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

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

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

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brain storming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
EUROPEAN ISLAMOPHOBIA REPORT 2017

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

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

Combatting Islamophobia on the European and the Supranational Levels

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

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

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

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

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

8. Ibid.
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-Gypsiness.

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

The Rise of the Far Right in Europe

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

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

18. Ibid.
The Right Wing in Opposition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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26. Ibid., p. 2.
The Right Wing in Power

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

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

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

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

Co-option of Islamophobia by Centrist Parties

We observe a general trend within centrist political parties to co-opt the Islamophobic discourse of right-wing political parties. The former president of Romania, Traian Basescu, proclaimed in the midst of a debate on a mosque in Bucharest that this was
“a risk to national security,” and argued that “part of the Islamization of Europe is building mosques everywhere.” During a local council election in Bucharest in June 2016, several leading Bucharest mayoral candidates argued for a referendum on the mosque, amongst them the current mayor Gabriela Firea of the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat – PSD).28

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

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

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


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

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

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

Denying the Suffering

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

THE STATE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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In Sweden, three members of the national socialist Nordic Resistance Movement were sentenced to up to eight-and-a-half years in prison. The trio was found guilty of bombings of two refugee housings and a libertarian socialist trade union office in Gothenburg, which severely wounded one person. They were trained in urban guerrilla warfare by a Russian radical nationalist and anti-Muslim paramilitary organization. The perpetrators were influenced by Islamophobic and anti-Semitic discourse, which was clear in a recorded video prayer to All-Father Odin in which they vowed to “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.\textsuperscript{51}

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

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

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

### Threatening the Religious Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Steps Forward and Policy Recommendations**

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

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

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

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

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-Gypsysism.

• The adoption of EU standards for National Action Plans against Racism that take into account specific forms of racism, and include specific measures on Islamophobia with objectives and targets is necessary.

• EU member states should adopt national action plans against racism addressing Islamophobia as a specific form of racism.

• The European Commission should develop a roadmap detailing main policy instruments, issues and examples of good practice by Member States. This would function as a standard document that would be the basis for concrete operational objectives and action plans for the EU coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred.

• The European Commission’s coordinator on anti-Muslim hatred should develop a clear action plan for combatting Islamophobia.

• A high-level roundtable should be organized with the European Commission’s coordinator on anti-Muslim hatred and NGOs on the issue of Islamophobia.

• Europe needs courageous leaders and activists who can confront the Islamophobic discourses and narratives in the age of rising far-right parties.

• A Guidance handbook should be developed on the collection methodology of hate crime data for EU Member States in order to ensure that Islamophobia is dully recorded according to the victims’ and witnesses’ perceptions and lived experiences; other bias indicators should be included in the data collection as well.

• The recording of anti-Muslim/Islamophobic crimes as a separate category of hate crime by the police is essential to uncover the real extent of this problem and to develop counter-strategies to combat it.

• Muslim women’s access to employment should be improved since they are the most discriminated group among Muslims. Gender equality departments and the corresponding committees of EU institutions should give specific attention to situations of discrimination affecting Muslim women by documenting the issue and pushing for specific programs and measures to combat it.

• While protecting free speech, developing good guidelines to tackle online hate speech and considering primary legislation to deal with social media offences and online hate speech are also vital since the Internet plays an important role in the spread of Islamophobic discourses and also in the radicalization of far-right terrorists.
• Discrimination in the workplace should be tackled to address the low level of economic activity among Muslims through targeted interventions at the stages of recruitment, job retention, and promotion.

• Preserving the Human Rights Act and the protection of minority rights including religious slaughter, circumcision and the wearing of religious attire or symbols are imperative for a multicultural Europe.

• Counter-terrorism policies should work with Muslim communities, not against them, in the so-called “de-radicalization” programs. These programs should also incorporate the fight against far-right and far-left terrorist groups and should not only target Muslims.
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN NUMBERS

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

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

DENMARK

In 2016, 56 Islamophobic incidents were reported. 20% of 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]).
GERMANY

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

MALTA

- **7% of Muslims** have experienced physical violence.
- **25% of Muslims** have experienced harassment.
NORWAY
• In 2017, 14% of Muslims experienced harassment.

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

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

- The terrorist attack in Manchester in May resulted in a fivefold increase in Islamophobic hate crime in the Greater Manchester region.
  (Source: Greater Manchester Police)

- Hate crime cases targeting Muslims in Greater London for the entire year of 2017 increased to 1,204 from 1,678 in the previous year, which is equal to a 40% rise.
  (Source: Scotland Yard)

- Between March and July 2017, the number of attacks on mosques climbed to 110 from 47 in the previous year.
  (Source: Tell MAMA UK)

- In 2016, 1,223 cases of Islamophobic attacks were reported to Tell MAMA. Twenty percent of these incidents involve physical attacks; 56% of the victims were women, while two-thirds of the perpetrators were men.

SWEDEN

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

SPAIN

- In 2017, 546 attacks took place against Muslims.
  (Source: Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia)
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
POLAND
NATIONAL REPORT 2017

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Executive Summary

In spite of the insistence of the key political figures in the country that the problems of racism and Islamophobia do not exist in Poland, the frequent reporting on verbal and physical attacks on non-indigenous residents of Poland prove the contrary. To a great extent the ‘refugee crisis’ continues to occupy the political debate in 2017 and Islam, Muslims and refugees are unscrupulously used as a bogeyman in the run for elections. This will very possibly result in Poland being sued by the European Commission in the European Court of Justice. Furthermore, the current changes to the Polish justice system and prosecutors’ decisions to discontinue the investigations into a number of hate crimes against Muslims in Poland, does not give an optimistic prognosis for the equal access to justice in the country in the future. The state-funded media outlets seem to carefully select the guests invited to comment on issues related to Islam and its followers, which results in the strengthening of the stereotypical portrayal of a Muslim as ‘violent’, ‘terrorist’, ‘Jihadist’, ‘sexist’, ‘rapist’, ‘uncivilised’, ‘double-faced’, and, in general ‘a threat’ to European and Christian values. While the concerns expressed by Muslims are sometimes heard by the state officials, no significant actions to address such anxieties are being made. Independently of the state institutions, however, civil society actors, including some Christian groups, increasingly react to acts of aggression and discriminations against Muslims in the form of systematic as well as spontaneous, ad-hoc initiatives. The number of hate crime attacks on Muslims is on the rise. Muslims were the largest targeted group representing 20% of all cases. Based on the Ministry of Interior statistics, in 2017\(^1\) there were 664 hate crime proceedings where Muslims had been targeted, and 193 (29%) of those resulted in an indictment.

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\(^1\) The cited numbers cover the period January 2017- October 2017 as at the time of writing the report, the full numbers had not yet been released.
Streszczenie


Introduction

Since the 2016 report on Islamophobia in Poland, the situation has become even more aggravated. Hate crime is on the rise, and the resentment against Muslims and refugees unifies people who normally occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum. The European Commission has announced its intention to sue Poland at the European Court of Justice for refusing to take in asylum seekers. The government formed by Law and Justice politicians has become more entrenched in their actions in regard to the refugee quotas, and their refusal to address racism in their own ranks, the media, and society at large. While racism and Islamophobia exist across Europe, Poland is an example of a country where they are not only permitted, but currently actively fuelled by the government and state institutions, as well as the extreme fringes within the Catholic Church, an important player on the Polish socio-political scene. The ecumenical teachings of John Paul II and Pope Francis (who encouraged Catholics, in a 2017 document, to “welcome, protect, promote, and integrate immigrants, refugees, and human trafficking victims”), have not affected Polish Catholics’ perceptions of Islam. In other words, Islamophobia has entered the Polish mainstream and become a tool of political warfare. With over 50% support, it is likely that the ruling party will remain in power for another term. This means that the situation in Poland regarding Islamophobia and hate crime is likely to deteriorate further. Indeed, this report is a re-statement of problems noted last year with the proviso that they have escalated.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics
The relationship of the Polish state and the Muslim community under the Law and Justice Party (PiS) government continues to be fraught. The nationwide anti-refugee attitudes, fuelled by the continued refusal of the Polish government to accept refugees from Muslim countries and a backlash by the state-controlled media are decidedly on the rise. These attitudes translate into a fast-growing number of hate crime incidents, including physical and verbal abuse as well as vandalism. In early summer 2017, the leaders of Polish Muslim organisations including the Muslim Association of Poland, the Muslim League of Poland, and the Muslim Students’ Society in Poland wrote an open letter to the speaker of the Polish Parliament as well as to the Parliamentary Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities requesting support. There was no immediate response to it. In the letter, the Muslim community warned that misrepresenting Islam in the state media, and the continued anti-refugee campaign is very likely to lead to a rise in physical attacks on Muslims. The government’s refusal to address this issue is not surprising as xenophobic rhetoric is part of its political programme. The House of Parliament itself was also a site of both organised and spontaneous Islamophobic incidents: in June, a conference about Islam was organised in the parliament by a ruling party’s MP, Tadeusz Dziuba, during which not a single Muslim spoke about the religion - instead, a motley of conservative activists and academics discussed Islam as an intrinsically fundamentalist ideology that presents a danger to Poland. It is impossible to discuss all incidents in detail here due to space limitations; however, they often share a common denominator: they are largely ignored by the ruling party who say that hate crime incidents are rare and do not constitute a serious problem in Poland. However, even cursory research into the situation of Muslims and foreigners in general in Poland belies that claim. In November, again the parliament was a site of an Islamophobic excess whereby an unidentified man wore a T-shirt that read ‘Racist. Xenophobe. Patriot. Poland with-

out Islam’. Having walked around the building for some time unhampered, he was able to get away without any consequences despite this act being punishable by law.\(^\text{14}\) The occasional protests of the opposition who admit that racism in Poland presents a significant challenge are ineffective. The ruling party dismisses such protests as left-wing ideology aimed at undermining the government. As a result, Muslims and other minorities have become a bargaining chip in Polish politics.

**Justice System**

The reform of the Polish judiciary system which has recently resulted in unprecedented disciplinary measures by the European Union\(^\text{15}\) means that one of the foundations of a democratic state – the separation of powers – is seriously compromised. The judiciary and prosecutors are now controlled by the executive power, that is, the government ministers. This may (and some, like the Centre for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia, argue it already has\(^\text{16}\)) present Muslims living in Poland with a new challenge. As the prosecutor’s office has become politicised, hate crimes, normally prosecuted *ex officio* (automatically), are ignored.\(^\text{17}\) Similarly, there are signals that the police refuse to take action on hate crime reports.\(^\text{18}\)

**Employment**

Antidiscrimination employment laws in Poland are largely dictated by EU laws. In March 2017, the European Court of Justice ruled that employers would be able to prohibit the wearing of religious symbols by their employees. This was despite the content of Article 9 (about freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights. Although the new ruling refers to all religions, the fact that the new ruling was instigated by the appeals against member state courts’ rulings regarding complaints by two Muslim women to the European Court of Justice suggests that Muslims may be its intended target. This will not improve the inequalities in the Polish workplace where visible Muslim symbols may trigger Islamophobic discrimination. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for Polish Muslim female converts, even university graduates, client-facing roles are often out of bounds; the most frequently employment undertaken by these Muslim women in the private sec-


\(^{16}\) Ośrodek Monitorowania Zachowań Rzystowskich i Ksenofobicznych, post from January 6, 2018, retrieved January 11, 2018 from https://www.facebook.com/osrodek.monitorowania/.


tor is work at call centres.\textsuperscript{19} It appears that a group who are definitely at risk is food outlet workers, for example kebab shop employees, as demonstrated by the attacks listed in the Chronology section.

\textbf{Education}

In September 2017, qualitative research commissioned by the Commissioner of Human Rights on the attitudes among Polish secondary school students was published. The findings reveal strong anti-refugee, Islamophobic and homophobic prejudice among the majority of the 396 respondents.\textsuperscript{20} More specifically, the youth tend to view Muslims as potential terrorists and do not wish to welcome Muslim refugees. This attitude was prevalent among students regardless of age, location, or type of school. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Education has decreed that from September 2017, anti-discrimination programmes in Polish schools will be shut down despite the glaring need for such initiatives as shown by the CHR research. Instead, educational initiatives promoting patriotism and a national and cultural Polish identity have been introduced.\textsuperscript{21} This inward trend is amplified by the lack of objectively taught religious education classes in Polish schools as, for example, is typical in the UK state schools (instead, the students usually have a choice of Catholic instruction or ethics classes).\textsuperscript{22} Therefore, one can only expect the xenophobic attitudes among Polish students documented by the CHR to intensify.

\textbf{Media}

The TV channels that remain at the forefront of the production of Islamophobia in Poland are the state-sponsored TVP (Polish Television) and Telewizja Republika - but they are not limited to them. Essentialist descriptions of Islam and Muslims are broadcast on the news, in documentary and investigational series,\textsuperscript{23} current affairs programmes, etc. On June 5, on the TVP Info’s programme \textit{News} a two-minute report entitled ‘Europe in Ramadan’ aired, which presented the Islamic holy month as a time of increased terrorist attacks in Europe. In the programme, Wojciech Szewko (PhD) quotes former spokesperson of IS (Islamic State) as a representative of Islam, saying that Ramadan is a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Kaleta, Ewa, “’Odczepcie się od mojej chustki’. Polki w hidżabie” \textit{wp.pl} (December 5, 2015) retrieved January 11, 2018 from \url{https://kobieta.wp.pl/odczepcie-sie-od-mojej-chustki-polki-w-hidzabie-5982315640255105a}.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Woleński, Jan, “Wszystko, czego nie wiemy o lekcjach religii: Kto i za co właściwie płaci?”, \textit{Polityka} (February, 16, 2016), retrieved January 11, 2018 from \url{https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/kraj/1649200,1,wszystko-czego-nie-wiemy-o-lekcjach-religii-kto-i-za-co-wlasciwie-placi.read}.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} For example: TVP Info, “Magazyn Śledczy Anity Gargas”, (September 6, 2017), retrieved December 30, 2017, from \url{https://vod.tvp.pl/video/magazyn-sledczy-anity-gargas,06092017,33625209}.
\end{itemize}
The month of blessings in which all attacks will be counted a thousand times over, therefore ‘smart’ Muslims wait to attack during Ramadan.\(^{24}\) The author of the video goes so far in the manipulation of facts as to include a fragment of a skit from 2015 by Yacine Hasnaoui, a French comedian of Algerian descent, in which he smashes bottles of alcohol in a shop.\(^{25}\) The author of the report comments on the scene as if it was real and describes it as “a radical protest of an Islam follower as registered in one of the shops in France.”\(^{26}\)

TVP’s After Eight (Minęła 20), a daily, current affairs broadcast, frequently hosts guests known for their Islamophobic opinions. On June 6, 2017, the studio guests were Miriam Shaded, Colonel Piotr Wroński, and historian Jerzy Targalski (PhD). The host began with the question “What is happening now in Europe? Migratory crisis? War on terror? Or maybe war on Islam?” Miriam Shaded immediately responded, “With Islam”.\(^{28}\) Shaded would later add “Muslim kids are taught to hate us, to despise European and Western societies”.\(^{29}\) During the programme the Qur’an was called a “book of hatred and intolerance” (Fig. 1) as well as the “work of Satan”.\(^{30}\) On other occasions the guest was Wojciech Ciejrowski, who gave ideas on how to fight Islamic terrorists, that is “to kill them with bullets soaked in swine blood” and then “to desecrate their corpses with it”;\(^{31}\) and Dariusz Oko, a priest and professor, who claimed that Prophet Muhammad practiced “a little holocaust, anywhere Islam entered, there was a violence and rape”\(^{32}\) (Fig. 2).

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
In the mood of ‘discovering the truth’ about Islam, a conversation took place between Tomasz Terlikowski, the host of the Clash of Civilizations programme aired on Telewizja Republika, and his guest, Sandra Salomon, a Palestinian and former Muslim, who explained that she left Islam once she realised that it is “a violent system.”

The open letter, sent in June 2017 by recognised Polish Muslim associations to the speaker of the Polish Parliament, in which they complained over the misrepresenting and essentialist reporting on Islam and Muslims in Polish state media, was received also by TVP and the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT). While in July, TVP responded that such allegations are unfounded, and that TVP does not hold responsibility for the opinions of the guests invited to the studio, in November, the KRRiT responded to the letter’s authors with a reference to TVP’s position on the issue and confirmed the allegations. Thereafter, no action has been taken to address TVP’s coverage of Muslims.

**Physical and Verbal Attacks**

Despite the unlawful reluctance of prosecutors and the police to pursue hate crime, according to statistics released by the National Prosecutor’s Office, in the first half of 2017, 947 hate crime proceedings were conducted, compared to 863 such proceedings in the first half of 2016. Muslims were the largest targeted group: they constituted 20% of the cases. Based on the Ministry of Interior statistics, in 2017, there were 664 hate crime proceedings where Muslims had been targeted, and 193 (29%) of those resulted in an indictment. There is an agreement among third-sector activists that these numbers are steadily escalating. Meanwhile, the Minister of Justice Mariusz Blaszczak claims that Poland has no problem with hate crime, despite the fact that in 2015 there

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were three times as many incidents as in 2014.\textsuperscript{36} According to Muslim organisations met by the Commissioner of Human Right in 2016, the scale of the attacks is much larger than the statistics – those should be multiplied by five to gauge the real scale of Islamophobia in Poland, as the victims often do not report attacks.\textsuperscript{37}

It appears that the indigenous Polish Muslim population (Tatars) may have less experience of Islamophobia than more recent arrivals who are likely to stand out in terms of looks and dress in Polish urban areas.\textsuperscript{38} Some selected attacks are listed in the Chronology section; most never make it to the mainstream media, but the following is an illustrative example. A Muslim student from Germany visiting Poland as part of a school trip to the concentration camp in Majdanek (near Lublin) was spat at by an aggressive male. Throughout the visit, female members of the group, especially those who wore a hijab, were constantly harassed and verbally abused by passers-by in Lublin. Strikingly, the police displayed an odious degree of passivity - a police patrol to whom the group reported the attack ignored the report, and another patrol they approached only reacted with laughter. Eventually the student reported this hate crime to the German police upon her return to Germany.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Internet}

The cyberspace is a fertile ground for the hate speech. According to the statistics of the National Prosecutor’s Office for the first half of 2017, 39.5% of all hate crimes in Poland (including crimes against different national, ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities) were com-

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{“Shock! The islamisation has been planned for 17 years! Scandalous documents of UN leak!”}
\end{figure}


\textsuperscript{40} Screenshot from wRealu24.pl, retrieved December 30, from https://wrealu24.pl/szok-islamizacja-byla-zaplanowana-juz-17-lat-temu-wyciekly-skandaliczne-dokumenty-onz/
mitted in cyberspace. Although this figure is lower if compared with the first half of 2016 (49%), according to Hejtstop (Hate Stop) the numbers of crimes continuously grow, while the reporting of those to the police has dropped. Hejtstop suggests that one of the main reasons for the dropping figures is the Polish government’s lack of financial support for the organizations that used to report hate crimes on behalf of the victims. These organizations, therefore, cannot work as efficiently as they were able to in the past.

The role of the language and pictures that circulate in cyberspace can hardly be overestimated in the increase and strengthening of the Islamophobic attitudes among Polish Internet users. The websites known for fake news, such as wRealu24.pl, wpolityce.pl, wsieci.pl, fronda.pl chmnews.pl, ndie.pl, polskaligaobrony.org.pl, and YouTube channels such as Religia Pokoju (Religion of Peace) or Marcin Rola, attract viewers with shouting headlines like “The Real Face of Islam”, “The Hidden Truth Exposed”, “The Real Threat of Shari’ah”, etc., as well as pictures of the beheading of Christians, the beating and raping of girls by violent Muslim men, migrants flooding European streets, etc. (Figs. 3-5)


44. The financial support ended after April 2016, when the agreements for Norway Grants managed by the Stefan Batory Foundation expired.


47. Channel opened on May 24, 2017. Up to January 8, 2018, the channel has posted 256 videos and was viewed 5,511,390 times. Retrieved January 8, 2018, from https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTsrpTcVe0uWsuYOJSxG/about.

48. On January 8, 2018, the channel had gathered over 80,200 subscribers. Retrieved on January 8, 2018, from https://www.youtube.com/channel/UGJFvWMiZnErzPAD008RzYPA.
When compared to the 2016 EIR Report and the data on the followers of anti-Muslim Polish Facebook pages, the figures for the beginning of 2018 show an increase in the number of Facebook users joining these groups. The ‘No to the Islamisation of Europe’ (linked to Ndie.pl website) group gathers 348,571 followers (320,000 on December 30, 2016); ‘Stop the Islamisation of Europe’ gathers 64,482 followers (60,000 on December 30, 2016); while the Polish anti-racist group ‘Yes for refugees – No to racism and xenophobia’ gathers only 10,673 followers (8,000 in February 2017). While the number of followers of the later increased by 2,673 members, the anti-Muslim groups increased (in the above order) by 28,571 members and 4,482 members during 2017.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

The landscape of central figures in the Islamophobia network in Poland have not changed significantly since the 2016 EIR report. The ultra-nationalist movements continue to use refugees and Islam among the major elements of their mobilisation. The Polish National Movement (Ruch Narodowy), the National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo Radykalny), and the All-Polish Youth (Młodzież WszechPolska) all took part in the November 11 Independence Day march in Warsaw, where slogans “We don’t want Islam, we don’t want Muslim terrorists” were shouted. (Fig. 6) Sixty thousand people were reported to have attended this year’s march.

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55. It is noted, that the march was attended also by non-Polish members of foreign ultra-nationalist groups from Hungary, Sweden, Slovakia, Italy, and others. Retrieved of January 8, 2018, from https://www.wprost.pl/kraj/10086012/zagraniczne-media-krytycznie-o-marszu-niepodleglosci-to-ze-odbywa-sie-w-akurat-w-warszawie-to-paradoks.html.
TVP and Television Republic constitute perhaps the most extensive catalogue of media figures in the Islamophobia network in Poland. Guests invited to speak about Islam, Muslims and refugees are individuals known for their anti-Muslim rhetoric. To name a few: Miriam Shaded, the president of Estera Foundation, who recently stated that all Muslims should be registered in special governmental databases; Tomasz Terlikowski, editor and among the hosts of the programme Clash of Civilizations on Television Republic, and the author of the book Caliphate Europe; Marcin Rola, chief editor of wRealu24.pl; Witold Gadowski, an investigative journalist; priest Prof. Dariusz Oko, lecturer at Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow.

The Europe of the Future Association (euroislam.pl) remains the most important actor of legitimising Islamophobia by juxtaposing Islam with notions of enlightenment, human rights and democracy. The analyses published on euroislam.pl are given a ‘scholarly’ face by the academic credentials of active members of the network, who are invited to public talks, or to comment on current affairs in mainstream media outlets.

Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

In 2017, Polish Commissioner of Human Rights, or the Ombudsman, Adam Bodnar continued to raise concerns about the exacerbated situation of Muslims...
in Poland. On February 28, he met with representatives of Muslims of multiple ethnic and national backgrounds as well as members of various political parties from the left to the far-right. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the detrimental effects of treating the refugees and Muslims as a bargaining chip to win the electorate. This potentially productive meeting, however, did not appear to offer any significant improvements, and in June, the established Polish Muslim organizations sent the previously mentioned letter to the Polish state representatives. The Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities invited Muslim organizations’ delegates to discuss their concerns during the committee’s meeting on December 7. While no concrete decisions were made, the committee requested from the Muslim delegation to provide them the data on the hate crimes concerning the Muslim community in Poland.

Civil society has shown more efforts to push back against anti-Muslim and anti-refugee narratives than state-level institutions. The NGOs Never Again (Nigdy Więcej), Hate Stop (Hejtstop), and the Centre for Monitoring Racist and Xenophobic Behaviours (Ośrodek Monitorowania Zachowań Rasistowski i Ksenofobicznych), together with the campaign ‘Zero Tolerance’ (Zero Tolerancji) by the political party Party Together (Partia Razem), continue their systematic engagement in monitoring online and offline hate crime.

Regarding systematic initiatives, civil society also actively responded to the ongoing Islamophobic events in Poland. In June, almost 300 citizens of the city of Poznan came together in a ‘Silent Demonstration’ to protest the hate campaign against Poznan’s imam Youssef Chadid. Imam Chadid received death threats after a fake video of him was published online, in which he supposedly called for hatred.

63. That meeting was preceded with another on February 1, when the Ombudsman hosted a discussion on the report on hate speech and the negative portrayal of Muslims in the Polish press. Retrieved January 7, 2018 from https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/sniadanie-prasowe-na-temat-jezyka-prasowego-opisujacego-spolecznosc-muzulmanska-w-polsce.
64. Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, “Mowa nienawiści: spotkanie polityków i przedstawicieli środowiska muzułmańskiego w Biurze RPO” bip.rpo.gov.pl (February 28, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2017 from https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mowa-nienawi%C5%9Bci-spotkanie-polityk%C3%B3w-i-przedstawicieli-%C5%9Brodowiska-muzu%C5%82ma%C5%84skiego-w-biurze-rpo.
65. Responding to Muslims’ fear and anxiety about the current anti-Muslim attitudes, Janusz Korwin Mikke, a member of the European Parliament, responded by saying, “To win the election, I have to incite hatred towards refugees”. Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich, “Mowa nienawiści: spotkanie polityków i przedstawicieli środowiska muzułmańskiego w Biurze RPO” bip.rpo.gov.pl, (February 28, 2017), retrieved January 7, 2017, from https://www.rpo.gov.pl/pl/content/mowa-nienawi%C5%9Bci-spotkanie-polityk%C3%B3w-i-przedstawicieli-%C5%9Brodowiska-muzu%C5%82ma%C5%84skiego-w-biurze-rpo.
against Christians.\textsuperscript{70} Similarly, in response to the attack on the Muslim Cultural Centre in Warsaw,\textsuperscript{71} the organisation United against Racism (Zjednoczeni Przeciw Rasizmowi) organized a demonstration in support of Muslims and against racism in Poland in front of the Central Metro Station in Warsaw.\textsuperscript{72} Some Christian circles also actively join the counter-Islamophobia initiatives. Branches of the Tygodnik Powszechny Club in Warsaw\textsuperscript{73} and Poznan,\textsuperscript{74} together with the Catholic Intelligence Club invited representatives of the Muslim League of Poland to talk about Islam, Muslims and refugees at their monthly gatherings; they also organised workshops on how to counter the propaganda in the media.\textsuperscript{75}

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

The Polish government and the state institutions are reluctant to acknowledge and challenge Islamophobia, instead trying to cast Islamophobic acts as hooliganism, ignoring the rise of Islamophobic crime and often fuelling it. Anti-discrimination policies have not been strengthened and those in existence continue to be ignored. Anti-discrimination education programme requirements have been removed from Polish schools. Taking as an example the Independence Day march, which became a platform for Islamophobic messages and hate speech and was also plagued by hate crime in the form of physical and verbal attacks against those who protested it, the response to these punishable acts by the police was at best sluggish, and at worst, non-existent, as there were reports of the police protecting the perpetrators, rather than the targeted groups. Hate crime data continues to be collected by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji), as well as the National Prosecutor (Prokurator Krajowy), and analysed by the Main Statistics Office (Główny Urząd Statystyczny). As Islamophobic hate crime is not a distinct category, it is difficult to track its rise through official statistics; instead, the records of third-sector organisations supply such data which is unfortunately necessarily fragmentary. However, it appears that both the prosecutors and the police often refuse to


record and act on reports of hate crimes. In this situation it is understandable that victims of such crime may be reluctant to contact these institutions. Instead, third-sector organisations such as Never Again (Nigdy Więcej) receive such reports in astounding numbers. Right-wing academics and commentators with an anti-Islamic bias are much more likely to be consulted and invited to state initiatives and state-controlled media programmes. Muslims are generally absent from these endeavours and, so, further silenced. Objective voices on the matter are relegated to the ever-shrinking neutral media.

The policy recommendations made by the last report\(^76\) have unfortunately been ignored. In the face of this, we feel the necessity to restate them here.

- In order to challenge Islamophobia and other forms of xenophobia in Poland, at least minimally, the recognition at the highest level of the state that such issues exist is first and foremost necessary.
- It is also necessary to significantly strengthen widely understood anti-discrimination policies in the whole country. The resolved governmental Council for Fight Against Racism and Xenophobia should be reinstated or a new body should be created to address the issues of racism and xenophobia at the highest level and to overlook the policies undertaken to tackle these phenomena.
- There cannot be any tolerance of hate speech and all forms of hate crimes should be punished with outmost severity.
- A new mechanism of collecting data on hate crimes should be put in place and the employees of relevant state institutions (in particular the police) should be trained in how to register cases of such crimes.
- State institutions in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders (in particular from academia and the non-governmental sector) should identify some of the key issues of xenophobia and racism in the country and in cooperation with these stakeholders fight to build a more tolerant and inclusive society.

In addition, we suggest an additional recommendation related to the media:

- Media organisations that advocate hate crime, including Islamophobic crime, and engage in hate speech ought to have their public funding cut, if they receive any. This recommendation should be legislated as soon as possible.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN POLAND

Chronology

- **03.01.2017**: A group of men attacked and severely injured a Pakistani Muslim man in Ozorków. The perpetrators were all imprisoned although they were only sentenced to less than 2 years.77
- **08.04.2017**: Three men attacked and severely injured three Pakistani Muslim men who worked in a restaurant in Świdwin.78
- **17.04.2017**: Four men attacked the Bangladeshi owner and staff of a kebab restaurant in Łódź. They verbally and physically abused the staff. The police patrol demonstrated indifference to the incident.79
- **28.04.2017**: The Prosecutor Office discontinued the inquiry into a public incitement to racial and religious hatred by Justyna Helcyk, a member of the far-right organisation National Radical Camp.80
- **16.06.2017**: The Regional Prosecutor's Office discontinued the investigation into the case of disturbing the Friday prayer rites at the Islamic Culture Centre in Katowice on December 30, 2016 by the ONR (National Racial Camp) rally, under the slogan 'Silesians against Islamic terrorism'.
- **19.06.2017**: A pseudo-scientific conference about Islam took place in the Polish Lower House of Parliament (Sejm). Not a single speaker was Muslim, and those who spoke displayed a significant anti-Muslim bias, depicting Islam as barbaric. The conference was organised by a Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) MP Tadeusz Dziuba and Natasza Dembińska-Urbaniak, the chairperson of the Conservative Women’s Congress (Kongres Kobiet Konserwatywnych).
- **20.06.2017**: A Law and Justice MP, Jan Mosiński, published an Islamophobic slur about an opposition party politician on his Facebook page.
- **20.06.2017**: An open letter from the representatives of the Muslim community is sent to the speaker of the Polish Parliament. It asks for a response to the increased amount of hate speech in the Polish public space that may lead to physical attacks.
- **21.06.2017**: A Muslim student from Germany visiting Poland as part of a school trip to the concentration camp in Majdanek (near Lublin) was spat at by an aggressive male. A police patrol to whom the group reported the attack ignored the report, and another patrol’s only reaction was laughter.
- **01.09.2017**: The commencement of the new academic year saw the erasure of anti-discrimination objectives in the education programme in Polish schools. It

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77. *Brown Book* - hate crime monitoring carried out by the Never Again Association (selected incidents from 2017, forthcoming).
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
was replaced by the objective of ‘shaping patriotic and civic attitudes, and national and cultural identity’.

- **08.09.2017**: A Muslim woman was physically and verbally attacked by a man in Warsaw. He pushed and kicked her violently. She was helped by a passer-by and the perpetrator was detained by the police.

- **07.10.2017**: The event ‘Rosary at the borders’ was organised on the day of the anniversary of the Battle of Lepanto (in which the fleet of the Holy League defeated the fleet of the Ottoman Empire in 1571). Approximately one million Poles flocked to the country’s borders, apparently to pray for ‘world peace’ and the help of Virgin Mary in facing modern-day dangers. One of the organisers listed the ‘Islamisation of Europe’ as one of the current challenges.

- **18.10.2017**: A Muslim couple were verbally attacked by a man in a tram in Poznan. The attack was triggered by the fact that the couple were visibly Muslim and spoke German.

- **11.11.2017**: Far-right groups that took part in the Independence Day march in Warsaw carried banners with fascist, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic slogans. The event was reported on widely in international media.

- **27.11.2017**: The premises of the Muslim Cultural Centre in Warsaw were vandalised. The act was recorded on CCTV, and three weeks later the perpetrator was detained by the police who found leaflets propagating hate speech in his flat.

- **19.12.2017**: In a cabinet reshuffle Beata Kempa, known for her anti-refugee attitude, was nominated as the Minister for Humanitarian Assistance and Refugees. In February, she has said, “Everyone who knows Islam well, realises that if we bring here sick [Muslim] children for their treatment, because they spent time with the non-believers, they will not be accepted back into their families.”

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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 analysis in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.