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The denial of the very existence of Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism/anti-Muslim hate crime in Europe by many demonstrates the need for an appropriate effort and political will to tackle this normalized racism and its manifestations that are deeply entrenched in European societies, institutions, and states. This denial is not only the case for extremist groups on the political fringe of the society, but rather far-right discourses have moved to the center of political power. Consequently, it is not only right-wing extremist groups that rely on the means of Islamophobic propaganda and discourse - social democrats, liberals, leftists or conservatives are not immune to this form of racism.

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

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

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C, and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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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.”\(^1\)

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 re-posting 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

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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.” 8

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

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

8. Ibid.
bía. 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-Gypsiesm.

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.”19 In Slovenia, right-wing populist and extremist parties are not strong enough to win elections, however they are very active on social media and in the organization of public events and protests. For instance, Nova 24TV in Slovenia broadcasted the following Islamophobic opinion: “Obviously, we do not have enough terrorists, rapists and other criminals in Europe. It seems that leading politicians want to bring even more. Only this can explain their desire for the ever-increasing inclusion of migrants and Muslims in European countries.”20

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

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

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

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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.” 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.”

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, which argued that “the love offer of Jesus Christ and Muhammad’s use of violence are as different as day and night.”

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

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.kieli.org/mot/eduskuntasanasto/netmot?UI=field&height=147.
40. For a detailed description of Terhi Kiemunki’s court case, see Ibid.
People’s Party following the verdict by the European Court of Human Rights. 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. 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.

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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 “re-take 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

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

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

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

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

Threatening the Religious Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steps Forward and Policy Recommendations

The picture presented here shows us that there is an urgent need to counter these developments. And there is room for hope. Critical assessment of the current situation regarding Muslims in Europe is growing within parts of civil society. Not only are there more and more institutions that are working to bring attention to the rise in hate crime towards Muslims such as the Spain-based Observatorio de la Islamofobia en los Medios53 but there are also favorable developments such as in the Norwegian justice system which has developed positive steps regarding monitoring and convicting cases involving hate speech or discrimination against Muslims. Also, the German Federal Police has made a first important institutional step to combatting Islamophobia by documenting it: for the first time, Islamophobia has been included as a category of hate crime.

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

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.
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NUMBERS

• The overwhelming majority of European states do not record Islamophobic incidents as a separate category of hate crime. The recording of anti-Muslim/Islamophobic crimes by the police as a separate category of hate crime is essential to uncover the real extent of this problem and to develop counter-strategies to combat it.

• In the EU, only 12% of Muslims who have been discriminated against report their cases to the authorities. (Source: FRA) The non-exhaustive list that follows hints at the extent of underreporting of anti-Muslim hate crimes in Europe by states and NGOs, which has serious implications regarding the awareness of Muslims and the bureaucracy to tackle these issues.

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

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

AUSTRIA
256 Islamophobic incidents were documented.
(Source: EIR Report, Antidiscrimination Office Styria, ZARA, and Initiative for a Discrimination-Free Education [IDB]).
FRANCE

- **121** Islamophobic incidents were reported.  
  (Source: Observatory of Islamophobia)

- **19** Muslim places of worship were closed by the government;  
  **749** individuals were placed under house arrest;  
  over **4,500** police raids were conducted;  
  and the list of individuals under government surveillance has reached **25,000**.

- **17,393** individuals were enrolled in the Terrorism Prevention Database (FSPRT).

GERMANY

- **100** attacks occurred on mosques.  
  (Source: DITIB and German State)

- **908** attacks took place targeting German Muslims.

- **60%** of all Muslim teaching staff felt discriminated.  
  (Source: Karim Fereidooni)

- There were **1,906** criminal attacks on refugees  
  (5.2 attacks per day).

- There were **286** attacks against refugee shelters  
  (0.8 attacks per day).

- **132** criminal acts and physical attacks against  
  (refugee) aid workers occurred (0.4 attacks per day).  
  (Source: German state)

MALTA

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

- **25%** of Muslims have experienced harassment.
NORWAY
• In 2017, 14% of Muslims experienced harassment.

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

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

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Executive Summary

This 2017 report tells the story of how Islamophobia has been a convenient geopolitical and a policy-relevant catalyst for racism writ large in Germany. This trend “started” publicly with a defence against “Islam” and “Muslims,” but emerged clearly, yet at times also subtly, as a call for more “Whiteness” in 2017. In multicultural times, this might be explained by the fact that it is still easier to infer an attacked German “culture,” than to call for a white German “culture.” The latter trope is also constitutive of a narrative around an angry and marginalized white German “protest voter” that ties a post-World War II German identity, on the one hand, to an aggrieved and victimized “Whiteness” at Germany’s national core, on the other hand. This very paradox is anchored in the masterful straddle between “white neglected, marginalized, and angry outsiders” and Germany’s “white national core.” Thus, this year’s focus rests on the neoliberal version of white supremacist political parties in Europe, such as the Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD), along with the political and social strengthening of neo-Nazi/right-wing extremists and the changes in the phenomena of violence that accompany these developments. In the first 210 days of 2017, 205 politically motivated attacks on parliamentarians took place. The year 2017 also witnessed around 5.2 attacks on refugees and 0.3 attacks on aid workers per day, along with around a total of 100 attacks on mosques, as well as, around 908 attacks on German Muslims.

In this report, “Whiteness” is not understood as a skin-/color, but as a moral and economic codification of power relations along ethnic and racializing lines that operates transnationally.” Whiteness thus not only takes on the role of the disguised and invisible norm, but also that of “neutrality,” as will become clearer with the legal ban against the Muslim headscarf. Whiteness should also be understood as pivotal for discursive debates such as the German “Leading Culture Debate,” proposals for a new Asylum Law, or debates around an alleged “Muslim anti-Semitism” that threatens German democracy. Moreover, in German media, 60-80% of the representations of Muslims and Islam are portraying the latter two as physically violent, gender oppressive, religiously fanatic and/or fundamentalist, as well as socially and culturally backward.

The year 2017 also marks one in which official statistics of Islamophobic attacks were registered and made publically available by the government for the first time. This report had a limited scope and much more could have been written about how the issue of Islam, refugees and immigration ruled this year’s election campaign, marginalizing almost all other issues. In conclusion, Islamophobia remains an undeniable force in contemporary German politics.
Zusammenfassung


Das Jahr 2017 markiert auch das Jahr, in dem offizielle Statistiken islamophober Angriffe registriert und von der Regierung zum ersten Mal öffentlich zu-
gänglich gemacht wurden. Abschließend muss gesagt werden, dass dieser Bericht begrenzt ist - viel mehr hätte über die einzelnen Themen oder Fälle geschrieben werden können; wie z.B. über die Deportationen illegalisierter Flüchtlinge, mögliche Änderungen im Asylrecht, mehr Sicherheitspolitik an Europas Grenzen, Flüchtlingsfamiliennachzug, oder wie das Thema Islam, Flüchtlinge und Immigration die Wahlkampagne dieser Wahl anführte und fast alle anderen Themen marginalisierte. Aber da Islamophobie auch weiterhin eine unleugbare Kraft im heutigen Deutschland zu sein scheint, wird es auch in naher Zukunft noch weitere Möglichkeiten geben darüber zu schreiben.
Introduction

In times of increasing social polarizations, content voids come into existence around issues of politically sensitive but relevant debates, often left for “antagonistic” camps to fill. Identity and racism are two of those sensitive issues. Discussions around Islamophobia and racism in Germany are still at the beginning, with their agents desperately trying to assert their place in a diverse German nation. German (white) identity, on the other hand, in the wake of a post-economic collapse and ongoing crisis, seems to attempt its own representation via tropes of an aggrieved white German core, marginalized, and thus in need of “re-centering.” Hence, when it comes to Islamophobia in 2017, three issues shaping political possibilities and structural limitations within Germany circumscribe this report – all three are outlined in the following chapter in more detail. Most notably, this report calls to attention the rising political power of white nationalism and white conservatism that profited from and accelerated due to the public hysteria around Islam, an imagined German cultural demise and European victimization tropes. Islamophobia undoubtedly became the litmus test of and for political power in Germany and Europe. In a more polarized society, collecting data about minority rights and racism in particular, can thus fill the missing factual gaps of differently lived realities in the same country.

Significant Incidents and Developments

Firstly, there exists a worrying trend of member states of the European Union (EU) shifting to the political right. Within Germany, it is the Alternative for Germany party (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD) that has peddled right-wing, conservative and politically disenfranchised former left-wing voters into its democratic fold. The AfD, including its Islamophobic party program, has been a convenient “retreat” arranged primarily for the conservative parts of the upper and middle classes. A final point here is that it seems reasonable to argue that global (i.e. U.S., Filipino, Indian) as well as European trends have shown that “conservatism” and right-wing extremism can be artfully merged in neoliberal times, with right-wing ideologies embracing a particular form of democratic order, rather than fighting against it entirely. This report thus has a strong focus on white conservatism and neo-Nazi activity, including its non-Muslim targets such as politicians or individuals, who are in favour of refugee rights. It could be argued that society could either witness an erosion of democracy with democratic means or, a return to older forms of Greek and imperial democracy, characterized by a political economy that grants full democracy to only a few.

The second important contextual issue is that the phantasmatic German mainstream label of “migrant” for people who have been escaping war. The latter discursive move blends in well with a general trend that shows the conflation
of terminologies such as refugees, migrants, Muslims and people of color in media, politics and everyday parlance. This powerful linguistic and social move downplays the global crisis of forced displacements\(^1\) to the mere level of “economic migration,” thus paving the way for even more discriminatory or racist resentment, as detailed later in this report. Sadly, the forced displacement of people reached an all-time high\(^2\) with 66 million people displaced worldwide in 2016. Europe’s fear of being overrun by non-white and non-European people from the global south, however, is put in context by the fact that the main countries of asylum for refugees were Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Uganda, and Ethiopia\(^3\) - according to the same UNHCR report, Germany took in 669,500 refugees. The triple conflation of “refugee” with “migrant” and “Muslim” thus whitewashes global displacements based on militarization and war (EU, North America, China) and the global war over resources (primarily oil, gas, coltan/tantalum and REE, uranium and water) that are all primarily fought in non-Western and low-income countries. This report thus calls to attention the worrying trend of self-victimizing tropes of inferiority in the EU countries, which are accompanied by massive changes in legally dangerous and politically dubious securitization politics. The move from post-/colonial to securitization politics has over time been marshalled by liberal codes of moral wrong- and right-doings, whilst maintaining most of its material former structures – the year 2017 showed many of those effects - Islamophobia as a discourse being among them.

Thirdly, it is safe to attest that Islamophobia and the global refugee crisis are transnationally related and have led to local and European-wide accelerations of already deeply rooted racisms as well as an expansion of right-wing activities and a conservative tilt to the right of a significant proportion of the German public. The worrying trends toward an undermining of democracy as we have come to know it for the past 70 years is the core of this report. The ongoing structural increase of violence (in quality and quantity) since 2015 in Germany can today be investigated

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1. According to the UNHCR definition, “forced displacement” is either inside a nation-state (internally displaced people, IDPs) or displaced across borders (refugees) as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations. See the UNHCR Report 2016, “Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2016”, retrievable at http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/.

2. This statistic is relevant only with reference to its historical limitation: global statistics by “International Organizations” such as the UNHCR, which was created in 1950, are thus limited in their historical scope and the possibilities for comparison they offer. It is, however, safe to say that until today the collection of “conflict” data remains inevitably difficult, due to the strenuous and difficult coordination between IOs, NGOs, and governments to collect comprehensive data on “people on the move” in low or high-intensity conflict situations, especially if access is limited.

3. Of all refugees worldwide, 5.5 million came from Syria, 2.5 million from Afghanistan, and 1.4 million came from South Sudan. Additionally, “[i]n line with the United Nations Statistics Division classification, three of these (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Uganda) were classified as least developed countries, facing severe structural impediments to sustainable development in addition to the challenges of large refugee flows.” UNHCR Report 2016, Global Trends, p. 14.
and shown with data. Since the beginning of 2017, comprehensive nationwide police data sets are collected on racist or discriminatory violence in Germany and made public – though gaps still remain. Yet, data collection in times of discrimination is a political act, just as it is political not to collect data. For a more historical-political overview regarding the absence of data before 2017, see the 2015 Islamophobia Germany country report; for a more legal and discursive analysis see the Parallel Report submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2015. This 2017 report is thus again born from the difficulty of breaching an incomprehensive and partially selective quantitative data set with qualitative studies to illustrate the magnitude of the described trends. Finally, due to the limited scope of the topic, much of the structural implications or important details are described only briefly in footnotes, while the report is necessarily selective and could not comprehensively cover all relevant developments that took place in 2017.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics

Two years of extreme Islamophobic violence in 2015 and 2016, the national elections in 2017 and the entry of the right-wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD) into the national parliament as the third-strongest represented party constitute worrying trends for German democracy. The entry of the AfD into parliament might have served as a temporary buffer for more direct and person-centred violence and could explain the slight decrease of Islamophobic incidents – yet, statistically, the number is too marginal to be able to make a general statement. The slight decrease in Islamophobic incidents is, after all, mirrored by an increase in general racism. Some might argue that it is the quiet before the storm; others might argue the AfD will soon prove their inability to govern. Whatever will come of Europe’s tilt to the right, Germany as the strongest country in the EU is representative of a general European trend and is without a government since the September 2017 national election - most likely even until March 2018. This is the longest time that German political fractions have taken to find a suitable coalition partner.

The current European context shows an erosion of support for mainstream parties; the Socialist Democratic Party (SPD) lost most of its constituency and had the

worst election outcomes on record. During their election campaign, both the SPD and the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) started to embrace public demands for renewed debates about a German Leitkultur (leading culture), double-citizenship and a “ceiling” to the number of refugees allowed per year (set to 200,000 refugees per year according to the CDU). This is arguably an outcome of a general right-wing tilt of the voting constituency and the appeasement policies of the more mainstream parties. To defend those party goals, many of the mainstream politicians and parties would argue that “all Germans” would feel a certain sense of “cultural loss,” with the marginalized and angry AfD voter seemingly testifying to that disintegration. Thus, the rationale goes, in order to win back the supposedly lost and angry white German voter, one has to adapt to or accommodate to an extent an AfD discourse. In this way, the power-losing mainstream German parties and the power-winning AfD straddled the thick divide between “neglected outsider” and “national core” and successfully ran election campaigns that mainly centered on anti-refugee sentiments and anti-Muslim racism. For the AfD, this might be because – as referenced earlier – it is (still) easier to argue for an attacked German culture by Muslims, than to argue for a white (only) Germany.

In conclusion, it is a general European and German myth that neo-Nazi or strongly conservative ideologies ratchet up the more ‘socially acceptable’ forms of democratic worldviews due to class impoverishment or social neglect. In that same mythical vein, it also seems convenient to mark the former East as inherently more prone to racism and violence. Although an economic, or rather neoliberal, momentum is definitely present, anti-Muslim racism has a long tradition of being more than just an economic “career.” Islamophobia is also connected to white and Western fantasies of power: contemporary racializing discourse traffics its content via discursive pathways where “white victimization” and “white superiority” co-exist at the same time. Furthermore, those intersecting, yet seemingly paradoxical narratives have

6. Kate Connolly, “Shake Hands and Read Goethe: Attempt to Define German Values Draws Ire”, The Guardian, May 5, 2017, retrieved September 5, 2017 from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/05/german-minister-resurrects-wary-debate-over-countrys-values. Connolly writes, “The word Leitkultur was originally a farming term to describe dominant plant varieties within a habitat. It has long been a favourite word of Germany’s right-wing thinkers, but was first used as a political term by the Syrian Islam expert Bassam Tibi, from the University of Göttingen, central Germany. He said, 20 years ago, that Europe needed a Leitkultur to consolidate its common values, such as tolerance, separation of church and state, and human rights.”
always been expressed through cultural interpellations from imperial/colonial times to the present. This is best shown in the fact that the majority of votes that brought the AfD to power come from the middle class (29%) or upper classes (39%).\textsuperscript{10} The not so “new” wave of white-supremacist democrats thus stands in contrast to the more traditional German right-wing/extremist parties and their elites (i.e. NPD, die Republikaner), which historically garnered their constituency from low-income and “low-educated” backgrounds\textsuperscript{11} in a post-WWII Germany.

\textbf{Justice System}

The ongoing process against the National Socialist Underground (NSU) has by now reached the status of Germany’s trial of the century, next to the trial of the Red Brigades (RAF) and the Nuremberg Trials. With old men drinking beer with friends in basements in front of Hitler photos; with an accused woman (Beate Zschäpe) who cares more about cats than humans whilst being the (almost fetishized) main focus of the German media (most likely due to her gender); to the point of crucial witnesses dying before they can further testify; to the state shredding important files relevant to the persecution; to finally hiring a fortune teller to solve the case. This trial has not only shown the darkest sides of Germany’s fight in shining light on right-wing organized crime, but has also made an international embarrassment of Germany’s justice and intelligence system.\textsuperscript{12} Today, the victims’ lawyers are primarily criticizing the federal prosecutor’s office for assuming that the NSU consisted solely of three people (two of them dead, and Zschäpe the only one left), thus whitewashing the possible existence of a wide network of NSU-supporters far beyond the names we know so far publically. After four years of trial, the final judgment is set for autumn 2018 in Munich and will most likely have a lasting effect since it will signal to German society how right-wing motivated crime is tried and managed in a country with a growing population of non-white and non-ethnic Europeans.

Another important legal event occurred in January 2017. After more than a decade of trying to ban the right-wing party NPD, the final legal judgment of Germany’s

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High Court states that there is no legitimate ground to assume that the party would be able to achieve the dissolution of the democratic principles of the German legal and political system. In other words, the court saw the party with 6,000 party members as not posing a threat to German society, its political system or its public order. To date, there have only been two party bans in the Federal Republic of Germany: one against a successor of the NSDAP, the SRP, and the other against the communist KPD.

Less than a month after the Christmas market attack by Anis Amri in Berlin, the German government came forth with new legal milestones in January, propelling Germany’s security architecture onto the next level with a new draft law: the Asylum Law is supposed to be altered in order to ease the forced departure of refugees deemed illegal, including those that pose a threat for the internal security of Germany. From surveillance through electronic (ankle) tagging to the state’s right to analyse and access cell phones and data carriers of all sorts. According to the German government, the latter is done in order to retrieve the necessary security and identity information of its owner, either for the purpose of deportation or for security reasons. In the case of applications for asylum, 50-60% of all asylum seekers could be affected by the screening and securing of their data. In comparison, for criminals of German nationality, the screening and securing of private data (carriers) needs the legal approval of a judicial court in Germany and cannot be retrieved pre-emptively without legal clearance. Hence, questions as to whether the law will pass the Constitutional Court still remain.

**Employment**

In Germany, the public sector (state jobs such as in school teaching or lawyers hired by and working for the state) are regulated by federal and state law. The following descriptions thus intersect in various forms, but not solely, with the legal field as described above.

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13. The Federal Constitutional Court, “No Prohibition of the National Democratic Party of Germany As There Are No Indications That It Will Succeed in Achieving Its Anti-Constitutional Aims”, Press Release No. 4/2017, Constitutional Court of Germany, January 17, 2017, retrieved January 1, 2018 from https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/EN/2017/bvg17-004.html. “While the NPD indeed professes its commitment to aims that are directed against the free democratic basic order and although it systematically acts towards achieving them, which is why its acts constitute a qualified preparation of abolishing the free democratic basic order that it strives for, there are no specific and weighty indications that suggest that the NPD will succeed in achieving its anti-constitutional aims. Neither is there a prospect of successfully achieving these aims in the context of participating in the development of political opinions (aa), nor is it sufficiently discernible that there is an attempt – attributable to the NPD – to achieve these aims by undermining the freedom of participating in the development of political opinions (bb).” For the entirety of the judgement please see BVerfG, Judgment of the Second Senate of 17 January 2017 - 2 BvB 1/13 - paras. (1-1010), http://www.bverfg.de/e/bs20170117_2bvb000113en.html.


The vociferous debate about the Muslim headscarf continues frivolously into each New Year and will most likely also entertain German public debates in the near future.\textsuperscript{17} This debate is particularly and highly gendered, trapping religiously devout Muslim women who wear the \textit{bikîab} (headscarf) at the exclusionary intersections of sexism (vis-à-vis Muslim men and other men) and racism (vis-à-vis white German society and other women). The German headscarf law is handled and interpreted differently in each federal state – it is thus hard to make general statements about its application due to the limits in time and space of the report. Overall, however, it is clear that the “Law of Neutrality,” which bans the headscarf in certain civil servant sectors, stands in opposition to German Basic Law and its engrained Freedom of Religion (\textit{Art. 4 Abs. 1 und 2 GG auf Glaubens- und Bekenntnisfreiheit}).

An example from Berlin, the country’s capital, is that 2017 marks the year when more women sued the state for their discrimination on the job market in the public sector, such as being a teacher or lawyer. In an interview with Shemi Shabbat from the ADNB (Counselling Centre for Equal Treatment - against Discrimination, Berlin\textsuperscript{18}), he stated that the newly found courage to sue the state is the result of a new judgment passed by the Higher Labor Court on February 9, 2017. Therein the court stated the following:

In the present case, the defendant federal state \textit{[Berlin]} has directly disadvantaged the plaintiff based on her religion, because it refused employment for the plaintiff at a general education school \textit{[Allgemeinbildende Schule]} in the federal state of Berlin at a primary school (elementary school), because the plaintiff, as a devout Muslim, also wishes to wear a Muslim headscarf on the job. \textit{[ . . . ]} Based on \textit{§ 2 NeutrG}, the prohibition of wearing a Muslim headscarf in order to serve at a general education school at the primary level (and at secondary level I) constitutes a serious encroachment on the applicant’s fundamental right under \textit{Article 4 (1) and (2) of the German Basic Law}. \textit{[ . . . ]} According to the case law of the First Senate of the Federal Constitutional Court, to which the distinguished Chamber has joined, a blanket headscarf ban for teachers in public schools violates their fundamental right under Article 4 (1) and (2) GG to freedom of belief and confession (BVerfG, 27.01.2015, 1 BvR 471/10 and 1 BvR 1181/10 BVerfGE 138, 296 [BVerfG 27.01.2015 - 1 BvR 471/10, 1 BvR 1181/10], see also BVerfG, 18.10.2016, 1 BvR 354/11, NZA 2016, 1522 on the prohibition of headscarves for teachers at public day-care centres).\textsuperscript{19}


\textsuperscript{18} The Counselling Centre for Equal Treatment - against Discrimination, Berlin: \url{http://www.adnb.de/en/}

\textsuperscript{19} LAG Berlin-Brandenburg, "Rechtsprechung", February 9, 2017, retrieved December 25, 2017 from \url{https://dejure.org/2017,2188} Translations are those of the author.
To date it might seem as a political success to witness ethnic and legal minorities claiming their rights before the law. However, the path to legal equality isn’t an easy one and many women decide against it, since the legal procedure is a strenuous one: for instance, after the discrimination takes place, the plaintiff has a two-month leeway to demand compensation for the loss afflicted.\(^\text{20}\) In other words, the first hurdle is for the plaintiff to directly pinpoint the discrimination, hire a lawyer, present a sound case and gather all annotated files to make a petition within two months following the discrimination. Then follows a three-month leeway within which the plaintiff must hand over the case and start the legal procedure in front of the Berlin (labour) court. If the plaintiff wins the case – as happened in February 2017 - the best outcome is that the state of Berlin pays the plaintiff 2 or 3 months of their missed salary (in Berlin, the standard wage per month is between c. 3,300 - 4,200 Euro). In conclusion, the new Berlin judgment supports young headscarf-wearing women to make their legal claims, yet the general legal set-up victimizes them while giving them legal support: if the plaintiffs win the case, the compensation of maximum 7,000 – 10,000 Euro still doesn’t grant them entry into the job market. It rather serves as a “consolation prize” for a lost battle. The “Law of Neutrality” could henceforth also be understood as a political tool of deterrence against entering occupations that “represent the state.” A desire for cultural dominance, or Whiteness, needs to be considered in order to explain an educational backstreet in which Berlin (and other states all over Germany) is actually desperately looking for teachers, even amongst the retired.\(^\text{21}\) In 2016, Berlin went as far as searching for teachers in the Netherlands and Austria\(^\text{22}\) making it apparent that technical skills alone are not what is primarily desired. In conclusion, although women have sued the state in 2017, the young women who want to work are trapped between the “Law of Neutrality” and the “Basic Law” not-/granting them their constitutional rights, as long as the state pays compensation instead of including a diverse population into its ranks.

**Education**

Karim Fereidooni in his dissertation on anti-Muslim racism in the educational sector found that around 60% of all teaching staff felt discriminated against

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(based on the headscarf or generally anti-Muslim racism) in Germany. Fereidooni, thus, speaks of a powerful gap between the political public calls for “diversity” with an increasing number of pupils of color and the reality faced by many Muslims (of color) who are attempting to enter or are already working in the public educational sector. Similar to the justice system, the discrimination that Fereidooni describes is oftentimes just as outspoken, such as mobbing during apprenticeship, as it is subtle, having direct psychological and institutional consequences as well as affecting the personal psychological future of the young victimized teachers.

According to the ADNB in Berlin, the “Law of Neutrality” as a top-down approach to handle the social debate about Muslim headscarves in Germany, generates its own effects and ramifications in society. Shemi Shabbat, an anti-discrimination counsellor at the ADNB, thus states,

The mere existence of the Law of Neutrality as well as the public discourse about ‘Muslims’ in general encourages school principals to misconstrue the law as having a wider application field as it actually, legally, has. For instance, people filling occupations and positions that are not included in the law are now being discriminated against based on the personal assumption that they are violating the Law of Neutrality with their headscarves. This primarily afflicts other women workers such as interns, trainees, trainers or facilitators from educational projects outside the school, or even the cleaning personal, that are now being prevented from working at schools and come to us to seek help. Some people seemingly assume, that if the state allows not to employ women with headscarves then, of course, they are entitled to, or even should do, the same.

According to the preliminary data of the ADNB in Berlin for 2017 at the time of writing, Islamophobia in the educational sector, kindergartens or with the Youth Welfare Offices clearly shows itself with its gendered and grotesque face: women are primarily inhibited from working in the public sector and due to its obscure common sense interpretations also elsewhere. They are also more often the targets of racist accusations of not being in proper command of the German language. Men, on the other hand, are more often victims of ascription of violent and demeaning behaviour at Youth Welfare Offices, depicted as bad fathers, criminalized by police, along with experiencing difficulties getting into


public spaces of enjoyment, such as clubs. In summary, one can attest that wom-
en are the inarticulate, repressed Other, whereas men are the hyper-violent and
sexually threatening Other.

Many times, higher education personal (as well as politicians or public intel-
lectuals) also use tropes of “freedom of speech,” “ethnopluralism,”26 “white/German
victimhood” and the misconstructions of real facts as mere opinions. A professor of
sociology and political science at the University of Würzburg (West Germany) de-
manded from one of her students during a lecture to take off her headscarf, explaining
her reasoning by comparing headscarves to baseball caps, demanding respect
from her students as well as arguing that there might be a law for the freedom of reli-
igion in society, but “not in science.”27 At Humboldt University (Berlin), Professor
Markus Egg is the head of the English Studies Department and long known for his
racist statements and AfD support. He was attacked by students who threw a bucket
of water over his head on November 8, 2016, upon which the university responded
with a call for more respect of “competing opinions” and a search for the assailants.28
Law Professor Thomas Rauscher (University of Leipzig) referred to Nazi marches in
Poland with a Twitter post stating: “Poland: ‘A white Europe of fraternal nations.’
That’s a wonderful goal for me!” In the debate that followed and the critique he
received, Rauscher considered himself to be the “victim.” 29

Media
Kai Hafez, professor of International and Comparative Communication Studies
(University of Erfurt), stated in an article in February 2017 that 60-80% of all the
German press still portray Muslims and Islam primarily via negative stereotypes such
as physical violence, women’s repression, fanaticism and fundamentalism, and back-
wardness.30 And, although, we can witness a decrease in racializing and discrimi-

26. The outdated but oftentimes conservative or right-wing idea that cultures are mainly homogenous in themselves,
having an “authentic core” (in body and spirit) that can be defined and kept apart from other cultures. Different
cultures are then supposed to live “parallel” (or next to each other), without mingling or cultural/body exchange.
27. Islam iQ, “Uni-Professorin vergleicht Kopftuch mit Basecap”, October 26, 2017, Islam iQ online, retrieved on
Online, retrieved December 29, 2017 from http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/afd-politiker-und-hu-professor-mask-
29. Marco Fieber, “Skandal an Leipziger Uni: Professor sort mit rassistischen T weets für Wirbel”, November 16,
2017, Huffington Post Online, retrieved January 2, 2017 from http://www.huffingtonpost.de/2017/11/15/rassis-
mus-tweet-professor-uni-leipzig_n_18564594.html.
30. pro Christliches Medienmagazin, "Medien Nehmen Islam über Terror wahr", January 7, 2016, retrieved on
December 2, 2017 from https://www.pro-mediennmagazin.de/medien/journalsmus/2016/01/07/medien-nahmen-
islam-uber-terror-wahr/. The media outlet research included the ARD & ZDF, the TV news shows “Fakt, Frontal
21, Kontraste, Monitor, Panorama and Report” and “Deutschlandfunk.” For print media it was the following out-
lets: Bild, Bild am Sonntag, Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, Spiegel, Focus, Welt am Sonntag and the economic
news magazine Capital. 530,000 news pieces were analyzed in total.
natory wording, according to Hafez, we also witness the actual stigmatization of Islam and Muslims today in (1) a selective reporting prism (see above for common subjects) and (2) a stigmatizing representation via images. “Islam has had a ‘negative press’ for the past 1,400 years,” 31 Hafez writes, referring to colonial and religious narratives that constructed the barbaric and religiously molded “Orient” as the antithesis to a fantasized emancipated and free “Europe.” Originally, the educational mandate of state-sponsored public media (such as the ARD, ZDF, MDR, etc.) is to bridge ideological divides in society through reporting. Yet, as Hafez’s thesis goes, since that is not truly done when it comes to Islam, people who usually have little or no contact to Islam, “Muslims,” or the Middle East, take the selective reporting prism and their imagery at face value and as all-encompassing truth. Hafez’s take is to keep sidelining the AfD and their demagogues through non-reporting. The latter is an argument that should at least be debated in Europe and North America, where the named demagogues managed to take centre stage precisely through media/Internet representations that masterfully celebrate racists as “spectacles,” whilst believing democracy to be carved in stone.

Furthermore, if it holds true that the majority of AfD voters, for instance, come from the middle to upper classes and thus enjoy a secure lifestyle, then the media (and the Internet) play an important role when conveying the contemporary political landscapes to this particular voting constituency. Moreover, Daniel Bax, journalist and author of a book on anti-Muslim racism, comments on the (Nazi-era) terminology of “Lügenpresse” (lying press) so often heralded by AfD supporters or politicians:

Interestingly enough, no other German party has as many journalists in leading positions as the AfD. This obviously contradicts the prevailing impression that right-wing populists are in blatant opposition to media writ large. The latter is rather a picture that they themselves enjoy cultivating, but in reality they and the racist attitudes they represent are unfortunately part of the mainstream media. 32

Another important debate in 2017 was a racial profiling debate, carried into 2017 from the New Year’s Eve celebrations in Cologne and primarily spread through media outlets running unfounded stories in a successive and fast-paced manner. As sufficiently explained in the “Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2016”, it became clear, that the police quickly used racial indicators to separate so-called “NAFRIS” (“North African Intensive Perpetrators” in police terminology) from ethnically white-looking men, thus missing evidence on


32. Daniel Bax is a former taz journalist and now works with the Mediendienst-integration.de, an online information portal for journalists dealing with issues of racism and migration, as well as, security and cultural issues. The interview took place in Berlin on January 12, 2018.
New Year's Eve 2015/2016. Another important side effect of New Year's Eve 2015/2016 is that the incidents apparently called enough attention to women's bodies in public spaces, eventually leading to the establishment of “groping and harassment free” safe zones in major cities such as Berlin during New Year’s Eve or in Munich during Oktoberfest in 2017. Although it is important to call to attention women’s bodies in relation to still existing patriarchy (consider also the #MeToo debate of that same year), it is nevertheless questionable that it took an incident involving the “racialized Other” to bring enough attention to a wider structural issue that was until then widely neglected.

Finally, another racializing trope of anti-Semitic allegations against Muslims took place shortly after President Donald Trump announced Jerusalem to be Israel’s capital along with his intention to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Just like in other cities of the world, Berlin took to the streets, while protestors were primarily citizens of Arab and Palestinian backgrounds. Shortly afterward, the press distributed stigmatizing allegations about the “Demo of Shame” claiming that chants of “Death to the Jews” were shouted for minutes on end. Although it is true that Israeli flags were burned during the demonstration, the singing of such anti-Semitic chants could not be proved either by video or by audiotapes by various individuals, the organization Jewish Forum for Democracy and against Anti-Semitism (JFDA), or by an Israeli journalist, who was present. And albeit this seems to be a good example for the misrepresentation of facts, several nationwide online and printed articles were published and Minister of Justice Heiko Maas immediately stated that people who shout “death to Jews” should “be tried” in 2018, Maas became the minister of foreign affairs in Merkel’s new cabinet. Maas then also called for the establishment of a “commissioner against anti-Semitism” who will answer the following foreign policy question for the German public, which is seemingly left

untainted by prior media reporting on the so-called Middle East conflict, “Why do we need to experience and witness these forms [of anti-Semitism] nowadays on German streets and public places?” Although public media shaming of the demonstrators was common, one of the few groups that publicly showed solidarity with the demonstrators was the Jewish Antifa Berlin (many of them Israelis), who stood in solidarity with the Palestinian demonstrators against the media misrepresentations and Maas’s allegations.

The incident was yet more fuel to the fire of inflammatory rhetoric against Muslims as a threat to democracy. Quickly, several political statements were made and most notably a draft proposal was put forth to the parliament by the CDU tackling the ostensibly growing threat of an alleged imported anti-Semitism. German states should thus “ensure that the possibilities of § 54 (1) No. 5 of the Residence Act are consistently applied to foreigners who call for anti-Semitic hatred. It is the will of the German Bundestag [Parliament] to counter the call for hatred against sections of the population and the endangerment of peaceful coexistence by intellectual arsonists early on by classifying this behavior as a particularly serious expulsion interest.”

Ten days before the national Holocaust Remembrance Day in January 2018, the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and the Greens passed the resolution entitled “Fighting Anti-Semitism in a Determined Way” to counter the increase of anti-Semitism on German soil. Therein, the 2018 Bundestag resolution lists several measures meant to fight the rise of anti-Semitism including appointing a minister responsible for anti-Semitism/Jewish Affairs (Antisemitismusbeauftragte/n) to coordinate activities across the different national ministries and states, which would add to another already existing special representative within the Foreign Ministry. While the resolution names anti-Semitism as a general problem, it also highlights that it has “a special breeding ground” (be-
sonderer Nährboden) in Africa and the Middle East, which seems to allude to the recent wave of refugees, as well as, linking it to their attendant German Muslim and black subjects. The resolution continues in Sub-category Three to ask if the burning of an Israeli flag (in public, for example, during demonstrations) could be summoned by criminal law, while in Sub-category Six it calls for a legal strengthening of the ability to expel foreigners on the basis of anti-Semitism. In Sub-category Seven, it strongly opposes the global BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel) and demands that jurisdiction verifies whether BDS could qualify as general hate speech and incitement against a people (Volksethnetzung) and thus become liable before the law. In Sub-category Sixteen, the resolution demands regular reports on the state of anti-Semitism that shall be discussed regularly in the parliament; in Sub-category Seventeen, a European-wide effort of countries and institutions to cooperate in the fight against anti-Semitism is called for. The fractions of the CDU, the Left, the SPD, and the Greens in the Free State of Thuringia have issued a proposal similar to the one mentioned above, in which BDS is clearly stressed as pivotal in the fight against anti-Semitism and is marked as anti-Semitic. 46

According to police and intelligence statistics, 47 there have been around 43.6 anti-Semitic physical attacks per year in Germany between 2001 and 2015. 48 In 2016, there were 28 attacks plus two murder attempts; in 2017, there were 28 physical attacks. More than 95% of them were committed by right-wing, white German individuals.

The overview in Figure 1 shows that there was an average of 43 physical anti-Semitic attacks per year (Gewalttaten). In comparison, from January to December 2017, 268 refugees (not counting German Muslims) were physically injured during racist attacks, while 15 of them were children 49 according to government data. 50 Furthermore, German Muslims experienced 32 physical at-

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47. Until the beginning of 2017, there were no official statistics on anti-Muslim racism, anti-black racism, etc. The data given in the statistics here is solely and entirely from police and intelligence statistics. The former have collected data without great conceptual clarity especially when it comes to racism. For a more detailed description of the data collection problem, see Anna-Esther Younes (2016): Islamophobia in Germany: National Report 2015, in: Enes Bayraklı & Farid Hafez, European Islamophobia Report 2015, Istanbul, SETA, 2016.
49. The last quarter (October to December) of the annual data didn’t list children separately. In the second quarter of the year, there were officially no injured children and there is no separate data for the fourth quarter of the year.
attacks, according to government data. So far there are no statistical correlations between anti-Semitic violence and the refugee influx – in fact, the overwhelming majority of perpetrators are white, right-wing German individuals. There is also no considerable increase due to the so-called “refugee crisis” (since 2015) or even an increase in “foreigner violence” (PMK-Ausländer). The threat of an alleged “Muslim anti-Semitism” is, however, arguably stigmatizing an already powerless minority of refugees, as well as, Muslim and/or black communities in Germany that have little power to counter such slandering narratives. In conclusion, it is reasonable to wonder about the geopolitical relevance of a public emphasis on an “imported anti-Semitism” by Muslims and blacks that doesn’t seem to correspond to statistical evidence? And, moreover, why is the numeric growth and social threat of right-wing and conservative extremists (as will be shown above) and their attendant political bodies in the parliament not addressed publically in the same manner as ”Muslim anti-Semitism”?

Physical and Verbal Attacks
Attacks on politicians constitute another pillar of the other worrying trends indicating an expansion of right-wing and/or conservative-leaning racist worldviews toward the representatives of German democracy and the state. According to

the government of Germany, there were 205 politically motivated criminal acts (including physical attacks, intimidations, destruction of property) against German parliamentarians in the approximately 210 days between 01.01.2017 and 31.07.2017 (figures on the last five months of 2017 have not yet been made public). In comparison, in 2016, 317 criminal offenses were committed against politicians in around 320 days (01.01.2016 - 13.11.2016) and were motivated by the so-called refugee crisis. In the beginning of 2017, the government argued that politicians were targeted when they started rejecting right-wing ideology and when they spoke up in defence of immigration (meaning Syrian and Afghani immigration primarily for Germany). In an interview with ReachOut Berlin, the increase of physical and non-physical attacks against politicians was ascribed not only to the positioning of politicians on issues of refugee asylum and anti-neo-Nazism, but also because most of these politicians weren’t explicitly or publicly vocal and positioned on these or similar (i.e. racist) issues before, which turned them into new and visible new targets.

Of the 205 incidents until mid-2017, 93 were right-wing motivated criminal offenses; 18 were left-wing motivated; and 94 cases were not able to be categorized. Many of the 94 uncategorized cases, however, were characterized by rape fantasies against female MPs or Angela Merkel (graffiti, Facebook, emails), other forms of sexualized violence such as insults (primarily against women) and were many times interwoven with references to, for example “Rape Fugees,” violent threats of gun violence or bombings, Nazi and pedophilia allusions, and homophobia coupled with allusions to Muslims or Islam. On March 31, 2017, two gunshots were fired from a car at the party office of The Left (Die Linke) in Leipzig - notably this incident was also deemed “not categorizable.” The latter acts and themes of violence, however, might reasonably indicate right-wing-leaning actors.

The myth of the former East as being more prone to Nazi violence is not supported, with an almost even-handed dataset that includes 13 of the 16 federal German states, with no indication that the East is represented more often.

54. Interview with Helga Seyb (Reach Out) and Kati Becker (Registerstelle Berlin), Berlin. 20.12.2017.
55. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/13592.
56. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/13592, pp. 29-45.
57. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/13592, p. 38.
However, according to the German government, such attacks on politicians and their facilities are not happening nationwide and therefore there are no legitimate grounds for understanding the attacks as “strategic and systematic intimidation” of politicians. In several documents, the aggressive deeds are attributed to a “situated impulse to act” (situativer Tatimpuls), term that doesn’t exist in legal language, nor does it comprehensively define any collective action taken by a group against another group/person (i.e. neo-Nazis vs. politicians) for any informed understanding of the attack’s context. In early 2017, the government stated that the violent intimidation tactics are used against representatives of a “functioning asylum policy.” Yet, later the same year, the government softened its position, indicating that it does not see any intentional and/or motivated efforts in the violent acts themselves that deem further concern on a structural level.

In Berlin, for instance, a pastor was threatened, a bookseller tracked down and surveyed, and a unionist’s car set on fire, all because they publically announced their support for refugees and stood up against neo-Nazi ideologies. In an interview, the aforementioned unionist, Detlef Fendt, stated that the trend of public intimidations

58. En passant, the government’s response in Drucksache 18/13529 (2017: 3) is also that their main source of information about attacks on politicians comes from the Joint Center for Defense against Extremism and Terrorism (Gemeines Extremismus- und Terrorismusabwehrzentrum, GETZ). This artful disclosure of unconstitutional data surveillance needs more explanation. At the end of 2006, the “Law for the Establishment of Collective Data Sets of Police Offices and Intelligence Services of the Federal Government and States” was ratified and ensured a data exchange based on common data sets between the police and intelligence services (“Law for the establishment of collective data sets of Police Offices and Intelligence Services of the Federal Government and States”) (from December 22, 2006, ratified on December 31, 2006, BGBl, p. 3409). An overview of the law can be accessed online at http://www.buzer.de/gesetze/75771 (in German only). Part-and-parcel of that development was the introduction of an Anti-Terror Data Set (Anti-Terror-Datei, ATD), in the following March (2007). A legal move as this thus provides for a free data exchange between police offices and the intelligence services in Germany. This includes the Federal Office for the Protection of the Government (Verfassungsschutz), the Military Counter-Intelligence Service (Militärischer Abschirmdienst, MAD) and the Federal Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst), and also includes the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) as the only federal office that cooperates in the GETZ. (See the GETZ homepage for the list of partners: https://www.bka.de/DE/UnsereAufgaben/Kooperationen/GETZ/getz_node.html). According to Will (2006 & 2012), the law from 2006 has durably changed Germany’s “architecture of security,” actually breaching the constitutional “Principle of Separation” (Trennungsprinzip) that was engrained in the Constitution due to the lessons from fascist Germany. The close cooperation between intelligence offices and the police made possible the Nazi persecution of minorities and political opponents. The Principle of Separation introduced after WWII thus secured that such cooperation and form of persecution shall not be possible again. With the 2006 law, this legal separation has been breached for the first time in post-WWII German history, although it was deemed unconstitutional by the High Court of Germany in 2014 (BVerfG, Urteil des Ersten Senats vom 24. April 2013- 1 BvR 1215/07 - Rn. [1-233], http://www.bverfg.de/e/rs/20130424_1bvr121507.html. In English: BVerfG, Judgment of the First Senate of 24 April 2013 - 1 BvR 1215/07 - paras. (1-233), http://www.bverfg.de/e/rs/20130424_1bvr121507en.html). The government seemingly normalizes the breach of the “Principle of Separation” and its replacement with the “Principle of the Availability of Information” in an unapologetic way by way of introducing their data retrieval in the named documents (Drucksachen. Antworten). [A large part of this footnote is taken from Anna-Esther Younes (2014) “A Chronicle of A Disappearance: Mapping the Figure of the Muslim in Berlin’s Verfassungsschutz Reports (2002-2009)”, in Islamophobia Studies Journal, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 114-142: pp. 120-121.]

59. Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/11125, p. 3.

and violence reminded him of his grandfather who was imprisoned in a concentration camp by the Nazis.\footnote{Jo Goll und Torsten Mandalka, RBB 24, 18.02.2017, “Neukölln erlebt neue Welle rechtsextremer Gewalt”. Accessible at https://www.rbb24.de/politik/beitrag/2017/02/neukoelln-rechtsextreme-gewalt-.html, retrieved January 4, 2018.}

MP Caren Lay’s (The Left) experiences are another good example of attacks on political representatives: since 2010, her staff and offices have been attacked 28 times by right-wing supporters. In only one case did the police issue an arrest. According to Lay’s office, “There were many conversations with police officials [...], but until today we were continuously told that investigations brought little reliable traces. \textit{[We were told that]} just because somebody is [...] a well-known figure in the local right-wing scene, that that doesn’t necessarily mean that \textit{[the police]} can add the respective person to the list of suspects \textit{[sic]}. In various press releases as well as in many personal conversations \textit{[with the police]}, MP Lay has regularly criticized the police for their lack of interest in solving the cases.”\footnote{The personal list was sent to the author in December 2017, by MP Lay’s office. The quote is taken from an email exchange with MP Caren Lay’s office. December 21, 2017.}

It is thus worrying to observe a negation of a home-grown neo-Nazi scene (including its violence) whose growth goes way beyond the so-called “refugee crisis” in 2015. The rise of right-wing attacks is attributed primarily to the effects of the refugee influx and downplayed as not having any prior structural implications or comparable events. A similar attitude can be found toward the National Socialist Underground (NSU) complex later in the report.

From January 2017 onwards, Islamophobia became a subcategory of “hate crimes” in official police statistics of “politically motivated criminal acts.”\footnote{Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/12319.} In a more detailed response from the government\footnote{Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/146.}, focusing on the months from April to June, the data shows an emphasis on person-centred attacks on individuals. Around 97% of all incidents registered by the police were officially categorized as right-wing motivated crimes.\footnote{Deutscher Bundestag, hib 584/2017.} Overall in 2017, there were up to 1,906 criminal attacks on refugees \textit{(5.2 attacks per day)}; 286 attacks against refugee shelters \textit{(0.8 attacks per day)}; and 132 criminal acts and physical attacks against (refugee) aid workers \textit{(0.4 attacks per day)}.\footnote{Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/889, 23.02.2018.} The numbers are provisional, due to change (it is probable that they will go up rather than down), and are solely police and intelligence statistics. These numbers on refugees and their immediate environment alone, however, now prove, statistically, that (violent) Islamophobia is \textit{the} pivotal force in contemporary German racism/-s and a continuous driving force in German society writ-large.
Attacks on mosques are more difficult to assess. According to the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DİTİB), in 2016 around 76 DİTİB and other mosques were attacked in the first three quarters of the year, compared to 97 in 2017. Police data and categories were changed with the new information catalogue that was introduced in 2017, which means that attacks on religious Muslim institutions that are not full-fledged mosques (such as prayer rooms at airports) or even adjacent buildings or side-street vandalism are no longer included in the records. Overall, the government registered around 71 attacks on mosques and 908 “anti-Islam” (islamfeindlich) motivated crimes against German Muslims (ranging from verbal to physical attacks and murder attempts). A list sent by the anti-discrimination research office of the DİTİB collected all government registered attacks on mosques together with attacks registered by the DİTİB (DİTİB mosques and others, however not all mosques in Germany). Overall, this list shows 101 attacks on mosques in Germany throughout 2017, while the government statistics registered only 57 attacks on mosques from January until the end of September. FAIR international, the Federation against Injustice and Racism in Cologne, has their own list with attacks on mosques in Germany, merging the official government statistics with those of their own media analysis. FAIR international thus counts 71 attacks on mosques for the year 2017 in Germany. The Counselling Centre for Equal Treatment (ADNB) in Berlin also noted that it happens that busses in the vicinity of Berlin refuse to stop near refugee asylums, which are oftentimes in isolated locations and hard to reach otherwise.

In 2016, there were 2,545 attacks against refugees in person (excluding attacks on asylum homes or aid workers). Aid workers were attacked 217 times and asylum

67. DİTİB - The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, usually referred to as DİTİB, is one of the largest Islamic organizations in Germany and runs a regular register on racist attacks against their institutions and worshippers. For more information see www.ditib.de/ The numbers were retrieved via email and depict only the statistics for the first three quarters of the year 2016 and 2017. The last quarter of police statistics is not yet finished. The data for 2017 is also provisional and might still change due to new and incoming data from the police or individual mosques in the next couple of months. (All data is of 21.12.2017)


69. Ulrich Paffrath is a PhD student at the Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main (Germany) and also serves as an assistant researcher about anti-Muslim racism and racism at the DİTİB academy in Cologne. The complete list he assembled was sent to the author on January 10, 2018.

70. See: Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksachen 18/12319, 18/13330 and 19/1448.

71. FAIR International is a non-governmental and independent counselling and information center on issues of racism and anti-Muslim racism, in particular. Since 2014, FAIR International collects data on attacks against mosques, and since 2016 data on physical and verbal attacks on “Muslim identified” or Muslim-positioned persons. The data presented in this report are open to change and provisional. The provisional list was sent to the author by Taner Aksoy, managing director of FAIR, on January 12, 2017. For more information please visit www.fair-int.de/.

homes 988 times.\textsuperscript{73} In 2015, there was no comprehensive police/government data collection. It is notable that there is no direct relation between the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) federal states and the so-called West German federal states when it comes to racist incidents. This again does not support the mainstream myth that most racist or Islamophobic attacks and incidents occur in the former East (GDR). Noticeable for the year 2015 is that there were 326 male criminal right-wing suspects, compared to 40 female right-wing criminal suspects.\textsuperscript{74} This may imply that actual physical violence is still predominantly perpetrated by males, though it does not mean that women do not occupy important (supportive) roles, which are not reflected in criminal offenses or at least in their statistics.

Importantly, Islamophobic incidents are often not reported to the police nor accounted for in their statistics. People are often too scared or ashamed, do not know where to go, or are blocked from reporting in subtle ways by local law enforcement authorities.\textsuperscript{75} At a local Berlin level, Kati Becker from the local Register\textsuperscript{76} stated, “We are not part of migrant or Muslim networks or organizations and thus we do know and see very little of what is actually happening. However, if we have interviews with victims of racist attacks or if we engage in reach-out programs in mosques, for instance, we hear that people are having racist encounters almost daily. The estimated number of unreported cases is thus most likely a lot higher than our statistics.” \textsuperscript{77}

In Berlin, the preliminary data for 2017 collected by Reach Out and the Berlin Registers shows a decline in racist attacks in comparison to the year before. Compared to 360 racist attacks (verbal attacks, intimidations, arson attacks, where people could have been or were hurt) in 2016, including 13 of an Islamophobic nature, they reported a decline to 201 racist attacks (provisional data as of 20.12.2017) in 2017, including 11 Islamophobic attacks. According to Helga Seyb from Reach Out

\textsuperscript{73} Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/11298.
\textsuperscript{74} Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/7000, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{76} Registers are documentation centers for racist, dehumanizing and antifeminist attacks, graffiti, demonstrations, verbal and physical attacks, stalking, incitements to violence, arson attacks and more.
\textsuperscript{77} Kati Becker is the coordinator of all registers in Berlin. The coordination office is located in the same office as ReachOut (Victim’s Counselling Center for victims of Right-Wing Extremism, Racism and Anti-Semitism, see: www.reachoutberlin.de/). The project description of the Berlin Registers is taken from their homepage: “The documentation-centre’s aim is not only to record and analyse extreme right incidents but also to uncover discrimination in everyday life on a local basis. Opposed to existing statistics, documentation-centres don’t only record criminal charges like property damages or assaults but also incidents with a lower threshold like stickers, insults and threats that for one reason or another weren’t reported to the police. The documentation of such incidents at local drop-in centres is a possibility for victims to share their experiences and not be left alone with the incidents. [...] The documentation of incidents is published on the homepage of the Berlin documentation-centres [...]. Every year the districts analyse the incidents. [...] Documentation-centres are limited in their operating range. They can only include those incidents that are published by the police or are documented by the drop-in centres or the victim counselling centre.” For more information or an overview of the data see http://www.berliner-register.de/. Kati Becker and Helga Seyd were interviewed together at the facilities of ReachOut on December 20, 2017.
and Katja Becker from the Register, racist attacks in Berlin have doubled since 2015. Anti-Muslim racism, however, statistically stagnates; in terms of reporting, it exhibits a slight numeric decline.

In Munich, the local Register\(^78\) accounted for 14 Islamophobic incidents and attacks, which would mirror the Berlin statistics and shows similar trends for the southwest of Germany and one of its most important cities. Due to a limited allocation of registers or victim counselling centres in Germany,\(^79\) data centres and thus data remains primarily located in the former East, contributing to a distorted representation of the former East as inherently more racist, sexist, violent and overall dangerous.

Overall it is safe to attest to an increase of violence in certain spaces (i.e. mosques, against German politicians); a marginal decrease in other cases (asylum homes, physical attacks against refugees and/or “Muslims”); and an increase in numbers concerning racist attacks writ large since 2015 - for Berlin even a doubling since 2015 according to Reach Out.

**Different Phenomena of Violence**

The new liberal game over democracy’s definition also finds expression in the public display of violence. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Government (Verfassungsschutz) has published data that clearly shows an increase in (certain types of) violence from 2015 to 2016. Right-wing motivated criminal offenses rose to 23,555 (22,960 in 2015), while left-wing motivated criminal offenses decreased to 9,389 (9,605 in 2015), with a further 5,233 offenses not categorizable (4,391 in 2015). Additionally, two new group categories were introduced for surveillance, both relating to right-wing extremists that are willing to use guns and reject the democratic order of the constitution: the so-called Reichsbürger and Selbstverwaltende.\(^80\) The Federal Ministry of the Interior notes a climax in politically motivated crimes for the year 2016\(^81\) so far - still without taking into account the official statistics for 2017.

Along with the electoral gain of the Islamophobic AfD and a public debate that tried to stigmatize or critically dissect many of the AfD arguments, Germany nevertheless witnessed an increase in everyday racism writ large. Whilst attacks on “Muslims” and refugee asylum homes are slightly decreasing, comparing to 2015

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\(^78\). München-Chronik. The Munich Chronicle is a research and documentation center for racist, dehumanizing and antifeminist attacks, graffiti, demonstrations, verbal and physical attacks, stalking, incitements to violence, arson attacks and more. The homepage has been online since December 12, 2017. For a more detailed description of their work see https://muenchen-chronik.de/.


and 2016, it becomes also apparent that attacks are now less focused on primarily one target group/scapegoat (i.e. anti-Muslim racism) and instead seem to widen their scope, including more ethnic minorities. This official political climate might be explained in two ways. Firstly, Islamophobic attacks are occurring in the form of organized attacks in public (against refugees, politicians, Muslims) or demonstrations (PEGIDA), because the respective representatives (AfD) are now part of the German parliament, which might ostensibly signal more tolerance toward racist violence. Secondly, everyday racism and violence (beyond Islamophobia) that shows itself in a more “organic” and spontaneous way is increasing. With their Islamophobic election campaign for national elections the AfD was the subject and agent of a wave of a general increase in racist attacks whilst lowering the bars for public demonstrations of racial hysteria. However, depending on how the AfD will perform eventually, the worrying rise in numbers of right-wing extremists with and without guns remains the same.

An example for the normalization/increase of generally racist public demeanours is a Facebook post from November 3, 2017 in the Federal State of Hesse (Hessen, West Germany). It depicts the famous photo of Anne Frank on a pizza box cover headlined by a well-known German food producer’s emblem (Dr. Oetker) and its all-time famous slogan, “The one fresh from the oven.” (Fig. 2) The photo was posted by Mister W in a Facebook group called “The Patriots,” which included 19 MPs of the AfD and 33 AfD MPs of various federal parliaments (Landtagsabgeordnete).

Ulrich Paffrath, who researches anti-Muslim incidents, writes, “For the data collection period 2017, we witness already a linguistic radicalization in comparison to 2016. The latter finds expression especially in the ‘hate mail’ that are being received [by DİTİB mosques]. The perpetrators are increasingly willing to

82. The interview with ReachOut took place on December 20, 2017.
83. The reprinting of this Facebook screenshot is for the purpose of citation. The author would also like to thank Dr. Oetker and their legal team for their cooperation during the research as well as to the bakery Backhaus Eckhardt in Wetzlar and their lawyer for further information.
84. Facebook quickly took down the photo although “The Patriots” still continue as a Facebook group, albeit now with more self-regulation concerning their own posting rules. The bakery fired Mister W after they learned about the posting.
85. Parliamentary Debates in the Federal Parliament. Speech by Caren Lay, the Left, accessible on Facebook, December 13, 2017: www.facebook.com/linksfraktion/videos/10155251843788434/?hc_ref=ARRK2azf7578dzTokG_JK3MLxH9h3yYFyFhlj0CH6MhoXOYXicgA6NLQOYkkKkU
86. Ulrich Paffrath is a PhD student at the Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main (Germany) and also serves as an assistant researcher on anti-Muslim racism and racism at the DİTİB academy in Cologne.
use right-wing extremist or dehumanizing formulations, which in parts (especially linguistically) equate to familiar tropes of Nazi anti-Semitism (i.e. bacillus, parasites in the German national body, Islamic vermin, etc.)\textsuperscript{87}. Another example, according to Paffrath, that also infers right-wing extremist attitudes of the perpetrator(s) is “the often-used word ‘popular body’ (\textit{Volkskörper}) in combination with descriptions of minorities as alien matter or pathogens/germs/viruses, such as: ‘[...] you are the poisonous sting in the healthy national body that we must tear out completely.’”\textsuperscript{88}

Although organized Islamophobic demonstrations might have decreased in number, spontaneous violence and brutalization levels increased. For example, in Cottbus (East Germany) on the night of April 15, 2017, a car sped up in a 30 km/h restricted inner-city zone and killed the 22-year-old Egyptian student Shaden Mohamed al-Gohary in a hit-and-run incident. (Fig. 3) Whilst the architecture student was lying on the street, dying, witnesses and friends stated that people started insulting Shaden in racist ways, believing she was a refugee.\textsuperscript{89}

One witness stated that the people who were in the car eventually came back on foot and started saying 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.”\textsuperscript{91}

After the police arrived, racist vitriol apparently continued but didn’t make it into the first official police reports. Only after a young woman published a leaflet days later, was the press informed about the incident and the prosecution first heard of the hate-speech and vitriol at the scene. To date, the investigations continue, including internal police investigations as to why valid information was left out of the police reports. The Berlin-based newspaper \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} reports that a

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure3}
\caption{The 22-year-old Egyptian student Shaden Mohamed al-Gohary killed in a hit-and-run incident in Cottbus, on April 15, 2017.\textsuperscript{90}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{87.} Excerpts from a hate-mail sent to the Central Mosque of Cologne on September 9, 2017 (Kölner Zentralmoschee). Sent via email by Paffrath on January 3, 2018. Translation by Anna-Esther Younes.

\textsuperscript{88.} Excerpts from a hate-mail sent to the Central Mosque of Cologne on September 8, 2017 (Kölner Zentralmoschee). Sent via email by Paffrath on January 3, 2018. Translation by Anna-Esther Younes.

\textsuperscript{89.} Hend El-Behary, “Was the Egyptian Student in Germany Killed in a Racially-Charged Attack?” \textit{Egypt Independent}, April 20, 2017, retrieved on July 20, 2017, from http://www.egyptindependent.com/was-egyptian-student-germany-killed-racially-charged-attack/. The photo of Shaden Mohamed el-Gonary was taken from the same article for the purpose of citation.

\textsuperscript{90.} The photo of Shaden Mohamed el-Gonary was taken from an article in the \textit{Egypt Independent} for the purpose of citation.

big part of the smoke screen surrounding the case (including witnesses that didn't want to be named publically) might be due to the fact that the extremist neo-Nazi scene in Cottbus has already led to a series of tensions, intimidating the public and strengthening the positions of sympathizers - so far secretly. In January 2017, 120 neoNazis marched through the city centre, right next to the police station and in a legally unannounced deployment.92 The reporting journalist, Alexander Fröhlich, drew a parallel to Germany in the beginning of the 90s and it is reasonable to understand this neo-Nazi demonstration as a political provocation and a social intimidation/recognition.

**Internet**

Today, the media and the Internet compulsively merge, for the better or the worst, representing the fourth (trans-/national) pillar in a national democracy. Most of what was said about the media in this report, can equally be said about the Internet (see the Anne Frank collage discussed in this report that appeared on Facebook). Furthermore, next to the more mainstream reporting criticized by Hafez or Bax in the media section of this report, it seems that the right-wing online portal “Politically Incorrect News” (PI News) has garnered more followers since the Islamophobia report in 2015. Back then, PI News counted around 100,000 visitors per day, in 2016 it had 120,000, and by 2017 it further increased to 150,000 visitors per day. For the past 10 years there is a constant rise in visitors to this right-wing conservative, pseudo-liberal and outright white supremacist portal that semi-artfully stages itself under the heading “News against the Mainstream · Pro-American · Pro-Israeli · Against the Islamization of Europe · For the Constitution and Human Rights.”93 The main topics the PI News pivots are Islamization, crime, the 2017 elections, immigration, the Left, activism and "old media" (seemingly referring to themselves as the “new media.”) 94

**Central Figures in the Islamophobic Network**

The central figure in this report has been an aggrieved white subject that is, at best, utterly disturbed and, at worst, traumatized by the perceived “cultural loss” due to more diversity in the nation state. This aggrieved white figure takes on political currency by seemingly representing Germany’s margins and center at the same time: it represents the “law of neutrality,” the ‘angry’ protest voter that helped the AfD enter the German parliament, as well as, the right-wing attackers and the

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overwhelming majority of times when law enforcement could or has not pursued important hints and facts.

Another reliable figure that represents the continuous investment in Islamophobic resentment is the regular demonstrations of the various PEGIDA fractions throughout Germany. In 2017, 76 demonstrations against the “Islamization of the Occident” were held (around 6.3 demonstrations per month) with an average of 46.8 participants per gathering. The intelligence service (Verfassungsschutz) of Bavaria, for that matter, monitors the activities of PEGIDA-Munich, PEGIDA-Nuremberg, and PEGIDA-Franken due to direct links to right-wing extremist groups and unconstitutional activities.95

Six months after the elections, Merkel finally consolidated her government with more women than ever before in German history (six women, nine men in the cabinet, while six of 15 ministry positions have gone to women). Yet, current German and European geopolitics seem to clearly signal a new era of governance: in a post-2009 economic era, seven to nine years later, a “new” political elite with entrepreneurial qualities – and weaknesses – has entered into governments, selling nationalist and racist attitudes to consumer-citizens who want to maintain a good conscience whilst holding on to an economic affluence gone. Dr Alice Weidel, lesbian, mother, and former investment-banking economist, could be labelled a “global nativist” and one of the spearheads of the AfD leadership.96 Weidel is in a way symptomatic for this “new” political right-wing elite: her role, as well as that of others, shows that formerly excluded (sexual) minorities are today able to rally behind the banner of racist exclusion whilst pursuing neoliberal economic politics that further the disintegration of the social fabric in the name of “freedom” and “security.” Whether this nationalist-conservative future will also be open for a “king to be pregnant,”97 is still left open.

The rhetoric of “economic migrants,” through which (primarily) refugees of war and conflict zones are categorized as “worthy of protection” and “not worthy of protection,” is enabling the tightening of security and immigration law in the face of a global human crisis primarily funded by European money. To date, Germany is amongst the world’s top five countries for weapons’ exports (based

97. In 1969, fantasy author Ursula K. Le Guin published her famous sci-fi book The Left Hand of Darkness, in which she tackled topics such as war and culture and deconstructed conventional views of gender, sexuality and race. Here, I am referring to one of the most famous sentences in her book, namely “The king was pregnant.” Le Guin died on January 22, 2018.
on economic profit) and it has followed its legacy of selling weapons to warring factions in war, dictatorships, as well as conflict zones since the 1970s.

In the meantime, the new government is expanding the Ministry of the Interior to "Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Homeland." What this new expansion of words, in particular that of “homeland” (Heimat), will entail in a material and legal way – other than appeasing a more and more right wing-leaning voter constituency – is not yet fully clear. What is clear, however, is that this political move happens in the wake of the rise of the AfD into parliament, PEGIDA’s continuing weekly marches, as well as, against the backdrop of refugee influxes and a steady increase in direct physical violence against those seen as Muslims and people of color writ-large.

Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia
In June 2017, another National Action Plan against Racism (Nationaler Aktionsplan gegen Rassismus, NAP) was published by the government. Although the government received several critiques for its past NAPs from the Institute for Human Rights in Germany, it might nevertheless be a step in the right direction. For this year’s report, homophobia and transphobia were included in the action plan. Although their inclusion is important for any intersectional analysis of racism, it still doesn’t become sufficiently clear why homophobia and transphobia against white people as general phenomena were included in a report on racism – the question remains also unanswered in the document.

Between January and September 2017, German pilots solemnly embraced civil disobedience as a political action and goal: 222 deportations (primarily to Afghanistan) were stopped because German pilots refused to fly with the soon-to-be-deported on board. The pilots believed Afghanistan to be an unsafe place.

According to the MEDIENDIENST who conducted the research on MPs of various ethnicities, there is a small increase in the number of MPs whose origin does not rest entirely inside German borders. It doesn’t become clear how many are of color and how many are white, and their number is still marginal, but with 8.2% as

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opposed to 5.9% in the years before, there is a slight increase in terms of representation (58 out of 709 parliamentarians). That makes 58 MPs with “migration stories” in their family and 709 ethnically white German MPs. The Left party scores the highest with 13 out of 69 MPs, the AfD has 8 out of 92, Merkel’s CDU has 7 out of 246 MPs, and the SPD 15 out of 153.104 In comparison, 22.5% of the German population has one or two parents of non-German nationality and/or descent.

After the seemingly intended misrepresentation of the Anti-Trump Demonstrations of Palestinians and Arabs in Germany, The Jewish Antifa Berlin stood in solidarity as one of the few public acts of group solidarity with the protesters and published a counter-narrative to the mainstream media representation.

Starting in April, people took to Twitter to resist negative representations of Muslims, Islam and mosques by Journalist Constantin Schreiber. That month a Twitter campaign was born under the hashtag “My Mosque Report,” countering the negative representation with personal love messages from people and their relationship to their mosque/s.105

An ongoing research funded by the European Commission – Directorate of Justice maps counter-narratives to Islamophobia in eight European Union member states, including Germany.106

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Since 2005, the first female chancellor of Germany and currently the leader of the G7 (the world’s seven economically strongest countries), Dr Angela Merkel, has undoubtedly steered the country with subtle and clever tactics, playing off formerly left-wing tropes against conservative ones in a post-/economic crisis and culturally diverse Europe. Especially, her soft politics regarding the cultural and political opening for gay and lesbian marriage equality as well as her humanitarianism expressed toward refugees in times of war, have not always been straightforward, but rather have cautiously straddled the political lines between enemies and supporters of these policies. Her attempt at opening Germany, and by extension, Europe, to a more multicultural reality has left her with few friends inside the political establishment in Germany (including her own party) or Europe - most notable are the antagonisms with the next generation of young, conservative and right-wing leaning political representatives such as Kurz


105. See: https://twitter.com/hashtag/meinmoscheereport?lang=en


107. Member States: Germany, France, United Kingdom, USA, Japan, Canada, Italy. Together, these countries represent around two-thirds of the global net wealth.
in Austria over the so-called refugee crisis. The AfD, conservative groups, and right-wing movements have successfully used the rising political tensions resulting from late 20th-century European changes toward more multiculturalism (even if those were not always embraced by the political establishment) by operating along tropes of socio-political grievances, white victimization, cultural trauma and powerlessness.

This report called to attention the dangers that lie in the democratic ideal of granting representative rights to all groups, without understanding that political and economic power is allocated very differently amongst those same groups. The fantasy of “freedom of representation” for everyone, thus, quickly finds its reality in a socioeconomic power gap where socioeconomically weaker groups are structurally unable to defend themselves against the misrepresentation by more powerful groups. Hence, the return of a “white nostalgia” on a “freedom-of-representation-for-everyone” ticket - in place of a more global and egalitarian Europe that protects its weakest links - threatens minority rights generally. In this respect, the observable normalization of racist hate speech and violence, physical threats against state representatives and in particular against Muslims, bears witness to a much larger structural change that needs to be tackled. In the following, some policy recommendations are articulated:

• Yearly state publications of statistics concerning Islamophobic incidents (including separate categories for refugees; asylum homes; aid workers; verbal and physical attacks on the latter two; as well as, two separate categories for attacks on mosques and German Muslims), racist incidents and right-wing (-motivated) crimes by the government should be made accessible to the public. This should entail a description of the definition of the categories (how the data is collected, defined and registered) as well as a comprehensive and easily accessible overview of the most important facts for policy work and journalists.

• Registerstellen (victims’ registers) and Opferberatungsstellen (victims’ counsels) must be implemented in all federal states and in all major cities. They should be kept separate from state institutions, but in close proximity to each other in order to ease access and anonymity for the victims.

• A comprehensive and nationwide awareness campaign for victims of anti-Muslim racism concerning the existence of registers and victim counselling offices as well as their legal rights should take place.

• The educational mandate of the state-funded public media should entail more distinguished reporting on minorities, in particular Islam and Muslims and should support and encourage more self-representation. The latter should include the hiring of more journalists of color, journalists of non-heteronormative sexual orientation and gender identities, as well as taking into account special measures to ensure the inclusion of class-wise underprivileged candidates and people who are forced to operate in a world designed primarily for those commonly called “abled-bodied.”

• Police and legal authorities have to be sensitized to Islamophobia and organized
right-wing (neo-Nazi) and racist movements. In that vein critical Whiteness and anti-racism trainings for police would be an important measure in order to be better able to properly situate a crime scene as well as monitoring systems within police work protocols regarding issues of racial discrimination.

- The government’s National Action Plan against Racism should also include a more detailed description of the general state of racism in Germany writ large, as the approach to the concept and term “race” seems academically outdated\(^\text{108}\), the guidelines for action don’t exceed the naming of funding programs. Overall, it seems like a lose description of already existing government programs of various sorts and general statements about racism. However, if properly executed, as it seems to be intended\(^\text{109}\), an action plan based on the already existing UN guidelines could be a good supplement for German civil society and government politics and could complement a yearly publication of statistics tackling racism and Islamophobia.

- More post-/colonial and anti-racist educational approaches in school and university curricula are needed in order to reflect the diversity of the student body and their histories as well as their personal and group experiences in Germany.

Chronology

- **01.01.2017:** Islamophobia becomes a category in police statistics and criminal reports and is thus statistically and officially registered by the government as of 2017.
- **10.01.2017:** Weeks after Anis Amri’s Christmas market attack in Berlin, the government proposes a new Draft Asylum Law, which would massively curtail refugee rights.
- **09.02.2017:** The Labour Court in Berlin judges that the “Law of Neutrality” violates the basic rights of headscarf-wearing women who want to enter the profession of teaching. The judgement states that it violates Article 4 (1) and (2), the right to freedom of belief and confession, of the German Basic Law.
- **15.04.2017:** Egyptian student Shaden Mohamed al-Gohary is hit by a car in a hit-and-run incident in the city of Cottbus, and verbally abused in a racist matter, whilst lying injured on the ground. She eventually dies three days later in hospital.
- **January to December, 2017:** The government counts 71 attacks on mosques, whereas non-governmental organizations have different accounts, varying from 70 to more than 100 attacks over the entire year. The government also counted approximately 908 attacks on German Muslims.
- **January to December, 2017:** In the first 273 days of 2017, there were 1,413 attacks on refugees and 93 attacks on aid workers in Germany.


\(^{109}\) Ibid., p. 39.
This is the third issue of the annual European Islamophobia Report (EIR) consisting of an overall evaluation of Islamophobia in Europe in the year 2017, as well as 33 country reports which include almost all EU member states and additional countries such as Russia and Norway. This year’s EIR represents the work of 40 prominent scholars and civil society activists from various European countries.

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

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

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

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

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