent. [32] Fourteen per cent of the Muslim population report that they have been directly subjected to harassment, and 27 per cent have experienced that people behave negatively towards them when they learn of their religious affiliation.

Established anti-Muslim/anti-Islamic organisations have increased their activity in 2017. There has also been a steady increase in the number of open Facebooks groups for nationalist and right-wing extremists as well as an increase in right-wing populist news sources. For the first time in Norwegian political history, a member of the government, the minister for immigration and integration, openly expressed claims close to those found in Islamophobic discourses. At the same time, the justice system has developed in a positive direction when it comes to monitoring and convicting cases involving hate speech or discrimination against Muslims.

Recommendations

- Establish a national action plan against Islamophobia. This should include plans for research, education and general measures to combat prejudice against Mus-

31. For example, in October, SIAN was met with a locally organised counter-demo in a small town. https://www.nrk.no/ho/angrep-politiet-under-motdemonstrasjon-1.13723494

32. Interestingly Muslims view the actual situation less negatively than the population sample, though more than half (52 per cent) share this assessment. Muslims see a negative trend more clearly than the general population. Almost two in three Muslims believe that negative attitudes are today more prevalent than they were five years ago, while only one in three in the general population shares the same view.

lims. Such a plan will clearly signal recognition of the phenomenon and how it is related to racism.
- Highlight diversity in public portrayals of Islam and Muslims. Presentations must avoid group constructions of Muslims. Special assistance should be offered to politicians and journalists.
- Improve methods for monitoring hate crime/discrimination against Muslims.

Chronology

- **06.01.2017:** The court convicted (for a second time) a hairdresser of discrimination against a customer on the grounds of her Muslim identity.
- **25.01.2017:** A man was found guilty of harassing a ticket controller on a bus for being Muslim.
- **02.02.2017:** A far right-wing politician was convicted of hate crime after commenting on a recent murder of a white woman and a young Muslim boy saying that it did not matter that Hassan was killed as he would become a terrorist anyway.
- **27.06.2017:** The Equality and Discrimination Tribunal stated that an employer had acted against the law when saying to an employer that she could have the job *if* she was comfortable working without a hijab. Also the decision of a nursing home in Stavanger of refusing to let its employees wear hijabs, was deemed illegal by the Equality and Discrimination Tribunal.
- **26.07.2017:** The minister of integration and immigration suggested a prohibition against hijabs at elementary school.
- **10.07.2017:** An Afghan man was physically attacked on the subway.
- **11.09.2017:** The Progress Party, well-known for its anti-immigration policy, especially concerning "Muslim countries" was elected to serve four years in government.
- **01.10.2017:** The Human Rights Service launches a new explicit Islamophobic project asking readers to submit photos documenting "how Norway has changed". The photos published are clearly anti-Muslim in character.
- **06.12.2017:** A broad population survey was launched showing that negative attitudes towards Muslims are quite prevalent in the Norwegian population and that 36 per cent of Muslims report having had personal experiences of discrimination during the past 12 months.

This is the third issue of the annual *European Islamophobia Report (EIR)* consisting of an overall evaluation of Islamophobia in Europe in the year 2017, as well as 33 country reports which include almost all EU member states and additional countries such as Russia and Norway. This year's *EIR* represents the work of 40 prominent scholars and civil society activists from various European countries.

The denial of the very existence of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism/anti-Muslim hate crime in Europe by many demonstrates the need for an appropriate effort and political will to tackle this normalized racism and its manifestations that are deeply entrenched in European societies, institutions, and states.

This denial is not only the case for extremist groups on the political fringe of the society, but rather far-right discourses have moved to the center of political power. Consequently, it is not only right-wing extremist groups that rely on the means of Islamophobic propaganda and discourse - social democrats, liberals, leftists or conservatives are not immune to this form of racism.

As a survey published by the FRA reveals 76% of Muslim respondents feel strongly attached to the country they live in, while 31% of those seeking work have been discriminated against in the last five years. At the same time, only 12% of Muslims say they have reported cases of discrimination. Hence, we can say with certainty that the extent of discrimination Muslims face in Europe is much greater than the numbers revealed in any report on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime in Europe.

In other words, one can claim that all the available data and statistics about Islamophobia in Europe show only the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, revealing the comprehensiveness of structural anti-Muslim racism lies at the heart of the *European Islamophobia Report* project, which on a yearly basis analyzes the trends and developments in Europe from Russia to Portugal, and Malta to Norway.

About SETA

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.

SETA

ANKARA • ISTANBUL • WASHINGTON D.C. • CAIRO

9 789752 459618