

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA TO MEMBER STATES AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

## *Workshop on synergies and good practices on tackling anti-Muslim racism and discrimination*

**25<sup>th</sup> June 2019-Madrid**

As civil society organisations, we have highlighted the following recommendations that can be reached through specific actions, in close consultation, cooperation and full transparency with civil society experts.

### **1. Tackle the structural manifestations of Islamophobia by adopting measures in key policy areas**

- Recognition of Islamophobia (**anti-Muslim racism/anti-Muslim hatred**) as a specific form of racism. **Islamophobia** refers to acts of violence and discrimination, as well as racist speech, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping and leading to exclusion and dehumanisation of Muslims, and all those perceived as such. Many manifestations of Islamophobia are structural in their nature, in the sense that discriminatory patterns against Muslims are embedded in policies, laws and practices of institutional or private bodies.
- Support the **adoption or improvement of national policies against racism**, such as **National Action Plans against Racism**, with specific measures or strategies to counter Islamophobia, including measures to tackle intersectional discrimination targeting Muslim women (on the model of the [Barcelona action plan against Islamophobia](#)).
- Adopt **guidelines to implement an intersectional approach to religious dress restrictions** by recognising these restrictions mostly target Muslim women and are against full gender equality. These guidelines could promote non-discriminatory approaches to enable full inclusion of all Muslim women in all areas of life. Assessment of existing legislation should be done taking into account this approach.
- **Develop and promote harmonisation of data collection in areas of hate crime and equality**, recognising anti-Muslim bias as a category. These data should be disaggregated by multiple grounds of discrimination, including gender, race, ethnicity and religion.
- **Assess and acknowledge the discriminatory impact of counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism measures** and ensure that counter-terrorism measures

comply with fundamental rights safeguards, especially when implementing the recently adopted EU counter-terrorism Directive.

- Ensure **the safety of Muslim worship places**, in dialogue with the communities involved.
- Following the Council of Europe's example, establish **the day against Islamophobia on 21<sup>st</sup> September as a date for raising awareness** across Europe on the challenges and protection of Muslims.

## 2. Secure safe and decent working conditions for civil society working against Islamophobia

- **Refrain from participating in/supporting often-unfounded accusations** against civil society organisations working against Islamophobia. These are clear manifestations of the generalised suspicion towards Muslims in Europe. Civil society organisations in Europe are key democratic stakeholders which ensure that all communities are heard and empowered and hold governments accountable. However, civil society organisations working against Islamophobia are often severely delegitimised and may have their reputation, resources and integrity threatened.
- **Develop and strengthen funding programmes** enabling civil society working against Islamophobia to develop long-term projects for capacity building, advocacy for equality, strategic litigation, educational programmes, etc. This should be included in the current EU budget negotiations. Facilitating access to these funds is also crucial to allow civil society to benefit from them, **thus improving eligibility criteria** to suit the realities of small NGOs is crucial to allow CSOs to benefit from them.

## 3. Consolidate the mandate of the European institutions to keep Islamophobia high on the agenda

- **Develop a roadmap** on combating Islamophobia with concrete objectives and targets.
- **Include combating anti-Muslim hatred as a priority** in forthcoming communications related to tackling racism and the future of the EU high-level group on combating racism and related intolerance.
- **Secure the position of the EU coordinator** on combating anti-Muslim hatred as long as it does not replace strong political will, actions and effective policies. Clarity about the role should be ensured by a clear mandate and transparent communication and consultation process.

### Signatories:

AEQUITAS (Cyprus)

AFD International (Belgium)

Alliance Citoyenne (France)

Asociacion Musulmana por los Derechos Humanos (Spain)

CLAIM - Allianz gegen Islam - und Muslimfeindlichkeit (Germany)

Collectief tegen Islamofobie en Discriminatie (Netherlands)

Collective Against Islamophobia in Belgium (Belgium)  
Collective Against Islamophobia in France (France)  
COREIS Islamic Religious Community (Italy)  
Dokustelle – Dokumentations- und Beratungsstelle Islamfeindlichkeit & antimuslimischer  
Rassismus (Austria)  
ECPI-Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives (Romania)  
Euro-Mediterraan Centrum Migratie & Ontwikkeling- EMCEMO (Netherlands)  
European Forum of Muslim Women (Europe)  
European Network Against Racism (Europe)  
European Network on Religion and Belief (Europe)  
Faiths Without Borders (Finland)  
Fondazione L'Albero della Vita (Italy)  
Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (Europe)  
Lallab France (France)  
Muslim Association of Greece (Greece)  
Organizacion Nacional para el Dialogo y la Participacion (Spain)  
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