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 policymakers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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 unacceptable 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.”

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.”

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. 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-

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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,” 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. 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.

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” are needed to combat

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. Combating 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.”

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. In this context, the FRA recommends better implementation of the relevant EU and national legislation to combat widespread harassment and hate crime against Muslims.

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. 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 Islamophobia.

8. Ibid.
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 and published for Jewish communities. 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.” The ECRI concludes that the “negative experiences of Muslims in Europe can fuel feelings of isolation within a larger community and hinder inclusive societies.” 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, 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-Gypsism.

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.
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.” 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.

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.

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.” 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.”

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.” 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!”

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


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.

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.”

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).

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, 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.

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. In Slovakia, former president Robert Fico argued that he will “not allow the creation of an integrated Muslim community in Slovakia.”

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


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.”

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.” 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.

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

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. 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. 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 was launched to amend a law in favor of a “Burka Ban.” Among the initiators was Terhi Kiemunki, a former member of the Finns Party, who was convicted of incitement to hatred due to texts on her blog defaming Muslims. A spokesperson of the initiative was Jukka Ketonen, current chairman of the Finnish Defense League (FDL), who proclaims to be fighting against “Islamic extremism” 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

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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/net/eduskuntasanasto/netmot?U1=field&height=147.
40. For a detailed description of Terhi Kiemunki’s court case, see Ibid.
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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

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

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planning attacks on French politicians and on Muslim places of worship.\textsuperscript{51}

In Russia, between 2012 and 2016, five imams were killed in the Stavropol region. The cases remain unresolved to this day. 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.

\section*{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 \textit{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


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.\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{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”\textsuperscript{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-

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

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

dalism towards Muslims. 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.

• 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 combating Islamophobia with concrete policy recommendations and ways forward - as it did to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsism.
• 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.
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- 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]).
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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)

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).

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)
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.

SWEDEN

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

SPAIN

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

**Mujahed Sebastian Abassi** is a medical doctor by profession working in Denmark but has also studied Middle Eastern politics and Islamic studies in Sweden. He has been active in various Muslim communities and organizations for almost fifteen years in both Denmark and Sweden. He wrote the first Danish Islamophobia report for the Centre for Danish Muslim Relations (CEDAR) in 2017 and is currently its vice chair and chief strategist. E-mail: mujahed@cedar.nu

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Executive summary

The notion of Islam and Muslims being fundamentally in contradiction with Danish values has been reflected in several policies and laws. Among them is the statement by the leader of the Social Democrats Mette Frederiksen, that Muslim free schools are generally not a good idea due to their ill alignment with the majority culture. A campaign by the far-right Danes party encouraged Muslims to leave Denmark. A National Sanctions list of a dozen persona non-grata was introduced, 10 out of 11 being famous Muslim preachers. Several public campaigns have taken place to counter negative social control, all of them pointing it out as a Muslim phenomenon. According to the National Police about 20% of hate crime committed in 2016 targeted Muslims, while the group make up 5% of the general population, making Muslims the most targeted minority. A total of 39 physical attacks against Muslims were reported in 2016 and 2017. Moreover, Muslims receive the most hateful comments after politicians on social media. ReportHate (AnmeldHad.dk) registered 1100 online incidents during 2016 and 2017 out of which 98% targeted Muslims. About a third of the incidents have been categorized as hate crimes. Several media reports showcase the problem of established media not involving Muslims, seldom using them as sources. The harmful effects of the majority attitude towards Muslims has this year been highlighted in both a Phd dissertation from Aarhus University and in a UN report on Freedom of Religion and Belief. Civil society’s response to Islamophobia increased this year, mainly through the Centre for Danish Muslim Relations that published the first Danish Islamophobia report and launched a campaign tackling Islamophobia in politics reaching out to about 350,000 people. To end the inflammatory rhetoric in the public discourse Muslims must both be recognized as a heterogeneous group and as targets of Islamophobia.
Sammendrag


De negative effekter af majoritetens holdninger til muslimer er blevet beskrevet i både en PhD afhandling og i en FN rapport om religionsfrihed i Danmark. Civil samfundets modsvar er stadig stigende på trods af det voksende had mod muslimer. Center for Dansk-Muslimeske Relationer publicerede både en rapport om Islamofobi og lancerede en større kæmpe, som modsvar til hadefulde politiske og islamofobiske ytringer. Videoen nåede ud til over 350.000 seere. For at den inflammatoriske retorik i den offentlige diskurs skal ændres skal muslimer både anerkendes som en heterogen gruppe, og som mål for Islamofobi.
Introduction

Denmark hosts a Muslim population of approximately 5%; this is estimated to rise to around 10% in 2050.1 Religious organizations have been divided by country of origin with Urdu, Arabic or Turkish as their main language. However, they are becoming increasingly Danish, which is demonstrated by the fact that a third of all mosques now conduct their sermons in Danish, a decade ago only one out of ten did.2 Muslims are slowly becoming a part of society in other ways too; a Muslim graveyard has been established, Muslim chaplains are working in both prisons and hospitals and Muslims are becoming part of the mainstream with Muslim veil wearing women being employed as models and starring for big Danish brands.3 Yet as is the case in many Western countries, the bias against Muslims has increased dramatically in Denmark after 9/11. For example, a survey in 2016 showed a third of Danes considering Denmark to be at war with Islam.4 Among minorities, Muslims are the most targeted by hate crime.5

And while integration has been shown to be easier in countries in which obtainable criteria of belonging are emphasized like Sweden, France and the Netherlands it is harder in countries like Denmark were the non-obtainable conditions, such as religious and ethnic background, are emphasized. Research further shows that Muslims in Denmark are significantly more effected by political rhetoric than non-religious and non-Muslim immigrants. This in turn directly effects Muslims’ trust in democracy and feeling of belonging.6

A Voxmeter poll showed 75% of Danes considering it possible to be Danish even though a person’s parents are born in a non-western country.7

In his report on freedom of religion and belief published in February 2017, UN special rapporteur, Heiner Beilefeldt, noted that Muslims feel threatened by the

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public debate about “Danishness” and “Danish values” and that it is a problem for the cohesion of society.\(^8\)

**Significant Incidents and Developments**

Islamophobia is not accepted as a valid term in the public debate but small steps to change the status quo were taken in 2017. The first Islamophobia report was published in April, leading to the term becoming more widespread, for example through a Wikipedia article on Islamophobia.\(^9\) And the first online campaign #SlukforHate (Eng.: #TurnoftheHate) challenging the Islamophobic rhetoric of especially the Danish People’s Party was launched in October 2017, the subsequent election results were the Danish Peoples party’s worst ever.\(^10\)

However, the year began with the far-right Danish People’s Party, currently in government, trying to ban prayer rooms in public institutions making it harder for especially Muslim students to pray. In February, a bill was put forward in parliament, again spearheaded by the Danish Peoples Party; the V38 bill defined non-Western immigrants and their offspring as non-Danish, and asked the government to drastically reduce the amount of asylum seekers coming to Denmark.\(^11\)

The bill does not strip citizens of their citizenship, and are merely symbolical. An online campaign #JegErDansk (Eng.: #IAmDanish) designed to challenge the bill managed to put enough pressure on politicians to result in a re-vote; the new bill was not accepted by parliament.\(^12\)

In May, a National Sanctions list – also known as the “Hate Preacher List” – was put into practice banning several Muslim preachers from entering Denmark. In

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12. Folketinget, F43 Om, hvorvidt det er ufornøjligt med at være ”dansker” at være indvandrer eller efterkommer af indvandrere fra et ikkevestligt land, retrieved February 13, 2018, from: http://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/forespørgsel/F43/BEH1-94/forhandling.htm, In an interview with the author Alex Sabour from Gorilla Media claim their video reached 90% of the adult population within a few days. And an anonymous lobbyist confirmed to the author that it was the driving force behind a re-vote. Both interviews conducted in May 2017.
September, a renowned Professor Emeritus, Uffe Østergaard, stated he had changed his mind on foreigners, particularly Muslims. He used to welcome the influx of migrants, he now concluded: “Muslims must become Lutherans, or else we are screwed”. It paved the way for a political paradigm shift by raising the “issue of Muslims” and just a few days later the former Minister of Foods, Dan Jørgensen, declared that the Social Democratic Party, the largest party in Denmark, had been wrong all along. He now claimed that foreigners and especially Muslims were a bigger problem than anticipated.

Thus, bias against Muslims intensified with the Social Democratic Party shifting to a populist rhetoric joining the Danish Peoples party in their anti-Muslim efforts, while civil society presented new and innovative ways to counter the hate.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics

In February 2017, a bill defining non-Western immigrants and their offspring as non-Danish was accepted by parliament with 55 against 54 votes. During the parliamentary debate, Martin Henriksen, the Danish People’s Party, said that especially Muslim immigrants are a problem. And in an interview about the proposed bill he added: “The more [people] in Denmark with Muslim background, the greater the threat to Danish identity.” Shortly after the introduction of the new bill,
the Danes Party (a small and extreme right-wing political party) ran a campaign in
neighbourhood’s with a large Muslim population, where they distributed fake tickets
to “Far-away-stan” promising to send immigrants “home”.19 (Fig. 1) In June 2017,
just a few months following the campaign the party shut down due to the party
leader leaving the party.20

A political paradigm shift occurred in September, just two months preceding
the local elections, when former Minister of Foods Dan Jørgensen, claimed the
Social Democratic Party had been wrong all along; saying that foreigners and espe-
cially Muslims were a bigger problem than anticipated.21 It might be explained by
the steady stream of voters leaving the party for the Danish Peoples party.22 Den
Korte Avis (Eng.: The Short Newspaper”), a populist online medium, covered the
news by declaring that the Danish People’s Party was spearheading a revolution by
pushing the Social Democratic Party into a direction that had been unheard of in
the rest of Europe. The news outlet declared that Denmark had become a pioneern-
anti-foreign country.23

In the run-up to the local elections Kim Hammer from the Danish People’s
Party was reported to the police for saying that “Muslims destroy the Western world”
at a school debate causing some of the attending schoolchildren to leave in tears.24 The
party achieved its worst results since 2001, losing most of its mayoral posts across the
country,25 (Fig. 2) A new populist party called Nye Borgerlige (Eng.: New Middle
Class) claim the Danish People’s Party is too lenient toward Muslims and asks for
harsher measures.26 Just like the Danish People’s party, Nye Borgerlige had a poor
outcome during the local elections.27

19. Flemming Christiansen, “I postkassen I Brøndby Strand: Så rejs dog hjem, fremmede,” Politiken, February 17,
20. https://www.ritzau.dk/nyhed/nyheder/vis/bfc0c373-176b-4ef1-8850-009deefb4687
uary 13, 2018, from: https://www.pressreader.com/denmark/ekstra-bladet/20170916/281646780309461
kan se i noget andet europeisk land,” Den Korte Avis, (September 16, 2017), retrieved February 13, 2018, from:
https://denkorteavis.dk/2017/thulesen-dahl-er-ved-at-skabe-en-politisk-revolution-son-man-ikke-ser-i-noget-andet-
europaeisk-land/
skoleboem-med-udtalelse-om-muslimer/6862966, the incident was reported to the Police by the ReportHate.dk portal.
25. Louise Uberg, “DF afviser, at valget er et nederlag - men det er den i den grad, fastslår politisk redaktør,” TV2,
November 22, 2017, retrieved February 13, 2018, from: http://nyheder.tv2.dk/politik/2017-11-22-df-afviser-at-
valget-er-et-nederlag-men-det-er-den-i-den-grad-fastslaer-politisk
26. Mathias Mosskov, “Ny partiformand snart klar til valg: I vareste fald kan det ende i borgerkrig,” TV2, August 2,
2016, retrieved February 13, 2018, from: http://nyheder.tv2.dk/politik/2016-08-02-ny-partiformand-snart-klar-til-
valg-i-vareste-fald-kan-det-ende-i-en-borgerkrig
As a counterpart to the right-wing parties, The National Party, is worth mentioning. It participated in local elections for the first time and presented several veil-wearing Muslim women as candidates. One of them was Noura Bendali who received almost 1500 personal votes in Copenhagen. She explained how she was threatened by both Muslims, claiming democracy to be unlawful according to Islam, and by Islamophobes, saying they would kill her for entering the elections. Candidates from the Danish People’s Party called her “Fucking Muslim” during debates and asked her to remove her veil.

Public Campaigns

The issue of negative social control has been the subject of quite a few public campaigns in 2017 in which Muslim parents are singled out as the issue. The municipality of Copenhagen launched a campaign about negative social control – “Love is a right” – as well as a 12-step approach to combat negative social control. As a lead up to the municipality’s campaign, a report was published in which young Muslim women were described as in need of help to stand up to their families. On their campaign site, the municipality states that “Many young people with a different ethnic background than Danish cannot choose their partners”. Under a picture of a young girl in a hijab, it is further stated: “If you know someone targeted by social..."
control, share your concerns with us”. Stories with titles such as “Meet Jasmine who cut ties with her parents” are also to be found on the website.33 (Fig. 3)

In October 2017, the Institute for Human Rights published a report about negative social control, where they recommended those under social control to avoid speaking with their parents.34 Finally, the Ministry of Immigration and Integration conducted a campaign about negative social control called “With honor and respect”.35 Common for all campaigns is that they all paint a picture of negative social control as common among minority Danes, particularly Muslims, presupposing negative social control being a Muslim issue that the state should solve for, not with the Muslims.

Justice System
The National Sanction List, also known as the “Hate Preacher List”, is a list of religious preachers who are banned from entering Denmark for two years. First passed in December 2016, the National Sanction List was put into practice in May 2017, and further expanded in December 2017. According to the Danish Immigration Service, “the law is a result of a political agreement about initiatives relating to religious preachers, who seek to undermine Danish laws and values, and support a par-

34. Source: “Kærlighed er en ret”, Unable to find publ. date, retrieved March 5 2018, from: https://www.kk.dk/socialkontrol
allel concept of the law”. The list includes: Mohamad bin Abd al Rahman bin Milhi bin Mohamad al Arefe, Kamal El-Mekki, Bilal Philips, Terry Dale Jones, Salman Bin Fahad Alodah, Mohamad Rateb Abdalha Al-Nabulsi, Khalid Yasin, Muhammad Raza, Alparslan Kuytul, Ismail al-Wahwah and Abdullah bin Radi Almoaede Alshammary. It has so far not been possible to gain access to documents explaining why the individuals on the National Sanction List have been banned from entering Denmark. The Danish Immigration Service, which is responsible for executing the list, states: “We cannot comment on specific persons. In general, we can state that we do thorough research through open sources - such as homepages, news sites and social media – on whether there are any religious preachers who fulfil the conditions set forth in the law on being registered on the National Sanction List.”.

After the European Court of Human Rights upheld Belgium’s ban on burqas and full-face Islamic veils, a so-called mask ban (popularly referred to as the niqab ban) was proposed by the Danish People’s Party in October 2017. Among the politicians supportive of the ban are left-wing parties, the Social Democrats and the Danish Social Liberal Party, explaining their support by stating that they are against the oppression of Muslim women. The ban comes in response to a very low number of niqab-observers in Denmark. A report from 2010 states that 200 women wear the face covering in Denmark, while Dr. Kumm Mirza who focused her research from 2017 on “honor-related” legislation in Denmark estimated only 35 women wearing either the burka or niqab in Denmark.

Danish law already contains two paragraphs regarding face coverings and masking. Article 134b states that it is punishable by jail (up to 6 months) or a fine if anyone covers their face during meetings, assemblies, processions, or other

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41. Morten Skjoldager, Jurist Sabha Mirza: Lov mod muslimske kladenragter gor ingen forskel, Politiken, October 15, 2017, retrieved February 13, 2018, from: https://politiken.dk/indland/art6159877/Lov-mod-muslismskekl%C3%A6ndragter-g%C3%B8r-ingen-forskel
events in public space that hinder the identification and not for a praiseworthy cause, i.e. to protect oneself from cold weather. It is also punishable by a fine or jail, up to 4 years, if someone illegally forces anyone to wear a face covering that hides their face. Mirza states that there is no evidence that women who cover their faces are forced to it, and that the law thus will mainly effect women who wear the face veil voluntarily. Martin Henriksen a Danish politician and MP from the Danish People’s Party stated that the niqab ban is the first step towards a ban of the hijab in public institutions.

**Employment**

A poll from the market research institute, Megafon, demonstrates that eight out of ten Danish Muslims note that attitudes towards Islam have worsened over the past 10 years. 37% share feelings of being looked down upon because of their Muslim background, another 33% feel that their Muslim background has made it more difficult for them to get a job and 32% state that marked physical appearance has been negatively reprimanded.

According to sociologist Brian Arly Jacobsen, discriminatory treatment can lead to social marginalization and isolation, which is already seen in parts of the Danish Muslim population. According to Jacobsen, non-Muslim Danes will begin to copy the way the public debate speaks about Muslims, and thereby legitimize reprimands on Muslims’ clothes and religiosity.

There is no data on discrimination of Muslims in the Danish employment sector. It is illegal to collect official data categorized by religious belonging and since civil society have not collected such data there is none. Although according to Amal Hassani, the author of a report on discrimination in Denmark, there are quite a few cases of discrimination against especially Muslim women, most have just not been recorded.

**Education**

The Board of Equal Treatment rejected a complaint in April 2017 from a group of students who were banned from praying on school property. The board stated

42. Danske Love, Straffeloven §134 b, retrieved February 13, 2018, from: https://danskelove.dk/staffeloven/134b
44. Morthen Skjoldager, Jurist Saba Mirza: Lov mod muslimske klædedragter gør ingen forskel, Politiken, October 15, 2017, retrieved February 13, 2018, from: https://politiken.dk/indland/art6159877/Lov-mod-muslimske-kl%C3%A6dedragter-g%C3%B8r-ingen-forskel
47. E-mail correspondence between the author and Amal Hassani, March 2 2018.
that praying on campus caused worry, conflict, and great unease for other students and employees. In May, members of the Danish People’s Party petitioned for a resolution to ban prayer rooms in all public educational institutions. The aim of the motion was to assure that public educational institutions would not support an Islamization of the Danish Society. As a result, the Ministry of Education conducted a survey of 1775 schools discovering that out of the 1261 participating institutions, only 27 had prayer rooms (or similar spaces) on campus. Out of these, 15 were mainly used by Christian student organizations. When confronted with the questionnaire’s results, Marie Krarup from the Danish Peoples Party, who proposed the motion, replied: “There is something wrong with the facts, there’s nothing wrong with our motion for resolution.”

Muslim free schools are also under heavy surveillance following an episode, where suspicious material was found during a federal inspection at one of the schools. After the episode the Danish People’s Party, along with the Social Democratic Party first demanded for a more intense supervision of all Muslim free schools and later for a shutdown of all schools with 50% or more of the students being of “foreign background”. Mette Frederiksen, leader of the Social Democratic Party, added that: “I must be honest and say that it is fundamentally not a good idea with Muslim free schools (...) a Muslim free school with a foundation in Islam is not part of the majority culture in Denmark”.

In September the Ministry of Education issued a heavily criticized survey blamed for smearing Muslims and being tendentious. In the survey students were

49. The motion for resolution was proposed for the first time on January 18th, but was then revoked and proposed again on May 16th, retrieved February 13 2018, from: http://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/beslutningsforslag/b54/index.htm and http://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/beslutningsforslag/b152/index.htm
asked amongst other things whether they had experienced Muslim students being victims of social control if they did not follow Islamic rules.\textsuperscript{56}

The book \textit{På Ulige Fod} (Eng.: On Unequal Grounds) showcases the correlation between bad test results by minority Danish students and the discriminatory treatment of them in school curricula.\textsuperscript{57} When minority Danes are visible it is often only under special circumstances and the ethnic Dane thereby constitutes the standard that frames the general learning situation, leaving the ethnic and religious minority students on unequal grounds.

\textbf{Media}

A study called \textit{Dem vi taler om} (Eng.: The ones we talk about) by \textit{Ansvarlig Presse} (Eng.: Responsible Media) was published in February and demonstrates an underrepresentation of ethnic and religious minorities in the media.\textsuperscript{58} When minority Danes are used as experts, it is mostly in stories about immigrants and Islam. Furthermore, the study show that media can play an active role in portraying a negative image of minorities. Certain media stories problematize whether minorities’ religion, family patterns and traditions are compatible with Danish law, traditions and norms. A yet unpublished media analysis on Muslims and Islam in Danish media by journalist Bent Dahl Jensen points to politicians setting the tone in the debate about Muslims.\textsuperscript{59} For example, in relation to the debate on a “Niqab ban” the majority of sources heard were politicians promoting a ban.

Preben Brock Jacobsen, author to the newly published book, Islam i Medierne (Eng.: Islam in the Media), argues that a critique of Islam is much more apparent than a defense of it, as he found 256 critical articles compared to 88 non-critical articles in his analysis.\textsuperscript{60} The subjects range from Islam being the root cause of terror, Islam as anti-democratic to Muslim oppression of women. 47% of the articles point out religion as the main cause of failed integration or to terror, and only 14% of the articles have a socio-economic explanation. Jacobsen argues the consequence of a one-sided negative representation of Islam and Muslims is that the mainstream population begin to construct a stereotype of Islam and Muslims.\textsuperscript{61}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} Christian Horst, “På Ulige Fod - Etniske minoritetsbørn som et skoleeksempel”, Aarhus Universitetsforlag 2017, the text is a summary of the book.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Bent Dahl Jensen, “Hvem tegner mediebilledet af muslimer i danske medier?”, December 2017, yet unpublished. The study is based on the seven major newspapers (Online version).
\item \textsuperscript{60} Jesper Petersen and Preben Brock Jacobsen, “Islam i medierne”, Systime, June 2017, the text is a summary of the book and Jacobsens study is based on 2850 articles, the articles are from major newspapers: Ekstra Bladet, Jyllands-Posten, Kristelig Dagblad and Politikken.
\end{itemize}
A study of the media coverage on negative social control was made in December. The analysis was conducted on Danmarks Radio’s (DR) online platform during 2017. Out of the 50 times “social control” was used on the platform, 47 was tied to Muslims and Islam.\(^{62}\)

In general the state-funded tv station DR is one of the more balanced in its reporting about Islam and Muslims. TV2, the largest tv-channel however, is sometimes accused of being biased toward Muslims. An example that spurred a lot of such criticism was in relation to a tv-series in 2016. The National Sanctions list was a direct result of that heavily criticized tv-series called “Mosques unveiled” that TV2 aired in the spring of 2016. After massive criticism and through lobbying by the Center for Danish Muslim Relations, the channel have tried to balance its content; amongst other things with an anti-racist campaign that went viral in the beginning of 2017.

Among newspapers Ekstrabladet and Jyllands-Posten have been notorious for its anti-Muslim bias. The Cartoon crisis began because of a few satirical cartoons being published in Jyllands-Posten in 2005, since then many of the people behind those cartoons have stopped working for the paper and its since become a bit more nuanced.

Radio24syv is a large radio station with radio hosts of diverging political opinions but one of them have been called a far-right populist and his name is Mikael Jalving. He claims Muslims will be the end of Europe if Europeans don’t stop them from entering the continent.\(^{63}\)

**Physical and Verbal Attacks**

According to the National Police report on hate crime committed in 2016, 274 violations were registered, 88 were religiously motivated and 56 cases targeted Muslims. Thus, Muslims that only represents 5% of the population represents 20% of registered hate crime. That is an increase from 2015 by 15 cases making Muslims the most targeted group in Denmark.\(^{64}\) The National Police suggests that Muslims being the largest and most visible minority explains the high numbers of violations directed towards the group. According to the report most hate crimes against Muslims take place on the internet while other religious and racially motivated violations often involve other forms of crime, i.e. violence, threats, malicious damage/graffiti etc.\(^{65}\) However, Muslim women in Denmark are heavily targeted

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\(^{64}\) Mikkel Abildgaard og Julia Friis Jørgensen, “Flere muslimer udsættes for hadforbrydelser i Danmark”, friisjulia.wixsite.com, No date, 2017, retrieved Feb 13, 2018, from: https://friisjulia.wixsite.com/hadforbrydelser/baggrunden?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_messaging%3B8L8y17hQ3yRmdp6m5qKYA%3D%3D

by physical hate crime and discrimination according to NGOs. From the portal AnmeldHad.dk (Eng.: ReportHate), a total of 39 physical attacks against Muslims were reported in 2016 and 2017.

In February 2017, a 16-year old boy named Ali was attacked by four of his majority Danish classmates, who threw a Molotov-cocktail on him. According to Ali’s older brother, Muhammed, they had been making racist comments and other minor incidents had been going on for years. They had told Ali to go back to his own country and called him degrading names related to Muslims and immigrants. The attack did not lead to much debate and was moderately covered in media. The silence surrounding the case did in itself result in some debate about political and media bias.

Just after Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, 16-year old Tarek and his friends participated in a demonstration at the US embassy in December 2017. Tarek and his friends shouted “Fuck Trump” after which they were allegedly attacked by 7 policemen. The policemen ran towards them and kicked Tarek to the ground. (Fig. 4) As they pushed him down, he claims they hit him with their fists and shouted “Muslim pig” and “Stupid Muslim”.

When Tarek’s mother, Iman, and his 11-year old sister went to the station to pick him up, the police detained the mother. At the police station she claims a strip search in front of male officers was conducted, when protesting they asserted her that they would not look at her body.

67. E-mail correspondence between author and CFE, 7th Nov 2017
talked to media, NGOs and to the Independent Police Appeals Authority (DUP). The Vice Police Chief Jesper Lauenborg Bangsgaard at the Copenhagen Police believe the mother and son might be lying about the incident; nonetheless, he stated the incident would be investigated.

**Internet**

The institute for Human Rights published a report about online hate showing one out of seven online comments on Facebook were hateful. Hateful comments were defined as threats or discrimination in regards to one of eight areas including age, political orientation and religious affiliation. The report showed that most hateful comments were about religion (40%) and foreigners (34%). Politicians are the most targeted group on social media, followed by Muslims and non-western foreigners. Among the hateful comments targeting religion 86% was directed towards Islam. The ReportHate portal registered almost 1100 online incidents during 2016 and 2017 of which 98% targeted Muslims. About a third of the incidents have been categorized as hate crimes.

**Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network**

“For Frihed” (Eng.: For Freedom) and their political wing “Stram Kurs” (Eng.: Tough Line), formerly known as “PEGIDA” are led by lawyer Rasmus Paludan, who claims to be the most radical in his views on foreigners. Paludan issued a controversial list of 20 people in relation to the local elections. The list consisted of nineteen Muslims and one Non-Muslim activist the party said would be expelled from Denmark if they won. (Fig. 5) None of the nine “Stram Kurs” candidates were voted into office in the 2017 local elections.

The Foreign- and Integration Minister Inger Støjberg (from Venstre, The Liberal Party of Denmark), celebrated her 50th restriction against non-Western foreigners with a celebratory cake in March 2017. This was criticized by fellow politicians and experts.

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74. AnmeldHad.dk (Eng.: ReportHate.dk) have registered the event.
77. E-mail correspondence between author and CFE, 7th Nov 2017.
gument%253Aflagship3_message%253B8L8yv17hQ3yRmdp6m5qKYA%253D%253D.
who argued the publicity stunt was only to gain votes from far-right sympathizers.  

She also made headlines both for lying about her education, about statistics in relation to welfare and about a kindergarten she claimed did not allow pork to be served because of Muslims dietary preferences.  

She used the satirical cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad from 2005 as a wallpaper on her phone and published it on social media. It caused the former chief of security services (PET) to call her both childish and a security threat.  


various restrictions to immigrants and asylum seekers that she pushed through; drastically decreasing the number of approved asylum seekers and proposed to send rejected asylum seekers behind bars or to a deserted island.86

Intact Denmark is linked and modeled on Intact America, campaigning against the widespread practice of male circumcision in the US. Intact America aims to transfer its ideology, slogans and propaganda to Denmark. American Intactivists refer to Denmark as a “Ground Zero” regarding the circumcision debate, hoping a legal ban in Denmark can be used to further their agenda in the US. A leading figure in the Danish circumcision debate providing Intact with arguments and often poorly conducted research to prove his point is Morten Frisch, professor at the State Serum Institute. On social media, where Dr. Frisch posts stories about male circumcision on an almost daily basis, he routinely describes Jews and Muslims in a scornful and demeaning manner, and frequently allows others to post outright anti-Semitic and Islamophobic comments.87

In June 2017, Dr. Frisch posted the article “Violence is more often part of child-rearing in non-western families”, comparing male circumcision to child abuse, arguing that there is no difference between hitting your child in the face with your fist and circumcising him.88

Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

Politics

The first larger initiative to specifically tackle Islamophobia in politics was funded and executed by the Center for Danish Muslim Relations in the run-up to the 2017 local elections.89 The #SlukforHadet (#TurnoftheHate) campaign reached more than 350,000 viewers even though Facebook removed it for a week without an explanation.90 Several voices were also specifically raised against Foreign- and

88. Screenshot from Morten Frisch Facebook wall on the 9th of June 2017.
Integration Minister, Inger Støjberg. Amongst them the former PET chief, the former Integration minister and fellow party member Birte Hornbech. Hornbech was highly critical over the “us” and “them” mentality of Støjberg.91

Media
Denmark’s Radio aired a radio program called Koranskolen (The Quran school). The program gave imams a platform to explain Islam without the critical approach common elsewhere. The host motivated it by saying; “We hear less of the imams because many of them don’t feel comfortable talking to the press. It is telling that they constantly feel accused and therefore have reservations regarding the press. It’s an important thing to fix...”.92

Another program also by Denmark’s Radio that aired on TV in the beginning of 2017 focused on the challenges of a few women converting to Islam. The show was named Når naboens datter bliver Muslim (Eng.: When the neighbor’s daughter turns Muslim).93

As a counterpart to mainstream media, Muslims and other minority Danes have launched their own media channels. Radio WAIH established by a group of Muslims with the aim of nuancing the current media landscape has launched several online campaigns, amongst them a campaign on islamophobia, the Niqab-ban and Muslim free schools.94

Internet
The social media campaign #JegerDansk (#IamDanish) by Gorilla Media was designed to challenge the V38 bill on the Danishness of non-western minorities. It managed to put pressure on Danish politicians so that just three months later the bill was almost overturned.95

Civil Society
The first Islamophobia report was published by the Center for Danish Muslim Relations, leading to the term becoming more widespread, for example through inspiring the first Danish Wikipedia article on Islamophobia to be written.96

Criminal acts

95. See footnote 12, p. 6.
by Muslims are often used in an Islamophobic context. This year the Police failed in ending a bloody gang war between mainly young Muslims. The engagement by Muslim communities helped in ending the bloody conflict and was an effective way to tackle Islamophobic tendencies.97 And the Danish Women’s society launched a campaign called “Whore” portraying a woman in hijab as a victim of hate crime, with the intent of tackling hate crime towards Muslim women.98

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

According to official statistics on hate crime by the National Police, Muslims are the most targeted minority in Denmark, especially online. Islamophobia in Denmark is spurred by certain politicians, traditionally by those from the Danish People’s Party, recently also by the leadership of the Social Democrats. Muslims should therefore organize themselves politically to end the hateful rhetoric and the Danish politicians that do not concur with the Islamodiversion should aid them in this effort. Muslims are seldom used as sources by established media, instead critical voices often make up the majority of sources. Muslims must therefore participate in media to a greater extent, a responsibility that lies with both the media outlets and the Muslim representatives. A few laws are under way, both a Niqab ban and a ban on male circumcision. This underlines the necessity of education and awareness among the public and among professionals. Certain institutions try to solve social issues by meddling in the personal lives of Muslim families. Instead they should consult academics and civil society in the pursuit of the best possible solutions. The following recommendations are therefore set forth:

• Muslims must be recognized as a heterogeneous group and equally accepted as Danes compared to any other group of society.
• Instead of downplaying hate crime towards Muslims, explaining it by Muslims being visible and a large minority, the National Police need to take Islamophobic hate crime more seriously. The National Police report on hate crime is mentioned on p. 17.
• Resources need to be allocated into initiatives that can change the inflammatory public discourse regarding minorities in both media and politics.
• Research must be conducted to identify the challenges associated with Islamophobia, which fuels a negative spiral of extremism through increased ant-Muslim hatred and responsive hatred by Muslims.
• Neutral meeting grounds between Muslims and non-Muslim Danes need to be prioritized since the contact hypothesis naturally dissolves stereotyping and racism.

98. Posted on the Danish Women’s societies Facebook page on 30 May 2017, accessed March 2, 2018. From: <https://www.facebook.com/danskkvindesamfund/?hc_ref=ARSLIKR8IT1UUq1JIo88E7ySEXifJ91WadBEQdFGsYwWC CuXbk4aFRjJeTKFe6X1I&cref=nf>
Media must involve Muslims more often when covering Islam as well as other subjects instead of prioritizing voices critical of Islam and Muslims, as it creates a skewed image of reality.

Awareness and education of professionals in the educational sector, health care system, law enforcement and the justice system.

Chronology

- **11.01.2017**: Public debate on the ban on prayer rooms in public institutions intensifies due to a proposal in parliament.
- **07.02.2017**: Non-westerners and their children are declared non-Danish by parliament and Ali is assaulted by a Molotov-cocktail.
- **14.03.2017**: Inger Støjberg celebrates her 50th restriction against foreigners with a cake.
- **20.04.2017**: The first Islamophobia report is published.
- **27.04.2017**: The Board of Equal Treatment rejected a complaint from a group of students banned from praying in school.
- **02.05.2017**: The National Sanctions list, also known as “Hate Preacher List”, was put into practice.
- **24.06.2017**: The extreme far-right party the Danes party dismantles.
- **16.09.2017**: The Social Democrats shift their political paradigm closer towards the political right, stating that Muslims are a problem.
- **04.10.2017**: The so-called mask ban, also known as the “niqab ban”, are proposed by the Danish People’s Party.
- **09.10.2017**: The #SlukforHadet campaign was launched.
- **21.11.2017**: Local elections with bad results for the two right wing parties, the Danish People’s Party and Nye Borgerlige.
- **08.12.2017**: Tarek is allegedly attacked by Police at an anti- Trump demonstration.
- **12.12.2017**: “The Hate Preacher list” is being extended.
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.