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EUROPEAN  
**ISLAMOPHOBIA**  
REPORT  

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2015

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ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ (Eds)

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# INTRODUCTION

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ

In June 2014, the website for reporting hate crimes to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) went public. In 2014, only five states officially reported on hate crimes against Muslims, whereas civil society reported in 21 countries. Still, for the majority of the 57 member countries of the OSCE, there is no official information available. Furthermore, if one were to assess the quality of these state reports, it becomes apparent that the collected data does not always rely on a comprehensive systematic collection.

Since Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism has become a growing threat in European societies, we – the editors – felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite: from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in specific - this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia.

## **Contribution of this report**

The national reports in the EIR look at significant incidents and developments in each country during the period under review. The authors look at the employment sector: has there been any discrimination in the job market based on the (assumed) Muslimness of a person? They look at education: has Islamophobic content become part of any curricula, textbooks, or any other education material? The political field in a narrow sense is also a central aspect of the EIR: has Islamophobia played any role in politics, from election campaigns to political programmes to personal statements, etc., be it on a regional or national level? Authors also take a close look at a central force where Islamophobia has spread: the media. Which media events have focused on Islam/Muslims in an Islamophobic way? The justice system is also featured in the national reports: are there any laws and regulations that are based on Islamophobic arguments or any laws restricting the rights of Muslims in their religious lifestyle? Cyberspace as a central space for spreading hate crime is also examined: which web pages and initiatives have spread Islamophobic stereotypes? In addition, central figures in the Islamophobia network are discussed: which institutions and persons have, among others, fostered Islamophobic campaigns, stirred up debates or lobbied for laws?

Since the EIR is not content with pointing a finger at the problem, the reports also look at observed civil society and political assessment and initiatives undertaken to counter Islamophobia in the aforementioned fields. This will empower politicians and NGO activists, who want to tackle the issue. Since the EIR is not a purely scholarly work, at the end of every report, authors offer policy recommendations for politics and NGOs. An executive summary at the beginning and a chronology at the end of every report give the reader an overview on the state and the development of Islamophobia in the respective countries.

Since the single reports share broadly the same structure, the EIR offers the possibility to compare Islamophobia in these countries. Despite the fact that the data in specific fields is not available in an identical way for all countries, the report still facilitates an impulse for identifying research gaps.

Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, or Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in specific.

## **What is Islamophobia?**

Although the term 'Islamophobia' has become widely recognised in the Anglo-Saxon world and has become established in academia as can be seen by the numerous conferences, journals, and research projects dedicated to it, in many European countries, there is still a great amount of opposition to the term. One can understand the opposition expressed by the public not merely as an academic debate, but, in fact, as a sign of the hegemonic power of Islamophobic prejudices. Acknowledging this situation,

at the heart of this project lies the following working definition of Islamophobia:

“When talking about Islamophobia, we mean anti-Muslim racism. As Anti-Semitism studies have shown, the etymological components of a word do not necessarily point to its complete meaning, nor to how it is used. Such is also the case with Islamophobia studies. Islamophobia has become a well-known term used in academia as much as in the public sphere. Criticism of Muslims or of the Islamic religion is not necessarily Islamophobic. Islamophobia is about a dominant group of people aiming at seizing, stabilising and widening their power by means of defining a scapegoat – real or invented – and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of a constructed ‘we’. Islamophobia operates by constructing a static ‘Muslim’ identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalised for all Muslims. At the same time, Islamophobic images are fluid and vary in different contexts as Islamophobia tells us more about the Islamophobe than it tells us about the Muslims/Islam”.

### Central findings

That Islamophobia works without Muslims and tells us more about the anti-Muslim racists than it tells us about Islam and Muslims, can best be seen in the eastern region of Europe. In countries like Hungary, Finland, Lithuania, or Latvia, where only a small number of Muslims live, Islamophobia functions as a successful means to mobilise people. People not only greatly overestimate the country's Muslim population but, although Muslims have not committed any violent acts in most countries in the name of Islam, they are still often deemed violent and are considered to be terrorists.

It could be observed that both attacks in Paris, which happened in 2015, became a discursive event that shaped the debates on Islam and Muslims throughout Europe. Above that, the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ was a central topic, which many actors linked to the issue of Muslims invading Europe. For example, the leader of the Hungarian Fidesz’ parliamentary club Antal Rogán warned of a future ‘United European Caliphate’,<sup>1</sup> while former Secretary of State László L. Simon urged Hungarians to return to their Christian spirituality and make more babies in order to counter the negative cultural effects of mass migration such as the envisioned ‘impending victory of Islamic parties imposing polygamy and destroying the remainder of European culture’.<sup>2</sup> This strong Islamophobic rhetoric is not restricted to the extreme right. In fact, the *refugee-migration-Islam-terrorism nexus* became the standard argument justifying a number of domestic and international measures. The social democrat Czech President Miloš Zeman claimed the influx of refugees into Europe was masterminded by Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood as “an organised invasion” to “gradually control Europe”.<sup>3</sup>

1. Károly Villányi, “Azt akarjuk, hogy unokáink egy európai kalifátusban éljenek?”, *Magyar Idők*, 14.11.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, <http://magyaridok.hu/belfold/azt-akarjuk-hogy-az-unokaink-egy-europai-kalifatusban-eljenek-5035/>.

2. “L. Simon: Szaporodjunk!”, *Népszabadság Online*, 05.09.2015, accessed 03.01.2016, [http://nol.hu/video/lSimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm\\_source=mandiner&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=mandiner\\_201601](http://nol.hu/video/lSimon-a-szaporodasban-latja-a-jovot-1573295?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=mandiner_201601).

3. Agence France-Presse, “Integrating Muslims into Europe is ‘impossible’, says Czech president”, 18 January, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/18/integrating-muslims-into-europe-is-impossible-says-czech-president> (accessed 8 March, 2016)

## Policy Recommendations

Islamophobia poses a great risk to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia. Here we have summarised some of the important policy recommendations from the national reports.

- Islamophobia should be acknowledged as a crime and should be included in all national statistics throughout Europe.
- Hate crime legislations should be adopted in all European countries that acknowledge one's religious identity as being a basis upon which one may be targeted.
- In order to collect data about Islamophobic incidents, victims registers must be introduced in all European states.
- In order to help the victims of Islamophobic attacks, counseling services for victims must be established in all European states.
- Journalists, lawyers, Police (security officials) and legal authorities in all European countries should be educated by qualified personnel in regards to Islamophobia.
- Muslim civil society has to be empowered with information to combat Islamophobia, especially in the direction of the creation of a consciousness of the illegality of hate crimes.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders have to work towards creating an alternative narrative of Muslims in the respective countries which will work to dispel the widely accepted negative image of Islam.
- Civil society actors must also push for legislative change in the context of school enrolment policies so that all members of the respective societies are treated fairly when accessing education.
- Governments must draft a policy that ensures that the rights of religious minorities to manifest their faith are respected in education and the workplace; this must not be left to the preferences of individual boards of management or principals.
- Discrimination on the job market towards Muslims and especially Muslims who wear veils is a widespread phenomenon. This should be recognised and seriously addressed by better legal regulations and the creation of a relevant consciousness.
- Civil society actors must engage with media actors/outlets in terms of the publication and broadcasting of standards in order to reduce/minimise the use of racialising discourses vis-à-vis Muslims and other minority communities.
- The civil rights violations experienced by women wearing headscarves should be addressed by lawmakers and politicians.
- An independent media watchdog should be established in order to monitor media reports in real time in all respective countries.



ISLAMOPHOBIA IN  
**GERMANY**  
NATIONAL REPORT 2015

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ANNA-ESTHER YOUNES



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year of 2015 has seen a quantitative and qualitative intensification of Islamophobia in Germany. The topics included in this report cover the PEGIDA movement, the situation of national data on Islamophobia, media and reporting biases around gender and feminism, as well as the influx of refugees and asylum seekers from the Middle East and Afghanistan.

One of the most concerning aspects about the most recent developments of Islamophobia is the continuing absence of reliable and nationwide data on Islamophobic incidents. For this, this survey compels the government of Germany to take active measures to guarantee a countrywide collection of data.

Throughout 2015, the PEGIDA movement almost single-handedly questioned the fringe status of Islamophobia in Germany, whilst nevertheless being portrayed by politicians as an extremist phenomena not representative of mainstream society. This report thus demands a more comprehensive and serious undertaking at the level of German society and the government to promote ample discussion about racism (instead of obscurantist discourse only about PEGIDA), amongst which Islamophobia is the most dominant form at the present moment.

A specific image of womanhood, vague claims of sexual and gender equality, and very specific nationalistic ties (most notably with Israel) seem to all be primary features of a public and politicised Islamophobia in 2015, to be found in right-wing milieus just as much as in German mainstream policy and legal debates. Like the PEGIDA discourse, these politicised debates deflect very necessary national conversations (like those about gender, sexuality and contested European political complicities) while intensifying the negative associations between Islam, Muslims, discrimination and violence. This report thus calls for policymakers to cease locating the problems of sexism, anti-Semitism or homophobia only in the Muslim 'Other' and to undertake a sober assessment of enduring forms of discrimination in contemporary Germany society.

Furthermore, the discriminatory legal environment that either only slowly admits, does not welcome, or even prohibits the wearing of the headscarf still persists throughout Germany, despite the positive legal stride of the lifting of the ban for Muslim headscarf-wearing teachers which occurred in 2015. Besides a comprehensive overhaul of civil rights law, this report also advocates concrete protections for Muslim women and men vis-à-vis the labour market.

Finally, the continuing influx of refugees and asylum seekers into Germany, the majority of whom come from predominantly Muslim societies, has unfortunately granted Islamophobia a licence to operate under ostensibly reasonable and legitimate concerns with regards to the 'defense' of German and European sovereignties. Compounded by the ongoing gains Islamophobia has made in 2015, the so-called

‘refugee crisis’ has had the deleterious effect of merging anti-refugee sentiment, Islamophobia and patriotic nationalism into a fuse set to be ignited imminently, as will be shown in the report. The year 2015 is then sadly the year Islamophobia became an undeniable force within German society, and continuous efforts and data like the following report will thus be assuredly necessary in the years to come.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Jahr 2015 hat eine quantitative und qualitative Intensivierung der Islamophobie in Deutschland gesehen. Die Themen, die in diesem Bericht besprochen werden sind die Folgenden: die PEGIDA-Bewegung (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes); nationale Daten über Islamophobie; Genderfragen und Feminismus; sowie die Geflüchtetenwanderungen und Asylsuchenden aus dem Mittleren Osten und Afghanistan.

Einer der schwierigsten Aspekte bezüglich der Entwicklung von Islamophobie ist das anhaltende Fehlen von zuverlässigen und flächendeckenden Daten von islamphobischen Vorfällen in Deutschland. Daher merkt dieser Report an, dass die Regierung aktiv Maßnahmen ergreifen sollte, um eine landesweite Erfassung von Daten zu gewährleisten.

Während des Jahres 2015, schaffte es PEGIDA in einer fast schon Art und Weise, die sogenannte Randerscheinung der Islamophobie in Deutschland, in die Mitte Deutschlands zu rücken. Gleichzeitig wurde PEGIDA von Politikern weiterhin als extremistisches Phänomen tituliert und nicht als repräsentativ für die Mainstream-Gesellschaft dargestellt, mit der dennoch gesprochen werden muss. Dieser Bericht fordert eine umfassendere und ernsthaftere Verpflichtung auf der Ebene der deutschen Gesellschaft und der Regierung eine umfangreiche Diskussionen über Rassismus zu führen (anstatt nur über PEGIDA), unter dem Islamophobie die dominierende Form heutzutage darstellt.

Ein sehr spezifisches Bild von Weiblichkeit, vage Ansprüche an was sexuelle Befreiung und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter bedeutet, und sehr spezifische nationalistischen Bindungen (vor allem mit Israel) scheinen im Jahr 2015 die Hauptmerkmale für eine öffentliche und politisierte Islamophobie zu sein, die in rechten Milieus genauso zu finden ist, wie in der deutschen Mainstream-Politik und legislativen Debatten. Dieser Bericht fordert daher, die Probleme des Sexismus, Antisemitismus oder der Homophobie nicht nur im „muslimischen Anderen“ zu verorten. Stattdessen ist eine nüchterne Einschätzung andauernder Formen von Diskriminierung im heutigen Deutschland einzunehmen.

Trotz der teilweisen positiven rechtlichen Schritte zur Aufhebung des Verbots für muslimische Kopftuchträgerinnen im Jahre 2015, hat sich das rechtliche diskriminierende rechtliche Umfeld entweder nur sehr langsam, gar nicht oder nur

widerwillig über das Tragen von Kopftüchern ausgesprochen. Dieser Bericht ruft somit auch immer noch zu konkreten Schutzmaßnahmen für muslimische Frauen (im Besonderen) und Männern vis-à-vis dem Arbeitsmarkt auf.

Schließlich hat die Flüchtlingswanderung nach Deutschland, von denen die meisten Menschen aus muslimisch geprägten Ländern kommen, Islamophobie die Lizenz gewährt unter einem angeblich vernünftigen und berechtigten Bedenken zu operieren. Abschließend ist das Jahr 2015 somit leider das Jahr, in dem Islamophobie eine unbestreitbare Kraft in der deutschen Gesellschaft geworden ist. Kontinuierliche Anstrengungen und Daten wie der folgende Bericht werden in den nächsten Jahren weiterhin genauso notwendig und wichtig.

## INTRODUCTION

Germany is the economically strongest state in Western and Central Europe. When it comes to foreign policy, Germany's military prowess augments its stark economic supremacy, which is thus also important for a broader analysis, although Germany is still perceived as less militaristic and violent than other European states such as England or France. This perception of Germany as economically dominant yet markedly reserved in its deployment of violence to further national interests overlooks ongoing ethnic conflicts inside of Germany, some of which are discussed below, and it occludes Germany's active participation in the global arms trade, which has opportunistically played rivaling powers in the Middle East, such as Kurds and the Saudi state, while funneling weapons into high-conflict zones like Syria and Egypt. It is thus also essential to understand Germany's long-standing involvement in Middle East conflicts in conjunction with Islamophobia and interethnic conflicts in Germany.

Germany has been ruled by Angela Dorothea Merkel, the chancellor and head of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), since 2005. Long known for her conservative, quiet politics, Chancellor Merkel steadfastly held to her party's austerity politics in her dealings with the Greek credit crisis in the first part of 2015, bringing a wave of international criticism as well as consolidating domestic support for the synergy between German economic and political governance. She then rejuvenated her political legacy with her handling of the so-called 'refugee crisis' in the late summer, refashioning her image as strong, calm and committed, typified in her mantra, "Wir schaffen das" (We can do it). In July 2015, her encounter with a Palestinian refugee girl on a talk show, in which Merkel explained to her that she – and many others – will need to leave Germany no matter how long they have been here, led to criticism and even ridicule within the media and throughout society. In the months that followed, Merkel and her alliance of industry and business leadership managed to keep Schengen borders open, despite Eastern European calls to shut them. Posturing this policy as a commitment to human rights, Merkel's wager was to strike a balance between the necessities of Germany's powerful export economy with the domestic and European concern with taking in too many refugees. In the final months of 2015, the high rate of refugees coming to Germany persist, and anti-refugee sentiment has become a primary political grievance of German voters. European unity seems ruptured as to how to deal with the political development. Despite its refugee-welcoming rhetoric, it is thus also reasonable to question whether Merkel's style of governing Germany during 2015 will not also be the stumbling block for her future political career.

This report maps Germany's policies and social events in 2015 in order to understand Islamophobic structures as historical and contextual. In other words, policies and events seemingly local to Germany will be framed and assessed within a

broader historical context, which goes beyond 2015.

It makes little sense to think of the context of Islamophobia in 2015 without thinking about the influx of people fleeing war or economic desolation in countries (formerly) invaded or economically strangled by Europe. In fact, it should be noted that also in Germany, the racialised figure of the 'Muslim' has gained new momentum with predominantly Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis seeking refuge in Germany - what is not new, however, are the stereotypes levelled against the 'Muslim Other'. Instead, what has changed a bit is the extent of Islamophobia and how it has moved further into a legitimate and dominant discourse in long-standing mainstream media and German political parties, such as the CDU.

The so-called 'refugee crisis' has been ceaselessly reported as a 'migrant problem', and its framing within a 'security' (i.e. both national and European) discourse must also be seen as part and parcel of Europe-wide racist discourse. But it is to the specificities of Germany that this report turns next.

## **ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Before we can engage in the analysis of 2015, the goal of the report, we need to first define the grounds for our terminology. Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism is an established object of NGO, academic and media analysis for the last decade in Germany. This report emphasises Islamophobia inside Germany as one of the strongest racist problems in German society to date. Islamophobia brings together a number of stereotypes and biases that circulate around the figure of the supposed Muslim or Islamist. The outcome of such societal and historical discourse is an idea that Islam or Muslims are inherently different and thus incompatible with local German culture. Most importantly, what characterises this discourse writ large, is that Islamophobia is expressed via 'culturalising' discourse, giving illegitimate reason to believe that the 'dislike' of or hatred toward Muslims is not a phenomenon of racism, but of a justified cultural incompatibility or just individual biases.

Another way of explaining the ostensible, inherent incompatibility of what is perceived to be 'Muslim culture' with German values finds expression in the post-WWII German discourse of a 'Judeo-Christian culture'. The latter paradoxically views itself as secular and timeless at the same time that it asserts a questionable cultural affinity to the German-European Judeocide. This discourse also makes its way into German Islamophobic discourse in 2015, as we will see shortly.

In the context of its economic and political domination of Europe, German 'native culture' apprehends itself as free from the social disequilibrium of gender, race and class discrimination, when in fact gender discrimination, sexual biases, class inequalities and racial fantasies and dominations are regnant issues in contemporary Germany. For this reason, Islamophobia, and the events it generates and inspires,



are particularly conspicuous for a society which in these instances does not take responsibility for its problems. Islamophobia thus doubly impacts German society; on the one hand, by stigmatising Muslims and those perceived as Muslim, while at the same time falsely exonerating German society from other, ongoing social problems.

In January 2015, the Bertelsmann Foundation issued its report on religions<sup>1</sup> showing that 61 % of Germans believed that Islam as a religion does not fit into the Western world and that 57 % of all Germans find Muslims threatening. And already before the influx of asylum seekers, 24 % of Germans were of the opinion to deny 'Muslims' immigration to Germany. Thus, Islamophobia has important implications for domestic and international politics, even extending European or German borders.

This Islamophobic attitude is mirrored by the internationally renown PEGIDA movement (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident), which came into existence in autumn 2014 and thus falls in line with a longer discourse of anti-Muslim racism. According to the Ministry of the Interior, around 25,000 people took part in the weekly demonstrations in Dresden alone (Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/4067). It is not mentioned, however, how many people took part in other local PEGIDA demonstrations all over Germany throughout 2014 and 2015. Next to the unreliable data, we also witnessed a general social confusion over the 'true' constituency of PEGIDA: discussions in Germany thus revolved around the recurrent questions as to whether the phenomena of PEGIDA is only one of the 'Wutbürger' (enraged citizens) who feel neglected and tricked by German politicians and the media. Or, are they a more mainstream version of the right-wing extremist ideologies inside of Germany?

In its anniversary demonstrations in October 2015, again around 20,000 people took to the streets in Dresden. In line with the aforementioned, PEGIDA views 'Muslims' as more criminal, sexist, homophobic and terrorist than white Germans. PEGIDA discourse tries to disarm any allegation of racism through the positive evocation of Judeo-Christian values, sometimes expressed by the waving of Israeli flags or inviting orations by Israeli speakers. PEGIDA also claims that Muslims and refugees endanger the German economy and welfare state permitting free rides in an already precarious economy from which many PEGIDA supporters consider themselves to be "left out" or "neglected".

So far, all mainstream political parties have verbally distanced themselves from PEGIDA, dismissing their demonstrations at times even as vulgar racial populism. PEGIDA, for their part, responded to these allegations by pointing out that their opinions don't divert that much from Chancellor Merkel's statements, who declared "multi-culturalism as failed", already in 2010. PEGIDA spokespersons have relentlessly tied their policy appeal to conservative German discourse. In this sense,

1. Bertelsmann Stiftung, "*Religions Monitor*", 8 January, 2015, last accessed 6 January, 2016, <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/topics/aktuelle-meldungen/2015/januar/religion-monitor/>.

PEGIDA almost single-handedly questions the fringe status of Islamophobia, trying to posit it instead in the mainstream of German society. Thus, with the frustration of being called a vulgar mass movement along with their consistent feeling of not being taken seriously, some PEGIDA demonstrators paraded gallows designed for Chancellor Merkel as well as Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, in their October 2015 demonstration.<sup>2</sup>

PEGIDA is not just responsible for discursive violence, but also for interpersonal violence. For instance, during PEGIDA demonstrations in Berlin, attacks on people taken to be ‘Muslims’ increased throughout 2015. In an interview with the anti-racist NGO ReachOut<sup>3</sup> it was stated that most incidents of recorded Islamophobic violence in Berlin in 2015 happened in the vicinity of PEGIDA demonstrations (BärGiDa is the name of the Berlin branch). It was also stated that the concentration of refugees in asylum accommodations has made it easier to target and plan attacks throughout Berlin, especially with the improvement of social networks enabling better collective communication. ReachOut also stated that at least since the refugee influx the common assumption that East Germany is more prone to racist violence than West Germany was finally falsified. According to ReachOut, in Berlin alone, the majority of verbal or physical attacks against Muslims/mosques and refugees have primarily occurred in Berlin’s centre (Stadtteil “Mitte”) and on the fringes of (i.e. BärGiDa) demonstrations.

Islamophobia finds expression in the domain of the Internet as well. The website “Politically Incorrect” (PI-News<sup>4</sup>) advocates its PEGIDA-like ideology successfully, receiving up to 100,000 hits per day. In line with an increasingly savvy European-wide network of interlinked right-wing movements, PI-News has also introduced an English version of its homepage as well as a PI-TV, a collection of online videos. According to their website, local PI groups are predominantly located in the West of Germany. Even before PEGIDA became a movement, PI-News had positioned itself as an online portal dedicated to “reporting the truth” about social ailments in German society using the danger of Islam and Muslims as a rallying argument. It is here where the constituency of PI-News and PEGIDA supporters probably finds their common ground.

Next to the sexist images of a blond and a brown voluptuous woman with banners saying “Islamophobic but sexy”/“Maria instead of Sharia” and their bikinis stating “Burka Free Zone”, PI-News posts a blurb at the end of their homepage

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2. Spiegel Online, “*Demo in Dresden: Staatsanwaltschaft ermittelt wegen Pegida-Galgen*”, 13 October, 2015, Spiegel.de, last accessed 8 January, 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/pegida-demo-staatsanwaltschaft-ermittelt-wegen-galgen-a-1057524.html>

3. “*ReachOut Berlin - Opferberatung und Bildung gegen Rechtsextremismus, Rassismus und Antisemitismus*”, <http://www.reachoutberlin.de/>

4. “*Politically Incorrect – News gegen den Mainstream. Proamerikanisch. Proisraelisch. Gegen die Islamisierung Europas. Für Grundgesetz und Menschenrechte*”, <http://www.pi-news.net/>

stating “This blog supports a strong and secure Israel and appreciates its virtues.” In that narrative, PI-News, much like PEGIDA, uses the support of the Israeli nation state and its politics in order to avoid accusations of racism. Instead of racism, it presents the fantasised fear of a ‘clash of civilizations’ as a reality, which in turns for them extends from Israel to Germany with the ‘Muslim’ as the ultimate threat. Considering this consistency between PEGIDA and (online) movements such as PI-News, and maybe even for the 57 % of the respondents in the Bertelsmann poll who reportedly feel threatened by Muslims/Islam, permissive sexualised images of women, vague claims of sexual and gender equality, and very specific nationalistic ties seem to all be primary features of a public and politicised Islamophobia in the contemporary moment of 2015.

## ABSENCE OF DATA REGARDING ISLAMOPHOBIA

As for 2015, Germany still suffers from a nationwide condition of an absence of data concerning Islamophobia. The absence of data on racism became a public debate only in the wake of an attack on a Synagogue in Düsseldorf. Shortly after the attack, in October 2000, then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder famously called for an “uprising of the decent [people]” [“Aufstand der Anständigen”].<sup>5</sup> From then onwards, national funds were allocated for the establishment of Opferberatungsstellen (victims’ counseling services) in order to coordinate counseling for victims of racist, anti-Semitic or right-wing violence, monitoring of xenophobic, anti-Semitic and right-wing extremist attacks, as well as the collection and distribution of raw data regarding the same offenses. Unfortunately, Schröder’s goal was far from being implemented nationwide. For whatever reason, all former East German states made use of these funds to establish the victims’ counseling services, whereas only within the last 3-5 years have formerly West German states also established the same victims’ counseling services. This imbalance in data collection has resulted in a distorted picture of racism and other forms of discrimination and violence. This distortion is consistent with the common discourse of East Germany being the problematic location for right-wing extremism.

One important but totally local outcome of Schröder’s call are the Registerstellen<sup>6</sup> (victims’ registrars) of Berlin, charged with the collection of data on racism, anti-Semitism, lgbtiq-phobia, anti-roma/sinti racism, right-wing extremism and other

5. Spiegel Online, “Anschlag auf Synagoge: Schröder fordert ‚Aufstand der Anständigen“”, *Der Spiegel*, 4 October, 2000, last accessed 11 January, 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/anschlag-auf-synagoge-schroeder-fordert-aufstand-der-anstaendigen-a-96537.html>

6. *Register zur Erfassung rechtsextremer und diskriminierender Vorfälle in Berlin*, <http://www.berliner-register.de/>. The Registerstellen are civil society-based agencies charged with collecting and making public citizens’ reported instances of acts of discrimination (including sexism, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, etc.). These agencies have limited investigative powers and community rapport; their success is entirely dependent on individual or community rapport. Interestingly, both the Opferberatungsstellen and the Registerstellen are not widely known among residents and citizens.

discriminating events and acts of vandalism in Berlin reported to them by citizens. Even in Berlin, however, data specifically collected about Islamophobia was introduced in 2015. An official and reliable idea about the changing extent and quality of Islamophobia is still missing.

One possible pathway to useable data on attacks against Muslims or Muslim institutions, can be found in the record of recurrent “kleine Anfragen” (minor requisition) to the Bundestag (Federal Parliament) by the left-wing party “Die Linke” which can gather quarterly data on police/state statistics. The data given in the answers of the Bundestag are however limited – for years many NGOs or organisations representing Muslims have asked for a special category for Islamophobia in police statistics. So far, any arson attack against a mosque, for instance, is too broadly categorized as ‘arson attack’. That way, there are no specific indications about the crime and its intent as a possibly racist incident targeting specifically Muslims or Muslim institutions. For instance, “Die Linke” had asked in one of their “minor interpellations” from November 2015 (Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/6762: 1-2):

“However, the full extent of Islamophobia and Islamophobic motivated crimes remain in the dark, because federal and state authorities have refused so far, to expand the catalog of ‘hate crime’ with a subtopic on ‘Islamophobia’ or ‘anti-Muslim racism’ - as particularly Muslim associations and criminologists have demanded for a long time so far – and which is already the case for the sub-theme ‘anti-Semitism’” (Bundestagsdrucksachen 17/13686 and 18/1627).

In order to broaden the categorical possibilities, which could include ‘anti-Muslim racism’ as a criminal offense, it would take the Conference of the Federal Ministers of the Interiors (Innenministerkonferenz) of all states to formally change the acceptable categories police are currently allowed to use. This seems to thus be more of a problem of political will than of legal possibilities.

DITIB – Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs– for instance is the biggest representation of Muslim communities and oversees the majority of mosques in Germany. DITIB combines data from all the aforementioned ‘minor interpellations’, as well as police statistics, as well as reports given to them from their own mosques and their staff. From 2013 until 2015, the attacks on (DITIB) mosques were 12 in 2013; 73 in 2014; and 77 in 2015. The crimes were verbal abuse (2013:7; 2014:33; 2015:32), vandalism (2013:5; 2014:34; 2015:34) and physical attacks on people (2013:0; 2014:6; 2015:11). When comparing the DITIB data over these three years, a clearly worrisome increase in willed violent behaviour emerges.

The aforementioned data collection centres operate independently from state institutions; however, neither the Registerstellen nor the victim counseling NGOs have a policy of data sharing yet. As for those civil society structures, they are still underfunded and understaffed. It is nonetheless important to have two ways of col-

lecting data: one from the state institutions such as the police and one from civil society centres. This is because there is still widespread distrust toward the police as an institution among marginalised residents and citizens in Germany. Furthermore, the report to the police entails a legal process many are unwilling – for various reasons – to undergo. Many times it is also the case that police does not believe the victims’ accounts of what happened to them and some victims in the first instance are primarily looking for a place where people can “understand them” and counsel them. The latter aspects make it important to maintain civil society centres independent from state institutions such as the police. However, in both structures, a yearly report on local and national statistics is a necessity. Needless to say, the condition of absent reporting and missing data erroneously seduces policymakers to believe that there is “no problem”.

### **Gender and the headscarf**

A vociferous debate centred on the headscarf has been occurring ever since Muslim women advanced into upper- and middle-class German society. In many circles it has for a long time been debated as a symbol of sexist repression, of political extremism, or simply Islamism, with an underlying argument of incompatibility with German norms.

Such is also the case for the headscarf in public state institutions such as legal institutions, the police and schools. Women who wear a Muslim headscarf have been excluded from all three spheres based on various arguments about ‘neutrality’ (when representing the state), ‘ideological influence’ and ‘religious symbolism’. The headscarf has been publically and legally debated ever since the case of Fereshta Ludin who went to the Federal Constitutional Court after she was rejected for a teaching position in Baden-Württemberg due to her headscarf. On the issue of the headscarf the Constitutional Court gave legislative rule back to the federal states (2003) and the issue remained nationally unresolved until March 2015.

In March 2015, the Constitutional Court decided to give schools the primary power to decide whether to accept teachers with headscarves or not, if schools deem the person and the headscarf not to be a “direct threat” (konkrete Gefahr) to the school or to the neutrality of the institution. The reception of the new law has been mixed, varying drastically, and it will take some more time to see the impact of the new policy due to the different federal school laws that are in place so far. Some federal states prohibit any religious symbol in schools (Berlin and Bremen); eight states never had laws concerning the headscarf; and Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg and Hessen will probably take issue with the new openness to religious symbolism.<sup>7</sup> The year 2015 then marks an important moment for the ability of headscarf-wearing women who are employees to contest their employment discrimination by being

7. Markus Deggerich, Jan Friedmann, Dietmar Hipp, “Sieg mit Tücken”, *Der Spiegel*, 21 March, 2015, last accessed 2 January, 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-132696516.html>

able to appeal to the law. Nordrhein-Westfalia, for instance, has changed its federal law and toppled the general headscarf ban in 2015.

On 3 June, 2015 another famous headscarf debate started in Berlin. Betül Ulusoy, a young law student on her way to the second state examinations, needed to start her legal clerkship and was put on hold – after an initial acceptance of her application without a photo – after her headscarf was seen when she appeared for signing her work contract. That day, she made a public statement about her discrimination on Facebook and the case went viral. Public interest was sparked because she applied to work at Bezirksamt Neukölln (district office of Neukölln), a district famously branded as the centre of the Arab-Turkish ‘parallel society’ of Berlin, but also because it was formerly administered by the infamous Islamophobic demagogue Heinz Buschkowsky. However, because the district office is precisely not a judicial domain but rather a municipal administrative one, the headscarf ban was without merit, but rather a remnant in the local organisational culture of Buschkowsky’s legacy. In the wake of public debate, the district office accused Ulusoy of willfully creating and manipulating a media scandal.<sup>8</sup>

Although Ulusoy was finally offered a post in another state institution in Berlin, the case for young law students wearing the Muslim headscarf remains unresolved. Although the state has the duty to educate the young female-identified students, they will eventually face the normative walls of ‘neutrality’ still demanded in legal positions where one represents the state such as in a courtroom, etc. This means that young women wearing a headscarf are educated to become lawyers, while the possibilities of them undergoing all legal formative experiences are limited due to the visibility of their headscarf. A gendered, if not even sexist, bias toward religious Muslim women who wear headscarves is visible here – whereas religious (Muslim) men would be able to work in any German state institution, Muslim women are barred from it, even after having received the costly and long education by the state or the city of Berlin.<sup>9</sup> The employment discrimination facing Muslim women who wear the headscarf exceeds the state labour market. As we have seen, contemporary Islamophobia traffics in gendered and racialised discourses. For Muslim women who wish to be employed, this is particularly disadvantageous because gendered and racialised norms regarding the permissibility of the headscarf leave them at the whim of intersecting discriminatory policies and politics.

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8. Jost Müller-Neuhof, “Neukölln droht neuer Ärger ums Kopftuch - Der Fall Betül Ulusoy in Berlin”, *Der Tagesspiegel*, 18 July, 2015, last accessed 8 January, 2016, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/der-fall-betuel-ulusoy-in-berlin-neukoelln-droht-neuer-aerger-ums-kopftuch/12073570.html>

9. Marlene Grunert, “Mit Kopftuch im Referendariat - Neutralität im Gericht”, *Legal Tribune Online*, 24 February, 2014, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.lto.de/recht/studium-referendariat/s/referendariat-kopftuch-verbot-neutralitaetsgesetz/>

## Feminism and Islamophobia

A further gendered dimension of Islamophobia finds expression in public anxieties about the ‘safety’ of German women. This can be understood as the flipside of the anxiety about the headscarf in which a specific ideology about women’s agency is negotiated. Such a historical debate reached again another peak on the last day of 2015. Around the main train station in Köln, an unknown group of men reportedly encircled women of varying age groups and robbed them whilst sexually harassing them. This event has ratcheted up Islamophobic vitriol and it will most likely inform future policy and legal affairs in Germany for months and years to follow. The reason to suspect its deep policy significance lies in the strong rhetoric provoked by initial media reports: several commentators and intellectuals jumped to conclusions around “packs of men attacking women” likening it to “Tahrir-like scenes”, epitomised in the (white) feminist magazine EMMA, founded by the famous German feminist and writer Alice Schwarzer.<sup>10</sup>

As of mid January, the actual numbers are not clear, yet reports have circled in the national and international press that 1,000 men of “North African” and “Arab” background were involved. The numbers reported in the media vary widely from those of the police who state that so far it could be a group between 3 to 20 men<sup>11</sup>, with no consistent evidence about the background of the perpetrators. So far there have been around 400 complaints to the police in Köln, with other cities such as Frankfurt, Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Stuttgart following heed. On 9 January there were 31 suspects identified including Germans, Americans, a Serb and 18 asylum seekers from the Middle East.<sup>12</sup>

Henriette Reger, the mayor of Cologne who was stabbed in October during her mayoral campaign by a man for her pro-refugee stance, stated that there is no clear evidence of the identities of the perpetrators.<sup>13</sup> During the first week, the media was criticised for not reporting ‘the truth’ about the events immediately, but rather tiptoeing around it due to a fear of inflaming anti-refugee sentiments. Another criticism levelled against the media was its sensationally racist portrayal of the situation; for instance, covers such as the one by Focus, which depict a white female figure, naked, with black handprints on her body, a half-open mouth, her

10. Emma, “Frauen berichten EMMA vom Terror”, *Emma Online*, ticker, last accessed 7 January, 2016, [www.emma.de/artikel/koeln-frauen-berichten-emma-vom-terror-331129](http://www.emma.de/artikel/koeln-frauen-berichten-emma-vom-terror-331129)

11. Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, “Willkommen in der Hölle, Ladys - Gewalt gegen Frauen”, *taz.de*, 6 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://m.taz.de/Gewalt-gegen-Frauen/!5263311;ml>

12. Anna Sauerbrey, “Germany’s Post-Cologne Hysteria”, *New York Times online*, 8 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.nytimes.com/2016/01/09/opinion/germanys-post-cologne-hysteria.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/09/opinion/germanys-post-cologne-hysteria.html); The Associated Press, “Protests in Cologne After Assaults; Merkel Pledges New Laws”, *New York Times online*, 9 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/01/09/world/europe/ap-eu-germany-cologne-crimes.html](http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2016/01/09/world/europe/ap-eu-germany-cologne-crimes.html)

13. Kate Connolly, “Tensions rise in Germany over handling of mass sexual assaults in Cologne”, *The Guardian online*, 7 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/06/tensions-rise-in-germany-over-handling-of-mass-sexual-assaults-in-cologne](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/06/tensions-rise-in-germany-over-handling-of-mass-sexual-assaults-in-cologne)



body covered by the headlines stating “Women complain. After the sex-attack by migrants: Are we still tolerant or blind already?”

Some critics have pointed out that sexualised violence against women has not been eliminated in Germany. In fact, some claim, that “German rape culture” has been tolerated for a long time. For instance, the example often used is that of the sixteen-day long Oktoberfest. During the German festivities, every day a rape is reported to local police – the shadow numbers are higher – and that figure does not include other forms of sexualised violence and harassment.<sup>14</sup> According to Terre des Femme Germany there are around 160,000 rapes per year with around 8,000 complaints to the police and 1,000 convictions. Overall, according to Terre des Femme, in 2014, the likelihood for a man to be held responsible and persecuted for rape in Germany is thus lower than 1 %.<sup>15</sup> PI-News, however, has already made use of the fear with a logo, which can be downloaded from their homepage stating “Rapefugees not welcome”.



In the following weeks, Merkel promised a strengthening of laws that would allow people convicted of felonies (such as rape or burglary) to be summarily deported. Hilal Sezgin wrote in her critique about the way the New Year’s Eve incidents were reported and used: “What is of interest [for those in power] is only in what way sexualised violence can be instrumentalised for other topics; in this

case it means what the sexist incidents can mean for the acceptance of refugees and [the legalities of] Schengen”.<sup>16</sup> Just like narratives about an imported anti-Semitism or homophobia, women’s rights are also a site for the consolidation of the claim that the ‘Muslim Other’ imports dangerous values.

### Citizenship and citizen rights vs. cultural norms

A change in German citizenship law was approved in 1999 and came into effect in January 2000. The new law changed the old Wilhelminian *jus sanguinis* (rights

14. Andi Hörmann, “Bier, Promille und Vergewaltigungen - Aktion ‘Sichere Wiesn’ will Frauen vor sexueller Gewalt schützen”, *Deutschlandradio Kultur*, 22 September, 2014, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/oktoberfest-bier-promille-und-vergewaltigungen.2156.de.html?dram:article\\_id=298239](http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/oktoberfest-bier-promille-und-vergewaltigungen.2156.de.html?dram:article_id=298239)

15. Terre des Femmes, “Erfolg: Bundesjustizministerium will Vergewaltigungsparagraf § 177 StGB verschärfen”, *Archiv, Terre des Femmes online*, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.frauenrechte.de/online/index.php/themen-und-aktionen/haeusliche-und-sexualisierte-gewalt/aktuelles/archiv/1640-erfolg-bundesjustizministerium-will-vergewaltigungsparagraf-177-stgb-verschaerfen](http://www.frauenrechte.de/online/index.php/themen-und-aktionen/haeusliche-und-sexualisierte-gewalt/aktuelles/archiv/1640-erfolg-bundesjustizministerium-will-vergewaltigungsparagraf-177-stgb-verschaerfen)

16. Hilal Sezgin, “Ich bin es Leid - Sexuelle Übergriffe”, *Die Zeit Online*, 6 January, 2016, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.zeit.de/kultur/2016-01/koeln-sexuelle-uebergriffe-sexismus](http://www.zeit.de/kultur/2016-01/koeln-sexuelle-uebergriffe-sexismus)



based on blood descent) to a jus soli (rights based on territorial descent).<sup>17</sup> Already then, an ethical ‘loyalty oath’ was added, requiring the support of “a free and democratic order of the Constitution” for citizen applicants.

Ever since the change in citizenship rights, normative claims about possible belonging and assimilation moved into the foreground, such as a zero-tolerance toward sexism or gender bias, as well as homophobia, all being deemed important values upon which citizenship was supposed to be granted (or denied). Back in 2006, Baden-Württemberg proposed a citizenship test asking the person’s views on forced marriage, homosexuality and women’s rights.<sup>18</sup> The same happened in Hessen in the same year, adding several questions about the Holocaust and Israel, finally asking the applicants to “Explain the term ‘Israel’s right to existence’.”<sup>19</sup> From 2009 onwards, all federal states seemingly erased the already mentioned parameters of moral legitimacy from their tests.<sup>20</sup>

In the third and fourth quarter of 2015, the fear of an ‘imported anti-Semitism’ due to refugees from predominantly Muslim-majority countries intensified and was publicly discussed. Most of the articles and debates circled around an alleged anti-Semitic and anti-Israel critique that was purported to form part of socialisation in places like Syria and Iraq. Jewish institutions and bodies and German democratic ideals were perceived to be menaced by the new refugee population.<sup>21</sup>

In November 2015, the head of the CDU in Rheinland-Westfalia Julia Klöckner proposed to introduce a contract between ‘migrants’ (refugees) and ‘state’ for the next party congress in mid December titled “A plan for integration” (Integrationsplan). Her proposals were accepted and include a cut in social welfare and the possibility of a revocation of the right to stay, if the given ‘norms’ are violated, including the acceptance of gender equality and homosexuality, the acceptance of

17. The new citizenship law that came into effect in 2000 reduced the residency requirements from 15 to 8 years tied to a valid residence permit, gainful employment, no criminal convictions, as well as the will to give up former citizenship. German language tests became obligatory.

18. Deanne Corbett, “Testing the Limits of Tolerance”, *Deutsche Welle Online*, 16 March, 2006, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/testing-the-limits-of-tolerance/a-1935900>

19. Spiegel Online, “Becoming German: Proposed Hesse Citizenship Test”, *Spiegel online*, 9 May, 2006, last accessed 9 January, 2016. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/becoming-german-proposed-hesse-citizenship-test-a-415242.html> The original questions and answers in German are accessible at *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 16 March, 2006, “Deutscher werden? 100 Fragen, 100 Antworten”, *abendblatt.de*, last accessed 10 January, 2016. <http://www.abendblatt.de/politik/deutschland/article107098676/Deutscher-werden-100-Fragen-100-Antworten.html>

20. Einbürgerungstest-online.eu, last accessed 20 January, 2016. <http://www.einbuengerungstest-online.eu/fragen/>

21. Martin Niewendick, “Sorge vor neuem Antisemitismus wegen Flüchtlingen - Juden in Berlin”, *Der Tagesspiegel online*, 15 October, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/juden-in-berlin-sorge-vor-neuem-antisemitismus-wegen-fluechtlingen/12455444.html](http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/juden-in-berlin-sorge-vor-neuem-antisemitismus-wegen-fluechtlingen/12455444.html); Michael Brenner, “Bringen die Flüchtlinge mehr Antisemitismus nach Deutschland?” 20 September, 2015, *Süddeutsche Zeitung Online*, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/debatte-bringen-die-fluechtlinge-mehr-antisemitismus-nach-deutschland-1.2655933](http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/debatte-bringen-die-fluechtlinge-mehr-antisemitismus-nach-deutschland-1.2655933);

FAZ, “Schuster warnt vor mehr Antisemitismus durch muslimische Flüchtlinge - Zentralrat der Juden”, 8 October, 2015, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung online*, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtling-skrise/zentralrat-der-juden-schuster-warnt-vor-mehr-antisemitismus-durch-muslimische-fluechtlinge-13846554.html](http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtling-skrise/zentralrat-der-juden-schuster-warnt-vor-mehr-antisemitismus-durch-muslimische-fluechtlinge-13846554.html)

German legal supremacy above Sharia law, the support for Israel's right to exist as well as the rejection of "any form of anti-Semitism" (CDU, 15.12.2015).<sup>22</sup> This latter aspect of anti-Semitism included "any form of anti-Semitism" that could be seen in the culmination of various events, most recent of which was the war against Gaza in 2014. During this war, Merkel publicly stated that "the recent alleged critique against the politics of the state of Israel uttered on pro-Palestinian demonstrations, were nothing but the expression of hatred against Jews [...]" (Merkel, 2014).<sup>23</sup> In 2015, it seems Merkel's statement has hardened into national policy with respect to refugees and in conjunction to rising Islamophobia.

### Islamophobia and the so-called 'refugee crisis'

The EASY-System of the Ministry for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has estimated that around 1 million people were registered as refugees in Germany in 2015. Reports in Germany switch between reporting a "flood", a "migrant crisis" or a "refugee crisis". Throughout the year, the immigration of people primarily from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan has led to physical, material and verbal attacks throughout Germany. To give a satisfying overview is not possible in this report and we will confine ourselves to the analysis of only two events. To this date, there is also no truly reliable nationwide overview of all attacks against refugees or asylums. Until October 2015, there have been around 850 attacks on refugee asylum homes and in the third quarter of the year, 13 people have been injured in those attacks.<sup>24</sup> In 2014, the Amadeo Antonio Foundation and PRO ASYL have counted 153 attacks on refugee asylum homes.<sup>25</sup> The pogrom-like demonstrations and violent events in 2015 have been compared to the events lasting several days right after German unification<sup>26</sup> (1989-1991) in Hoyerswerda (1991); the years of unification were marked by the massive outbreak of racist violence. Hoyerswerda became the synonym for racist mobs attacking refugees or migrant workers and their homes.

Over the course of several weeks, the city of Heidenau in Saxony has seen the mobilisation of racist demonstrations starting in August 2015. The strongest erup-

22. CDU, 28. Parteitag, Karlsruhe, "Beschluss. Karlsruher Erklärung zu Terror und Sicherheit, Flucht und Integration", 14-15 December, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [https://www.cdu.de/system/tdf/media/dokumentel/beschluss-karlsruher-erklarung.pdf?file=1&type=field\\_collection\\_item&id=3888](https://www.cdu.de/system/tdf/media/dokumentel/beschluss-karlsruher-erklarung.pdf?file=1&type=field_collection_item&id=3888)

23. Die Bundesregierung, "Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel anlässlich der Kundgebung des Zentralrats der Juden in Deutschland gegen Antisemitismus am 14. September in Berlin", 14 September, 2014, last accessed 10 January, 2016, [www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2014/09/2014-09-14-merkel-kundgebung-judenhass.html](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Rede/2014/09/2014-09-14-merkel-kundgebung-judenhass.html)

24. Deutscher Bundestag. "Übergriffe auf Flüchtlingsunterkünfte. Inneres/Antwort", *Bundestag Online*, 16 November, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <https://www.bundestag.de/presse/hib/2015-11/-/395984>

25. Mut gegen Rechts. Meldung. "Rechte Hetze gegen Flüchtlinge - Eine Chronik der Gewalt 2014", 31.12.2014, last accessed 9 February, 2016. <https://www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de/news/meldung/rechte-hetze-gegen-fluechtlinge-eine-chronik-der-gewalt-2014-03>

26. Matthias Meisner and Lars Radau, "Vergleiche mit Hoyerswerda sind angebracht - Anti-Asyl-Proteste in Freital", *Die Zeit Online*, 23 June, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-06/freital-fluechtlinge-asyl-proteste>

tion of violence happened at the end of August, when around 1,000 demonstrators marched through the city, finally blocking the street on which 600 refugee seekers were brought. The unrest erupted in violence when the mob attacked the police protecting the refugees on their way into the asylum home, leaving 31 police officers injured and one of them with severe wounds.<sup>27</sup>

In June 2015, upon arrival of a few hundred refugees, Freital (Saxony) attracted media attention due to the intensity of anti-refugee violence; the city had already witnessed clashes between opponents and supporters of an asylum home for months. The city also became the scene of a stand-off between the German Minister of the Interior Thomas de Maizière, amongst others, and ‘concerned citizens’ on the other side, along with supporters by the PEGIDA movement (including their then-main organisers Lutz Bachmann and Tatjana Festerling), representatives of the neo-liberal conservative party AFD and the right-wing party NPD. People critical of the anti-refugee sentiments were screamed down and verbally harassed to “shut up”.<sup>28</sup> Violent fantasies such as burning buses with refugees were expressed online and on the Facebook homepage of PEGIDA.<sup>29</sup>

The continuing influx of asylum seekers into Germany, the majority of whom come from predominantly Muslim countries, has granted Islamophobia a licence to operate under ostensibly reasonable and legitimate concerns around the Muslim ‘Other’ and Islam writ large. The year 2015 saw Islamophobia become an undeniable force within German society.

## CONCLUSION

### Policy recommendations

There remains much to be done in terms of institutional mapping of Islamophobic incidents, as well as in supporting those people, institutions and NGOs already working on the intersections of education, statistical mapping and counseling. For this important work, the categories of ‘Islamophobia’ or ‘anti-Muslim racism’ are necessary instruments. The intersections between the influx of asylum seekers and refugees and an already existing and longstanding Islamophobia should be better analysed and tackled by government authorities. The inherent sexism in the slow legal progress toward headscarf-wearing Muslim women should be seen as such, tackled and worked against. Feminists, women and LGBTGQI NGOs should be supported

27. Matthias Meisner, “Der braune Mob von Heidenau - Flüchtlinge”, *Die Zeit Online*, 22 August, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2015-08/heidenau-fluechtlinge-ausschreitungen-polizei>

28. Zeit Online, “Tumulte bei Bürgerversammlung in Freital - Flüchtlinge”, *Die Zeit Online*, 7 July, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-07/freital-buergerversammlung-tumulte>

29. Peter Maxwill, “Streit über Asylbewerberheim in Freitag: Pöbel-Pingpong im Pegida-Land”, *Spiegel Online*, 25 June, 2015, last accessed 10 January, 2016, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/fluechtlingsheim-in-freital-poebel-pingpong-im-pegidaland-a-1040544.html>

in breaking down the violent and false portrayal of women/feminist/LGBTQI issues as being diametrically opposed to racism issues.

**Below are further policy recommendations to ameliorate the context of contemporary Germany:**

- Registerstellen (victims' registrars) must be implemented in all federal states. They should be kept separate from state institutions. Forms of categorisations must be standardised and include the category of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism as already happened in Berlin in 2015.
- Opferberatungsstellen (victims' counseling services) must also be extended in all federal states.
- Registerstellen and Opferberatungsstellen should be in close proximity to each other, if not even in the same agency in order to facilitate timely data exchange, devoid of victim shaming.
- The introduction of the category 'Islamophobia/Anti-Muslim Racism' in all national statistics including police and legal statistics.
- National and local statistics by state authorities have to be routinely and annually presented to the public.
- Police and legal authorities have to be sensitised to Islamophobia.
- There is dire need of better logistics of refugee registration and housing.
- The state has to guarantee bodily safety to refugees.
- State funds must also be allocated for security personal to guard mosques and other Muslim institutions as it is already the case for Jewish institutions and synagogues.
- Legislators must swiftly and comprehensively address the civil rights violations experience by headscarf-wearing women.
- Reform of the traineeship possibilities for young legal students with headscarves.
- In order to avoid the media debacle of New Year's Eve, funds must be allocated for a media watchdog, independant from the state, that monitors media reportage in real time and with specific foci such as Islamophobia, homophobia, etc.
- It is pressing that feminist, women's and LGBTQI institutions are supported in their effort to confront the instrumentalisation and misuses of their causes by anti-Muslim racists.
- Migrant and LGBTQI of colour, women's and feminist NGOs should receive proper funding for staff and institutional infrastructure, in order for them to broaden and strengthen their impact in terms of educational training and publications.



Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism poses a growing threat to the democratic foundations of European constitutions and social peace as well as the coexistence of different cultures throughout Europe. Both civil society actors and states should acknowledge the seriousness of this issue and develop concrete policies to counter Islamophobia.

As the leading think tank in Turkey, SETA felt an urgent need to address this problem. In fact, there are still people denying the very existence of racism against Muslims. Many state and civil society institutions, from the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) to the countless civil society organisations throughout Europe, have done priceless work to prove and establish the opposite. Yet, institutions like the FRA publish only irregular reports on a restricted number of countries while most civil society organisations tackle racism in general and only few focus on Islamophobia in particular -this is the urgent gap our report wishes to fill.

The European Islamophobia Report (EIR) is an annual report, which is presented for the first time this year. It currently comprises 25 national reports regarding each state and the tendencies of Islamophobia in each respective country. The current report features the work of 37 extraordinary scholars. In the years to come we will attempt to cover even more countries. This report aims to enable policymakers as well as the public to discuss the issue of Islamophobia with the help of qualitative data. At the same time, several of its unique characteristic features make a difference to the current state of the debate on Islamophobia. Studies on Islamophobia have in the past predominantly concentrated on Western Europe. This is especially the case with reports focusing on Islamophobia. The EIR is the first to cover a wide range of Eastern European countries like Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia. This will enrich the debate on racism in general and Islamophobia in Europe in particular.

## 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.



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