

Report

ECCAR Working Group on Anti-Muslim Racism Good Practices in Tackling Anti-Muslim Racism locally April 2021-January 2022

Linda Hyökki, Danijel Cubelic

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Introduction

Depending on the country, manifestations of anti-Muslim racism are connected to specific political, historical, and social relations. However, similarities in patterns can be pinpointed in how Muslims and people perceived as such face intolerance, hatred, and discrimination in all European countries. Academic research and reports from civil society organizations show that Muslims experience violence, verbal harassment, and structural forms of discrimination regarding equal access to education, the labor market, and the housing market. Anti-Muslim racism endangers the rights of Muslim citizens and the peaceful coexistence in democratic, open, and free societies. Inclusion policies at the local level may have a tremendous impact by, e.g., offering easy and accessible ways to report episodes of discrimination and racism, developing measures related to the delivery of basic services, and empowering the political voices of those affected by anti-Muslim racism. Followingly, ECCAR is committed to building equal, inclusive, and cohesive societies and protecting the inhabitants of our cities from discrimination of all forms.

To support its member-cities in tackling anti-Muslim racism, ECCAR established, in December 2020, a permanent working group led by the City of Heidelberg that received funding from the European Commission for the year 2021. The establishment of the working group was based on the outcomes of the ECCAR General Assembly 2020 (Bologna 19-20 November), where a working group on Islamophobia was held. An overarching first recommendation was establishing a structured working group to discuss local policies to fight anti-Muslim racism within ECCAR member cities. The working group would help ensure that the fruitful discussion at the General Assembly would not remain as a one-off but function as the first step of a longer process, which will entail sharing good practices, tools, and solutions.

The working group held its first meeting in April 2021. The working group commenced with the project on good practices tackling anti-Muslim racism locally. The project's aim for the next ten months was to analyze how local governments can take action against anti-Muslim intolerance, hatred, and discrimination in their capacities as democratic institutions, rule-makers, employers, service providers, and public contractors. In June 2021, Ms. Linda Hyökki, an expert in Islamophobia studies and a Ph.D.candidate at the Ibn Haldun University Istanbul, was hired as the group coordinator after the group was given 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 targeted measures for tackling anti-Muslim intolerance, hatred, and discrimination in different areas and through multiple strategies.

Since it was unclear whether the working group would receive further funding to continue its work after January 2022, the aim was to document a list of good practices by the end of December 2021 and publish these online on the ECCAR website. The publication of the good practices would benefit several stakeholders, including the ECCAR member cities that could learn from the examples of their colleagues to implement similar initiatives in their respective contexts and researchers, journalists, activists, and policymakers. The list of good practices included examples from as many cities as possible to ensure a solid representation of a geographical variety. On the one hand, this was considered necessary to reflect the geographical variety of ECCAR member cities. On the other hand, the geographical variety of represented practices would reflect the everyday reality of Muslim communities all around Europe. The phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism manifests itself differently from country to country, depending on local/regional socio-political circumstances and policies related to the governance of minorities and Islam. The collection of good practices was done in two steps; through a mapping survey and personal consultations with the cities on the practices.

Soon after the working group commenced its work, it became clear that mere collection and documentation of good practices would not be sufficient to serve the needs of the working group members and the ECCAR cities at large in terms of benefiting from the working group activities. ECCAR cities interested in the subject matter had, during the Bologna General Assembly, expressed their interest in specific topics related to anti-Muslim racism. Hence, two webinars were planned to offer all ECCAR cities the opportunity to learn from each other and from experts invited as guest lecturers. Moreover, during the June 30 meeting, participating city representatives expressed the need for a working definition of anti-Muslim racism to facilitate understanding the phenomenon and the group's work. The working definition was drafted by the working group coordinator Ms. Linda Hyökki and reviewed by ECCAR Vice President Mr. Danijel Cubelic. The first draft was sent to the working group

members for review and feedback, and a consultation meeting was held, after which the final version of the definition was reviewed by the rest of the ECCAR Board members and approved. Finally, the working group participated in a closed consultation meeting with the secretariat of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (*ECRI*) on the new GPR No. 5 on anti-Muslim racism. These consultations involved a written review of the draft GPR No. 5 by Hyökki and Cubelic and a zoom meeting with the team behind the draft document. Since GPR No. 5 has, however, not yet been published by the time of authoring this report, any further details related to its contents and our working group's comments will be left out of this report. In the following, all other activities will be explained in more detail, including a comprehensive summary of the good practices survey and a list of collected examples. The working group will be authoring a Guide Book during the first six months of 2022, including descriptions of the good practices and expert contributions from academics and practitioners from the field.

Activities April 2021-January 2022

Working Group Meetings

April 2021

Following the initial consultations in the General Assembly of December 2020 in Bologna, the Kick-Off event for the working group was organized. All cities that had registered their interest in the issue were invited to participate. The meeting included an overview of the activities for the year 2021, a mapping of topics that would be interesting for the working group members to cover in webinars, and a get-to-know amongst the participants. The meeting was held in English.

June 30, 2021

The working group called all interested ECCAR Member Cities to join the meeting in which the Good Practices project was introduced. The WG explained the survey and announced the forthcoming webinars. The meeting was held in English, with French and German-speaking interpretation services.

September 9, 2021

The working group was called together for a one-hour consultation related to the working definition of anti-Muslim racism. The draft document was previously sent to the working group members for their comments and feedback. The meeting was held in English. Those who had participated in the survey and registered for the working group already previously were invited to attend.

December 13, 2021

After the online presentation held at the General Assembly (December 3, 2021), where the results from the survey and the collection of good practices were presented, the working group held a meeting where those who missed the General Assembly could catch up with the results. The participants also engaged in exchanging ideas for webinars planned for 2022. The meeting was held in English, and Ms. Nicoline Erichsen from the ECCAR Heidelberg

office helped with interpretation into French. Invitees were so far all who had participated in the working group's activities, i.e., the survey and the webinars.

Survey: Tackling anti-Muslim racism locally

As a first step in collecting good practices, the working group designed a survey with the survey tool QuestionPro. All ECCAR member cities were invited to participate in the survey. The survey contained multiple-choice questions about the cities' current work against anti-Muslim racism. The questions considered the structural aspects of such work and its contents, such as staffing and departmental opportunities, topics covered by the city initiatives, implementation of projects, and whether projects are designed and run with a participatory approach. Finally, the survey asked the cities to name current or past projects. The call for participation emphasized that cities that have not yet implemented any measures or projects should also submit their responses so that the gaps in knowledge, and any support needs, could be detected. We were also interested in disclosing whether the cities would like to develop such strategies. We were especially looking to hear as diverse stories as possible from big and small cities all over Europe.

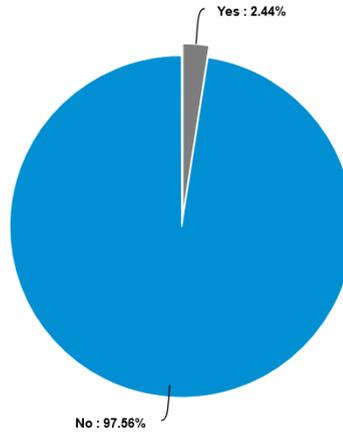
Moreover, we invited submissions for good practices that do not solely focus on the topic of anti-Muslim racism. Still, they should have at least a secondary objective to do so. Forty-two member cities filled the survey successfully; however, not all cities submitted examples of good practices. Moreover, the cities could submit longer texts within the survey to specify certain aspects of their work. This proved beneficial in recognizing the cities' challenges in their work against anti-Muslim racism, as many of the issues mentioned in the responses were not quantifiable.

The work on anti-Muslim racism in ECCAR cities is situated in the city administration structures very differently across the cities and countries. This question was important as we wanted to map how the work in cities is structured. An existing department, an office, or even a position filled by a 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 at large. 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 of the city administration, 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
- extremism prevention
- religious affairs
- social development
- citizenship

- diversity
- culture

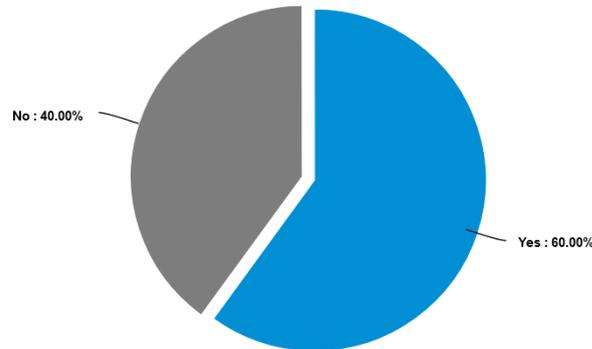
Does your city administration have a department/contact person that/who solely focuses on work against anti-Muslim racism?



Suppose the work on anti-Muslim racism is located in one of the departments mentioned above. In that case, it affects the number of working hours and human resources the ECCAR cities can distribute. Moreover, the department's aim at large also affects the city's approach to the work. For instance, if anti-Muslim racism is approached from the lens of integration, this can affect how "Muslims" as a community are understood, i.e., as newcomers and foreigners.

The anti-Muslim racism working group at ECCAR was established in December 2020 to assist the ECCAR member cities in their current work relating to the subject matter and provide support for those cities who want to start such work in their local context. Roughly more than half of the survey respondents reported that they already had had experience with local-level measures tackling anti-Muslim racism.

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)



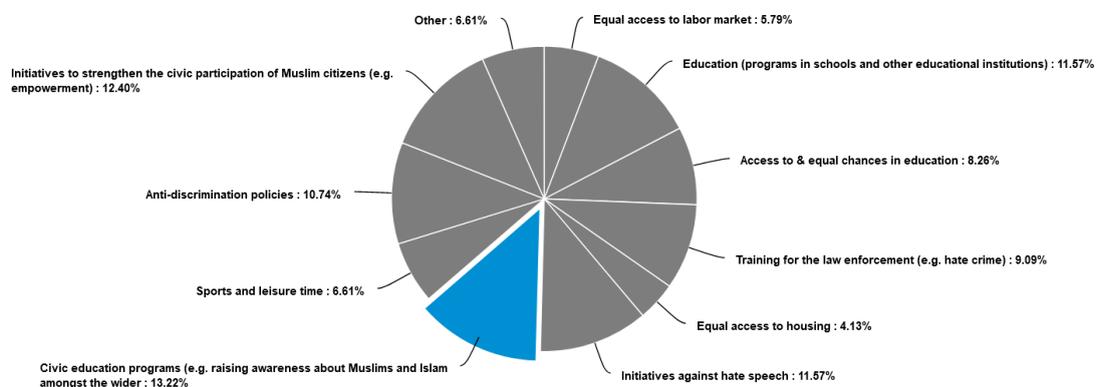
However, we asked for experience with measures that either solely targeted anti-Muslim racism or had it as a subordinate objective. This was a conscious decision to highlight that cities – depending on the structural circumstances of their work against anti-Muslim racism as explained above – might have to follow departmental objectives for projects and have a broader approach to each project. For instance, one German city responded that they recognize the problematic media representation and stigmatization of immigrants, which harms their efforts to shape integration processes in a positive way that would inhibit anti-racist work in general. Many cities have located 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. As one city representative from Sweden noted, they have not traditionally measured different kinds of racism. Still, they recognize the need for such work, i.e., to move further beyond general anti-racism work and look into phenomena such as anti-Muslim racism separately.

Altogether, the topics covered by projects that either had anti-Muslim racism as its primary objective or subordinate one were mainly related to civic education programs 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 then, in the longer term, will not engage in discriminatory or hateful behavior towards Muslims. A similar objective is covered by educational programs in schools whereby these also directly affect student relations and contribute to a better learning environment for all. Another significant part of the projects concentrates on the empowerment of the Muslim community in terms of civic participation, which can be considered a means to give more visibility to the community so they can be seen as part and parcel of democratic societies. Such measures give Muslim citizens a platform to function and have a voice in many civic roles and not just be regarded as "the problem" but as part of the solution to societal issues that concern all citizens. Programs related to anti-discrimination policies are also strongly represented in ECCAR member cities, indicating an already existing strong recognition of problems caused by anti-Muslim

discrimination. However, specific initiatives concentrating on equal access in housing or the labor market are still not very common.

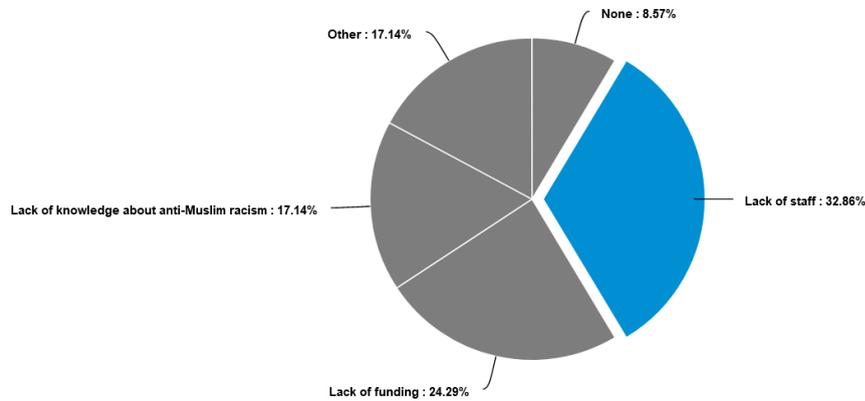
Nevertheless, a French city representative commented that they are overwhelmed by the number of discrimination cases in the labor market against Muslim women who wear a religious headscarf. They urgently need to focus on such manifestations of anti-Muslim racism. Training for law enforcement to document and recognize hate crimes correctly is necessary, as Muslims often are victimized intersectionally as targets of hate speech or hate crime. Ethnicity, race, religious background, social status, sexual orientation, and gender can all be either sole reasons for a biased motivation or overlap as motivation in an incident.

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



As 40 % of the cities responded that they have not yet had any kind of experience with projects related to anti-Muslim racism, this could be seen to overlap with some cities' experiences in facing difficulty 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 explained by the work against anti-Muslim racism in departments that have to conduct work on anti-racism or human rights in general, meaning that the areas to cover are very wide. 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 it is clear that more measures concentrating on civic education programs are needed. Anti-Muslim racism is often positioned and ranked against antisemitism, and hence challenging to address appropriately. Here, we hope that the working definition drafted by the working group will assist city representatives so that measures can be adequately designed to address both phenomena and their respective manifestations.

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



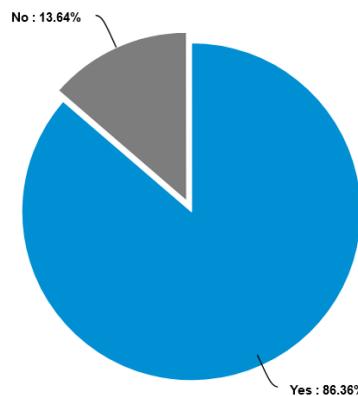
Generally speaking, the survey results showed that the establishment of the working group on anti-Muslim racism had been a good start in supporting the ECCAR member cities in learning about anti-Muslim racism. Twelve cities reported the lack of knowledge about anti-Muslim racism as a challenge to their work. Apart from the self-evident effect of the pandemic on the work of the cities, a few cities reported difficulties on the national political and social levels, i.e., referring to the polarized political climate and general xenophobia. For instance, in Belgium, one city reported that it was too sensitive to initiative measures that focus only on anti-Muslim racism. Still, the work had to be put in the broader context of tackling all kinds of racism. At the same time, another one reported that they face political opposition towards the work on Muslim communities as the opposition does not want to accept certain nationalities to be represented in the city council. In France, again, one city reported that working on anti-Muslim racism is currently difficult within the larger context of the French political situation. Another French city representative regrets that the French law does not recognize the concept of anti-Muslim racism. Hence, even debates on the political and societal level regarding the phenomenon are always tense. 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 experience 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 hinder contact. Additionally, one Spanish city agreed about the missing participation from within the Muslim community. However, to better determine where the perceived lack of trust and nonexistent willingness to engage stems from, ECCAR would have to conduct interviews with representatives of the Muslim communities to form a better understanding of how the community relates to the city administration, which is working against anti-Muslim racism.

Finally, in terms of implementing projects with a participatory approach, it could be concluded that for many ECCAR cities, the cooperation between local governments and the Muslim community is good. While 24 out of 42 cities had responded that they had experience with initiatives tackling anti-Muslim racism, 19 cities responded that they had organized events and initiatives in cooperation with the Muslim community. However, this number still does not tell us for how many cities such cooperation was in a bottom-up process where the

community takes the initiative's lead in program design and implementation. In contrast, the city administration merely facilitates the implementation. One Swedish city responded that they foster a participatory process where the Muslim community has contributed to giving the city a deeper understanding of the situation and possible solutions and activities to combat anti-Muslim racism. However, for some cities, cooperation with the community is still only at the starting point because the community, consisting mainly of refugees, is still very young, as was reported by one eastern German city.

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



Webinars

Cities fostering civic participation of Muslim citizens

On the occasion of the annual European Day Against Islamophobia (September 21), ECCAR's working group on anti-Muslim racism organized a webinar entitled "Cities fostering civic participation of Muslim citizens" on September 13, 2021. ECCAR member cities and their local partners all around Europe participated in this knowledge-sharing event. A poll amongst the cities showed a need for more robust facilitation of political activism and socio-cultural events open for the public and initiated by the Muslim communities.

The two invited experts who spoke at the event also addressed these topics. Dr. Amina Easat-Daas (De Montfort University, UK) noted the importance of recognizing Muslim residents' intersectional identities while fostering civic participation. She emphasized that positive and inclusive local identities – formed around cities and communes – have significant potential in the current politically tense atmosphere. While the far-right is monopolizing the narratives about national identities in exclusionary and ethnically loaded terms, identification with the city of residence is often more accessible and more familiar to many members of minority groups. Yasemin Soylu, Deputy Managing Director of "Muslim Academy Heidelberg" in Germany, highlighted in her turn how bottom-up initiatives in civic participation could challenge the prominent narratives about Muslims as "the Others" in the societies. She encouraged the cities in facilitating Muslims' visibility as "an inherent part of

the society" and as citizens who may use their religious beliefs as a resource for fostering democracy.

As parts of a pan-European anti-racist coalition, ECCAR member cities play a significant role in building inclusive cities, leading to an inclusive Europe. In the city and the public space in general, experiences shape the sense of safety and belonging to a specific environment. Dr. Amina Easat-Daas brought forth the importance of recognizing Muslim civic participation as an asset in achieving mutual benefits among residents of different backgrounds. In other words, Muslim citizens' interests should not be defined only by their faith identity but also by many other social identities they carry as residents, parents, students, neighbors, professionals. Many European cities lack Muslim representation in the civil society sector. Followingly, "Muslim life" is often recognized as being located only in the city's peripheries, such as industrial areas where mosques and prayer rooms usually are based, as Ms. Yasemin Soylu noted in her presentation. The webinar participants were committed to changing this by strengthening the networking between the city administration and local Muslim communities and facilitating the visibility of Muslim actors in their societies.

Monitoring and reporting anti-Muslim hate crimes and discrimination

A recent report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) shows alarming figures on hate crime reporting across Europe. Only 9 out of 10 persons who have been victimized to hate crime report the incident to the responsible authorities. The report noted that common reasons for underreporting were the lack of trust in authorities and the overwhelming bureaucracy of the 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.

ECCAR recognizes that cities and local governments play a significant role in changing the situation. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms can be well initiated on a local level, in cooperation on the one hand with NGOs and on the other hand with state authorities. Data collected based on low threshold access for the victims of hate crime and discrimination can be aggregated and reported to state authorities. This will make victimization more visible and contribute to establishing more robust policies regarding hate crime and discrimination.

Against this background, the working group organized on October 18, 2021, a webinar on the subject matter. The participants were representatives of ECCAR member cities from Turkey, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and France. The webinar hosted three guest speakers who shared their expertise in monitoring and reporting anti-Muslim hate crimes and discrimination. Mr. Griffin Ferry, representing the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), presented the importance of cooperation between authorities and civil society actors in hate crime reporting. He also explained the indicators developed by ODIHR that can be used to recognize and differentiate hate crimes from other offenses. Ms. Hanna Attar from the organization CLAIM, Alliance Against Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Hate, presented the project *I Report*, a nationwide reporting portal in Germany for anti-Muslim hate crime and discrimination. *I Report* aims to form unified reporting of incidents to achieve more accurate statistics. Victims of hate crime and discrimination can also get help in connecting with professional counseling centers across Germany via *I Report*. Finally, Ms. Iris Aviñoa contributed to the webinar by giving an example of a good practice

implemented on a local level in tackling anti-Muslim racism, especially in reporting anti-Muslim prejudiced discrimination. Ms. Aviñoa is one of the authors of the recently published report by Barcelona Discrimination Observatory.

At the end of the webinar, representatives of ECCAR member cities shared their experiences with already established monitoring and reporting mechanisms. They also discussed their plans to implement such measures in their respective cities with the three expert guest speakers. The webinar ended with an optimistic view towards the future with further forthcoming initiatives such as training city officials on hate crime, tackling anti-Muslim discrimination at the workplace, and awareness-raising campaigns for the wider public.

ECCAR Working Definition "Anti-Muslim Racism"

The discrimination and the hostility experienced by Muslim citizens in Europe manifest themselves intersectionally. Gender, sexual orientation, (perceived) ethnicity and/or race, skin color, (perceived) religious identity, and social class often overlap as grounds for discrimination. Furthermore, since Islam and followingly, 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 similar to the Muslims with a migratory background. The role of cities as service providers, employers, and builders of urban space in this regard is significant. By creating a culture and politics of tolerance and acceptance, cities can also provide a living environment that is safe and inclusive for all citizens regardless of their religious background.

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, during the past years, used in their official reports different terms such as "Islamophobia," "anti-Muslim hatred," "discrimination against Muslims," and "anti-Muslim prejudice" to describe the discrimination and hostility experienced by Muslims. However, ECCAR recognizes the strength of the term "anti-Muslim racism" because it is rooted in an understanding of race as a product and not a prerequisite of racism.

In this modern understanding of race – and consequently racism – *racialization* allows Islam to be used as a marker for an inferior Otherness, similarly to how race used to be understood to be an inherently physical or biological marker of inferiority. Followingly, anti-Muslim racist thinking and acting categorize anyone *perceived as Muslim* as a "racial Other" and thus, inferior. This is also one of the reasons why ECCAR considers anti-Muslim racism especially dangerous for society as a whole, as also non-Muslims are affected by it. Due to their appearance, a Sikh or an Arab Christian/Jew, for instance, can be perceived as a Muslim and discriminated against motivated by anti-Muslim racism. Especially vulnerable to experiencing anti-Muslim racist hostility, discrimination, and hate crime are Muslim women – due to their often visible "Muslimness" based on a religious dress – as well as refugees, who in the last years have become a target group of anti-immigrant, right-wing extremist sentiments. Due to

racialization, they are also marked as "Muslim" regardless of their actual religious background. This adds to their vulnerable position in society as they often lack support networks and information about their fundamental rights.

News reporting and political developments all around Europe demonstrate that anti-Muslim racism is fuelled by nationalist xenophobia that has been rising in all European countries for the past ten years. While Muslims, in the last decades, have become the new target of right-wing politics, anti-Muslim racism also feeds from global events marked by violence committed by Muslim actors. Unfortunately, it has resulted in the securitization of Islam, and Muslims have been put under general suspicion. Consequently, they are, on the one hand, seen as a threat to European societies, culture, and values. However, on the other hand, European Muslims are double victims as they can equally become victims of any violent terror attack against the public of European countries. Still, Muslim citizens are scapegoated, blamed, and put under the spotlight as the cause of the problem. Therefore, the work against anti-Muslim racism must also be based on the understanding that instead of discriminative policies and exclusionary public attitudes, enhancing civic engagement and political participation of Muslims in Europe will strengthen relationships between citizen groups. It is imperative to consider the existence of anti-Muslim racism as a hindrance to the successful political and economic development of multicultural, post-immigration societies of 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 towards inclusion. These include available funding for the work against anti-Muslim racism, the structure of departments within city administration, the available workforce, the 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. Consequently, ECCAR cities recognize anti-Muslim racism on the one hand as a structural problem and, on the other hand, as an ideology and a driving force that endangers peaceful coexistence in democratic societies. Despite challenges, ECCAR cities are already demonstrating many efforts in implementing good practices towards tackling anti-Muslim racism in various fields. These include media, political discourse, equal treatment in institutions, leisure time, service and health care, private sector, labor 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 authored a working definition on the subject matter. The global work against anti-Muslim racism often lacks proper definitions of the used terminology, which impedes the well-rootedness of practice hindering, among other things, the design and implementation of efficient and accurate policies. It is to be noted that this definition is not binding. Still, it can be taken as a basis for the cooperation between ECCAR, its member cities, and their partners. Moreover, the cities in their work can adopt the definition in their respective local contexts.

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 high level of official institutions. It considers Muslims as essentially different from non-Muslims and hence not

legitimate receivers of equal treatment. Anti-Muslim racism is intersectional, while victims can experience it mixed with other forms of discrimination on the level of gender, religious identity, ethnicity or skin color, and social class. Hence, the experiences of anti-Muslim racism by Muslim women of color 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 racisms, it is fundamentally used to exclude Muslims from the same benefits and rights of citizenry as non-Muslims by otherizing 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.

Collection of Good Practices in tackling anti-Muslim racism locally

The working group commenced collecting approaches in fighting anti-Muslim intolerance, hatred, and racism on a local level across European countries. The working group's objective was to share and publish those good practices so that ECCAR cities and other practitioners might learn from each other to a collaborative process and a toolbox including a broad range of inclusive and participatory approaches in policy-making. The project also wants to establish a continuous exchange between local governments, researchers, and NGOs in the field.

ECCAR cities participating in the working group on anti-Muslim racism manifest a solid commitment to change, strengthen the networks between the city administration and local Muslim communities, and facilitate Muslim actors' visibility in their societies. The good practices examples relate to several different strategies; action plans, measuring and reporting systems for anti-Muslim racism, interreligious dialogue, migrant councils, welcome services, diversity in public administration, education and law enforcement, access to public services, housing policies, intercultural, educational, sports and leisure programs, civic education, anti-bias training, and measures to counter, prevent and monitor hate speech. Below are included 18 good practice examples from eight different countries.

List of good practices

Intercultural Dialogue and civic participation

Heidelberg, Germany "Jewish-Muslim Culture Days"

The Jewish-Muslim Culture Days are a format that is unique in Germany: after the second Jewish Culture Days under the motto "To Life" and the first Muslim Culture Days under the title "For the People," the organizers of the Jewish Culture Days and the Muslim Culture Days got together in 2017 in Heidelberg. They established that any discussions in the media and politics on Jewish and Muslim encounters are mostly based on problems. However, life in Heidelberg – as in many other places in Germany – is mainly harmonious. Following the guiding principle "New Normal(s)," this cooperation should look beyond the deficient integration debates at the natural and respectful coexistence and show that the open society in which Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists, and people of many other faiths live peacefully

together has already long been the reality. The project aims to strengthen the diversity of perspectives in debates about Jewish and Muslim life in Germany and make Jewish and Muslim positions visible – not as interreligious dialogue, but as a contemporary intervention in questions of education, culture, society, and belonging. At the same time, the development of self-confident, solidary, and future-oriented concepts of democratic coexistence in a plural society should be initiated. Antisemitism, anti-Muslim racism, intolerance, and every form of exclusion and discrimination are countered during these cultural days with what unites them: a sign that in a cosmopolitan society like Heidelberg, people live, celebrate, eat, and discuss together. The culture days allow new social networks to develop, which come into effect in different event formats, such as readings, film screenings, concerts, and city tours.

Zürich, Switzerland “Initiatives for interreligious dialogue”

The [Zürcher Forum der Religionen](#) (Zurich Forum of Religions) is an association of 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 interreligious dialogue and exchange between religious and political institutions. The Forum also offers a series of annual events for the public in the locations of the religious communities. For example, regular visits to different Muslim communities attract much attention and enable people to step into the mosques and meet community members. Personal encounters and conversations are believed to be the best way to neutralize prejudices and misconceptions and counteract anti-Muslim Racism. On a different note, the [Zentrum für Interreligiösen Dialog](#) (Centre for Interreligious Dialogue) focuses on conveying knowledge about Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Their curriculum offers a vast array of lectures and seminars on theological and societal issues related to religion. In addition, the organization conducts workshops in public schools imparting basic knowledge on Islam and strengthening skills in dealing with religious diversity.

Karlsruhe, Germany “Muslimische Kulturtage” (Muslim Cultural Days)

The Muslim Cultural Days (MCD) are the most significant event for the German-speaking Muslim community in Karlsruhe and occur every two years. Within the framework of the MCD, lectures, workshops, panel discussions, and book readings take place. In terms of the effectiveness of the measures, it should be noted that the MCD team observes a substantial increase in contact requests after and during the event period. These are private individuals and representatives of other associations, various religious communities, municipalities, and municipal institutions. Requests again related to, for example, interviews on television, for magazines, discussions with expert groups on specific Islam-related topics, mosque tours, cooperation in the interreligious area, and so on.

Göteborg, Sweden “Annual Eid celebration”

The Eid celebration for all is a cultural celebration that has been held for 14 consecutive years. During these years, it has become a tradition for all citizens in Göteborg. The festival has grown to become a much appreciated and well-attended event. The festival is a meeting place for families from all parts of the city to meet and enjoy together. 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 together and share the joy of a celebration. Feeling safe and welcomed by Göteborg by celebrating one of the most

significant Muslim holidays at an established cultural institution has invaluable positive aspects for the individual, the family, the group, and by extension, for the society as a whole. The joy that our young participants have experienced through the celebrations over the years is priceless and has left its mark on how you relate to their city. They feel more included and visible, especially in the city's public culture.

Kortrijk, Belgium

The city works together with the Muslim community in many ways. Until 2019, we held "Dar es Salaam" every year, three evenings about Islam, of which two are lectures and a third evening concluded with a space for dialogue. Since 2015 they have organized "Dialogue in friendship" to create meetings between Muslims and Christians. After the terrorist attacks in Brussels on March 22, 2016, Christians and Muslims held a silent march together against terror. Every year, they organize *iftar* meals together during Ramadan.

Furthermore, the city has maintained a good connection with the mosque for years. At the request of organizations, visits to the mosque are arranged. The city organizes ad hoc activities during the year. Finally, the city gives advice or offers help with its accreditation files.

Leipzig, Germany Workshop to building bridges between the city administration and the civil society

Reservations and stereotypes about Muslims are widespread in eastern Germany. Against this background, the Leipzig city council passed a resolution on July 8, 2020, to take more committed action against anti-Muslim racism. In implementing this decision, the city's Department for Migration and Integration organized a workshop to network administration and civil society actors on this topic and jointly considered how anti-Muslim racism can be pushed back and what concrete measures are required to do so. The workshop made clear that there is great potential for learning from one another. The personal exchange with those affected by anti-Muslim stigmatization or even racism leads to sensitization for the topic on the part of the administrative staff. At the same time, the knowledge of civil society actors is strengthened concerning how the administration works and what influence the administration has to improve the situation. However, for a sustainable mutual learning and sensitization effect, other people than those involved in this workshop must be involved.

Intersectionality and Vulnerable groups

Graz, Austria "Permanent roundtable for Muslim women"

The Anti-Discrimination Office Styria initiated in 2016 a support group in which Muslim women could reflect on their experiences of discrimination and exchange views with others affected. The group met at regular intervals until 2019. The project's aim was empowerment and awareness-raising through an exchange of experiences and placing the topic of anti-discrimination in the communities. An important aspect was that the roundtables were less about experts empowering the women and more about the experts accompanying and supporting the women in their personal development processes of self-empowerment. The women knew that at the meetings, they would meet women in a similar situation, in the same life situations, so that the inhibition threshold was low to nonexistent. The meetings took place on the premises of the Anti-Discrimination Office Styria. Getting to know the office

made it easier for the women to take advantage of the counseling services in case of discrimination, as they already knew the office and the counselors. The Anti Discrimination Office Styria should thus be an essential contact point for all Muslim women affected by discrimination in Styria. In addition to empowerment, it is also a matter of making a complaint and strengthening trust in the rule of law: It is not normal and legitimate that such acts are committed.

Chemnitz, Germany "Activities against xenophobia towards refugees"

Chemnitz was the only place where the Free State of Saxony had an initial reception facility for refugees for many years. However, the Free State of Saxony has not taken any measures to enable positive contact experiences for immigrants and the host society. In this situation, the The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth commissioned the Chemnitz University of Technology with a study to analyze the perception of events in the city population, the causes, and effects. The study provides important insights into anti-Muslim racism. A significant role is played here because concrete positive contact can reduce fears and threat perceptions and strengthen security. The city of Chemnitz has taken various measures to counter racism and xenophobia and shape a cosmopolitan city dock to the study's recommendations.

Education

Gothenburg, Sweden "Under the Same Sky"

The purpose of Under the Same Sky is to, based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights, work long-term against all forms of oppression towards increased understanding of human diversity, and to develop interpersonal relationships in schools with students from 13-16 years old. During the course, students will meet young adults from different religious backgrounds. They will have the opportunity to reflect on what separates or unites them with others and how they can create positive relationships and mature in responsibility for each other. The course comprises 15 sessions of 60-80 minutes, which can be incorporated into a regular class schedule. The course is designed to suit all schools, regardless of whether the norm around students is religious or secular.

Heidelberg, Germany "Muslim Academy Heidelberg"

In Heidelberg, city and knowledge have always been inseparably intertwined: Germany's oldest university forms an essential part of today's city identity. At the same time, Heidelberg is growing and developing under the existing social dynamics. How can architecture and urban planning help shape these changes in a targeted manner? International Building Exhibitions (IBA) are an influential instrument for urban development. With the motto "Knowledge-based urbanism," the IBA Heidelberg builds on Heidelberg's existing potential and thinks ahead. From 2012 to 2022, the IBA will be active across the city, helping to initiate, advise and implement urban and architectural projects that are exemplary for the knowledge society. Muslim Academy Heidelberg i. G. came together in the spring of 2013 as a grassroots movement under the name "Teilseiend." Its objective is to visibly locate Muslim life in Heidelberg within the framework of the IBA. From the Muslim perspective, a future-oriented institution and a place are to be created for all Heidelberg residents who initiate exchange on equal terms and at different social levels. For this purpose, the Heidelberg Muslim Initiative wishes to act as a bridge between urban society, science, and

Muslim communities. The unique feature of the initiative lies in its heterogeneous composition of Heidelberg Muslims and the claim to a diversity of opinion and controversial negotiations. Since then, the academy has been developing a new Heidelberg model in which Muslim work is a matter of course for the whole society. For the first time, a political, educational institution and thus a place for promoting democracy will be institutionalized under Muslim sponsorship, paving the way for overcoming social polarization related to Islam and Muslim life. The Muslim Academy Heidelberg aims to stimulate knowledge in Heidelberg through its work with Muslim intellectual impulses.

Hate Crime and Discrimination

Malmö, Sweden "Safe Digital Cities"

When the city became a member of Nordic Safe cities at the beginning of 2020, there was a lack of an understanding of Malmö's digital "mood." Many threats and hatred affect people online, and few cities today have a systematic view of what online life looks like at the municipal level. The first analysis was presented in March 2020. It shows that Malmö has problems with online hatred and that hatred and racism are aroused by issues related to crime and migration – and are in principle directed entirely at Muslims and/or people with (or perceived) MENA background (mixed). So Islamophobic/anti-Muslim racism. Most hatred arises if people who are perceived as / are Muslims or with a MENA background (or others who stand up for them) point out injustices (the hate is directed at the minority or those who stand up for the minority). Hence, we offered training for civil society actors in Malmö and other organizations and helped reduce hatred online on their platforms. We also created a group with several moderate digital voices that oppose extremism online. We have had meetings with the Oslo online police which inspired us to find a model where the authorities in Malmö (municipality, police, and civil society actors) can be present on the web to create more digital security, to enter into dialogue with citizens, and to be present where they are on the digital streets.

Barcelona, Spain "Discrimination Observatory"

The Observatory of Islamophobia in Catalonia (ODIC, for its acronym in Catalan) was created in 2020 with a double objective. Its first aim was to centralize all situations of Islamophobia that occur in the Catalan territory and support their social and/or judicial denunciation. Its second aim was to make visible the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Catalonia. Last year ODIC published its first annual report, which collected the complaints it received throughout the previous year (2020). The ODIC is a fundamental space for the fight against Islamophobia in the city (and the rest of Catalonia). The ODIC has laid the foundations for collecting cases and the systematization and dissemination of problems related to Islamophobia. It has also become a reference for communities and entities that deal with Islamophobia or suffer from its impacts.

Graz, Austria "Ban Hate reporting App"

The Antidiscrimination Office Styria (ADS) is an institution that offers counsel to people who feel discriminated against irrespective of legal protection. Cases of hate speech were reported to the ADS to an increasing degree, which is why in 2017, the ADS developed the

first mobile application for reporting hate postings without unnecessary bureaucracy and independent of the platform ("BanHate"). The app is available for free (iOS-Store, Google Play-Store), with an area of responsibility in Austria, while posts are received from all German-speaking areas. Hate speech can be reported with only a few clicks and is subsequently examined for illegal content by legal practitioners and eventually forwarded to appropriate agencies and authorities when indicated.

Rotterdam, Netherlands "Beyond bonding & bridging, linking communities and safeguarding equal treatment in a super diverse city"

Reporting discrimination is vital for a better insight into the source and size of the problem and increasing victims' resilience. Our experience is that it makes a tremendous difference when Muslim residents can report to an organization they trust. Therefore, a pro-active and outreaching approach by a known and trustworthy organization is necessary. The project "Beyond bonding & bridging, linking communities and safeguarding equal treatment in a super diverse city" (BBB) serves as an example of how to shape a super diverse city in which there is a place for all to exist and live together. Furthermore, the project shows how to act when this is challenged by harassment and discrimination. It builds on existing networks, methods, and community capacity in creating a better early warning view and anti-discrimination response. The project facilitates a combined intervention strategy to improve the quality of the information on the impact of discrimination and coping strategies of communities. It directly involves the local Muslim, Jewish and Black communities. The 50 representatives involved are also the ambassadors who introduce the newly developed methods to 500 influencers in the community networks and local government.

Cities as service providers

Toulouse, France "Extra-municipal consultation body"

The extra-municipal consultation body "Fraternity – council for secularism" (Fraternité – Conseil de la laïcité) is one of its kind in France responding to the permanent objective of the City of Toulouse to promote dialogue between representatives of all religious communities. The council consists of seven represented religious communities; the two representatives from the Muslim civil society are the religious association (the Islamic Religious and Cultural Association in France (ACCIF) and the Regional Council for Muslim Worship (RCRM). The current work of the council relates to the question of confessional areas in cemeteries (in particular that of areas designated for Muslims) in the cemeteries managed by Toulouse Métropole/Toulouse town.

Bologna, Italy "Education and Training"

The *City Plan for a non-discriminatory and human-rights based administrative action towards new citizens* was adopted in 2018 by the City of Bologna to ensure 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 belonging to different communities, including Muslim communities. Based upon this framework, civil servants were trained through a cross-disciplinary approach as an open lab, adapting contents and methodology over time. The methodological framework followed a human rights-based approach that, on the one hand, has helped to

overcome predominant narratives and framing of specific communities, as "others," strangers, or through the optics of security and on the other hand, to develop specific action plans to improve service delivery. The first training involved 130 public servants working in the six city districts, on the topics of 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 an apparent reference to municipal services; intercultural communication; contexts, culture, diversity. More training was repeated, including more public officials, front office staff, school services, "community work" staff, librarians and museum workers, and the local police.

Barcelona, Spain "Municipal Action against Islamophobia"

Barcelona City Council approved the first plan against Islamophobia in December 2016 with an initial duration of 18 months and extended until June 2019 to combat the increase in hate speech targeting Islam because of the terrorist attacks in Barcelona on 17 August 2017. It should be noted that the plan to combat Islamophobia was created with the close participation of the Muslim communities, experts, and human rights organizations to include the perspective and work of leading associations and entities. This allowed the involvement of people affected in the design and implementation plan. The plan represents the efforts of Barcelona City Council and the entities to raise awareness of Islamophobia as a form of discrimination. Its objective is to counteract the negative generalization suffered by Islam through images and hate speech disseminated in the media, normalize the city's religious diversity, and reinforce the mechanisms to prevent Islamophobic discrimination.

Vienna, Austria "Diversity Management"

The City Administration is supported by its integration-oriented diversity management approach and teams. The Department for Integration and Diversity offers training events for employees of the City of Vienna, which either take place at Wien-Akademie (the 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 addressing among others the following: "Transcultural competence," "Islam in Vienna," "Diversity management – an introduction," "The foreign within me," "Seen from a counterpart's perspective," "Vienna as an immigration city – debates and facts," "Clients with a migration background." Topics related to diversity in the society, including religious backgrounds of citizens, discrimination, etc., are always a part of the contents of these trainings. Advanced training is also provided to various stakeholders, employed at governmental and non-governmental institutions and volunteers, such as the police, Austrian Federal Railways, staff members of schools / high schools, social workers, medical professions, social organizations such as Caritas, Red Cross, etc. The department has offered the lecture "*Islam in Vienna*" for over 13 years. The settings, length (from 3 to 7 hours), and contents of the talks and workshops are tailored to the needs and backgrounds of participating groups.

Bologna, Italy "Participatory Approaches"

The research titled *An effective inclusion of Islam and Muslim citizens in Bologna* was conducted between 2013 and 2015 by the European University Institute to strengthen the relationship between the City of Bologna and the Muslim communities. This preliminary participatory survey involved the local Muslim communities, young Muslims, religious leaders, the emerging CIB (Islamic Community of Bologna), and a few municipal services to explore and highlight the Muslim presence and contribution, the existing relations, and their unmet needs at a local level. This contributed to the adoption by the city of Bologna in 2018 – through another participatory process – of a *City Plan for a non-discriminatory and human-rights-based administrative action towards new citizens*. The Plan envisaged a comprehensive framework of steps that lead to more specific plans targeting different areas and municipal services (local police, etc.). One of these steps was a new research titled *The needs and expectations of religious communities in Bologna* concerning local service provision, public spaces, places of prayer, sense of exclusion or belonging, etc. The research investigated any discriminatory situation or conditions preventing the full enjoyment of the freedom from manifesting religious identities. The ongoing participatory process recently led to the co-design of a Help Center to report and receive support in case of discriminatory conduct. The *S.P.A.D. (Sportello antidiscriminazione/Anti-discrimination help center)* was co-designed by the City of Bologna and 30 civil society organizations, and it is co-managed by all entities taking part in the process, with encouraging results.