**The International Alliance for Peace and Development**

The IAPD seeks to promote for peace and sustainable development all over the world. The IAPDA works to counter hatred, violence and extremism and to work side by side with the UN mechanism and other affective institutions all over the world. The IAPDA follows its vision by networking in order to mobilize efforts, cooperation and integration.

**Report on Anti-Muslim Hatred and Discrimination in The European Context**

* **Introduction.**

Islamophobia and xenophobia are broad term definitions that need to be identified and elaborated on to build on their conceptions and thoughts. It is important to note that these notions are essential to base the practices and context factors on them. Starting from the term Islamophobia it refers to the fear, hate, prejudice, or discrimination towards the Islamic faith or Muslim people especially when combined with political terms it could refer to the dissent of political Islam in the political context. However, there is no agreement upon the difference between Islamophobia and Xenophobia, sometimes scholars and politicians treat Islamophobia as being a part of xenophobia which means it could be more inclusive of other forms of racism. Nonetheless, the intersectional phenomenon of islamophobia is linked to anti-Muslims-hatred, built upon this racialization of Muslims, the actual or assumed Muslim identity "Muslimness", the development of the Muslim as the other, also applied to the lack of authority for such classes of individuals, the denial, individual acts and prejudices. This phenomenon has multiple aspects: societal, organizational, administrative, human, targeting features. Where Colloquial expressions activities can affect this phenomenon.

In the current report Islamophobia according to the indexes is a part of racism as well as xenophobia. The following sections would focus on the region of the European Union in order to tackle the laws, practices of discrimination in the European states of the union as well as the societal stances, and Muslim hatred in cases of vulnerabilities. On the other hand, the good practices of tackling anti-Muslim hatred, undertaken by civil society and international organizations would be presented if available.[[1]](#footnote-1)

* **Discrimination in law and practice**

The Constitutions of all European Union countries secure the right to freedom of faith. The law of faith differs greatly, from Countries with either an existing religion, to Countries that uphold a policy of absolute segregation. Nonetheless, the European states have international treaties to abide by and mostly all of them guarantee the right to faith for any human being. Both the European Convention on Human Rights and the international treaties of the Member Countries and the European Court on Human Rights provide legal positions and guidelines to protect the freedom of religion of persons. With relation to hate speech, in 1996, the European Council urged Member Countries to prohibit public religious hatred to bigotry, abuse, or racial hatred against a section of society or members of a group identified by relation to color, ethnicity, belief or ethnic or national origins. Also, the European convention of the human rights indicates the full rights and freedom to everyone in the European Union countries to believe in whatever they want as illustrated in article 9 *“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice, and observance. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”* However, the concept of indirect discrimination makes it possible to challenge legal mechanisms which while impartial in their face, have enough effect of discriminating against people on basis of religion, unless they are directly proportional to the genuine purpose sought. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Nevertheless, in a secular society with religious freedom, the Law assumes that it may be appropriate to put limitations on the freedoms of faith in terms of balancing the needs of the different communities and to ensure that everybody's views are protected, but in the exercise of its regulatory power in this area and in its ties with the various sects, doctrines, and values. The court deemed that it is reasonable and justified for the regional powers to curb such a grant to those religious groups which are present with an authorized organization. Notwithstanding, according to the court, the regional statute breached the constitutional law of equality, in reality, as the national administration had no agreement with any Islamic religious association, the said condition was, in fact, an indirect way to exclude local public funding for the construction of mosques, although the well-established residence of Muslims in that regional area. A further area in which the notion of indirect discrimination on spots of religion may represent a part, as means for supporting religious pluralism, is the right to wear religious dresses or to display religious symbols in the workplace or public places, be it the Islamic veil or others. State courts’ decisions are regularly in favor of the organization's concern in protecting the impartiality of the workplace, with some exclusions.[[3]](#footnote-3)

In many European countries the symbols of Islam especially women wearing Hijab are not tolerated, the ban on Islamic veiling in public schools is a present obstacle in face of Muslims in European countries. Where problems before the EU Convention on Human Rights involved the removal of young women from state high schools for consistently refusing to drop their headscarf in physical training courses. The court acknowledged the opinion drawn by the national governments that the wearing of a hijab, such as the Islamic hijab, was incompatible with sporting classes on grounds of fitness, hygiene, and safety. The previous cases about Mosques and Hijab have been considered as problematic issues for the European governments as well as the Muslim community in Europe. Even if the courts did not consider such incidents as eradication of human rights in most of the cases, still the incidents reflect the notion of Islamophobia and Muslim hatred.[[4]](#footnote-4)

For instance, in the Uk, security cameras are mounted around so-called Muslim areas, and social services are called upon to condemn extreme behavior. Many innocent Muslims are persecuted primarily on the grounds of their religious activity, and there is no proof that they are engaged in any illegal activity. As well as in France, after the state of emergency was imposed after the Paris attacks of November 2015, human rights NGOs recorded 3,594 raids on homes, mosques, and prayer rooms, as well as house arrests, leading to 6 jihadist police prosecutions and only one pending trial.[[5]](#footnote-5) Absence for religious reasons has also been raised before the courts of the EU Member States. Italy and Spain have signed bilateral deals and some well-known religions in the region, which allow for the right of employees to leave on days other than Sundays. Problems occur, however when States opt not to enter into an arrangement with those well-established religious communities, as was the situation with the Islamic community in Italy. Another situation was in the United Kingdom, where the claimant was a teacher in a public school in England who protested about the inability of the school authority to adjust his work time in order to encourage him to take a 45-minute break on Friday afternoons and to pray in the mosque. The Commission dismissed the claim pursuant to Article 9(2), recalling that the petitioner had, of its own free will, acknowledged teaching responsibilities under its contract only with Inner London Education Authority and that as a part of that contract, it had found itself unable to work with the Ilea and fulfill Friday prayers. A similar argument was adopted later in Finland.[[6]](#footnote-6)

* **Social attitude, hate speech, attacks, and violence against Muslims**

As noticed, incidents illustrated above at the courts and in relation to the laws and national regulations indicate that there could be an integral part of the problem related to the European states’ societies and how the people deal with Muslims as “others”. In a recent case, Rasmus Paludan burned versions of the Quran in many instances in Denmark, in 2019. Also, two Algerian ladies wearing Hijab were fatally stabbed underneath the Eiffel Tower in the middle of increasing tensions in Paris after the decapitation of teacher Samuel Paty. The purpose of the violence is still not entirely clarified. In 2020, nine people have been killed and five others injured in a terrorist attack by a far-right militant attacking two shisha bars in Hanau. However, the incidents were not confined to only one European state, they were scattered in different spots in Europe even in one of the best countries with regard to the human rights protection indexes, Switzerland, in 2016 A man screamed before setting a fire at the Islamic center located in central Zurich. The reason is still under investigation, but the Swiss Islamic Central Council released a statement stating that it should act as an "alarm" for the danger faced by growing Islamophobia in Swiss society. Also, later in 2019, Philip Manshaus, 21, opened fire on a mosque in Bærum, Norway, a suburb 20 kilometers away from Oslo. He wounded one human and was then subdued by two worshipers. At the time of the attack, there were three congregations in the mosque before the gunman opened fire in the Al Noor Islamic center of Bærum in Norway.[[7]](#footnote-7)

* **Multiple discrimination and hatred suffered by Muslims in vulnerable situations**

A study done by the statisticians proved that the reputation of Muslims differs considerably throughout Europe. Half or more of them have a rather or very negative impression of Muslims in Hungary, Italy, Poland, Greece, and Spain. In Italy (36%), Hungary (35%), and Greece (32%), almost a third holds rather unfavorable views. Majorities of the other nations studied express optimistic views towards Muslims. However, at least a fifth of all countries have unfavorable perceptions of Muslims according to pew research centers. However, no nation does the plurality claim that "very few" Muslims accept ISIS. [[8]](#footnote-8) In five nations, a quarter or more claim that many or most Muslims do so. This comprises 46% in Italy, 37% in Hungary, 35% in Poland, 30% in Greece, and 25% in Spain. Significant numbers of Poles (28%) and Hungarians (20%) do not share an opinion on this matter. All in all, Europeans are deeply divided about whether refugees fleeing states such as Iraq and Syria are a big danger to their region. Significant numbers in Poland, Greece, Hungary, and Italy share this opinion, as do 52 % in the United Kingdom. Somewhere else, there is much less interest. [[9]](#footnote-9)

According to the EU-MIDIS, an average, 1 in 3 Muslim Survey participants (34 percent of men and 26 percent of women) reported having encountered discrimination in the previous 12 months. On net, 37% of Respondents of Muslims were stopped customs control in the preceding 12 months claimed that this was due directly to their refugee or minority history. By contrast, 19 percent of non-Muslim minority respondents surveyed in the EU-MIDIS found that this was the case. [[10]](#footnote-10)

OSI analysis shows that religious bigotry against Muslims remains a crucial obstacle to complete and equitable inclusion in society. The results of the study are consistent with other studies which show that the degree of religious prejudice aimed against Muslims is prevalent and has risen during the last years. European-born Muslims, especially women, were much more likely to have higher levels of religious intolerance than foreign-born Muslims. European-born Muslim men have described the police as a central source of unequal treatment and bigotry. For Muslims, the prevalence of bigotry and racism has an effect on their sense of common belonging. Also, Muslim children appear to suffer from bigotry and discrimination in schools and are faced with poor standards on the part of teachers. Teachers require adequate preparation and encouragement to ensure that they can be successful in highly diverse schools, both ethnically and culturally.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Muslim and Islamic organizations, which include mosques, prayer spaces (masjids), educational institutions, and cemeteries, are also threatened by abuse and vandalism. However, Muslim women are more vulnerable when it comes to discriminatory actions and hate-crimes. Nonetheless, the Refugees and migrants of Muslim origins are also vulnerable than other minorities. [[12]](#footnote-12)

* **Good practice in considering anti-Muslim hatred, undertaken by international organizations.**

The OSCE High-Level Conference on "Confronting Intolerance and Prejudice towards Muslims in Public Discourse" held in Vienna in 2011. The meeting was co-hosted by the Chairperson of the Organization for Stability and Collaboration in Europe and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. It was dedicated to investigating such types of intolerance with a view to establishing concrete methods and best practices for action to fight anti-Muslim hate. There was an average of 161 registered members, including 41 leaders of civil society and four representatives of foreign organizations. Members came from 42 participating Countries and 3 OSCE Collaboration Partners. [[13]](#footnote-13)

International Alliance for Peace and Development (IAPD) has organized several events calling for peace and promoting cohesive societies in which all people regardless their backgrounds integrated and empowered. One of the most prominent initiative of IAPD in this field is the “Peace-Makers Forum” which include peacebuilders from all over the world who are countering the hate speeches and violent extremism in their home countries as well as building peace globally.

Despite all the efforts, anti-Muslim sentiments in political dialogue and in the media remain a subject of concern as well as in the societal arena too.

* **Recommendations:**
* Decision-makers in Europe should encourage fair justice, resolving inequality based on faith and ideology in education, accommodation, and the supply of goods and services. Besides, the statistical organizations and agencies should gather reliable statistics on minorities in order to promote evidence-based strategies to encourage diversity and address discrimination.
* National governments should use civic and national awareness campaigns Advertisements to ensure that lawmakers, staff, other authorities, and the general public are clearly aware of current legislative rights and procedures for redress towards prejudice on grounds of religion or belief. As government agencies should help the potentials of citizens including Muslims, to react to their concerns and demands.
* Local authorities should build municipal initiatives that emphasize the shared and egalitarian culture of communities as a successful way to improve solidarity and belonging. With governments and representatives of Muslim and other minority groups can focus on ensuring that public sector organizations have employees that reflect the diversity of their cities and cultures.

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2. "Guide On Article 9 Of The European Convention On Human Rights". 2020. *European Court Of Human Rights*. <https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Guide_Art_9_ENG.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. "Second European Union Minorities And Discrimination Survey Muslims – Selected Findings". 2020. *European Union Agency For Fundamental Rights*. <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/second-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey-muslims-selected>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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6. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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9. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. "Data In Focus Report | Muslims". 2020. *EU-MIDIS - FRA*. <https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/448-EU-MIDIS_MUSLIMS_EN.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
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