

## Executive Summary

There are estimated to be 15–20 million Muslims living in the EU; this population is expected to double by 2025. Muslims in Europe are a diverse population of citizens, as well as newly arrived migrants. Most live in capital cities and large industrial towns. Though the majority of Muslims are a long-standing and integral part of the fabric of their cities, many experience discrimination and social and economic disadvantages. Muslims in Europe today are also under heightened suspicion and scrutiny. This complex situation presents Europe with one of its greatest challenges: how to effectively ensure equal rights and social cohesion in a climate of political tension, economic uncertainty and rapidly expanding diversity.

There are very little data available on Europe's Muslim and minority populations. What does exist is extrapolated from ethnic and country-of-origin data, which provides a limited picture of the lives, experiences and needs of Muslims in Europe.

The increasingly visible ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of Western Europe has triggered debates on social cohesion and integration. Muslims are often at the centre of these debates. Policies to support integration and promote cohesion are developed at the European, national and local levels. The European Union defines integration as a two-way mutual process. This report focuses on public policies at the city level, in the context of national and European interpretations of the concept of integration, and how they are played out in the everyday lives of Muslims and non-Muslims across Europe.

On the whole, people from different backgrounds in the 11 cities studied by the Open Society Institute said they got along well together and were willing to help each other. Yet, though both Muslims and non-Muslims believed that similar values were an important part of belonging to a country, the majority did not believe that people in their own neighbourhoods shared similar values. Muslims identified respect for religion as a more important national value than did non-Muslims. These results present a complex picture, suggesting that a sense of shared values is not as necessary for people from different backgrounds as trust and a willingness to help neighbours.

For Muslims, feelings of belonging to their neighbourhood and city are stronger than belonging to the nation. For non-Muslims, national belonging is greater than (or the same as) city or community belonging. Half of Muslims who identified culturally with their country (i.e. saw themselves as Belgian, French, Dutch, etc.) did not feel that others viewed them in the same way. Cultural identification increased with integration in other areas such as employment and education. Muslims with a visible religious identity did not differ from other Muslims in their sense of cultural identification, belonging, or levels of trust.

The OSI research suggests that religious discrimination against Muslims remains a critical barrier to full and equal participation in society. The findings of this report are consistent with other research and suggest that levels of religious discrimination

directed towards Muslims are widespread and have increased in the past five years. European-born Muslims, particularly women, were more likely to perceive higher levels of religious discrimination than Muslims born abroad. European-born Muslim men identify the police as a key source of unfair treatment and discrimination. For Muslims, the persistence of discrimination and prejudice affects their sense of national belonging.

OSI found significant levels of interaction between people from different backgrounds, with European-born Muslims reporting the most. Frequent contact occurred at work, schools, shops, in public spaces such as transport and parks, and (more surprisingly) in the home. The majority of European-born Muslim women (51 per cent) had frequent contact at home with people outside their ethnic group.

The results run contrary to the view that Muslims live parallel or segregated lives, or do not feel a sense of belonging or attachment to the city and country where they live. It suggests that discrimination remains an important barrier to belonging, but one that many are overcoming.

The picture on educational attainment for minorities is mixed. In some countries, once socioeconomic background is taken into account, minorities are doing well. For some Muslims, religion plays an important role in supporting and encouraging education. Parental support, particularly in the early years, is also a strong predictor of future educational attainment. Across all cities, there is increasing recognition of the importance of pre-school education in ensuring that pupils from minority and other disadvantaged backgrounds do not start formal schooling underprepared. There is also growing evidence that education systems which place pupils into different education streams too early are disadvantaging young people from minority groups, who need more time to develop the linguistic skills to excel in education.

A desire for more ethnically mixed schools emerged consistently and strongly in the focus group discussions involving Muslim parents across the different cities. Parents were anxious about the adverse impact of segregation on their children's education and future prospects. Policymakers must find ways to overcome segregation, ways that result from a mixture of residential settlement patterns and parental and school choices.

Some Muslim pupils continue to suffer racism and prejudice at schools and are confronted by low expectations from teachers. Teachers need appropriate training and support to ensure that they can be effective in classrooms that are increasingly diverse, both ethnically and religiously. At the local level, many schools are responding positively to the needs of Muslim pupils, finding imaginative ways to work positively with their cultural heritage.

The settlement patterns of the majority of Muslims in the 11 cities in the OSI survey reflect the nature of the migration process in their country. Workers and their families mostly settled in the poorer districts of large industrial cities. This geographical

concentration produced networks of support and the development of goods and services to meet cultural needs.

The OSI survey, however, shows that most Muslims want to live in mixed communities, challenging the claims that the geographical concentration of Muslims reflects their desire to live among their own kind. Discrimination in housing confronts many Muslims and restricts their choices. Policymakers must find ways to maintain areas that are ethnically and religiously mixed, and to ensure that Muslims are able to choose where to live in a city unrestrained by discrimination and prejudice.

Muslims are not integrated into the mainstream labour market. They face higher unemployment rates and higher poverty rates than the general population. Those who are employed are often in marginal and low-paid jobs, this carries a greater risk of unemployment. Low-paid jobs also lead to segregated or parallel working lives.

Human capital accounts for some of this disadvantage in employment. Other factors include the lack of social networks, knowledge about the labour market, and language fluency. Some Muslims, particularly women who wear the veil, face penalties in the labour market based both on their ethnicity and their religion. Muslim women are also influenced by cultural preferences regarding family and childcare. Across the 11 cities, different measures are being taken to provide support for labour market participation; these include working with Muslim communities to ensure that advice and information reaches those who are furthest from the labour market. Some cities, as major employers, are taking steps to ensure that their workforce reflects the full diversity of the local population.

There are high levels of satisfaction in the health care that individuals receive. Reports of discrimination and unfair treatment are low, and most respondents felt that doctors and health clinics respect the needs of people of different faiths. Nevertheless, accommodating the needs of Muslim patients – in particular, the provision of *halal* food and, where hospitals provide chaplaincy services, access to imams – remains an issue that needs to be addressed. The need for appropriate care services for first-generation migrants who are growing older is an emerging issue of concern for many Muslims. Across the cities, there are examples of effective service delivery and provision that takes the cultural and religious needs of Muslims into account.

It is critical to ensure the accurate reporting and recording of hate crimes. The high levels of trust in the police provide a good base from which to develop initiatives to improve reporting. However, it needs to be recognised that these overall high levels of trust exist alongside low levels of trust among young European-born Muslim men, who experience the greatest amount of discrimination and unfair treatment at the hands of the police. The situation in Marseille suggests that over time, even the most complex and fraught relations between the community and the police can improve. Some cities are developing imaginative ways to improve engagement with communities, as well as effective strategies for recruiting and retaining police officers from minority communities.

The enormous media scrutiny of Muslims in different European countries has involved the negative reinforcement of stereotypes and prejudices. However, as the research also suggests, Muslims are aware of differences between the approach and agenda of different media organisations. The generally negative media coverage has also provided the impetus for individuals, civil society, and public entities to respond with greater engagement in media discussions, and to focus on the need to encourage and support more Muslims working in the media.

The OSI research points towards some encouraging trends, as well as the persistent challenge to ensure political and civic participation for Muslims.

Many Muslims who are not EU citizens remain disenfranchised, particularly in Germany and France, where they do not have the right to vote in local elections (even though many are long-term residents). Those who vote are more likely to feel that they can effect change in their city than those who do not. However, Muslim voters remain less likely than non-Muslim voters to feel that they can influence decisions affecting their city. Young Muslims, with more education and familiarity with political institutions, have greater confidence in their ability to effect local change than the older generations. Muslims are active in mainstream political parties. Parties based on ethnic and religious identity have not gained the support of Muslim voters. Increasing numbers of Muslims are standing for political office, but face additional scrutiny and questions because of their ethnic or religious background.

Muslims and non-Muslims share similar views in relation to their level of trust in the city council and government. Trust in local political institutions is higher than national institutions. The difference between Muslims and non-Muslims in their levels of trust in Parliament is significant and should be of concern.

The majority of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents are involved in mixed ethnic and religious organisations. The OSI research finds many positive initiatives taken by officials at the local level to engage with ethnic and religious organisations in their city. These initiatives may account for one striking finding from the OSI survey: respondents involved in same-ethnic/religion civic organisations are significantly more likely to trust their city councils than those involved in mixed organisations. In engaging with Muslim civil society organisations, policymakers and practitioners always need to ensure that they include women, young people, and others who may be marginalised by existing community organisations.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the results of this study, the 'At Home in Europe' project has developed a comprehensive set of recommendations for policymakers at the European, national, and local levels. The following is a summary of the recommendations found at the end of this report. These recommendations provide the first steps and initial ideas to support Muslim and non-Muslim communities strengthen their trust in each other and increase their ability to work together to achieve common goals.

## European Union policymakers

### Improve efforts to address discrimination

- Policymakers should promote equal treatment that addresses discrimination based on religion and belief in education, housing and the provision of goods and services.
- Equality bodies should be empowered to promote good community relations.
- The European Commission and Council should provide guidelines for national data protection commissions to establish safeguards against ethnic and religious profiling.
- The European Commission and Council should use technical guidance and programme funding to support the development of anonymous statistical data on ethnicity and law enforcement. Such data are essential to detect, monitor, and address ethnic profiling practices at the national and local levels in Member States.
- The European Commission must provide financial support for pilot projects, research, and dissemination of best practices for the recruitment of more diverse police forces.

### Improve and reform policies on integration and minorities

- EU statistical agencies and projects should collect accurate data on minorities in order to support evidence-based policies to facilitate integration and fight discrimination.
- The EU should expand efforts to increase the knowledge of civil society groups and local officials about the EU's Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration.
- EU cultural programmes should include a greater acknowledgement of Muslims' shared heritage with Europe, their contributions to European society, and endorse multiple religious and ethnic identities as a benefit to European society.
- The EU should treat integration efforts as a genuine two-way policy process that includes majority societies and communities.
- The EU's Integration Fund should prioritise supporting initiatives that provide diversity training for public service workers.
- The Council of Europe and other organisations should continue and expand research efforts, focusing on the impact of media coverage on Muslims, and its effects on social cohesion at the local level.

### Recognise that religion is not a barrier to integration for Muslims

- EU Member States should respond to the study's findings that most people are not threatened by visible displays of religion, by focusing instead on the discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping directed by a few against those who visibly display their religious identity.

### Address diversity and discrimination issues in the workplace

- The European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities should compile and share examples of good practices used by European cities to increasing diversity in the workplace.
- The EU should support city governments in developing local employment monitoring bodies to establish and evaluate objectives to increase Muslim and ethnic minority employment and economic integration.

### Make education more accessible and responsive to a diverse student body

- The EU should work on developing a forum among cities for exchanging information and best practices about collecting educational data on minority students.
- The European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture should devise programs and activities that allow educators and communities to share information about best practices for harnessing students' cultural heritage and diversity to improve learning.

## **National and Local policymakers**

### Increase awareness about discrimination

- National officials should use public information campaigns and national advertisements to make sure legislators, administrators, other officials, and the general public are clearly aware of existing legal protections and mechanisms seeking redress against discrimination based on religion or belief.

### Recognise the benefits and challenges of ethnically mixed neighbourhoods

- National officials, taking into account the results of the OSI research which shows a general preference for mixed neighbourhoods, should ensure that discrimination does not present a barrier to a free choice of where to live. Officials should pursue urban regeneration policies that ensure access to housing for all, and neighbourhoods with a good mix of ethnicities.

### Recognising Muslim civil society bodies as legitimate participants in community consultation and engagement

- National and local engagement with Muslim civil society bodies must acknowledge the full diversity of Muslim communities and recognise that no single body or organisation can reflect that diversity. Where city and district officials have worked with Muslim community and civil society organisations, there has been greater confidence and an increased sense of integration in the city. Muslim civil society bodies are able to support access to parts of the community which public bodies may otherwise find hard to reach, and provide advice and information that ensures the effective and efficient delivery of services, taking the needs of local communities into account.

### Consider reforms to definitions of nationality and voting rights for non-citizens

- Where necessary, national officials should consider reforms to nationality for long-term settled third-country nationals, so that naturalisation is the desired goal of settlement (as it is in the United States, Canada, and Australia); also that dual citizenship should be possible.
- National officials should consider giving voting rights for those without citizenship in local elections in order to address concerns about democratic legitimacy amongst policymakers in areas with large disenfranchised populations.
- In the absence of voting rights, local governments should create mechanisms to allow third-country nationals to express their views.

### Promote opportunities for interaction

- Local policymakers should respond to this study's findings that show a desire for greater interaction between various groups. Education and employment are key areas for providing cohesion and a sense of belonging to an ethnically diverse community. Local policymakers must examine schools, businesses, and workplaces for opportunities to increase interaction between various ethnic and religious groups within the community.

### Develop and promote inclusive civic identity

- Local policymakers should develop municipal campaigns that emphasise a common and inclusive city identity as an effective way to increase cohesion and belonging.

### Engage with communities to ensure awareness of rights

- Local policymakers and representatives from Muslim and other minority communities should work to ensure that members of their communities are aware of, and can access, existing legal protections against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief.
- Local policymakers and representatives from Muslim and other minority communities should work together to ensure that public sector agencies and enterprises have staff that reflect the diversity of their city.