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

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

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

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

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

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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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, legitimates 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-
ed “You look at what’s happening last night in Sweden. Sweden, who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers. They’re having problems like they never thought possible,” 4 Swedish officials and reporters were bewildered since there were no major incidents that night. The climate of the age of fake news, which has always been central to the spread of conspiracy theories, is now exaggerated and expanded by leading politicians in the world, while the structural dimension of Islamophobia still exists at the heart of European societies and institutions. This situation requires a need for a clear stance by governing politicians, elites and intellectuals since they are bound by their constitutions and laws, and international and national human rights standards.

In this manner, British Prime Minister Theresa May criticized Trump for re-posting material from the far-right Britain First, while the U.S. president answered her with the advice that it would be better if she dealt with the “destructive radical Islamic Terrorism that is taking place within the United Kingdom” rather than focusing on him. 5 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. 6

**Combatting Islamophobia on the European and the Supranational Levels**

Combating 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” 7 are needed to combat

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

Although the statements of high-ranking politicians such as Frans 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.
bobia. While this verdict made clear that visible signs of political, philosophical or religious beliefs can be banned in private companies, it left many questions open regarding the decisions to be taken in the future.

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

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

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

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

The Rise of the Far Right in Europe

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

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

The Right Wing in Opposition

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

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

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

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

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

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).  

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

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

In Hungary, the ruling conservative Fidesz competed in Islamophobic rhetoric with the far right. It finally managed to make anti-Muslim narratives become un-
contested and thus realized a support of an overwhelming portion of the population. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán became famous for the alleged conspiracy of George Soros to Islamize Europe with the help of “hordes of migrants raping Europe.”

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

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

**Denying the Suffering**

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

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The (Mis-)Use of Education and Academia

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

Online Islamophobia

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

Groups such as the explicitly Islamophobic Identitarian Movement that represents the postmodern face of the New Right, is active in countries like Slovenia, Hungary. Malta witnessed the emergence of its first far-right party, the Ghaqda Patrijotti Maltin (Maltese Patriots). While doing poorly in elections, their media campaign and social media advertisements presented many Islamophobic statements. In countries with a negligible Muslim population like Latvia, Islamophobic attitudes are still mostly voiced on the Internet. In Italy, a significant research on intolerance based on an analysis of Twitter realized by Voxdiritti in 2016 ranked Muslims as the fourth most targeted group (6% of all tweets).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. This initiative was not only supported by the right wing, but also the Social Democrats and the Danish Social Liberal Party, arguing that they would, thus, empower Muslim women. There is also a law prohibiting male circumcision under way in Denmark.

**Terrorist Attacks against Muslims**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\textbf{Threatening the Religious Infrastructure}

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steps Forward and Policy Recommendations

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

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

dalism towards Muslims. These examples of political courage give hope that there still exist reasonable politicians, who look beyond their ephemeral political careers, keeping the good of the whole of society in mind. With an increase of alternative right-wing media and social media bubbles as well as a general swing to the right, hate speech is becoming more and more normalised. In an especially extreme incident in the Czech Republic, children in a primary school in the city of Teplice were threatened with death in gas chambers; the class was comprised predominantly of children of Arab or Romani origin. Such incidents call for an unambiguous reaction on behalf of politicians and opinion leaders.

The authors of every respective national report have suggested specific recommendations regarding the country they have covered. This will support all those forces within European societies, who work towards a more equal society and fight every form of racism. The editors of the *EIR* support the following recommendations which were made by the OSCE ODIHR office, the FRA, the ENAR, the European Coalition against Islamophobia, and other NGOs:

- In the face of the increased and generalized suspicion and marginalization of Muslims in the post-terrorist attacks and migration contexts and the deep impact the former have had on Muslims’ lives, including newly arrived migrants, the recognition of the specific form of racism targeting Muslims (or those perceived as such) is crucial.

- The misconceptions and demonization surrounding the fight against Islamophobia and visible Muslims, in general, need to be challenged; data, facts and concrete solutions need to be visible in order to improve the recognition of Islamophobia and influence policy changes.

- This should lead to informed anti-racism/anti-discrimination policies and support the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation on the national and European levels. EU institutions need to recognize and address Islamophobia politically as a form of racism that can lead to human rights violations.

- While the issue of Islamophobia has gained more visibility in recent years at the EU level, there is a clear need for stronger actions that will materialize recognition into concrete political actions.

- Considering their competence on the issue of anti-racism and non-discrimination, EU institutions have the possibility to support progress and change in this area. The appointment of the European Commission’s coordinator on combatting anti-Muslim hatred following the European Commission’s 2015 colloquium on anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred has created a momentum for the EU to act.

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• The legal and political recognition of Islamophobia is of utmost importance. Therefore, a European-level conference on Islamophobia should be organized with the support of at least one EU Member State or the European Parliament.
• In this context, the European Parliament should adopt a resolution on combating Islamophobia with concrete policy recommendations and ways forward - as it did to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsism.
• The adoption of EU standards for National Action Plans against Racism that take into account specific forms of racism, and include specific measures on Islamophobia with objectives and targets is necessary.
• EU member states should adopt national action plans against racism addressing Islamophobia as a specific form of racism.
• The European Commission should develop a roadmap detailing main policy instruments, issues and examples of good practice by Member States. This would function as a standard document that would be the basis for concrete operational objectives and action plans for the EU coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred.
• The European Commission’s coordinator on anti-Muslim hatred should develop a clear action plan for combatting Islamophobia.
• A high-level roundtable should be organized with the European Commission’s coordinator on anti-Muslim hatred and NGOs on the issue of Islamophobia.
• Europe needs courageous leaders and activists who can confront the Islamophobic discourses and narratives in the age of rising far-right parties.
• A Guidance handbook should be developed on the collection methodology of hate crime data for EU Member States in order to ensure that Islamophobia is duly 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 the all hate crime committed in 2016 targeted Muslims, while the group make up 5% of the general population, making Muslims the most targeted minority.

(Source: National Police)

BELGIUM

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

AUSTRIA

**256** Islamophobic incidents were documented.

(Source: EIR Report, Antidiscrimination Office Styria, ZARA, and Initiative for a Discrimination-Free Education [IDB]).
THE STATE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

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

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

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

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

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

UNITED KINGDOM

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

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

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

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

SWEDEN

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

SPAIN

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

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Executive Summary

It is very often argued that Islamophobia does not exist in Portugal. However, Portugal has an old colonial legacy that sets the ground for Islamophobia. Racial discriminatory attacks actually do occur in the country. Due to its colonial past, the authoritarian dictatorship, which lasted almost the entire twentieth century, and the transition period as an aftermath of de-colonialization, a new notion emerged in Portugal: the Portuguese Muslim. The latter emerged as a result of immigration from former colonies; in other words, the “Portuguese Islam” that existed for centuries in overseas colonies began to be transferred to the mainland in order to reconcile the past narrative of the expulsion of Muslims which aimed at the creation a “Catholic Portugal.” The first Portuguese Muslims were mostly black and of Asian origin and their colour was the main identifying factor for being Othered and discriminated against. However, during the so-called “democratization process” and the entry requirements for the European Union, some important steps were taken to accommodate these recent arrivals, who even today remain a marginal phenomenon. Some political, legal, and sociocultural bodies began to be founded in order to support these immigrants and provide them the necessary assistance for their social inclusion. Despite the arguments of Portugal’s Lusotropicalism (it is claimed that the Portuguese have an inherent adaptability to the tropical climate and are better colonizers as they lack prejudice) and the narrative of “pluri-religious Portugal” during the “normalization” of the democratization process, there is a deep-seated Islamophobia that emerges any moment a so-called “Muslim threat” appears on the horizon. The invisibility of Muslims due to their small number (currently some 0.6% of the national population) and their silence in political, social, cultural, and public affairs appear to create an image of a well-integrated community. Since most of the members of the local Muslim society are native speakers, educated, and belong to the relatively well-off segment of larger society, they are accepted and considered “good citizens.” Due to lack of data concerning discriminations Muslims face in their everyday lives - for example, the Muslim associations do not keep statistical data on any kind of violations - it would be easy to claim that Portugal is free of Islamophobia. However, Portugal is far from being a paradise for Muslims: people in public who appear to be Muslim are verbally abused, there are acts of vandalism against places of worship (two incidents against the Lisbon mosque in 2015 and February 12, 2017), and Muslims are portrayed by some as threats to society’s secular base. At a political level, the most significant attack in terms of hatred towards Muslims took place in a small village called Mouraria in the country’s midwest when the local Muslim community tried to construct a mosque in 2016. The residents of the town inhospitably resisted the idea by signing petitions claiming that a mosque would harm the ancient cityscape. As a holiday destination with sea resorts in the south, swimwear becomes a subject of humiliation; last year, two British tourists were denied entry to a holiday resort’s swimming pool in Albuferia because of their “burkinis” (July 21, 2017).
Resumo

Muitas vezes, argumenta-se que a islamofobia não existe em Portugal, no entanto, como em qualquer outro lugar do mundo, ocorrem alguns ataques discriminatórios raciais no país. Devido ao seu passado colonial e à ditadura autoritária que durou quase todo o século XX e ao período de transição após a descolonização surgiu uma nova noção em Portugal: o muçulmano português, como resultado da imigração das antigas colónias, ou seja, o “Islão português” “que existiu durante séculos em colónias ultramarinas começou a ser transferido para o continente, a fim de uma possível reconciliação com a narrativa passada de expulsão de muçulmanos para criar um “Portugal católico”.

Os primeiros muçulmanos portugueses eram na sua maioria de origem negra e asiática e essa era a principal razão para se expor aos ataques raciais no país. No entanto, durante o chamado “processo de democratização” e os requisitos de entrada para a União Europeia, foram tomadas algumas medidas importantes para acomodar esses recém-chegados, ainda hoje um fenómeno marginal.

Alguns órgãos políticos, legais e sócio-culturais começaram a ser fundados para apoiar esses imigrantes e prestar-lhes a assistência necessária para a inclusão social. Apesar dos argumentos do Lusotropicalismo de Portugal e da narrativa do “Portugal pluri-religioso” durante a “normalização” do processo de democratização, houve um sentimento anti-muçulmano profundo que emerge a qualquer momento, uma ameaça chamada muçulmana aparece em horizonte.

A invisibilidade do número de muçulmanos (atualmente, cerca de 0,6% da população nacional) e seu silêncio em assuntos políticos, sociais, culturais e públicos parecem criar uma imagem de comunidade bem integrada. Como a maioria dos membros da sociedade muçulmana são falantes nativos, educados e relativamente bem desenvolvidos da sociedade em geral, são aceites e considerados bons cidadãos. Devido à falta de dados relativos às discriminações que os muçulmanos enfrentam nas suas vidas quotidianas - por exemplo, as associações muçulmanas não mantêm dados estatísticos sobre qualquer tipo de violação - seria fácil afirmar que Portugal é isento de islamofobia e longe de ser um paraíso para os muçulmanos. Ainda há abusos verbais nas ruas sobre as pessoas que parecem ser muçulmanos, ataques de vandalismo nos locais de culto (dois incidentes na mesquita de Lisboa em 2015 e Fevereiro 12, 2017) e são considerados uma ameaça à base secular de a sociedade. A nível político, o ataque mais significativo em termos de ódio contra os muçulmanos ocorreu em uma pequena aldeia chamada Mouraria, no centro-oeste do país em 2006, quando a comunidade muçulmana local tentou construir uma mesquita. Os moradores da cidade resistiram à ideia assinando petições, alegando que uma mesquita prejudicaria a paisagem antiga da cidade. Como um destino de férias com seu mar resorts no Sul, de fato de banho torna-se um objecto de humilhação; no ano passado, dois turistas britânicos foram negados para entrar na piscina do seu estância de férias em Albufeira por causa de sua “burkinis” (Julho 21, 2017).
Introduction

Having traditionally been a Catholic country, Portuguese citizens, or rather subjects in the imperial era, were not allowed to have any faith other than Catholicism as recently as 1911, when the first Republican Constitution was issued. António de Oliveira Salazar (1889-1970), the dictator who ruled Portugal for four decades, signed a concordat1 with the Vatican that gave the Catholic Church a privileged position in 1940. It was only with the 2001 law on religious freedom2 (Lei da Liberdade Religiosa, Lei n.º 16/2001 de 22 de Junho) that a new concordat3 became necessary. Signed in 2004, it recognized religious freedom, public expression, and religious education for non-Catholics. However, the best legal standings cannot always guarantee all citizens the necessary liberties or protection - as has been experienced in many countries. For instance, the Catholic Church still enjoys innumerable privileges such as being the only state-recognized religious community, being represented in the media with live coverage of religious ceremonies and festivities, offering the only legal marriage form, having the exclusive right of being present to assist inmates in prisons or patients in hospitals, and having the privilege of tax exemptions. Religious groups other than the Roman Catholics, like Protestants, Buddhists or Muslims, could enjoy some of these privileges on the condition that they form a legal entity and are registered with the Ministry of Justice. It is interesting that a religious community in order to be recognized must prove that it has existed in Portugal for more than 30 years.4 Portugal is still being monitored particularly by the European Union’s bodies on liberties regarding the implementation of these laws concerning liberties and particularly religious freedom.

The Portuguese were ruled by Muslims for five centuries on their own land and later, they began to rule and colonize Muslims in other parts of the world. So, the relationship between the Portuguese and Muslims is not something new; however, during the dictatorship period Muslims and other minorities endured pressures and could not take part in the political and cultural life of the nation. After the 1974 Revolution, the situation was improved due to the normalization in domestic policies and the decolonization process in the overseas territories. The “Retornados” - the population “returned” from their colonial military posts - affected the Muslim presence in Portugal as some Muslim citizens found an opportunity to return to the mainland.5 This period of transition into a democratic society also witnessed some excellent developments in

Muslim social life like the establishment of Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa (Islamic Community of Lisbon - CIL)
6. In fact, the attempts to found such a center were initiated early on, in 1966, but the centre was officially recognized two years later, in 1968.7 Formerly, Muslims were allowed to carry out their collective prayers in a part of Palácio de Príncipe Real. However, a space was needed by Muslims and negotiations began with the Portuguese state under the leadership of Suleiman Valy Mamede (1937-1995). The Mozambique-born legal scholar Valy Mamede was an influential person among political circles and was very persuasive in his causes. For instance, despite some resistance from the Lisbon city council at the time, he was able to convince them of the economic benefits of constructing an Islamic centre to the so-called Arab trade of the country's economy. The importance of the centre comes from the fact that it provides speakers who represent the “Muslim voice” in Portugal to the mainstream media. The community's visibility has increased by a recognizable speaker, Sheikh David Munir, the imam of the Mesquita de Lisboa (the mosque situated within the estate of the CIL) and the Muslim community is now relatively well represented in the national media. As a sign of goodwill towards religious tolerance some 8,000 to 10,000 non-Muslim school children are brought to the mosque every year for a closer look at Muslim worship and public seminars are organized in which the popular subject of the month is debated on the third Wednesday of each month with an open-door policy.

According to Abdool Vakil, one of the leading figures of Portuguese Muslims, whose family emigrated from Mozambique but is originally from Gujarat, India, Portugal is perhaps the least racist country in Europe.8 He says, “I have been living in Portugal for more than fifty years and they treat me as a friend. I am not an Other, I am one of them, and even after they learn that I have another religion. I have never felt this thing called Islamophobia.”9 There are various reasons for the relatively better conditions for foreigners in Portuguese society. First of all, it is the last Western

8. There are stories on Portuguese Muslims where they are treated well; for an example, see a recent article in a popular magazine: “São portugueses, são muçulmanos” https://www.publico.pt/2015/02/08/sociedade/noticia/sao-portugueses-sao-muçulmanos-1685260, retrieved January 10, 2018. Apart from these “nice” stories or myths that claim that Islamophobia does not exist in Portugal, there is an urgent need to question its presence in the country. Marta Araújo does just this in “Vamos falar sobre islamofobia? Quando se fala de islamofobia em Portugal – ‘islamo- quê?’ – parece que nos enganámos no lugar” (December 1, 2017), https://www.publico.pt/2017/12/01/mundo/opiniao/vamos-falar-sobre-islamofobia-1794482, retrieved January 10, 2018.
European country to open its borders to immigration despite the fact that it was one of the oldest colonizer countries. One would have expected that the citizens of former colonies like Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau would have emigrated earlier but the country’s economic conditions and the dictatorship did not provide potential immigrants fair prospects.

**Significant Incidents and Developments**

Today it is estimated that there are more than 50,000 Muslims (including some 7,000 to 8,000 Ismaili, a few hundred Twelver Shiite and some Ahmadi) living in Portugal.¹⁰ There are 34 mosques or prayer places present in the country. Among the shrines, the Mesquita Central de Lisboa attracts the most attention as Portuguese politicians and higher officials visit it from time to time. At the beginning of Ramadan, usually a higher state or a government official is present at the fast-breaking dinner. In 2017, the prime minister sent a warm message through the official website on May 26. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa greeted “our Muslim brothers sincerely” and wished Ramadan would bring peace and encourage respect towards differences.¹¹

There are no official reports kept on the Islamophobic incidents in Portugal. In 2009, an exceptional incident occurred when Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon Dom José Policarpo publicly warned Catholics not to marry Muslims by claiming that there would be “a lot of problems that even Allah would not be able to predict their future.”¹² This was an incident that clearly showed that when there is a perceived threat coming from Muslims, past memories come to the surface easily.¹³ Especially in his homily, Cardinal Policarpo portrayed a polarized society of nós (us) versus eles (them) or more specifically, Western, secular - but at the same time Catholic Portuguese – on the one hand, and, on the other, Muslims, not secular, not Western, and oppressors of women. However, the Muslim reaction remained relatively moderate and even after the cardinal’s death the Muslim community expressed their condolences in extremely polite words; the imam of the Lisbon mosque stated that he was a “very friendly and kind person who had supported an open dialogue with other faiths to create a multi-religious and multicultural society.”¹⁴

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The diplomatic attitude of Muslims perhaps contributes to the peaceful co-existence in Portuguese society. Despite the compliant attitude of Muslims their places of worship were vandalized directly after the Charlie Hebdo attacks by extreme far-right groups who sprayed the date “1143” - the date signifying the independence of Portugal – on them as a provocation. Another incident took place two years later and was considered an act of a lone wolf. Yet, the most significant Islamophobic incident took place in the small town of Mouraria - the name of which probably derived from the term *mouro*, Muslim, who historically lived in that part of Lisbon before they were expelled in 1496. In Mouraria, local people vehemently resisted the Muslim community’s desire to build a mosque. The opposition went so far as to claim that a new mosque would create something like Molenbeek, Brussels through the ghettoization and eventually the radicalization of the Muslim community. Similarly, locals opposed the construction of a second mosque in the Martim Moniz neighbourhood of Greater Lisbon arguing that public funds should not go to a religious cause that would favour Islam to the detriment of the faith of the country’s great majority. According to the public petition website, only 8,278 people signed the petition against the plans to build a new mosque in Lisbon.

Portugal attracts millions of tourists annually. Faro Airport becomes a large hub particularly for British holidaymakers - to the extent that it looks like a British town in summer months. Despite the familiarity between the Portuguese and British, two British tourists were denied entry to the pool of their hotel in Albufeira because of their “burkinis” (July 21, 2017). These tourists were probably not Muslims but the hotel employees rejected their swimsuits on the basis that they were not “acceptable in Portuguese culture.” This was despite the fact that their swimsuits consisted of three-quarter-length leggings and elbow-length sleeves, which were all waterproof and designed for swimming.
Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics

Portuguese society, especially in rural areas, is marked by Catholic traditionalism. This is true despite the fact that in the urban centres and large cities this outlook is predominantly disguised. The fact that economic and political centralism characterizes Portuguese society appears to cause Portugal to be less affected by global neoliberalism in terms of the internalization or even the transnationalization of its economy, politics, and culture. Despite a left-wing faction that has grown steadily after the 1974 Revolution and has voiced solidarity with minorities, especially the ones commonly discriminated against in society, the spirit of Salazar, the authoritarian, still remains very much alive in the Portuguese imagination. Similarly, a melancholic feeling (saudade) towards the ex-colonies and the glorious Portuguese past continues to exist. The Portuguese people seem to believe that they are still living in a mono-cultural environment as heirs to the great Portuguese empire. Yet, in recent years, they have also begun to accept the fact that the country is becoming a multicultural site - a euphemism to refer to the colonial past - and Muslims, as well as other immigrants, are encouraged to integrate into a postcolonial nation.\(^\text{22}\) Despite the fact that the Muslim population has a high economic status, they are mostly native speakers, and they are part of Portuguese social and cultural life, there is still no Muslim representative in the country at any political level. So, Muslims continue to be the subjects of political decisions but have not become policymakers despite the fact that approximately 70% of them are Portuguese citizens who could have an enormous impact on the political elections. Their relatively small number could explain the lack of their representation. Yet, they could be asked to express their opinions on subjects that are significant to them, such as legal changes.

Meanwhile, the ultranationalist political party Partido Nacional Renovador\(^\text{23}\) (National Restoration Party) claims it is promoting the interests of the nation above sectarian interests by proclaiming that “Portugal belongs to the Portuguese.” Similar to their counterparts in various other European countries, they oppose immigration as they claim it reduces the chances of employment opportunities for the locals. Although they received only 0.5% of all votes in the last elections of 2015, they tend to increase their votes especially by forming alliances with Movimento de Acção Nacional (National Action Movement) and Aliança Nacional (National Alliance). Similarly, the Cidadania e Democracia Cristã (Citizenship and Christian Democracy

\(^{22}\) Gaspar dos Santos, 2008, op. cit. p. 45.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN PORTUGAL

Party) with its 0.05% of votes, tries to advocate Roman Catholicism as the state religion although the party administrators have not expressed any negative opinion on members of other faiths.

Perhaps one of the most common problems of the Muslim community in Portugal is that they have not been able to establish an institutional body to provide and check whether food is compatible with (halal) food standards. Most of the Muslims prefer vegetarian food when eating outside of their homes but for domestic consumption they complain that there is not enough halal meat supply. Muslims in Lisbon say that they are allowed to slaughter their animals according to Islamic rules but because of lack of supply from time to time they have had to resort to Jewish kosher butchers or shops. Muslims attending the CIL are aware of recently opened halal restaurants (around 40 including kebab houses) or butchers (currently 4) in their living areas in Greater Lisbon but those who live in small towns like in the Algarve or Alentejo regions in the south, have extreme difficulty in finding halal beef or chicken. Even trying to consult the CIL website to inquire about the names or addresses of halal food suppliers results in a blank page with an inscription “Under Construction.” (http://www.comunidadeislamica.pt/pt/halal)

Justice System

In theory, Portugal legally recognizes minority groups either coming from its former colonies or as a result of recent immigration. There are, as mentioned above, laws and regulations on the rights of ethnic, religious, political or cultural minority groups that protect them against any injustice. Since Muslims have not organized themselves in such a way so as to record such attacks in media, employment, education, or to monitor the physical or verbal abuse of persons and their community centres, the legal system has not processed any criminal cases. At the same time, Muslims do not intervene in the processes of preparation of parliamentary bills or legal documents that concern them. For example, Muslims are satisfied that headscarves are allowed in public places or that their children can receive religious education when a group of 10 pupils has been gathered. Yet, they do not demand, for example, to have holidays on their own religious holidays such as the Ramadan festival.

Portugal is a member country of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that provides assistance to participating states and NGOs in promoting democracy and human rights. The office has also provided guidance with ways and methods to collect reports on hate crimes, for example. The data that has been submitted to the office is published on the website of the ODIHR and classified according to country, official data and incidents that are reported by other sources, etc. Portugal offered data for the report only in 2014 and according to their official report there were only

21 cases\textsuperscript{25} in that year, whereas no data was submitted by other groups such as Muslim associations. According to other official data like the reports by the ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) and the CICDR (Commission for Equality and against Racial Discrimination) a number of racial discriminations occurred in the country. It should be noted that the CICDR is responsible for producing reports on discriminatory acts on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity, or nationality.\textsuperscript{26}

It is interesting that there are only 60 to 84 reported cases and most of them occur in the areas of employment, public services/security officials, and business. These are followed by the areas that are most expected like media, education, and health. The nationalities of the victims, as was expected, are Brazilians, Angolans, Cabo-Verdeans and then Russian and other East European nationals like nationals of Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, and Bulgaria. Since it is not permitted to determine the ethnic backgrounds of citizens in Portugal, the exact size of different ethnic groups is not available. However, if victims voluntarily pronounce their ethnic or religious affiliations, they can be taken into account in these statistical reports. Therefore, in the CICDR report there is a section on the complaints of victims from different ethnic, cultural or religious categories: blacks and Roma have been exposed to racial attacks most but there are also a very small number of victims who identified themselves as Jews (3.3\% in 2013) or Muslims (1.7\% in 2013 and 1.2\% in 2015) in addition to the new entry of refugees (1.2\%) in 2015. What needs to be appreciated in the struggle against racial discrimination is that the complaints could easily be reported to the commission’s ergonomic website (http://www.cicdr.pt/queixa), yet, the site is monolingual and those victims who cannot speak Portuguese find it difficult to register their complaints. In addition to these international and national institutions monitoring cases of racial discrimination, an autonomous counselling body was established under the Ministry of Justice in 2003. The principal task of this body, Comissão da Liberdade Religiosa (Commission of Religious Liberty), is to provide assistance to the ministry by preparing academic and popular reports on the exercise of religious freedom within Portugal.\textsuperscript{27}

**Education**

As to the education of Muslim children, they can either receive religious education within the state schools if the number of students reaches 10 (practically, there is no state school in which more than 10 Muslims students are enrolled), or at the private school situated in Palmela (International School of Palmela, http://cip.edu.pt/).


close to Lisbon. This school provides both secular and religious curricula and upon graduation students can choose to receive further education to become religious instructors or imams in a Muslim country. This private school appears to be the favourite educational institute among the Muslim elite class in Lisbon in addition to 10% non-Muslims due to its higher standards and excellence.

It seems that parents do not complain about the educational services as they feel they can send their children to the courses at religious centres or, as a last resort, they can provide religious training at home. The problem here lies in the fact that the Portuguese state has not provided a higher educational institution to train imams and to offer other religious services. Associação para a Educação Islâmica em Portugal (Association of Islamic Education in Portugal) was established in 1997 to provide mainly a place of prayer (Mesquita Darul Ulum de Odivelas http://islam.com.pt/sobre/historia-dar-ul-uloom/) in addition to some religious, cultural and educational activities in Odivelas, Lisbon. This centre provides a kind of sufi training with a traditional orientation.

In a Catholic society like Portugal, religion definitely has a significant part in the educational system as there are numerous institutions that either belong to the Church or are supported by it such as Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP). This private university has four campuses in the country (in Lisbon, Porto, Braga, and Viseu) and provides an education with a Catholic vision. It is expected that these institutions would also offer certain courses on Islam with the objective and unbiased intention to present Islam and Muslims to their students and/or to the general public. It can be argued that the best social sciences program available in Portugal is the ISCTE-IUL (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa) where courses on various subjects like anthropology, sociology, history and business are taught. Public events like seminars and conferences take place here, and MA and PhD theses are written at the school. Despite the high standards of these events it seems that prejudice remains in the minds of educated people. The events organized at this institution on Islam and Muslims could not escape a biased perspective; for instance, under the heading of Islão em Debate (Debate on Islam) a seminar was offered under the title “Religião e violência no Islão contemporâneo” (Religion and Violence in Contemporary Islam) on February 21, 2017. No matter how the subject was treated, it is obvious that the religion of Islam and violence have been conflated by being presented in the same sentence. The seminar probably attracted a lot of attention as it was repeated on September 29, 2017 within the university premises this time as a café talk. Similarly,
the previous year the same institution organized an event with the title “De Terroristas a Estadistas: O dito Estado Islâmico e o futuro do Médio Oriente”31 (From Terrorists to Statesmen: The So-Called Islamic State and the Future of the Middle East) on March 9, 2015 - again the negative attitude is clear.

**Media**

The public television channels broadcast religious services on Sundays or other holy days of the Catholic Church like on the Our Lady of Fátima Feast Day32 on May 13. Other communities cannot use such opportunities to reach out to their members and their compatriots. The media outlets argue that the air time of religious groups is determined in accordance to their size. The media coverage of Muslims is restricted to almost once a year at the beginning of the month of Ramadan. Apart from this, the words “Muslim” or “Islam” are used in Portuguese media solely with reference to terrorist attacks in other parts of the world. Sometimes even the state television channel RTP broadcasts programs on Muslims without proper background research such as the claim that there is an increase in the number of people - national or foreign - who support the terrorist organization DAESH.33 In theory, religious communities have a right to broadcast their own views on the state TYV channel of RTP2, however, the presentation time is mostly used by the Catholics, Protestants and other Christian Churches – this is despite the fact that the Catholic Church in Portugal unofficially has an exclusive television channel, Quatro. Therefore, Muslims try to become more visible in cyberspace like on the websites of the CIL (http://www.comunidadeislamica.pt/pt/) and the journal al-Furqan (http://www.alfurqan.pt/). The lack of visibility of the Muslim community comes from the fact that the country as a whole lacks a clarity on the image of Islam. The country has some classical prejudices vis-à-vis Islam such as that Islam lacks basic rights of expression of thought, incompatibility with democracy or women’s rights. Instead of broadcasting objective and informative programs the media only give space to Muslim leaders to condemn terrorist attacks that happen somewhere else or, on occasion, they interview them on the subject of radicalism. In these instances, the speaker is required to express the opinion that Islam does not support extremism or violence in order to appease masses subscribed to the Portuguese extreme right.

**Physical and Verbal Attacks**

The very small religious or ethnic community needs to act more carefully when it comes to being accommodated in a proudly Catholic country in which “o muçulma-

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no é o inimigo da cultura cristianizada”\(^{34}\) (the Muslim is the enemy of Christianized culture). Muslims are considered as coming from a strange culture, a different time (Middle Ages) and another space (outside of Europe). Although there are certainly some incidents of verbal or even physical attacks, Muslims themselves either do not report them or worse, they pretend they do not happen to them. The reports by the CICDR (Commission for Equality and against Racial Discrimination) indicate that there are very few cases of racial or religious discrimination in Portugal which could be the result of the Muslim community’s social, cultural, or economic weakness, or rather their hesitance in involving more in public affairs. Some of the reasons for not reporting to the security officials is having to prove that the attack occurred, persuading the officials on the nature of the attack, or shame to have been a subject of such an attack. In general, there is silence about Muslims in the same way there is a general silence about racism and discrimination.

**Internet**

If one carries out a web search on any search engine with keywords like *anti-Islão* (anti-Islam), *racismo* (racism) or *intolerância* (intolerance) the results mostly refer to incidents and opinions that occur in other countries as if such instances, attitudes or mentalities do not exist in Portugal. However, it is also possible, if very rare, that certain zealots consider themselves protectors of Portugal and even of the whole European civilization from the perceived threat of Muslims. For example, a blogger called Gladius is worried about the growth of the Muslim population in Europe and in Portugal\(^{35}\) strangely dated: “Lues, 22 de Janeiro de 2771 AUC” as there is no Portuguese name of a day like “Lues” or the year “2771” must refer to a fictional utopic future. The author uses the ancient and defamatory term “credo de Mafoma” (faith of Muhammad) to smear Islam, argues that Muslims resist globalization, that they refuse to integrate into host societies, increase crimes, bring the fear of terrorism, and that the Muslim population increases very quickly. Or the publication of provocative articles that incite hatred towards Muslims like the claims that DAESH aims to include the Iberian Peninsula in their ambitious caliphate\(^{36}\) as if to claim that there is no danger coming from domestic Muslim community but external forces like DAESH would one day come and occupy Portugal.


Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The claim that there is no Islamophobia in Portugal does not have a substantial basis as the concept is relatively new in the Portuguese academic realm of research. The education system, the media, and political and legal institutions need to behave more carefully and take the necessary steps to correct people’s misconceptions on Islam and Muslims. Portugal is an intensively Catholic country; Catholicism is a part of Portuguese identity and the collective memory is full of negative narratives, mostly distorted, regarding past events. The small number of Muslims might not cause great problems at the moment but in the future, when the number increases, these bad memories of past centuries will come alive and cause problems that will be greater than those of other European countries.

In the meantime, the Muslim population needs to organize itself in order to confront any possible Islamophobic occurrences by being vigilant and keeping records that can be presented to national and international bodies. The size of the Muslim community or the fact that Muslims remain silent might give the wrong impression that there are no cases of racism or discrimination in Portuguese society but this does not mean that such repulsive incidents do not happen - keeping records is absolutely necessary. The website of the CICDR (Commission for Equality and against Racial Discrimination) is well designed but it is monolingual and at least the section for submitting complaints (http://www.cicdr.pt/queixa) needs to be translated into other languages – at the very least into English.

There is a need for more empirical research on contemporary Islam and Muslims living in Portugal and training school teachers to educate pupils in a more respectful manner. Training journalists in printed and visual media to communicate an accurate image of Islam to their audience is also necessary.

People from former colonies who speak Portuguese and are familiar with the culture might not experience difficulties in social inclusion but newcomers, especially from the Middle East or other Asian countries, need more time and patience to acclimatize to this new environment. As a result of not speaking the language properly, life becomes harder in terms of finding employment or requesting their civil rights in public life. Authorities need to provide these immigrants or refugees the means to acquire the necessary skills for integrating into Portuguese society.

Chronology

- **12.02.2017**: The Central Mosque of Lisbon was vandalized.
- **21.07.2017**: Two Muslim women were not allowed to use a private pool in a holiday resort in Albufeira for their “burkini”-style swimming clothes as it was claimed by the security personnel that they were not acceptable in Portuguese culture.
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.

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