

EUROPEAN ISLAMOFOBIA REPORT 2022

We are pleased to present to you the eight consecutive edition of the *European Islamophobia Report* (EIR) on the International day for the elimination of racial discrimination which is observed on 21th of March globally.

By gathering 26 local scholars and experts specialized in racism and human rights, the eighth edition of the *European Islamophobia Report* addresses the state and development of Islamophobia across Europe in 2022. All 23 national reports included in this year's annual edition invite policymakers, civil society, scholars, and all people interested in Islamophobia to gain insight and knowledge on the most important incidents and data regarding Islamophobia in Europe in 2022. Since the first publication of this report covering the year 2015, the *European Islamophobia Report* has become a cutting-edge source for information on Islamophobia in the fields of politics, media, employment, education, and justice. The annual report also exposes European Islamophobia networks and highlights initiatives to counter anti-Muslim racism.

The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly contribute to the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic statements spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights of European Muslim citizens and ultimately threaten society as a whole. As a result, the *European Islamophobia Report 2022* discusses the impact of anti-Muslim racism on human rights such as freedom of association, freedom of speech, and religious freedom, and the state of law in Europe.

This eighth edition of our report reviews the effects of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the coverage of the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar in European media, and how anti-Muslim legislation and measures in states like Austria and France have developed and have been fought by civil society. The 23 country reports demonstrate how governments, political parties, and media participate and counteract in reproducing discourses that put the fundamental rights of European citizens in jeopardy. This compendium of useful insights and data aims to provide European policymakers, institutions, and NGOs with recommendations on how to tackle anti-Muslim racism in Europe both effectively and systematically.

As last year, this project has been materialised with the support of the International Islamophobia Studies and Research Association (IISRA) based in Berkeley, California and the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley; Rutgers University's Center for Security, Race and Rights; the Berkeley-based International Islamophobia Studies Center; the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project (IRDP) at the Center for Race and Gender (CRG) at the University of California, Berkeley; the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas (AMED) Studies program at San Francisco State University; the Vienna-based Leopold Weiss Institute; and the Research Centre Social based in Novo Mesto, Slovenia.

Below please find the executive summary of EIR 2022.

You can download EIR 2022 and previous reports from: www.islamophobiareport.com

Kind Regards

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Executive Summary

The unanimous adoption of the United Nations resolution that declared March 15 the “International Day to Combat Islamophobia” is a major success in the global recognition of Islamophobia as an existing and pervasive problem. This resolution holds the potential to be used by civil society and politicians who have been fighting Islamophobia in the past to put pressure on nation-states that have, on the one hand, promoted Islamophobia and make them accountable for their actions, and, on the other, pressure such states to take concrete action against Islamophobia.

The beginning of the war in Ukraine seems to have overshadowed other domestic issues including Islamophobia to varying degrees, while in Russia, civil society activists and journalists expressing dissent have been subjected to criminal prosecution with the help of the Law on Non-commercial Organisations, the Fake News Law, and the Law on Military Censorship. The persecution of members of various Islamic groups and the further inclusion of Islamic books such as an abridged version of Sahih al-Bukhari on the list of extremist materials has continued. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has uncovered the stereotypical perspective of many Europeans vis-à-vis different kinds of refugees, welcoming white, Christian (female) Ukrainians as opposed to the often violent resistance and rejection of Muslim refugees.

In regards to institutionalised Islamophobia, the Austrian Integration Minister Susanne Raab (ÖVP) organised the second iteration of the “Vienna Forum on Countering Segregation and Extremism in the Context of Integration” to export her battle against so-called “political Islam” to other European countries. A total of eleven countries are said to have participated in the forum. On a national level, Raab has increased the annual budget of the Documentation Center Political Islam to 1,700,000 Euro (from the original 500,000 Euro).

As the strongest ally in this politics, France continued its path of a crackdown on its Muslim population. Emmanuel Macron’s “systematic obstruction” policy has led to the control of 1,727 Muslim institutions, 118 closures, and 10 million euros seized between January and August 2022. In the field of education, the so-called Laïcité Plan to control and police Muslim women’s bodies has been implemented. A national education directive forces teachers and administrative staff under threat of penalties to detect “too long” skirts, to report female pupils, and to file a disciplinary complaint.

Similarly, in Belgium, the minister of justice pressured the leading imam of the Great Mosque of Brussels to resign or risk losing government funding for the mosque.

In Denmark, a hijab ban in elementary schools was suggested. The government set aside funds for teachers to recognise and prevent so-called negative social control and honour related conflicts for the next two years.

British prime minister, Rishi Sunak, has largely ignored the fight against Islamophobia, while defending the infamous government’s PREVENT counter-terrorism strategy and vowed to refocus it on the threat of so-called “Islamist extremism”. The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) definition of Islamophobia was officially rejected only days after the new government took office.

Criticism by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) does not seem to echo with many of these member states.

At the same time, other European institutions reproduce one-sided analyses that conflate radicalization and violence with Islam, portraying Muslims in the Balkans as a security threat, as is the case with the European Commission's "Kosovo Report 2022".

Four specific recommendations emanate from the eighth volume of our *European Islamophobia Report*:

- The new United Nations resolution declaring March 15 as "International Day to Combat Islamophobia" should be used by policymakers and civil society actors to press for more change in the fight against anti-Muslim racism.
- We reiterate the urgency as declared by European institutions, especially with regard to the member states of the Council of Europe, to take the ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination seriously and to implement it. The recommendations should also be included in the various national action plans of European Union member states.
- We reiterate that European and national institutions should take the findings of the European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) as presented in the "Directive (EU) 2017/541 on Combating Terrorism - Impact on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms" seriously and recognise the damage of anti-terrorism legislation on Muslim communities in Europe.
- Austria's attempt to export its infamous witch hunt against Muslim civil society via the newly established "Vienna Forum on Countering Segregation and Extremism in the Context of Integration" must be fought back by EU member states.