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

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

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

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

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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SETA is pleased to present the third edition of the annual *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) succeeding the reports of 2015 and 2016. This year, 40 prominent scholars and civil society actors from various European countries who specialize in different fields such as racism, gender, and discrimination studies, present 33 country reports. In addition to highlighting the developments of Islamophobia in key fields such as employment, education and politics, they provide precious country-specific policy recommendations to counter this phenomenon and a detailed chronology of events. Since every year it applies the same methodological framework on a large number of European countries, the *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) provides a unique collection of European-wide analyses in regard to anti-Muslim racism in Europe to policy makers, social scientists, and ordinary readers.

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

- First of all, Islamophobia is severely impacting the life of millions of European Muslims facing racism at university, in the workplace, the public sphere, etc. In addition to representing a threat to their physical life, this racism undermines their place in society and their sense of belonging in European nation states.
Secondly, the rise of Islamophobia both reflects and strengthens the normalization of far-right discourse in the political spectrum across Europe. Within a few months, neofascist parties entered the German Bundestag, accessed strategic ministries in Austria, and registered historical results in the French, Dutch and Italian elections.

Thirdly, Islamophobia poses a problem of internal security as it intensifies tensions between communities, legitimizes hate crimes against individuals, and undermines the European Union ideals of peace and coexistence.

Finally, Islamophobia represents an obstacle for European international relations, since it mars the EU image of tolerance worldwide and increases tension between EU member states and certain strategic partners, including Muslim countries.

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

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

Burhanettin Duran

*General Coordinator of SETA*
THE STATE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

ENES BAYRAKLI • FARID HAFEZ

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

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

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

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

The first statistics, which were revealed for 2017 by the German State reveal around 71 attacks on mosques and 908 crimes against German Muslims (ranging from verbal to physical attacks and murder attempts). Germany also registered 1,413 attacks on refugees and 93 attacks on aid workers in Germany in the first 273 days of 2017. However, although the German state registered 71 attacks on mosques, the DITIB, which is an NGO, listed 101 attacks on mosques in Germany all throughout 2017. Therefore, bearing in mind also what the FRA revealed about the reluctance of Muslims to report incidents, one can claim that the estimated number of unknown cases might be more than eight times higher. There are various reasons for these phenomena; some of these include:
• Victims may not be aware of the reporting mechanisms.
• The victims’ possible social isolation or proximity to the perpetrator.
• The victims’ lack of trust in the authorities, due to fears that their claim will not be taken seriously.
• The victims’ fear of being victimized again by police officers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Combatting Islamophobia on the European and the Supranational Levels

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

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

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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.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

14. Ibid.
15. The members of this coalition are the following: European Forum of Muslim Women; Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations; Karamah EU; European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion; European Network against Racism; and the Collective against Islamophobia in France.
A resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on March 23, 2016 (Resolution 31/16) expressed “concern over violent attacks motivated by anti-religious bias, targeting individuals belonging to religious minorities, as well as religious places, and recommended that states prevent, investigate and punish such acts.” Although this is more a general resolution on freedom of religion it is still relevant to EU states which are witnessing an unprecedented rise of anti-Muslim hate crimes in the last decade. More concretely, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance reported that “the fear of terrorism and racist and xenophobic speech often translate into increases in hate crimes targeting Muslims, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.” Like many others, the special rapporteur reiterated the importance of collecting disaggregated data on hate crimes targeting Muslims and others.

The Rise of the Far Right in Europe

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

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

18. Ibid.
The Right Wing in Opposition

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

There are many examples of this blatant anti-Muslim racism, some of which will be presented here. In this context, the Northern League’s candidate for president of the Lombardy region of Italy warned that there is a “risk that the white race disappears and is replaced by migrants.”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 Euroscetpeesists (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

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-optation 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-

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Granada-Islam_0_597390772.html.

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.

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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).

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.kielikone.fi/mot/eduskuntasanasto/netmot?UI=fi&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.42 This initiative was not only supported by the right wing, but also the Social Democrats and the Danish Social Liberal Party, arguing that they would, thus, empower Muslim women. There is also a law prohibiting male circumcision under way in Denmark.

Terrorist Attacks against Muslims

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

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

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

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

In Sweden, three members of the national socialist Nordic Resistance Movement were sentenced to up to eight-and-a-half years in prison. The trio was found guilty of bombings of two refugee housings and a libertarian socialist trade union office in Gothenburg, which severely wounded one person. They were trained in urban guerrilla warfare by a Russian radical nationalist and anti-Muslim paramilitary organization. The perpetrators were influenced by Islamophobic and anti-Semitic discourse, which was clear in a recorded video prayer to All-Father Odin in which they vowed to “retake our land” and “take the fight against you who have defiled our country.” “Oh Jew, oh Muslim / We Norsemen have awakened / You should fear us / We are coming after you / The rage of the Norsemen thunder / Be assured / Oh, Jew and Muslim / The Norsemen are coming after you.”

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. 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, 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.

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. 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.

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.\(^5\)

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

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

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

### 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

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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-

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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]).
THE STATE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

GERMANY

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

FRANCE

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

MALTA

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

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

**NETHERLANDS**

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

**POLAND**

- In 2017, Muslims were the most targeted group representing **20%** of all hate crime cases.
  (Source: National Prosecutor’s Office)

- Between January and October 2017, there were **664** hate crime proceedings regarding attacks against Muslims.
  (Source: Ministry of Interior)

- **193** (29%) of those proceedings resulted in an indictment.
  (Source: Ministry of Interior)
THE STATE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

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

In 2017, the end of the political crisis generated by the change of power in Macedonia was in sight. In the first half of the year, racism towards Albanians and Muslims in the media and the protests on the streets of the country, aimed at dehumanizing the requests of the Albanian people.

Cases of Islamophobia were sparked off by the unresolved interethnic disputes between Macedonians and Albanians. Yet, it is hard to pinpoint the exact nature of bias in the cases of Islamophobia when the victim is a Albanian Muslim since Muslim Albanian as ethnicity and religion often overlap and both give rise to hate crimes.

Hate speech in social and other media significantly increased in the beginning of 2017 and during the local elections in October. Discrimination and Islamophobia were also present in the field of employment, education and judicial institutions, which will be especially noted in this report.

Encouraging Muslims is an essential task in fighting Islamophobia. This process should be led by authorities with the cooperation of the Islamic Religion Community in Macedonia. The training of the local Muslim NGOs in detecting and processing hate speech and hate crime against Muslims is also important.

NGOs that are active in promoting and defending human rights have to deal with this issue separately beyond the narrative of pure discrimination. However, Islamophobia is often triggered by the global movements as well, the terrorist attacks in Europe, the political situation in the U.S., the wars in the Middle East even - all these were among the factors that generated Islamophobia in Macedonia.

This report will carefully follow the activities, analyze and explore the attitudes of the government and its institutions, the education system, politicians, media, justice system, etc., as well as identify potential problems and difficulties in detecting Islamophobia.
Извршно Резиме

Во 2017-та година се надзираше крајот на политичката криза. Во првата половина на годината албанофобијата и исламофобијата во медиумите, социјалните мрежи и на улиците се одвиваше во насока да се дехуманизираат барањата на Албанците.

Тоа објаснува зашто случаи на исламофобија беа поттикнати од нерешените мегуетнички несогласувања меѓу Македонците и Албанците. Но тешко е да се разликува потсвесниот мотив кога се разгледува еден случај, посебно кога жртвата е од албанска националност со исламска религија.

Говорот на омраза на социјалните и други типови медиуми се зголеми во почетокот на 2017 и за време на локалните избори. Дискриминацијата и исламофобијата беа исто видливи во сферата на образованието, вработувањето и судството, и ќе биде посебно забележано во извештајот.

Важна задача е да се охрабруваат муслиманите да се борат против исламофобијата. Овој процес треба да го водат властите во соработка со Исламската верска заедница на Македонија, но исто и треба да се обучуваат локалните муслимански невладини организации при откривање и процесирање говор на омраза и злосторство од омраза против муслиманите.

Невладините организации кои се активни во промовирање и бранење на човековите права мораат да се спра ваат поединечно со овој проблеми, измајќи го наративот на класичната дискриминација.

Сепак, исламофобијата е често поттикната од глобалните движења, како и од терористичките напади во Европа, политичката ситуација во САД, дури и војните на Средниот Исток и сè што е сегмент на создавање исламофобија во Македонија.

Овој извештај ќе ги следи активностите, анализира и истражи ставовите на Владата и нејзините институции, образовниот систем, политичарите, медиумите, судството, итн, како и да ги идентификува и детектираат проблемите за да пронайде случаи на исламофобија.
Introduction

The reader is kindly directed to “Islamophobia in Macedonia: National Report 2016” for an extensive description of the political situation and crises, as well as the context of Islam and the ethnic structure in Macedonia. All information in this report pertains to the period between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017.

The methodology used for drafting this report consists of desk research of media reports, reports from NGO organizations, reactions of the Ombudsman office and the Commission for Prevention of Discrimination, cases directly reported to the author, and online correspondence with important stakeholders. The languages of the data collected and used in this report are English, Macedonian, and Albanian.

Different religious groups have a relatively long tradition of living alongside each other in Macedonia. Many cases of Islamophobia are triggered by the unresolved interethnic disputes. These can be easily noticed in hate speech in social and other media, in the rhetoric of the politicians but also in cases of concrete discrimination in employment and the judicial processes. However, Islamophobia is often spurred by external factors as well. Macedonia was part of the route of the recent so-called migrant crisis. The political discourse around this issue affects not only the daily politics of the country, but also the attitudes toward Muslims in general.

Significant Incidents and Developments

The political scene among Albanian parties was tense but under the initiative of the Albanian government, they demonstrated solidarity in a joint document, which was a prerequisite for a new coalition with the SDSM (Socijaldemokratski sojuz na Makedonija – Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) or the VMRO - DPMNE (Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionernaja organizacija – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity). The media called this document the “Tirana Platform” and it was the reason for the start of the first protest in 2017, called “Тврдокорни” (Hardcore).
A new wave of protests started again, now under the motto “За Заедничка Македонија” (For a Joint Macedonia) and finished every day in front of the assembly, where they addressed the MPs. On April 27, the new president of the assembly was elected, Talat Xhaferi, in a tense atmosphere. The protesters stormed inside the parliament. Parliamentarians, journalists, and police officers were brutally attacked; the most severely injured was the leader of the Albanian party Zijadin Sela.

Three weeks after the attacks, Zoran Zaev, leader of the SDSM, received the mandate from President Ivanov to form a new government.

The local elections that were held in 2017 will be analyzed separately in this report, due to the fact that they were a central moment in the Islamophobia network.

**Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events**

**Politics**

The protestors of so-called “Tvrdokorni” (Hardcore) on September 2, stated, “They [the government] are threatening us with erasing the Macedonian name and the present Macedonian identity. They are threatening us with assimilation with the large Islamic migration.”

The reaction of the citizens to the restoration of the Ali Pasha Mosque in Ohrid was the following: “What is most interesting in this case is the permanent insistence on building a minaret, which as we highlighted, should be 32 m, thus making it the most dominant object in the very heart of the city. It will change the image of Ohrid....”

Following this announcement on social media, a heated debate were sparked among the residents of Ohrid and insults were directed at Muslims. At a press conference, the Minister for Culture Robert Alagjozovski publicly picked a side: “We

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will stop the project so as to see and find a common solution. We will not allow for construction work where this could incite ethnic tension and where this is not in accordance with the law. In that regard, we are clear.”

A significant number of Muslims on social media networks complain about border crossing profiling. The sole profile that is targeted and singled out is on the basis of whether an individual visibly Muslim. The president of the LEGIS Association publicly called the authorities and the public services to stop his persecution, but also that of other prominent Muslims.

On December 28, Trump’s administration in Florida bestowed an acknowledgement prize upon the head of Islamic Religion Community in Macedonia for “Life-long Achievement” for his fight against extremism, radicalism and Islamophobia.

Justice System

The *Urgent Reform Priorities* is a document of the European Commission based on a report, which contains specific proposals of action, and imposes urgent reforms in the judiciary. It is also known among the public as the “Pride Reforms.”

The judiciary reforms are visible in the complaint proceedings which took place in 2017. An example is the Monstrum case, were the defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment without the necessary evidence. The Supreme Court decided to release the convicted and to impose cautionary measures on them. The court justified this decision by stating, “The factual situation was wrong and partially established.”

One of the reasons for the lack of trust of the community toward the judiciary bodies can be noticed with the help of the analysis of two violent protests where the consequences were extremely different.

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16. A considerable number of Muslims turned to the Ombudsman about this issue and received a response from the Ministry of Interior Affairs that no procedure was being pressed against them. However, the halt at the borders continues despite the denial of the ministry.


19. As a reminder, the case of Monstrum (2012) involves five citizens of Macedonian ethnic background who were killed under mysterious circumstances. Only two hours after the attack, the Interior Minister of that time held a press conference declaring that this was an organized crime orchestrated by Islamic radicalization. Five Muslim citizens were sentenced to life imprisonment. Fakulteti, May 2, 2012, ТРОЌА ОД У АПСЕНИТЕ СТРЕЛАЛЕ ВО ПЕТМИНАТА КАЈ СМЉКОВСКОТО ЕЗЕРО http://www.fakulteti.mk/news/12-05-02/trojca_od_flipirane_vo_petminata_kaj_smiljkovskoto_ezero.aspx

20. PLUSINFOR, December 1, 2017, Обвинетите од „Монструм” ќе се бранат од слобода http://plusinfo.mk/vesti/135854/obvinetite-od-monstrum-od-deneska-se-na-sloboda-


22. Telma, Top Tema, May 24, 2017-th. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gk3k695lg. In this press report there are several comparisons regarding the double standards of the judiciary, including the one in this report.
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN MACEDONIA

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<tr>
<td>Protests after the verdicts of the Monstrum case* (Muslim participants)</td>
<td>• Broken court windows</td>
<td>3 years of imprisonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mild injuries to policemen</td>
<td>24,000 euros for material damages to the court**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protests in front of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and violent entry into the building*** (The participants are part of the protests under the slogan of “For a Joint Macedonia” and are Macedonian)</td>
<td>• Material damage to the assembly premises</td>
<td>Conditional sentence of 6 months to 18 months (minimum sentence)****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The research on public opinion on courts and human rights conducted by the Helsinki Committee of Macedonia (HCM) illustrates utterly expected data whereby citizens of the Macedonian ethnic community believe significantly more than the citizens of the Albanian ethnic community that the current situation in the judiciary system is satisfactory.23

Employment

Legislation in Macedonia provides limited protection to the right of freedom of religion in the employment process and at the workplace. In Macedonia, the right to be absent from work in order to attend Jummah prayer is not regulated by labour legislation. Regarding the Jummah prayer, in the beginning of 2017, Muslim employees asked permission to attend Jummah prayers in writing, through an email to the Ministry of Finance in Macedonia, but they received a negative response from the legal department.24

In September, a case of discrimination in employment was reported to the author by an English teacher who applied for employment at an elementary school in Ohrid, where during the interview, she was told by the principal that she would have to remove her headscarf if she wants to work at the school. The case was reported at the Inspectorate within the Ministry of Education. In the end, another candidate was hired.

23. Извештајот во сенка за Поглавје 23 [дел од Проектот “Мрежа 23+], Хелсиншкиот Комитет за човекови Права, May 13, 2017, Skopje
24. Email to the author.
The author had another case of discrimination reported to her which occurred at the 8 Septemvri Hospital in Skopje. The employee was ordered to remove her headscarf if she wanted to continue working, because the Internal Rule Book require this. The mentioned rule book is not publicly available so the article that prohibits this cannot be found.

In October, the personal confession of a Muslim woman spread on social media networks. During a job interview at the country's largest pharmacy chain, she was told to remove her headscarf if she wanted to work for the company. The author of the research got in touch with the Muslim woman who confirmed her experience, but also, the experience of other Muslim women with this company. This claim is substantiated with clearly visible evidence as no pharmacy belonging to this chain employs a veiled Muslim woman.

**Education**

Muamer Doko, the principal of Bratstvo and Edinstvo Elementary School in Ohrid, removed the sisters Hilal and Hazal L. from education, claiming that the headscarf was forbidden. The Ombudsman condemned this action, the Commission for Prevention of Discrimination gave their opinion on it, and the case was reported at the Helsinki Committee for further processing. The Ministry of Education issued a public statement where it underlines the right of the girls to go to school with a headscarf.

In an elementary school in Gevgelija, the key city in the so-called refugee crisis, a questionnaire was distributed, containing the following question: “Would you mind if a member of a given nation: (1) Comes to your country as a visitor; (2) Lives permanently in your country; (3) Lives in your building or neighbourhood; (4) Is your friend; (5) Goes to school with your child/children, etc. The options given were: Citizens of Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. The pupils were supposed to choose the country and select an answers from 1 to 5. The questionnaire was immediately withdrawn, because it was not approved by the Ministry of Education.

The hospital described in the example of discrimination on the basis of religion in employment does not even allow female students with a headscarf to do their internship there. This form of discrimination was reported to the author in February

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2017 by a Muslim girl who missed the semester because she could not complete the necessary practice, which is a precondition for participation in exams. She sought help from the Helsinki Committee; however, due to unknown reasons, the victim of the discrimination renounced further legal action and left the Medical Faculty.

The Survey Analysis Report\(^\text{30}\) published by the CDT Research Centre in October 2017 and promoted in Macedonia focuses on youth perceptions and attitudes related to stigmatization and Islamophobia. According to the report, contact with refugees decreases the level of Islamophobia and stigma among the youth toward refugees.

- On a scale of 1 to 5, the level of stigma toward immigrants among youth in the EU is 2.76. Thirty-five percent of the respondents stated that they had never any contact with immigrants. (Fig. 1)
- The research points out that the chief reason for negative attitudes toward immigrants is the negative perception of Islam. (Fig. 2)

The results about knowledge about Islam are presented in Figure 1. On average, respondents were able to correctly answer approximately two (2.19) out of six questions. It is worth noting that respondents from European Union countries are as knowledgeable (2.18) as those in the Western Balkan countries (2.20).

Respondents from Hungary were the most informed about Islam. On average, they gave correct answers to more than half of the questions (3.08). In contrast, the lowest level of knowledge was observed among the Italian youth, with an average of 1.37 correct answers. Further support for the claim that the overall knowledge

30. Survey Analysis Report. The study was developed by Nemanja Batrićević - CDT Research Center, October, 2017.
of Islam is at an unsatisfactory level comes from the fact that 16% of the respondents were unable to answer a single question. Equally striking, close to two-thirds (62%) of the sample was unable to provide an answer to more than 2 questions.

The level of Islamophobia and immigrant stigma are presented in Figure 2. In the total sample, young people averaged 2.7/5 points on the Islamophobia scale. It is worth recalling that the average knowledge of Islam is 2.2/6, which points to the possibility that, in part, negative attitudes originate from pure lack of knowledge. Importantly, on average, participants from Western Balkan countries are less Islamophobic (2.5) than their counterparts from the EU (2.9). Interestingly, while we see significantly different levels of Islamophobia in the two regions, the attitudes on immigrants in the EU (2.76) and the WB (2.65) are similar.

Media

According to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Macedonia, the Criminal Code contains five articles under which hate speech spreading and promotion can be placed. The existing articles provide sufficient basis so that court proceedings are initiated against the people spreading hate speech. Thus far, not a single person has been convicted of hate speech perpetrated in the media.

In 2017, on the hate speech website (www.govornaomraza.mk), seven cases of hate speech due to religious affiliation were reported: five cases of hate speech toward refugees and migrants and two cases of hate speech on the basis of religious affiliation (Islamophobia and xenophobia) on web portals.

On July 20, the following image of the graduation picture board of the kindergarten “Bleta (Bee)” appeared on social media networks. (Fig. 3)

The next day, headlines in printed and electronic newspapers in Macedonian and Albanian read “In a Phantom Kindergarten in Chair Municipality [Bleta means bee], Children Are Being Indoctrinated with Islamic Customs and Rituals!”

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headline reads, “Instead of Feeding the Kids with Honey, Bleta Feeds the Kids with Ideology.” The article further states, “... it is about abusing children for the purpose of their Islamic ‘education,’ always in the spirit of extremism, isolation, mental restraint and exclusion of other cultures and religions...”

Amid the tense political climate throughout 2017, as well as the local elections at the end of the year, the rival parties used all available media means to dehumanize the opponent with the frequently used negative narrative of Muslims: ISIS, Talibans, etc. Such words were used to attack the Albanian political party BESA, for which an article stated, “The exceptional, offensive, disruptive, and nihilistic behaviour of the BESA movement further raises doubts about the impact of the Tekfīr sect, some of which are suspected of being the leaders of this pre-Taliban group.”

After the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel by the USA, at the UN General Assembly voting, Macedonia voted against Trump’s decision. The Macedonian news portal Infomax, right-wing oriented, stated online, “Even in its foreign policy, Macedonia stood shoulder to shoulder with the radical Wahhabi regimes.”

Physical and Verbal Attacks
In the centre of Skopje, a girl with a headscarf was attacked. Her name is Sumeja Ademi, a student at the Faculty of Law. The perpetrators were a group of high school children. During the attack, the following words were directed at her: “terrorist”, “sod off and go back to Arabia” and “dirty Shiptar woman.” The case was reported to the Helsinki Committee and the Ministry of the Interior; however, as minors are involved, there is no progress in the investigation.

The news of the prohibition from entering a pool for a girl in a burkini, with the explanation that the visitors would not feel comfortable in the presence of a woman in a burkini, spread on social media. All public pools in Macedonia according to their rules and regulations prohibit clothes that go below the knees – and therefore the burkini as well.
In the city of Radovish, the program *The Prophet Muhammed and Trustworthy Society* was stopped indirectly by the local authorities. The doors of the premises, which are under the authority of the local municipality, were closed; after entry was enabled, there was no electricity on the premises.  

**Internet**

The research of the Macedonian Media Institute titled “The Effectiveness of the Legislation for Hate Speech Protection” stated,

The common evaluation of the legal incrimination of hate speech is solid, despite some inconsistencies, where outside of the penal justice system, the following cases of indisputable misuse of freedom of expression remain undeservedly untouched: journalist writings or statements given through the public information media, speeches and statements of representatives of political parties which encourage or defend violence…

On the official Facebook group of the VMRO DPMNE, the political party’s local committee in the city of Gevgelija, used the visit of Macedonia’s Prime Minister Zoran Zaev to Mustafa Pasha Mosque during the Ramadan Feast (Eid al-Fitr), accompanied by the Grand Mufti (*Reis-ul-ulema*) of the Islamic Religion Community as a call to mobilize Macedonians. (Fig. 4)

**Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network**

This year will also be remembered as a year marked by xenophobia reaching its peak. Despite the fact that the Balkan route is closed,
the number of refugees insignificantly small, refugees were still in the spotlight of the period preceding the local elections. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy’s draft “Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners 2017-2027” brought about hate speech in the assembly, the streets, social networks, and media. The VMRO DPMNE was the party that has incessantly been spreading fear among the population with the alleged 150,000 refugees that were to become asylum-seekers in Macedonian cities. At the parliamentary session of August 16, the words “migrant/refugee” were mentioned 88 times by the VMRO MPs. The xenophobia sparked by politicians’ speeches resulted in specific activities. AWAKENING, a civic initiative, was created overnight, which went viral in the social media networks; this initiative gathered signatures in municipalities for a referendum against the settling of migrants. After the signatures were collected, the counsellors in the municipalities discussed the proposal and it was only the VMRO counsellors and their coalition partners that voted for holding a referendum. A visual presentation follows of all the phases where the VMRO DPMNE took measures for the intentional and conscious spreading of xenophobia and Islamophobia.

On August 16, in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, VMRO DPMNE’s members from the assembly booth called on the government not to settle Macedonia with refugees.

On September 9, a Facebook campaign started named “AWAKENING – NO TO MIGRANTS.”

The text reads, AWAKENING! No to migrants! Let’s preserve our neighbourhood and

49. Republika, August, 16, 2017, Данев: Каде ќе ги населите мигрантите, меѓу “Вардарска” и „Островска” и во станови во Аеродром?, http://republika.mk/811270

Figure 5: The cars in the Skopje municipality of Aerodrom were ”decorated” with posters calling for “Awakening” and “Saying NO to migrants.” Published on August, 18, 2017.
municipality, our city, the way we remember it and the way we want to live in it. Let’s prevent the SDSM-government’s decision to bring in migrant settlers and the construction of housing for them, because nothing would be the same afterwards.

....ENOUGH, IT IS TOO MUCH! A WAKENING is needed, let’s preserve Macedonia! Now is the time to say NO to this DEADLY PROJECT FOR MACEDONIA!51

In a specific location in the municipality of Aerodrom, people started to gather signatures for scheduling the referendum with the slogan “NO to migrants in Aerodrom.”52 (Fig. 5)

On September 6, the council of the Aerodrom Municipality decided to schedule a referendum, against the migrants in their municipality.53

In the city of Bitola, on August 4, the political party who led the campaign against the migrants, VMRO DPMNE, made a public statement.54

On September 12, the Facebook campaign “AWAKENING, NO TO MIGRANTS SETTLING IN BITOLA!” started.55

Figures 7 and 8 were posted by other Facebook groups.

In the centre of the city, on September 1, a gathering of signatures for scheduling a referendum started.56

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51. Translated by the author from Macedonian language to English.
54. TVTERA, August 4, 2017, Дали во Битола ќе се градат згради за мигранти?- праша VMRO-ДПМНЕ, tera.mk/dali-vo-bitola-ke-se-gradat-zgradi-za-migranti-prasha-vmro-dpmne/
55. FB GROUP, Будење Битола, https://www.facebook.com/budenebitola/?ref=br_rs
In the council of Bitola, on September 5, the governing majority, led by the VMRO DPMNE, scheduled a referendum. Around 20 municipalities decided that citizens will vote on a referendum regarding the government’s strategy on migrants on the local election day (October 15).

In Shtip, the Union of Young Forces of the VMRO DPMNE posted the image below on their official Facebook profile, (Fig. 9) while the VMRO Municipal Committee of Gevgelija asked citizens to sign the initiative in mass numbers. (Fig. 10)

The official Facebook page of Butel Municipality, “I love Butel,” joined the anti-refugee movement by posting a photo of the author of this report, and

a collage of photos of fighters, refugees, etc. (Fig. 11) The case was reported to the cybercrime department, which deleted the page after a few hours.

Many human rights organizations warn of the spread of Islamophobia and other forms of hate speech in this campaign. “The Helsinki Committee warns that the continual spreading and inciting of hate speech, can easily be conducive to perpetrating hate crimes.”

The Ministry of Local Government didn’t allow the referendum against migrants to be held on the Election Day, i.e. October 15. The government that voted for this referendum lost the general election.

Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

The Helsinki Committee of Macedonia publishes The Discrimination Informer every month with specific cases of discrimination but also recommendations on how to eliminate this type of discrimination. The HCM also runs websites for monitoring and reporting hate speech and hate crime (www.govornaomraza.mk and www.zlostorstvaodomraza.mk). In the field

Figure 10: The VMRO DPMNE GEVGELIJA civic initiative “AWAKENING Gevgelija.” Posted on August, 29, 2017, retrieved on December 23, 2017.

Figure 11: “Skopje 17.08.2017; ???” Even though the photo was taken in August 2015, the Facebook post claimed it was current. Posted on August, 19, 2017.

of hate crime, the OSCE-ODIHR office in Warsaw organized trainings on how to monitor and report hate crimes against Muslims, where several human rights activists from Macedonia were present.

On the media level, worth mentioning is the weekly show “На иста страна” (On the same side), where a single question is discussed from the point of view of various religions, like the status of women, the celebrations of holidays, prayers, etc. Also in this field, the news agency Anadolu Agency has a website in the Macedonian and Albanian languages, where it presents unusual news related to positive developments in Muslim society.

The new government slogan is “A society for all”\(^{61}\) which gives people a sense of optimism and feeling of belonging. For the first time in Macedonia, a Muslim woman with a headscarf ran for councilor in the Municipality of Struga, and became the first hijab-wearing councilor.\(^ {62}\)

### Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Research points to the conclusion that Islamophobic incidents in Macedonia are closely correlated with politics. The dynamics of events in 2017 have led to the conclusion that research is required in the field of hate speech in political instances, which have led to hate crimes. There are factors which contribute to the difficulty of tracking Islamophobia in Macedonia.

Regarding policy recommendations those of last year's report are still relevant today. The main problem is the lack of a central documentation on Islamophobia.

- Cooperation between governmental bodies, the Islamic community and NGOs in fighting discrimination against Muslims should be fostered.
- The Islamic community should be more active in the field of Islamophobia and in training imams to encourage Muslims to report the cases of discrimination or other forms of intolerance against Muslims.
- Regulation of Islamic practice (prayer, \textit{Jummah}, and headscarf) and available ways to accommodate this in education and employment should be raised.
- Commitment to countering violent extremism, and supporting projects in this sphere,\(^ {63}\) but not at the expense of freedom of religion and not solely focusing on Islam or Muslims.


\(^{63}\) During the period between December 2016 to June 2017, Analytica think tank implemented a project titled “Mother Schools for Countering Radicalism.” This project was implemented in cooperation with Women Without Borders. The project aimed to raise awareness on countering radicalism and enhance the competence and capabilities of mothers from Skopje to deal with the phenomenon of radicalization in their relationship with their children. The project was held at the Municipality of Chair, which is considered to be one of the most affected municipalities when it comes to violent extremism. The author of the report attended this school.
Effective investigation on the previous year’s attacks on masjids and mosques – specifically the masjid in the city of Kriva Palanka.

Chronology

- **23.02.2017**: A young Muslim student was attacked in the city centre of Skopje.
- **19.09.2017**: Primary school in Ohrid, expels two students from school because they were wearing headscarves.
- **21.10.2017**: First woman in a hijab enters the City Council of Struga.
- **15.12.2017**: Ministry for Culture stopped the restoration of the minaret of Ali Pasha Mosque in Ohrid, until legal procedures have been checked.
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 the 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.