By gathering 35 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized in racism and human rights, the fifth edition of the European Islamophobia Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 32 country reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for comparing countries and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as politics, employment, or education with regard 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 and threaten the whole of society. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2019 discusses the impact of anti-Muslim racism on human rights, multiculturalism, and the state of law in Europe.

This fifth edition of our report highlights how European societies are progressively overwhelmed by the Islamophobic discourse of the "Great Replacement" and other far-right conspiracy theories. The 32 country reports demonstrate how governments and mainstream media participate in reproducing such discourses that put the fundamental rights of millions of European citizens in jeopardy and how one can counteract these developments. This compendium of useful insights and data aims to provide European policy-makers, institutions, and NGOs with recommendations on how to tackle anti-Muslim racism in Europe seriously.

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., Berlin and Brussels. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy-makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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Executive Summary

The NGO *Dokustelle* documented 1,051 cases of anti-Muslim hate crime, which is nearly twice as many compared to 2018 (540 cases). The far-right government coalition of the ÖVP and FPÖ lasted only to 28 May following the Ibiza gate scandal that led to the dismissal of the longtime FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache. This created a public climate that focused primarily on the Ibiza gate and its repercussions. Also, the subsequent government of experts that took power until the upcoming elections in October 2019 gave a pause to the strong wave of anti-Muslim legislation. Nevertheless, the lasting impact of new personnel appointed by the far-right government in the state bureaucracy was evident. For example, the Interior Ministry’s Secret Service (BVT) published a report that for the first time named the Islamic Religious Community (IGGÖ) not as a partner in the fight against Jihadism, but as a problem of extremism. This marks a radical shift in the BVT’s Islam-related politics. The European Parliament elections that took place on 26 May did not target Muslims as much as in previous years’ elections given the focus on the Ibiza gate. The impact of this was that many of the political projects that affected Muslims were put on the waiting list. The destabilization of the far-right coalition thus had a positive impact, creating a breathing pause in the country. Nevertheless, the ÖVP and the FPÖ both repeated their standard anti-Muslim policy claims in the elections campaign in 2019. The implementation of Islamophobic legislation went hand in hand with other far-reaching authoritarian and repressive legislations. Following the implementation of anti-Muslim legislation in 2018, some further restrictions of Muslim religious practice were implemented such as the hijab ban up to an age of 10 years. Also, no political party to date has really positioned itself against those anti-Muslim claims, suggesting that Islamophobia still enjoys a hegemonic power across the political spectrum. At the same time, more anti-racist initiatives could be observed compared to 2018. With the negotiations for a new government that culminated in a coalition of the ÖVP and the Greens beginning in January 2020, one looks to the year 2020 with cautious optimism.
Zusammenfassung

Country Profile
EIR 2019

Country: Republic of Austria
Type of Regime: Representative democracy
Form of Government: Semi-presidential federal parliamentary republic
Ruling Parties: Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP, centrist-right) and Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ, right-wing)
Opposition Parties: Austrian Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), The Greens, NEOS, Liste Pilz/Liste Jetzt!


Total Population: 8.9 million
Major Languages: German
Official Religion: No official religion. Federal constitution recognizes 13 churches and religious communities. Islam has been legally recognized since 1912.

Statistics on Islamophobia: 1,051 cases documented by Dokustelle Muslime; 385 of 1,950 documented cases by ZARA.

Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: The NGO ZARA documented 1,950 cases.

Major Religions (% of Population): Catholics 57.24%, Protestants 3.3%, Muslims 8%

Muslim Population (% of Population): 700,000 (8%) according to estimations made by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF)

Main Muslim Community Organizations: Islamic Religious Authority in Austria (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, IGGÖ). With the new Islam Act of 2015, all major Muslim organizations are part of the IGGÖ.

Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: SOS Mitmensch, Dokustelle Islamfeindlichkeit und antimuslimischer Rassismus, ZARA, Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft

Far-Right Parties: FPÖ
Far-Right Movements: Identitarian Movement, Info Direkt
Far-Right Terrorist Organizations: N/A

Limitations to Islamic Practices:
- Hijab Ban: In kindergartens since 2018. Since 2109, in primary school up to 10 years of age.
- Halal Slaughter Ban: Partly banned
- Minaret Ban: In the counties of Carinthia and Vorarlberg.
- Circumcision Ban: None
- Burka Ban: Yes, since 2017.
- Prayer Ban: None
Introduction

The far-right government coalition of the ÖVP and FPÖ lasted only until 28 May following the Ibiza gate scandal\(^1\) that led to the dismissal of the longtime FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache. This also created a public climate that focused primarily on the Ibiza gate and its repercussions. Also, the subsequent government of experts presented itself as an ‘unpolitical’ one, thus leaving little space for debating Islam and Muslims. The impact of this was that many of the political projects that affected Muslims were put on the waiting list. The destabilizing of the far-right coalition thus had a positive impact, creating a breathing pause in the country. The implementation of Islamophobic legislation went hand in hand with other far-reaching authoritarian and repressive legislations. The far-right government had implemented several restrictive legislations such as the amendment of the “law of aliens” (Fremdenrechtsnovelle) in July 2018 that included the possibility to analyze data from mobile phones. Asylum seekers who have committed a criminal offense can be placed in so-called detention pending deportation after serving their prison terms. Individuals officially registered as refugees can now apply for Austrian citizenship after a minimum of ten years of residency and work. Civil society aid organizations for refugees were planned to be replaced by state agencies.\(^2\) Other limitations of religious freedom such as the abolishment of the legal recognition of the previously established Protestant holiday of Good Friday (which is the most important one for Protestants in Austria) revealed that the shrinking of human rights and religious freedom will subsequently affect other minorities.\(^3\)

According to a survey conducted by Salzburg University-based sociologist Wolfgang Aschauer, 79 percent of 1,200 respondents believe that Islamic institutions should be increasingly surveilled. Seventy percent believe that Islam is not compatible with the Western world, 60% fear that there are terrorists among Muslims, while 87% supported the statement that Muslims have to adopt to the Austrian culture. This shows the deep-seated and widely shared anti-Muslim prejudice which Aschauer traces back to a political climate that allowed for these views to become normal.\(^4\)

\(^1\) The Ibiza-gate was triggered on 17 May 2019 by the publication of a secretly recorded video of a meeting in Ibiza, Spain, in July 2017, held by Strache and FPÖ-Gudenus discussing their party’s underhanded practices and intentions. Both politicians intend to sell government contracts to an alleged niece of a Russian businessman and hinted at corrupt political practices involving other wealthy donors to the FPÖ. As a consequence, the scandal caused the collapse of the governing coalition on 18 May 2019. Elections were set for 29 September.


Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

The NGO ZARA documented 1,950 racist acts. The civil society organization Dokustelle Muslime documented 1,051 cases of anti-Muslim incidents in 2019. The majority consists of the spread of hate (757 cases), followed by 118 cases of insult, discrimination (43 cases), and others. According to ZARA, 385 of 1,950 documented racist acts were anti-Muslim.

In April, Muslims notified the police that they had heard gunshots in front of the Islamic Center in Vienna. The police found cartridges of a blank gun in front of the entrance of the largest mosque in Vienna. According to the police, the gunshots were the result of a quarrel between two car drivers.

A sticker with the intimidation “RAPEFUGEES NOT WELCOME” was seen on a bench in the fifth district of Vienna. (Fig. 1) Refugees are often equated with being Muslim, especially after the influx in 2015.

Figure 1: Sticker with the words “RAPEFUGEES NOT WELCOME” on a bench in the fifth district of Vienna, 1050.

Employment

The Dokustelle and ZARA document discrimination in the labor market. For further data, their reports should be consulted. The presentation of the 2019 report was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea that women cannot wear a hijab as attorneys, judges, and police officers, as discussed in 2017 alongside

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5. Personal correspondence with Dokustelle prior to the release of their annual report.
6. Personal correspondence with ZARA prior to the release of their annual report.
8. Email to the author, December 2019.
the implementation of the full-face veil ban in the Integration Act 2017, was further expanded. A Muslim legal intern was not allowed to sit on the judge’s bench. The Linz Higher Regional Court (OLG) ruled that the young woman could not represent the state and the judiciary if she wore the hijab. According to the president of the OLG, Katharina Lehmayer, the “tricky issue was not yet regulated by the legislator.”

**Education**

In March 2019, ÖVP Minister of Education Heinz Faßmann informed the public that a survey will be conducted on social climate and integration in schools. One question in the survey involved the increase/decrease of the number of girls wearing the hijab. Kenan Güngör, who was also a member of the expert council on integration of the Foreign Ministry, was in charge of the survey that claims to engage with teachers. The results have not been published yet.

Minister of Education Faßmann (ÖVP) replaced eleven executive personnel in his ministry. Many pedagogues were forced to leave and were replaced by loyal party members such as Markus Benesch who has been working for Sebastian Kurz in various leading positions. This has the potential that anti-Muslim legislation will be further entrenched in the field of education.

A male student appeared armed with a weapon for lectures at the Faculty of Physics of the University of Vienna in October. On social media, he had made remarks and expressed violent fantasies about Islam. After another knife was discovered, he was banned from the university as a first reaction. On his Twitter account he stated, “I would like to die in a fight against Islam and kill as many of them as possible.”

A highly problematic aspect is the Secret Service’s (BVT) new approach to dealing with the Muslim community. While in the past, the Islamic Religious Community (IGGÖ) was seen as a partner in the fight against Jihadism, now major aspects of the IGGÖ’s activities from religious education in public schools to the training of teachers in college are seen with suspicion.

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Politics

On 11 January 2019, the weekly *Profil* reported that the federal far-right government wants to create a monitoring center that tracks religious extremism, conducts research, and archives and documents it.¹⁴ Freedom Party whip Johann Gudenus said there would be a “law against political Islam modelled on the Prohibition Act of 1947.”¹⁵ The law was planned to be published in the second half of 2019 and was not implemented because the government resigned. The exclusive focus on Islam was overruled by the constitutional committee as unconstitutional. According to the Freedom Party, there are two foci: “religious laws that are put above state law and the unequal treatment of women due to religious reasons.”¹⁶ Independent MP Efgani Dönmez supported this initiative to monitor movements such as “the Muslim Brotherhood and the Turkish Milli Görüs.”¹⁷ Vice chancellor and party leader Heinz-Christian Strache emphasized the need to “ban political Islam on a legal basis.”¹⁸

Following Strache’s launch of his think tank debating “Islamic Anti-Semitism” and the presentation of a study on anti-Semitism according to which Arab and Turkish immigrants were more anti-Semitic than others, the government demanded that a “Monitoring Center for political Islam, Rule of Law, and Prevention” (*Dokumentationsstelle für politischen Islam, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Prävention*) be established in 2020.¹⁹ Certain journalists uttered their suspicion of these consecutive happenings.²⁰ Chancellor Kurz said, “Politicians are urgently required to protect our free society from political Islam and its excesses, such as anti-Semitism.”²¹ Kurz explained that this means to monitor Islamist associations, Islamist ideology on social media, and segregation in the realm of education. The law was planned to be debated in parliament in the summer of 2019.²²

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¹⁶. Ibid.
¹⁷. Ibid.
²¹. Ibid.
Peter Pilz, leader of the small parliamentary party Liste Jetzt, argued that Austria’s political system was infiltrated by political Islam. Specifically, he stated “Milli Görüs, the Turkish Muslim Brotherhood… [a]long with Erdogan’s ATIB [Turkish Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Cooperation, FH], both have taken over the Islamic Religious Community (IGGÖ).”

According to him, with the new president Ümit Vural, the “power of political Islam” was set in cement. Pilz further argued, “We have to look at whether individual representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood have not had an impact on the law. We have to be careful that Milli Görüs does not exploit parts of domestic politics.”

He warned that the ÖVP and SPÖ could be infiltrated by them. Pilz claimed that Sebastian Kurz had given the Muslim Brotherhood the possibility to use the law for its own purpose, especially in terms of financial aid from foreign countries.

The ATIB protested against these allegations by Pilz and argued that the ATIB would be “one of the strongest proponents in the fight against extremist religious tendencies,” thus again reproducing anti-Muslim stereotypes.

According to the ATIB, Pilz is a populist who engages in conspiracies because of his own insignificance, and it accused him of dividing society.

Also, the former party member and independent MP Martha Bißmann criticized her former party leader for being as populist as the far right. Following a visit to a meeting in Cologne by the president of the Islamic Religious Community, FPÖ party whip Johann Gudenus asked him to step down. President Vural participated in a conference organized by the Turkish department of religious affairs, Diyanet. Gudenus saw this as a proof that Vural was a “radical Islamist” participating in a “secret meeting” – it should be noted that the meeting was never secret.

Following the coverage of a “Turkish-nationalist Milli Görüs movement” by the daily Krone, ÖVP minister and party leader of the Viennese branch, Gernot Blümel, argued, “Years of looking away paved the way for the emergence of parallel societies
in Vienna.”30 He stated that the city must not become the “center of political Islam […] What has been sown by the red-green government for decades is now bearing fruit in the form of organized Islamic associations. In this way, our society does not ask for integration but segregation.”31 Rather than counteracting this discourse, the social democratic government argued that the federal government was in charge of this issue. According to them, they had already filed a petition to the interior minister to “closely monitor associations who spread authoritarian or Islamic-nationalist ideologies and to regulate the states on a regular basis.”32

A discussion on the Christchurch terrorist attack took place in national parliament. According to the information from the Ministry of Interior, the terrorist Tarrant came to Vienna via Budapest and had left Austria on his way to Estonia. With a group of other people, Tarrant had visited North Korea. Two of them were Austrians. The Interior Ministry said that there were no relations to persons or right-wing extremist organizations. MP Walter Rosenkranz (FPÖ) criticized the opposition by claiming that it did not act on the danger of right-wing extremism and argued that the opposition parties were blind in one eye, refusing to see left-wing extremist and Islamist terror. FPÖ party whip Johann Gudenus even argued that the “daily persecution of Christians” would be uncommented by political leaders and thus criticized the lack of empathy with all victims of terrorist attacks. He then argued that the ban of political Islam would be the right answer to fight radical Islamist terrorist movements “who want to destroy our culture.”33 Peter Weidinger from the governing ÖVP also stated, “We are not blind on the left, nor on the right eye,” thus equating the threat of right-wing extremism with leftist groups. Previously, ÖVP MP Efgani Dönmez also argued that right-wing extremism and Islamist extremism both share the same goals: the destruction of society and the state. Alma Zadić (Jetzt) criticized FPO politicians for using the same language as the Identitarians. Prominent politicians of the FPÖ spoke of combating “invaders.” She identified parallels with the beginning of the Yugoslavian war, where the society was divided and people took to arms. Social democratic MP Peter Wittmann argued that one could not deny the strong links between Interior Minister Herbert Kickl (FPÖ) and the Identitarian movement. A resolution from the government was adopted by all parties to re-implement a strategy against right-wing extremism. Also, the government argued that the permanent investigation

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
committee and the National Security Council would allow for more detailed information about Tarrant’s relation to Austria.34

Following the dissolution of the far-right government, Viennese FPÖ Chairman Dominik Nepp said that the Islamic Community (IGGÖ), which is a legally recognized corporative institution, should be investigated regarding its legal status because its president Ümit Vural asked to build a visible mosque in every state of Austria. He stated, “The IGGÖ is … by political Islamists, whose goal is to create an Islamic theocratic state with peaceful means.”35 Karl Nehammer, general secretary of the ÖVP, responded to Vural saying that integration was more important than the construction of a mosque in every state of Austria. “The IGGÖ must not bring Muslims further away from our society, but must help to improve their integration. This requires joint efforts and a commitment to our catalog of values instead of false fantasies with mosques. We are of course not against mosques per se, but I see the outlined path from a large mosque per federal state as critical because it does not contribute to the integration of Muslims, but does the opposite.”36

In 2017, members of a chat group of the student union AG, which is ideologically linked to the governing ÖVP, had spread anti-Semitic and white supremacist content. While a member was excluded from the ÖVP youth organization and a local MP was removed from the ÖVP in Lower Austria, the public came to know that a member of this very chat group was working in the Foreign Ministry. He had worked for the ministry and the Austrian Integration Fund ÖIF.37

Political scientist Bassam Tibi warned of a “new anti-Semitism” emerging in Iran that is rooted in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. He was invited to speak at an official commemoration of the Holocaust and said that he “adored him [Sebastian Kurz, FH] very much.”38 Tibi stated, “If a new systematic pogrom of Jews is repeated, then it will be in the Near East.”39 In contrast to Tibi and his narrative of anti-Semitic Muslims, the president of the Austrian Federal Council (SPÖ), the second chamber of the parliament, did not focus on the “new anti-Semitism” but on human rights and democracy.

34. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
In an interview with the daily *Österreich*, Vice-Chancellor Strache said that the deletion of the legal recognition of the established Protestant holiday Good Friday was necessary in order not to let Muslims claim a separate legally recognized holiday. He said, “We definitely do not want a Muslim holiday.” 40 Norbert Hofer (FPÖ) reiterated this. 41 This also had an effect on the Jewish holiday Yom Kippur, forcing Protestants and Jews to take an extra day off on their religious holidays. 42 The Protestant Church prepared a lawsuit against the removal of its holiday from the official list of national holidays.

During a parliamentary debate in the Viennese Council on 27 February 2019, an FPÖ MP argued that Rami Ali, an anti-racist political activist, is presumably a Muslim Brother. The FPÖ argued that he was linked to the Social Democratic Party and Green MP Faika El-Nagashi. 43 Because of parliamentary privilege, the MP cannot be sued.

Thomas Bulant of the Social Democratic labor union FSG criticized the federal government for not allocating enough money to teaching staff. Naming the problems, he argued, “Part of this, of course, is the creeping Islamization in our society, violence or crime.” 44

According to the head of the SPÖ in Lower Austria, Franz Schnabl, the ÖVP’s strategy in the election campaign to discuss Islam as a security threat was a distraction from internal scandals. He stated, “Creating fear is not the job of responsible politicians.” 45

During the convention of the European Peoples Party (EPP) in May 2019 in Zagreb, Sebastian Kurz declared that Europe had to “defend Europe’s Christian-Jewish identity.” 46 He further stated that “it should not accept more people, whom it is not able to integrate.” 47 The original proposal for a department of the European Commission was “Commissioner on the Protection of European Way of Life,” which was

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47. Ibid.
regarded as populist by the Social Democrats and the Greens. The term “protection” was later changed to “Promotion,” which was not welcomed by Sebastian Kurz.48

During the election campaign, the ÖVP demanded that marriages can only be contracted with a minimum age of 18 years. A request by the Austrian Press Agency APA made clear that this initiative targeted Muslims, claiming that with immigration, people came to Austria who think that Islamic values were more important than Austrian ones.49

In a response to the ÖVP’s attempt to ban the Identitarian movement, the FPÖ reiterated its will to ban political Islam.50 When the ÖVP called for a ban of political Islam in its election program, the FPÖ argued that it was the justice minister of the ÖVP who had not put such a law into practice.51

Legislation
After a hijab ban in kindergarten was already implemented in 2018, the ÖVP invited the anti-Muslim author Zana Ramadani as an expert to the education committee to expand the hijab ban up to 10 years of age. She argued, “Once you wear it [hijab, FH] as a girl, you won’t take it off.”52 The proposed text bans “wearing ideological or religious clothing, with which a covering of the head is connected.” An explicit naming of the hijab would be problematic while this description allows the kippah and dastar (turban worn by Sikhs) not to be affected. Minister of Education Heinz Faßmann argued that this would be done for secularity and the equal treatment of men and women. Another expert, Ebrahim Afsah, called the hijab a “modern, political symbol” and argued that the ban was not problematic since it was not obligatory at this young age. NEOS and SPÖ did not support the proposal, though they declared that they would not support young girls being forced to wear the hijab. In addition to the hijab ban, they called for a more comprehensive policy to support social workers and language skills. Minister Faßmann also argued that he envisions a space for public servants that is ideology and religion-free specifically mentioning policewomen, judges, and teachers (except teachers of religion classes). Minister

48. Ibid.
Faßmann said that the ban is only up to 10 years of age because this is less risky to be against religious freedom. He added, “I am nobody that fights with the machete.” To this, his expert, Zana Ramadani, added, “I am here for using the machete.”

President of the Islamic Community Vural had proclaimed that he would litigate against the hijab ban, which was introduced by the ÖVP and FPÖ in 2018. At the same time, the ÖVP called for a broadening of the hijab ban to include pupils up to 14 years as well as Muslim teachers because they “implicitly undermine the neutrality of the state and promote a social system in which women do not have the same position as in our Western, enlightened society.”

During the election campaign in late 2019, the FPÖ called for an expansion of the hijab ban to up to 14 years of age in school. This stance was also taken by the ÖVP. The FPÖ also called for a hijab ban for teachers. According to MP Hermann Brückl, the hijab supports an early social and gender segregation. In September 2019, shortly before the new national parliamentary elections, the FPÖ submitted an amendment to change to School Teaching Act to include a hijab ban for pupils up to the age of 14 as well as for teachers. “The headscarf is a symbol of political Islam and has no place in educational institutions,” said FPÖ chairman Norbert Hofer.

The motion was not accepted by the rest of the parties. MP Christoph Matznetter (SPÖ) argued that the only teachers wearing a headscarf would be nuns and MP Michaela Steinacker (ÖVP) agreed that such a ban would also threaten Catholic teachers of religious education. Due to considerations of fundamental rights, the initiative was postponed.

FPÖ Viennese chairman Dominik Nepp published a press release, in which he spoke about “Muslim sexual delinquents, who see our daughters and women as unprotected game from their misanthropic perception of women.” According to him, Shariah would rule in schools, where Muslims make up the majority in Vienna.
Media
On 17 January, three female ministers presented their measures to fight violence against women.

Minister of Women Juliane Bogner-Strauß (ÖVP) headed the initiative. The argument was that anti-Semitism, radical Islamism, and a different perception of women was “imported” with the “migration wave.” According to Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl, violence against women increased with the “migration crisis.”

During Austria’s most important weekly political debate on TV following the murder of four women within one week, State Secretary Karoline Edtstadler (ÖVP) argued that there was no patriarchy in Austria. Rather, this was due to “imported patriarchy” (from Muslim immigrants).

A theologian was interviewed on the ban of the headscarf and gave different answers to critical questions. On the one hand, she criticized the government that puts pressure on Muslim girls and their parents. On the other, she argued that one has to be cautious and look at which ideology is spread by religious teachers, thus reproducing a general suspicion against a religious community.

Some figures such as the self-proclaimed “moderate Muslim” Abulwafa Mohammed supported the notion of the government’s European Islam without uttering one word of critique towards the government’s policies vis-à-vis Muslims. In another op-ed, the same author argued that the spirit of the Islam Act of 2015, which was widely criticized as being discriminatory in many respects, “aimed at the independence and responsibility of Muslims in Austria.” He further argued that some Muslim associations and organizations – without naming them and thus creating a suspicion around many – “are not open about their ideological and political goals.” He concluded his op-ed with the words: “Out of love for Austria and Islam, I urge for more transparency in Muslim communities.”

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60. “Im Visier: Karoline Edtstadler”, Linkswende, 4 February 2019, http://linkswende.org/im-visier-karoline-edtstadler/?fbclid=IwAR3QyYigjdhbY7aqw3w2FIM66cL7M7g0vov9mmqB-QgZ37UlAGexISSE (Access date: 19 December 2019).
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
Activist Rami Ali published one of the most comprehensive critical op-eds in Der Standard on Susanne Wiesinger’s book dealing with the alleged threat of Islam in school.67 Philosopher of law Stefan Hammer argued in an interview in Die Presse that a hijab ban in school and universities would be an unlawful interference in religious freedom.68

A panel was held at the University of Vienna to discuss the ban of the hijab. While all panelists supported the claim that young girls should not wear a hijab, Heiko Heinisch called for a general ban in school. Policy advisor Kenan Güngör criticized the language used by parts of the government in the legitimization of the ban and feared that this language would counteract the goal of weakening conservative Islam. Michael Kramer represented the Islamic Community (IGGÖ) and argued that the initiative was “right and important, but the implementation via a law was wrong.”69 NEOS party whip Christoph Wiederkehr argued that this ban would be used against one particular religious group, while supporting a “religion-neutral school up to 14 years.”70 Martin Kienl from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the law.

While the Islamic Community criticized the hijab ban as an interference in the parents’ right to education, according to the head of the education department of the Islamic Community, Amina Baghajati, they had a “good practice” when dealing with kids who wear the hijab, be it forced or not.71 In the weekly Falter journalist and cultural studies scholar Judith Kohlenberger discussed a study conducted by two political scientists from Stanford University who assess the impact of the headscarf ban on Muslim societal integration in France. Kohlenberg takes the evidence to counteract the government’s proclamation that a headscarf ban would enhance societal integration.72

In an interview with the Upper Austrian Federation of Austrian Industry, its CEO said that the canon of values would be violated when Santa Claus is not allowed to enter kindergarten anymore because of migration, thus reiterating a false idea of Muslim immigrants changing the culture of the country.73

The daily Krone published a story on the “Turkish-nationalist Milli Görüs movement,” which had established a European youth headquarter in the 15th Vien-

70. Ibid.
nese district. State youth attorney Nik Nafs said that he had asked the secret service for further information on the allegations that the movement stands for problematic values such as homophobia, anti-Semitism, and nationalism.\(^74\)

In an opinion piece by Christian Ultsch in *Die Presse*, the author commented on the Christchurch terrorist attacks as follows, “Anyone who draws exaggerated conclusions about a ‘structural hatred of Islam’ from the bloody deed of a fascist in New Zealand is wrong.”\(^75\) While Ultsch on the one hand realizes the danger that comes from white supremacist racists, he sees this ideology as an old relict that is drawn upon by a few isolated people. He argues that one has to rethink how issues like Islam and migration are discussed, but also criticizes the social democrats who linked this anti-Muslim ideology of the right-wing government with the Christchurch terrorist. Furthermore, he criticizes the SPÖ leader’s words that there was a “structural hate against Islam.”\(^76\) “In doing so, it is promoting the Islamophobia debate, the function of which is not least to prevent a critical examination of Islam.”\(^77\)

Adelheid Wölfl from *Der Standard* informed the public of the ideological relations of the Christchurch terrorist to Serb nationalist ideology and its genocide of Muslims during the Yugoslavian civil war in the 1990s.\(^78\)

Following the Christchurch attacks, the Islamic Religious Community doubted the integrity of expressions of mourning by politicians of the FPÖ, who have been a strong force of anti-Muslim discourse for decades.\(^79\) The president of the Jewish Community expressed his condolences to the Muslim community.\(^80\) Chancellor Kurz was not willing to name the ideology behind the terrorist attack, but gave a general statement saying: “Our position on this is very clear, no kind of extremism whatsoever – whether it’s radical Islamists or right-wing extremist fanatics – has any place in our society.”\(^81\)


\(^76\) Ibid.

\(^77\) Ibid.


In an op-ed in *Die Presse*, Nina Scholz discussed a survey on anti-Semitism conducted in 2016 on youngsters in youth centers.\(^{82}\) According to this study, 47% of Muslim youth, 27% of Christian Orthodox, and 7% of Catholic youth hold anti-Semitic views. But what Scholz continues to argue is that “a look at the literary Islamic tradition would bring a unique anti-Jewish tradition to the fore”\(^{83}\) and would question the assumption that anti-Semitism was imported to Muslim thought by Europeans. According to her, Islamic anti-Semitism has to be searched in the Islamic tradition and reappraised.

The newspaper *Österreich* falsely claimed that the Muslim organization Milli Görüş is monitored by the Secret Service (BVT).\(^{84}\) Milli Görüş did not react.

The European delegation leader of the FPÖ Harald Vilimsky supported far-right extremist newspaper *Info Direkt*, which is close to the Identitarian Movement, as an MEP.\(^{85}\)

In an op-ed, two academics questioned the data provided by the Dokustelle Muslime, which monitors anti-Muslim hate crime. They also questioned whether racism and religion could be conceptualized within one category, thus questioning the existence of anti-Muslim racism. They especially criticized the fact that the media had covered the rise of hate crime as reported by Dokustelle. From a Eurocentrist perspective, they argued that “religion has to be domesticated and surveilled.” Further, they claimed that one should look at racism in Arab societies and anti-Semitism among Muslims in Europe.\(^{86}\)

In an op-ed, Ednan Aslan critically reflected on the Islam policies of the government coalition of the ÖVP and FPÖ. He argued in favor of training imams in Austria, as the Islam Act of 2015 had claimed (which is not the case). He also claimed that the government had planned to define standards for the establishment of mosques along with the Islamic Religious Community (IGGÖ). He argued that it was the government’s goal to prevent ideological indoctrination in Islamic kindergartens, check textbooks for Islamic religious education in public schools, fight the radicalization of Muslim youth, and close down mosques of rad-

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\(^{83}\) Ibid.


Islamophobia in Austria

According to Aslan, not a single one of these goals had been achieved, even more imams from abroad had entered Austria following the influx of refugees, and more schools founded by several states for the training of imams had been opened. While Aslan welcomed that the previous government was open and clear about not wanting a “radical Islam,” he argued that they did not say which form of Islam they wanted to support. He especially criticized the fact that the government did not speak out about supporting an “Islam of European imprint” (Islam europäischer Prägung). Aslan supports the Islam Act of 2015 and wishes that further steps are taken.87

Justice System

The application for recognition as a religious community on behalf of the Alevi community was rejected by the Viennese High Administrative Court. The reason for this was that the statutes were in most parts identical to those of the already legally recognized community of the Islamic Alevi Community (ALEVI), which is recognized under the Islam Act of 2015. The Alevi community asserts to represent 70,000 Alvis and protested the verdict, arguing that its facilities might be closed, if they do not subordinate to the Islamic Alevi Community. Also, the Office for Cultural Affairs (Kultusamt) of the Austrian Republic requested the community to change its name in order to prevent a confusion with the recognized “ALEVI.”88

According to a letter by the federal department of education, the hijab ban has also implications for sports education. The letter states, “Pupils up to ten years are forbidden to wear ideological or religious garments that are related to the covering of the head, also in sports classes.”89 This also explicitly includes the burkini. The president of the IGGÖ, Ümit Vural, stated that the IGGÖ will submit a lawsuit against the ban of the hijab in elementary school in December 2019.90

Vural also criticized the shortage of 65 imams in Austrian mosques following the deportation of imams and the designation of imams from ATIB as an endangerment of public safety and order.91 After having been elected, Vural stressed that

“racism should not become the normal.” He also made clear that the number of hijab-wearing girls in elementary school is extremely low.

Following the implementation of the Symbol Act, the Ministry of Interior published the 13 logos that are banned according to the amended act. (Fig. 2)

Figure 2: Banned logos of different organizations.

The logos of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Grey Wolves, the military arm of Hizbullah, and Hamas are amongst them. The fine for showing such a logo in public is up to EUR 4,000, and repeat offences incur a fine of up to EUR 10,000. While in the past the Symbol Act had only banned the logos of DAESH and Al-Qaeda, this move, where the logos of non-violent organizations are banned alongside violent ones, can be interpreted as a potential move towards further suppression of organizations that are allegedly related to the named organizations. The recent plans to ban so-called political Islam can be read as such a move.

The Arab Cultus Community, which is part of the Islamic Religious Community and is home to more than ten mosques, won a lawsuit against the government’s initiative to close down the community and its mosques. In closing down the mosques and the community, the Office for Cultural Affairs (Kultusamt) had acted against the law according to the verdict of the Viennese Administration Court. At the same time, the government vowed to appeal the verdict at the Federal Higher Administrative Court. Minister Gernot Blümel argued that if this means changing the law, then this had to be done by the federal government.

Various mosques in Vienna and Lower Austria were visited by personnel of the state's Cultural Office without prior notification. The Islamic Religious Community said this was an “exceedance of one’s level of competency.” The officials told the community members and imams that they would “check if everything is fine.”

According to the newspaper Addendum, associations of the Turkish Federation in Wiener Neustadt were closed. Reasons were not made public.

Following news that the first newborn baby of 2018 had Muslim parents with a mother wearing a hijab, a 65-year-old pensioner was given a six-month probation due to a hate posting.

A 67-year-old pensioner was given a 15-month probation because he had fixed a sign outside of his private apartment that showed Nazi symbols and the sentence “Office Moslem-Hunter. Kill them all.”

Both Karl Nehammer (ÖVP) and Johann Gudenus (FPÖ) were delighted with the verdict of the Constitutional Court which supported the expulsion of two imams from ATIB mosques that were financed by the Diyanet.

Sabine Matejka, president of the Austrian Lawyers Association, argued in August during the Alpbach talks that the governance of religious neutrality in the court
should be dealt with in a comprehensive way. “It is not okay to ban only the hijab for lawyers. Either the ban is for everybody or for nobody.” The president of Austrian lawyers, Rupert Wolff, argued during the debate that neutrality should be compulsory for all state authorities.

The court in the city of Graz ruled on an attack on a mosque that was perpetrated on 6 May 2016. The head of a pig was put outside of the mosque and pig blood was spilled. Three men were convicted on the grounds of vilification of religious teachings and a woman reached an extrajudicial agreement. The court proceedings were not open to the public on the grounds of “public order and national security.” The judge argued that “the work by the secret services and the identity of the officials had to be protected” and he wanted to “prevent the dissemination of extremist propaganda.”

In autumn of 2018, the Ummet Mosque in Feldkirch was closed because it was said that it had radicalized youth with the dissemination of the Koran. According to a study conducted by the institution “okay zusammen leben” led by Eva Grabherr, this mosque was a “political-Salafist” one and the administration of the mosque refused to give interviews to them. The report claimed that many youths that participated in the campaign ‘Read’ (Lies) would have joined Jihadist organizations and left to Syria in 2014/2015. The mosque was closed because the lease had ended.

In December 2019, the mosque Savjet in Vienna was raided. According to the police, this was a “usual control.” According to the tabloid press, this was due to migrants without legal documents who visit the mosque.

Following the publication of our *European Islamophobia Report* in 2019, an open letter against the publication was written by people whom I had mentioned in the national report for 2018 on Austria in the *European Islamophobia Report*. Every single Austrian newspaper published the piece, and my reply as well. Following the publication and a media campaign against the report and myself, I also received a letter, where I was personally threatened. The letter wrote, “Are you a political scientist? No, you are a Moslem! You are dumb like nearly all Muslims! Also, Islam is no religion, but an epidemic, epidemics have to be exterminated! [...]” (Fig. 3)


105. Ibid.


ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AUSTRIA

Internet

According to the *Guardian*, organized hate groups based in Israel were active in spreading anti-Muslim prejudices on Facebook in several countries, including the U.S., Canada, Australia, Great Britain, and Austria.111

Following the verdict of the Constitutional Court that the deportation of imams was legal, FPÖ party whip Johann Gudenus spread the message on his social media.

At the beginning of the New Year, the youth branch of the FPÖ, the RFJ, posted an ad on its social media channels stating, “Mohammed most popular name for newborns in three Viennese districts.” (Fig. 4)

110. Personal Archive, October 2019.


The Austrian National Youth Council, a representative of more than 50 youth organizations in Austria, demonstrated against the government’s hijab ban. (Fig. 5)

**Figure 5**: Austrian National Youth Council’s demonstration against the hijab ban: “Politics is not to be done on the expense of Muslims. This racist discourse is poisonous for the social climate in the long term.”

**Figure 6**: FPÖ party whip Johann Gudenus posts “Deportation of imams legal.”

FPÖ party chairman Norbert Hofer posts, “The Battle against Political Islam Is Only Possible with a Strong FPÖ” during the election campaign in 2019. (Fig. 7)

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113. “Politics is not to be done on the expense of Muslims. This racist discourse is poisonous for the social climate in the long term”, Austrian National Youth Council, Screenshot, 2019.

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN AUSTRIA

Figure 7: FPÖ party chairman Norbert Hofer posts, “The Battle against political Islam is only Possible with a strong FPÖ.”

Figure 8: FPÖ Vienna party chairman Dominik Nepp posts, “I don’t let myself be intimidated in the battle against political Islam.”

FPÖ Vienna party chairman Dominik Nepp also spread a post mobilizing against the hijab, showing a woman in a niqab in the background. (Fig. 9) and another post where he states not to be “intimidated in the battle against political Islam”.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

Vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ) established the think tank *Denkwerk Zukunftsreich*. Unlike the think tank of the chancellor Sebastian Kurz *Think Austria* with six employees, Strache’s think tank has one employee only, the historian Thomas Grischany. The first and only event that took place was on 13 February, where political scientist Michael Ley presented his book *Islamic Anti-Semitism* (*Islamischer Antisemitismus*) and shared a podium with German Jewish journalist Henryk M. Broder and anti-Muslim public figure Laila Mirzo, who has a relationship with various far-right outlets and movements. Another guest was Birol Kilic, who represents the Turkish Cultural Association, and who argued against Ley. Broder spoke of Islamic anti-Semitism as an “insolvable problem.” Ley warned of an “Islamization and blatant increase of Islamism” in Europe. He went on to say, “Europe is facing Islamization - and if you like, the final solution of Judaism.” Michael Ley was previously interviewed by Martin Sellner, discussing their shared views, where Ley stated, “It is important that the Identitarians become stronger.” Liste-Jetzt MP Alma Zadić asked on whose initiative Ley was invited. Vice-chancellor Strache answered, “The initiative and idea for this event and for the selection of the guests on the podium was developed by me in cooperation with the department’s own think tank and my cabinet.” Laila Mirzo works for the far-right weekly magazine *Wochenblick*. Leaked internal documents of the Identitarian movement revealed that “Laila” was in charge of the social media

117. “Hijab and Shariah have no place in Vienna”, Dominik Nepp, Screenshot, 29 December 2019.
121. Ibid.
channels of the movement. She was invited as an “Islam expert,” though the institution Stoppt die Rechten could not identify any qualifications justifying the description.\textsuperscript{122} I have sued Michael Ley for his comments in his keynote during the event, where he claimed that I was an Islamist and won the case in the second instance.

The Austrian Integration Fund continued organizing one-sided events. On 22 February 2019, it organized a discussion with Hamed Abdel-Samad entitled “The Secular State and Islam,” moderated by Michael Fleischhacker.\textsuperscript{123}

The FPÖ’s ally in the U.S. Congress, Republican Congressman Steve King, lost his influence after being removed from all committee assignments after bipartisan condemnation of his remarks on white supremacy on 14 January 2019.\textsuperscript{124} Bernhard Gaul reported this in the daily Kurier.\textsuperscript{125}

It was revealed that an underground network of right-wing extremists with headquarters in Germany and links to Austria and Switzerland had prepared for a “Day X.” The network Hannibal (named after its leader) that consists of former policemen and personnel from the Secret Service and Defense Ministry prepared for the day when all order would collapse. The group had prepared a death list of its political opponents. The Austrian connection is the knights’ order Lazarus Union, which is officially only a charitable organization. Its headquarters is in Burg Kreuzenstein near Vienna. Hannibal was the vice president until reports of the organization made the news and his membership was revoked. The Austrian secret services kept a low profile in their investigation.\textsuperscript{126}

Personnel from the Foreign Ministry’s secret service warned that armed groups of soldiers are also organizing themselves in Austria. Based on investigations in Germany, Austrian ex-soldiers were identified as participating in transnational WhatsApp chat groups. The association Milf-O, which is considered to have links to right-wing extremism, was mentioned in the chats. Two candidates for the FPÖ in the national elections have prominent positions within the armed forces and thus,


the secret service fears that important information could have been handed over to people outside of the department of defense. At first, the new FPÖ defense minister did not express concern about the fact that Austrian soldiers were members of the Identitarian Movement.127

Prosecutors instigated a probe into the “disproportionately high donation” from Australian white supremacist Brenton Tarrant to the head of Identitarian movement’s Austrian branch.128 Martin Sellner, head of the movement, received EUR 1,500 in early 2018 from the terrorist, who had murdered 50 people at two mosques in Christchurch. Sellner was blocked in 2018 from entering Great Britain before a Generation Identity conference near London. According to state authorities, the terrorist Tarrant had visited the country before the massacre and according to the Independent, he had met right-wing extremists in Europe two years prior to the attacks.129 According to the Minister of Interior, Tarrant had visited Austria from 27 November to 4 December 2018.130 Following the news about these relations, the Austrian government announced its will to close down the Identitarian movement.131 The Australian terrorist had visited the cities Steyr, Vienna, and Klagenfurt. In 2016, Vice-chancellor Strache had called the Identitarian movement a non-leftist civil society movement. (Fig. 10)

Figure 10: Screenshot of a posting of the chairman of the FPÖ on the Identitarian movement, where he calls the Identitarian movement a “non-partisan non-leftist civic movement” that draws on “peaceful activism”.132

128. Chris Baynes, “New Zealand terror attacker had financial links with European far-right group Generation Identity, Austrian chancellor reveals”.
129. Ibid.
While Strache argued that he had no links to the Identitarian movement, journalists have traced the many personal ties between Identitarians and FPÖ personnel. Following the Ibiza gate, former vice-chancellor and FPÖ chairman Heinz-Christian Strache gave his first interview to the German branch of the Russian TV channel RT.

Martin Sellner, the voice of the European Identitarian movement, was given a platform on the Austrian "Breitbart" Servus-TV, where he positioned himself as a victim of the Christchurch terrorist, arguing that his name would now forever be related to the terrorist. Anne-Catherine Simon criticized the fact that Servus TV had invited one of the leading German right-wing extremist ideologues, namely Götz Kubitschek, mainstreaming his views but not challenging his very problematic statements. Kubitschek has not been given any platform on German TV. The debate was moderated by Michael Fleischhacker and a famous Islamophobe, Henryk Broder, was also invited.

According to political scientist Strobl, international activities by the Identitarian movement in Europe are planned in Austria. The Identitarian movement has official branches in France, Austria, Germany, and Italy, and informal representatives in Ireland, Britain, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia. Following a lawsuit in Austria that took four years, 17 activists were acquitted in the summer of 2018. There are around 300 Identitarian activists in Austria, between the ages of 15 and 35.

While the Identitarian movement was not banned, there were discussions to amend the Symbol Act 2015 to include the ban of the logo of the Identitarian movement. Since the meeting was postponed and the government dissolved, this was not implemented. During the elections, Karl Nehammer said that the ÖVP will...
ban the right-wing extremist Identitarian movement. Consequently, the logo of the Identitarian movement was banned.

Ednan Aslan had to step down from his position as head of the research project “Islamic Theological Institute” at the University of Vienna. According to Der Standard, the reasons the rector made this move are not fully clear. Some insiders argue that it was due to “fundamental misconduct, not least in personnel management” ranging from mobbing to bad atmosphere within the team. Aslan rejected these allegations.

Ilham Manea, a senior advisor of the European Foundation for Democracy, invited by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) to give a talk in the city of Wels. The ÖVP-owned newspaper Volksblatt titled an interview with Manea “I Have No Problem with the Headscarf Ban’ Muslim Political Scientist Elham Manea Warns of the Excesses of Political Islam.” In the interview, Manea questioned why Austrian authorities are dealing with Alif (Upper Austrian Muslim organization with historical roots in the Milli Görüs movement), which she called the Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Milli Görüs movement. She stated that Milli Görüs is inspired by political Islam, that they have “totalitarian views,” and that it would be wrong for people belonging to this movement to work as religious teachers in public schools. Also, she supported the government’s hijab ban in the same interview. When confronted with the position of the IGGÖ, who think that the ban would be discriminatory, she stated, “It is not discriminatory. With all religious freedom, there must also be the possibility to prevent certain phenomena of religious excesses.” She also supported the ÖVP’s position to ban “political Islam.”

The anti-Muslim author Michael Ley was interviewed in far-right media such as Wochenblick, where he argued that orthodox Islam was a political religion and similar to European fascism, representing a totalitarian ideology, and that political Islam was as anti-Semitic as Islam itself.

A historical report commissioned by the FPÖ on the party’s relationship with Nazism, included questionable authors. One was the known anti-Muslim author Laila Mirzo, who is also aligned to the Identitarian movement. Mirzo was in charge of content for the Identitarian movement’s social media platform on Facebook. She

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writes for far-right media outlets such as *Wochenblick* and *Jüdische Rundschau*, who often support AfD claims. In the same report, there were also two Israeli authors, who were chosen to support the non-anti-Semitic image of the FPÖ. According to the Israeli far-right author and former secret service agent Mordechai Kedar, Nazis were always “very friendly” to Muslims and thus, the “battle against political Islam” would not be a continuity of the Nazi past. According to the Rabin Center, Kedar is a “sick conspiracy theorist.” He had argued that the best weapon against Jihadists is to rape their mothers and sisters. The second Israeli author was 84-year-old Raphael Israeli, who in 2017 had suggested to detain Israeli Arabs in camps.  

**Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia**

Compared to 2018, there were many more initiatives taken against anti-Muslim racism in 2019. This is especially the case with NGOs that dedicate their efforts to countering Islamophobia. The following is a short list of attempts to tackle Islamophobia:

- The anti-racist NGO SOS Mitmensch presented its first report on anti-Muslim racism in Austrian politics. This report presented 20 cases of anti-Muslim speech by members of the FPÖ in 2018. The report was drafted by the internationally renowned linguist Ruth Wodak. During the press conference, Wodak warned that with the FPÖ in power, anti-Muslim racism became central to the government. She criticized the ÖVP for not taking a clear position. She warned of the perils of demagogy and reminded the audience of the national-socialist rhetoric.

- The president of the Styrian parliament organized a memorial event on the Holocaust to discuss not only history, but what history means for today. The title of the event was “How Does Resistance Work?”

- Muslim women of the Islamic Religious Community published the declaration “Muslim Women Speak” where they criticized the fact that many legislations discuss them, while nobody listens to them.

- The Islamic Religious Community organized a conference to discuss the use and misuse of the term “political Islam” in order to counter the government’s attempt to criminalize Muslims.


Both the Islamic Religious Community and the Jewish Community (IKG) criticized an anti-Muslim racist poster published by the Styrian youth wing of the FPÖ, the RFJ.\textsuperscript{150}

The Viennese Chamber of Labor (Arbeiterkammer) awarded a dissertation on anti-Muslim racism in Austria, written by Benjamin Opratko, with its Antonio Gramsci Prize for Critical Research in the Migration Society.

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

The hegemony of the anti-Muslim discourse is unbroken. Following the governance of the ÖVP and the FPÖ, which has fully institutionalized anti-Muslim political claims, the lack of anti-racist initiatives is most outstanding. SOS Mitmenschen’s report documenting anti-Muslim racism was an important attempt of intervention, although it only tackled the FPÖ’s discourse and not both parties’ politics. Still, civil society and a political opposition are most important. Aside from the detailed recommendations offered in the last years, this seems incredibly urgent. The political hegemony of Islamophobia, in specific, has to be contested. While the IGGÖ argued that it would challenge certain laws like the hijab ban in court, much more has to be done on a legal level. A selection of recommendations follow:

- The Islam Act has to be legally contested.
- The two hijab bans have to be litigated against.
- The organized anti-Muslim network has to be uncovered.
- Training on racism, especially Islamophobia, should be offered to journalists, lawyers, and police (security officials) by qualified personnel.
- Muslim civil society has to be empowered with tools to combat Islamophobia, especially in the creation of a consciousness towards the illegality of hate crimes.
- Educational institutions and stakeholders have to work towards creating an alternative narrative of Muslims in Austria which will work to dispel the widely accepted negative image of Islam.

**Chronology**

- **January 2019:** At the beginning of the New Year, the FPÖ’s youth organization RFJ published ads intending to scandalize with the slogan “Mohammed most popular name for newborns in three Viennese districts.”
- **22.01.2019:** The anti-racist NGO SOS Mitmensch presented its first report on anti-Muslim racism in Austrian politics.

11.03.2019: News media reported that following the news of 2018 that the first newborn baby had Muslim parents with a mother wearing a hijab, a 65-year-old pensioner was given a six-month probation for a hate posting.

20.03.2019: The ÖVP invited Zana Ramadani as an expert for the education committee that proposed the expansion of the hijab ban up to 10 years of age following a hijab ban that was already implemented in 2018 for kindergarten. Defending the ban, Zana Ramadani said, “I am here for using the machete.”

21.03.2019: The ÖVP and the FPÖ were delighted by the verdict of the Constitutional Court which supported the expulsion of two imams from ATIB mosques as an effect of the Islam Act of 2015.

27.03.2019: The media made public that the Austrian Identitarian movement leader Martin Sellner had received funds from Brenton Tarrant, the white supremacist Christchurch terrorist.

29.03.2019: The court in the city of Graz ruled on an attack on a mosque that was perpetrated on 6 May 2016. Three men were convicted of vilification of religious teachings and a woman reached an extrajudicial agreement.

14.07.2019: The Interior Ministry’s Secret Service (BVT) published a report that for the first time named the Islamic Religious Community (IGGÖ) not as a partner in the fight against Jihadism, but as a problem of extremism.

21.10.2019: The weekly Profil reported that a male student appeared armed for lectures at the University of Vienna. He had previously posted tweets such as “I would like to die in a firefight against Islam and kill as many of them as possible.”

03.12.2019: News media reported that the Linz Higher Regional Court (OLG) ruled that a woman could not represent the state and the judiciary if she wore the hijab.

26.12.2019: The FPÖ presented a historical report on its relationship with Nazism, which included a chapter by the Islamophobe Laila Mirzo, who is connected to the Identitarian movement. The report also had a chapter written by far-right author and former Israeli secret service agent Mordechai Kedar, who had argued in the past that the best weapon against Jihadists is to rape their mothers and sisters.