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 crimes in Europe by many demonstrates the need for an appropriate effort and political will to tackle this normalized racism and its manifestations that are deeply entrenched in European societies, institutions, and states.

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

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

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

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

SETA is pleased to present the third edition of the annual *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) succeeding the reports of 2015 and 2016. This year, 40 prominent scholars and civil society actors from various European countries who specialize in different fields such as racism, gender, and discrimination studies, present 33 country reports. In addition to highlighting the developments of Islamophobia in key fields such as employment, education and politics, they provide precious country-specific policy recommendations to counter this phenomenon and a detailed chronology of events. Since every year it applies the same methodological framework on a large number of European countries, the *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) provides a unique collection of European-wide analyses in regard to anti-Muslim racism in Europe to policy makers, social scientists, and ordinary readers.

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

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

Thirdly, Islamophobia poses a problem of internal security as it intensifies tensions between communities, 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-

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ed “You look at what’s happening last night in Sweden. Sweden, who would believe this? Sweden. They took in large numbers. They’re having problems like they never thought possible,”\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{6}

Combatting Islamophobia on the European and the Supranational Levels

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

As an NGO coalition statement following the 4th Roundtable on anti-Muslim hatred, which was organized by the European Commission (EC) and chaired by the EU coordinator on combatting anti-Muslim hatred, David Friggieri, made clear, a “stronger and more concrete commitment and actions”\textsuperscript{7} are needed to combat


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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14. Ibid.

15. The members of this coalition are the following: European Forum of Muslim Women; Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations; Karamah EU; European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion; European Network against Racism; and the Collective against Islamophobia in France.

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

The Rise of the Far Right in Europe

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

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

18. Ibid.
The Right Wing in Opposition

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

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

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

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

For the first time since 1989 a right-wing extremist party managed to enter parliament in Slovakia. The opposition party ‘We Are a Family – Boris Kolar’ submitted
a bill to amend the laws to enable a ban on building mosques. Eleven members voted for the proposal, 48 against it, while more than a half of the MPs, 77 in total, abstained from the vote.

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

The successful Swiss right-wing party SVP tried to introduce a full-face veil ban in Sweden. Another parliamentary initiative by National Councillor Yannick Buttet (CVP) demanded a “mandatory labelling of imported halal meat at all stages of sales as well as an increase in the price of imported halal meat.”23 Although the National Council accepted the initiative, the Council of States rejected it.

In Switzerland, the parliamentary motion by Lorenzo Quadri from the regional right-wing party Lega, which was adopted in the National Council, instructed the Federal Council to draw up a bill, which, following the rules that apply in Austria, provides a guarantee for the following: “(1) The prohibition of Islamic places of worship and imams who accept funds from abroad; (2) The obligation for Islamic centers to disclose the origin and use of their finances; (3) The duty to conduct sermons in the language of residence.”24

Meanwhile in the UK, UKIP’s election manifesto promised a public ban on “face coverings” and proscribed sharia courts in the UK. In the Netherlands, radical parties such as the Dutch SGP (a radical Christian party) published a manifesto,25 which argued that “the love offer of Jesus Christ and Muhammad’s use of violence are as different as day and night.”26

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

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

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

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

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

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

Co-option of Islamophobia by Centrist Parties

We observe a general trend within centrist political parties to co-opt the Islamophobic discourse of right-wing political parties. The former president of Romania, Traian Basescu, proclaimed in the midst of a debate on a mosque in Bucharest that this was
“a risk to national security,” and argued that “part of the Islamization of Europe is building mosques everywhere.”27 During a local council election in Bucharest in June 2016, several leading Bucharest mayoral candidates argued for a referendum on the mosque, amongst them the current mayor Gabriela Firea of the Social Democratic Party (Partidul Social Democrat – PSD).28

In Poland, there is no nominal right-wing political party, but a conservative party in power, which nevertheless allows an unambiguous negative image of Islam to be spread in state institutions. State-funded media outlets seem to carefully select their guests, who spread a stereotypical portrayal of Muslims as “violent,” “terrorists,” “Jihadists,” “sexists,” “rapists,” “uncivilized,” “double-faced,” and in general “a threat” to European and Christian values. While a research commissioned by the Commissioner of Human Rights on the attitudes among Polish secondary school students was published in 2017, showing that the majority of the 396 respondents reveal strong anti-refugee, Islamophobic and homophobic prejudice,29 the Ministry of Education shut down anti-discrimination programs in Polish schools and instead promoted programs supporting patriotism and a national and cultural Polish identity.30

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

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

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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 legitimised 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

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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.36 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.37 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’ initiative38 was launched to amend a law in favor of a “Burka Ban.” Among the initiators was Terhi Kiemunki,39 a former member of the Finns Party, who was convicted of incitement to hatred due to texts on her blog defaming Muslims.40 A spokesperson of the initiative was Jukka Ketonen, current chairman of the Finnish Defense League (FDL), who proclaims to be fighting against “Islamic extremism”41 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.kiellikone.fi/mot/eduskuntasanasto/netmot?Ui=field&height=147.
40. For a detailed description of Terhi Kiemunki’s court case, see Ibid.
People’s Party following the verdict by the European Court of Human Rights. This initiative was not only supported by the right wing, but also the Social Democrats and the Danish Social Liberal Party, arguing that they would, thus, empower Muslim women. There is also a law prohibiting male circumcision under way in Denmark.

Terrorist Attacks against Muslims

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

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

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

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

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

The fact that Islamophobia goes hand in hand with other forms of racism, such as anti-Semitism in this case, should be a symbolic reminder for those, who are aware of European history. Beyond this example of a right-wing extremist movement, the case of Hungary, where the ruling Fidesz party mobilizes against George Soros while portraying him as a conspirator alongside Muslims to change the European population, reveals again that racism will eventually target every minority.

On September 27, 2017, four members of the banned neo-Nazi group National Action in the UK were arrested on suspicion of preparing and instigating acts of terrorism. According to the UK’s Defense Ministry some of them were soldiers serving in the British army.

In Germany, two supporters of a neo-Nazi terrorist group were arrested on January 14 after 155 kg of explosives were discovered in their home. On April 27, a German soldier posing as a Syrian refugee was arrested for allegedly planning a “false flag” shooting attack against politicians that would be blamed on asylum seekers.

On October 17, 2017, 10 far-right militants were arrested by French anti-terrorist police in France. According to the TV station M6, they were suspected of

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

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

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

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

### Threatening the Religious Infrastructure

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

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

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

In Bulgaria, an indifference from the part of governments to the religious needs of Muslims can be observed. There is a lack of funding by the state be it in the area of religious education, Muslims’ attempts to develop a cultural-religious center, or the blocking of Muslims’ attempts to regain property ownership of \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.\(^\text{52}\) Initiatives like this seem to target specifically Muslims, not extremists, and to restrain their scope of activities, which ultimately reflects already existing restrictions as discussed above.

Steps Forward and Policy Recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• The legal and political recognition of Islamophobia is of utmost importance. Therefore, a European-level conference on Islamophobia should be organized with the support of at least one EU Member State or the European Parliament.

• In this context, the European Parliament should adopt a resolution on combating Islamophobia with concrete policy recommendations and ways forward - as it did to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsism.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DENMARK

In 2016, **56 Islamophobic incidents** were reported. 20% of 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 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.

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

In 2017, 546 attacks took place against Muslims. (Source: Plataforma Ciudadana contra la Islamofobia)
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
UKRAINE AND
OCCUPIED
CRIMEA
NATIONAL REPORT 2017

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Executive Summary

The year 2014 brought many historical and political changes to Ukrainian society. The annexation of Crimea and the Russian intervention in Eastern Ukraine triggered processes within the Muslim communities in Donbass and Crimea concerning the revision of their place in the political landscape of Ukraine. Due to political and religious reasons many people were forced to become IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). Many of them had a Muslim background which was met with Russian hostility following the annexation. Those who did not leave the Crimea Peninsula are under tremendous pressure. The main geographical destinations of migration have been Kiev and Lvov. Thus, Islam is now a political reality in Ukraine and even if the general numbers of the Muslim community are not comparable with those of Russia and Western Europe, their role is quite important in Ukrainian social and political life.

Several conclusions emerged following the research for this report. First, since 2014, Islam and Muslims themselves have become a serious element of the political life of Ukraine. Second, in many cases, Ukrainian Muslims were accepted in the political life of the country in both governmental discourse and by the far-right movements – both unprecedented developments. Third, Crimean Muslims and Crimean Tatars are the most prosecuted group in Crimea, which has been annexed by the Russian Federation. Fourth, the light shed on the absolutely unexplainable behaviour of the SBU (Security Service) against Muslims who have become the target of prosecution within the Ukrainian mainland. This special group of people, namely Muslims from Central Asia and Russia, are accused of collaboration with extremists; many human rights defenders, however, consider this as element of political struggle against opposition and Islamophobia. Fifth, Ukrainian Muslims themselves have become the target of the SBU by being accused of collaborating with ‘terrorists’ and ‘extremists’. Finally, the new positive status of the Ukrainian Muslims is gradually falling victim to Islamophobia. There are two main reasons, an international and a domestic one. The former is the Islamophobia in Europe and the latter the fact that the Ukrainian government cherishes the far-right movements within the country. Those movements clearly have racist, Islamophobic, nationalist and xenophobic views. It is still unknown how far Ukrainian society can embrace tolerance and acceptability of the Muslim presence within the country. Islamophobia could develop in Ukraine because of the rising role of the far-right groups in Ukrainian society and owing to the political elite additionally maintaining nationalistic discourse - currently this is mostly oriented against Russia. However, history shows that these groups have aggressive and xenophobic tendencies.
Резюме / короткий зміст

У традиційних європейських християнських суспільствах, лише дві країни на континенті мають корінні мусульманські громади. Україна може бути єдиною державою, яка має євразійську традицію ісламу (історично сильний вплив ісламу на регіон був зроблений Монгольською Золотою Ордою) і в той же час має корінне співтовариство з громадами мусульман. Ці дві особливості належать корінним жителям Криму - кримським татарам. Це найбільша та найстаріша мусульманська громада. Орієнтовна кількість кримських татар в Україні становить 300 000 чол. Разом з ними загальна кількість мусульман в Україні становить менше 1 млн. чол.

Відповідно до Конституції України, Україна є світською державою, але більшість людей є православними християнами. Проте, слід зазначити, що практично все XX століття Україна була частиною Радянського Союзу і підвергалася значному впливу комунізму та атеїзму. Після розпаду Радянського Союзу ситуація змінюється: це суспільство, перед яким стоїть задача реставрації релігійних традицій та установ. Значна частина всього мусульманського населення знаходилась в Криму, і до 2014 року українці ніколи не були свідками ісламу як чинника внутрішньої політики за межами Криму. Іслам та Україна зустрілися лише після політичних змін в Україні у 2014 році.

Іслам з самого початку існування української державності почався як політичний феномен і завжди був пов'язаний з кримськими татарами або татарами Поволжжя на Донбасі. У Донбасі для татар Поволжжя іслам зіграв консолідаційну роль. Це стало визначальним фактором їх успіху, в період на початку 90-х бо найбагатшою людиною України є Рінат Ахметов, який походить з Поволжьких татар та є мусульманином. Ісламофобія рідко присутня в українському суспільстві, але траплялися деякі неприємні випадки.

2014 рік приніс багато історичних та політичних змін в українській суспільстві. Анексія Криму та втручання Росії в Східну Україну спричинили процеси в мусульманських громадах на Донбасі та в Криму. Багато людей через політичні та релігійні причини змушені переселенцями. Багато хто з них мали релігійний мінінал і яке викликало агресивну ворожість в Росії після анексії. Ті, хто не залишив півострів, знаходяться під великим тиском у Криму. Основним географічним призначенням стали Київ та Львів. Таким чином, іслам зараз є політичною реальністю в Україні, навіть якщо загальна чисельність мусульманського співтовариства є незрівняною з Росією та Західною Європою, а їхня роль є досить важливою в українському суспільно-політичному житті.

Досі ще невідомо, як далеко українське суспільство могло б піти в питанні толерантності та прийнятності присутності мусульман. Ісламофобія могла б розвиватися в Україні через зростання роль кримських правих груп в українському суспільстві та через те, що політична еліта додатково підтримувала націоналістичний дискурс, який в основному орієнтувався у напрямку проти Росії. Однак, як показує історія, ці групи мають агресивні та ксенофобні тенденції.
Introduction

Ukraine compared to other European nations has enjoyed a very long period of cultural interaction with Islam. It was a long and difficult process which is still ongoing. It is possible to divide the history of Islam in Ukraine into several important periods.

1. Period of Khazar Khaganate
2. Kievian Rus and Ukraine form part of the Golden Horde
3. Crimean Khanate
4. The Russian annexation of Crimea and the deportation of the Crimean Tatars by the Soviet Union
5. The return of the Crimean Tatars to Crimea at the end of the 1980s and Ukraine’s independence
6. Two central developments for Ukrainian Muslims: the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the growth of the Muslim community in the Ukrainian mainland

Historically the territory of contemporary Ukraine has always been a symbolical and actual frontier of different civilisations and cultures. Islam played a crucial role in the history of the Pontic Steppe up to the end of 18th century.

Until the end of the 18th century, almost the entire Southern Ukraine was populated by Muslims. The local indigenous non-Slavic nomadic population of the Pontic Steppe (Pechenegs, Cumans) were Muslims since the Arab invasions reached the Northern Caucasus in the 7th and 8th centuries. The situation dramatically changed in AD 1240 when the Mongolian Army approached the walls of Kiev and finally invaded almost entire Eastern Europe. Since then, the Ukrainian territories became an integral part of Ulus of Juchi and finally, the Golden Horde. In the mid-14th century, a serious part of contemporary Ukraine was populated by Muslims. Khan Uzbek and his son Dzanni Bek eventually converted all the Golden Horde to Islam.

During the Soviet Union period, the Muslims who were living in the territories of contemporary Ukraine were concentrated in Crimea only, with the exceptions of some sporadic representations in large cities. In 1944, the Soviet Union made a final effort to annihilate the Pontic Steppe culture and Islam on the southern frontier. However, at the end of the 1980s, Crimean Muslims started returning to Crimea with tremendous efforts and despite the outstanding restrictions introduced by Moscow.

Throughout the 1991-2014 period, the official Ukrainian position on Islam was very controversial. In many cases, Muslims were considered as a threat and the Ukrainian government effectively supported a schism with the Ukrainian Muslim community. The Crimean Tatars claimed the right to lead the Ukrainian Muslim community, but the Ukrainian government considered such a claim as a threat to the state. Nevertheless, it did not play a crucial role in the restoration of Islam in
Ukraine. For instance, in 1992, the Muslim Spiritual Board of Ukraine (MSBU) was established in Kiev and in 1994, the Grand Mufti of Ukraine was elected.\(^1\) Interestingly, in 1997, the political party Islamic Party of Ukraine (Партия Мусульман Украины) was founded.

In the beginning of the 90s, the Crimean Muslim Spiritual Board (CMSB) with its own mufti, who had a close association with the Crimean Tatars,\(^2\) operated in Crimea and in Donetsk, the Spiritual Centre of the Ukrainian Muslims was established. There were permanent confrontations between the Kievan Grand Muftiat and the two regional institutions (Crimean and Donbass) which were supported allegedly by the Special Services. The religious reason the regional Muslims were not eager to integrate with the Grand Muftiat is that, reportedly, many thought that the Grand Mufti of Ukraine belonged to the religious movement Al-Ahbash.\(^3\) In 2010, the MSBU opened a new Crimean Spiritual Centre for the Muslims of Crimea specifically against the Crimean Muftiate (in order to undermine the Crimean Tatars’ leadership).\(^4\) In 2009, a new Muftiate named “Umma” was created with a pro-governmental mission; it declared a geopolitical “European vector” and claimed to be “patriotic and Ukrainian-centric.”\(^5\) Additionally, the two large organisations Arraid\(^6\) and Hizb Ut-Tahrir,\(^7\) the controversial movement with a highly polarising political context, are present in Ukraine.

The current situation of Islam in Ukraine has more positive features than negative ones. Islamophobia has rarely manifested itself in openly aggressive narratives or aggressive actions.

However, the current Ukrainian political situation and the place of Islam within it deeply depends on the following critical factors:

1. The ethnic character of the Muslim community of Ukraine has mostly a Eurasian nature (Crimean Tatars, Volga Tatars, Chechens, Azerbaijanis and Turks) with a growing number of Slavic-origin Muslims. The Muslim population is approxi-
mately one million. They have 160 mosques and praying houses, seven Muslim schools and approximately 100 Sunday schools. The radical nationalistic movements make a distinction between the Muslims who “have invaded” Europe and those who are of European origin. This is exclusively related to the possibility of the settlement of Syrian refugees in Ukraine.

2. The biggest Muslim community in Ukraine is the Crimean Tatars, who are indigenous people to Crimea. Most cases of Islamophobia throughout the process of Ukrainian independence were related to them.

3. The foundation of the Ukrainian internal policy regarding Islam is based not on openly xenophobic policies, but on the political consideration of keeping Islam under permanent control and the effective integration of the state surveillance of Muslims’ activities. In Ukraine, Islamophobia before 2014 had features of the state policy.

4. Without intending to, Ukraine became deeply involved in the Russian fight against counter-terrorism and extremism. There are many cases of political refugees from Russia or from Middle Eastern state, as well as Russian citizens.

5. The Ukrainian law enforcement agencies have not only prosecuted Russian-origin Muslims in the last couple of years, but also Ukrainian Muslims. These cases, however, remain undisclosed to the general public in Ukraine.

6. The views on Islam in Ukrainian society have a double context. When it concerns local indigenous Muslims communities, Islam, for the most part, enjoys a positive narrative - namely “Islamobenderovcy” (Islamobenderovians). This is the political narrative with the highest level of Muslim recognition in the new (after Euromaidan) Ukrainian society. On the other hand, are the public and media observations and analyses of European events (the so-called refugee crisis and the wave of terrorist attacks throughout the continent). These attitudes share a lot in common with the far-right and nationalistic Ukrainian movements.

7. The so-called “case of Hizb ut-Tahrir” and “case of Tablighi Jamaat”. The prosecution of the Crimean Muslims was launched by the FSB at the beginning of 2015 and is now the main course of Russia’s prosecution policy in Crimea. Three individuals have been accused of extremism and each was sentenced to five years of in prison.

8. The turning point for Ukraine and its Muslim community was the geopolitical changes in Kiev in 2014 (“Euromaidan”) and the subsequent developments in Crimea (its annexation by the Russian Federation) and the Russian invasion of the Donbass.

9. The biggest Muslim communities in Ukraine live in Crimea (Crimean Tatars) and Donbass (Tatars).

10. The destiny of both communities after 2014 is dividedness. On both sides, some sided with Ukraine and others with Russia. In Donbass, the Volga Tatars created the pro-separatist Muftiate “All-Ukraine Spiritual Board – Edinenie” (Unity).

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8. A portmanteau word used to describe Muslims who are pro-Ukrainian and support the historical Western Ukrainian anti-Russian narrative.
11. There is a relatively small number of human rights violations in Ukraine that can be clearly linked to Islamophobia. However, there are many cases where Islamophobia – along with other factors – can be said to be present. This is particularly true in relation to annexed Crimea.

12. The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation established a rigid political and social regime for the local indigenous people, the Crimean Tatars. They were deprived of long-existing religious and ethnic institutions, and some religious communities have been purposefully labelled as extremist.

13. The systematic prosecution of the Crimean Muslims in Crimea by the Russian Federation follows a specific strategy of undermining the Crimean Tatars national and religious identity. The majority of Crimean Muslims have Crimean Tatar origin.

14. Islamophobia in Ukraine has one additional characteristic: Ukraine nowadays is a symbolic harbour for many Muslims who have fled prosecution in Russia. According to many human rights activists, the Ukrainian reaction is inappropriate and the current governmental policy is putting these people in danger.

Significant Incidents and Developments

As has been already mentioned, Islamophobia in Ukraine displays completely different characteristics than in Europe or Russia, while 2014 became a turning point for Ukrainian Muslims when Muslims escaping from the Russian occupation of Crimea were relocated in mainland Ukraine. Moreover, the Muslim community actively participated in the 2014 Euromaidan events and was engaged in the war in the Eastern Ukraine on the Ukrainian side. This engagement took the form of a contribution to the political transition and direct military involvement. Two bright examples are the Muslim women who were working as volunteers in Donbass, the Advisor to Minister of Defence Olga Bashey (a Ukrainian convert to Islam)⁹ and Amina Okueva, who was killed on October 30, 2017.¹⁰ (Fig. 1) The perpetrator of the attack remains unknown. It should be noted that in the ATO zone (Counter-Terrorist Zone) in Eastern Ukraine there were organised military chaplains for Muslims who were fighting against separatists in Eastern Ukraine.¹¹

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Despite the striking positive political and social developments for the Muslim community in Ukraine, worrying instances occurred as well. On March 21, 2016, several people made a sign “No Islam” and drew a swastika on the door of the Muslim Association of Ukraine and took a photo in front of the sign.\(^\text{14}\) (Fig. 2) In April 2016, the local police department opened an investigation into the case, yet no guilty persons have been found.\(^\text{15}\)

Human rights activists placed a lot of attention on the case of Amina Babaeva (originally from Russia, Dagistan).\(^\text{16}\) Reportedly her husband was a member of DAESH, but two years ago she divorced him and was living in Istanbul, but after a while she was accused of collaboration with terrorists and consequently she was deported to Kharkov, Ukraine where she sought asylum. In Kharkov, the Ukrainian Security Service on September 12 deported her to Russia despite the active opposition of human rights activists. Famous human rights activist Evgeniy Zakharov described the behaviour of the SBU as “fear of terrorism and Islam. Their logic is that every Muslim
struggling to reach Ukraine is a priori a terrorist. It is certainly Islamophobia. In this regard and with such logic, in the future they could say that the Crimean Tatars deserve to be deported to Russia as well.”17 The same concerns were expressed by the head of the Crimean Tatars Mejlis Refat Chubarov when he asked the officials from the SBU, “Who can guarantee that Russia is searching for these people for political reasons and not on trumped-up charges? The SBU’s answer: ‘Nobody can’.”18

This is not the only example of the SBU cooperating with the Russian Federation, which seems very strange at a time of war with Russia. Another Islamophobic incident occurred in relation to Ruslan Meyriev. Meyriev is 32 years old and comes from Ingushetia, Russia. He fled the Russian Federation in 2012 because of the systematic prosecution of Muslims as he considered his life to be under threat. He started living in Crimea in 2013 and fled after the annexation by the Russian Federation. He then moved to Vinnitsa where he settled until he was invited to participate as a volunteer in the newly organised “Muslim Battalion”. In 2014, Russia added his name to the international ‘wanted list’ and brought criminal proceedings against him.19 In the following year, he was interrogated by the Ukrainian police but was released soon thereafter. However, in January 2016, he was detained pending extradition. In April, Meyriev applied for political asylum. In November, the court declined his appeal as not relevant. According to the Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group there is now “a real danger that the Prosecutor General’s Office will order Meyriev’s extradition”.20 The only thing which is keeping him in Ukraine is that Ukrainian volunteers and human rights activists are claiming that they are going to send an application for his case to the European Court of Human Rights.

Unfortunately, in Ukraine there exist at least nine cases and two people have already been extradited to Russia, where their destiny is currently unknown. All nine cases involved Muslims. Human rights activists have access to only six cases.21 The main legal instrument that Russia is imposing against Muslims, in Crimea as well, is Article 205.5 of the Criminal Code (“Organisation of the activities of a terrorist

organisation and participation in the activities of such organisations"). 22 All cases have a specific feature which leads to the Ukrainian Migration Service refusing to grant them asylum; consequently, the Ukrainian government believes the best option is to send them to Russia. The common element in all these cases is that the asylum seekers demonstrated an eagerness to support Ukrainian independence and at different levels they were involved as volunteers in the Eastern Ukraine or the border with annexed Crimea. The Russian argument is that they were fighters of DAESH in Syria. 23 In most cases, they were located via Interpol.

The destiny of the prosecuted and detained Muslims in Russia is not clear. Timur Tumgoev was arrested when he arrived at the airport in Kharkov from Turkey in June 2016. He had voiced the desire to become a part of military formations in the Eastern Ukraine and fight on the Ukrainian side. 24 In July 2017, he was released from the detention centre. 25 Human rights defenders know about the following cases:

Magomed Iliev - Still at the detention facility in Zaporozhie. 26

Shakhban Isakov – He arrived in Kiev from Egypt in 2016 and was immediately detained. At the beginning of 2017, he was released after the pressure of Muslims and human rights activists. 27

Sharapudin Sharapudinov – He, as others, faced detention when he arrived to Ukraine in 2016. Following a release from a detention facility, he was arrested again for accusations of criminal activity. 28

Zelimkhan Belkharoev – The last hope of his remaining in Ukraine and not being deported to Russia is the decision of the European Court of Human Rights. 29


These people represent striking examples of how Interpol can become an effective tool of eliminating political opposition when people are hiding abroad.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Politics

The political events which took place in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014 allowed not only democratic and pro-European political parties to come to power, but also brought people to power who clearly represent nationalistic and far-right movements with strong connections to European radical right-wing parties. For instance, the Speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament Andrei Parubij before he came to power, had contacts with the French Front National.30

Ukrainian Muslims exist in two dimensions: “Ours” as, for instance, Crimean Tatars, Volga Tatars, Chechens, etc., and “Others” - those who are threatening the European continent.31 Racism towards migrants and Muslims falls under the “Others” category. Many politicians were openly against Ukraine joining the Dublin Regulation. For example, Ukrainian MP Vadim Rabinovich registered a law for excluding Ukraine in participating in the redistribution of refugees within Europe.32 In May 2017, the representatives of the National-Patriotic Movement of Ukraine tried by force to close a Lebanese café in Kiev, calling it the “Arabian eatery.”33 In July, the Ukrainian SBU in the city of Zhytomir searched the mosque, house and office of the imam of the religious community Nur Al-Islam Akhmat Azyev and accused him of disseminating terrorist literature.34

The general strategy and vision of the far-right movements in Ukraine are that Europe is under the invasion of foreigners and their supporters, and therefore such “dangers” could reach Ukraine. The political public discourse is quite diplomatic

because of the war with Russia (all attention is dedicated to this) and the concrete tactic is that of avoiding any confrontation with Western public opinion.

However, any concrete attempts from the Ukrainian government to take a more pro-immigrant position have been met with radical resistance. Ukraine promised the European Union to build an asylum shelter in Yagotyn, in the outskirts of Kiev. The construction works suddenly intensified in 2016 and since then, became a highly politicised issue in Ukraine. In Yagotyn, local people together with members of far-right movements such as Azov and Pravy Sektor, blocked any governmental attempts to approve a decision for taking in Syrian refugees.\(^{35}\) The future of these facilities is still unclear and a decision has yet to be approved because of the open racism towards Muslims and migrants which has been expressed on many occasions.\(^{36}\)

**Media**

As one human rights activist has said during an interview about the Ukrainian media, “They see the situation with the Islamophobia in Russia and Crimea and strongly criticise it but are silent about the prosecutions of the local Muslim community by the SBU”.\(^{37}\)

In May, in the Western Ukrainian city of Lvov, the SBU arrested the advocate Vladimir (Abdulla) Lushyk, a convert to Islam, for alleged connections with DAESH. The prosecutor accused him of assisting a woman, whose husband is a citizen of Afghanistan and suspected of supporting DAESH, with travel documents. He was detained several times but was eventually released. Currently he is under house arrest and recovering from the injuries he suffered in the detention facilities. The case has not been closed yet, while it has remained completely out of the Ukrainian media.

In the Lvov region, a woman of Slavic origin converted to Islam and was put under psychiatric observation by her relatives as a result. The court deprived her of her parental rights and local authorities were involved in actions which infringed on her civil rights.

**Internet**

It is quite interesting that in 2017, there has been public discussion about the danger of the so-called Islamic State to Ukraine. To a degree this was expected since the fight against this terrorism organisation in the Middle East by the Russian Federation and the USA and their allies created the conditions for worldwide spreading of its surviving fighters and

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37. Confidential interview conducted in December 2017.
supporters. According to Ukrainian experts, Ukraine could become one of the destinations of these terrorists. However, the Ukrainian human rights activists consider the situation from a different angle. For them, the Russian Federation is only using a counter-terrorism approach as a pretext for fighting its religious and political opposition and the people coming from Middle Eastern countries have nothing in common with DAESH.

For example, on April 3, the Ukrainian Internet newspaper Vesti published an article under the title “Why Ukraine Became the Centre of Legalisation of ISIS Fighters.” The author tried to convince the readers that Muslims coming to Ukraine have connections with the international terrorist network.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

The tricky issue with the far-right movements is that, on the one hand, they certainly have a certain Islamophobic agenda and close connections with far-right movements throughout Europe. Nevertheless, they are troubled by the direct confrontation with the Russian Federation over Crimea and Donbass and by the fact that Russia now evidently has connections with almost every European populist political party and movement. Russian aggression is a primary priority for them. As a result, the Ukrainian far-right movements decided to construct their political agenda in favour of a temporal alliance with the Muslim community of Ukraine.


Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia

Unfortunately, in Ukraine there are no particular organisations or institutions fully dedicated to the analysis and monitoring of Islamophobia in the country. This work was usually conducted by the religious institutions, the Muftiati Umma; by ethnic communities as in the case of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People; or by many human rights organisations whose efforts often overlap in functions and operational activities. Sometimes journalists who are covering stories in the Ukrainian media are also actively involved in the process of monitoring. Nonetheless it is true that until now none organisation or institution has not involved in systematic way into the process of monitoring of Islamophobia in Ukraine. It is mostly sporadic and chaotic.

Overview of the Situation in Crimea

The Russian Federation annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and since then it has been entirely under Russian control. The Crimean case has many different and sophisticated features but one of the crucial ones is the prosecution of the local indigenous Muslim population, namely the Crimean Tatars. Russia has managed to perfectly conflate the fight against the people who support the territorial integrity of Ukraine with the fight against ‘extremists’.

For some it may be a contested assumption but Russia’s policy towards the Crimean Tatars since 2014 has been Islamophobic. The only systematically prosecuted community in Crimea is the community of the Crimean Tatars. From the very beginning, Russia went to a great extent to divide Crimean Tatar leadership and particularly the religious community. Russia created its own alternative religious Islamic architecture in Crimea. In order to make the Crimean Muftiati,\(^{41}\) which before 2014 was closed to the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars People, appeaseable they created alternative Muftiates, such as the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims – Tau-rida Muftiati in 2014.\(^{42}\) Further afield, in Kiev they took other measures (currently ongoing) such as the prosecution of the followers of the Muslim political group Hizb ut-Tahrir. Many human rights NGOs dealing with Crimea have been paying special attention in the last year to the prosecution of Crimean Muslims, the majority of whom are simultaneously Crimean Tatars and followers of Hizb ut-Tahrir. These are called the cases of “Hizb ut-Tahrir”\(^{43}\) and “Tablighi Jamaat”, the second being an apolitical religious movement. Both organisations are banned as extremist in the Russian Federation. In the second half of 2017, the systematic interrogations and prosecutions of Crimean Tatars intensified.

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Throughout 2017 the following human rights violations against Crimean Muslims were registered by the human rights NGO Krym SOS:\(^45\)

- 23 criminal cases
- 10 politically motivated court decisions for sentences in prison
- 4 politically motivated cases currently being heard in court
- 135 cases of imposing administrative sanctions
- 23 arrests, 86 fines, 22 court decisions are currently pending
- 40 politically motivated searches of Crimean Muslims’ houses and offices
- 184 people were illegally detained
- 4 raids by the Special Forces in the places where Crimean Tatars have strong demographic representation

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Figure 6: The daily realities and living conditions of Crimean Muslims in annexed Crimea.47

Figure 7: The police in Crimea are about to apprehend a Crimean Muslim activist.48

47 Images available at Openrussia.com (https://openrussia.s3.amazonaws.com/media/legacy/notes/redactor/o/62/b1/62b141b893d1.jpg or Anna Nemtsova, “The Daily Beast: kak Putin voyuyet s nesushchestvuyushchimi terrorisi-
tami (How Putin Fights with Non-Existent Terrorists)”, (original https://www.thedailybeast.com/putins-super-cyni-
cal-war-on-terror Putin’s Super Cynical ‘War on Terror’), Openrussia, (August 20, 2016), retrieved January 2, 2018

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Islam, as was discussed and analysed throughout the report, has deep roots in Ukraine and Islamophobia has never played a dominant role in Ukrainian culture or public opinion. It usually had a “governmental face” and was always related to the Crimean Tatars who were concentrated in Crimea. After 2014, the Muslim population in Crimea and Donbass started to migrate across the Ukrainian mainland because of the Russian military intervention. Nowadays, there are Muslim communities in many Ukrainian large and mid-sized cities and their numbers will be growing. There are increasing numbers of Crimean IDPs in the Ukrainian mainland; refugees from Russia who are escaping prosecution; and a natural increase of Muslim immigrants and refugees from the Middle East and South and Central Asia. The period 2014-2017 was particularly calm and did not witness any aggressive attitude from the Orthodox Slavic majority. Except in Crimea, of course, where Islamophobia is widespread and has been exercised as a systematic approach by the Russian Federation.

Most Ukrainians consider Muslim IDPs as victims of Russian aggression, but the situation could change in the following years in response to the European rise of Islamophobia. In order to mitigate the possible rise of Islamophobia in Ukraine, the government should implement the following recommendations:

• Increase awareness about Islam and the Muslim community in Ukraine and particularly in school textbooks.
• The SBU (Security Service of Ukraine) should immediately stop the prosecution of the representatives of the Muslim community in Ukraine and asylum seekers (mostly from the Russian Federation).
• It is necessary for the Muslim community of Ukraine in the coming year to open a special monitoring mission (possibly an NGO) which will collect information on Islamophobia.
• The best preventive measures against the Islamist threat to Ukraine are the Ukrainian commitment and coherent support of the pro-Ukrainian and anti-extremism Muslim communities.
• It is necessary to elaborate an open and transparent policy towards Muslims since after 2014 Islam has become a reality, not only for Donbass or Crimea but for the entire country due to the sudden and new presence of many Muslim communities in numerous Ukrainian cities. To prevent any possibility of instances of Islamophobia, the Ukrainian government should deliver a strong, reassuring message.
• Self-isolation is the main problem of the Muslim communities in Western Europe. The Ukrainian government should institutionalise the process of monitoring Islamophobia at the state level. Every incident should be recorded and systematised in order to contribute towards appropriate and realistic policy.
• Educational seminars and training should be provided for teachers, civil servants, and especially for police departments.
• Permission should be granted to Muslim women to have passport photos wearing their headscarves and the 1994 provision banning any clothes that are worn on the head should be withdrawn.
• Legislative amendments are necessary to allow the Muslim community of Ukraine to have official days off during the celebration of the Kurban Bayram.
• The rising Muslim community requires the construction of a Grand Mosque of Ukraine and of a central Islamic Centre. The current status threatens the cohesiveness of the Muslim community.

Chronology

• **12.01.2017:** In Bakhchisaray, Crimea, Zevri Abseitov was placed in a psychiatric hospital for examination. This old Soviet Union practice against opposition is quite often used as a tool in Crimea.⁴⁹

• **17.01.2017:** Emir Kuku was accused of preparing the forcible seizure of power and the forcible change of the constitutional system of the Russian Federation. Kuku called these accusations absurd and stated that they were being directed against “observant” Muslims.⁵⁰ The same accusations were issued for several other Crimean Tatars.

• **06.04.2017:** A raid took place in the central market of Simferopol (about 60 people were detained). “Two women were detained … the main criterion is a visible-Muslim appearance (traditional Muslim clothes and beard). The availability of documents did not matter. After the collection of fingerprints and saliva samples, they were all released.”⁵¹

• **17.04.2017:** In the Muslim (Crimean Tatars’) cemetery in Bagerevo, Crimea an act of vandalism was recorded. Unknown persons painted the faces of the tombstones green, painted offensive pictures and destroyed the fences in the cemetery.⁵²


• 07.05.2017: A raid on the homes of 18 families of Crimean Tatars in the Sudak region. During the raid, the Crimean Tatars were questioned with a specific questionnaire containing questions with the purpose of finding out the religious nature of the person.

• 15.06.2017: Raids on the villages of Urozhainoye and Prisivashnoe of the Soviet district. Selected documents of 10 Crimean Tatar families were checked and a search was carried out in their houses.

• 10.08.2017: After searching the house of Crimean Muslims (Mirpochaevy family), who were citizens of Tajikistan, the police detained four members of the family (father and sons). Two members of the family were tortured with electricity. After these events, the family left Crimea.

• 11.10.2017: In Bakhchisaray, the FSB conducted several searches in the houses of Crimean Muslims. Six persons were detained.

• 13.10.2017: The FSB searched the house of the Crimean Muslim Renat Paralamov, who was taken to the police centre. There, he underwent psychological and physical torture (electrical shocks). The next day he was found by people at Simferopol’s bus station.

• 14.10.2017: More than one hundred Crimean Tatars picketed against the prosecution and violations of human rights of Crimean Muslims.

• 08.11.2017: In the administrative border between the occupied Crimea and the mainland of Ukraine, a group of Crimean Muslim women were stopped and interrogated for their alleged connection to DAESH. The FSB put psychological pressure on them.

• 08.11.2017: Organised searches in Crimean Muslims’ houses were conducted and the employees of a “Halal Fast Food” café were taken to a police station.


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 crimes in Europe by many demonstrates the need for an appropriate effort and political will to tackle the normalized racism and its manifestations that are deeply entrenched in European societies, institutions, and states.

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

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

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

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