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.
ABOUT EDITORS

Enes Bayraklı
Mr. Bayraklı earned his BA, MA and PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna, and conducted research for his PhD thesis at the University of Nottingham in Britain between 2009 and 2010. He took office as a deputy director at Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in London in 2011-2013. Mr. Bayraklı also served as the founding director of Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in Constanta and Bucharest during the period of August-December 2012. Mr. Bayraklı has been a faculty member in the Department of Political Science at the Turkish-German University since 2013. His fields of research include the Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy, Cultural Diplomacy, Foreign Policy Analysis, German Politics and Foreign Policy. bayrakli@tau.edu.tr

Farid Hafez
Farid Hafez, PhD (Political Science, University of Vienna), is a political scientist and non-resident senior researcher at Georgetown University’s “The Bridge Initiative” at the School of Foreign Service. He defended his habilitation thesis on “Islam Politics in the Second Republic of Austria” at the University of Salzburg in 2019. In 2017, he was a Fulbright visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley and in 2014, he was a visiting scholar at Columbia University, New York. Since 2010, he has been the editor of the Islamophobia Studies Yearbook, and since 2015 the co-editor of the European Islamophobia Report. Hafez has received the Bruno Kreisky Award for the “Political Book of the Year” for his anthology Islamophobia in Austria (co-edited with John Bunzl). He has more than 100 publications in leading journals such as Politics and Religion, Patterns of Prejudice, and German Politics and Society. His latest publications are Islamophobia in Muslim Majority Societies (Routledge, co-edited with Enes Bayraklı, 2019) and Feindbild Islam. Über die Salonfähigkeit von Rassismus (Islamophobia. On the Acceptance of Racism. Bohlau, 2019). Email: farid.hafez@sbg.ac.at

For more information about the EIR:
www.islamophobiaeurope.com
islamophobia@setav.org
The Author

Enes Bayraklı earned his BA, MA and PhD from the Department of Political Science at the University of Vienna, and conducted research for his PhD thesis at the University of Nottingham in Britain between 2009 and 2010. He took office as a deputy director at Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in London in 2011-2013. Mr. Bayraklı also served as the founding director of Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in Constanta and Bucharest during the period of August-December 2012. Mr. Bayraklı has been a faculty member in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at the Turkish German University in Istanbul. Currently he is also the director of European Studies at SETA foundation. His fields of research include the Islamophobia in Europe, Far right movements in Europe, Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy, Foreign Policy Analysis, German Politics and Foreign Policy. Email: ebayrakli@setav.org

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Executive Summary

In 2019, 871 hate crimes against Muslims were reported to the police. Fifty-eight of them were crimes against Muslim religious sites and in 46 crimes Muslims were physically injured by anti-Muslim racists. The numbers of Brandeilig, an initiative against attacks on mosques, are even higher than those of the police: Brandeilig counted 122 attacks on mosques in 2019. The year was also a year of right-wing terror with three right wing-motivated murders. Walter Lübcke, who had campaigned for the admission of refugees, was murdered by a right-wing extremist in Kassel. In a racist attack in Halle, a woman was killed in front of a synagogue and a man in a kebab shop. Sawsan Chebli, a politician, and Seda Başay-Yıldız, a lawyer, have received death threats from right-wing extremists, and many Muslims have been discriminated against or even attacked by racists. The electoral success of the Islamophobic party Alternative for Germany (AfD) can largely be explained by the derogation of Islam and Muslims by a large part of the electorate. Unilateral media reports on crime by foreigners and terror as well as dull generalisation foster the normalisation of hostility to Muslims. The anti-Islamic AfD receives its intellectual superstructure from right-wing masterminds and publicists, whose main goals are to prevent an alleged Islamisation of German culture and to produce “cultural purity”. Despite the many negative events there are also a lot of organisations in Germany that act against Islamophobia and a strong civil society that demonstrates against racism and the AfD. However, there is still a lot to do. Although there is broad and decades-old research on the causes of prejudice, racism, and right-wing extremism, research results are still being ignored by politics. The reduction of Islamophobia in many arenas of society such as work, education, state institutions, civil society, etc. should have top priority. Successful prevention programmes, especially in the youth field, that promote empathy and contacts between Muslims and non-Muslims should be long-term and not short-term. Right-wing extremism has to be fought more and the media should also be asked to report responsibly and in a differentiated way with less focus on “bad news” about Muslims.
Zusammenfassung

Country Profile
EIR 2019

Country: Germany
Type of Regime: Federal and Representative Democracy
Form of Government: Federal parliamentary republic, head of government: chancellor
Ruling Parties: Christian Democratic Party (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD)
Opposition Parties: The Greens, The Left, the FDP (FDP, The Liberals), the Alternative for Germany (AfD), independent candidates
Last Elections: 2017 Elections – CDU/CSU 33% (246 seats), SPD 20.5% (153 seats), AfD 12.6% (94 seats), FDP 10.7% (80 seats), The Left 9.2% (69 seats), Greens 8.9% (67 seats)
Total Population: 83.1 million (Federal Statistical Office, Germany; June 2019)
Major Languages: German
Official Religion: Christianity
Statistics on Islamophobia: According to official police crime statistics 871 Islamophobic crimes have been reported in Germany. Fifty-eight of the reported crimes were committed against Muslim religious sites. In 2019, a total of 46 Islamophobic crimes were reported in which victims were physically injured. Brandeelig, an initiative against attacks on mosques, counted 122 attacks on mosques in 2019.
Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: In their report on hate crimes the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community show that in the year 2018, 1,725 racist crimes were reported to the police of which 259 were violent; 910 hate crimes were Islamophobic, of which 74 were violent. A report of a counselling centre for discriminated pupils in Berlin (ADAS) reveals that discrimination based on ethnic origin and/or religion in the period from June 2016 to April 2018 played a role in 137 of the reported cases (83%). Ninety-seven reports related to ethnic origin and 40 to religion or belief. Seventy-eight per cent of the reports of discrimination based on religion related to Islam. The German police also appear to have problems regarding racist attitudes and behaviour. A representative study from 2017 shows that 14% of black people in Germany have experienced racial profiling in the past five years.
Major Religions (% of Population): Christianity (53.17%), Without Religion (38%), Islam (approximately 5.4 to 5.7%)
Muslim Population (% of Population): Between 4.4 and 4.7 million people (estimated).
Main Muslim Community Organizations: Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB); Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Germany (AMJ); Islamic Community Milli Görüş (IGMG); Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD);
Union of Islamic Cultural Centres (VIKZ); Islamic Community of Shia Communities in Germany (IGS)

**Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia:** Netzwerk gegen Diskriminierung und Islamfeindlichkeit (CLAIM) lists 37 NGOs: Salaam-Schalom-Initiative; Katholische Erwachsenenbildung im Land Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. (KEB); Gesicht Zeigen! Für ein weltoffenes Deutschland e.V.; Muslimisches Jugendwerk; Interkulturelles Institut für Inklusion e.V.; Türkische Gemeinde in Deutschland (TGD); Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend in Deutschland; Junge Islam Konferenz; AWO – Nicht in meinen Namen; La Red e.V.; Rat muslimischer Studierender und Akademiker; Breaking Up; Fair International; Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus; NIR – Netzwerk gegen Islamfeindlichkeit und Rassismus Leipzig e.V.; 5hoch4 – Jugendclub im Netz; WoW – With or Without; ufuq.de; Insan e.V.; RAHMA; Minor; isaar; Begegnungs- und Fortbildungszenrum muslimischer Frauen e.V.; Al-Etidal Bremen – Gegen Radikalisierung & Extremismus; AntiDiskriminierungsBüro Köln; Muslimrat München e.V.; JUMA — jung, muslimisch; aktiv; Bildungsteam Berlin Brandenburg e.V.; Antidiskriminierungsnetzwerk Berlin des Türkischen Bundes in Berlin-Brandenburg; Zentrum für Europäische und Orientalische Kultur e.V.; Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften, Mosaik e.V.; Anlaufstelle für Diskriminierungsschutz an Schulen (ADAS); Aktionsbündnis muslimischer Frauen; Abrahaimisches Forum; Stiftung gegen Rassismus; Muslimische Jugend in Deutschland e.V.

**Far-Right Parties:** Alternative for Germany (AfD), National Democratic Party Germany (NDP), *Die Rechte, Der III. Weg, Bürgerbewegung Pro NRW*

**Far-Right Movements:** Identitäre Bewegung, Reichsbürgerbewegung, PEGIDA

**Far-Right Terrorist Organizations:** Gruppe Nordadler, Kameradschaft Aryans, *Atomwaffen Division, Gruppe S*

**Limitations to Islamic Practices:**
- **Hijab Ban:** A ban on the hijab exists for people holding official offices such as in courts (or being a lawyer), in school (schoolteacher), or entering the police force.
- **Halal Slaughter Ban:** None
- **Minaret Ban:** None
- **Circumcision Ban:** None
- **Burka Ban:** None
- **Prayer Ban:** None
Introduction

For many years, results from German studies have revealed that about half of the population in Germany has Islamophobic views. In the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Religion Monitor 2019, 50% of the population of West Germany and 57% of the population of East Germany state that Islam is a threat to them\(^1\) and in the Leipzig authoritarianism study from 2018, 42% of West Germans and 51% of East Germans agree on the statement that Muslims should be prohibited from immigrating to Germany.\(^2\) Since 2016 polarisation and radicalisation processes in Germany in the wake of the so-called refugee crisis can be viewed, which led to an increasing authoritarian aggression against Muslims.\(^3\) In addition, the Islamophobic Alternative for Germany (AfD) with a strong right-wing extremist faction achieved considerable election successes on the federal level - also in 2019. The questions about a leading German culture (“Leitkultur”) and whether Islam belongs to Germany are not only discussed by right-wing populists, but are also part of the debate of the political centre. Furthermore, media coverage on Islam and Muslims in Germany is very much focused on bad news. Reports of terrorism, clan crime, and honour killings contribute to the fact that the non-Muslim population in Germany is more likely to reject Muslims, especially in those regions where only few Muslims live. Many Germans are unable to correct their negative image through social contacts with Muslims.\(^4\) Most Germans are not even aware of the many facets of Islam with its many different religious communities and its plurality. As it seems, Islamophobia is omnipresent in key areas of German society. This report summarises significant events related to Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in 2019, and in this context describes the extent and forms of Islamophobia in various arenas of society such as employment, education, politics, media, justice, and the Internet. Islamophobia is not just a problem for Muslims. It shakes the basic democratic values and also leads to division of society and tendencies of co-radicalisation and thus possibly to a spiral of violence. The report also refers to some of the many organisations in Germany that actively campaign against Islamophobia. The last part briefly outlines what can be done politically in the fight against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.

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Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

- Documented Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes

It is difficult to make a statement about the exact number of crimes with an Islamophobic background. The reason is that police statistics only focus on the reported cases. What matters in this context is whether people report such incidents. Representatives of Muslims in Germany as well as German politicians criticise the procedure of how crimes are classified as they believe the German police does not classify enough crimes as Islamophobic. Therefore, we do not have adequate knowledge about all committed crimes with Islamophobic background and can only speculate that the number of unreported cases is significantly higher. In 2019 871 Islamophobic crimes were reported in Germany. 58 of the reported crimes were committed against Muslim religious sites. In 2019, a total of 46 Islamophobic crimes were reported in which victims were physically injured. Eight people were arrested for committing an Islamophobic crime. Brandeilig, an initiative against attacks on mosques, counted 122 attacks on mosques in 2019. This number differs from the official police statistics.

In May 2019, the Ministry of the Interior published the case numbers on politically motivated crimes in 2018. The report shows that 910 crimes with an Islamophobic background were committed in 2018 (in 2017 this number was 1,075) of which 840 were assigned to the category of politically motivated crimes associated with the political right.

- Major Incidents in the Context of Right-Wing Extremism

Again, in 2019 it became clear that Germany has a huge problem with right-wing extremism. Besides the remarkable successes of the far-right and anti-Islam party Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the state elections in Brandenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia, two events attracted worldwide attention. On 2 June 2019, Kassel’s dis-

strict president Walter Lübcke, member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), was shot dead on the porch of his house. A right-wing extremist with a criminal record is strongly suspected. He initially confessed, but later withdrew his confession. In his confession, he claimed that his motive were Lübcke’s statements during the so-called refugee crisis in 2015. In October 2015, Lübcke had publicly spoken out in favour of accepting refugees at a citizens’ meeting where he opposed KAGIDA, the Kassel offshoot of the Islamophobic and racist Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA). According to previous investigations, the alleged murderer attended this citizens’ meeting. A video of this gathering was shared on the social networks by right-wing extremists and racists which led to numerous death threats against Lübcke. The case also triggered horror because the alleged murderer and neo-Nazi had links to the Islamophobic and right-wing extremist party AfD and took part in one of the far-right “funeral marches” in Chemnitz in 2018. A discussion arose in Germany about the extent to which the AfD is an agitator through its racist policies and whether it bears responsibility for the right-wing extremist violence in Germany.

Another event was the anti-semitic motivated rampage in Halle on 9 October 2019. The perpetrator obviously took the mass shootings of Oslo in 2011 and the mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019 as a model and filmed his crime. At the beginning of the video recording, the terrorist said that he believed that the Holocaust had never taken place and that feminism was the reason for low birth rates in the West, which in turn has led to mass immigration. The “Jew” was the cause of all problems. His attempt to kill Jews in a synagogue failed and instead he killed an uninvolved passer-by who was not Jewish, and then drove to a kebab shop, where he executed a person with actually no migrant background. However, in the discussion about the crime, it was often not discussed that the murderer chose a kebab shop as a replacement after his failure at the synagogue. This changed when it became known that the Halle murderer confessed that he wanted to kill a Muslim after failing to kill Jews in the synagogue. Kebab shops in Germany are associated with immigrants.

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from Turkish and Arab countries. Both the Halle attack and the murder of Walter Lübcke have led to weeks of discussions in Germany about right-wing extremist violence. In particular, there was a debate about radicalisation in social networks.

**- Reported Attacks: A Selection**

There were other Islamophobic and anti-Muslim racist incidents which have been reported by the media. A selection of those are listed below in chronological order.

January 2019: German lawyer Seda Başay-Yıldız who represented the family of the first murder victim of the right-wing terrorist cell National Socialist Underground (NSU) received a threatening letter, which was signed “NSU 2.0”.¹⁰ In an earlier threat, five Frankfurt police officers were suspected. According to media reports, this act again indicates that the perpetrator has access to police data. The new letter relates to the suspension of the Frankfurt police officers. It contained the following text: “You brain-dead shit donor are obviously not aware of what you did to our police colleagues! However, it is now getting really bad for you, you Turkish pig! We will tear off shitty’s (Başay-Yıldız daughter’s name) head ... and the rest of your kebab crew will also be taken care of competently”.¹¹ Together with other incidents the letter led to a debate on the problem of right-wing extremism within the German police. Another incident took place in Stralsund where a man from Syria was attacked and abused. The state security department was investigating this because it is believed to have a politically motivated background.¹² Another incident took place in Konstanz. The president of the football club Türkischer SV Konstanz received a copy of a newspaper article, on which all sorts of anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim slogans had been written.¹³ The article featured slogans such as “Muslim pig,” “these disgusting Turkish louts”, “the biggest mistake since 1945, letting Muslims in” and “Need UZI”. (Fig. 1)

February 2019: At a weekend, three young girls were the victims of an anti-Muslim racist attack.¹⁴ The first case occurred in the Berlin district of Marzahn.

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¹¹ Annette Ramelsberger, “Rechte bedrohen erneut Frankfurter Anwältin”.
An unknown man punched a 15-year-old and a 16-year-old from Syria several times in the face. Earlier, he allegedly approached the two and insulted them in an Islamophobic manner. The girls had to be treated in hospital. In the Neukölln district, according to the police, a woman tried to rip the headscarf off a 12-year-old’s head. The attacker had pulled her by the hair and racially insulted her. The woman was also alleged to have tried to stab the girl several times with a blood-filled syringe and threatened her with pepper spray. The 12-year-old was slightly injured in the attack.

March 2019: For the third time, a Syrian food market in Telgte near Münster was the target of an attack. Unknown perpetrators smeared pork, eggs, and foul-smelling liquids on the facade of the shop in three different nights. Among other things, a sandal filled with minced pork hung on the shop door, and the glass panes were smeared with lard.

April 2019: A 37-year-old man in Dortmund attacked a 26-year-old woman from Lünen who was wearing a headscarf. In Berlin, another woman wearing a headscarf was the victim of a right-wing extremist who performed the Nazi salute

15. Ibid.
and punched her in the stomach. \(^{18}\) The police in Hennef reported that a man attacked immigrants twice for racist reasons. \(^{19}\) The 29-year-old man is said to have insulted a young family from Syria and tossed a glass bottle in their direction. After the 30-year-old father filmed the man’s insults on his mobile phone, the 29-year-old hit him with his fists. The victim had to be taken to hospital. A few minutes later, the perpetrator confronted two Syrians (a 20-year-old and 21-year-old) in an intense fight for no apparent reason. Police also reported that a 21-year-old Syrian man in Querfurth was beaten and abused by five or six attackers. \(^{20}\)

June 2019: In Bremen, 50 Korans were torn up in a mosque and some of them were stuffed into a toilet. The chairman of the mosque criticised the police for not having reacted sensitively enough in this case, as the police initially only assumed property damage, not an Islamophobic act. \(^{21}\) In Hamburg, a Muslim woman was molested and beaten in the stomach by a right-wing extremist. Another hate crime in Bremen happened in a tram. A 27-year-old man insulted a 16-year-old man in an anti-Muslim, racist manner. When the 16-year-old and his friends tried to avoid the conflict and to sit somewhere else, the perpetrator suddenly stabbed the 16-year-old with a knife from behind. The young man was seriously injured. \(^{22}\)

July 2019: A woman in Berlin-Mitte was insulted because of her headscarf. \(^{23}\) The 54-year-old visited a grocery store on Friday afternoon, accompanied by two other people. There, the three clashed with a 46-year-old woman. She insulted the 54-year-old Turkish woman because of her headscarf. Witnesses alerted the security forces. The state security took over the investigation.

August 2019: SPD politician Sawsan Chebli received an anti-Muslim racist letter in which, among other racist comments, it stated: “I know you Arabs are not so blessed with intelligence, but maybe you will get it someday. Religions are ideology and it doesn’t matter what the stinking pedophile Mohammed or the anti-social genocidal Jew God wants. You can slaughter what you want in your housings. German culture and European values have to be accepted here in Germany” (see figure 2). It ended

with a quote which threatened Chebli: “They laughed, they thought it was fun. Well, they don’t laugh anymore today, because it’s deadly serious” (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Sawsan Chebli tweets a picture of a racist threatening letter.24

A Syrian man filed a criminal complaint for sedition with the police in Finsterwalde in August. The victim claimed to have been verbally attacked. According to the police, a stranger approached him, turned violent and pushed him. The perpetrator also uttered hate speech towards the victim, performed the Nazi salute, and showed him the middle finger.25

September 2019: A 20-year-old man from Syria was attacked in Cottbus and subjected to racial insults. According to the police spokeswoman, the man was beaten by another man at a downtown stop, pushed to the ground, and insulted.26

October and November 2019: A month after the burial of a young Turkish woman in Wirges, her grave was desecrated for the first time in early October. In November, perpetrators struck again on the Muslim cemetery. They maliciously trod the fence that surrounds the tomb, trampled the flowers, tore out the grave sign with the name of the deceased, and threw it into an adjacent hedge.27

there was also a racist attack on a Muslim woman in Hamburg. According to media reports, a 23-year-old was first insulted and threatened, and later the perpetrator hit the woman in the stomach. SPD politician Sawsan Chebli received another racist letter. In the letter, the Berlin state secretary is asked, among other things, to “publicly” resign from her office. Chebli posted the full text on Twitter. An excerpt from the racist letter follows: “You negro lover too made it onto our death list and officially took third place. No government in the world will be able to save you from our assassination because your life is worth nothing to them just as little as that of Jews, Muslims and Negroes. We do not tolerate an Islamisation of our Aryan Germany”.

December 2019: In Seibnitz, two teenagers attacked an eleven-year-old Muslim girl, tore off her headscarf, pulled her hair to the ground, kicked her, and asked her what she wanted in Germany. Also in December, a 54-year-old driver drove into several Muslim graves in a cemetery in Nuremberg. According to investigations, she

apparently hit the graves on purpose. 32 At the Wilhelmine-Fliedner comprehensive school in Hilden near Düsseldorf, the police investigated a teacher who racially insulted a student with Lebanese roots. Despite the investigation, the teacher was not suspended. The teacher reportedly said to the student: “You don’t have to smile at all. In former times, something like you would have been gassed”.33

Employment
There is no reliable empirical material that can provide sufficient information about discrimination against Muslims in the German labour market. This is mainly due to the fact that there are no studies with sufficiently large samples. A large number of population surveys are carried out in Germany, but there are not particularly many carried out among the migrant population - this group is also marginalised in terms of research.

An interesting study would be, at least in theory, a representative survey by the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency.34 However, the proportion of Muslims (n = 21) is so small that no reliable statements can be made (about half of those surveyed stated that they were discriminated against on the basis of their religious affiliation). However, a logistic regression analysis based on the data reveals that religious affiliation among the “differently religious” group, which also includes Muslims, is a significant factor of discrimination in working life.35 This study can serve as an important first hint, but more recent studies with a higher number of Muslims interviewed would be desirable.

Another survey of people who were discriminated against in the context of work revealed that women wearing a headscarf are particularly affected by discrimination in the labour market.36 In seven out of ten cases where Muslims were discriminated in the job market, the affected persons regularly wore a headscarf. This was often

put forward by potential employers as a reason why employment in the respective company or organisation was not possible.

The results of a survey in companies show how difficult it is for a Muslim woman who wears a headscarf to find a job: 35% of the companies surveyed stated that they generally do not consider Muslim women who want to wear a headscarf at work for training positions.37

Another study by the Anti-Discrimination Agency illustrates the problem further.38 A job agent at a job centre testifies the following in the study:

“Yes, of course, the origin can be a risk or the religion. If I have someone sitting in front of me with a headscarf, then at least I have to address it if the person would like to work in sales, and then you have to address it, and there is a risk that this will be considered my opinion. (…) So, I really try to put it simply: okay, that’s the job market. And now there are two options. You adapt to the job market and you may have a relatively good chance of finding employment on the job market, or you stay the way you are, feel comfortable with it, can live in harmony with your religion, but may have poorer job market opportunities.”39

A study by the Berlin Science Center for Social Research (WZB) conducted between October 2014 and April 2016 examined the feedback on fictitious applications from people with different migrant backgrounds.40 The researchers found that people with roots in Africa or Muslim countries were the most discriminated against. Overall, the positive response rate for applicants without a religious signal was 54%, 57% for Christians, 53% for Buddhists and Hindus, and 46% for Muslims. The researchers come to the conclusion that discrimination is not against “non-Christians” per se or against migrants from Muslim countries, but specifically against Muslims.

Education

In cooperation with the Center for Educational Integration, the Georg Eckert Institute examined 65 textbooks on the subject of politics, social studies, history, and

geography from five different federal states.\textsuperscript{41} They researched how migration and integration with regard to social diversity are represented in the textbooks and whether they show diversity as a normal state. One result of the study is that textbooks do not reflect the reality that prevails in the classrooms and migration is still seen as a problem. The terms “foreigners”, “strangers”, and “migrants” are used as synonyms and are not differentiated or even questioned, and the construction of “we” versus “others” is maintained.

In the analysed textbooks, the problematisation of migration outweighs the representation of diversity as a normal state of affairs. Migration is primarily described in social studies and history textbooks, sometimes also in geography textbooks, as conducive to conflict and crisis. It inevitably leads to socially controversial situations. In this context, migration and diversity ultimately only appear as a problem and challenge for a society that is still predominantly presented as homogeneous.

The scientist Silvia Horsch-Al Saad also criticises the portrayal of Islam since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.\textsuperscript{42} Since that date, textbooks have often linked Islam to violence and terror in a problematic manner. For example, when there are a few pages in books with photos of the mosque from Mecca, these are followed by pictures of the attacks in New York.

Another problem is discrimination against Muslims in schools. The Anlaufstelle für Diskriminierungsschutz an Schulen (Contact Point for Protection against Discrimination at Schools, ADAS) is a contact and advice centre for cases of discrimination at schools in Berlin. In the period from June 2016 to April 2018, it documented and evaluated cases of discrimination.\textsuperscript{43} Based on the data, it can be seen that the largest group of discriminated students are from countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey. Racist discrimination based on ethnic origin and/or religion played a role in 137 of the reported cases (83%). Ninety-seven reports related to ethnic origin, and 40 to religion or belief. Seventy-eight per cent of the reports on discrimination were based on the religion of Islam.

Politics
While in Germany right-wing extremist parties such as Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of German), Die Rechte (The Right), and Der III. Weg (The Third Path) have hardly any success in elections, the right-wing

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populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany, AfD) succeeded in 2019 in three state elections. In Bremen, the AfD achieved a share of 6.1%, in Thuringia 23.4%, in Brandenburg 23.5%, and in Saxony 27.5%. Contradictory intra-party tendencies can be found in the AfD. In addition to the national conservative, liberal economic, and conservative values, and Christian fundamentalist and direct democratic forces, there are members within the party who represent authoritarian, ethnic-nationalist, homophobic, anti-feminist, anti-Semitic, historical revisionist, and Islamophobic positions. This faction of the party is called the “Flügel” and is supported by around 40% of AfD members, according to party estimates. Björn Höcke is considered the leader of the Flügel. Due to the pressure on “The Flügel” as it was supposed to be observed by the intelligence services, it has been dissolved in 2020. It is unclear in which way the “Flügel” is still functioning as an informal group.

In his book *Nie zweimal in denselben Fluss* (Never Twice in the Same River), which appeared in mid-2018, the fascist Björn Höcke conjured the “death of the people by the exchange of populations” as a central goal of his party and called for Germany to be cleansed of “cultural aliens”.

Höcke wrote, “In addition to protecting our national and European external borders, a large-scale remigration project will be necessary”. This refers to his desire to banish millions of citizens from the country. Höcke wrote that this “remigration project” can only be achieved by violence. He called his cynical vision of the future the “politics of ‘well-tempered cruelty’”. Not only does Höcke want to cleanse Germany ethnically, but also politically as his policy of “well-tempered cruelty” contains the elimination of those people who are responsible for the failed immigration policy. Höcke, like many other AfD politicians, has voiced anti-Islam views. In a speech in 2018, he emphasised that Muslims were “infinitely far” from Allah, and that the founder of their religion, Mohammed, was a field commander and therefore Muslims were war-loving and to be taken as a threat. In 2017, Höcke even announced that as soon as his party comes to power, the Islamic faith will even be forbidden in Turkey. He already announced this in a tweet in 2017 (“Islam has a home and it is not called Europe! On the Bosphorus, ‘Mohamed, Muezzin & Minaret’ must end!”) (see figure 4).

45. Henning and Höcke, *Nie zweimal in denselben Fluss*.
However, political parties are political interest groups that rise from the population itself. Especially after the election in Thuringia, there was a discussion about the AfD voters and their reasons for choosing a party that is against immigration and stirs up fears of an alleged “Islamisation” of Germany. Quite a few scientific articles on the reasons people vote for AfD were published in the past three years. Here, two main hypotheses competed. Firstly, that AfD voters, like the AfD party itself, are xenophobic and therefore support the AfD. Two studies are worth mentioning here. Martin Schröder’s study in 2018 found that AfD supporters are not economically deprived, but are primarily xenophobic and afraid of an alleged “infiltration” of their own culture. 48 Another study based on a multivariate analysis of the Leipzig study on authoritarianism in 2018, also came to the conclusion that objective economic indicators such as low income and unemployment have no influence on the choice of the AfD while hostility towards Muslims is a particularly strong predictor for this choice. 49

Against the background of the high potential for Islamophobia in the German population, however, it would be careless to keep an eye only on the AfD. There has been a debate about the German “Leitkultur” (guiding culture) since the late 1990s. In this context, the question is repeatedly asked whether Islam belongs to Germany at all. Hidalgo et al. argue that the question alone is problematic because it plays in the hands of right-wing populists and right-wing extremists. 48 The far right are then the ones who are able to define who belongs to the German culture and who does not. Also the question assumes that the fact that a religion belongs to Germany is up for debate itself is problematic, as freedom of religion is also one of the basic dem-

ocratic principles in Germany. The problem is that with asking this question more moderate parties also fall into the right-wing populist trap. Against this background, it is not surprising that the Christian Social Union (CSU) made the headlines in 2019 when they had a discussion about whether they should list the Muslim applicant Şener Şahin as a candidate for mayor. According to Şahin, there was support from the ranks of the CSU, but there were also significant intra-party protests because, as a Muslim, he apparently did not suit the programme of a Christian party. It is not surprising that some members of the CSU do not believe Islam belongs to Germany: in 2018, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) emphasised this notion.

It is not only the CSU that has problems with Islam and Muslims. In the SPD it had been difficult for years with the racist concepts of Thilo Sarrazin, who in 2018 published a new Islamophobic book entitled Feindliche Übernahme: Wie der Islam den Fortschritt behindert und die Gesellschaft bedroht (Hostile Takeover: How Islam Hinders Progress and Threatens Society). Sarrazin’s party exclusion was repeatedly discussed. In 2019, an arbitration commission judged that the application for exclusion was legal.

**Media**

With regard to Islamophobia, the biggest problem for the German media is that media reports focus on the “bad news” and there is almost no good news related to Islam and Muslims. The media are particularly focused on reports of Islamist terrorism, in this context particularly the so-called Islamic State, and there has also been an increase in coverage of “clan crime” that right-wing populists and extremists like to use as evidence of the failure of a multicultural society. It is therefore not surprising that Germans often relate Islam to fanaticism, proneness to violence, and backwardness. In 2019, the *Neue Deutsche Medienmacher*, a network for media professionals with a migrant background, awarded four TV talk shows (“hart aber fair”, “maischberger”, “Anne Will”, and “Maybrit Illner”) a negative award (“The Golden Potato”). From the jury’s point of view, the reason for the negative award is that these programmes give a distorted picture of living together in Germany as an immigration country by exaggerating problems and conflicts, solidifying prejudices, and violating journalistic standards. According to the jury, the recipients’ headlines are sensational; for example, “Homeland Germany - Only for Germans or Open to Everyone?”, “Citizens Anxious - How Do We Deal with Criminal Immigrants?”, “Fear of Islam: Is All

Just Populism?”, and “Here to Stay. New Immigrants, Old Problems?”. The Neue Deutsche Medienmacher criticised the fact that such TV show clichés are promoted. The programmes on the topics of migration, refugees, and Islam are characterised by prejudice and alarmism because they are almost always about extremism, crime, and other threats posed by migrants. They also criticised the occurrence that despite the fact that a quarter of the population of Germany has a migrant background, when TV shows present topics such as pensions, care, climate, etc., hardly any people of colour are represented.

A media report in July 2019 in particular triggered both Islamophobic reactions and a discussion about hate against Muslims in Germany. The tabloid newspaper Bild reported with outrage that a day centre for children in Leipzig does not prepare pork anymore out of respect for two Muslim children.54 (Fig. 5) The day-care centre received threats and a little later withdrew its decision due to the enormous pressure which was triggered by the media report in the Bild.55 For a while after the report under the hashtag #Schweinefleisch (pork) the topic was the most discussed on Twitter. The AfD jumped on the news and Beatrix von Storch, a member of parliament, spoke of “cultural submission” and claimed that those who would not adapt to the leading German culture should not be allowed to live their habits and norms in Germany.

![Figure 5: On 23 July 2019, the tabloid newspaper Bild expressed anger at the fact that a day-care centre for children out of respect for two Muslim children did not want to serve pork anymore.](https://www.bild.de/news/inland/news-inland/debatte-ueber-schweinefleisch-in-kitas-kniefall-vor-den-falschen-63490776.bild.html

Justice System
Public debates and legal cases in Germany are often about wearing the headscarf in public institutions. In 2019, a court handed down a judgment concerning this matter. In March, the Bavarian Constitutional Court decided that judges were not allowed to wear the headscarf in court. The headscarf violated the principle of neutrality. An Islamic religious community complained, claiming that the ban violated freedom of belief and conscience, as well as the principle of equality. They argued that it is common in Bavaria that crosses hang in the courtroom. The judges dismissed the claim on the grounds that these were two different issues. The rooms were set up by the administration and there was no connection to doubts about the independence of the judges. The judges did not see this as discriminatory because it applied to all religious communities.

The German police also appear to have problems regarding racism. A representative study from 2017 shows that 14% of black people in Germany have experienced racial profiling in the past five years. Authorities recorded far fewer cases: from January 2018 to April 2019, the federal police, for example, registered only 58 complaints about racial profiling. The problem is that complaints about racial profiling or police violence have to be made directly to the police. Often the police respond with a report on the complainant which leads to legal action. Unlike in other countries, there is no neutral office in Germany where victims of racial profiling or police brutality can complain.

Unfortunately, there are hardly any studies on the problem of right-wing extremism and racism in the police. An exception is a survey of over 4,000 police officers in Hesse. When asked about political statements, 66.1% of the participating police officers agreed with the statement that immigrants made the country more colourful or diverse. However, more than one in four sees the “danger” that Germany will become an “Islamic country”.

Internet
While it was still relatively easy to observe the activities of right-wing extremists and racists in the early days of the Internet, nowadays, this is becoming much more
difficult with social media and the darknet. It can be observed that in the comments on Facebook, for example, very often Islamophobic comments are made under links to online articles, mostly in the context of reporting on Islamist terror or crimes by immigrants. In 2017, a law was implemented to curb hate comment. Nevertheless, there seems to be a certain laid-back attitude in Germany about the boundaries of freedom of expression and racism.

A prominent website is the right-wing extremist blog “Politically Incorrect”.61 This blog was founded by the former teacher and right-wing extremist Stefan Herre in 2004 and is directed against the feared “Islamisation of Europe”. The blog is devoted to the topic “Islam” and “immigration” under the guise of criticism of Islam and freedom of expression. The Islamophobic articles put Muslims under general suspicion by reporting on crime, violence, and terror. Obviously, Islamophobic comments from readers are deliberately not removed by the website operators.

An example from 2019 is an article by Stefan Schubert, a former police officer, violent hooligan, and author. In 2019, he published the book Sicherheitsrisiko Islam: Kriminalität, Gewalt und Terror: Wie der Islam unser Land bedroht (Security Risk Islam: Crime, Violence and Terror: How Islam Threatens Our Country). The article with the title “Cultural Enrichment by Muslim Immigration Cannot Be Proven” dated 3 September 2019 is about Islam being backward and despising women, and invokes fears of mass immigration.62 The picture accompanying the article shows black men who are apparently resting.

Figure 6: Anti-Muslim racist article on right-wing extremist webpage “Politically Incorrect” entitled “Cultural Enrichment by Muslim Immigration Cannot Be Proven”.63

63. Ibid.
An extract from the comment section shows the hatred against Muslims:

“The massive flooding with such people leads to a decline in culture, prosperity and security.

This violent desert religion, for which women are worth as much as cattle, does not fit into a liberal Europe!”

‘Islam knows only death, war, annihilation, destruction, submission.’

‘How stupid do you actually have to be to expect ‘cultural enrichment’ from these savages?’

‘Muslims have an extremely radical conservative attitude and have maintained a status quo in their way of life since the time of Mohammed.’

‘Why should Muslims be interested in education and civilised customs when all education and all human behaviour is prescribed in the smallest detail in the Koran. Education from outside the Koran is out of the question for the Muslim because it was developed by ‘unbelievers’. As a consequence, nothing independent can come from the Muslims, except that they independently benefit parasitically from civilised and creative ‘infidels’. Of course, this is also a possible way of life, but we should never accept it here in Europe out of our own interest. I suppose that the barrel will eventually overflow. If it is up to me: soon.” 64

It is not understandable why so far only the Bavarian constitutional protection has put the site under observation.

Right-wing extremists have also increasingly discovered video blogs or YouTube as a way of spreading their racist ideology. Above all, channels of the Identitarian movement are to be mentioned. In addition to the channel of the Austrian neo-Nazi Martin Sellner, the channel Laut Gedacht (Loud Thinking) stands out, which now has over 50,000 subscribers and reaches over 400,000 people. Two members of the extreme right-wing Identitarian movement in Leipzig run a kind of news and lifestyle channel there, which under the guise of freedom of expression and satire lashes out against immigrants, Muslims, leftists, and other political opponents. The videos are aimed primarily at young audiences and have the strategy of selling right-wing extremism as a lifestyle. The channel is funded by the One Percent Movement, a kind of far right NGO.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network

The Institut für Staatspolitik (Institute for State Policy) is considered the nucleus for the ethnic-nationalist AfD wing around Björn Höcke. It serves as a think tank for right-wing educational work. The institute was founded in May 2000 by Götz Kubitschek, Karlheinz Weißmann, the lawyer Stefan Hanz, and four other members of the new far right. The founders belonged to the environment of Junge Frei-

64. Ibid.
heit, a weekly newspaper which is on the borderline between right conservatism and right-wing extremism. Both the institute and the publishing company are situated in Schnellroda in Saxony-Anhalt. According to the homepage of the institute, the focus is on the summer and winter academies, and are aimed at young people, especially pupils and students. In addition, there are regular “salons” in Berlin and Halle (Saale) and a congress in central Germany once a year. The institute is supposedly not related to any party, although Götz Kubitschek is supposed to be member of the AfD. It is supported by private funds. The events are attended by people from a wide range of far-right politics, including officials and activists from the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) and its youth organization, the Young National Democrats (JN), and the Identitarian movement.

Another relevant person in the context of far-right think tanks is Jürgen Elsässer. He was formerly an author and editor of left-wing print magazines but since the 2000s, he turned to the far right. He is editor in chief of Compact, a far-right monthly magazine which supports the AfD. Elsässer supports anti-American, homophobic, racist, and Islamophobic views against the background of conspiracy theories.

In the context of right-wing pioneers, right-wing publishers, and the Institute for State Policy, the Identitarian movement is also a participating organisation. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution classifies the Identitarians as right-wing extremists. The Identitarians want a closed, ethnically homogeneous European culture, whose identity is endangered by an alleged Islamisation. In cooperation with the Institute for State Policy, they had rented a house for their political purposes in Halle. Due to massive protest and pressure from the population, the Identitarian movement abandoned its house project in December 2019.

In addition to actors in the extreme right-wing scene, two authors in particular have made it into the political mainstream, whose works are spiritual food for Islamophobia and hatred of Muslims. The books by Thilo Sarrazin and Hamed Abdel-Samad are bestsellers in Germany and often run under the label “criticism of Islam”. In 2019, both authors met at an event in Dresden and were able to discuss their theses in front of an audience. 65 Sarrazin explained that the worldview on which the Koran is based prevents curiosity, freedom of expression, willingness to change and democracy, and at the same time promotes intolerance towards those who think differently, propensity of violence, and a tendency to be offended. For Sarrazin, this results in a concrete threat to the Western world. Due to their “backwardness” and their “oppression of women” Muslims reproduce more often than Europeans and

therefore the development of the Western culture and lifestyle was exposed to mortal danger. A particular threat for Sarrazin is that in one or two generations Muslims will outnumber the autochthonous population in many European countries. Therefore, he sees only one possibility.

“In addition to the measures that we have to take in Germany and the European countries, we must make a very clear decision to prevent immigration from Muslim countries as completely as possible for many decades to come.”

Sarrazin’s idea of man is very much shaped by the economic usability of people. His greatest fear is the stultification of the population and with it the economic and cultural decline of Europe and especially Germany. Before the joint discussion Abdel-Samad claimed that he does not agree with Thilo Sarrazin in all his views and that therefore he saw it as important to tell Sarrazin where he is right and where he is wrong. In the discussion he shares Sarrazins assumption that there is a “misery” in the Islamic world and in integration. Like Sarrazin, he sees the cause of this in the ideology of Islam, which Abdel-Samad certifies that it was always political. Other than Sarrazin he separates Islam from the Muslims and says “Not every Muslim is a Koran on two legs.” Abdel-Samads opinions on the “Islamic world” are highly appreciated by the far right and that becomes clear in this discussion with Sarrazin in Dresden. In that discussion together he distinguishes between Islam and Muslims, but hardly between Islamism and Islam.

The danger of Abdel-Samad’s theses is that – maybe even unwillingly – they put Muslims under general suspicion. Abdel-Samad wrote in a book entitled “Mohamed – Eine Abrechnung” (Mohamed – a reckoning) that he is convinced that the “pathology” of Mohammed - he describes him as a narcissist and paranoid person - has been transmitted to Muslims to this day. Daniel Bax wrote about the derogatory depiction of Mohammed by Abdel-Samad whereby 1.5 billion Muslims are associated with violent criminals and terrorist groups. In the joint event with Thilo Sarrazin it becomes clear that for Abdel-Samad Islam means “political Islam” from the beginning, while Christianity was initially and actually never political and therefore less threatening. It was particularly problematic that the German political establishment made concessions to Islam. The left-wing idea of diversity as well as the postcolonial perspective, which have a great impact on journalism and on mainstream society, would contribute to the uncritical relationship and trivialisation of Islam. Abdel-Samad, therefore, welcomes the fact that next to the CDU there is finally a party like the AfD.

66. Ibid.
68. Hamed Abdel-Samad, Mohamed – Eine Abrechnung, Droemer Knaur, München: 2015
In their undifferentiated focus on the theology of Islam, both authors are united in that with pseudo-scientific explanations they blame Islam for social grievances. Sarrazin’s pseudo-science is particularly evident through ad-hoc explanations using simple statistics that confirm an alleged inability of Muslims to integrate. He cannot measure the influence of “Islam” on the ability to integrate, but this does not interest the uncritical audience which seems happy to have its prejudices confirmed.

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

There are numerous initiatives that campaign against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. The CLAIM project (claim-allianz.de) is an initiative funded by the Federal Ministry for Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as part of the federal programme *demokratie leben*. There alone, 35 organisations are listed that are committed to combating Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism. These organisations are involved in consulting, educational work, dialogue, documentation, empowerment, higher education work, youth work, prevention of radicalisation, awareness raising, networking, and science. In addition, there are numerous organisations in Germany to combat right-wing extremism or to provide school material which helps to reduce prejudices and right-wing extremism. 70 In this context, the religious communities that are committed to interreligious dialogue should also be mentioned. 71

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

We currently have a situation in Germany in which anti-Muslim racism has become socially acceptable in certain milieus and regions. That is why Germany needs a policy which makes it very clear that Islamophobia violates both the anti-discrimination laws and the democratic requirement of freedom of faith. Programmes to reduce Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in all arenas of society such as work, education, state institutions, and civil society have to be established. Politicians and political parties should consult the results of scientific research. Despite of the many studies on prejudice and right-wing extremism, and despite the positive evaluation of prevention programmes, comparatively little money is invested in the prevention and the reduction of Islamophobia and other forms of group-focused enmity. Prevention programmes are often limited in time and not long-term. Studies show that racism

and prejudices can be reduced, especially in childhood and adolescence, for instance by empathy training and intergroup contacts.\textsuperscript{72}

Authorities, such as the police, need to be screened for anti-Muslim racism. In other countries, for example, the racism problem is taken very seriously by the police and programmes to reduce racism are launched. Such programmes are lacking in Germany.

The media are also obliged to report differently. For example, reporting the origin of criminals has little added value in explaining a crime, especially if little or no other explanation is offered. After crimes or terrorist attacks, the media could, for example, let criminology and psychiatry experts discuss the causes of such deviant behaviour. Often the biographical and psychiatric background of German right-wing terrorists is discussed in every detail, but this is usually not the case in reports on Islamist terrorists. There are two measures here: the disturbed irrational right-wing extremist, and the rational Islamist who is apparently shaped by his “dangerous and violent” religion. In this context, more information from relevant experts would help to foster a discussion on the causes of crimes and terrorism which according to a conclusive study on left-wing and right-wing extremists as well as Islamists in Germany lie primarily in the broken biography and dysfunctional family background of terrorists, whereas in the case of Islamists the religiosity plays no other role than rationalising the hate against others.\textsuperscript{73}

The fight against right-wing extremism is most urgent. For too long, state institutions were blind when it came to the political far right and underestimated the danger from the far right. At the moment, the authoritarian aggression of the far right is directed particularly against Muslims. Co-radicalisation creates dangerous dynamics on the part of radical nationalists and Islamists who are interested in a spiral of violence. This spiral of violence needs to be broken. This can also be done by discussing the similarities between the so-called Western and Islamic worlds rather than their differences. Intergroup conflicts can also be resolved by emphasising the fact that there should no longer a “we” and “others” in people’s minds.

Chronology

- **14.01.2019**: Media reports that German lawyer Seda Başay-Yıldız who represented the family of the first murder victim of the right-wing terrorist cell National Socialist Underground (NSU) receives a threatening letter from right-wing extremists.


\textsuperscript{73} Saskia Lützinger, *Die Sicht der Anderen Eine qualitative Studie zu Biographien von Extremisten und Terroristen*, (Luchterhand, Köln: 2010).
• 02.06.2019: CDU politician Walter Lübcke who campaigned for the admission of refugees is murdered by a right-wing extremist.

• 23.06.2019: Tabloid newspaper Bild reports on a day-care centre which does not want to serve pork and triggers anti-Muslim racists reactions in German public.

• 09.10.2019: A racist tries to kill Jews in a synagogue in Halle. After his attempt fails, he kills a passer-by and a guest of a kebab shop. Before he runs into the kebab shop, he says “We gonna take that döner”.

• 02.12.2019: SPD Politician Sawsan Chebli receives death threats by right-wing extremists who write that they will not except an “Islamisation” of Germany.

• 19.12.2019: CSU politician Şener Şahin announces that he will run for mayor in Wallerstein. Members of the local party organisation are not willing to accept a Muslim candidate. Later, Şahin withdraws his candidacy.