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European Islamophobia Report (EIR) 2022

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We published the eighth edition of the European Islamophobia Report (EIR)¹, covering the year 2022, on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21st. The eighth edition of the European Islamophobia Report, which brings together 26 local academics and experts specializing in racism and human rights, addresses the state and development of Islamophobia across Europe. The annual report includes 23 country reports, inviting policymakers, civil society, academics, and anyone interested in Islamophobia to gain information about the most significant events related to Islamophobia in 2022. Since the initial publication of the report covering the year 2015, the European Islamophobia Report has become an essential resource for obtaining information about Islamophobia in politics, media, employment, education, the legal system, and the network of Islamophobia.

This report extensively explores the primary factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the escalation of anti-Muslim bigotry in Europe. It encompasses a wide array of issues, ranging from Islamophobic rhetoric propagated in domestic media to legislation and policies that curtail the basic rights of European Muslim citizens, ultimately posing a threat to society at large. Accordingly, the 2022 European Islamophobia Report addresses the repercussions of anti-Muslim racism on rights such as association, expression, and religious freedom, as well as its impacts on the rule of law in Europe.

This eighth edition of our report continues to illustrate the effects of the conflict in Ukraine, the portrayal of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar in European media, the emergence of anti-Muslim legislation and measures in countries such as Austria and France, and how civil society is actively combating Islamophobia. The reports from 23 countries unveil how governments, political parties, and the media either contribute to or resist the perpetuation of discourses that jeopardize the fundamental rights of European citizens. This compilation, containing invaluable information and data, aims to provide European policymakers, institutions, and NGOs with recommendations on how to effectively combat anti-Muslim racism in Europe in a systematic manner.

Similar to the previous edition, this project is supported by the International Islamophobia Studies and Research Association (IISRA) situated in Berkeley, California, and the Othering & Belonging Institute affiliated with the University of California; the Center for Security, Race and Rights institute affiliated with Rutgers University; the International Islamophobia Studies Center based in Berkeley; the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project (IRDP) carried out at the Center for Race and Gender (CRG) affiliated with the University of California; the Arab and

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Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) Studies program at San Francisco State University; the Leopold Weiss Institute headquartered in Vienna; and the Research Center Social based in Nova Mesto, Slovenia.

Since the refugee crisis in 2015, Europe has been grappling with increasing xenophobia, particularly towards Muslim-origin immigrants. The rise of radical right-wing parties like AfD in Germany and Front National in France signifies that Europe is at a political crossroads. The continent is being tested on how effectively it upholds human rights, tolerance, and pluralistic values. The surge in xenophobia is interconnected with the rising Islamophobia and hatred towards Muslims in Europe. As in previous years, the 2022 European Islamophobia Report aims to shed light on this concerning issue by analyzing anti-Muslim incidents across Europe.

Similar to previous years, this year we also highlighted the presence of Islamophobia in key areas such as employment, education, and media including the internet, the legal system, and politics. As always, the authors of this year's country reports have presented valuable policy recommendations specific to each country to combat this phenomenon and provided a detailed chronology of events. The European Islamophobia Report continues to offer a unique collection of analyses on anti-Muslim racism across Europe, catering to policymakers, academics, community leaders, and general readers alike.

The unanimous declaration of the United Nations to designate March 15th as the "International Day for the Elimination of Islamophobia" is a significant achievement in terms of recognizing Islamophobia as an existing and widespread problem on a global scale. This decision has the potential to be used by civil society and politicians engaged in combating Islamophobia to exert pressure on nation-states that promote Islamophobia and hold them accountable for their actions, while also compelling these states to take concrete steps against Islamophobia.

The year 2022 was overshadowed by Russia's annexation of Ukraine. In certain nations, the focus on Ukraine appeared to overshadow varying degrees of internal issues, including Islamophobia. The incursion of Russian forces into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, not only marked the onset of a globally significant war but also a military conflict that profoundly impacted several European countries, particularly those reliant on Russian gas and oil supplies. Within Russia, it became evident that while the official Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims unequivocally supported the state's war endeavors, Muslims residing in the Russian Federation were disproportionately mobilized and exploited, revealing a conspicuous aspect of racism in addition to the war's economic politics. This situation further complicated the lives of Muslims in Russia at the local level. Against the backdrop of the war, journalists representing civil society activists and the opposition encountered criminal prosecution under laws such as the Non-Commercial Organizations Law, Fake News Law, or Military Censorship Law, which classified individuals receiving foreign support or deemed to be under "foreign influence" as "foreign agents." Throughout 2022, persecution against followers of various Muslim movements in Russia persisted, with numerous Muslim activists experiencing harassment. Members of Hizb al-Tahrir, a political yet nonviolent group, witnessed the conviction of 44 individuals, while six convictions were handed down against members of the apolitical Tablighi Jamaat, and seven criminal cases were initiated against members of the mystical Nurcu movement. On August 29, 2022, a publication containing hadiths compiled in Sahih al-Bukhari, a fundamental book of Muslim theology, was deemed extremist material and included in the list of banned materials by a ruling of the Laishevsky court in Tatarstan. Additionally, a separate condensed edition of the original book was also prohibited.

In a more general sense, Russia's occupation of Ukraine has exposed Europeans' stereotypical views towards different types of refugees. The discussion surrounding the natural reception of white, Christian Ukrainians in the rest of Europe, as compared to the problematic portrayal of Muslim migration, has brought to light deep-rooted prejudices held by many

Europeans. In a newspaper column, a prominent Greek writer known for his anti-Muslim sentiments described Ukrainians and Muslims in the following manner: The genuine refugees, including elderly individuals, women, and children, are fleeing from an actual war, while the younger generation stays behind to defend their homeland. However, Muslims, primarily young individuals, are portrayed as seeking improved living conditions and are labeled as fanatics of Allah, aiming to colonize Christian societies based on the Quran. They are depicted as having different beliefs, customs, and life values.

Moustafa Bayoumi summarized the media coverage of Ukrainians affected by the war in Europe as portraying them as "civilized" and resembling Europeans, thus accepting them into the larger Euro-Christian community. Even the Islamophobic Finns Party (PS) did not object to the arrival of tens of thousands of white Ukrainian refugees in Finland, highlighting the contrasting treatment of Muslims.

As a demonstration of institutionalized Islamophobia, Austrian Integration Minister Susanne Raab (ÖVP) organized the second "Vienna Forum Against Discrimination and Extremism" with the intention of exporting her fight against the so-called "political Islam" to other European countries. Eleven countries participated in the forum. At the national level, Raab increased the annual budget of the Political Islam Documentation Center from the initial 500,000 euros to 1,700,000 euros.

France, known for its institutionalized Islamophobia, has continued to exert pressure on the Muslim population. Emmanuel Macron's policy of "systematic obstruction" targeting Muslims has led to the surveillance of 1,727 Muslim institutions, the closure of 118 institutions, and the seizure of 10 million euros between January and August 2022. In the field of education, the so-called Laïcité Plan has been implemented to control and monitor Muslim women's attire. A national education directive compels teachers and administrative staff to identify "excessively long" skirts under the threat of punishment, report female students, and file disciplinary complaints.

Similarly, in Belgium, the Minister of Justice threatened the prominent imam of the Brussels Grand Mosque with resignation, stating that he should risk losing state funding for the mosque unless he resigns, putting pressure on the imam and the mosque.

In Denmark, a ban on headscarves in primary schools has been brought up for discussion. The Danish government has allocated funds for the next two years for teachers to recognize and prevent conflicts related to alleged negative social control.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, while defending the government's counter-terrorism strategy called PREVENT, largely ignored the fight against Islamophobia and promised to refocus on the alleged threat of "Islamist extremism." Shortly after the new government took office, the official definition of Islamophobia proposed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) was formally rejected.

The criticisms of the European Commission against racism and intolerance (ECRI) do not seem to resonate in most of these member states. At the same time, other European institutions, like the European Commission in its "2022 Kosovo Report," continue to produce one-sided analyses that depict Muslims in the Balkans as a security threat, linking radicalization and violence with Islam.

In our eighth edition of the European Islamophobia Report, four concrete policy recommendations stand out in the fight against Islamophobia:

- The recent designation of March 15th as the "International Day for Combating Islamophobia" by the United Nations provides an opportunity for policymakers and civil society actors to utilize it as a means to exert pressure for significant change in the fight against anti-Muslim racism.

- European institutions, particularly member states of the Council of Europe, should treat Recommendation No. 5 on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination by ECRI with utmost seriousness and ensure its effective implementation. These recommendations should also be integrated into the national action plans of European Union member states.
- The findings presented in the report titled "The Impact of (EU) Directive 2017/541 on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms" by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) should be duly acknowledged by both European and national institutions. It is crucial to recognize the detrimental effects of counter-terrorism legislation on Muslim communities in Europe.

The witch-hunt initiative against Muslim civil society carried out by Austria through the newly established "Vienna Forum for Combating Discrimination and Extremism in the Context of Integration" should be opposed by EU member states.

Notes

¹ To download the 2022 European Islamophobia Report and previous editions, please visit: www.islamophobiareport.com

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Yazarların alıřmadaki katkı oranları eřittir.
The authors' contribution rates in the study are equal.

ıkar atıřması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

alıřma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kiři ile ıkar atıřması bulunmamaktadır.
There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of the study.

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