Local Actions against Anti-Muslim Racism

Policy Recommendations for City Administrations and Their Partners

ECCAR
European Coalition *of* Cities Against Racism

Content note

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors (cities, NGOs and experts) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the publication or its editors.

ECCAR encourages a diversity of voices addressing anti-Muslim racism. The contributions are thus not dependent on each other but have been brought into conversation to broaden the discourse. This Guidebook thus welcomes a thoughtful and respectful dialogue on the issue.

ECCAR is politically independent. All activities are based on ECCAR's purpose as defined in its statutes.

The aim is to combat any form of racism and discrimination at a municipal level and thus contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights, respect for diversity in Europe, international mindedness, tolerance in all fields of culture and mutual understanding among peoples.

With its work ECCAR raises awareness of the values of a just and solidarity-based society among the general public in Europe to motivate them to decisively oppose racist or discriminatory opinions and behaviours.

International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities – ICCAR

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Foreword

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Across Europe, Muslims continue to face discrimination. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), one out of three Muslim respondents said they were a victim of discrimination or harassment based on visible religious symbols such as their clothing . Similar numbers reported that they faced discrimination when searching for a job. As the number of Muslims in Europe is expected to continue to grow with some estimates predicting that they will constitute up to 14% of the overall population in 2050, the potential impact of growing Islamophobia is worrisome.

The roots of such discrimination are deeply set. Factors such as race, ethnic origin, cultural identity, and gender are known to influence and shape the structural vulnerabilities that different communities face. Such vulnerabilities have been further exacerbated in contexts of emergency, illustrated starkly by the disproportionate challenges that already discriminated groups, including Muslims, have faced across the COVID-19 pandemic.

To address such challenges, we need to act holistically, sensitively, and practically. Responses need to address the structural underpinnings of discrimination in order to improve the lived experiences and outcomes of those in vulnerable situations. Local governments are key among the actors who can advance such an approach, invested with the legitimacy and proximity to understand needs and priorities, the authority to act, and the reach to make a pragmatic difference.

For almost two decades, UNESCO has placed cities at the heart of its strategy to combat racism and discrimination in all of its forms. This was further elevated by the Global Call Against Racism, issued by UNESCO's Member States in 2020 as a political call to action to tackle the increased menace of racism and discrimination, among others, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Global Call mandated a UNESCO Roadmap Against Racism and Discrimination, within which local action has been afforded a predominant role, alongside an annual Global Forum Against Racism and Discrimination, the second edition of which took place in Mexico City in November 2022 and which included several important spaces to advance more effective municipal actions to combat this era-defining challenge.

The UNESCO International Coalition of Sustainable and Inclusive Cities plays a critical role in advancing this renewed strategic vision. Through its regional branches, we have already seen important progress. Key amongst these, the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) has embraced many opportunities under the new Roadmap, for instance supporting the use of the UNESCO Master Class Series against Racism and Discrimination, reaching more than 6000 students to educate them on the impact of racism and motivate them to take concrete action. Furthermore, ECCAR cities actively contributed to the first Policy Dialogue held in cooperation with ICCAR in October 2022 to share experiences and lessons learned in establishing legal and institutional frameworks to fight racism and discrimination.

ECCAR has also launched many innovative initiatives to empower local governments: to collect data, identify good practice, set benchmarks, and build capacities, and this guidebook is a solid example in this regard. With it, ECCAR provides experience-based advice on addressing Anti-Muslim discrimination across different policy areas falling under the responsibility of city administrations. The fact that it draws on concrete examples of city practice – from collective Iftar events organized by Mosques in Leuven, Belgium, to the outreach efforts to Muslim women made by the Anti-Discrimination Office in Styria, Austria – roots it firmly in practice, and provides the knowledge and methodologies needed to support local policymakers in ending Islamophobia within Europe and across the world.

I would like to commend ECCAR for this work and look forward to further developing our cooperation towards achieving our common goal: ending racism in all its manifestations.

have demonstrated that many European cities now see anti-Muslim racism as a problem that requires targeted counteraction.

As ECCAR, we recognize our fellow Muslim residents' struggles and hence work to end discrimination and protect religious freedom in all spheres of life. We are dedicated to fostering inclusivity and mutual respect in places where Muslim European residents feel at home —in the cities. Our objective is to facilitate the recognition of the diversity of Muslim religious and cultural life as an organic part of European societies.

In this guidebook, we have collected good practice examples from 17 European cities demonstrating the strong commitment of ECCAR cities to non-discrimination. Creating this guidebook is a crucial first step in bringing together local governments, researchers, policy advisors and NGOs to share best practices and exchange knowledge on creating better policies suitable for diverse regional and local contexts.

Benedetto Zacchiroli,
ECCAR President

Danijel Cubelic,
ECCAR Vice President /
Director of the Office
of Equal Opportunities
at the City of Heidelberg

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to create "a just, equitable, tolerant, open, and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are satisfied". As a member of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), the European Coalition against Racism (ECCAR) is committed to attaining this objective, to securing equal access to public services and urban facilities for everybody and to tackling institutional racism on a local level. Our activities aim to fight prejudice, hate speech and misinformation and to foster a culture of diversity, thereby strengthening democratic participation and social cohesion.

Anti-Muslim racism as a form of cultural racism, targets Muslims and people perceived as such based on racialized markers of otherness, such as appearance, dress, name, or even the language they speak. Hence, even non-Muslims can become targets, especially if they are assumed to have a "migratory background" from a "Muslim" society. The manifestations of anti-Muslim racism range from violent attacks against persons and property to online hate speech, structural discrimination, and bias in medial or political debates.

Following the General Assembly of ECCAR in 2020, numerous member cities emphasized the necessity of forming a working group that specifically addresses combating anti-Muslim racism in local contexts. ECCAR acknowledges that anti-Muslim racism impedes the development of inclusive cities and peaceful coexistence in democratic, open, and free communities. Since establishing our working group, more than 80 member cities have taken part in our workshops and other events. The conversations at the events

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Setting the Scene

Anti-Muslim Racism in Europe

D epending on the country, manifestations of anti-Muslim racism are connected to specific political, historical, and social relations. However, intolerance towards, hatred and discrimination of Muslims and people perceived as such follow similar patterns across all European countries. Research has shown that Muslims and people perceived as such experience manifold forms of stigmatisation, discrimination, and violence, ranging from hate-motivated violence, verbal or online harassment, and ethnic and religious profiling to police abuse. Structural forms of discrimination concern access to education, the labour market, and the housing market, as well as policies or legislation that indirectly target or disproportionately affect Muslims and unduly restrict their freedom of religion. Moreover, on the level of public media and political discourse, anti-Muslim racism manifests itself in the blanket stigmatisation and Othering of Muslims. Within this type of stigmatisation, Muslims are exclusively perceived as a social and political problem and are not considered agents that can participate in and contribute to society.

A recent European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) report exemplifies the practical consequences of normalising anti-Muslim racism. It shows alarming figures on hate crime reporting across Europe. Up to nine out of ten persons victimized by hate crimes do not report the incident to authorities. The report also notes that common reasons for underreporting were a lack of trust in authorities and the overwhelming bureaucracy of reporting mechanisms. Moreover, over 40% of Muslim respondents who had experienced bias-motivated harassment or violence left their experiences unreported because they felt that reporting would not change anything.

The discrimination and the hostility experienced by Muslims in Europe manifest in an intersectional manner. Gender, sexual orientation, (perceived) ethnicity and/or race, skin colour, (perceived) religious identity, and social class often overlap as grounds for discrimination. Furthermore, since Islam and, consequentially, Muslims are seen as "foreign" in Europe, indigenous Muslims like Tatars in Finland and Poland, Pomaks in Bulgaria, the Balkan Muslims, and converts experience hatred, discrimination, and exclusion like Muslims with a migratory background. The effects of discrimination and marginalization in social and political discourses and of very tangible forms of threat are deeply rooted and highly disruptive, even on an individual level. They may result in a feeling of fear and vulnerability, of humiliation and a diminished self-esteem, and they may produce profound anger against mainstream society and its constituents. On the other hand, they may also lead to complete denial and unhealthy suppression.

Many Muslims living in European societies feel constant pressure to make their own identity more acceptable to a prejudiced and sometimes outright anti-Muslim public. Therefore, they may try to conceal or underplay their own religious identity to reduce (unfounded) public suspicion and mitigate the constant danger of experiencing discrimination and even violence. In effect, they feel they cannot be publicly visible as Muslims if they want to fully exercise their social and human rights.

These feelings lead to a dire situation in which the pure anticipation of discrimination, physical violence, and subsequent practical self-censorship creates constant everyday stress, whose psychological harm can be even more significant than the actual experience of such discrimination. This can be particularly devastating for children: Evidence indicates that witnessing racist incidents and the perceived need to self-censor in childhood can lead to socio-emotional problems in later life. Apart from these effects on everyday life and their individual psyche, the prevalence of anti-Muslim racism in European societies also clearly affects the structural and institutional treatment of Muslims and people perceived as Muslims. Thus, Muslims face discrimination on the housing market and their housing standards are poorer. They also face discrimination on the job market. They have lower income levels, higher rates and extended periods of unemployment, and less access to privileged and desirable occupations. All this leads to poorer health standards and lower education levels. Notably, such structural and institutional discrimination has a long-term domino effect that harms not just the individual directly concerned but also future generations.

Muslims who live in majority non-Muslim European societies constantly experience the feeling of being under general suspicion. They are often treated as representatives of "all Muslims" or Muslim-majority societies and nations and their politics. They are frequently asked to distance themselves from terror attacks where the perpetrator was identified as a Muslim or from the situation in Muslim-majority societies. This happens even though Muslims who live in majority non-Muslim European communities might have no connection whatsoever to perpetrators of violent attacks or have no links to or are not involved politically in violent groups. They often feel that they must constantly justify themselves for being Muslim and defend Islam.

Furthermore, in recent decades the media and political discourse in many European countries have increasingly focused debates concerning Muslims in Europe on "security concerns", which has had a tangible negative effect on the sense of security in Muslim communities. It has harmed the freedom of expression exercised by Muslims and limited their political participation. Young Muslims who have grown up in a social environment marked by the securitisation of Islam and "general suspicion" often feel discouraged and consequently do not participate in politics or engage in civil society. Muslims who live in such a social and political climate and have been explicitly singled out as "suspects" have to continue living with the associated trauma, shame, and structural discrimination for years and decades, even if they have been officially exonerated. The effects may be experienced on all social levels; it concerns adults facing the legal system or suspicions at the workplace as much as children undergoing unfair treatment in the education system, including Muslim school children.

Moreover, it is worth noting that counter-terrorism policies or practices may create a hostile atmosphere within Muslim communities and diminish the trust that communities and individuals may have in official authorities. This lack of trust leads to an underreporting of hate crimes and alienation on both individual and social levels. This in turn,

only leads to more social division and less social integration.

As can be concluded from the above observations, anti-Muslim racism endangers the rights of all Muslim residents of European countries and people perceived as such and their access to equal treatment and opportunities in society. It also constitutes a general threat to a peaceful co-existence in democratic, open, and free societies. Values such as democracy, freedom, and open discourse are often understood to be inherent to European societies; they were the founding values of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Thus, addressing the threat these values face due to the prevalence of anti-Muslim racism is essential.

Inclusion policies at the local level may tremendously affect the preservation of these values. Such policies should include, e.g., creating easy and accessible ways to report incidents of discrimination and racism, making basic services of civil society and local political structures more accessible for people coming from a broader social spectrum, and empowering the political voices of those affected by anti-Muslim racism. In conclusion, ECCAR is committed to building equal, inclusive, and cohesive societies and protecting the residents of our cities from discrimination of all forms.

NOTE ON STYLE

In this guidebook, the terms anti-Muslim racism, antisemitism, and antigypsyism are spelled according to the spelling used by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

ECCAR Working Definition for Anti-Muslim Racism

European and global institutions such as ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Intolerance), FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), the EC Coordinator on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred, ODIHR (the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights), and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief have in the past years used different terms in their official reports, such as "Islamophobia", "anti-Muslim hatred", "discrimination against Muslims", and "anti-Muslim prejudice", but also "anti-Muslim racism" to describe the discrimination and hostility experienced by Muslims and people perceived as such. However, ECCAR recognises the strength of the term "anti-Muslim racism" because it is rooted in understanding race as a product and not as a prerequisite of racism. The term also allows us to acknowledge the historical and structural aspects of the phenomenon as a form of racism.

According to this understanding of race and racism, the concept of racialisation plays an important role. As defined by ECRI, racialisation is "the process of ascribing characteristics and attributes presented as innate to a group of concern to it and of constructing false social hierarchies in racial terms and associated exclusion and hostility."[1] Hence, in the process of racialising Muslims, a person's actual or perceived "Muslimness" is used as a marker for an ascribed inferior Otherness, similarly to how race used to be understood to be an inherently physical or biological marker of inferiority. Accordingly, anti-Muslim racist thinking and acting categorises anyone perceived as Muslim as a "racial Other" and, thus, inferior. This is also one of the reasons why ECCAR considers anti-Muslim racism particularly dangerous for society and democratic co-existence. Due to their appearance, Sikhs, or Arab Christians/Jews, for instance, can be perceived as Muslims and discriminated against due to anti-Muslim racism.

Despite widespread rhetoric that claims that "Muslims do not belong to Europe", Islam and Muslims have a long history in Europe. Areas of Spain, Portugal, and Italy have had large Muslim populations throughout the medieval period. In these countries, Muslim people continued to live there, even under Christian rule, well into the modern period (albeit often clandestinely and underground). The long interreligious history of the Iberian Peninsula led to cultural and religious exchange and an impressive knowledge production that later affected the European Renaissance and the eventual emergence of modern Europe. Countries such as France, Croatia, and Hungary (long before Muslim populations later arrived under Ottoman rule) have also known Muslim minority populations in the medieval period. Poland and Lithuania have had a constant presence of Muslim Tatars since the 15th century and Finland ever since the 19th century. Under Ottoman rule, Muslim minority communities stabilised in present-day Greece, Bulgaria, and Romania and continue to exist until today. Larger and sometimes majority Muslim populations can be found in several member states of the Council of Europe today, such as Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Türkiye. Muslim communities have interacted with non-Muslim communities in Europe

for centuries, shaping European culture, politics, and scientific history. They have had a lasting positive influence on European identity. This old history of Muslims in Europe continues in a new globalised world, marked by migration and transnational connections. In the course of the last 60-70 years, new communities of Muslims consisting mostly of more recent immigrants from Muslim majority nations and their descendants and, to a lesser extent, native converts to Islam, have formed and become a natural part of many European societies.

Despite this long history of Muslims and Islam in Europe, there is a long history of marking Muslims as "the Other" in a European perception. In the case of both Iberian as well as Southeast and Central European history, Muslims have often been identified with the political threat of conquering nations, such as the Muslim rulers of al-Andalus or the Ottoman Empire. In several post-Ottoman societies, in particular, the rhetorical distancing from a Muslim past and Muslim influences in culture and society has become part of nationalist identity. Some other countries, such as Hungary or Poland, often cultivate a mythology of being a "wall against Islam" that is often invoked in current right-wing and conservative political discussions. In Western Europe, the idea of Europe has also been constructed in a way to deliberately make Muslim communities and contributions invisible.

During colonial imperialism in the 19th and early 20th century, several European states ruled over Muslim populations, particularly France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The idea of the superiority of white European non-Muslim society and culture over Islam and Muslims was a vital ideological force in their colonial project. It strengthened the construction of Muslims as Europe's "eternal Others". Here as well, we already find the emergence of the perception of Muslims as a "security concern" because religious movements and insurgencies in the Muslim world were often perceived as a threat to colonial rule.

These tropes were resurrected in the context of Western (including European) post-colonial geopolitics, particularly in the form of "war on terror" policies developed after the tragic events of 9/11. A spiral of global violence has followed, in which Islam has been hijacked by Jihadist terrorists and was consequently reduced to that idea. This idea served as justification for several wars and human rights abuses globally. It was also used as justification for European immigration policies and increased violence towards migrants at the EU border. News reporting and political developments all around Europe demonstrate that anti-Muslim racism is fuelled by nationalism, xenophobia, and political populism, which have been on the rise in all European countries in the last ten years. In the public perception of many European societies, Muslims are mainly perceived as a problem and not as members of a religious and cultural community that has long contributed positively to European life and still continues to do so.

Therefore, the work against anti-Muslim racism must be based on the understanding that enhancing Muslims' civic engagement and political participation in Europe will

ECCAR Working Definition for Anti-Muslim Racism

Anti-Muslim racism includes discrimination, hatred, and exclusion faced by Muslims and individuals perceived as Muslims due to their (perceived) religious identity. It is an ideology that permeates all social classes and operates from street-level to the highest level of official institutions.

It considers Muslims as fundamentally different from non-Muslims and hence not legitimate receivers of equal treatment. Anti-Muslim racism is intersectional, so that victims can experience it in combination with other forms of discrimination concerning gender, religious identity, ethnicity or skin colour, and social class. Hence, the experiences of anti-Muslim racism by Muslim women of colour can differ from that of a white Muslim male. Anti-Muslim racism can manifest itself explicitly or in a hidden manner differently through conduct, gesture, verbal communication, structural discrimination, or physical violence. Since anti-Muslim racism works similarly to other forms of racism, it is essentially used to exclude Muslims from the same benefits and rights of citizenship as non-Muslims by otherising them to the extent that their fundamental rights can be violated. Anti-Muslim racism fuels hatred amongst citizen groups and endangers social cohesion and the basic principles of democracy.

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Therefore, the work against anti-Muslim racism must be based on the understanding that enhancing Muslims' civic engagement and political participation in Europe will

strengthen relationships between citizen groups. In contrast, discriminative policies and exclusionary public attitudes work to the detriment of social integration, peace, and safety. It is imperative to consider the existence of anti-Muslim racism as a barrier to the successful political and economic development of multicultural, post-immigration societies in Europe as a whole.

While ECCAR members are all united in their objective to improve inclusion and social cohesion, each city has its respective local context marked by several factors that might limit their work concerning inclusion. These include available funding for the work against anti-Muslim racism, the structure of departments within city admin-istrations, available workforce, size and demographics of the local Muslim community and the historical relationships between the majority and ethnic/religious minorities. Moreover, anti-Muslim racism permeates all social classes and spheres of life. Conse-quently, ECCAR cities recognise anti-Muslim racism as a structural problem on the one hand and, on the other hand, as an ideology and a driving force that endangers peace-ful coexistence in democratic societies. Despite existing challenges, ECCAR cities are already demonstrating a lot of efforts to implement good practices that tackle anti-Mus-lim racism in various fields. These include media, political discourse, equal treatment in institutions, leisure time, service and health care, private sector, labour market, law enforcement and justice and everyday intergroup relations.

To support the work of its member cities in tackling anti-Muslim racism locally, the working group drafted a working definition on the subject matter. The global work against anti-Muslim racism often lacks proper definitions of the terminology used, there-by preventing practices from taking root, and hindering, among other things, the design and implementation of efficient and accurate policies. We would like to point out that this definition is not binding. Nevertheless, it can serve as a basis for the cooperation between ECCAR, its member cities, and their partners. Moreover, the cities can adapt this definition to their respective local contexts. ECCAR has adopted the term anti-Muslim racism for this guidebook. Still, it is worth noting that some contributions below may use other terms, such as "Islamophobia", since this term is widely accepted, especially in the anglophone discourse. However, the Runnymede Trust Report 2017, "Islamophobia: Still a Challenge for Us All"[II], defines Islamophobia as "anti-Muslim racism", illustrating how these terms overlap.

The definition was discussed with experts and ECCAR member cities in an online meet-ing in October 2021 and introduced at the General Assembly of ECCAR in Bordeaux in December 2021.

About this Guidebook: The Rationale and Method

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To support its member cities in tackling anti-Muslim racism, ECCAR established a permanent working group led by the City of Heidelberg in December 2020 that received funding from the European Commission. The working group was established based on the outcomes of the ECCAR General Assembly 2020 (Bologna 19-20 November), that included holding a working group meeting on anti-Muslim racism. A first essential recommendation was to establish a structured working group to discuss local policies for fighting anti-Muslim racism in ECCAR member cities. This working group was set up to ensure that the fruitful discussions at the General Assembly would not remain unused but serve as the first step in a longer process, which will entail sharing good practices, tools, and solutions.

The working group held its first meeting in April 2021 and started out with the project on good practices to tackle anti-Muslim racism locally. The project's aim for the next ten months was to analyse how local governments can act against anti-Muslim intolerance, hatred, and discrimination in their capacities as democratic institutions, rule-makers, employers, service providers and public contractors. In June 2021, ECCAR created the position of a Working Group Coordinator after receiving a grant from the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. From June 2021 until January 2022, the working group collected and documented good practice initiatives from various cities throughout Europe that focus on measures tackling anti-Muslim intolerance, hatred, and discrimination in different areas and with multiple strategies.

Experiences of discrimination and hate crimes are frequently marked by intersectionality as many Muslim individuals and people perceived as such have multifaceted identities depending on their ethnicity, race, gender identity and social class. These diverse identities can overlap whenever people experience violence and discrimination and make particular population groups vulnerable to anti-Muslim racism in different ways. In response to that ECCAR has made a commitment to always highlight the different perspectives of Muslim women, men, LGBTQI+ people and refugees.

*Action Fields for Local Work against
anti-Muslim Racism*

Good Practices were collected in two steps: a mapping survey and personal consultations with the cities on their practices. By December 2021, the working group had finished collecting good practice examples and published these online on ECCAR's website. The list of good practices includes examples from as many cities as possible to ensure a sound representation of the geographical variety. On the one hand, this was necessary to reflect the geographical variety of ECCAR member cities. On the other hand, the geographical variety of practices represented had to reflect the everyday reality of Muslim communities all around Europe.

This guidebook is the result of the working group's efforts to increase the publication of good practices on ECCAR's website. For this guidebook and in the course of 2022, the working group reviewed, expanded, and grouped together good practices according to subject to cover six different action fields for local work against anti-Muslim racism. Additionally, contributions authored by stakeholders and experts working in the field, such as academics and NGO-representatives, have been added to the collection of texts to support the presentation of good practices in their respective thematic fields. This guidebook is set to address several stakeholders, such as researchers, journalists, activists, and policymakers and most importantly, ECCAR's member cities, so that they can learn from these examples and use this knowledge in their respective local contexts.

Intersectionality and Vulnerable Groups

The City as a Provider of Equal Services

Intercultural Competence in Education

Strengthening Civic Participation

Tackling Hate Crime and Discrimination

Civic Education and Citizen Dialogue
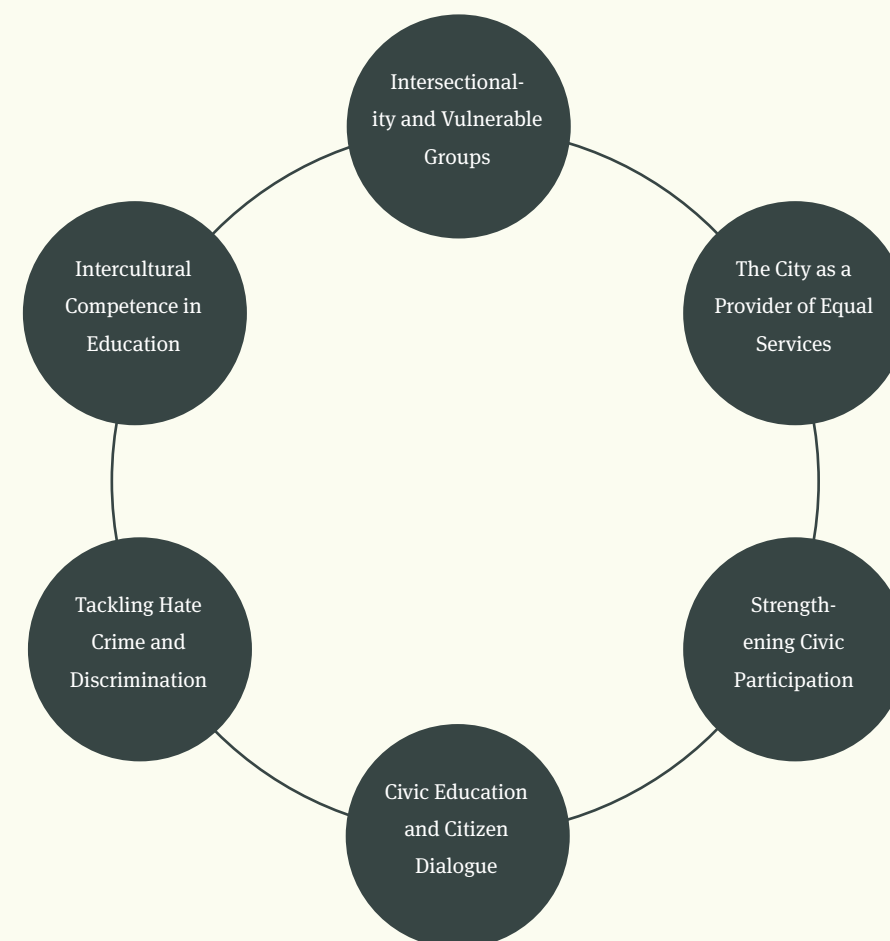
Mapping the Terrain – ECCAR Survey on Anti-Mus-lim Racism Related Measures

Does your city have experience with measures tackling anti-Muslim racism (measures, that have explicitly mentioned anti-Muslim racism as their objective, be it the main objective or a subordinate one)?

Yes

60.00%

40.00%
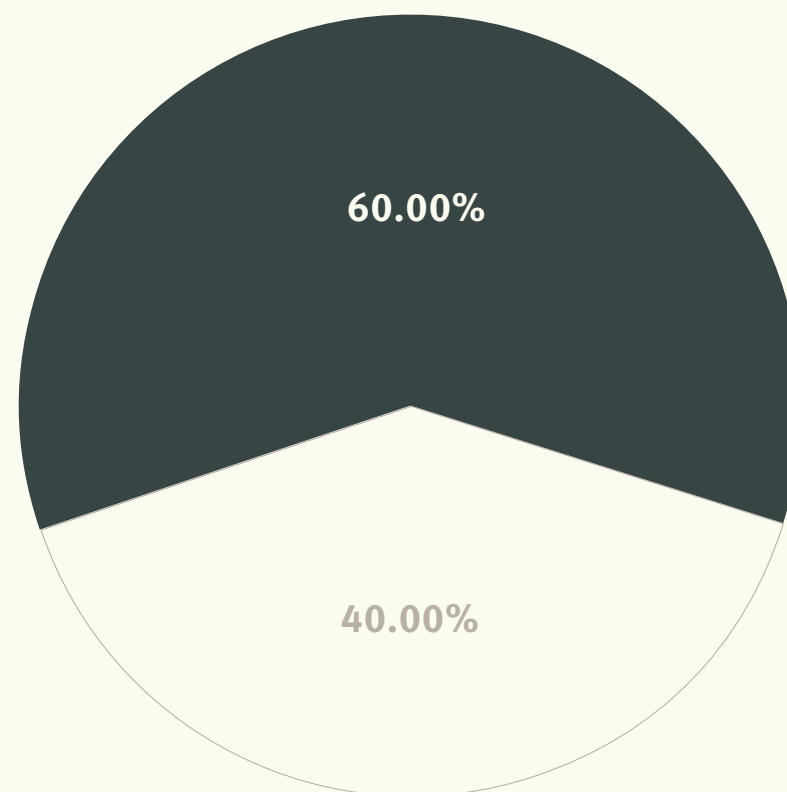
No

The ECCAR Working Group on Anti-Muslim Racism was established in December 2020 to assist ECCAR's member cities in their current work relating to the subject matter and provide support for those cities who want to start working on the issue in their local context. In a survey conducted during 2021, the state-of-the-art in the work against anti-Muslim racism in ECCAR member cities (N=42) showed that roughly one half of respondents had experience with local-level measures tackling anti-Muslim racism.

ECCAR member cities have integrated the work on anti-Muslim racism in different places within city administration structures. Whether this work is assigned to a department, an office, or one civil servant who solely focuses on the work against anti-Muslim racism is an indicator of the importance given to the issue by the city administration. If the work on anti-Muslim racism is carried out by a department that is not exclusively focusing on this issue, that affects the number of working hours and human resources the city can commit. Moreover, the department's agenda at large also affects the approach to the topic. For instance, approaching anti-Muslim racism as a topic related to integration would leave the diversity of the relevant Muslim community completely unacknowledged. Several generations of Muslims live in many European societies where Muslim communities have expanded because of migration. It is crucial to ensure that the needs of these diverse groups within the Muslim community are appropriately mapped out and efforts to meet these needs are made.   Addressing anti-Muslim racism solely under the umbrella of "integration of immigrant communities and security concerns" limits its relevance and scope. Social integration is an important goal for all constituents of society. Muslims do not pose a particular problem to integration, and anti-Muslim racism or other difficulties faced by Muslim communities are not merely a result of failed integration.

However, some ECCAR cities have specialised municipal action plans against anti-Muslim racism, for which examples are provided in chapter 4.2.2. As per the survey, only one city responded that they have a department/contact person who solely focuses on work against anti-Muslim racism. For the rest of the respondents, the work on anti-Muslim racism is located in diverse departments, focusing on the following cross-cutting issues:

equal opportunities   social cohesion   anti-discrimination

inter-departmental work against racism   human rights

integration and migration   intercultural relations

prevention of extremism   religious affairs   social development

citizenship   diversity   culture

Does your city administration have a department/contact person that/who solely focuses on work against anti-Muslim racism?

Yes

2,44%

97,56%
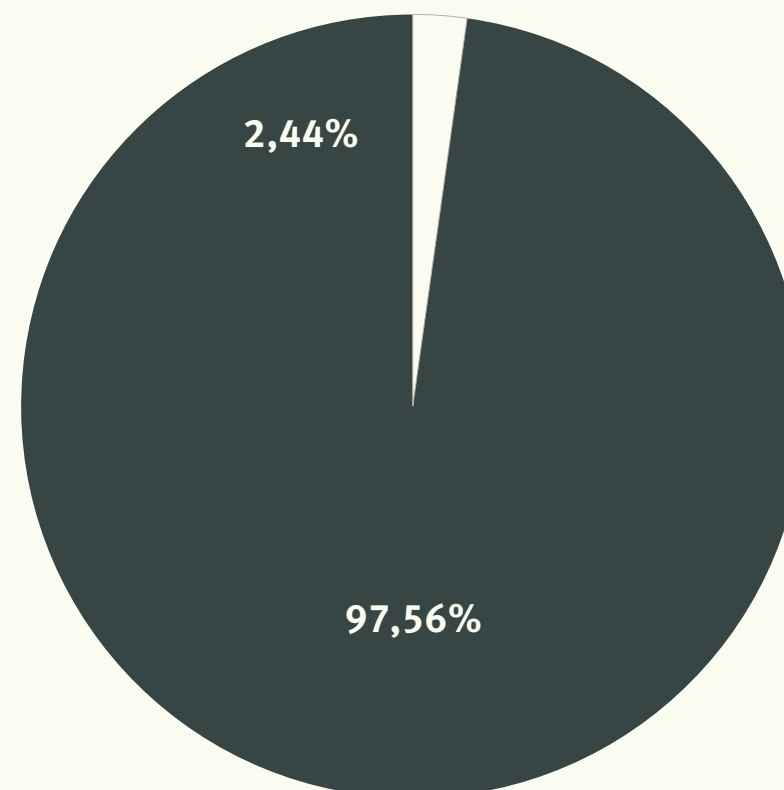
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This also shows that, depending on the structural circumstances, the work against anti-Muslim racism might have to follow departmental objectives for projects and a broader approach to each project. For instance, one German city responded that they recognised the problematic media representation and stigmatisation of immigrants, which harmed their efforts to shape integration processes in a positive way, and which in turn inhibited anti-racist work in general. The issue of tackling the role of media in disseminating negative stereotypes and anti-Muslim racist narratives comes up in several good practice examples in this guidebook. Many cities have included measures on anti-Muslim racism within their integration policies, interfaith dialogue projects, general anti-racism projects, or human rights projects. However, cities also wish to have a stronger focus, specifically on anti-Muslim racism. One city representative from Sweden noted they did not usually track different kinds of racism in their local work. Still, they recognised the need for such work, i.e., to move beyond general anti-racism work and focus on phenomena such as anti-Muslim racism separately.

All in all, the topics covered by projects that either had anti-Muslim racism as the primary objective or as a subordinate one are mainly related to civic education programmes that raise awareness amongst the broader public about Muslims and Islam. Such initiatives contribute to tackling anti-Muslim racism on the micro-level of society, which is essential, considering how they can affect the attitudes of individuals who, as a result, will not engage in discriminatory or hateful behaviour towards Muslims. ECCAR recognises that cities and local governments play a significant role in changing the current situation. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms can very well be initiated on a local level in cooperation on the one hand with NGOs and on the other hand with state authorities. Moreover, data collected from reporting platforms allowing low threshold access for victims of hate crime and discrimination can be aggregated and reported to state authorities. This will increase the visibility of victimization and contribute to establishing more robust policies regarding hate crime and discrimination. In chapter 4.5 of this guidebook, we present good practice examples of mechanisms that tackle structural discrimination and the ongoing dangers of cyber hate.

Educational programmes in schools have a similar objective, directly affecting student relations and contributing to a better learning environment for all. The good practice examples in chapter 4.6.2 show how programmes give students the opportunity to increase their intercultural competencies by talking to young Muslim adults and asking questions. Such projects, as well as others that aim to improve teachers' skills in interacting with Muslim students who may come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and may have varying access to dominant and official languages, are essential in breaking down barriers and improving religious literacy. It is important to note that these programmes can be implemented in different locations and demographic settings due to their flexible design.

Another significant part of the projects concentrates on empowering the Muslim community in terms of civic participation, which gives more visibility to the community

so that they are perceived as part and parcel of democratic societies. Such measures give Muslim citizens a platform to take over and have a voice in many civic roles. Instead of being regarded as "the problem", they are considered part of the solution to societal issues that concern all citizens, as we will see in chapter 4.3., which is illustrated by good practice examples from ECCAR cities and elaborated by Dr Amina Easat-Daas. The Heidelberg Muslim Academy is an excellent example of such an initiative. There are also many programmes related to antidiscrimination policies in ECCAR member cities, indicating a strong and already existing recognition of problems caused by anti-Muslim discrimination. However, specific initiatives concentrating on equal access to housing, or the labour market are still the exception. So far, the only good practices reported to ECCAR come from Berlin, as discussed in chapter 4.5.2.

As 40% of the cities responded that they have not yet had any kind of experience with projects related to anti-Muslim racism, this reply could coincide with the fact that some cities are facing difficulties when working on initiatives related to anti-Muslim racism. The lack of staff has been the most significant issue regarding structural challenges. This could be because some departments that work against anti-Muslim racism must work on anti-racism or human rights in general, meaning that they have many responsibilities. Moreover, in terms of institutional challenges, missing structures within the city administration were reported by one Swedish city. The same city also noted a lack of understanding and acceptance of everyday racism and structural discrimination. Hence, more measures concentrating on civic education programmes are needed. Moreover, due to politics, anti-Muslim racism is often positioned and ranked against antisemitism, making it challenging to address the former appropriately. We hope that the ECCAR working definition for anti-Muslim racism will help city representatives so that adequate measures can be designed to address both phenomena and their respective manifestations.

If yes, which of the following categories have your initiatives tackled?

Initiatives to strengthen the civic participation of Muslim citizens (e.g. empow-erment)

Other

Anti-discrimination policies

Equal access to labour market

Education (programmes in schools and other educational institutions)

12,40%

6,61%

5,79%

11,57%

Sports and leisure time

10,74%

6,61%

8,26%

Access to & equal chances in education

13,22%

9,09%

4,13%

Training for the law enforcement (e.g. hate crime)

11,57%

Civic education programmes (e.g. raising awareness about Muslims and Islam amongst the wider public)

Initiatives against hate speech

Equal access to housing

What challenges are you facing when it comes to the design and implementation of measures and initiatives to tackle anti-Muslim racism?

None

Other

8,57%

17,14%

Lack of staff

17,14%

32,86%

Lack of knowledge about anti-Muslim racism

24,29%

Lack of funding
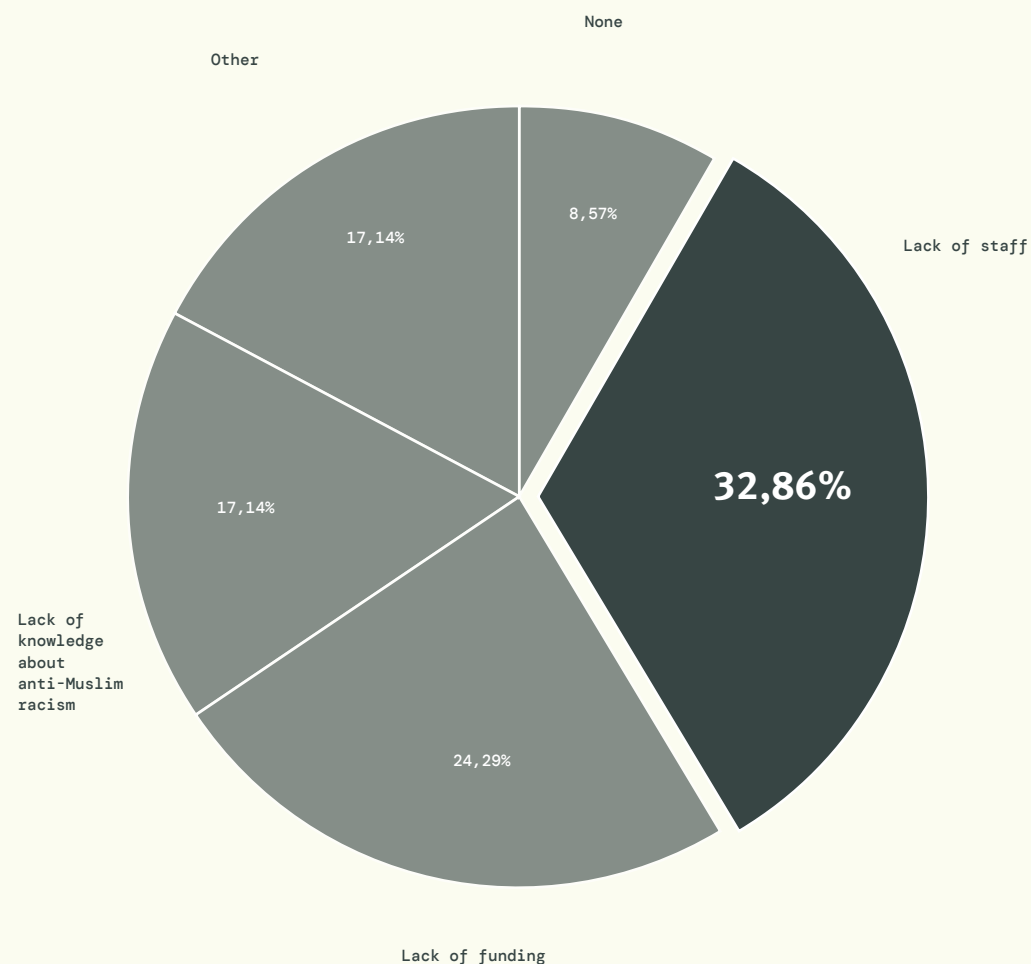
The survey results showed that establishing the Working Group on Anti-Muslim Racism was a good start to support ECCAR member cities in learning about anti-Muslim racism. Twelve cities reported that the lack of knowledge about anti-Muslim racism was a challenge for their work. Apart from the obvious effect of the pandemic on the cities' work, a few cities reported difficulties on the national political and social levels, i.e., referring to a polarised political climate and general xenophobia, which made it difficult to initiate measures that focus only on anti-Muslim racism. This work had to be put in the broader context of tackling all kinds of racism. At the same time, another city reported that they faced political opposition to their work with Muslim communities as the opposition did not want to have certain nationalities represented in their city council. One French city reported that working on anti-Muslim racism was currently difficult within the larger context of the political situation in France. Another French city representative regretted that the French law did not recognise the concept of anti-Muslim racism. Hence, even debates on a political and societal level regarding the phenomenon were always characterised by tensions. One German city reported that they had experienced a lack of demand in their city to work against anti-Muslim racism.

In contrast, another city reported that they experienced a lack of interest and trust within the Muslim community in terms of engagement with the city. The Muslim community's resources are scarce, but language barriers hindered establishing contact. Additionally, one Spanish city agreed that there was a lack of participation within the Muslim community. However, to better determine where this perceived lack of trust and unwillingness to engage stems from, ECCAR would have to conduct interviews with representatives of Muslim communities. This would help to better understand how the community relates to the city administration.

Finally, in terms of implementing projects based on a participatory approach, we could conclude that for many ECCAR member cities, the cooperation between local governments and the Muslim community is good. While 24 out of 42 cities said that they had experience with initiatives tackling anti-Muslim racism, 19 cities responded that they had organised events and initiatives in cooperation with the Muslim community. The Cities of Leipzig and Heidelberg have provided local good practices for such projects in chapter 4.3.2. However, these figures do not tell us how many cities approached such a cooperation bottom-up, giving communities the lead in programme design and implementation, while the city administration merely facilitated implementation. One Swedish city responded that they fostered a participatory process in which the Muslim community contributed to giving the city a deeper understanding of the situation and suggested possible solutions and activities to combat anti-Muslim racism. However, for some cities, cooperation with the community is still only at the beginning because the community, consisting mainly of refugees, is still very young, as one eastern German city reported. Several contributions to this guidebook highlight the importance of bottom-up processes and participatory approaches in measures against anti-Muslim racism.

Was the project/measure designed and impemented in cooperation with representatives of the Muslim community?

Yes

86,38%

13,64%

No
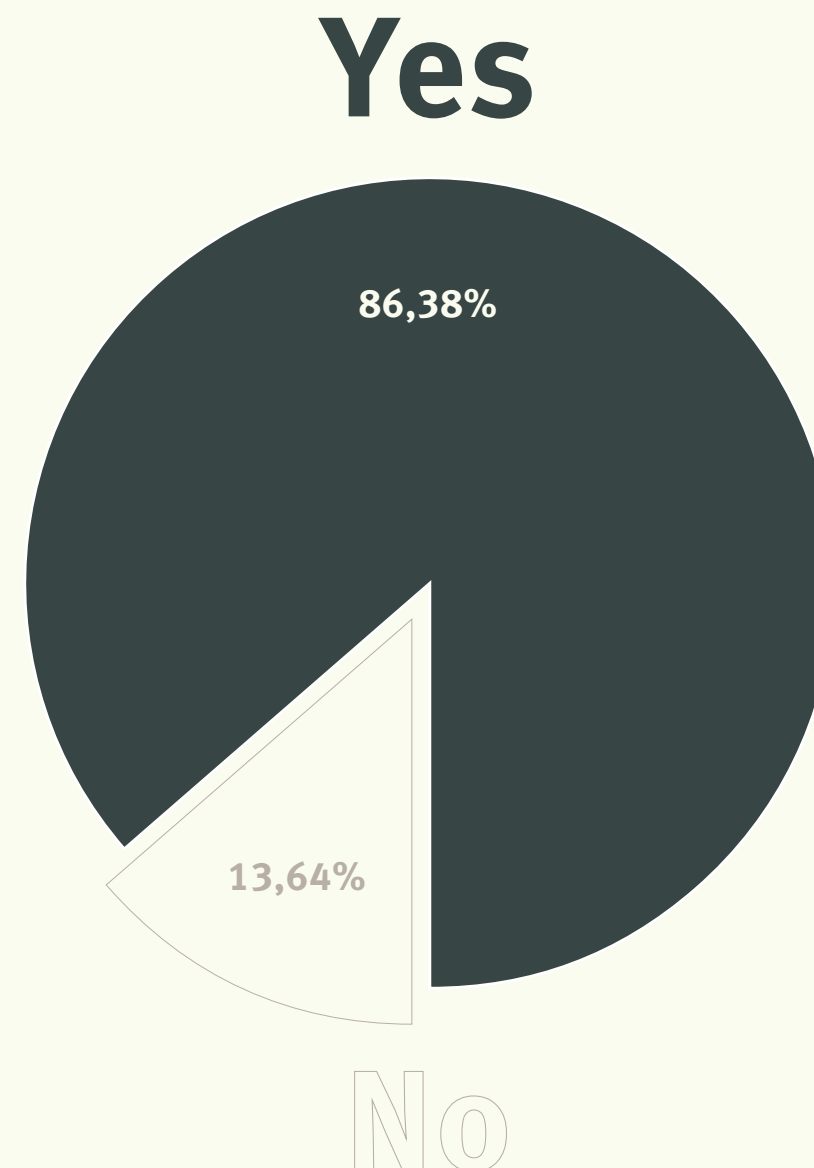
Hope and Safety in the City: The Protection of Muslims in Europe

EUROPEAN NETWORK
AGAINST RACISM - ENAR

ENAR has been actively advocating the new EU Anti-Racism Action Plan adopted by the European Commission in September 2020. The plan grounds its actions on a solid understanding of racism as well as acknowledging how embedded it is in European histories and structures and sometimes perpetuated by institutions themselves. It also includes a recognition of all forms of racism, including anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia.

Islamophobia is growing fast in Europe but is still hardly recognised as a specific form of racism. The mainstreaming of far-right ideas in media and political circles, based on an Islamophobic narrative, leads to an increasing number of attacks against (those perceived as) Muslim individuals, properties, activists and civil society organisations via discriminatory policies and practices.

We urgently need policy responses that are comprehensive enough to address Islamophobia. Cities have a key role to play, as they are closest to the implementation level and can adapt and find solutions that are directly in line with people's needs. We have also seen that, despite toxic national debates, cities can often support resistance and protect their residents in all their diversity.

The EU now has a strong legislative and policy framework, transposed into national law for the most parts. Cities can play a unique role in ensuring that these tools aimed at securing the fundamental rights of all, are properly implemented and have a positive impact on people's lives. This however requires a strong collaboration with equality bodies, human rights institutes, anti-racist associations and more importantly, racialised people themselves.

Indeed, one key feature of structural and institutional discrimination is how racialised people, including Muslims, have been excluded from democratic processes. However, addressing the lack of leadership and meaningful participation of racialised groups is the only way to build more democratic and inclusive communities, and to adequately address the issues these groups are encountering. Moreover, cities need to focus their actions on the most marginalised to be able to address deeply rooted inequalities, for example concerning Muslim women wearing religious signs, who are excluded from many areas of life, Arab, Black or young male migrants disproportionately impacted by abuses of law enforcement, racialised LGBTQI+ communities, etc.

These areas of action should be part of comprehensive action plans against racism at national, but also regional and local level and they should be key vehicles to address manifestations of Islamophobia and systemic racism. The EU Anti-Racism Action Plan also stresses the need to have interconnected strategies at all levels of power. We call on cities to engage in current European and national discussions on the design and implementation of national action plans against racism, to ensure they include and reflect measures that are necessary on a municipal level. ENAR will seek to support cities and reinforce our members' collaboration with the local level to ensure cities are safe and that they are places of hope for all.

4

Action Fields for Local Work against Anti-Muslim Racism

Intersection- ality and Vulnerable Groups

Introduction: An Intersectional Approach in the Work against Anti-Muslim Racism

The 2016 report by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), "Forgotten Women: The Impact of Islamophobia on Muslim Women"[III], showed through fieldwork results from eight European countries that Muslim women are disproportionately affected by anti-Muslim racism. Also, academic research by numerous scholars such as Irene Zempi and Neil Chakraborti[IV] has emphasised the fact that Muslim women are particularly often victims of hate crime and harassment, frequently due to their evident visibility as Muslims. In both cases, the concept of intersectionality plays a role when we want to analyse the experiences of discrimination. Intersectionality simply means that the different aspects of people's identities such as gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and race etc. overlap and produce unique experiences of discrimination. An example for this is Muslim women who cannot find a job due to headscarf bans in certain professions which puts these women into an unequal position compared to Muslim men as the religious practice of wearing a headscarf is related to gender. Intersectional discrimination is, however, different from the concept of multiple discrimination, an example of which would be a Muslim Woman of Colour who is not offered a job due to her ethnic background but also because she is a woman, so the employer thinks she will soon be on maternity leave anyway. It is important to note here, that the latter ground for discrimination can be experienced by any woman and hence the multiple grounds for discrimination can be regarded separately while in intersectional discrimination a person's identities are so intertwined that they are harder to regard separately.

However, there are also other population groups who can be particularly vulnerable to anti-Muslim racism, as the contributions below show. Muslim men for instance face different kinds of stereotypes than Muslim women, which are also gendered and overlap with anti-Muslim racist ideas about Muslims and Islam. Refugees again are in a particularly vulnerable position due to their socio-economic status. As new arrivals, they are not yet fully aware of all their rights as residents and can hence easily become a target for discrimination. They are also easily stereotyped as "financed by the state" and can hence become a target of hate mongering due to their allegedly privileged access to social welfare compared to other residents. The intersectionality of anti-Muslim racism manifests itself on several levels in the case of refugees. They are often male, young, in need of social support and Muslim, which is easily taken as an excuse to create a fear figure of "the violent young Muslim man" who is a threat not only to the "native" women of the relevant society, but also allegedly the reason for unsafe inner cities. It is also important to note, that due to the racialisation of Muslims, refugees of non-Muslim background from Muslim majority countries fall victim to anti-Muslim racist discrimination as they are perceived as Muslims because they speak Turkish or Arabic or due to their looks, as you will see in the contributions below.

4.1.2

Gender Matters

4.1.2.1 **Victimisation of Muslim Men to Anti-Muslim Racism:
ECCAR Interview with Prof. Peter Hopkins**

ECCAR Interview with
Prof. Peter Hopkins

ECCAR: How do gender, ethnicity, and religion intersect in the victimization of Muslim men and non-Muslim men perceived as Muslims to anti-Muslim racism?

Prof. Peter Hopkins: First, it is important to acknowledge that gendered Islamophobia is not only about Muslim women; it is also about Muslim men. I think there's a particular intersection of categories or qualities that are perceived to be about "Muslimness" and when they come together, I think that certain groups of men are more likely to experience Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism, as a result. Some of the markers associated with "Muslimness" and Muslim masculinity are skin colour, facial hair, or a beard and perhaps a particular type of clothing. However, many Muslim men who dress "Western" may experience anti-Muslim racism due to racist assumptions based on their skin colour and the beard. These are the two main signifiers. And when they are

together, there's a chance that a person can be read as being a Muslim. And it is not just British Pakistani or Asian men, it is basically anyone who is not white that is affected by this. Some research I have done in this area found that communities who may be defined as White such as Central and Eastern European migrants or Roma can experience anti-Muslim hatred. And because they are, as one of my colleagues calls it "Not quite White", they might be olive-skinned for instance, people have assumed them to be Muslims and they have experienced anti-Muslim racism. And then if you add on to that any sort of non-Western dress, the risk of being victimised becomes even higher due to the combination of those things.

I think one other factor that can come into play is where they are and who else they are with. So, in a sense, Islamophobia, and the experiences of it are spatially bound. For instance, an area of a city that's traditionally associated with Muslims or with

ethnic minority communities, because perhaps it is an area that is a bit more ethnically diverse and a bit segregated; in that area, the men I mentioned above will be read as Muslims, whereas if they are in another place, they might not necessarily be. So as an example of the "Not quite White" group, in Glasgow there is a neighbourhood that was since the 1960s throughout to the 1990s traditionally associated with Pakistani Muslims until it became more associated with Roma and traveller communities. And these Roma and traveller men were perceived as Muslims because they were in that neighbourhood. It was almost a stigma that shows clearly how the stereotypes associated with one geographical place carry over and get imposed onto another community.

Moreover, I think that there is a curious set of stereotypical assumptions – and I find this is interesting because this has changed over the years – of a Muslim woman as submissive, oppressed, and forced to stay home and do the cooking and the cleaning. And certainly, in the UK, the stereotype of Asian Pakistani men used to be that they are quite feminine in the physical sense, that they are weak, they are smaller, that they were more likely to work in industries that require dexterity. This is really a racist stereotype, of course, but with 9/11 this stereotype changed to say that Muslim men are potential terrorists that pose a threat and are dangerous, that they are aggressive and angry, and that they are very likely carrying a bomb in their bag and so on. So those stereotypes in a sense have shifted. It used to be Black men, who 30 years ago were the big threat

and in terms of stereotypical masculinity they were seen as tall, big, muscular, and ready to beat you up. But now, I would say the main threat are "Muslim terrorists".

ECCAR: You said before that in Glasgow, there was a certain area of the city which was mostly associated with Muslim communities or ethnic communities, and hence someone dwelling in the area would be more easily racialised as a Muslim. Do you think that there is anything that city administration and the local authorities can do against these kinds of stereotypes or even stigmas about certain urban spaces?

Prof. Peter Hopkins: Some of the work I have done with other researchers has been to map Islamophobic incidents. There are places where Muslims and people perceived as such are more likely to experience Islamophobia. If the city governors and city managers were more aware of the geographical distribution of Islamophobia so to say, then they would be in a stronger position to plan targeted initiatives in those areas. If those areas are, say an ethnically diverse community, and you know that it is where most of Islamophobic incidents happen, then any training or any initiative with a focus solely on that area would have more of a local impact. But this of course must overlap again with challenging assumptions and stereotypes about certain areas of the city at large. Also, we should not think that because many Islamophobic incidents happen in a certain area that all work to tackle anti-Muslim racism should go to those

neighbourhoods as we know that people are mobile; they travel to work, to engage in social activities etc. In the UK, many incidents happen on public transport or in transport hubs so city officials could usefully make themselves aware of these issues and target initiatives accordingly.

ECCAR: So, if we think about cities for instance as employers, service providers and maintainers of a democratic public space, how can cities then in your opinion – act against this form of gendered Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism?

Prof. Peter Hopkins: There are quite a lot of actions that cities can undertake. Sometimes I think that part of the challenge is that there is no sort of a quick answer. I do not think that if everyone does only one certain thing, that anti-Muslim racism will disappear, because it is such a diverse phenomenon. So, we need many different strategies, and it is best if we use them all rather than only trying one or two of them out.

Cities could take a clear stand against anything that is Islamophobic for example by calling it out through their official communication channels. I would encourage politicians and city leaders to insist that leaders in companies and organisations make structural change to ensure no discrimination of Muslims in workplaces. City governors should be funding training also for their own staff to tackle this issue. Moreover, they should encourage and support more educational initiatives improving the public understanding of the

issue through universities and schools. For instance, it is important to educate teachers so that they understand Islamophobia and can challenge it in the classroom. I think it is also useful to connect the efforts in tackling anti-Muslim racism with other movements that resists discrimination and racism such as LGBTQI+ activism or broader anti-racist activism. Together, you gain a bigger voice. But any training or projects in this regard should pay specific attention to gender and intersectionality.

Moreover, when it comes to hate crime and discrimination, in the UK the work of Tell MAMA[v] tends to show that more incidents were reported by women. But we do not know how strong the reporting is, so I wonder, are some men more likely to brush it off? And just think, "Oh, no, I'm not reporting it" and do the "hard man" act. One way of tackling this issue could be to offer reporting services through a third party such as libraries, city halls or even mosques, rather than reporting directly to the police or even to NGOs, to lower the threshold for the men to report incidents of discrimination or hate crime. For instance, in mosques, men may be more likely to speak to others about their discrimination and hate incident experiences, but they do not officially report them. There are quite a lot of Muslim women's advocacy groups so there could also be some initiatives empowering Muslim men.

4.1.2.2

**Muslim Women's Inclusion in Society
(European Forum of Muslim Women - EFOMW)**

The European Forum of Muslim Women (EFOMW) was established in 2006 with the aim of protecting European Muslim women's rights and promoting their inclusion in our pluralistic societies. Representing 20 grassroots Muslim women's organisations across Europe, our aim as an umbrella body is to convey their concerns at the European level and advocate for positive change.

The issue of the intersecting discrimination faced by Muslim women emerged as a common topic in our work and a critical issue of concern for our member organisations. Intersectionality shows that multiple forms of discriminations shape each other and demands that we acknowledge that current mainstream approaches to reach gender equality do not take into consideration the plurality of women and therefore do not address the multiple forms of discrimination that women face. Women are affected by discrimination differently depending on their profile (determined by religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity etc.) but they are all affected by the same power structures, including patriarchy, racism, Islamophobia, and economic exploitation to name but a few.

The European Union has made gender equality a priority with its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. And while there has been great progress for women in social, economic, and political fields, that progress has not been the same for all women, especially those from minority groups, as the policy approach lacks an intersectional perspective and so far, does not take into consideration the challenges faced by marginalised groups of women across the EU.

We found that the greatest challenges that Muslim women face in Europe today are:

Islamophobia in Europe is on the rise, and it is well documented that Islamophobia affects Muslim women disproportionately. Therefore, an intersectional approach to combating the specific forms of Islamophobia that impact Muslim women is crucial. Our organisation considers Islamophobia to be a form of racism, which is the result of the social construction of a group as a race, in this context, ascribing fixed particularities and labels to Muslims and those perceived as Muslims.

There is an increase in political parties, which promote Islamophobic ideas, policies, and practices in European countries.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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- Give a proportionate space to Muslim women's voices on all issues the public debates, just like any other citizen group, and not only when 'Muslim' issues are at stake,
- Collect more equality data to identify discrimination with a special focus on the collection and monitoring of data regarding forms of multiple discrimination affecting women (on the labour market, in education, health care and the judiciary system),
- Establish contacts with organisations that register cases of discrimination and hate crime-related offences and provide free legal aid,
- Establish contacts with community-based organisations within the field of discrimination and racism and facilitate collaboration between communities,
- Reach out to the Muslim communities regarding instructions on how to start reporting cases of discrimination and hate crime,
- Offer educational visits by local Muslim women to talk about their experiences,
- Organise meetings between Muslim women and local authorities to educate about the consequences for the social, political, and economic wellbeing of Muslim women,
- Create safe spaces in which broader collaboration is possible between Muslim women and other organisations/communities working on equality, racism, and discrimination,
- Host regular events where communities can learn about Islam, Muslims, and Islamic customs,
- Contest the negative and stereotypical portrayal of Muslim women in media by investing in Muslim women's self-representation.

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**We found that the
greatest challenges
that Muslim women
face in Europe today
are:**

Media is a contributing factor in reinforcing the Islamophobic lens through which Muslim women are perceived, especially regarding the way Muslim women's bodies are portrayed in reports about terrorism, religious practices, but also and about gender oppression when focusing on the veil.

There is a growing sense of insecurity which limits the places and societal spheres that Muslim women feel safe to enter.

The risk of falling victim to hate crimes is greater for Muslim women, as many Muslim women are easily identified as Muslim.

The discrimination of Muslim women is like a tangled web and has enormous consequences for the social, political, and economic wellbeing of Muslim women.

Muslim women suffer from the same type of inequalities all women experience: the gender pay gap, risk of being relegated to the lower-wage sector on the labour market, difficulty accessing good health care and violence. However, there is a tendency to culturalise these experiences, and considering that these issues are amplified by additional factors such as having a migratory background and wearing a headscarf, this further hinders their chances to live a life with equal opportunities.

Currently, there is a lack of data on ethnicity and religion in many countries which could help to identify and separate the different motivations for discrimination in different spheres of society. For this reason, the actions needed to combat discrimination will remain limited.

We are concerned that the stigmatisation and exclusion of Muslim women will continue to reinforce social divisions, increase isolation, and create further tensions in a Europe that desperately needs better social participation and engagement from all segments of society.

There is an increase in political parties, which promote Islamophobic ideas, policies, and practices in European countries.

4.1.2.3

The Imperative for Centering the Marginalised Voices of Queer Muslims (Leyla Jagiella)

Queer Muslims are subject to and victims of multiple forms of intersecting discrimination and marginalisation that need to be addressed consciously to allow those affected by both anti-queer discrimination and anti-Muslim racism full access to human rights and social participation. In the context of this policy recommendation, "queer" is to be understood as an umbrella term for all people with LGBTQI+ identities (since this is currently an established practice in most queer Muslim contexts both in Europe and elsewhere). Likewise, in this policy recommendation, "Muslim" refers to people who may either be Muslims in the proper religious sense or identify as Muslim as an expression of cultural identity. The marginalisation and discrimination that queer Muslims experience is, therefore, not only limited to people who identify as queer and/or Muslim in the narrow sense. Since the mentioned discrimination and marginalisation is mainly based on stereotypes and attributions, even people who may be neither queer nor Muslim may be affected if they are perceived as queer and/or Muslim from the outside. Preventing the marginalisation and discrimination of queer Muslims is a necessary step towards a more welcoming and inclusive society for all.

There has so far not been any specific institutional effort in addressing the particular concerns of intersectional positions, such as the position of the queer Muslims. Institutionalised laws and programmes usually discuss discrimination issues as singular events. For instance, there are laws and recommendations aimed at preventing racism, preventing discrimination based on religion, gender, sexuality, etc. These broad strokes are necessary and helpful to ensure democratic standards of society and politics. But the implementation of intersectional perspectives in antidiscrimination work is not self-evident. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to look at the multiple levels of intersecting discrimination and marginalisation that affect queer Muslims and those marked and perceived as queer Muslims.

Among the practical issues and challenges that queer Muslims and those marked and perceived as queer Muslims face in Europe today are:

Official and institutional policymakers rarely find well-informed interlocutors to address queer Muslim issues. Many queer Muslim organisations are still in their infancy. They are often ignored by policymakers, while the more mainstream Muslim and queer representatives usually do not have an interest in or an eye for the intersectional position of queer Muslims.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Raise awareness in discourses for all the issues mentioned above. Make them visible and audible whenever possible.
- Actively involve queer Muslim initiatives, organizations, and activists on all levels of policymaking and prioritise the voices of queer Muslims when it concerns their specific concerns.
- Ensure that this self-representation also translates into a diversification of voices. That is, ensure that there is not only one kind of queer Muslim voice. There are pious queer Muslims and agnostic queer Muslims, and there are queer Muslims more affected by discrimination within Muslim communities. There are queer Muslims more affected by racism and bigotry in mainstream societies, queer Muslims that have experienced migration and asylum, and those born as EU citizens, etc. All these voices present different perspectives that are necessary and productive.
- Support projects and counselling centres that give specific support and counselling to queer Muslims. Sponsor events that are dedicated to the same goal.
- Reach out to both mainstream Muslim communities and mainstream LGBTQI+ communities and engage them in alleviating discrimination and marginalisation of queer Muslims.
- Specifically invest in efforts that give queer Muslim refugees and asylum seekers access to counselling and support.

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Europe today are:

often ignored by policymakers, while the more mainstream
Muslim and queer representatives usually do not have an
interest in or an eye for the intersectional position of queer
Muslims.

Laws and policies often treat discrimination based on gen-
der or sexuality and anti-Muslim racism as two separate and
non-intersecting issues. Politics, media, and society also often
treat "queer people" and "Muslims" as two distinct popula-
tions often imagined as antagonists.

There is an intentional effort by right-wing politicians and
activists to pit queer identities and Muslim identities against
each other. Queer Muslims often find themselves at a discursive
intersection at which their existence is often politically exploit-
ed to further anti-Muslim or anti-queer sentiments.
Queer Muslims often experience anti-Muslim racism in queer
contexts and may be unable to find solidarity and support in
such contexts. Queer Muslims often experience anti-LGBTQI+
sentiments in Muslim contexts and may also feel ostracised
in Muslim communities. Queer Muslims often experience
anti-Muslim racism and anti-queer sentiments in mainstream
society.

People perceived as queer and Muslim are at an increased risk
of becoming victims of violence and hate crimes. For queer
Muslims, this risk rises exponentially.
Queer Muslims often also face additional levels of discrimina-
tion and marginalisation. Both being queer and being Muslim
can affect chances of success on the job market, the housing
market, etc.

Many queer Muslims flee Muslim majority nations to come to
Europe and seek asylum here. A significant number of queer
Muslims is, therefore, also affected by anti-refugee sentiments,
the structural struggles of the immigration and asylum regime,
the structural poverty and economic marginalisation affecting
refugees, etc. In the context of asylum procedures, queer Mus-
lims often feel pressured to identify and present as more visibly
queer and to renounce Muslim identities; this may be welcome
to some but may also cause severe internal conflicts in others.

4.1.3

Local Good Practice

4.1.3.1

Roundtables for Muslim Women (Graz, Austria)


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Population:                       292.630
ECCAR member since:                 2006
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Background

In our anti-discrimination counselling some Muslim women reported repeated discriminatory experiences in public spaces or on public transport. They were frequently victims of physical assaults on the street or in trams and busses, their headscarves were torn off their heads etc. These incidents made them feel powerless and they did not know how to handle the situation or where to go for support. Therefore, the Anti-Discrimination Office Styria initiated a support group in 2016 offering a space for Muslim women to reflect on their experiences of discrimination and exchange views with others affected. The group met at regular intervals until 2019. The aim of the project was to empower and raise awareness by exchanging experiences and putting the focus on anti-discrimination in these communities.

Reaching the Target Group

Although many Muslim women are regularly affected by discrimination, many of them are not able to recognise discrimination and do not know how to report it and take legal action against it, so that there is an urgent need for more information and awareness raising. A big challenge was to establish a basis for communication with the communities and a willingness/openness to talk. The Anti-Discrimination Office Styria's good ties and existing contacts to migrant grassroots-organisations proved very useful in reaching out to target groups. From ex-

perience, we knew that by involving key persons from migrant organisations (community leaders, dignitaries etc.) we would reach the most important gatekeepers. Therefore, we visited the different communities, mosques, and women's associations to publicise the project idea together with reference persons.

Support Groups as a Good Practice

An important aspect of the project was that the roundtables were less about us as experts empowering the women but more about us accompanying and supporting the women in their own personal development processes of self-empowerment. The women knew that in these meetings, they would meet women in similar situations which lowered or almost erased the threshold to participate. The meetings took place on the premises of the Anti-Discrimination Office Styria. Getting to know our office made it easier for the women to take advantage of our counselling services in case of discrimination, as they already knew our office and the counsellors. In addition to empowering the women, our roundtable project also aimed to inform about how to file a complaint while at the same time strengthening the women's trust in the rule of law.

4.1.3.2

Tackling Refugeephobia
(Chemnitz, Germany)

Population: 245.051
ECCAR member since: 2020

In 2018 anti-immigration mass protests fuelled by far-right groups turned Chemnitz into the epitome of a German city where anti-asylum actionist movements can successfully organise racist demonstrations. At the same time, it became clear what a big influence social networks and media had on demonstration dynamics, for instance in terms of mobilisation of participants. The media coverage of these events left behind an urban society that perceives the demonstrations as stigmatising in a variety of ways. To this day, the initiators of these demonstrations deny that the city's image has suffered consequently. Amid all this, those who work for an inclusive society and democratic values on a daily basis remain invisible. Day to day life in Chemnitz is shaped by social challenges that can be observed across Europe.

Dealing with the events of 2018 as well as with the currently strong right-wing extremist movements, is an ongoing process that needs to involve as many stakeholders as possible. Therefore, civil society still needs the support of the city administration. The city's appointment as European Capital of Culture 2025 represents a milestone in changing the urban society in Chemnitz. Expectations in this context are very high in Germany and Europe because the above-mentioned social conflicts are not only evident in Chemnitz. Civil society and the administration work together to ensure that Chemnitz is a city for everyone. To work towards that goal, the administration will fund the promotion of democratic values and support civil society's commitment in the long term. This is a clear sign that Chemnitz is committed to strengthening cultural diversity and democratic values.

There are hardly any reports on the victims of anti-Muslim racism in Chemnitz. This outset has made it difficult to offer migrant communities prospects for the future. Time and again, there are outbreaks of xenophobic hatred related to specific incidents, for

example because of discussions about the use of particular buildings as refugee accommodations. The City of Chemnitz is now actively tackling the root causes of these developments. For many years, Chemnitz had a very small number of citizens with a migratory background, which contributed to a lack of experience in dealing with immigration and the plurality of cultures. In 1999, 2.01% of Chemnitz' population had a migratory background whereas this number increased to 7.08% in 2015 and to 8.84% in 2020. Evidently, this demographic change brings along new challenges for a peaceful coexistence of different population groups in the city.

For many years, Chemnitz had the only preliminary reception centre for refugees in the Free State of Saxony. However, the Free State of Saxony did not take any measures to promote a positive contact experience for both the immigrants and the host society. This isolation has had detrimental social effects on the areas around these reception centres. This lack of integration support in refugee accommodations has led citizens to have one-sided and negative experiences with immigration, so that the first xenophobic and racist actions emerged around the facility and became the breeding ground for the currently strong right-wing populist and right-wing extremist movements. These movements are working towards making anti-Muslim racism an issue that appeals to a majority.

Due to this situation, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth commissioned Chemnitz' University of Technology to conduct a study and analyse the perception of the events with its causes and effects among the population. The study provides important insights into anti-Muslim racism. The indicators that were found suggest that anti-Muslim racism in Chemnitz is related to various factors that have their roots in a complex social development after 1989 and the fall of the Berlin wall, which marked the end of a division into East-Germany and West-Germany. The perception of people with a migratory background, contact experiences, perceptions of threat, authoritarian attitudes, and security concerns play a major role. The anti-asylum movements in Chemnitz are also related to broader concerns and show dynamics of group-related behaviour.

However, the study also indicates that there are ways to deal with immigration in a positive manner. The most important message is that positive contact experiences with immigrants can reduce willingness to join anti-asylum movements. The fact that concrete positive contact can reduce fears and perceptions of threat and strengthen the feeling of security plays a major role here. Hence, various measures that the City of Chemnitz has taken to counter racism and xenophobia and to create a cosmopolitan city are part of the study's recommendations for action.

**Example 1:
Conflict Manage-
ment in Public Spaces**

As part of a model project with the association VfB Salzwedel
e. V., a working group was set up dedicated to the topic of
"security in the city centre" with representatives of migrant
communities working in the group. This allowed for a mutual
change of perspective by dismantling prejudices and wrong
assumptions. Joint projects are under planning for the future,
which are set to address awareness raising among the public
for the way prejudices and rumours contribute significantly to
insecurities and fear mongering. The city is actively working on
the issue with joint projects involving the relevant communi-
ties.

**Example 2:
Festival of
Disagreements**

The Festival of Disagreements has been held since 2019 in a
park located in the city centre as a symbol of unsafe spaces.
The festivals' relaxed atmosphere allows people with a wide
range of opinions to enter into a dialogue with each other. We
organise moderated discussion panels with five people. Each of
these panels works towards making participants listen to each
other and exchange different opinions in an objective manner.
Participants are randomly assigned to tables to avoid staying in
their own "bubbles". Experience shows that the format is met
with great interest and can integrate migrant perspectives into
the public conversations very well. It is much more difficult to
make racist statements while in direct contact than in anony-
mous social networks. Moderators ensure that participants are
not monopolised by individual opinion leaders. Moderators are
trained beforehand and prepared for incident management.
The event is now copied and implemented in smaller formats
in other municipalities.

**Example 3:
Municipal Funding
Programme for
Cosmopolitanism**

Chemnitz has had a municipal funding programme for de-
mocracy, tolerance, and cosmopolitanism since 2009 with
annual municipal budget funds of € 80 000. This micro-project
fund successfully financed initiatives that support refugees,
building bridges, breaking down prejudices and establishing
positive networks. A stable civil society has developed from
these initiatives, whose representatives actively oppose racism
and xenophobia. The consistently high demand for project
support shows that actors feel well supported by the city. This
support is important because it shows a clear stance of the city
administration and democratic groups in this matter. In 2021,

funding was renewed and thanks to a rotation system in the
monitoring committee it also enables direct participation of
migrant community organisations. The municipal micro-pro-
ject fund is supplemented by the German Federal programme
"Live Democracy!".

**Example 4:
District Festivals**

District festivals were organised several times in the city dis-
trict that plays host to the reception centre.

Residents of the reception centre were explicitly invited to
participate. The aim was to enable natural cooperation on an
equal footing. The concept worked and will be continued once
the pandemic is over.

**Example 5:
The Neighbour-
hood Café**

Many associations, initiatives and church communities have
invited people to organise informal get-togethers between ref-
ugees and the local neighbourhood in their social spaces. The
concept of the Neighbourhood Café was deliberately used for
these encounters. Eating and drinking is often the best way to
start a conversation and break down prejudices. This concept
will be continued once the pandemic is over.

The City as a Provider of Equal Services

Human-Rights-Based Approach to Policymaking (Dr Klaus Starl)

Charles Husband, long-term scientific advisor to ECCAR, started his remarks on service provision by local authorities in a diverse society with this important observation.

Applying a human-rights-based approach to policymaking requires local authorities to know their communities to properly serve them. Knowing the local communities presupposes engagement and direct communication with them to learn to comprehend their legitimate needs. This approach has a very important implication for the local administration regarding structure, responsibility, and competences. As the ECCAR survey on measures related to anti-Muslim racism revealed, issues regarding "Muslims" are assigned to specific municipal departments, oftentimes integration departments. This structure increases the risk of institutionalizing existing anti-Muslim racism. An integration department may be competent for recently immigrated people and can support their familiarisation with the host society. However, what is essentially needed, is interreligious and intercultural competence of all staff in service departments, such as health, education, work, security, social welfare, care, and cultural affairs – basically, all departments where sensitiveness about cultural and religious aspects is necessary for treating people equally, and, eventually, to this end, treating them differently.

Furthermore, knowing the local community implies acknowledging its diversity, also regarding in-group diversity. I am hesitant to take over notions of group-based discrimination, as they tend to be too essentialist and tend to overlook interrelations and intersections with other concepts of inferiorisation. Moreover, it suggests a homogenous group of people. This is an incorrect presupposition for any Muslim community in any European city; not even the five pillars of Islam faith are shared by all groups in their practice and members have grown up in Western societies, come from different countries, are affiliated with different confessions or ideologies, are religiously organised or not even that. This fact still is neglected very often.

It is important to keep in touch to learn from each other in different settings. For Muslims, the main issue is that they feel totally misunderstood and feel like they are not taken seriously in conversations and in a work context. According to reports, from these misconceptions derive serious ill-treatments in prisons, police custody, preschools and educational institutions, health services, as well as regarding access to the job market.

Working in several cities with prison inmates for the purpose of preventing religious radicalisation revealed that the freedom of religion is respected by authorities to a certain extent, but the prison staff do not ensure protection and fulfilment of this human right, as there is no real legal basis in the respective laws and regulations. However, a prison is a unique universe. A similar situation exists in the educational sector, where the majority enforces cultural homogeneity.

Considering what has been reflected on above, the Human Rights Council of the City of Graz has been organising dialogues on the topic "Being Muslim in Graz" between Muslim citizens and respective organisations and local authorities, civil society organisations, the police, representatives of the educational sector, as well as other relevant actors and stakeholders since 2019. The purpose of these dialogues is to switch perspectives, foster understanding for the living realities of each other and elaborate recommendations. The topics selected for dialogue include religious freedom, work, health, political participation, media, housing, education, and culture.

These recommendations were formed based on the cooperation dialogues between authorities and Muslims in Graz and confirm my previous statement: Muslims are a very diverse group – as are other faith groups – but are homogenised by the process of Othering. Thus, human-rights-based services need to be delivered in a culturally sensitive way. To do so, authorities need to engage with all communities for which they are responsible. Finally, Charly Husband's formula holds true: "If you want to treat me equally, be prepared to treat me differently!"

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Education and culture need to be inclusive and inclusively accessible.
- Measures to counteract segregation in housing and schooling need to be implemented.
- Religious festivals need to be celebrated together with all faith groups.
- Teachers need to get interreligious training.
- Exercising the freedom of religion must be actively enabled by school authorities.
- Public housing needs to be used as an instrument to prevent and counteract segregation. Furthermore, there must be accommodations adequate for larger families.
- The city needs to ensure a positive media coverage on Islam and Muslims. City officials need to speak out clearly against placing Muslims under general suspicion and being stereotyped as fundamentalists.
- The city needs to ensure prayer rooms in public buildings.
- The city as employer must ensure diversity also with regard to wearing religious signs and cloths, e.g., creating uniforms for different faith groups.
- The health services need to respect religious sentiments by respecting specific piety rules, providing prayer rooms in hospitals, and offering pastoral services. Medical and care staff need to be trained accordingly. Easy to access information on patients' rights needs to be provided.

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4.2.2

Creating Local Action Plans against Anti-Muslim Racism

4.2.2.1

Bologna, Italy

Population:　　　　　　　388.367
ECCAR member since:　　　　2004

Background

The City of Bologna adopted its city plan for non-discriminatory and human-rights based administrative action for new citizens in 2018, thereby ensuring the right to well-being, the right to non-discrimination and the right to participation in public life at the local level for citizens or new citizens of different communities, including Muslim communities.

Based on this framework, which relies on a participatory approach, civil servants were trained in a cross-disciplinary approach (open lab), while contents and methodology were adapted over time. The methodological framework followed a human-rights-based approach which, on the one hand, helped overcome predominant narratives and the framing of certain communities as "others", strangers, or as a security risk and on the other hand helped to develop specific action plans to improve administrative services.

Trainings

The first of many trainings which were organised as a lab during a training course for civil servants in partnership with the University of Bologna involved 130 public servants working in the six city-districts and covered the following topics

- human rights, dignity, integration and cultural rights;
- the role of cities in ensuring participation, mutual understanding, and contrast to discrimination;
- statistics on the different communities at the local level to tackle biases and prejudices;
- expectations and needs of the local religious communities in Bologna, with a clear reference to municipal services;
- intercultural communication; contexts, culture, diversity.

Further trainings were repeated including more public officials, front office staff, school services, "community work" staff, librarians and museum workers, and the local police.

Research Projects

"An Effective Inclusion of Islam and Muslim Citizens in Bologna":

This research project was conducted between 2013 and 2015 by the European University Institute with the aim of strengthening the relationship between the City of Bologna and Muslim communities. This preliminary participatory survey involved local Muslim communities, young Muslims, religious leaders, the emerging CIB (Islamic Community of Bologna) and a few municipal services to explore and highlight Muslim presence and contributions, existing relations, and their unmet needs at a local level.

"The Needs and Expectations of Religious Communities in Bologna":

The City Plan for Non-Discriminatory and Human-Rights-Based Administrative Action regarding new citizens was adopted in 2018 and envisaged a comprehensive framework of actions leading to more specific plans targeting different areas and municipal services. One of these actions was this project regarding local service provision, public spaces, places of prayer, sense

of exclusion or belonging etc. The aim of this research project was to investigate discriminatory situations and conditions preventing the full enjoyment of the freedom to express religious identities.

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The ongoing participatory processes led to the co-design of a help centre to report and receive support in case of discriminatory conduct. The S.P.A.D. (Anti-Discrimination Help Centre) was co-designed by the City of Bologna and 30 civil society organisations, and it is co-managed by all entities taking part in the process, with encouraging results.

Why do Local Action Plans Matter?

One of the lessons learnt in Bologna is that local action plans matter and improve stakeholder groups' participation and engagement in defining policies dedicated to safeguarding common goods, such as human rights. Local action plans are necessarily limited by a time frame, specific objectives, actions, and monitoring tools, however their impact goes beyond their runtime, as was the case here, creating sustainable results. Specific objectives targeted in the action plan, like strengthening the anti-discrimination network have promoted the establishment of a new, co-managed service (the Anti-Discrimination Help Centre) that has subsequently augmented the number of discrimination reports (from an average of three to four reports per year on the metropolitan scale to 50 reports in six months on the municipal one), increased the commitment by other city services, raised awareness for the need for training in this field and, more recently, even the need to widen the scope and mandate of the Anti-Discrimination Help Centre by tackling more discrimination grounds and by engaging other stakeholder groups. Although many surveys are conducted on human rights and non-discrimination at the international and European level, and sometimes also at the national level, we have learnt that it is important to identify data gaps at the local level to build policies that are evidence-based and thus cater to specific needs of individuals and groups that make our city a unique and specific context. In this respect as well as regarding training, cooperation with the University of Bologna, with independent and non-profit research and policy-oriented centres, as well as grassroots associations have been an asset.

We have learnt that it is important to identify data gaps at the local level to build policies that are evidence-based and thus cater to specific needs of individuals and groups that make our city a unique and specific context.

(The City of Bologna)

Barcelona, Spain

Population: 1.636.732
ECCAR member since: 2008

The Barcelona City Council approved the first Municipal Plan Against Islamophobia in December 2016 with an initial duration of 18 months and extended it until June 2019 to combat the increase in hate speech targeting Islam because of the terrorist attacks that occurred in Barcelona on 17 August 2017.

The aim was to create a focused plan to combat a specific type of discrimination, considering the increased discrimination against the Muslim population on the grounds of their religion, ethnic origin or their gender, or a combination of these factors. In the years prior to the approval of the plan, the data that was gathered indicated a rise in hate crimes in general, of an Islamophobic nature.

In July 2016, the study "Islamic Religious Practice Among the Muslim Communities of Barcelona. Expressions and Problems" was presented. It found Islamophobic speech and practices in the city. The study gave rise to a series of recommendations that would serve as a basis for preparing the Municipal Plan Against Islamophobia.

It is worth noting, that the Municipal Plan Against Islamophobia was created with the close participation of Muslim communities, experts and human rights organisations, in order to include the perspective and work of leading associations and entities, thus involving those affected in the design and implementation of the plan.

Other departments of the City Council also participated with a view to ensuring the feasibility of the plan and to favour its internal adoption, good technical coordination as well as the awareness and involvement of each department.

The plan represents the efforts of the Barcelona City Council and the entities to raise awareness for Islamophobia as a form of discrimination that we need to counter. Islam is subject to negative generalisation through the dissemination of images, comments on social media and media outlets that encourage hate speech. The goal is to normalise religious diversity within the city and to reinforce the mechanisms to prevent Islamophobic discrimination.

Milestones of the Plan

– Raising awareness for Islamophobia as a form of discrimination, which is present in the City of Barcelona and has a specific negative impact on some of the city's residents, but at the same time is a threat to society because it directly endangers social cohesion and coexistence.
– Empowerment and capacity building among Muslims living in Barcelona, through support, direct training, reconciliation and increasing their knowledge of the general services offered by the City Council.
– Direct involvement of people affected by Islamophobia during the design, implementation, and monitoring of the plan.
– Acknowledging Islamophobia as a form of discrimination that needs to be prevented.
– Creating a community mediation protocol for opening places of worship.
– Support for Muslim communities in the districts of Nou Barris (C. Japó) and Sants in opening and moving their places of worship.
– Monitoring food diversity in school canteens by meeting with the Education Committee and by publishing a leaflet created by the Municipal Institute of Education on "How to prepare a halal menu".

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Lessons Learnt

☑ The City of Barcelona believes that actions should be more locally targeted, with more direct work at a district level. Moreover, some improvements are necessary to assess the mechanisms of the plan and its objectives. With this plan, a specific type of racism and discrimination has been put on the map and the City of Barcelona believes that it is important to raise awareness that there are three generations of Muslims residing in Barcelona and their religious practices need to be normalised as part of everyday life in the City of Barcelona. Furthermore, more work needs to be done on intersectional discrimination regarding Muslim women and to ensure Muslims' rights concerning aspects such as halal food in schools or access to places of worship.

Milestones of the Plan

Why Should Cities Have a Specific Plan Against Islamophobia?
The Plan against Islamophobia successfully helped overcome the more theoretical discussions about Islamophobia, since it consisted of specific actions and a detailed strategic plan. As an element of added value, the plan had a governance and monitoring structure consisting of two monitoring bodies; an internal one with representatives of the different departments of the City Council and an external one, a joint committee formed by a variety of associations and bodies.

A plan for working on a specific form of discrimination such as Islamophobia is necessary and relevant for any city. Unfortunately, the reality that led us to implement it in Barcelona is one shared by many other European cities. Therefore, the City of Barcelona believes that preparing such a plan is an effective tool for putting this issue on the political agenda of cities to prevent hate speech and crimes, as well as to encourage cohesion and coexistence and to ensure that the rights of all inhabitants are upheld, specifically those of Muslims.

Local Good Practice

4.2.3

4.2.3.1

Ensuring Culturally Sensitive Burial Services (Toulouse, France)

Population: 509.946
ECCAR member since: 2009

The extra-municipal consultation body of Toulouse, Toulouse Fraternité - Conseil de laïcité (Toulouse Fraternity – Council of Laicism), almost unique in France, is concerned with the application of the principle of secularism in the daily life of public services. It oversees implementing the permanent objective of the City of Toulouse to encourage dialogue between elected representatives, institutional representatives, the secular movement, representatives of the civil society, religious denominations, representatives of the Freemasonry movement as well as experts on secularism.

Representatives of the monotheistic religions, including all official religious communities residing in Toulouse, are invited: the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church, the Orthodox Church, the Jewish community, the Buddhist community, and the Muslim community. The two representatives of the Muslim civil society are the Association culturelle et culturelle islamique de France (ACCIF, Cultural and Islamic Cultural Association of France) and the Conseil régional du culte musulman (CRCM, Regional Council of the Muslim Religion).

The Council meets at regular intervals in plenary sessions and in the form of intermediate committees. The council also functions as a consultative body which can be called upon by the mayor and which can take up questions relating to the life

of spiritual communities, the religious life in the City of Toulouse and the Republic of France in general and provide expert opinions.

Each year, the council chooses a specific topic concerning the application of the principle of secularism within the city and its effects on the coexistence of religious communities in Toulouse. In the past, one of these topics was the question of confessional squares in cemeteries (for Muslims) managed by the City of Toulouse. In France, the mayor is legally obligated to authorise a person to be buried for a period of five years. The law prescribes absolute neutrality in cemeteries; so, in theory, specific confessional spaces are not allowed. This also means that no distinctive religious signs may be displayed in the aisles and common areas of cemeteries. However, ministry circulars allow mayors to group together the deceased of the same religious denomination: these are called confessional squares (traditionally, Jewish, and Muslim squares are organised). This is done on the condition that no separation is made between the different confessional spaces. Throughout the country, some mayors have decided, over time, to grant requests for the organisation of squares, while others do not accept them based on the law. It is estimated that there are 400-600 Muslim squares in the 35-40,000 existing cemeteries in France. In Toulouse and its metropolis, there are squares for the different religious groups.

The needs of the Muslim community regarding burials are identical throughout France:

– that the mortal remains be buried below ground level,
– that the deceased be buried without a coffin, which is obligatory in France,
– that the graves be oriented towards Mecca.

Once the squares have been authorised, the Muslim faith is considered and only one body is interred per grave.

Town halls and cities are not obligated to respect these religious principles. However, these principles are generally followed, wherever squares are organised, as is the case in Toulouse. The problem in Toulouse and its metropolis is the lack of available land for the burial of deceased Muslim citizens. Thus, a discussion on this issue has been ongoing since September 2021 within the Toulouse Fraternité

- Conseil de Laïcité. An initial meeting made it possible to establish a legal framework thanks to the intervention of the local university, the elected officials concerned with the topic in question and the general manager in charge of funeral services and cemeteries. Since then, three working groups have been organised including representatives of the Muslim faith and all interested partners. One of the objectives is to have a solution-oriented approach into finding a compromise for the practices related to the number of deceased persons buried per grave.

4.2.3.2

Intercultural Competence Training for Government, City and Municipality Officials (Vienna, Austria)

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Population:              1.931.593
ECCAR member since:           2008
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The Department for Integration and Diversity of the City of Vienna was founded in 2004. It has, since then, implemented more than 60 projects and several others are still running. Among them are various activities against different types of racism, including antisemitism and anti-Muslim racism. Over the years, they have been further developed and provided to various stakeholder groups.

All projects mentioned and described as well as all other activities should be understood as part of the general efforts of the City of Vienna to jointly implement and strengthen Vienna's diversity policies and culture of democracy as well as human rights policies. Vienna joined the Network of Human Rights Cities at the end of December 2014 after an almost two year long process of reflection, cooperation, and conception with a focus on anti-discrimination activities in a broader sense.[vi]

For administrative staff of the city

Trainings and Lecture Series
The demographic changes witnessed in the last few decades are also a challenge for Vienna's City Administration, especially regarding the diversity of its clients, but also regarding the

diversity of its staff members. Delivering high quality work requires staff to constantly reflect on different aspects of diversity (socio-cultural background, age, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, religion, political and societal opinions). To that end, the City Administration relies on an integration-oriented diversity management approach and relevant teams.

The Department for Integration and Diversity offers further training by in-house trainers for employees of the City of Vienna, which either take place at Wien-Akademie (the further training institution of the City of Vienna) or take the form of in-house events tailored to the needs of participants. The Department for Integration and Diversity offers training events addressing topics that concentrate on diversity, different religious backgrounds, and discrimination, such as:

- Transcultural Competence
- Islam in Vienna
- The Foreign Within Me
- Diversity Management – An Introduction
- Change of Perspective
- Vienna as a City of Immigration – Debates and Facts
- Clients with a Migratory Background

For Stakeholders in Government and Municipal Positions

Advanced training is also provided for various stakeholders, employed at government and non-government institutions, such as the police, Austrian Federal Railways, staff members of schools/high-schools, social workers, medical professionals, welfare organisations (e.g., Caritas, Red Cross) and volunteers. The lecture series "Wien.Vielfalt.Wissen" (Vienna.Diversity. Knowledge) invites many different experts and practitioners to share their knowledge. The department has been offering the lecture "Islam in Vienna" for over 13 years. The setting, length (from three to seven hours) and contents of the lectures

Lessens Learnt

☑ **Value research:** Acquisition of knowledge on the topic, keeping up to date, method research (e.g. transcultural competence).

☑ **Keep your topic up to date:** Knowledge of the current situation and capability to recognise current interests, requirements and challenges of the target groups is important (e.g., bullying of children at school).

☑ **Pay attention to dialogue and networking:** Pay attention to teamwork; ensure a continuing dialogue with the target group and work together to solve problems and deal with challenges; keep up a dialogue with both city institutions and communities as well as experts. Look beyond national borders to form networks, be aware of transculturality and the heterogeneity and dynamic characteristics of cultures.

☑ **Define clear goals:** Evaluation and ongoing adjustment of projects are necessary to keep track of whether goals are reached.

☑ As a result, we have a continued learning process and exchange both for the communities and the representatives of the City Administration. As one community stakeholder expressed it:
"Only when we started to implement the networking project with Afghan and Chechen communities, I learned that the typical lecture and audience situation does no longer work with my target groups. People can be addressed and motivated much more easily where there is fun, and excitement involved e.g., in cultural events".

and workshops are tailored to the needs and backgrounds of participating groups. The events are also offered in-house or as diversity management peer groups for up to eight persons.

These lectures seek to impart a basic knowledge of the historical, philosophical, and religious backgrounds, as well as the life worlds of Muslims, including the current challenges of anti-Muslim racism but also extremist movements. The lectures also focus on a basic knowledge of transcultural competences as a tool for working with clients from different (trans-) cultural backgrounds and include time for discussion and reflection on questions around the topic as well as optional follow-up events, for instance an excursion with a guided tour to a local mosque, and further theoretical input and discussions. Each follow-up event takes between 1.5 and 2.5 hours. Thus, the lectures offer a chance to self-reflect on Islam.

Supplementing this event, is a three-hour lecture entitled "Transcultural Competence", that goes into more detail. Racism is one of the topics covered.

Experts and practitioners cover additional topics and share their knowledge and experiences, mostly from outside the municipality. Many of them indirectly address issues related to anti-Muslim racism since the focus is on groups of people who are mostly Muslims or perceived as Muslims, among them are:

Transcultural Compe...

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**For Stakeholders
in Government and
Municipal Positions**

Knowledge) invites many different experts and practitioners to share their knowledge. The department has been offering the lecture "Islam in Vienna" for over 13 years. The setting, length (from three to seven hours) and contents of the lectures

Chechen Community

Extremisms and Nationalisms

Digital Civil Courage – Online Hatred

Young Afghans in Vienna

Arab Communities in Vienna and Voices of Arab Women

Equal Treatment: Law, Human Rights and Non-Discrimination

Every lecture and project implementation requires a lot of preparation. The following questions need to be addressed:

– What are appropriate training methods and formats for the target group?
– How can we make the lecture/workshop as interactive as possible?
– How do we use the knowledge of participants from the field for lectures/workshops?
– What research and scientific literature, statistics, or field research results would be useful for the programme?
– What can we learn from the feedback and input of previous lectures/workshops as well as from the communities and experts to make the programme better?

During the project implementation, lectures, and discussions about problems and questions from participants, a knowledge transfer should occur in both directions. Since the aim of the lectures/workshops is to put knowledge into practice, recommendations and suggestions on know-how should be given during the lectures and these should be discussed. Accordingly, solutions should be discussed/designed together (strong connection to the practical experiences of target groups, such as teachers, social workers, police officers, colleagues from various departments from the municipality etc.).

As organisers, we also constantly learn new things not only from research, but also from our own practice and from participants' practice. In addition to research, our strong point is therefore our strong connection to practice and dialogue. This strengthens social cohesion and at the same time empowers certain target groups. Our basis is always a culture of democracy and human rights.

[The arts] can be a powerful medium to create empathy, understanding and humanise Muslims through bringing forth their lived experiences.

(Dr Amina Easat-Daas)

Strengthening Civic Participation

4.3.1 Countering Anti-Muslim Racism by Fostering Spaces of Expression and Artist Creativity (Dr Amina Easat-Daas)

Islamophobia affects hundreds of Muslims each year, which surges in particular around "trigger events", such as the attacks on the Christchurch mosques in 2019. In the week after the attacks, Islamophobia monitoring organisations recorded a 692% increase in reported anti-Muslim hate crimes in Britain[VII]. Similarly, Islamophobic hate crimes were eighteen times higher in Australia[VIII] during the same period.

Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism[IX] is increasingly normalised throughout society.[X] Islamophobia manifests in a range of ways, be it in politics, with the former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson comparing veiled Muslim women to "letterboxes", leading to a spike in gendered Islamophobia,[XI] in legislation, with France prohibiting "ostentatious" faith symbols in schools which in practice led to the disproportionate exclusion of Muslim schoolgirls[XII] or interpersonal discrimination, often picked up in the hate crime statistics mentioned above. Clearly, this type of racism like all others poses a pressing problem for the whole society.

As part of a two-year European Commission funded pan-continental project in which I was involved, we found that there was a continent-wide need to challenge ideas which frame Muslims as homogenous and threatening – in terms of security, demographics, and moral values (and by extension challenge the state policies and politics which rest upon these). This project was based on extensive fieldwork with experts and practitioners examining best practices in countering Islamophobia (see also our summary[XIII] in our European Parliamentary briefing). At the same time, there was a need to foster spaces

for expression of the diversity of Muslimness and Muslim voices. In terms of processes, we argued that it was necessary to define and understand Islamophobia before systematically recording it and being able to deconstruct dominant narratives about Islam and Muslims and then reconstruct via the presentation of more realistic narratives. There are specific actions that local authorities can pursue and support in their fight against anti-Muslim racism.

This research highlighted a multitude of ways in which Islamophobia can be disrupted: challenging myths of Muslim cultural incompatibility through interfaith work, challenging flawed assumptions of sexism and misogyny as being exclusive to Muslimness by highlighting the growing work around Islamic feminism and Muslim women's active engagement in society, highlighting the diversity of everyday Muslims and facilitate societal dialogue through projects such as the human library project, which allows non-Muslims to talk to and get to know Muslims.

One of the key findings came from practitioners who pointed to the potentials of the creative arts in countering dominant negative perceptions of Muslimness: highlighting that the arts "(...) can be a powerful medium to create empathy, understanding and humanise Muslims through bringing forth their lived experiences". This notion maps onto existing work in methodologies of Critical Race Studies, suggesting the potential of creative counter-storytelling as a means of disrupting dominant racist narratives.[XIV]

Given the sparsity of work directly related to understanding this dynamic, around the start of the pandemic, I began work on a project specifically examining the nature of Muslim-led and Muslim-centred festivals based in cities. Here, I selected cases with either sizeable Muslim populations or locations with relatively novel approaches to Muslim festivals and interviewed festival organisers. Initial findings from this remote fieldwork indicate that countering dominant negative narratives around Muslimness, along with creating spaces for creative expression by Muslims are among the key drivers in shaping organisers' motivations to curate such festivals. This has led to my subsequent engagement with a local art gallery to curate events showcasing art by Muslim artists to audiences who might not normally engage with everyday Muslimness. The event is part of a wider strategy both to incorporate and highlight the work of minority artists, to increase minority engagement in comparatively more traditional art spaces and finally to explore the development of an understanding of the ways in which exposure to Muslim creativity and everyday experiences might positively shape attitudes and thus potentially reduce dominant Islamophobic narratives. These examples are just a few of many concrete examples of practices that can be implemented on a local level and will contribute to challenging Islamophobia in local communities. These are practices which local authorities can support, and they can hold the potential for far-reaching change.

4.3.2

Local Good Practice

4.3.2.1   **Bringing the City and the Community to the Same Table: Jointly Planning Measures Against Anti-Muslim Racism (Leipzig, Germany)**

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Population:                          620.858
ECCAR member since:                     2009
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Reservations against and stereotyping of Muslims are widespread in eastern Germany. More than half of respondents in a survey on the attitudes of Germans regarding religion perceived Islam as a threat.[XV] Against this background, Leipzig's City Council passed a resolution on 8 July 2020 aimed at taking more committed action against anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia.

This resolution states: "We recognise the fight against anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia as a task for the whole society. For effective municipal administrative action, the City of Leipzig explicitly calls anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia by their names. The City of Leipzig will develop a concept for the prevention of anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia in Leipzig by the end of 2020. The city also ensures financial security for political education work in relation to racist ideologies of inequality (...) and promotes Muslim life, Muslim associations, and Muslim initiatives in the city."[XVI]

In implementing this decision, the City's Department for Migration and Integration organised a workshop with the aim

of connecting city administration and civil society actors to jointly reflect on how to counter anti-Muslim racism and what concrete measures are required to do so. Invitations to participate in the workshop were sent to associations and initiatives who have acquired expertise in anti-Muslim racism through their work, as well as to members of Muslim communities in the City's Migrants Advisory Council (on whose initiative the proposal for this workshop was put forth originally), and representatives from various administrative departments. 30 participants gathered in the digital workshop room.

After three introductory inputs – on the background of the workshop, on current studies regarding anti-Muslim racism and on activities of the administration in the field of anti-discrimination – the second part of the workshop consisted of group discussions. Each group dealt with a different field of activity where the City's administration can in the future implement measures:

Group I "The municipality as an employer and trainer": This included further training programmes for employees, recruiting, trainees and students.

Group II "The municipality as a service provider": This included diversity-sensitive services offers and events for political and religious education for all citizens.

Group III "The municipality as a partner of civil society": This group focused on project funds by the City and various event formats.

The small groups discussed the following questions:

What are the fields where we need to act, what are the priorities?

How can existing activities specifically consider anti-Muslim racism?

What additional measures are required?

Lessons Learnt

☑ **Combating anti-Muslim racism is a long-term goal** that requires perseverance and continuous work. It is important that the various actors in city administration and civil society work together and support each other.

☑ **The potential to learn from one another is considerable. Personal exchange with those affected** by anti-Muslim stigmatisation or even racism sensitises administrative staff for the issue.

☑ **Civil society actors' knowledge is strengthened** with regard to how administration works and what influence administration has to improve the situation.

☑ For a **sustainable mutual learning and sensitisation effect**, other people than those who participated in this workshop must be involved. In addition to the exchange within the framework of individual workshops, parallel processes that deal with or touch on the topic of anti-discrimination should be connected to each other. This allows us to unite our strengths and reach a broader public.

Group I

Group II

Group III

The small groups discu

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Workshop Results

The work in small groups enabled a constructive exchange in which it became clear that anti-Muslim racism can be addressed in the larger context of anti-discrimination work and intercultural orientation. The population in general, but also the employees of the City Administration, have little knowledge about discrimination and hardly any sensitivity to the specific topic of anti-Muslim racism. Anti-discrimination work and opening the City Administration further to intercultural orientation are essential measures for the City of Leipzig, though not new. However, measures for their implementation must meet certain quality requirements and they must be implemented more sustainably. This includes, for example, raising awareness for discriminatory behaviour and discriminatory structures. One way to achieve this, is by training, which should be implemented on an on-going basis and in a larger context addressing the issue of anti-Muslim racism. In particular, the qualification of teachers and educators is of great importance. Teachers and educators can lay the foundation for these young people to grow up to become open-minded adults who are sensitive to discrimination. The formation of diverse teams in different contexts also helps to break down prejudices and stereotypes as different perspectives are present. The participants in the workshop brought up the positive effects of teaching Islam in schools, which has not previously existed in Saxony. Dealing with the diversity of Muslim life would help to impart knowledge and break down stereotypes. Regarding offers for political and religious education, participants expressed the wish for them to be collected and made available on a website. It is also important to provide concrete help, when applying for project funds, and to overcome language barriers – on the one hand to find offers of help in the event of discrimination and to be able to express oneself, on the other hand to make your own perspective clear in discussion groups.

Dos
- Timely announcement of dates and follow-up communication/reminders about workshop participation,
- Rely on contact persons who know the invitee to send the invitation,
- Rely on external moderation,
- Schedule discussions in small groups so everyone can have their say,
- Leave enough time for discussion in the groups (at least one hour).

Don'ts
- Project-based processing of the topic: limited time and dependence on volunteers are not helpful for such a programme format,
- Long processes within the administration (unfortunately often unavoidable),
- no quick success or quick implementation of measures visible, which leads to frustration,
- Limited personnel capacities: Within the administration, urgent, time-sensitive tasks are often given priority–while "soft" topics such as anti-discrimination fall behind.

4.3.2.2   **Political Education under Muslim Sponsorship (Muslim Academy of Heidelberg, Germany)**

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Population:                        160.355
ECCAR member since:                   2014
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The Muslim Academy Heidelberg i. G., which came together in the spring of 2013 as a grassroots movement under the name "Teilseiend e. V.", is concerned with taking over social responsibility in the context of faith. The special feature of the initiative lies in its heterogeneous composition of Heidelberg Muslims and the claim to diversity of opinion and controversial negotiations. Since its inception, the academy has been working on developing a new Heidelberg model in which Muslim work is part and parcel of society. For the first time, a political educational institution and thus an institution for democracy education will be under Muslim sponsorship, paving the way to overcome social polarisation concerning Islam and Muslim life. The concept of the academy is based on the model and the successful practice of Christian academies. Based on their experiences, among others in the context of overcoming National Socialism after the Second World War, a contribution to strengthening democracy in Germany and to overcoming extremist positions needs to stem from a sense of responsibility. Since political education has a long-standing tradition in Germany, the Muslim Academy is also an international flagship project and offers completely new perspectives on the position of Muslim life in our society.

In the framework of its events, the academy takes up current discourses and social challenges and wants to contribute to solving these challenges. Educational events are set to increase participants' knowledge, while they reflect on their own points of view. Experts support participants in becoming aware of their interests, resources and potential and in

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

discussing how they can contribute to the common good. The academy sees itself as a place of education for democracy, which, relying on a political education process, strengthens the target group's ability for social judgement and their ability to act. These abilities are prerequisites and form the basis for a functioning, democratic society. After all, all citizens should ultimately take responsibility and stand up for a peaceful coexistence. The Muslim Academy Heidelberg i. G. would like to activate this sense of responsibility in the long term and create the conditions for it. The academy not only offers its visitors personal growth opportunities in certain subject areas and empowers them to act, but also provides room for its visitors to contribute their ideas, for example through so-called future workshops. As Muslim Academy Heidelberg i. G., the facility is also a place where the interests of Muslim civil society are represented and is a symbol of social emancipation and participation. This target group often experiences marginalisation and powerlessness, and the academy offers them a space for empowerment and self-assurance.

The Muslim Academy's work is part of close and trusting cooperation, especially at the municipal level. As a proactive player, the Muslim Academy brings new views and perspectives into recurring debates and discourses, thereby developing existing competencies and making them accessible for a broader public and contributing to the diversification of the municipal landscape of actors so that it reflects the plurality of society.

In addition to the lack of places of religious practice and science, spaces that represent Muslim civil society and that allow for societal discourses are scarce, too. The Muslim Academy Heidelberg i. G. sees itself as a "third space" that invites discourse and debate between the religious and the secular spheres. In this context, the interfaces between science, society, and faith are brought together. This "third space" should also find its urban expression in the academy building. From the outset, one of the goals was to construct an academy with an accompanying conference building as a designated place of encounter and discourse. Since 2014, this goal has been pursued also as part of the Heidelberg International Building Exhibition (IBA): How can a building represent Muslim life in the heart of Heidelberg in a way that it is

- Strengthen grassroots movements that act bottom-up and not top-down, self-identify as Muslim-based organisations/movements and are run by Muslims themselves.
- Implement an approach focused on political education, which promotes civil society commitment in societal challenges, strengthens democracy, demands controversy and multiple perspectives.
- Address and strengthen Muslims as actors, not just as target groups. This allows for a proactive and creative change in discourses and for self-determined topics.
- Ensure innovative and sustainable cooperation at eye level, in which each actor takes responsibility and contributes different perspectives.
- Define the perception and position of Muslims as part and parcel of civil society and not as an object of integration in the framework of migration debates.

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This allows for a successful narrative change within society so that Islam and Muslim life in Germany is understood as part of the solution and not as part of the problem.

perceived as part and parcel of the society? What architectural ideas are there for a Muslim place of education?

Political education, functional accommodation, and catering as well as the socio-political relevance of Muslim sponsorship had to be represented in a prominent building project and a nationally and internationally representative location was required. Furthermore, the building should not feature any reference to typical elements of Ottoman architecture, but instead had to overcome the previous culturally oriented examples in favour of a new type of structure. When it comes to questions of architecture, it is also important to remember that this new type of structure has no reference point anywhere else, structurally, or conceptually, and that there are therefore no directly transferrable examples. This national and international architectural and structural model project is set to be a lighthouse project that will be a role model and have a positive effect on the socio-political emancipation and participation of Muslims in Germany and beyond. The fact that Muslims have long been part and parcel of society, requires representation, visibility, and identification in the form of a building!

Impact

Together with the city administration, the Muslim Academy coordinates municipal networks which, among other things, promote an exchange within the municipal landscape of actors on the main topics of anti-discrimination and prevention of hate violence as well as sustainable strategies involving civil society, administration, education, science, youth work, the police and culture to promote coexistence in diversity. This approach helps overcome one-sided views on phenomena, leading to a holistic perspective, through which any marginalisation or exclusion is countered, and a strengthening of society becomes possible. This makes it possible to understand phenomena such as anti-Muslim racism not as a problem that exclusively concerns Muslims, but as a fundamental challenge for a democratic urban society.

This allows for a successful narrative change within society so that Islam and Muslim life in Germany is understood as part of the solution and not as part of the problem.

designated place of encounter and discourse. Since 2014, this goal has been pursued also as part of the Heidelberg International Building Exhibition (IBA): How can a building represent Muslim life in the heart of Heidelberg in a way that it is

1. The project reaches Muslim target groups integrating them into discourses of society as a whole and motivating them to participate and assume responsibility.

2. Muslims become visible as actors in (city) society, they proactively engage with topics and concerns of their own choice and influence social discourses. Thereby, they contribute to diversifying the discourse and the stakeholder landscape and reflect social diversity.

3. Strong and trusting partnerships and alliances have developed. Solidarity alliances of different institutions, each with different perspectives, make it possible to respond to societal challenges such as hate crime, discrimination, racism, misanthropy, and extremism in a sustainable, resource-oriented, and multi-perspective manner and to promote a constructive and organic management of diversity and plurality.

4.3.2.3

Muslim-Based Service Providers of Social Work and Welfare (Nicole Erkan)

"Christianity is without a doubt part of German identity. Judaism is without a doubt part of German identity. Such is our Judaeo-Christian heritage. But Islam has now also become part of German identity." (Bundespräsidialamt 2010:6) This is a quote from a speech delivered by then-Federal President Christian Wulff[XVII] on the 20th anniversary of German unity in Bremen on 3 October 2010.

The question of whether Islam belongs to Germany or not – and thus indirectly the question whether Muslims belong to Germany – is the subject of ongoing public discussion, either within the larger discourse on Islam itself or on Germany as home country. Research shows that Muslims are perceived as guest workers, foreigners, or Salafists, but never simply as German citizens[XVIII]. At the same time, social identity and belonging is one of the basic human needs.

With this in mind, we might ask ourselves, what do such public debates do to Muslims' sense of belonging in our society? How can a cooperation between the city administration and Muslim self-organisations be designed so that it strengthens the cohesion of society as a whole?

Horizontal social work under religious-confessional sponsorship is fully established by various denominational welfare associations in Germany, such as "Caritas", "Diakonie" or the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, and they form an important part of Germany's welfare state. But what about social actors under Muslim sponsorship?

The German Social Code states that providers of public youth welfare services need to ensure a pluralistic range of services. Pluralistic therefore includes different world views as well as ideologically neutral providers. Although Muslims represent a substantial proportion of Germany's population (ca. 5.7% of the total population), there are only a few recognised social institutions and providers of social work under Muslim sponsorship. Muslim-based organisation are usually understood to mean mosque associations that so far have primarily offered religion-oriented education.

With the influx of refugees since 2015, the number of Muslims in Germany has increased. The willingness of welfare organisations and civil society to help was great. Mosque associations were and still are often the first point of contact for refugees. Mosque associations have important linguistic and cultural resources at their disposal, allowing them very good access to the target group. Nevertheless, they lack financial resources. Because Muslims do not have their own welfare organisation(s), Muslim self-organisations are structurally disadvantaged, so that their commitment is mainly supported by volunteers.

At the same time, it has become clear that Muslims were and are primarily discussed in the context of integration policies and/or security policies, not so much in the context of social policies that encompass society. The added value for society from contributions by Muslim civil society is thus hardly visible and to this day Muslim–based organisations are not perceived as important social actors, but rather as partners in interreligious dialogue and are thus reduced to their religious commitment.

It seems clear, that this debate has a direct impact on the cooperation between the city administrations and Muslim-based organisations. A stable relationship of trust with each other is essential for good cooperation, so that the Muslim-based organisations can function as a bridge between the city administration and civil society.

Therefore, I see it as indispensable that municipalities and Muslim-based organisations approach each other with the common goal of strengthening the cohesion of society. Possible cooperation should be based on an eye-level approach, so that all participants feel adequately valued and their intrinsic motivation to work towards common goals is protected. In practice, this means, for example, that when cooperation events take place, Muslim-based organisations receive access to funding, they are not left out of important meetings, such as working groups and conferences in public spaces. Since Muslim welfare work is often provided by volunteers and central encounters with stakeholders often take place during working hours, the representatives of Muslim welfare work should be offered paid positions to allow them to participate.

4.3.2.4

Mosques as Sites of Encounter and Cooperation: ECCAR Interview with Tuncay Nazik from the Mosque of Herne-Röhlinghausen

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ECCAR Interview with
Tuncay Nazik

ECCAR: How should we understand mosques in the 21st century, are they only places of worship or something else? Can non-Muslim citizens also benefit from the presence of a mosque in their city/neighbourhood?[XIX]

Tuncay Nazik: Yes, absolutely. The Turkish word "camii", which we use for "mosque", literally means "meeting place". The first generations of Muslims and the Prophet himself understood mosques as places of encounter. Great celebrations were held there. Christian visitors from Necran were accommodated in the Prophet's Mosque and could hold their Christian religious rituals there. The educational function of the mosque at that time deserves special mention. At times, hundreds of students who studied Islamic knowledge and passed it on to future generations were accommodated in the mosque.

ECCAR: How does your mosque community engage in social work? Which subject areas are covered and

are offers open to all citizens of the (extended) community, regardless of religious identity?

Tuncay Nazik: Through our activities, which include seminars, book readings, excursions, and other free time activities, we promote mutual understanding, work towards better welfare services for young people, strengthen interreligious dialogue and religious literacy. Our community is a permanent member of the "Röhlinghausen Neighbourhood" working group in which local clubs, political parties, institutions, and churches all contribute to civic life in Röhlinghausen district. As a certified association, our work is recognised by the youth welfare offices of the cities of Bochum, Herne, and Gelsenkirchen. We are also authorised by the State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to issue a volunteering certificate for those who actively participate in our community.

We are firmly convinced that a successful cooperation, mutual acceptance, and objective discussions can only be achieved

based on scientific knowledge, personal encounters, and rapprochements. Therefore, we give great importance to inter-religious dialogue. We think that issues related to the coexistence of our diverse communities must be put in a nutshell and addressed openly. This is the only way to break down prejudices, promote acceptance and ensure a peaceful coexistence.

We emphasise that our community activities are open to anyone who is interested in Islamic knowledge or wants to get to know us, those who strive for the good of humankind or would like to work with us towards peace and prudence.

ECCAR: How can social work by mosques/Muslim communities contribute to combating anti-Muslim racism? Can we say that such activities increase civic participation?

Tuncay Nazik: Life for Muslims in Germany has become more difficult. Islam is viewed much more critically by most of the society than it was previously. Different fears and mutual prejudices – I deliberately chose the word "mutual", since not only the majority society is affected by prejudices, but also the Muslim minority – can only be overcome if they are taken seriously and worked through in an objective manner.

However, I also see the current conditions in society and the harsh climate as an opportunity. On the one hand, the majority society can now recognise or atleast has the opportunity to recognise how important and at the same time vulnerable our democracy and our basic values are, such

as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, integrity of human life, etc. On the other hand, Muslims now can present themselves as more than just a community affected by anti-Muslim racism. We as Muslims living in Germany must recognise the value of living by the basic values derived from our constitution and the value of civic participation. This is not just a conclusion drawn from the current situation. It's a religious commandment:

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)". (The Holy Qur'an, 49:13)[XIX]

All of us must reduce our fears and prejudices and always approach those who think differently with an open mind. Isolation from society or losing heart and withdrawing after a failed attempt at opening, cannot be in a Muslim's interest. The Qur'an says in chapter 94: 5-6 that after every difficulty there is relief, hence, a believer cannot give up:

"So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief. Verily, with every difficulty there is relief". (The Holy Qur'an, 94:5-6)

ECCAR: What is the role of the city/municipality in supporting such offers/services provided by mosques/Muslim communities?

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Tuncay Nazik: Indeed, Muslim communities and their religious officials have a key role in promoting the civic participation of Muslims. Integration policies have misunderstood this for decades. The necessary steps to include our communities into the integration policy process were either not considered or there were prejudices and fears to approach each other from both sides, namely from the politicians and the communities.

Many Muslim communities are on the right track in this regard. They are committed to society and show that by for instance organising blood donation campaigns, civic education, and by being involved in refugee work. Unfortunately, in many cases, recognition from city officials and the city community at large falls by the wayside.

What are the concrete measures needed to achieve effective cooperation between the city, the municipality, and the communities?

① Actors such as teachers and educators who work with children and young people of Muslim background must get to know the culture and religion of the target group better, especially in terms of how to deal with topics of politically or ideologically motivated violence in a culturally sensitive manner.

② Visits to places associated with religious life such as mosques, churches, synagogues, and temples should be offered in preschools and schools.

③ Young people should be given the chance to develop a strong and open identity. In the case of immigrant children of the second or third generation, identity conflicts and the feeling of not being rooted anywhere and/or of not being fully accepted by any social group can contribute to radicalisation. All societal actors in politics, schools, communities, and the media must send young people a clear message: This is where you belong. The disconcerting debate as to whether Islam or Muslims belong to Germany, or to any other European society, only gives rise to the feeling of "not belonging" and this must be tackled by mutual acceptance.

④ Politicians and the media must deal with Muslim communities in a more differentiated manner. The fight against extremism must be carried out in a sensitive manner and so that it does not look like a fight against Islam. Constant negative labels or stigmatisation of Muslims leads to dissociation.

⑤ The majority society, security authorities, the media and everyone involved must accept that successful integration and a life in accordance with the constitution does not require drinking alcohol and discarding one's own religious beliefs. We need to understand that a practicing and deeply pious/devoted Muslim who believes in the Qur'an can also be a constitutional citizen. Constitutionality can and must only be measured based on one's commitment to constitutional values and not based on everyday practice or habits related to diet or dress code.

Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. (…)

(The Holy Qur'an, 49:13)

Civic Education and Citizen Dialogue

4.4.1

Local Good Practice

4.4.1.1   **Debunking Myths of Hate: Heidelberg's Alliance for Jewish-Muslim Relations (Heidelberg, Germany)**

Heidelberg's alliance for Jewish-Muslim Relations, Bündnis für Jüdisch-Muslimische Beziehungen, addresses contemporary Jewish and Muslim life in Germany and implicitly works on the prevention of antisemitism and anti-Muslim racism via resource- and solution-oriented, interdisciplinary discourses and event formats, such as the Jewish-Muslim Culture Days, podcasts or educational formats for teachers and students. The alliance is a cooperation of the Muslim Academy Heidelberg with the University of Jewish Studies, the University of Education, the socio-cultural centre Kulturhaus Karlstorbahnhof and the city administration. It thus reaches a wide variety of target groups by working towards empowering and making use of Jewish and Muslim communities' potential and their diverse life perspectives.

The Jewish Muslim Culture Days are a cultural festival programme that is unique in Germany and stands out even in the wider European context: In 2016, the Jewish Culture Days were launched for the second time, while the Muslim Culture days were launched for the first time in Heidelberg. The organisers of both festival programmes decided to merge their festivals in 2017 to create a distinctive new cooperation. While the German and larger European discourse on Jewish and Muslim relations focuses mostly on problems and emphasises conflicts, the lived reality in Heidelberg and many other places is largely one of harmonious interaction and mutual solidarity. Under the guiding principle of "New Normal(s)", the Jewish-Muslim Culture Days in Heidelberg want to focus on these harmonious relations and fruitful interactions in the public debate and create a discourse that looks beyond the dominant and deficient "integration" debates. The Culture Days aim to represent a natural and respectful interaction of different communities and to demonstrate the lived realities of an "open society" in which Muslims, Jews, Christians, Atheists and people of many other faiths and worldviews interact constructively and peacefully.

The project also aims to support the already existing positive diversity within both Jewish and Muslim cultural and intellectual life in Germany and to make Jewish and Muslim discourse positions and cultural productions more visible for the public, in an innovative encouragement concerning questions of education, culture, society, and belonging.

While the German and larger European discourse on Jewish and Muslim relations focuses mostly on problems and em-phasises conflicts, the lived reality in Heidelberg and many other places is large-ly one of harmonious interaction and mu-tual solidarity.

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Lessons Learnt

☑ Present a diverse range of formats that address both cultural entertainment and intellectual curiosity, both the academic and the popular discourse and connect different levels of cultural and intellectual engagement.

☑ Work directly with local Jewish and Muslim communities in programme planning and implementation, include specific events that directly give local Jewish and Muslim communities a platform to present themselves (e.g., guided tours of local mosques, synagogues, religious city life).

☑ Create programme events not simply as events "for an audience", but also as occasions for artists, academics, and others on the stage (see e.g., the two event examples above) to interact and network.

During its 14 programme events, the Jewish-Muslim Culture Days 2022 created numerous similar moments reaching and connecting a diverse audience and generating new incentives for positive social coexistence that protect against any form of marginalisation and discrimination.

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(City of Heidelberg)

The Jewish-Muslim Culture Days are devoted to the creation of self-confident, deeply united, and future-oriented concepts of democratic coexistence in a pluralistic society. The Jewish-Muslim Culture Days counter antisemitism, anti-Muslim racism, intolerance and every form of exclusion and discrimination with an emphasis on what unites us as human beings and as citizens of Heidelberg, a city where people of different backgrounds and orientations live, celebrate, eat, and debate together. The Culture Days enable the development of new social networks, which is mirrored in the festivals' many different event formats, such as readings, film screenings, concerts, and city tours.

In 2022, the Jewish-Muslim Culture Days, which lasted from 26 June to 11 August, presented a perfect and successful example of these efforts. With its broad programme and different discourse points it addressed a wide audience reaching from both local Jewish and Muslim communities to the larger mainstream society of Heidelberg interested in cultural productions and intellectual discourse. By inviting Jewish and Muslim artists and intellectuals from all over Germany and Europe (in 2022 from France, Austria, and the UK) the Culture Days also connected local Jewish and Muslim realities with a larger field of interaction and production. Local Jewish and Muslim realities were embedded in the Culture Days' programme through close cooperation with a mosque (Yavuz Sultan Selim Moschee), a Jewish synagogue (Jüdische Kultusgemeinde Heidelberg), a Muslim students' group (Muslimische Studierendengruppe Heidelberg) and several anti-racist initiatives and representative bodies (e.g., Migration Hub Heidelberg, Migration Council Heidelberg).

On an open-air stage near the River Neckar, Black-Jewish public speaker, author, and activist Emilia Roig opened the Culture Days with a speech on the importance of intersectional alliances, followed by a concert by German-Turkish saz player Ozan Ata Canani, whose songs reflect the history of Muslim migration in Germany and the challenges faced by working class immigrants of colour. The combination of political discourse and musical entertainment reached a diverse audience of roughly 100 people. Jewish and Muslim listeners and listeners from other marginalised communities found moments of recognition and empowerment both in Emilia Roig's speech and in Ata Canani's songs, while visitors from the broader mainstream community learned about contexts and cooperations that they did not know much about before.

A similarly defining moment was the reading by Jewish-Russian-German author Lena Gorelik on 27 July, moderated and discussed by German-Swiss Muslim- activist Hannan Salamat, an event that led to a very lively discussion comparing and connecting different Jewish and Muslim migrant experiences in Germany, underlining the common grounds between both, and deriving ideas and strategies for further alliances and structures of empowerment from that.

During its 14 programme events, the Jewish-Muslim Culture Days 2022 created numerous similar moments reaching and connecting a diverse audience and generating new incentives for positive social coexistence that protect against any form of marginalisation and discrimination.

4.4.1.2   **Bringing Marginalised Community Life to the Centre:
The Muslim Culture Days (Karlsruhe, Germany)**

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Population:                    303.907
ECCAR member since:              2007
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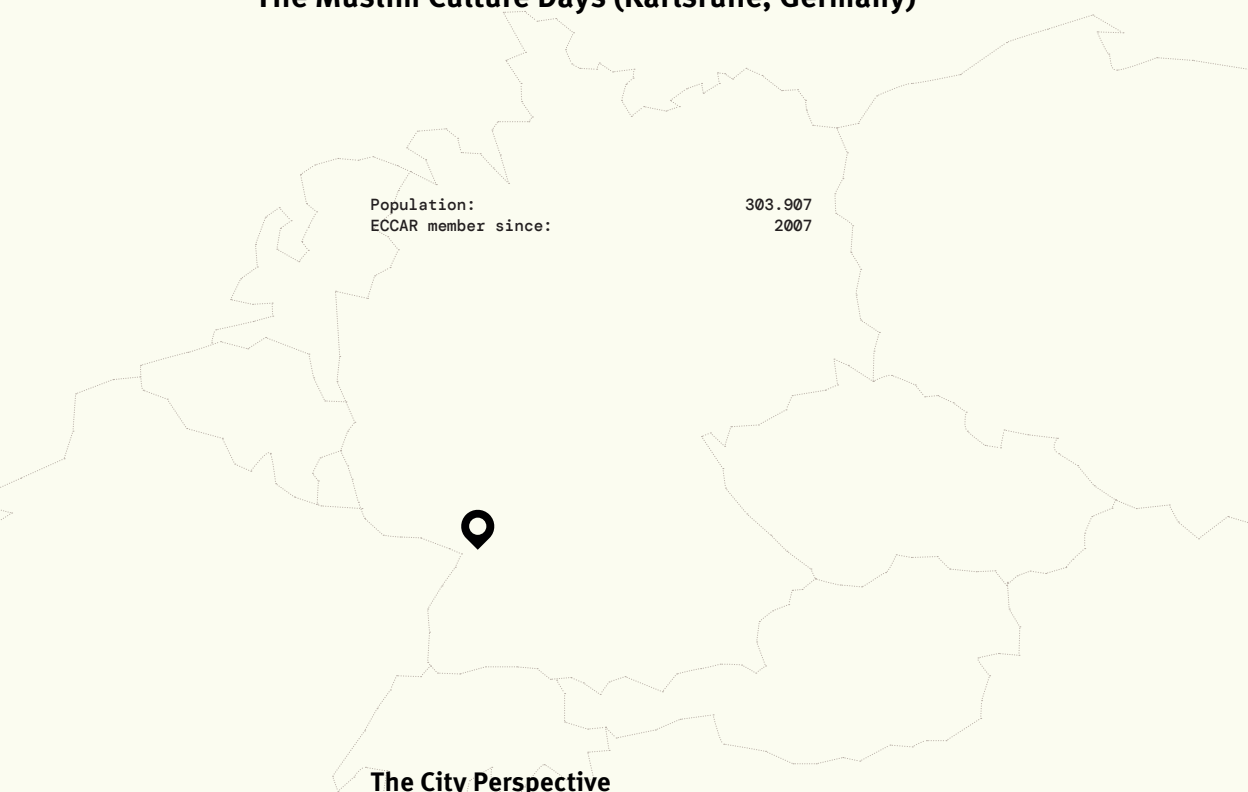
The City Perspective

The Deutschsprachiger Muslimkreis Karlsruhe (German-speaking Muslim circle, DMK) is an important institution in the dialogue between the religions in Karlsruhe and plays a central role in the social dialogue between religious Muslim residents of Karlsruhe and non-Muslim residents of the city, whether religious or not.

The mayors of Karlsruhe have been patrons of the former "Karlsruhe Islam Weeks" and the follow-up format "Muslim Culture Days" for many years, and often give the opening speeches at events. Events of the Culture Days are supported by the City's Office for Cultural Affairs and the Office for Integration and are frequently visited by local councillors and city employees.The DMK has an original approach to community work and focuses heavily on young people, yet it is one of the smaller mosque communities in Karlsruhe in terms of numbers. Nevertheless, the DMK is very open for Karlsruhe's majority society, well represented within the Muslim community and thus sees itself as the engine of Muslim life in Karlsruhe.

The DMK was for instance a very important player in realising the citizens' project "Garden of Religions". This project was developed jointly on the 300th anniversary of the city in 2015 and represents a major step in interreligious cooperation in Karlsruhe. A garden with its structural design, quotes, and illustrations, symbolises a peaceful and good coexistence of religions and religious people, respecting differences while at the same time recognising the priority of fundamental human rights. The association AG Garten der Religionen für Karlsruhe e. V., which runs the Garden of Religions project, is the basis on which the Council of Religions in Karlsruhe is currently being founded. The DMK is an active and important player in both.

The DMK's activities in and for the city community is essential not only for the City Administration and local political actors, but also for civil society, educational institutions, the media, and other religions. Because of this great commitment, Muslims in Karlsruhe have become visible as committed actors within society, entering dialogue with others and creating more awareness for the concerns of the local Muslim community. Thanks to this effective cooperation, the networks that developed, its reliability, and the trust, which was successfully established among its partners, the DMK is an essential part of public life in Karlsruhe.

In addition to the DMK, many other civil society actors and initiatives are actively tackling anti-Muslim racism (AMR) in Karlsruhe. To inform the wider public about anti-Muslim racism and ways to tackle it, the "International Weeks Against Racism in Karlsruhe" have since 2013 included several events such as workshops, lectures, readings, concerts, meetings, church services open for the public and much more in their programme. The networks Karlsruhe gegen Rechts (Karlsruhe Against Right-Wing Extremism) and Karlsuhe gegen Rassismus (Karlsruhe Against Racism) have also expressly put combating AMR on their agendas. In all these formats, interreligious dialogue initiatives and numerous Muslim associations and mosque communities are particularly active.

Under the motto "Let's show our colours…" and with its commitment to ECCAR, the City of Karlsruhe is sending a clear signal against discrimination and any kind of racism.

The commitment of the City of Karlsruhe has recently also led to setting up a "Round Table on Municipal Anti-Racism and

Anti-Discrimination Work in the City of Karlsruhe". In addition to other forms of racism and discrimination and their intersectional connections, the round table is also dedicated to the work against anti-Muslim racism and therefore has representatives from the DMK and other Muslim associations.

The NGO Perspective
(Deutschsprachiger Muslimkreis Karlsruhe)
The Muslim Culture Days are the largest bi-annual event organised by the DMK Karlsruhe including lectures, workshops, panel discussions and readings. Formerly known as Karlsruhe Islam Weeks, initiated in 1989 when the DMK was founded, the event has been an extremely important source of inspiration for the intensification of institutional cooperation between the DMK and other local religious communities, local associations, and the Karlsruhe City Administration. During the Muslim Culture Days, the DMK uses the opportunity to present its work, to get in touch with the citizens of Karlsruhe and to promote getting to know each other. The DMK aims to appeal to as many groups of citizens as possible with its diverse programme. Finally, encounters between different cultures, religions and traditions are set to promote the elimination of existing prejudices, misunderstandings, and fears of getting in touch with Muslims, and promote mutual tolerance instead.

Muslim Culture Days and Anti-Muslim Racism

The project offers a wide range of formats. On the one hand, there are lectures that focus explicitly on the problem of anti-Muslim racism, on the other hand, there are formats that do not address the issue directly, but rather show structures in their implementation that are conducive to combating anti-Muslim racism. The former includes, for example, lectures that show how Muslims are portrayed in the media and aim to raise awareness and reflect on the thought patterns and perceptions that participants have concerning Muslims. The latter include, for example, a Muslim city tour, which raises awareness of aspects concerning Muslim life among the citizens.

In 2020, the first Muslim city tour of Karlsruhe was organised in cooperation with the Anti-Discrimination Office of the City and further tours continue beyond the Culture Days. During the city tour, participants will learn about aspects of Muslim life in Karlsruhe from the beginnings to the present day.

These aspects also include art, cooking and sports workshops as well as music events in the form of concerts that centre on Muslim tradition. These concerts offer a particularly convenient platform to talk to guests and get to know each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Precisely these types of events, which do not put anti-Muslim racism at the top of their agenda, lead to encounters and exchanges of a more personal nature and leave space for questions which contribute to eliminating misunderstandings and foster openness towards the other person. The members of the Culture Days planning team are aware of the importance of the variety of formats and their targeted use, and they select event contents and formats according to the points described above.

Dialogue Partners

Furthermore, the Muslim Culture Days project engages dialogue partners from within the planning team or members of the DMK. Thanks to years of practice, these partners are familiar with different discussion cultures and can respond to the concerns and questions of participants. We want to emphasise that dialogue partners are not selected based on strict criteria concerning their professional expertise. Nor is this job about emphasising the expertise of DMK members; members do not have an answer ready for every question asked by interlocutors. Rather the focus is on the personality of each individual DMK member. This means that ideally, both sides will establish a natural conversation.

Sustainability of Partnerships

As already mentioned above, an important aspect in combating anti-Muslim racism, are encounters and discussions. Step-by-step, this will lead to mutual understanding and open dialogue free from prejudice. The project also gives time to establish new contacts and maintain existing ones. The project team deliberately keeps in touch with participants beyond the project duration and events. New Culture Days participants may leave their contact details; existing and new contacts will get invited to various one-off, but also weekly DMK events. Friendly relations have been established with many of these contacts.

Impact of the Project

In terms of the project impact, the Muslim Culture Days team registered a sharp increase in contact requests after the event.

These have come from individuals as well as representatives of other associations, various religious communities, and municipal institutions alike. Requests include TV or magazine interviews, exchanges with specialist groups on specific Islam-related topics, guided tours of mosques, interreligious cooperation etc. Many citizens of Karlsruhe are now familiar with the DMK and the members of the project team; the DMK is often referred to as point of contact on various matters. The Culture Days contribute significantly to this status of our association.

Lessons Learnt

☑ The event programme should include further topical foci in addition to events that deal specifically with the fight against anti-Muslim racism. Participants must not be given the wrong impression and think that only Muslims deal with anti-Muslim racism. Culture days in particular offer a very good opportunity to bring Muslim arts, cuisine, music, and other aspects of Muslim daily life closer to the non-Muslim population.

☑ The project should offer different formats. It is best to choose many interactive formats, such as workshops, that create a relaxed atmosphere.

☑ Dialogue partners should be involved in the project. Conversations in pairs or in small groups are personal and have a great impact on participants. On about 80% of our feedback forms, guests said that they appreciated the great conversations and the pleasant atmosphere at our events. Regarding the dialogue partners, the following should apply: No one is portrayed as an expert on Muslims. The focus should be on the personality of each person.

☑ The Muslim organisers should not be people you have seen at a one-time event. Encounters can only develop their full effect if contact is maintained. Visitors will be personally invited to other events outside the project. Over time, friendly relationships with some visitors can be established and you can arrange personal meetings.
If you invest time and effort in these encounters, they eventually bear fruit and become the best grassroots tool for combating anti-Muslim racism.

4.4.1.3

**Subsidising NGO Work
(Zurich, Switzerland)**

Population: 436.332
ECCAR member since: 2007

The City of Zurich subsidises two NGOs engaged in interreligious dialogue and is an active partner in both organisations.

The Zürcher Forum der Religionen (Zurich Forum of Religions) is an association that regroups representatives of religious communities and government agencies in the larger Zurich area. It sees itself as a link between the five major religious traditions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — and is committed to both interreligious dialogue and exchange between religious and political institutions. The forum offers a series of annual events for the public at the religious communities' venues. Among others, regular visits to different Muslim communities attract a lot of attention and enable people to step into the mosques and meet members of the community. Personal encounters and conversations are believed to be the best way to neutralise prejudices and misconceptions and consequently counteract anti-Muslim racism.

The ZIID, Zentrum für Interreligiösen Dialog (centre for interreligious dialogue) imparts in-depth knowledge about Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Their curriculum offers a vast array of lectures and seminars on theological and contemporary societal issues related to religion. In addition, the organisation conducts workshops in public schools conveying basic knowledge on Islam and strengthens skills in dealing with religious diversity. Public institutions such as schools or health care services can commission customised trainings or counselling for specific teams and topics.

4.4.1.4

Benefiting from Communities as Experts
(Kortrijk, Belgium)

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Population:                    77.741
ECCAR member since:             2020
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The City of Kortrijk cooperates with the Muslim community in many ways. Until 2019, we held the annual event series "Dar es Salaam", consisting of three evenings about Islam, two of which are lectures while the third evening offers room for dialogue. Since 2015, we have the platform "Dialogue in friendship" with the aim of enabling meetings between Muslims and Christians. After the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016, Christians and Muslims held a silent march together against terror. Every year, we organise iftar meals together during Ramadan.

Furthermore, the city has maintained good connections with the local mosque for years. Organisations can request visits to the mosque. We organise ad hoc activities during the year. Finally, the city gives advice or offers help with the mosque's accreditation files. In 2018, we drew up a charter of "ideological organisations", signed by the city and the local mosque, among others, with the intention of putting together at least two activities for the public. The exchange is based on mutual respect for each other's values and cultures, tolerance for all citizens regardless of ideology, equality of rights, equality of treatment, openness to enter dialogue with each other in a peaceful manner, appreciation for each other's differences, solidarity with and commitment to each other during difficult periods.

An important aspect in combating anti-Muslim racism, are encounters and discussions. Step-by-step, this will lead to mutual understanding and open dialogue free from prejudice.

(Deutschsprachiger Muslimkreis Karlsruhe)

Tackling Hate Crime and Discrimination

4.5.1

Bias Indicators of Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes as a Basis for Documentation and Reporting Systems (CLAIM Alliance against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Hate)

Pilot Project "I-Report"

The dark figure of anti-Muslim motivated attacks and discrimination in Germany is far higher than official statistics of recorded incidents. With "I Report", we want to contribute to a better recording and uniform documentation of incidents through a standardised system for recording and documenting anti-Muslim motivated attacks and discrimination. In cooperation with Dokustelle Austria, the Austrian Documentation-Centre on Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism, and anti-discrimination, counselling, and documentation centres from Germany, CLAIM has developed the reporting portal I Report, a standardised system for recording and documenting. Since July 2021, persons affected by anti-Muslim racism as well as witnesses can report cases via the website www.i-report.eu. The project is

funded as part of the EU programme Rights, Equality and Citizenship. In addition to the reporting portal, I Report intends to establish standards for recording anti-Muslim racism in German-speaking countries.

Background

Muslims and people perceived as such are often affected by intersectional discrimination and violence. This means that different grounds of discrimination such as religion, origin or gender can interact. Anti-Muslim racism can occur regardless of whether the person is a practising Muslim or whether a statement explicitly refers to Islam. Correctly recognising and understanding the anti-Muslim content of a violent or a discriminatory act can therefore often be challenging for counselling centres and officials in the justice system.

A study conducted by CLAIM shows that counselling centres in Germany sometimes do not have the resources to help those affected by anti-Muslim racism: half of the 72 counselling centres surveyed have no procedure for identifying anti-Muslim racism, and almost a third have no counsellors in their team, who are specifically trained in anti-Muslim racism, nor advisors who have personal or family connections to the topic or have a very good knowledge of Muslim communities.

Bias indicators are an essential tool for assessing attacks and discrimination in terms of their anti-Muslim content. These indicators are objective facts, circumstances or patterns associated with a discriminatory or abusive/violent act that alone or in conjunction with other facts or offenses suggest that the offender's act was motivated in whole or in part by some form of bias. However, indicators can only be helpful if there is a comprehensive understanding of anti-Muslim racism.

Based on the list of "Bias indicators of anti-Muslim hate crimes" of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) the following indicators were developed with experts as part of the I Report project:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Standardised and established understanding of anti-Muslim racism: To protect people from discrimination and violent attacks, an established and recognised working definition of anti-Muslim racism is required. Existing efforts by civil society organisations at EU and national level should be considered and experts from these groups should be involved in the development of a working definition. In addition, standardised indicators are required to record the anti-Muslim motive in cases of discrimination and assaults.

- Unified recording of anti-Muslim racism: Anti-Muslim attacks above and below the criminal threshold as well as anti-Muslim-motivated discrimination must be better recorded. Hence, a nationwide reporting system with a comprehensive and standardised recording and data collection policy is required. In addition, unified case documentation by counselling centres is required, and these must be financed sustainably in the long-term.

- Sustainable financing of counselling centres: To give the affected persons emotional and financial support and to protect them from secondary victimisation, affected persons should have the opportunity to report assaults to the police and the public prosecutor's office via counselling centres and be able to be represented by counselling centres in criminal proceedings. To make this possible, both a legal basis as well as sustainable and institutional financing for counselling centres are needed. This measure would also help to eliminate the number of unreported cases, as reporting is simplified.

anti-Muslim motives. To recognise an anti-Muslim motive, it is important to consider that persons are perceived as Muslims based on phenotypic characteristics, name, language, ascribed/actual origin and/or residence status, regardless of whether a religious affiliation exists. This means that people who have fled from Muslim countries and/or people

Background

No	Indicator	Indicative question to be asked
1	**Context**	Was the person affected marked as a Muslim (based on clothing, language etc.)?
2	**Time**	Which temporal references can be identified (anniversaries of violent attacks against Muslims and Muslim communities, Utøya attacks etc., or for instance Islamic holidays)?
3	**Incident patterns**	Were there similar incidents nearby (social media calls for attacks)?
4	**Threats**	Were there any threats beforehand? (e.g., social media, flyers etc.)?
5	**Intersectionality**	Did the perpetrator act for other reasons (sexism, anti-Black racism, homophobia etc.)?
6	**Location**	Did the incident take place in a location perceived as related to Muslim life?
7	**Organised hate groups**	Does the perpetrator, from the affected person's perspective, have a connection to organised anti-Muslim hate groups (right-wing extremist groups, PEGIDA etc.)?
8	**Self-perception and perception by others**	What if the counsellor classifies the case as anti-Muslim, but the person affected by the incident does not?

The indicators mentioned can be found in the reporting form for those affected by anti-Muslim racism and for witnesses of anti-Muslim racism. The database for counselling centres is based on these indicators, which should enable the counsellors to identify anti-Muslim motives. To recognise an anti-Muslim motive, it is important to consider that persons are perceived as Muslims based on phenotypic characteristics, name, language, ascribed/actual origin and/or residence status, regardless of whether a religious affiliation exists. This means that people who have fled from Muslim countries and/or people

with a migratory background from Muslim countries can be perceived as Muslim. Alleged/actual religious and alleged/actual ethnic affiliation therefore often work together in case of assaults and discrimination motivated by anti-Muslim prejudices. Focusing on just one motive (either ethnicity or religious affiliation) can result in the anti-Muslim motive bias going unnoticed, although it may make the case more serious.

CLAIM currently forms a broad social alliance against anti-Muslim racism, Islamophobia and Muslim hostility by uniting and linking 47 Muslim and non-Muslim civil society actors in Germany. CLAIM is supported by Teilseiend e. V., funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) as part of the federal programme "Live Democracy!".

4.5.2 # Fighting Anti-Muslim Racism Through Specialised Counselling Centres – a Model from Berlin

4.5.2.1 **The Berlin State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination (LADS)**

Population: 3.821.881
ECCAR member since: 2006

The Berlin State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination (LADS) was established in 2007 and is located at the Senate Department for Justice, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination.. Its legal and content-related bases are the General Act on Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG) as well as the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act. The Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act came into force in 2020. Because of its status as a federal state, Berlin is vested with legislative competences.

The work of the LADS against anti-Muslim racism rests on several principles of anti-discrimination policies:

The LADS works closely with experts from civil societies and from communities affected by racism, antisemitism, antigypsyism and/or homophobia and transphobia. Thus, civil society stakeholders were also involved in elaborating the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act. The act offers, among others, the possibility to prosecute discriminatory acts of public institutions such as administrations, schools, or police. It also gives associations the right to initiate proceedings. Thus, the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act is also an achievement in the fight against anti-Muslim-racism. The Berlin State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination regards legal rights as fundamental for successful anti-discrimination policies. Additionally, public authorities have positioned themselves clearly against discrimination and diversity guidelines for the Berlin administration have been published. In a cross-departmental collaboration, the Senate Department for Justice, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination has developed a multilevel State Programme for Diversity. The Berlin State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination coordinates the State Programme for Diversity.

The main objectives of the Berlin State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination are:

– Localization and reduction of structural discrimination
– Anti-discrimination policies on specific grounds of discrimination while considering intersectional perspectives
– Funding a network-oriented anti-discrimination helpdesk and legal advice infrastructure
– Funding the empowerment of vulnerable groups
– Funding NGO projects through the "State Programme against Right-Wing
– Extremism, Racism, and Antisemitism"
– Funding NGO projects by the "State Initiative: Berlin supports self-determination and acceptance of gender and sexual diversity (IGSV)"
– Hosting the Independent Ombuds Office according to the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act
– Policy advice in legislative processes

The localisation and analysis of structural discrimination provides the inevitable basis for tailor-made measures against discrimination. This also holds for the fight against anti-Muslim racism. The State Office (LADS) works closely with professionalised NGOs. In a low threshold approach, a contact point and help desk infrastructure have been set up. Designated contact points offer support in cases of antisemitism, antigypsyism, homo-

and transphobia, anti-Black racism, and anti-Muslim racism. These support centres also document and analyse discrimination cases. Their results are published regularly. The monitoring centres work together closely and constantly revise their documentation standards. With regards to anti-Muslim racism the Berlin Senate funds two support and monitoring centres: The documentation and help desk centre Netzwerk gegen Diskriminierung und Islamfeindlichkeit (Network against Discrimination and Islamophobia) run by Inssan e. V. as well as REDAR - Research and Documentation Center for Anti-Muslim-Racism by Transaidency e. V. The Network against Discrimination and Islamophobia addresses mainly religiously identified Muslims, whereas REDAR addresses mainly secular persons who experienced anti-Muslim racism, based upon the ascription of a Muslim identity.

The designated support centres work closely with an in-depth anti-discrimination counselling centre (ADNB by TBB e. V.), that offers legal advice and supports those affected in taking legal action. In addition, a special counselling service for victims of right-wing, racist, and antisemitic violence (Reach Out by ARIBA e. V.) and a psychological counselling service for victims of violence (Opra by ARIBA e.V) complement the support structure.

After the right-wing extremist attack in Hanau (Hesse) in 2020, claiming the lives of nine victims, all with migrant history, Muslim, and Roma background, the IslamForum Berlin (Islam Forum of Berlin), as well as many NGOs and migrant self-organisations, called for a more in-depth analysis of anti-Muslim racism in Berlin. The Islam Forum is a board that organises exchanges between Berlin Muslim organisations and Berlin's administration. Hence, the Berlin Senate established an Expert Commission on Anti-Muslim Racism. This commission comprises experts from civil society, the Islam Forum and mosque communities as well as scientists. At the end of August 2022, the commission launched a report with recommendations.

These recommendations will serve as a guideline for developing further measures against anti-Muslim racism as well as for funding specific projects. Currently, nine projects that directly focus on anti-Muslim racism are funded. These projects range from empowerment offers for Muslim girls and young Muslim women, community building with mosques, setting up professional structures for youth work addressing young Muslims, empowerment, and participation projects for the prevention of radicalisation and the above-mentioned help desks to victim support and monitoring structures. Additionally, projects focusing on discrimination in certain fields like housing and education are of great importance. ADAS, Berlin's anti-discrimination office for schools, and "Fair Mieten – Fair Wohnen" (Rent fair – Live fair), Berlin's specialised agency working against discrimination on the housing market, are two important projects focusing on field analysis. Together with self-organisations f. ex. Sinti and Roma organisations, Muslim organisations, BIPoC organisations, they analyse the specific forms of discrimination experienced, considering multidimensional and intersectional forms of discrimination.

4.5.2.2

**Safeguarding the Right to Housing
("Fair mieten - Fair wohnen" - FMFW)**

The Structure

"Fair mieten - Fair wohnen", Berlin's specialised agency working against discrimination on the housing market is a project of the Berlin Senate Department for Justice, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination and its State Office for Equal Treatment and against Discrimination (LADS). An important strategic goal of the office is to systematically strengthen networking and cooperation in this field and thus develop a culture of low discrimination in renting and discrimination-free housing. The "Strategy + Networking" Department is responsible for implementing this goal. In this context, the office also continuously cooperates with the Senate Department for Urban Development, Building and Housing and with the Senate Department for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs as well as with the Welcome Centre Berlin and the district administrations on specific issues. In the "Counselling + Support for Those Affected" field, the specialised agency provides concrete support to people who are discriminated against on the housing market, e.g., because of their ethnic origin or religion.

"Fair mieten - Fair wohnen" is the only specialised agency in Germany that exclusively deals with the issue of discrimination in the field of housing. This unusual but very effective organisation is also an intersection of two work areas that pursue different approaches: Dialogue in "Strategy + Networking" and qualified partisan counselling in "Counselling + Accompaniment of Those Affected". The two areas are managed by two organisations on an equal footing: UP19 Stadtforschung + Beratung GmbH with, among others, research, and counselling competences in the field of housing and diversity management, and the human rights organisation Türkischer Bund in Berlin-Brandenburg e. V., which contributes many years of

experience in anti-discrimination work. Both areas of work are accompanied by an expert advisory board, which is made up of representatives of groups frequently affected by discrimination, representatives of the administration, welfare organisations, stakeholders from umbrella organisations in housing and a public as well as a big private housing company.

**Anti-Muslim
Racism in Housing**

Two counselling cases of the agency serve as an example for anti-Muslim racism on the housing market. In both cases, the pre-contractual correspondences and contract negotiations by mail and telephone were very friendly and the lessors approached the people looking for a flat, so that they had good reason to believe that they would get the flat in question. In one case, the lease agreement had already been drawn up. Only when the Islamic religious affiliation of the flat seekers, in both cases women with headscarves or hijabs, became known to the lessors shortly before the contract was concluded, did they very promptly withdraw from their "almost-commitments". Their reasons for withdrawing did not seem credible but sounded like a pretext: They claimed that the flat was too small or that relatives had suddenly expressed a need to move in. People perceived as Muslims also experience discrimination when looking for housing, and this is more or less pronounced regarding specific types of lessors (more pronounced e.g., in traditional cooperatives and small private lessors) and when living together in the neighbourhood.

The legal basis of the centre's work in all the areas mentioned is the Act on General Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG), at national level, in individual cases also the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act (Landesantidiskriminierungsgesetz, LADG).

**Empowerment
Approach**

It is equally important to recognise the political, structural, and institutional dimensions of anti-Muslim racism and to effectively counter discrimination based on certain ideas of culture, religion and/or origin. In its counselling work, FMFW pursues an empowerment approach to support people who are perceived as Muslim and who have experienced discrimination in coming to terms with what has happened and in defending themselves against discriminatory behaviour. This empowerment approach also means that both areas of the office work

together with anti-discrimination counselling centres, which specialise in combating discrimination against Muslims. For example, the Berlin project Netzwerk gegen Diskriminierung und Islamophobie INSSAN e. V. (Network against Discrimination and Islamophobia) is represented on the advisory board of Fair Mieten Fair Wohnen and both projects support each other regarding press relations and social media.

The anti-discrimination counselling centres in Germany work confidentially, independently of funding from administrations and in a biased manner in the interest of those affected, taking their wishes into account. Such counselling centres are indispensable to empower those affected in situations where there is a clear imbalance of power to the disadvantage of vulnerable groups.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take equal treatment seriously, strengthen anti-discrimination work, take a public stand against anti-Muslim racism and work in a network in the relevant political areas and administration.
- Make the intersectionality of discrimination visible, which often affects Muslim women, but also address discrimination that may be taboo in Muslim groups.
- Do not only raise awareness for anti-Muslim racism in politics and administration, but also professionalise them regarding institutional and direct discrimination racism.
- Recognise and acknowledge in all relevant areas of political and administrative action that migrant and Muslim neighbourhoods are emerging. Do not expose these as problem neighbourhoods but develop them from within with measures compensating for disadvantages and communicate the structures and the added-value of social networks in these neighbourhoods, also in the context of "welcoming neighbourhoods" for current refugee-related migration.
- In dialogue with the housing industry, ensure a non-discriminatory/low-discriminatory housing culture, and provide mediation in urban development issues (such as acceptance of religious buildings).
- Support publicly commissioned trial projects (like f. ex. the City of Ghent) and regularly monitor and report on any discrimination in the housing sector, specify how specific groups are affected.

(Fair mieten - Fair wohnen)

It is equally important to recognise the political, structural, and institutional dimensions of anti-Muslim racism and to effectively counter discrimination based on certain ideas of culture, religion and/or origin.

(Fair mieten - Fair wohnen)

4.5.2.3 **Ensuring Equal Treatment in Education
("Anlaufstelle für Diskriminierungsschutz an Schulen" - ADAS)**

The first Anti-Discrimination Office for Schools (ADAS) in Germany was started by the educational civil society organisation LIFE e. V. as a model project and is financed by the State of Berlin since 2021. Other important milestones in Berlin were the introduction of a ban on discrimination and an obligation to protect schoolchildren from discrimination based on the Berlin Schools Act and the Berlin State Anti-Discrimination Act.

ADAS has been advising and supporting people who have either been discriminated against in a Berlin school or who have witnessed discrimination and want to do something about it. Those affected by discrimination can be students, parents but also teachers, pedagogical staff, or parent representatives.

Discrimination in schools is often subtle and structural and is not easily recognisable for those affected or there is insufficient evidence to prove it. On the one hand, the goal of ADAS in its function as contact point is to provide low-threshold support according to the needs of those affected and to show ways to take effective action against discrimination in school. On the other hand, schools are supported in addressing discrimination in a solution-oriented manner and in anchoring strategies for structural protection against discrimination.

Muslim students and students perceived as Muslim and their parents are among the groups with a particularly high risk of experiencing discrimination in schools: In 20% of all cases, discrimination was directly related to the Islamic religious affiliation of the person concerned. There is discrimination with an explicit reference to Islam, whereby discrimination or unequal treatment openly refers to the religious affiliation with Islam. Among others, visible signs of Muslim life are problematised, denigrated, rejected, or banned (e.g., the headscarf, prayer).

65% of those affected by discrimination were people with a family background from countries where most of the population is Muslim, such as Turkey or the MENA region. In this group, which makes up more than half of those affected, the anti-Muslim racism is experienced regardless of whether those affected are Muslims.

Example: A 10th grader who fled from Afghanistan to Germany two years ago is repeatedly greeted by other children with comments like: "We have to be careful with you, you will definitely set off bombs soon!"

A large proportion of cases reported to ADAS involve discrimination in which students are the victims and the discrimination comes from teachers and the school. This includes forms of direct discrimination, such as derogatory, racist statements and disadvantages.

Example: A school social worker made the remark at school, "We now have two girls with headscarves again, and if two start wearing headscarves, it will spread like a disease."

There are also reports of indirect or institutional discrimination such as general school rules that make it difficult or impossible for Muslim students to practice their religion at school, for instance wearing a head covering or a headscarf or praying on the school premises — even during breaks in the yard — is forbidden.

Example: A girl came to elementary school one day wearing a headscarf. She was pressured to take the scarf off: The teacher asked her to take it off immediately, otherwise she would no longer be allowed to take part in class. The girl said that she had decided to wear the headscarf herself and kept it on, whereupon the teacher put her in the back of the classroom at a single table and told her that she would no longer be asked to answer questions. Her classmates felt encouraged by the teacher's behaviour and began to bully the girl and tried to pull the headscarf off her head.

The Muslim parent representative who reported the case to ADAS filed a complaint about the situation at the school:

„Everyone believes in the German constitution, in the freedom of religion and that no one should be disadvantaged. At the same time, the school does everything to discriminate against the girls who wear headscarves or to ban fasting. During swim class, Muslim girls are always under scrutiny as to whether they showered naked or not. And that really happens daily. (…)"

In addition to Muslim schoolgirls who wear a headscarf, Muslim boys and boys who are perceived as Muslim are particularly often affected by multidimensional discrimination at school, linked to their gender as well as their ethnic origin and religion.

Gender-specific discrimination of boys is expressed, among others, in the fact that boys are treated differently in everyday school life, based on the stereotypical and prejudiced assumption that Muslim men are allegedly more aggressive. They are either the only ones to be punished for the same (mis)behaviour or harder than others.

Together with scientists from the Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg and the University of Trier, ADAS surveyed young Muslim people in mosque communities and at Muslim youth work events in Berlin between 2019 and 2021. The results of the study showed that young Muslims often experience an atmosphere that made them feel excluded due to their Islamic identity. For example, negative comments about Islam are part of everyday school life in many schools: more than half of young people (62%) stated that there are teachers at their school who make negative comments about certain religions. The negative comments related almost exclusively (92%) to Islam. In addition, it was reported that experiences of discrimination are part of the everyday life for Muslim schoolchildren and, above all, that girls and young women who are recognisable as Muslims by their headscarf experience negative reactions to the visibility of their religious affiliation. Most of the negative reactions, e.g., in the form of derogatory remarks and stereotypisation, come from teachers.

Example: One headmaster said to a girl that she should take off her headscarf and asked: "Is she the cleaning lady or what?"

More than a third of young Muslim people report having experienced forms of direct discrimination, insults, bullying and assaults at school. Most of the reported discrimination came from school staff. On top of that, Muslim students also reported disadvantages in the classroom:

"Most of the girls who wore headscarves were given an unfair mark; couldn't tell us apart."

Or:

"Everything was always explained to the German students individually and we were often ignored."

Lessons Learnt

☑   On the one hand, the work of ADAS in Berlin shows, that Muslim students, especially girls who wear a headscarf, are at high risk of experiencing discrimination in schools. On the other hand, the experience of setting up the Berlin contact point ADAS shows that independent anti-discrimination offices set up specifically for schools are important actors in effectively supporting those affected by discrimination in the education system and in reducing discrimination in schools in the long term.

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- Important recommendations for effectively counter-acting anti-Muslim racism in schools are the empowerment of young people and parents, as well as further training for teachers and school staff.
- In the legal field, it is important to further develop the anti-discrimination law in Germany in such a way that schools are also obligated to take appropriate measures to accommodate religious needs. This would make it easier for Muslim students to practice their religion at school, e.g. by fasting or performing the obligatory prayer, without having to proof individual discrimination, which is a difficult case.

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4.5.3

Local Good Practice

4.5.3.1

**"A Safe and Secure City also Needs
to Be a Safe and Secure Digital City"
- Tackling Online Hate (Malmö, Sweden)**

Population: 351.749
ECCAR member since: 2006

Background

This pilot project focuses on questions of security and safety in a digital environment, even though online life in Malmö cannot be completely separated from the life that takes place offline.

When Malmö became a member of the Nordic Safe Cities network at the beginning of 2020, Malmö's digital "mood" was hardly mapped. Threats and hatred affect people online and few cities today have a systematic overview of what online life looks like at the municipal level. We wanted to move from guessing or supposing to knowing.

Platforms

We decided to focus on two social media platforms: Facebook (FB) and Flashback (a national social platform with roots in the extreme right). A digital map of Malmö was created for Facebook (local pages, media, associations and more; only-open/public pages/groups, approx. 800). The conversations on Flashback were analysed based on thread starters that contain "Malmö" (406).
We chose Facebook because it is still the largest and most common social media platform in Sweden (about 70% of all Swedes use it). The goal of the pilot project was to analyse

the "digital streets and squares" where many Malmö residents "meet each other" but should not be exposed to hatred/threats/racism. Of course, there are groups (such as closed Facebook groups) where the tone is aggressive and perhaps even hateful but participating in them is an active and personal choice. What is going on in closed groups may be of interest to other organisations, but the municipality's preventive work often focuses on societal issues and the situational perspective. In this pilot, that is what is interesting for the City of Malmö, not matters related to security at the level of intelligence services or matters related to criminal investigations.

Algorithm

The linguistic algorithm is based on the Swedish language and thus does not capture hatred, racism, or extremism in other languages. Data was aggregated to present an overall situation or problem picture and no individual perceptions were of interest. The study has been conducted according to the GDPR.

Methodology

The Swedish Center for Preventing Violent Extremism was invited as a national partner. Nordic Safe Cities hired two Danish tech companies (Analysis & Speech and Common consultancy) to create the digital map image of Malmö and develop the language algorithm that would learn to identify and classify hate speech.

There are countless arguments about methodological shortcomings or considerations, but the most important thing is to be methodologically transparent and only interpret results based on these considerations. From a societal perspective, however, it is important to have general measures at the universal level with a very clear do-no-harm-perspective.

Analysis

The first analysis was presented in March 2020. It shows that Malmö has problems with online hatred and that hatred and racism arise from issues related to crime and migration and are in principle directed entirely at Muslims and/or people with (or perceived) MENA background (mixed). Hatred mostly arises if people who are perceived as/are Muslims or people with a MENA background (or others who stand up for them) point out injustices (and hatred is then directed at the minority or those who stand up for the minority).

On FB, local political discussions also provoke a lot of hate

Lessons Learnt

☑ Online hatred is a problem in itself: A safe and secure city also needs to be a safe and secure digital city.

☑ Online harassment is linked to what is happening in Malmö. Violence and crime lead to "peaks" of hatred. These peaks also occur when minorities stand up to injustice (e.g. discrimination), with hatred being directed at the current minority (as well as everyone who stands on that "side").

☑ The online hatred identified in the pilot initiative was almost exclusively Islamophobic/anti-Muslim racism and was directed at Muslims, or people perceived as such, and/or with roots in the MENA region. Behind hatred is a perception that Swedish nationality and security are exposed to threats or attacks.

vene preventively and actively online to ensure digital security. Political organisations are also welcome here. The first training was held online in November 2021. See also the civil society initiative "Codex Malmö" https://www.kodexmalmo.com/

Algorithm

Methodology

Analysis

MENA background (or others who stand up for them) point out injustices (and hatred is then directed at the minority or those who stand up for the minority).
On FB, local political discussions also provoke a lot of hate

speech. Of the approximately a quarter of a million comments that have been classified and analysed, 0.1% (FB) and 3.9% (Flashback) fall into the category of "hate".
An in-depth analysis, outside the pilot initiative but with the same algorithm was carried out when the Danish provocateur Rasmus Paludan announced his second visit to Malmö in May 2021, to carry out his "Everybody draw Mohammed Day". The digital analysis shows that it is possible with relatively simple means to break through the postulated "line of conflict", which in his (polarised) worldview stands between freedom of speech and Islam. By giving room for a nuanced voice in the middle, a good strategy is to stand in the middle and turn your back on hatred. That discovery was a coincidence: a civil society stakeholder called on political parties and other civil society actors to "turn their backs on hatred". We could see that the initiative made a difference.

Within the framework of the pilot investigation, two more analyses will be carried out. But since the first one already showed the problems with Islamophobic/anti-Muslim racist views so clearly, an action plan has been worked out to be launched as soon as possible. Continued analysing is of course important, but the steering group of the action plan agrees that the results are clear enough to initiate the action plan now.

❶ Strengthen the digital voice among organisations and build a "nuanced digital centre".

The Three Overarching Parts of the Action Plan:

Malmö moderates (education, concept, and de-escalation)

In autumn, we offer trainings for civil society actors in Malmö and other organisations, and help them navigate the digital world, reduce hatred online on their own platforms and places with a lot of hatred in the digital city and create a group with several moderate digital voices that oppose extremism online. The goals here are to get the many skilled civil society organisations we have in Malmö to become active online, to dare and try to create digital security and gain the competence to intervene preventively and actively online to ensure digital security. Political organisations are also welcome here. The first training was held online in November 2021. See also the civil society initiative "Codex Malmö" https://www.kodexmalmo.com/

②   **Build a "triage team", which will prevent, coun-
teract, and deal with polarisation in the digital de-
bate, both in the long term and in crises situations.
Police, municipality, civil society actors.**

Malmö collaborates online

We held meetings with the Oslo online police, which helped us
find a model where the authorities in Malmö — municipality,
police, and civil society actors — together can ensure security
on our "digital streets", to enter into a dialogue with citizens
and be present where they are. Here, the public and civil
society need to work together. It is essential, to assign clear-
ly defined roles, just like in all other work we do: the police
investigate and prevent crime, the city supports individuals
regarding specific issues but also in general regarding the city's
challenges, corrects factual errors and communicates, while
civil society can show alternative paths, present alternative
narratives, and engage Malmö residents in their activities.

③   **Create a secure local democracy with a non-
polarising and inclusive debate climate.**

Safe local politics and a non-polarising and inclusive debate
climate.

Local political stances, statements, and decisions, as well as
media attention to crime and violence give rise to much hatred.
    Malmö city supports political parties in their attempt to
identify hatred, actively distance themselves from hatred and
thereby create a secure local democracy with a non-polarising
and inclusive debate climate. This includes talks at the
political level about how all politicians in Malmö can take
responsibility for the conversation online and on their own
platforms, including helping to take the lead in defending a
secure local democracy in Malmö, where everyone can partic-
ipate. In these talks, the political leaders must be supported
and trained in safe online behaviour and on what to do when
they are exposed to threats and hatred.

Discrimination Observatory (Barcelona, Spain)

Barcelona's Office for Non-Discrimination (OND) has been around for more than twenty
years, and so has a wide variety of social organisations working to provide support for
the most vulnerable groups. Since 2017, the City Council and many social organisations
have joined forces with the board of the Service Assistance for Victims of Discrimination
(SAVD in Catalan), which has grown every year, so that 22 social city organisations and
the OND are currently cooperating. This is a workspace where methodologies and knowl-
edge are shared and where collaboration is encouraged, with the ultimate objective of
offering the best possible assistance to people affected by discrimination.
    Another essential goal is to raise awareness about the types of discrimination that
occur in the city and to improve data collection, so that we can design strategies that go
to the root of the problem. Therefore, the Barcelona Discrimination Observatory[XX] was
created. It has been publishing an annual report since 2018 on the work, data, and reflec-
tions of the OND as well as the board.
    The report combines qualitative and quantitative analysis, organised around seven
questions:

①   Who is being discriminated against?
②   Who discriminates?
③   Where does this discrimination occur?
④   For what reason?
⑤   What rights are violated?
⑥   How is this discrimination expressed?
⑦   What is the response of the OND and the specialist organisations to this
discrimination, and what are the results of these actions?

The answers that we obtain allow us to present and analyse the causes that are con-
cealed behind cases of discrimination in the city, which are only the tip of the iceberg.
In most cases, discrimination is linked to profound, structural problems, such as racism
and xenophobia, hostility against the LGBTQI+ community, and gendered discrimina-
tion.

Discrimination in Figures

16% of Barcelona's residents have experienced a discriminatory situation in their neighbourhood. That is the conclusion of the 2020 Barcelona Metropolitan Area Coexistence and Neighbourhood Relations Survey (ECAMB), which shows the experiences of discrimination in the city's neighbourhoods, based on interviews with 5,437 people in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, 4,043 of them in the City of Barcelona, carried out between 29 October and 23 December 2020.

However, if we look at the discrimination cases reported to the OND or to a member organisation of the SAVD Board, the figures are much lower: in the 2020 report,[XXI] there were 436 reported discriminatory situations. Discrimination on the grounds of religion amounted to 32 cases in 2020, 7.3% of the total and more than twice the 2019 figure of 14 cases. With 28 cases, we can also see a clear predominance of Islamophobia among discrimination cases, compared to two cases of antisemitism and one case linked to Christianophobia. If we focus on discrimination on the grounds of religion and racism and xenophobia, we find that in 84% of the situations these grounds were linked; this link was especially important in cases of Islamophobia, which made up most cases on the grounds of religion, which were recorded by the OND and the SAVD Board of Organisations.

In 78% of cases, discriminators were individuals (53%) and private organisations and companies (25%), while discrimination predominantly occurred in private areas, the majority in houses, flats and other dwellings (7).

The Fight against Islamophobia in Barcelona

Thanks to its Municipal Plan Against Islamophobia, the City of Barcelona is a pioneer in launching a very powerful and comprehensive instrument to fight Islamophobia.[XXII] In 2020, the Observatory of Islamophobia in Catalonia (ODIC) was created with a double objective: to centralise all reports of Islamophobia that occur in the Catalan territory and to support their social and/or judicial denunciation, while at the same time making visible the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Catalonia.

Types of Discrimination

Who discriminates?

Public
authority

9,4%

Police
forces

12,5%

53,1%

25%

Individuals
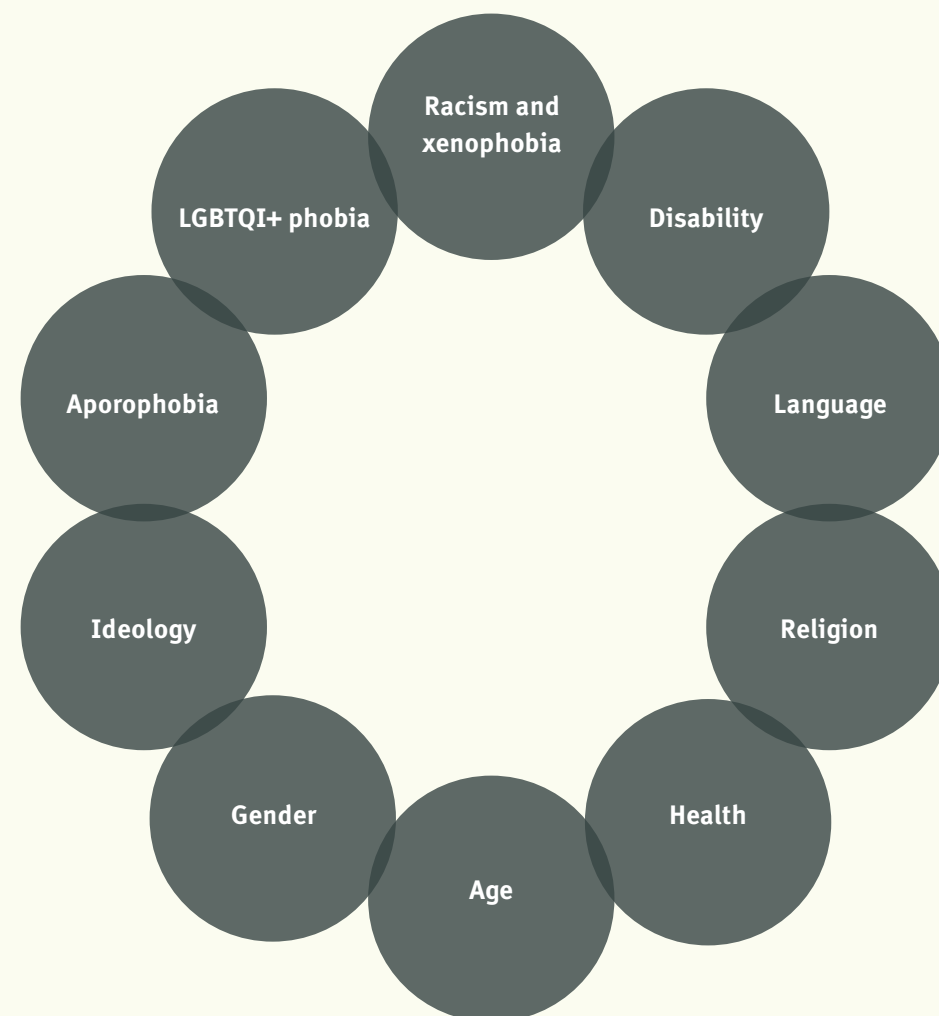
Private
organisations/
companies
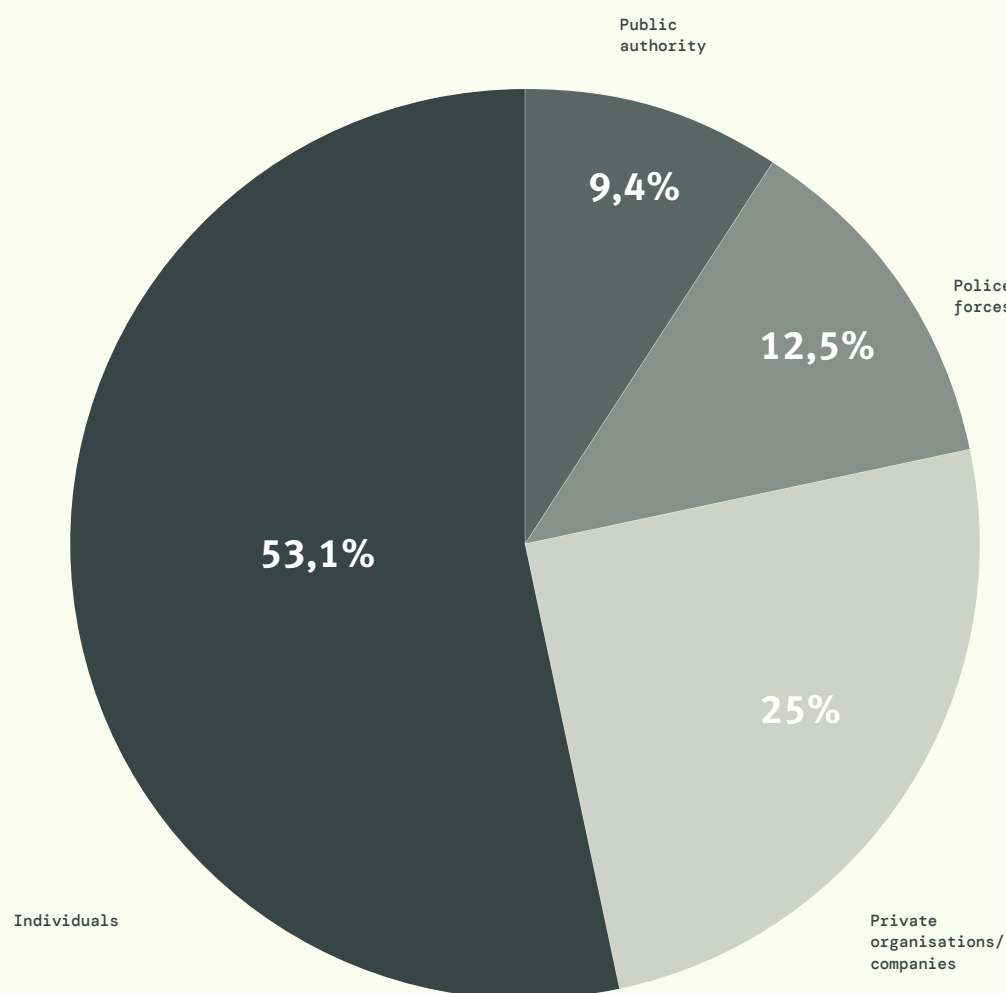
Its launch strategy considered several aspects. Firstly, directed at citizens, setting up the website and different audio-visual resources that explain the work of the Observatory in seven languages (Spanish, Catalan, standard Arabic, Urdu, Wolof, Amazigh, English, French and Darija). Creating a network was also essential: The ODIC contacted many entities in the Catalan territory, including Islamic entities (mainly mosques), human and civil rights entities and organisations concerned with the fight against discrimination and racism, as well as with the relevant public administration bodies. It also reinforced its collaboration with existing partners, such as the Service Assistance for Victims of Discrimination (SAVD) board, led by Barcelona's Office for Non-Discrimination.

However, implementation has not been easy. To start with, the ODIC's creation coincided with the pandemic, which greatly hampered the Observatory's work. Another fundamental challenge are the limited economic and human resources, given that it only has one staff member (no full-time position). Therefore, the Observatory's reach, which is set to cover the entire Catalan territory, is limited. Another challenge – that also applies to other types of discrimination documented in the Barcelona Discrimination Observatory Report – is the normalisation of day-to-day Islamophobic attitudes, even with people who are affected by them.

Despite the challenges, the ODIC published its first annual report last year, which collected the complaints it received throughout 2020.

After carefully analysing the cases that were clearly linked to Islamophobic motivations (19 in Catalonia, eleven in Barcelona) some valuable conclusions can be drawn from the report:

····⟩ **Islamophobia is always, in one way or another, institutional.** The report distinguishes three main categories, based on the different types of cases: personal, which is the leading one with 44% of cases, followed by institutional at 34%, and symbolic with 22% of analysed cases. However, the ODIC concludes that in so far as the expression of these Islamophobic actions entails the existence of an asymmetrical relationship between the aggressor and the affected person, most actions are motivated by the will to cause harm, yet

they remain unpunished. Therefore, there is a clear structural and institutional component to be observed in the patterns of Islamophobic actions.

⇢ **The gender dimension is a key explanatory vector.**
The disproportionate presence of cases that involve Muslim women – or who are perceived as such – in the cases reported in 2020, especially when they were in public spaces, clearly indicates the extent to which Muslim women are, at all levels, the object of Islamophobia.

**Positive Results
of the ODIC**

– The project has confirmed that there are people (Muslims and non-Muslims) who are very committed to defending human rights in the city and to fighting Islamophobia in particular.
– It is necessary to continue expanding and reinforcing the network to reach all of them. In this respect, at a communicative level, creating content in different languages has been essential, especially in that of minority populations (the Observatory's launch materials were published in Spanish, Catalan, standard Arabic, Urdu, Wolof, Amazigh, English, French and Darija).
– This strategy has made it possible to reach many apparently hard-to-reach communities who have shown a very good predisposition to getting involved and to contributing to defending these rights.

Despite all obstacles, the ODIC is a fundamental body for the fight against Islamophobia in the city (and the rest of Catalonia), and up until now has managed to lay the foundations for the collection of cases related to Islamophobia. It has become a reference for all people who are affected by Islamophobia in any of its manifestations, and for communities and entities that deal with this structural problem.

4.5.3.3

"BanHate": Europe's First Reporting App
for Hate Speech (Graz, Austria)

Population: 292.630
ECCAR member since: 2006

The Antidiscrimination Office Styria (ADS), located in Graz, the capital of the canton Styria, is an institution that offers counselling to people who feel discriminated against irrespective of legal protection. An increasing number of hate speech cases were reported to the ADS, which is why in 2017, the ADS developed its first mobile application for reporting hate postings in a non-bureaucratic manner and independent of platforms ("BanHate"). The app is available for free (iOS-store, Google Play store). Reports are examined for posts originating in Austria while hate speech on social media can be reported in all German-speaking areas. Consolidated counselling, promoting civic courage, anonymity, reduced bureaucratic obstacles as well as reporting and recording of hate speech and hate crimes are the foundation of the BanHate app.

The application allows you to report hate speech with only a few clicks. Reports are subsequently examined for criminal content by legal practitioners and, where indicated, forwarded to appropriate agencies and authorities.

The ADS is equally dedicated to counteracting hate crimes. Cooperating with police in Graz already since 2014, Austria's first and only study on hate crimes was carried out by the ADS. Austria is being criticised internationally for not collecting relevant data. Therefore, the BanHate app was extended to allow for reporting hate crimes in May 2020. This is set to help affected individuals and witnesses in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles when reporting these crimes, to provide in-depth and anonymised legal counselling as well as promote civic courage of witnesses.

On an annual basis, the ADS presents its "(Online) Hate Report Austria", including all statistics on reports through the BanHate app and current trends. Over 10,900 reports have been registered since the app was launched.

Statistics 2020 and 2019[XXIII]

For more information, visit **www.banhate.com**

3215

| 1465 |
| 1750 |

2020

1822

| 1072 |
| 750 |

2019

1694

| 697 |
| 997 |

2020
4th quarter
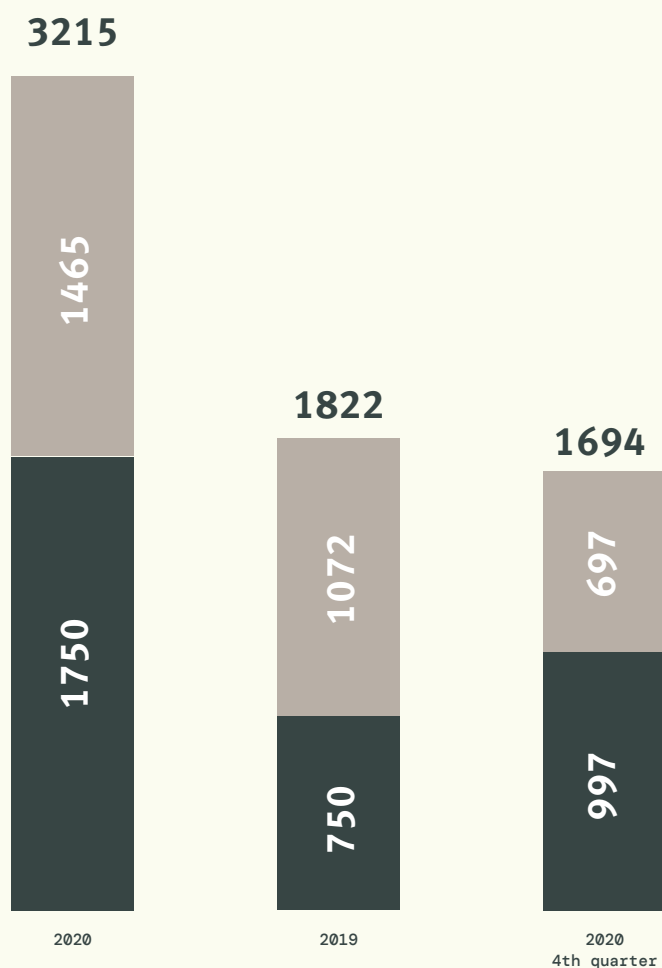
4.5.3.4   **Research for Policy: Muslims and Labour Market
Discrimination (Rotterdam, Netherlands)**

Population: 650.000
ECCAR member since: 2008

The IDEM is the Rotterdam Urban Expertise Centre for inclusion, discrimination and (LGBTQI+) emancipation. We are committed to an urban society where there is room for everyone. A society where everyone ca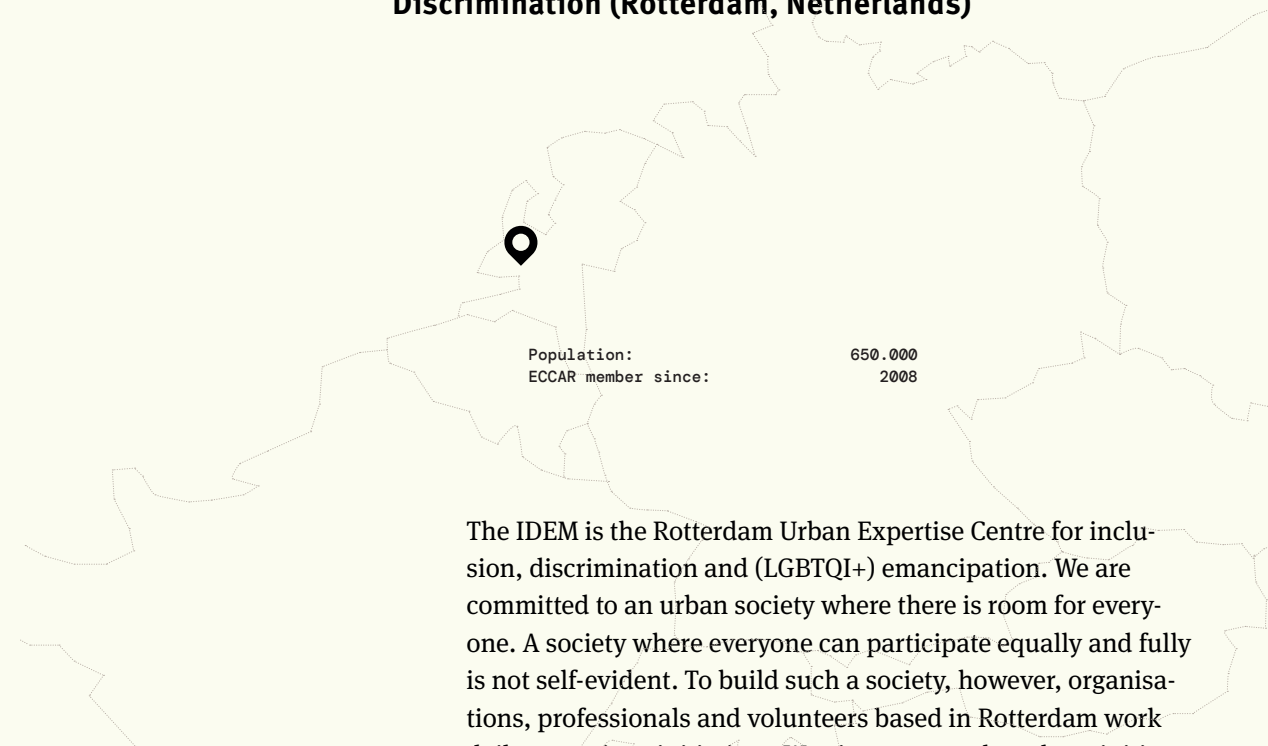n participate equally and fully is not self-evident. To build such a society, however, organisations, professionals and volunteers based in Rotterdam work daily on various initiatives. We aim to strengthen these initiatives by connecting organisations and people and ensuring that expertise and local knowledge is available and shared. For that we rely on a passionate team of researchers, networkers, and specialists. The IDEM works in an advisory capacity for the Municipality of Rotterdam. It was commissioned by RADAR, the City Administration's agency for equal treatment and against discrimination of the Municipality of Rotterdam, and Stichting art.1, a Dutch expertise centre for discrimination.

**Research on
Discrimination of
Muslim Women on
the Labour Market**

One of the research projects the IDEM conducted in the last years focused on discriminatory experiences of Muslim women on the labour market in Rotterdam. Therefore, the IDEM interviewed a group of twenty Muslim women who work in Rotterdam. The research showed that the group of women had experienced discrimination in the labour market on several grounds. They had had to deal with discrimination based on their religious identity, but they had also experienced racism and sexism. That is why this research used an intersectional approach, which means that we looked at different partial

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identities such as ethnic background, skin colour, gender, education level and socioeconomic status. We made this decision because the intersections of these identity axes influence each other and lead to different experiences.

Results

The interviews show that the women are more aware of discriminatory experiences. They say that they recognised discrimination better retrospectively and that they now have the courage to call it out. Analysis shows that this is mostly due to the current discourse and political movements targeting stigmatised groups and because now they themselves had a better understanding of the social position they are assigned.

It also appears that all interviewed women are confronted with prejudices and stereotypes in the workplace, to a greater or lesser extent. Over the years there seems to be a shift from more explicit forms of discrimination to more implicit ones. This may also be partly explained by the social climate which does not allow space for explicit hate speech anymore. Prejudices and stereotypes are embedded in more subtle forms of discriminatory violence, such as micro-aggressions.
The interviewed women use various coping strategies to deal with discrimination, both consciously and unconsciously. These strategies are sometimes used interchangeably, or different strategies are used at different times. Resistance strategies are used more often by younger women. These women resisted discrimination, for example by responding to a comment and entering into a dialogue, using humour, offering explanations about ethnicity, Islam, and Muslim women. We also found resistance concerning policy and governance measures.

Finally, the interviewed Muslim women often said that the more diverse their team or department is, the more recognition they experience and the more they feel that they can be themselves at the workplace. In such cases "diversity at the workplace" means that their colleagues do not necessarily have to be other Muslim women, but they can also be Persons of Colour, have different religious backgrounds, sexual identities, ethnic identities, socio-economic statuses and so on.

The interviewed Muslim women see two ways in which discrimination against Muslims can be countered structurally.

- On the level of legislation and policy, in particular agencies and organisations have a great responsibility to counter discrimination against Muslim women.
- Discrimination should be tackled through interventions. This includes education and (facilitation of) encounters and dialogue, with a focus on raising awareness and reducing prejudices and stereotypes.
- The women we interviewed wanted their voices to be heard (more). Studies like the present one can contribute to putting discrimination against Muslim women on the agenda of policymakers.
- There is a definite need for more alliances. Non-Muslims should speak out against anti-Muslim discrimination and offer support.

place.

(IDEM)

Results

Finally, the interviewed Muslim women often said that the more diverse their team or department is, the more recognition they experience and the more they feel that they can be themselves at the workplace.

(IDEM)

Intercultural Competence in Education

4.6.1 Youth Voice (Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations - FEMYSO)

FEMYSO (Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations) is a pan-European network of 33 member organisations across 20 European countries and is the voice of Muslim youth in Europe and is regularly consulted on issues pertaining to young Muslims. FEMYSO's vision is to be the leading voice for European young Muslims, developing and empowering them, and working to build a diverse, cohesive, and vibrant Europe. Anti-Muslim hatred has a deep-rooted history in Europe and more recently colonialism exacerbated this hatred making it more complex and difficult to spot and tackle. From this point of view, this type of discrimination is among the most complex, combining elements common to other forms of discrimination like Afrophobia, antisemitism and antigypsyism with racialisation elements labelling Muslims (whether born or convert) as the immigrant and the foreigner. Moreover, the data from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is key to understanding part of the anti-Muslim hatred in Europe, not only as a bottom-up issue but also as a systemic top-down issue. Since 2012, the agency has denounced "various significant international, European, and national case law and rulings, UN human rights body decisions, reports, findings by human rights and equality bodies and organisations relating to hate crime, hate speech and discrimination against Muslims, as well as relevant research, reports, studies, data, and statistics on these issues.

According to <u>OSCE's Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims</u> to which FEMYSO contributed, students face several negative effects because of being subject to discrimination or intolerance such as:

- low self-esteem
- self-segregation
- internalised oppression
- disengagement from school activities
- not fulfilling their potential
- attraction to violent extremist ideologies
- drop out/school refusal
- health problems/depression, and suicidal thoughts

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Education should aim to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and develop educational materials and tools to counter Islamophobia, such as guidelines for teachers and educators. An example is the initiative implemented by the Italian organisation "Un ponte per", that developed the "Combating the Structural Drivers of Anti-Muslim Hatred and Intolerance" project in collaboration with the EU. One of the objectives was to increase general awareness and resilience to structural drivers among the population through the dissemination of information and online platforms. Therefore, training on Islamophobia was provided to staff teachers of primary and secondary schools by experts on Islamophobia and discrimination. These trainings were entitled: "Islamophobia in schools: How to understand its triggers, overcome stereotypes, avoid conflicts and promote social cohesion practices". The purpose of this training was first and foremost to be a self-assessment tool for educators, but also to provide a topic for discussion that they could bring back to their students. This specific training was set up for 150 teachers and comprised eight hours.
- Educational programmes for school students as part of social studies or civic education where they learn about Islamophobia and its effects. It can also be part of summer schools and schools can experiment first and assess the outcomes. It could be useful to provide spaces for students where they can actively learn about Islamophobia.
- Training on unconscious bias and stereotyping for school counsellors and psychologists enabling them to adequately address the issues that Muslim students face. Making sure that the counselling and psychological support for young people are not connected to governmental programmes on preventing extremism efforts. Counselling for young Muslim victims of Islamophobic abuses is a sensitive issue. When such services subject the young

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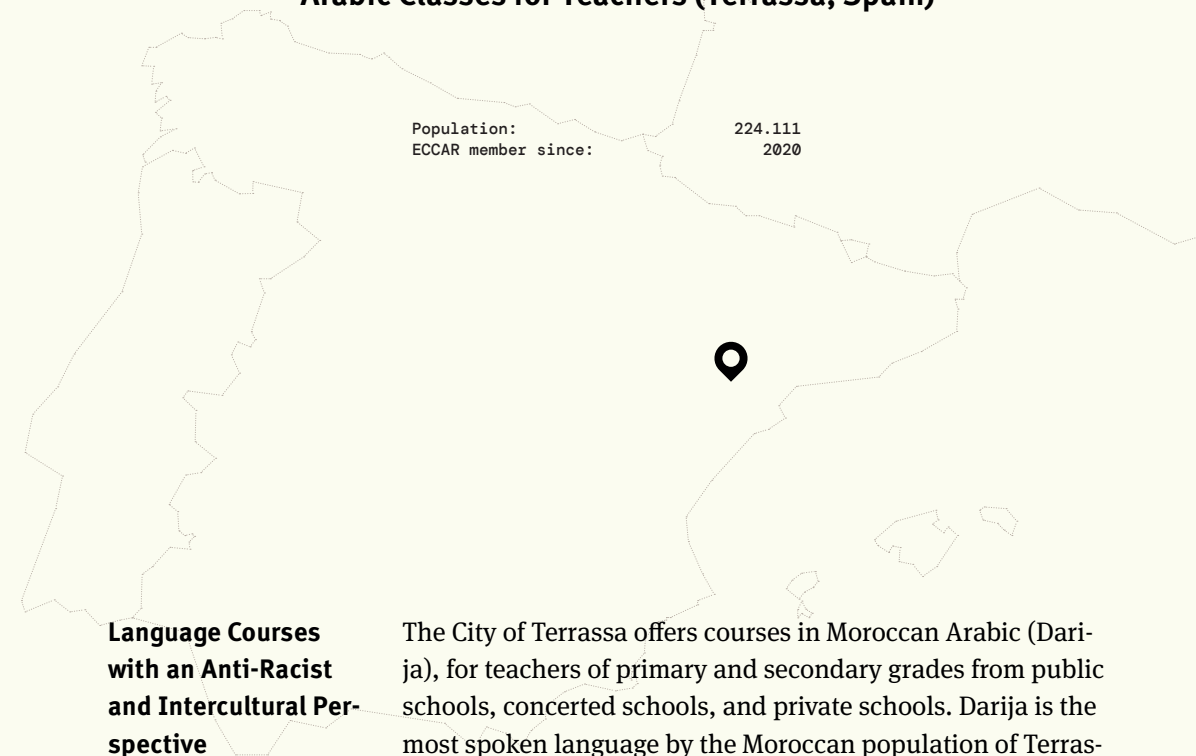person to scrutinising, that can be detrimental to the mental health of the victim of Islamophobic abuse.

- School policies must protect victims of bullying and hate-speech. The guidelines should be practical, easy to implement, and their success should be measurable. Schools should appoint anti-racism officers that can monitor and properly address Islamophobic incidents. Schools should collaborate with Muslim youth organisations to raise awareness on Islamophobia, its impacts or to jointly elaborate the policies.
- Decolonisation of school curricula: reviewing the curricula in a functional way to dismantle the orientalist perspective in schoolbooks. Example: One school in Italy used a non-accurate and Islamophobic narrative in a history book published by the major publisher Mondadori and was denounced by Muslim academic Francesca Bocca. She was later called to edit and update the content. Schools should adequately elaborate the curricula, and editors must collaborate with experts on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred, to ensure that the content is accurate, fact-checked, and comprehensive. Representation of Muslim academia in education to reflect inclusivity in schools.
- Ensure respect for religious commitments and practices such as prayer, dress codes and dietary requirements. Schools can implement silent rooms where all students can go for reflection and prayer. Moreover, promote tolerance towards dress codes from religious diversity (hijab, turbans, kippa …) within educational spaces. Schools should cater to dietary needs of all students, by offering halal, vegetarian, vegan and kosher options.
- Implementation of national curricula for religious studies in collaboration with the religious community in question. The example of Finland [XXIV] shows how in national contexts, where religious studies are compulsory until the age of 16, all religions have their own national curriculum which is developed by the Ministry of Education, allows for inclusivity and allows students to preserve their religious identities.

4.6.2

Local Good Practice

4.6.2.1

**Mutual Recognition Through Language:
Arabic Classes for Teachers (Terrassa, Spain)**

Population: 224.111
ECCAR member since: 2020

Language Courses with an Anti-Racist and Intercultural Perspective

The City of Terrassa offers courses in Moroccan Arabic (Darija), for teachers of primary and secondary grades from public schools, concerted schools, and private schools. Darija is the most spoken language by the Moroccan population of Terrassa, which is the largest community of migratory background in the city. It is spoken by 6.01% of the total population. In some neighbourhoods, this percentage exceeds 40% of its total population.

Rationale

Being able to say some words in Darija in the classroom, on the one hand helps to recognise students of Moroccan origin, and on the other hand to acknowledge (in the classroom, with the rest of the students) that that language has a value ("it is so valuable that even my teacher wants to learn it"). That favours a relationship of empathy and creates bonds, so that the other person is accepted in their entirety (their person, their language, their culture, their religion, etc. …), which in turn means that this person accepts you. The teachers told us how

their students were surprised and happy that they knew how to say some words in their language and that they even offered to practice with them and taught them new words so that they could expand their vocabulary. Likewise, the teachers recognised that the course had also allowed them to get closer to the families of Moroccan origin of the educational centre.

Furthermore, the sessions dedicated to anti-racism, intercultural perspective and religious diversity, allow participants to expand their knowledge, become aware of oppressions and privileges, learn to identify racism in the classroom (often invisible), know the services provided by the association SOS Racisme (in agreement with Terrassa Council) for victims of racism and adapt educational practices to make them more inclusive, taking into account diversity (origin, religious, cultural beliefs, etc.) of students in the classroom. Since the course was on Darija, special attention was paid to case studies relating to the Muslim religion (e.g., organisation of activities or examinations during Ramadan) and countering preconceptions and stereotypes about the Muslim population.

In addition, the course provides information on the normative framework (religious freedom as a fundamental right, also recognised in the Spanish constitution; the Spanish State's Cooperation Agreement with the Islamic Commission of Spain in 1992) and the implications of this legal framework in school contexts (freedom, rights, and obligations), and some materials and resources to address diversity of origin and/or belief in classrooms.

Teachers gave very positive feedback on this activity, both on the approach to language and on the socio-cultural and religious topics. Between 2019 and 2021, we have had six editions of the initial Darija course and an advanced Darija course (total: 106 participants), which were very well received by the teachers of the city. In the last quarter of 2022, we plan to offer two initial and one advanced course.

Course Contents

The language course is composed of 16 hours spread over eight sessions. It is based on a predominantly practical approach focusing on speaking skills including learning the Arabic alphabet and combinations of letters so that the teachers can pronounce the names and surnames of their students correctly. Other practical skills taught included different greetings,

Lessons Learnt

☑ Go beyond purely linguistic classes. For us, the success of the course lay in the combination of language classes with an intercultural perspective, anti-racism, and religious diversity (run by different professionals) to raise awareness for these issues among teachers. In addition, it is important to allow room for doubts and concerns (regarding norms, culture, religion, linguistics, etc.) that can be resolved during the course.

☑ Offer trainings with enough hours (we offered credits for courses of 15h and above) that are accredited by an institution (in our case the Pedagogical Resource Center) that fits the curriculum in your country (for selection processes, competitions, etc.).

☑ Set a minimum attendance rate of 80% to obtain the training certificate.

☑ Ask for feedback on the best dates and times to hold the course (in this case, we asked the Pedagogical Resource Centre for advice on what time during the school year, day of the week and what time would be most convenient).

☑ If there are enough participants, it may be interesting to organise groups according to the level at which they teach (preschool, primary or secondary school), since their (linguistic) needs will be different. However, if that is not possible, that is not a problem either (in our case, groups were always mixed)!

numbers, personal and possessive pronouns, body parts, colours and vocabulary related to the educational centre, the family, etc. We also adjusted the contents based on the demands expressed by participants, i.e., the teachers, during the course, using communicative patterns that allow everyone to interact in an educational context. Through a mixture of theory and practical exercises lead by different professionals, three sessions of the course are fully dedicated to the application of an intercultural and anti-racist perspective in situations or activities that might arise in the classroom or in the educational centre.

Certification

Teachers who have completed the "initial" level can progress to the "advanced" course which follows the same format (five sessions of Darija, two on an anti-racist perspective and one on religious diversity, taught by different professionals) allowing participants to deepen and to consolidate the knowledge acquired at the "initial" level. Participants obtain a certificate of attendance if they have attended at least 80% of classes. The certificate is issued by the Centro de Recursos Educativos, the Pedagogical Resource Centre.

Course Contents

focusing on speaking skills including learning the Arabic alphabet and combinations of letters so that the teachers can pronounce the names and surnames of their students correctly. Other practical skills taught included different greetings,

4.6.2.2

Religious Literacy Courses for Students
(Gothenburg, Sweden)

Population: 604.829
ECCAR member since: 2019

The project "Under the Same Sky" is based on the UN Decla-
ration of Human Rights and is set to work against all forms of
oppression and towards an increased understanding of human
diversity in the long run, as well as to develop interpersonal
relationships among students between 13 and 16 years.

During the courses that are offered as part of the project,
students will meet young adults from different religious back-
grounds. They will have the opportunity to reflect about what
separates or unites them with others, and how they can create
positive relationships, and grow into mature adults that take
over responsibility for each other.

One course comprises 15 sessions à 60-80 minutes, which
can be incorporated into a regular class schedule. The course
is designed for all schools, regardless of whether the majority
there is religious or secular.

Course Objectives

– To support the students in their individual process of
forming their identity
– To help classes develop a more inclusive and friendly
community
– To help students develop social abilities which enable
them to collaborate better with people from different
groups

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better. I think everyone
be okay, too."

Lessons Learnt

☑ There is no quick fix, it is about holding on over a
longer period to make a difference. Be patient!
☑ It is important to have a clear structure for your
courses, but you also need to be flexible to be able
to meet the individual school/class needs. You must
be able to respond to what happens in class.
☑ Peer role models are important. It is important that
the storytellers are young themselves so that they
can reach their peers.

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Course Objectives

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community
–   To help students develop social abilities which enable
them to collaborate better with people from different
groups

– To help students develop greater curiosity, more
understanding and tolerance for people´s different
perspectives and lifestyles
– To help students develop their knowledge, gain deeper
insights and a broader understanding of the concepts
of religion and culture
– To help students develop their abilities to see how the
course relates to the UN Universal Declaration of Hu-
man Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
as well as to the values at school and current events as
well as local and global events

By the summer of 2022, a total of 25 classes at six different
schools had been organised. To become a trainer, you need
to practice a religion and be active within established con-
texts such as an NGO or a religious community linked to
that religion. The project often collaborated with religious
communities to find trainers/young leaders. All instructors
take a training course to become what the project calls "sto-
rytellers". There are also further trainings for those who have
already passed the initial training. The project aims to achieve
a balance concerning, among other things, the religions that
are represented among the trainers. There is no guarantee
that everyone who attends the training will get assignments
immediately; this depends on demand and on the balance of
religions that are represented.

**Over the years, feedback has been very positive. Here are two
quotes from students who participated in the course:**

"I think all students should get to meet storytellers. Now I
understand why anyone is religious anyway. I didn't get that
before."

"I may not have learned a lot of facts about religion, but I
definitely learned to understand people better. I think everyone
needs to meet others to see that they can be okay, too."

I think all students should get to meet storytellers. Now I understand why anyone is religious anyway. I didn't get that before.

(Anonymous course participant)

4.6.2.3 **Jewish-Muslim Cooperation for Interreligious Dialogue (Malmö, Sweden)**

Amanah received the Malmö city award for human rights in 2019 for increasing knowledge among and understanding between people. Their work is based on interfaith collaboration in which Imam Salahuddin Barakat and Rabbi Moshe-David HaCohen play a central role.

With the City of Malmö award for human rights 2019, the City of Malmö wants to counteract discrimination and promote democracy and human rights. The award is set to draw attention to someone who has made a difference in the field of human rights in Malmö. This could be, for example, promoting anti-discrimination work, gender equality, children's rights or counteracting exclusion and furthering knowledge about how human rights can be put into practice.

Amanah is a Jewish-Muslim cooperation project whose purpose is to build trust and confidence between Jews and Muslims in Sweden, as well as to increase the understanding of the Jewish and Muslim religion, tradition, and culture among the majority population.

Municipal Funding The Municipal Board has been funding the initiative since 2016. In June 2019, the association Amanah received grants for 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 of ca. EUR 35,800 per year. The Municipal Board also decided that Amanah would submit the city office an annual report in connection with the call for additional funds.

Ramadan Special

ECCAR Policy Recommendations

At the beginning of April, many Muslim citizens across Europe started their 30-day-long fast during the Islamic month of Ramadan. Ramadan and its fast are considered highly important in Islam, as they constitute one of the five pillars of faith. The rule of thumb is that a fasting person abstains from food and drinks between dawn and sunset. However, the 30-days fasting period does not just mean abstaining from bodily pleasures, but it is also an important time of self-reflection, self-improvement, and of spiritual discipline. The month culminates in the three-day festivities of Eid-al-Fitr.

However, knowledge about Ramadan and about how Muslims manage their everyday tasks while fasting is limited among non-Muslims. Many Muslims face judgemental comments about their decision to fast, as it is considered too "extreme" to "not even drink water", or they face micro-aggressions through words such as, "just take a sip, God can't see you here". In 2022, the citizens' group PEGIDA Netherlands which stands for anti-Muslim racist political views announced to organise provocative "pork roasting" barbecues in front of Dutch mosques during Ramadan. As it usually is with misinformation, it can lead to tensions and, in the worst case, restrictions on religious freedom. For instance, in schools, teachers are worried that Muslim students will not be able to concentrate on studying, if they are fasting, and they resort to forbidding students to fast. The worst is that such rules are made without really listening to those affected. Every person reacts differently to fasting and takes their time to adjust to the new rhythm. There is no compulsion in the Islamic faith for a person to fast if it causes health issues. For those who want to exercise their religious freedom by adhering to this spiritual practice, imposed bans can cause more moral harm than "safeguarding" their well-being.

It is important to remember that fasting as a religious practice is not only observed by Muslims. Many Christian denominations observe fasts in one way or another. Orthodox Churches for instance observe the 40 days of Great Lent fast and abstain from certain foods. The Jewish religion has fasting rules on Yom Kippur like the Islamic fast. Moreover, many people fast by different methods to reap health benefits, without any religious worldview as their motivation. Since fasting is a practice that connects people from

different backgrounds, Ramadan offers an excellent occasion for interfaith exchange, strengthening religious literacy and building better civic relations.

In their role as employers, contractors, service providers, and creators of democratic urban spaces, cities that are committed to anti-racism and inclusion as pillars of their local government can use Ramadan to tackle anti-Muslim racism and enhance social cohesion. Some ECCAR member cities, such as Malmö and Gothenburg, are already implementing good practices in interfaith dialogue and civic education by organising an annual Eid festival together with the local Muslim community that is open to all people regardless of their background. Kortrijk in Belgium has been organising an Iftar dinner with the local Muslim community.

While there are many possible ways of action, the Working Group Anti-Muslim Racism of ECCAR recommends the following ones that can be a sign of support for the Muslim communities during this month:

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

one's
Eid
Meals

- Organising panel discussions or other civic education programmes with religious and non-religious actors of civil society on the topic of fasting,
- Organising a citizens' iftar dinner in cooperation with the local Muslim community,
- Supporting the local Muslim community in organising the Eid-al-Fitr festivities and contributing to a cultural programme as part of the event,
- Ensuring that the administration in city institutions possess enough religious literacy to be aware of the sensitivities of Muslim colleagues/peers/students observing the Ramadan fast,
- Publishing official Ramadan greetings by the city mayor and other representatives,
- Ensuring that the local police authorities are aware of Ramadan and can recognise possible hate crimes that target the Muslim community to intimidate them and keep them from practicing their religion,
- Communicating with the local mosques on their possible security concerns during Ramadan and if necessary, strengthening the connection between them and the local police.

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4.7.2 One's Fast is Everyone's Celebration: Public Eid Festivals and Iftar Meals

4.7.2.1 **Gothenburg, Sweden**

"The Eid celebration for all" is a cultural celebration that has been held for fourteen consecutive years and has become a tradition for the citizens of Gothenburg.

The festival has grown to become a much appreciated and well-attended event. A family celebration with cultural activities for children, young people, and adults where memories for life are created together with loved ones and other happy participants. The festival is a meeting place for families from all parts of the city to come together and celebrate.

"The Eid Celebration for all" is part of the city´s multifaceted cultural offer. The festival has served as a platform and meeting place for people regardless of religion, culture, ethnicity, or age. More than 20,000 citizens participate and share the joy of a celebration. Feeling safe and welcomed by Gothenburg and being able to celebrate one of the most central holidays at an established cultural institution has invaluable positive aspects for individuals, families, the group and by extension for society.

The joy that our young participants have experienced with these festivities over the years is priceless and has shaped their relationship with this city. They feel more included and visible, especially in the public culture that the city offers.

The organiser wants to empower minorities and offer a high-quality event. To be able to celebrate this festival, in one of the finest spaces in the city means a lot to the participants. During the last three years of the festival, they have actively worked with partners such as the Red Cross and Save the Children to include new arrivals, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors in the celebrations. For these visitors, the Eid celebrations mean a lot and our staff have received many heartfelt thanks from new arrivals. During these four years, 3,000 new arrivals, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors joined the celebration.

4.7.2.2

Malmö, Sweden (Ibn Rushd Study Association)

The Ibn Rushd Study Association aims to be an adult education resource at the forefront of social development and focuses on faith, fundamental rights, and diversity. Ibn Rushd is a voluntary organisation, which is independent of party politics. Ibn Rushd organises study and cultural activities within the framework of free adult education managed by volunteers. Ibn Rushd works based on Muslim values to spread justice, express solidarity, safeguard human freedom, assert diversity, offer advice, and promote meetings.

We see value in creating networks within civil society with authorities and other interested parties to be able to help change society for the better. Ibn Rushd is open to everyone and has activities all over Sweden. We want to work towards safeguarding democracy and human rights. We work actively to strengthen the Swedish-Muslim identity. Together with our member organisations, we offer adult education classes and engage in social debates, produce study materials, and offer a broad range of seminars, study circles and cultural events. We do this with our member organisations.

The Ibn Rushd Study Association actively supports and enables people to organise themselves in associations and organisations. Particularly marginalised groups are strengthened through the options that organisation can offer them. As a part of our democracy assignment, we support our associations and participants through education, financing, and guidance to facilitate active participation in society and facilitate the organisation of particularly marginalised groups.

Ibn Rushd is one of ten study associations in Sweden which receives state funding for adult education organisations. We have been around since 2008 and as an independent study association we are entitled to state support. Since then, we have grown and developed our adult education activities with our member organisations.

The Eid festival is hosted by the Ibn Rushd Study Association regularly since 2011 and has grown over the years in the number of visitors. In 2020, the celebration was cancelled and in 2021, we hosted the festival online. For 2022, the organiser intends to host a festival in the Folket Park. In 2019, 13,000 visitors attended the festival, and the organiser expects the festival of 2022 to be at the very least just as well-attended.

The organiser emphasizes the importance of making different minority identities visible in an official environment and in a positive context to strengthen integration and a sense of belonging through public celebrations that are open to all.

The City of Malmö has co-funded parts of the festival in recent years. Organisationally, all these festivities are directly funded and backed by the Mayor's City Office and are run in collaboration with an organising committee. The latter consists of a wide range of relevant groups. Their concept is based on equality of faith to highlight that all citizens are entitled to develop their spiritual and religious identities and be an integral part of society. The development of the festival from its first year (2011) shows how such programmes attract more and more citizens while at the same time increasing the visibility of the diversity of Malmö's Muslim community.

Timeline highlights

2021   We hosted the festival in a very reduced digital format via social media/Facebook. We also collaborated with the City of Gothenburg, that organises a similar Eid programme every year. On Eid Day, our programme "Eid celebration for all" has more than 10,000 views.

2019   We hosted the festival in the Folkets Park with about 13,000 visitors, 20 participating associations/exhibitors who represented about 30 ethnicities. The festival was promoted nationally via a website, on the City of Malmö's big screens and in several Arabic-language online newspapers.

2011   The first Eid festival was hosted at the Rosengårdscentrum with 750-1,000 visitors, five participating associations/exhibitors represent a small number of ethnicities.

4.7.2.3   **Breaking the Fast, Building Bridges (Leuven, Belgium)**

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Population:                    101.560
ECCAR member since:               2018
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Many local governments are looking for ideas on how to engage with the Muslim community in their city. Therefore, they support activities and events that enhance the visibility of the Muslim community and their cultural and religious heritage. This has obvious merits, as it facilitates intercultural contacts and dialogue, and it tackles the ignorance (which is a breeding ground for all kinds of negative, false assumptions) surrounding Islam and the Muslim community. It also demonstrates the core values of Islam and the Muslim community: solidarity, sense of belonging, openness.

When reviewing these initiatives (mostly centered around the holy month of Ramadan) critically, one could say that they do not entirely reach their goal. These events focus on the religious rites of Muslims by exoticising them. These events emphasise the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in a stereotypical way and contribute to Othering by focusing on the question what makes Muslims different from non-Muslims? Such events reinforce the stereotypical idea that the everyday lives of Muslims are only about religious and spiritual rites and hence only focused on "irrational behaviour" of Islamic inspiration. Undoubtedly, it is true that Islam does focus on religious rites, but Islam and the lifeworlds of Muslims are so much more than that. If we do not broaden the scope of these activities to include many other aspects of Islam, some of them even unknown to many Muslims themselves, we miss an important opportunity.

The City of Leuven has supported the organisation of an iftar (collectively breaking the fast during the month of Ramadan) by the mosques in the city. This event was organised by the mosques, in collaboration with health organisations, intercultural organisations and the City Council. Before breaking the fast, there were many round tables where several aspects of Islam were discussed. One table handled Islam in itself (What does Islam mean for Muslims? What are the core beliefs? What is the daily practice? How is a mosque run?). A second and a third table focused on Islamic perspectives on health. One looked at it from a broad perspective (What does Islam teach about health? How does that translate to modern medicine? How do they strengthen each other?). The last round table's main speaker was a Muslim cancer survivor who told the participants about her disease, the strength she found in her religious convictions and the support she felt from within the Muslim community. The topic of health was extremely relevant as this event was one of the first public gatherings after the devastating period of coronavirus-related lockdowns and restrictions.

By introducing this topic as part of an interreligious and intercultural event, discussions mostly steered clear of stereotypical approaches to Islam. It showed that Muslims have the same concerns as the rest of society and do not live in isolation, alone on a faraway planet. It also showed that Islam has an intellectual side that has a lot to say about many things, other than religious rites and spirituality. This approach ensured true equality between all participants, regardless of their backgrounds. It gave Muslims the chance to present their religion in all its diversity. In the future, our ambition is to further demonstrate the multidimensionality of Islam and let its insights enrich public debate on numerous relevant topics.

Undoubtedly, it is true that Islam does focus on religious rites, but Islam and the lifeworlds of Muslims are so much more than that.

(The City of Leuven)

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Endnotes

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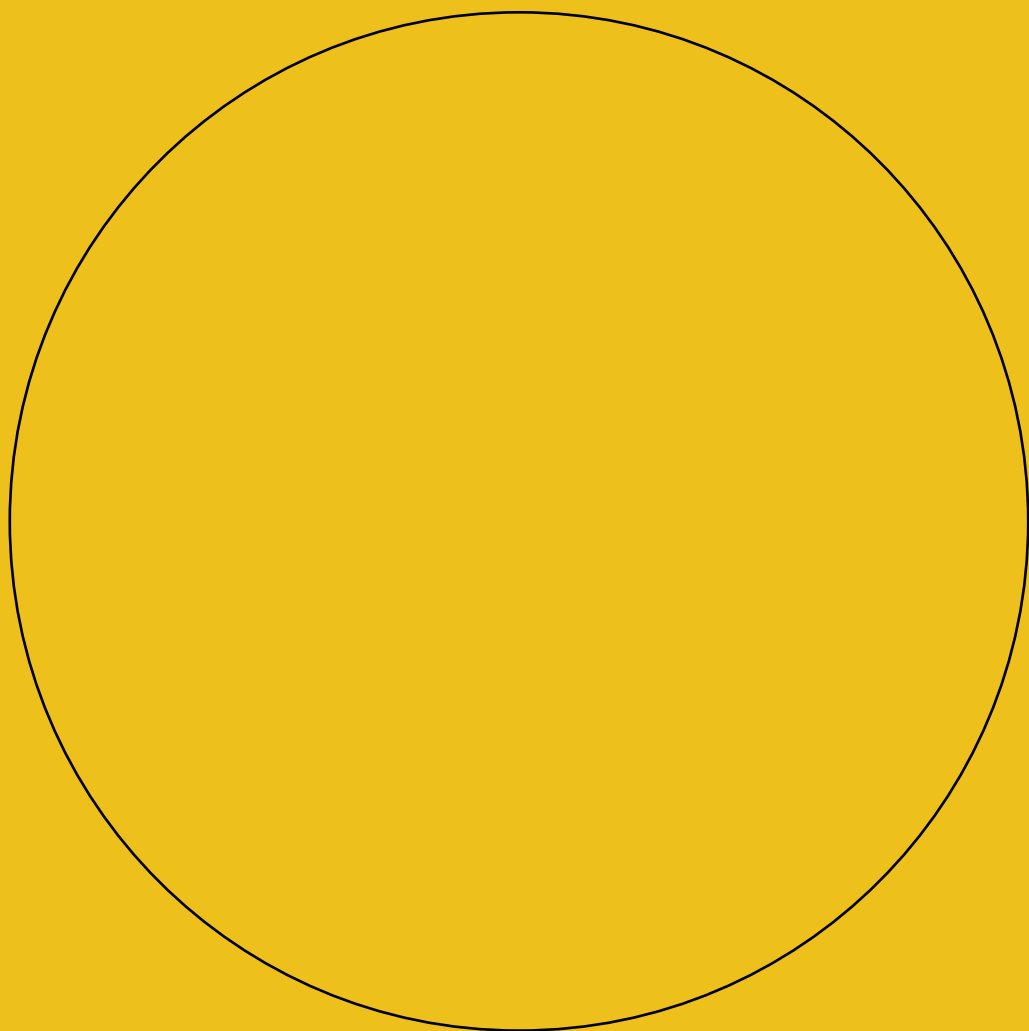
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