by gathering 39 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized in racism and human rights, the fourth edition of the European Islamophobia Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 34 country reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for comparing country reports and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as politics, employment, or education with regards to Islamophobia across Europe.

The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly support the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic statements spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights of European Muslim citizens. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2018 discusses the impact of anti-Muslim discourse on human rights, multiculturalism, and the state of law in Europe.

This fourth edition of our report highlights how European societies are challenged by the rise of violent far-right groups that do not only preach hatred of Muslims but also participate in the organization of bloody terror attacks. The rise of far-right terrorist groups such as AFO (Action of Operational Forces) in France or the network Hannibal in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland confirms EUROPOL’s alarming surveys on the growing danger of right-wing terrorism.

This year, SETA worked in cooperation with the Leopold Weiss Institute, an Austrian NGO based in Vienna dedicated to the research of Muslims in Europe. In addition, the European Union has funded the European Islamophobia Report 2018 through the program “Civil Society Dialogue Between EU and Turkey (CSD-V)”.

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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**Disclaimer:** Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the *European Islamophobia Report* are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Directorate for EU Affairs.

Executive Summary

The Norwegian discourse on immigration is mainly framed as a question of “integration.” This, however, presupposes a model of integration that is much stricter than the social organisation in the immigrants’ countries of origin. It is no wonder that the encounters between different social and cultural models have led to steep learning curves for all parties involved.

Besides general problems related to integration of new population elements, there are problems related more specifically to Islam. Certain aspects of the Muslims’ cultural background are an extra impediment to their integration in the Norwegian social model. On the other hand, in a historical perspective there is little experience with Islam in Norway. Many people have had no direct contact with Muslims, but relate to how they are depicted by others.

In this respect the media should be aware of its responsibility not to stigmatise Muslims as a group, but at the same time not shirk away from presenting problems in an objective and responsible manner. This may conflict with the media’s natural inclination toward sensationalism. News related to Muslims and Islam are overrepresented in the press compared to their share of the population.

Furthermore, it is disturbing to observe that certain politicians and media are consciously playing on prejudice that may promote hostility towards immigrants, in general, and Muslims, in particular. We can trace initiatives from the state and civil society to counter this, but it will be a long process and we have many challenges ahead of us.

In spring 2018, the think tank Minotenk expressed the need for an action plan against hostile attitudes towards Islam in Norway. This was meant to serve as a political tool and as a guideline for civil society. An appeal for such an action plan has since been repeated by several actors in civil society in order to put pressure on the authorities.
Kortfattet Sammendrag

Country Profile

Country: Norway
Type of Regime: Constitutional monarchy
Form of Government: Parliamentary democracy
Last Elections: 2017 Parliamentary Elections (Labour Party: 49 seats; Conservative Party: 45 seats; Progress Party: 27 seats; Centre Party: 19 seats; Socialist Left Party: 11 seats; Liberals: 8 seats; Christian Democrats: 8 seats; Green Party: 1 seat; Red Party: 1 seat)
Total Population: 5.3 million (estimate in 2018)
Major Languages: Norwegian (bokmål and nynorsk), Sami
Official Religion: No official religion. Historically, the official religion was the Evangelical Lutheran church of Norway. The Church of Norway is an independent legal entity, rather than a branch of the civil service, effective from 1 January, 2017. The church remains state-funded.
Statistics on Islamophobia: Since 2006, the Norwegian Police register statistics for “hate crimes” in BL/STRASAK. These are crimes based on race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. According to the last available figures published in 2018 for the year before, 1.4% of respondents to a survey said they had been exposed to hate crime, down from 1.9% the previous year. Of those exposed to hate crimes, 30% had filed a complaint to the police. There were 549 complaints for hate crimes in 2017, 120 of them were connected to religion but there are no separate statistics for Islam. Hateful comments about Islam on social media such as Facebook abound.
Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: The BL/STRASAK, the Norwegian Police register statistics for “hate crimes”, registered 373 cases of hate crimes related to race or ethnicity.
Major Religions (% of Population): Lutheran Church (70.6%), Catholic Church (2.9%), other Christian denominations (3.5%), Islam (4.0 %), unaffiliated (17%).
Muslim Population (% of Population): There are no official statistics for the total number of Muslims in Norway. A conservative estimate lists a little above 200,000 which corresponds to 4% of the population. Official statistics include only members of religious communities that receive government subsidy. In 2018, there were 166,861 registered Muslims (up from 148,189 in 2016), which amount to 25.5% of religious community members outside the Church of Norway. In the period 2014-2018, there was a 26.3% increase in registered Muslims.
Main Muslim Community Organizations: The Islamic Council Norway (IRN) has been the largest umbrella organisation in Norway. In April 2018, the IRN broke off its relations with the Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities in Norway (STL - established in 1996). This led other Muslim organisations in Norway, with strained relations to the IRN to join the STL; these were the Muslim Dialogue Network (including the Pakistan World Islamic Mission in Oslo and Rabita) and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Norway.

Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: Norwegian Centre Against Racism, Minotenk, Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities

Far-Right Parties: There are no far-right parties of any significance. The third largest party in parliament, the Progress Party, should rather be called moderate right-wing populist and self-identifies as a libertarian party. Some of its most high-profile politicians have made negative comments about non-western immigration, in general, and Islam, in particular. The far-right party Alliance received 0.1% of the vote in the 2017 parliamentary elections. The Democrats party received 0.1% of the vote on a national basis in the 2015 local elections, and was able to secure representation in 7 (of Norway’s 428) municipalities.

Far-Right Movements: People’s Movement Against Immigration; Norway against Migration Stop the Islamisation of Norway; Pegida – Norway (the police has intermittently closed the Facebook page of Pegida); Norwegian Defence League; Norwegian People’s Party.

Far-Right Terrorist Organisations: N/A

Limitations to Islamic Practices
- Hijab Ban: No
- Halal Slaughter Ban: No
- Minaret Ban: No (depends on local decision)
- Circumcision Ban: No
- Burka Ban: On 5 June, 2018, the parliament passed a bill banning cloth covering of the face during classes at educational institutions as well as day-care centres, which included face-covering Islamic veils such as the burka and niqab. There was no ban of wearing them outside the classroom.
- Prayer Ban: No
Introduction

Norway does not have a significant historical Muslim population. They are immigrants that came in different waves and who, even in a Scandinavian context, made an impact later than in the neighbouring Denmark and Sweden. The treatment of Muslims is conditioned both on attitudes in Norwegian society and the Norwegian state model. Religion may play a role in popular attitudes, but the state is quite robust in exercising equality before the law. In many ways there are quite different issues than in South-East Europe, which I am familiar with through my other research. These are issues that may not be visible in statistics. In short, in South-East Europe we have weaker states and a tradition of religious communities with strong historical stereotypes against each other. These stereotypes serve the function of conserving the integrity of each religious group. However, when it comes to dealing with coexistence from a practical point of view there is also a greater experience of interaction between people with different religious and ethnic background and a large shared cultural space. Scepticism towards Muslims is lower in Oslo, where locals have greater experience of interaction with Muslims, than in other parts of the country with less direct experience. The Muslims in Norway do not represent a uniform group and differ considerably according to place of origin and time of arrival. The Norwegian state does not approach them primarily as a religious group, but as immigrants. One of the main issues is the question of integration. The Norwegian state model presupposes a much larger degree of conformity in the population than immigrants are used to from their countries of origin. This entails a stronger pressure to adjust to Norwegian culture from what you have in less uniform and homogeneous societies. From a practical point of view, it is also a question of acquiring the necessary skills demanded in an advanced economy. Statistics are based on land of origin without specifying religion. In many cases the immigrants are not typical of the country as a whole since they come from specific regions. The figures below include first and second generation immigrants from some key countries with second generation listed in parenthesis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>First Generation</th>
<th>Second Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>42,406</td>
<td>(13,652)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>39,074</td>
<td>(17,040)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>33,416</td>
<td>(10,298)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>29,889</td>
<td>(2,497)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>22,150</td>
<td>(4,422)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>20,762</td>
<td>(3,980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>18,607</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia/Herzegovina</td>
<td>17,970</td>
<td>(4,300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>15,642</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

Two recent Norwegian reports deal with prejudice against Muslims. Both have decided to avoid the term “Islamophobia” and prefer the term **muslimfientlige holdninger** i.e. “hostile attitudes towards Muslims.” They define it as “prejudice, actions and practices that attack, exclude or discriminate people because they are, or are assumed to be, Muslims.” Surveys mapped attitudes based on three dimensions: a cognitive dimension (prejudices), an affective dimension (feelings such as sympathy and antipathy), and one that measures degree of social distance. Prejudices against a group were more prevalent than antipathy and social distance. The reports strived to draw attention to hostile acts against Muslims, or perceived Muslims, and also to clarify transgression of what can be termed as fair-minded criticism of religion and religious acts.

Widely held stereotypes against Muslims were documented in 2017. The main issues drawn attention to in the most recent report are stereotypes against Muslims as terrorists or Muslims as inherently oppressive towards women. The so-called Eurabia conspiracy theory featured widely on far-right webpages in Norway. A survey about attitudes towards immigrants published in June 2018 includes questions about atti-

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tudes towards Muslims and Christians. Almost half of the respondents (47%) were sceptical towards Muslims, while scepticism towards Christians was much lower (21%). Men are generally more sceptical than women, and those with less education are more sceptical than those with more education. Negative attitudes towards the niqab are prevalent, while the hijab is much more accepted. Occasional incidents of abusive behaviour towards Muslim is reported, such as an episode where a Muslim woman was spit on and verbally abused on a street in Oslo.

When it comes to more tangible incidents, the latest police statistics list 549 formal complaints about hate crimes on a national level in 2017. It ranged from hate speech to acts of violence. The most important categories of motives were: race/ethnicity with 373 cases, religion with 120 cases, and sexual orientation with 83 cases. The latest report from the Oslo Police is more specific in addressing problems related to negative portrayal of Muslims. Most hate speech is related to ethnicity (57%), before LGBT (20%), closely followed by religion (17%). It can sometimes be difficult to distinguish if a case is related to ethnicity or religion. In 2018, all religious hate speech was related to Islam. There were 40 complaints regarding hate speech based on religion to the Oslo Police in 2018, down from 43 cases the previous year. Of the 40 cases in 2018, 3 were related to people who had renounced Islam.

**Employment**

Surveys are dealing with the Muslims in the category of immigrants and the figures are based on country of origin and not religion. The lowest employment rates concern people from Somalia and Eritrea with less than half of them employed. They are followed by people from Iraq, 53% of whom are employed. Iran, Afghanistan and Kosovo all hover around 63%. Among those who have resided in Norway for a longer time, Pakistanis have a lower employment rate than the average of the population and also Turks (56%). Generally, immigrants have lower employment than Norwegians, and the difference between men and women is greater. They work more often part-time and are more often overqualified for their job. Immigrants from Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan are most prone to encounter discrimination at their workplace. Pakistanis had 25% less chance of being invited for a job interview according to a survey from 2012. Muslim women have complained about widespread

7. “Hatkriminalitet - anmeldelser 2017”.
discrimination when they wore the *hijab*, and Muslim women are stereotyped as passive and oppressed.\(^{10}\)

**Education**

There are no reports about explicit Islamophobic education material. The discussion about education is subtler. Questions of Islamophobia must be related to the general aspects of the Norwegian educational system. It has been pointed out that racism is seldom thematised in the classroom as it is associated with historical, racist regimes. The pupils are, thus, not well equipped to express their experiences with everyday social exclusion. The Norwegian equality ideal and emphasis on shared values may also make the teachers less receptive towards specific needs related to different religious and cultural backgrounds. The equality ideology may also prevent the teacher from presenting differences among the pupils. In a report from 2009, 13% claim to have had negative experiences in the Norwegian education system because of their foreign background. There are higher numbers for Iraq (20%) and Pakistan with 22% of males and 15% of females reporting such experiences. Another report from 2007 noted that 14% of immigrant pupils in Oslo often felt unaccepted by Norwegians, while the majority rarely had such experiences.\(^{11}\)

**Politics**

In mainstream politics, the Progress Party (PP) most openly expresses hostility towards Muslims. This is mainly framed as an anti-immigration discourse, because of perceived threats to Norwegian values and prohibitive costs of integrating people from distant countries. Minister of Justice Sylvi Listhaug resigned in March after massive protests when she claimed on Facebook that the Labour Party cared more about terrorists than the security of the country after a discussion about Islamist fighters. After the resignation of Sylvi Listhaug, the most prominent PP deputy during the second part of the year was arguably Per-Willy Amundsen. On his Facebook account he expressed opinions such as that migration from Muslim countries should stop in order not to change the identity of Norway and Europe, and asylum should only be granted to people from neighbouring countries. He endorsed fully the controversial Human Rights Service (HRS). Recently he made a controversial proposal of restricting child support to large families. Although nominally neutral to all population groups, it was clearly targeting immigrants in general and Muslims in particular. His comment regarding a particular incident on his Facebook account on 8 November, 2018, can illustrate his rhetoric: “Muslims must adjust to Norway. The security personnel at Harstad/Narvik Airport, Evenes only carry out their job. If this Muslim feels harassed, she may return to her coun-

11. Ibid., p. 17-18.
try of origin and live out her own ‘freedom’ there. That the executive at the airport Anne Britt Bekken apologised about the incident is just an incomprehensible act of political correctness. Stand up for your staff!” This tirade was occasioned by a polite complaint by a 17-year-old girl about the security check. She said she did not know how the press got wind of it as she had not intended to create an incident: “To be absolutely clear: I did not refuse a security check, and my complaint was not a protest against security measures. I simply wanted to know if there is a rule or a law that stipulates that I have to remove the scarf. In that case I want it to be confirmed so that I can turn up at the airport without hijab the next time. I certainly respect rules and regulations. But I cannot allow that opinions and ideas of individual persons are going to control me and my life.” At other airports, she had usually been taken aside to an enclosed area and not been asked to remove the hijab in public. In August, the Minister of Justice Tor Mikkel Wara (Progress Party) expressed the desire to end all public subsidies to Muslim communities in Norway independent of whether they contributed towards integration or not. He was in favour of continued subsidies to the Church of Norway. His statement was widely criticised in the press. It also runs counter to §16 of the constitution that provides the same right of economic support to all religious groups.

Media
There are various opinions on the role of media and they are not unambiguous. A Norwegian report on extremism argues that the “open” debate on migration in Norway has marginalised right-wing violence. There has been more violence in Northern European countries that combine stigmatisation of voices critical to immigration in the public sphere with high immigration and low support for immigration-critical parties. There are, on the other hand, concerns that higher activity on social media may increase the influence and legitimise immigrant-hostile and Muslim-hostile rhetoric. Another survey detected two main tendencies on the far-right spectre: (1) groups that focus mainly on general reservation about immigration and (2) groups that are more specifically hostile to Islam. These two groups tended to converge over time. They are mainly concerned with national questions and display little interest for issues such as Islamic terror. There is also no sign that hostile remarks on Facebook have led to more tangible engagement. As for mainstream media, it has been pointed out that Islam attracts disproportionate attention compared to the number of Muslims in the population. In general, Norwegian media does not have a sensationalist approach to Islam. There is a broad consensus in mass media to promote tol-

erance and condemn hostility towards foreigners. A particular incident that attracted much attention last year concerned a teacher substitute who could not extend his engagement because he refused to shake hands with female colleagues. An editorial in Aftenposten (09.08.2018) stressed an employer’s right to demand equal behaviour towards men and women – in Norway you are free to greet other people any way you like, but you cannot avoid the consequences. An op-ed in Aftenposten stressed that every individual believer cannot impose what s/he thinks is right on the rest of society. An editorial in Dagbladet (07.12.2018) stressed that equal treatment of women has higher priority than sensitivities related to religious faith. The aforementioned incident of the Muslim woman who had to remove her hijab in a security check was presented in an unbiased manner, and the woman herself was able to present her case in a major newspaper. A very ugly incident took place in December 2018 when two backpackers from a Norwegian university were brutally murdered in Morocco by Muslim extremists. The incident received wide coverage centred on the brutally of the act, but not as a general condemnation of Islam, except in far-right websites.

**Justice System**

Norway is not a litigating society to the degree that applies to many other countries. However, the justice system should guarantee a fair trial to Muslims who take recourse to it. Hate crimes are litigated according to §185 (hateful statements) and §186 (discrimination) of the penal code. In some instances, Norwegian legal practice may alienate Muslims. A case in point is Muhammad Qasim Ali, a Norwegian of Pakistani origin, who expressed a desire for legislation against blasphemy. The long defunct Norwegian blasphemy laws were abolished by an act of the Norwegian parliament in 2015. Norwegian laws against blasphemy have generally not been in use for the best part of last century after secular citizens challenged Christian sensitivities. There is no chance for a reversal of this practice. Norwegian hate speech regulations make a general distinction between attacks on a religious group or religious individuals, and attacks on religious beliefs, which are generally permitted. In this matter, Norway is aligned with practice in other western countries since this distinction is generally applied to hate speech. When it comes to concrete cases there were

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eight cases brought before the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal based on religion in 2018. Seven of these concerned Muslims. Three of the cases resulted in a positive verdict for the claimant. The first case concerned a complaint by a Muslim woman who did not get her work contract extended after she started to wear the hijab. The second was a complaint about harassment by a colleague at the workplace. The third concerned a man who lost his unemployment benefits when he refused to take a job where he would need to shake hands with women. The general rule is that you lose your unemployment benefits if you refuse to take a job you are offered, but in this case he regained them since he refused on religious grounds. The tribunal did not accept the complaint of the teacher who refused to shake hands with female colleagues and consequently did not obtain a permanent job. This case attracted much attention and many comments in the mainstream press. It was stressed that there are certain occupations where you cannot discriminate against women by referring to religious beliefs.

**Internet**

The Internet has made publishing much easier than previously and the possibilities to comment on articles have opened space for attitudes that would not pass the editors in the printed press. This is the area where you can encounter the most egregious utterances of hatred and hostility. This is in no way limited to Islam, but Islam is a favourite target for some people. Facebook is a favourite arena for those who express hostility towards Islam. The Internet is also a very dynamic arena and difficult to monitor. Certain web-based publications such as document.no, rights.no, and resett.no are highly critical of immigration in general and Islam in particular. Facebook figures have increased enormously in recent years. The number of followers according to the latest figures from 22 April, 2019 show: People’s Movement Against Immigration 15,650 followers; Pegida-Norway 17,849; Stop the Islamisation of Norway 29,806; and Norwegian Defence League 30,190. In 2015, the numbers for the same organisations hovered around 1,000-5,000. As always, it can be difficult to distinguish between legitimate criticism and slanted news. In the least they could be criticised for espousing certain stereotypes of Islam and contributing towards cultivating hostility. (For concrete examples, see the comments on Hege Storhaug below).

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Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

In mainstream politics, the Progress Party expresses most clearly hostility towards immigrants and Muslims. There are, however, also Muslims in higher positions within the party. There exist several groups with nationalistic profiles that are anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim. Well-known actors include the People’s Movement Against Immigration (fmi.no); Norway against Migration Stop the Islamisation of Norway (sian.no); Democrats in Norway (demokratene.no); Norwegian People’s Party (norskfolkeparti.no); Pegida Norway (on Facebook); Norwegian Defence League (on Facebook). Some of these groups are of marginal influence, but it is worth commenting on one of the most profiled actors, namely Human Rights Service (HRS) led by Hege Storhaug, who is also the publisher of the state-funded blog rights.no. She is tapping into certain fears and prejudices among part of the population with a mixture of truth, half-truths, and slanted news that may be difficult to see through for the general reader. She falsely claimed that the UN would ask Norwegian authorities to investigate her; that young persons are against the hijab and niqab in the public space; that more and more women are wearing the niqab and burka in Norway; that 1/8 of the citizens in Oslo are members of a mosque, etc.  

Another question relates to her publication Islam The 11th Plague. Such a book acts as muddling towards a different cultural group and reinforces certain prejudices. She may be correct in pointing out issues relating to discrimination of women, but her criticism does not contribute constructively towards their elimination because of the racialisation (Islamisation) of the problem. It is encouraging to observe that some Muslim women in Norway are addressing patriarchal structures in their community. They are also met with accusations and there is no reason to believe that they will have less opposition than feminist movements have encountered in other societies. It is, however, a healthier criticism. Among other central actors in the Islamophobia online alternative news media sphere in Norway, one finds Hans Rustad of document.no and Helge Lurås and Lars Akerhaug of resett.no. The latter is funded by a

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24. This has been demonstrated many times by faktisk.no that tests the veracity of the press: faktisk.no.
group of Norwegian corporate billionaires supportive of the Norwegian right-wing government since 2013, and particularly known for its regular incitement of hatred against Norwegian public intellectuals and artists of Muslim background.

Figure 3: SIAN demonstration in Oslo: “No to Islam - Yes to Freedom”.

Observed Civil Society and Political Assessment and Initiatives

The increased focus on the situation of Muslims in Norway has now led to greater engagement to encounter and improve matters. Some of the initiatives to throw light on the situation have already been mentioned. Among the latest additions it is worth mentioning that in early 2018, the Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities published an extensive report presenting an overview of knowledge and measures against hateful utterances. It stressed the need of measures based on deeper knowledge and the importance of long-term planning. In late 2018, the periodic report to the UN by the government agency Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman provides an overview of the official view. The report points out three trends: (1) More and more people are becoming positive towards immigration and a majority thinks that with the help of time things will fall into place. (2) A significant proportion of the population is sceptical about Muslims and other minority groups. (3) A minority expresses vocally its disapproval and hatred of Muslims and other minority groups. The report


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igration and a majority thinks that with the help of time things will fall into place. (2) A significant proportion of the population is sceptical about Muslims and other minority groups. (3) A minority expresses vocally its disapproval and hatred of Muslims and other minority groups. The report was followed by an alternative report by civil society organisations spearheaded by the Norwegian Centre Against Racism. It mentioned that the government should condemn and distance itself from a hostile discourse against foreigners by certain politicians and media so that their public utterance would not contribute to the promotion of intolerance, stigmatisation, and hatred. This recommendation had its background in hateful utterances by elected politicians and the lack of reaction by the authorities. Special mention was made of two PP deputies, who both had served as ministers in the government, Sylvi Listhaug and Per-Willy Amundsen. However, the report also commended the government for presenting a strategy against hateful utterances. The increased focus on hostility towards Muslims was also reflected in the financing by the Norwegian Research Council of a major project titled “Intersecting flows of Islamophobia” (INTERSECT) led by Iselin Frydenlund at the Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, University of Oslo.

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

At the present there is quite a bit of activity directed at integrating the Muslims in Norwegian society. The question of social integration is not a new discourse, but previously it concerned domestic conditions and smaller groups of immigrants. As there has been an increase of refugees from areas with a greater geographic and cultural distance it is natural that the situation becomes more complex. I think it is important to acknowledge, as various actors are aware of, that we have to think in the long term. The immigrants will certainly benefit from adapting to Norwegian society, but it is important to recognise that the kind of conformity and homogeneity created by ideals of social democracy are not always necessary or even desirable. It is important to question both our own concepts and the concepts of new citizens. An open letter to the prime minister by the 15-year-old Bismah Ejaz expressed her desire to be accepted as a Norwegian Muslim. In other words, Islam should not be considered a foreign element to our concept of “Norwegianness”.

Chronology

- **04.02.2018**: Two boys Sami (19) and Emmanuel (20) felt harassed when searched by the police at McDonalds. This led to several protests against police attitudes towards minority youth.

- **08.03.2018**: Prime Minister Erna Solberg warned against racist attacks on social media, in particular against the young Sumaya Jirde Ali.

- **20.03.2018**: Minister of Justice Sylvi Listhaug resigned after claiming on Facebook that the Labour Party cared more about terrorists than the security of the country after a discussion about Islamist fighters.

- **17.04.2018**: Two convictions in court for hate speech against Muslims.

- **08.06.2018**: The MP Per-Willy Amundsen criticised mainstream media on Facebook for avoiding negative news related to immigration and Islam.

- **22.07.2018**: Per-Willy Amundsen advocated once more on Facebook that immigration from Muslim countries to Norway and Europe must be restricted.

- **31.07.2018**: On Facebook, Per-Willy Amundsen blamed the underdevelopment in many Muslim countries on Islam.

- **03.08.2018**: Episodes on the streets of Oslo where Muslim women were spit on and verbally abused.

- **15.08.2018**: Minister of Justice Tor Mikkel Wara (Progress Party) wants to stop all state subsidies to Islamic communities in Norway.

- **27.09.2018**: Norwegian-Pakistani Muhammad Qasim Ali prepared a demonstration (that was called off) against proponents of caricatures of Muhammad and demanded stronger laws against blasphemy.

- **08.11.2018**: Rant by Per-Willy Amundsen on Facebook about the needs for Muslims to adjust to Norwegian reality after complaints by a Muslim woman related to a security check.

- **December 2018**: The PP asked for official statistics about the number of children born to immigrant parents in Oslo, and we see the beginning of a discussion that carried over into the next year. There was a general consensus that certain areas of Oslo had problems absorbing the existing immigrants and new immigrants should be settled elsewhere.