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PERCEPTIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AND ISLAMOPHOBIA

VOICES FROM MEMBERS OF MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Perceptions of Discrimination and Islamophobia

Voices from members of Muslim communities in the European Union

EUMC 2006

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Foreword

Evidence gathered by the EUMC over the last few years indicates that since the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, European Muslims have been seriously affected by an increasingly hostile social climate. Subsequent incidents, such as the murder of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh and the Madrid and London bombings further exacerbated prejudices and fuelled more incidents of hostility and aggression. Therefore the EUMC asked the 25 National Focal Points of its Racism and Xenophobia European Information Network (RAXEN) to collect information on the circumstances of Muslims, including information on Islamophobic incidents and crimes. This material has been combined with information from other sources to produce the EUMC report "Muslims in the European Union - Discrimination and Islamophobia", which is published simultaneously.

As part of the same exercise, the EUMC also commissioned this present report, which consists of 58 in-depth interviews with members of Muslim communities in 10 EU countries with significant Muslim populations. This study is designed to complement and supplement the quantitative data in the other report. We would emphasise that this study compiles perceptions and individual experiences. It is thus a valuable overview of opinions, feelings, fears, frustrations and also, the optimism and vision of the future that European Muslims in the EU have. It is designed to be read in conjunction with the first report.

I would like to express my thanks to all those involved in this report, in particular to all the interviewees who gave so much of their time and to the team of researchers who organised the fieldwork and carried out the interviews so professionally. I would also like to thank the Management Board of the EUMC for their comments and feedback on this report.

I hope that this report will contribute to raising awareness about the development of Islamophobia in the European Union. It is important to recount the experiences of European Muslims with regard to discrimination, and Islamophobic incidents and discourse which can be found increasingly in the public and political domain, and also to identify the social and political context which gives rise to this verbal and physical aggression. There is a need for more dialogue, social inclusion and non-discrimination policies in support of minority groups, which will ultimately have benefits for the entire society. I hope that this report will contribute to an open public debate on the realisation of the vision for multicultural societies in Europe without denying the problems that exist.

Many Muslims acknowledge that they themselves also need to do more to engage with wider society, to overcome the obstacles and difficulties that they face and to take greater responsibility for integration. However, engagement and participation

need also encouragement and support from mainstream society that needs to do more to accommodate diversity and remove barriers to integration.

It is essential to send the message that discrimination against Muslims and Islamophobia are entirely incompatible with European values, and to urge European Member States to implement fully and effectively current EU laws against discrimination and racism.

I hope that the report will contribute to an open public debate on ways in which we can live peacefully together while respecting fundamental rights and cultural, ethnic and religious diversity without denying the existence of problems, as outlined by those interviewed.

Beate Winkler
Director of the EUMC

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Executive Summary

This study was designed to be complementary to a major parallel EUMC research report entitled *Muslims in the European Union – Discrimination and Islamophobia*, which is a descriptive overview of the circumstances of Muslims in the European Union and manifestations of Islamophobia. This other report is based on a specific data collection exercise initiated in 2005 by the EUMC through its RAXEN data collection network. It presents an overview of what data is available on manifestations of Islamophobia, in all EU Member States, and also includes population data and information on the situation of Muslims in key areas of social life, such as employment, education and housing.

The present report is designed with a different role. It presents qualitative, subjective data, which complements the more statistical and descriptive picture presented in the other report. The transcription and analysis of the interviews with Muslim respondents in ten EU countries is able to convey an insight into what many in the Muslim population in the European Union feel about the inequality, prejudice, discrimination and acts of Islamophobia they or others in their communities experience at first hand. It also fills out the picture by presenting details of individual incidents and events which are only lightly touched on in the other report.

The report does not try to assess whether the opinions expressed by the interviewees are 'correct' or 'incorrect', it simply aims to set out what many Muslims in the European Union are concerned about and the EUMC does not endorse the views expressed by the interviewees. The interviews do not claim to be 'representative' of Muslim opinion in the European Union given the diversity that exists within the European Muslim population and the small sample of people interviewed. Since the interviewees are individuals who are active in Muslim community groups or organisations the report is less likely to encompass the voices of many European Muslims for whom their 'Muslim' identity is more of a cultural than a religious identity, who do not go to mosques and who do not see Muslim political or religious organisations as important or even relevant to them. Nevertheless, the interviews do present a valuable and insightful snapshot into opinions, feelings, fears, frustrations and, also, the optimism and vision of the future shared by many Muslims in the EU.

Methodology of the study

This report is based on interviews with European Muslims in ten Member States: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom. The interviews, conducted between August 2005 and January 2006, explored the interviewees' perceptions of Islamophobia and discrimination, as well as issues of integration and belonging in the European Union. Those interviewed were Muslim men and women, many of them young people, involved in mosques and religious institutions, in political institutions, in youth groups, and in anti-racist and human rights organisations. Altogether, 58 people were interviewed, either in direct interviews or in focus groups composed of young people. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed, providing a greater level of detail and subjective insight than would be possible with other types of research tool, such as questionnaire surveys.

Changes since 2001

Interviewees suggest that many Muslims in the European Union feel that they are under intense scrutiny. The interviewees agree that a great deal changed from 11 September 2001, the date of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. From that time onwards respondents in different countries have reported an increase in open incidents of everyday hostility. Most of those who were interviewed agreed that the situation had deteriorated over the last five years.

Citizenship and exclusion

In the opinion of the interviewees, many Muslims in the European Union feel excluded from economic, social and cultural life. This is stated to be particularly the case in those Member States where a large part of the Muslim population does not have access to citizenship. It is clear that citizenship is critical to ensuring a sense of belonging. Examples are given of how the vulnerability of those without citizenship is sometimes exploited by state officials, employers or landlords.

According to the interviewees, even when Muslims are citizens of a Member State, they can still feel a sense of exclusion. They feel that they are perceived as 'foreigners' who are a threat to society, and treated with suspicion. This feeling is reported to be stronger among young European born Muslims than their parents. While the second and third generation are in many ways more integrated than the first, at the same time their expectations are greater and so the consequent exclusion is more keenly felt.

Demands on integration

The interviewees feel that the demands on Muslims to 'integrate' are often unreasonable and inconsistent. Again, it is the young people who get particularly frustrated by this because they feel that they have done all they can on their side to 'integrate'. Respondents feel that although integration is a two-way process, yet the constant pressure on Muslims to integrate means that in practice only one side is emphasised. They argue that a sense of belonging is intimately linked to equal treatment that they expect from wider society. Thus Islamophobia, discrimination, and socio-economic marginalisation have a primary role in generating disaffection and alienation.

The respondents feel that, increasingly, acceptance by society is premised on the assumption that they should lose their Muslim identity. They feel that there is an assumption that their values are not compatible with 'European' values. In some instances the fact of having religious values is seen as a source of conflict with the majority European secular values. Respondents feel that Islam is portrayed as undermining key values of European societies, whereas in their view the values of the average Muslim are entirely consistent with European values.

Understanding Islam

The interviewees suggest that there is limited recognition of the contribution that Islamic civilisation has made to world civilisation and to Europe. Furthermore, they also feel that there is no recognition of the contribution Muslims have made to the communities in which they live.

Many interviewees feel that there was a lack of understanding in public and policy discussions about the diversity between and within Muslim communities and the changes that are taking place. They suggest that the public sees and hears more about those with extreme views than about those for whom their faith identity provides a set of values which supports integration and is compatible with European values. Young women who were interviewed report that they are upset and offended when people automatically assume that all Muslim women wearing a headscarf are forced to do so.

The media

Respondents consider that the media present largely a negative image of Muslims. They get frustrated over what they consider as negative portrayal resulting from distortions through selective reporting. They claim that often Islam is presented as monolithic, authoritarian and oppressive towards women, which is often the consequence of the treatment of women in some Muslim communities, but this is reinforced by a constant focus in media and public discussion on issues such as forced marriages and female circumcision.

The controversy over headscarves

Official policies such as the ban on women wearing the headscarf are perceived by respondents to militate against integration. Although the ban can be framed by the authorities in terms of a general ban on religious symbols, many Muslims feel that such a ban is targeted at them. Respondents also mentioned that the headscarf debate in education has had a wider 'knock-on' effect by legitimising discrimination in other areas such as employment, as well as stimulating more aggressive anti-headscarf reactions in both discourse and incidents on the street.

Daily discrimination

Respondents suggest that the majority of attacks suffered by Muslims are mostly verbal rather than physical violence. Nevertheless, respondents state that they are 'worn down' by such daily experiences, which are far more likely to happen when a person is visibly Muslim, such as when wearing a headscarf. Respondents also report facing discrimination in access to housing, education and employment: Many feel that Islamophobia is also expressed in the small details of every day encounters, in passing comments, in jokes, in the way Muslims are observed and looked at by others. In housing, the discrimination can be detected in questioning about language ability, headscarves, or the size of a tenant's family. In education, it can come from the denigration by teachers of a Muslim pupil's ethnic culture or the reinforcement of stereotypical views about Muslim communities and Islam. In employment, interviewees were aware of instances of employment agencies receiving requests from employers not to send Muslim workers and several respondents mentioned the difficulty in finding a job or accommodation when wearing a headscarf.

The provision of services

Respondents suggested that public organisations do not always take the needs of Muslims into account in designing service delivery. The interviews show that EU Member States have varied in their responsiveness to requests by Muslims for changes to accommodate their needs. Campaigns for the needs of Muslims to be addressed have often centred on the same issues: access to and provision of halal food, religious education in schools, planning permission for mosques, and so on. In the experience of respondents, the response ranges from support and willingness to make adjustments and changes to policies, through to indifference and resistance.

It is reported that in many instances Muslims rely on the good will of officials working at the local level. Examples given in interviews reveal that even when the law is on the side of those making the request, they face resistance in the form of extra bureaucratic hurdles or refusal by local officials to apply the rules.

The difficulties of anti-discrimination

Respondents suggested that often Muslims do not feel confident enough to be able to challenge discrimination. In the experience of respondents, most cases of discrimination or Islamophobia are likely to go unchallenged. In some instances it has been due to the absence of legislation to protect against religious discrimination. But even where legislation has been introduced those interviewed report the need for campaigns to inform people of their rights.

Support for victims of discrimination varies across Europe. In some Member States interviews show that there are anti-discrimination bodies and human rights bodies that have the confidence of Muslims and are able to bring cases that challenge discrimination and Islamophobia. In others, respondents feel that complaints are unlikely to lead to action. Despite this the interviews confirm that most Muslims continue to see the law as an important tool with which to challenge discrimination.

Police and law enforcement

Examples given in the interviews highlight positive attempts by law enforcement agencies to engage with communities and develop relationships through liaison groups and community forums. The interviews indicate that Muslims want to be seen as partners, who have as much at stake in ensuring community safety as the rest of society.

However, some respondents indicated that they are more often than not treated as suspects by law enforcement agencies. The actions of police are felt to particularly alienate young people. Respondents are also frustrated at the disparity between the attention given to initial police action, when Muslims are concerned, compared to the silence when those arrested are found innocent or released without charge.

Changes in Muslim communities themselves

The interviews show that many Muslims acknowledge that they themselves also need to do more to engage with wider society, to overcome the obstacles and difficulties that they face and to take greater responsibility for integration. In particular respondents note the need to move away from being inward looking and in this regard several interviewees place particular importance on the developments of an Islamic discourse that places emphasis on integration, engagement and participation with wider society. They see the development of an outward looking community as crucial in developing integration further and deeper.

Several interviewees acknowledge that a key challenge for mosques today is for them to become more inclusive and accessible for women and to be more relevant to the experiences of second and third generation European Muslims. Respondents recognise the need for Muslim organisations to improve the quality of their

contribution to policy making discussions. Muslims are stated to be increasingly involved in politics, standing in local and national elections.

The future - optimism and pessimism

Respondents could identify reasons to be both optimistic and pessimistic about the future of Muslims in the European Union. In countries where Muslims are forming the second and third generations, respondents could see a new generation of articulate, progressive young people, increasingly well educated, gaining positions in society, motivated to be actively addressing everyday social problems, and committed to the development of a cohesive and just multicultural society.

On the other hand, the pessimism of many respondents came from seeing the vision of such a society being eroded by what they see as media distortion and hostile government acts, from increasingly unreasonable pressures and inconsistent demands put on them, from their treatment in daily life, and the impact of anti-terrorist measures.

Introduction

In the late 1950s and '60s labour migration led to the establishment and growth of new Muslim communities in several EU Member States. Initially these immigrant communities were composed mainly of working age males and were defined primarily in terms of their economic function (as 'guest workers'), their colour or nationality. With the restriction of primary economic migration in the 1970s a process of settlement and of family reunification began. As men were joined by their wives and children, attention turned to the development of community infrastructure. An increasing proportion of the Muslim population is now second and third generation European-born Muslims. In the 1980s, Muslims also arrived in northern Europe as refugees seeking asylum, initially from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon, and then in the early 1990s from the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and Somalia. In some cases these were skilled professionals arriving from urban centres.

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks on the USA in 2001, many Muslims in EU Member States have been seriously affected by a difficult climate - as the EUMC documented in 2001 and 2002 in a series of reports which showed how Muslims had become targets of increased hostility. This is in spite of positive initiatives, involving Muslims and other religious groups, which aim to promote mutual respect and improve the social participation and positive integration of Muslims into EU societies.

The aim of this study is to provide a snapshot of perceptions from members of Muslim communities in the European Union, their experiences, their concerns and their expectations. This study is complementary to the parallel EUMC research entitled "Muslims in the European Union – Discrimination and Islamophobia".

The report is in two main parts: Part 1 describes respondents' views on the perceptions of European Muslims around issues of identity and integration, and how they respond to the views and perceptions of wider society towards Muslims and Islam. Part 2 portrays their experiences of and responses to manifestations of Islamophobia in various social, economic and political arenas of their lives in the European Union.

Methodology

The report is based on interviews of up to two hours in length with Muslims in ten EU states with significant Muslim populations: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom. The same sets of issues were explored in each of the interviews using a common methodology.[1] All interviews were conducted on a basis of anonymity to ensure frank and open discussions, with interviewees being told that quotes would only identify the EU Member State that the interviewee was discussing.

An initial interview list was provided by the EUMC. Many of those interviewed were from official Muslim representative organisations or Councils that the Member State governments had contact with. This initial list was supplemented by further recommendations from other Muslim organisations and NGOs contacted by the authors. Within this group, six were from national representative organisations, one was from a municipal level representative organisation, a further six were involved in organisations that campaigned on human rights and anti-discrimination issues, two were elected politicians, six were involved in religious organisations, and one worked for a Muslim charity. The first round of interviews was conducted towards the end of 2005. In total 29 people were interviewed at this stage, with a minimum of two interviewed in each of the ten countries.

In selecting people for interview it was recognised that it would be important to ensure the inclusion of women and young people. Therefore, in December 2005 and January 2006 in the second round of interviews, a further group of 29 people, aged eighteen to thirty-five in Germany, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom took part in focus groups. Over half of these were women. In addition to the questions of identity, belonging, integration, and discrimination, the groups explored their views of Muslim community organisations, institutions and 'community leaders'. The groups were composed of young people who were involved in their local Muslim youth organisations.

Those people who were selected for the individual interviews range from those involved in religious institutions and organisations to individuals who describe themselves as secular Muslims. One constraint was language. Where possible, interviews were carried out in English. Translators were used in four interviews and in conducting one of the focus groups.

The aim was to carry out long and more in-depth interviews with a small selection of respondents in ten EU countries. By tape recording and transcribing the interviews, it has been possible to provide a greater level of detail and insight than would be possible with a questionnaire survey. The approach was to allow people

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[1] In a few instances, limitations of time on the part of the individual being interviewed meant that fewer selected issues were explored in the interviews.

to speak freely about what they understood to be problematic for them, and what they perceived to be important.

The report does not try to assess whether the opinions expressed by the interviewees are 'correct' or 'incorrect', it simply aims to set out what many Muslims in the European Union are concerned about. The EUMC does not necessarily agree nor endorse the views expressed by the interviewees (respondents' quotes in shaded boxes).

Furthermore, the interviews cannot claim to be 'representative' of Muslim opinion in the European Union. This would not be possible because of the diversity that exists within the European Muslim population, and the small sample of people interviewed. Indeed, one drawback of the methodology of selecting interviewees from individuals who are active in Muslim community groups or organisations in the ten Member States is that the report is less likely to encompass the voices of many European Muslims for whom their 'Muslim' identity is more of a cultural than a religious identity, who do not go to mosques and who do not see Muslim political or religious organisations as important or even relevant to them. Nevertheless, the interviews do present a valuable and insightful snapshot into the opinions, feelings, fears, frustrations and also, the optimism and vision of the future that many Muslim people share in the European Union.

Part I: European Muslim communities

Part 1 of this report looks at respondents' descriptions of the Muslim communities' own organisations in Member States of the Europe Union, and the views of young Muslims on the activities of mosques and Muslim political organisations. This is followed by the interviewees' responses to questions of identity and integration in European societies, and how these are affected by attitudes of racism in the majority society, as well as by discourses on 'assimilation' and 'incompatible values'. Finally, Part 1 looks at how respondents see the future of Muslims in the European Union.

Quotations from interviewees are in shaded boxes in *italics*.

1. Structure and organisation of the Muslim community

1.1 Organisation

During the second half of the twentieth century Muslims arrived in countries of the European Union largely as economic migrants. Most arrived with the expectation of returning to their families within a few years:

> *"Early migrants were very interested to keep the culture and the traditions of their homelands, they always talked about going back home. So, their organisation was not political, socio-economic or integration minded, their organisation was based on ethnic groups … immigrant groups for the sake of keeping their sanity, and for the sake of keeping their traditions. They did meet every Friday, but they also needed some social activities so they used to import films, and singers from their homeland."* (Male, Denmark)

As women and children joined the men, there was an increasing focus on the development of community infrastructure. At the centre of this was usually the local community mosque, which in most cases would be a prayer room and would also provide after school Qu'ranic classes for children. More recently, interviewees note, a few mosques have moved beyond being just prayer rooms and cater more generally as community facilities. For example, the London Muslim Centre, opened in 2003, attached to the East London Mosque, includes facilities for meetings and conferences, a library, a gym, IT training facilities and much more.

The mosques set up by the first generation of Muslims in northern Europe were almost exclusively male domains. Several interviewees argued that a key challenge for mosques today is for them to become more inclusive of women and of the younger generation. In Germany, the war in Bosnia was seen as one catalyst for greater co-operation between the different mosques. It is reported that the initiative for this co-operation came from women:

> *"It came from the women's organisations, because, for women, they don't have this issue of 'if I go there then they will think that I will want something from them'. Women don't have that problem. They just go there and say 'brother, we must get together'. And this was during the Bosnian war. Nobody could refuse to co-operate on the Bosnian war. ...Whatever other mosque you didn't go to, you couldn't refuse to go to the Bosnian mosque ... it helped to develop cooperation on other issues like education*." (Female, Germany)

The language in which sermons and discussions take place within mosques is identified as one barrier to the development of multi-ethnic mosques:

> *"We still have mosques that are based on ethnicity. This is because of the language. We don't have a lot of mosques where they do Friday sermons in Dutch. If we had that we could attract a lot of young people from different backgrounds. We still have a lot of mosques where the Friday services are in Arabic, or Turkish or Urdu"*. (Young female, Netherlands)

> *"A new generation is going to different mosques .... Ten years ago this was unheard of; but now I think people are starting to go from one mosque to another. The fact that most of the sermons are in the original language does not help this. Turks use Turkish. Arab mosques are beginning to switch to French but only a very few."* (Young male, Belgium)

The interviews suggest that one consequence of domination of traditional mosques by men from the first generation has been the development of Muslim women's organisations and Muslim youth groups *outside* the mosque structure. France and the UK have, more recently, seen the emergence of Muslim advocacy organisations that campaign against racism and Islamophobia. The interviews also indicate that there has been a steady growth in the number of Muslim civil society and voluntary sector organisations, focusing, in particular, on education and welfare issues.

1.2   Young people's view of religious organisations

Many Muslim young people are indifferent to Muslim religious organisations, particularly those from a Turkish background who follow a more secular Islam. For those others who do see such organisations as relevant to their lives, there were many criticisms voiced, such as that mosques were often unable to meet the needs or address the concerns of young Muslims:

> *"I don't think mosques are doing the right job at the moment. If you go to the mosque, here … all the preachers, all they are talking about is the old stories, or what happened in the time of the Prophet. They never talk about the problems at present, what young people are facing and the dilemmas they have, what they face when they go out in the community. Another problem I think is that the imams who play a central role in the mosque, at this moment they are not educated in Holland. They come mainly from Turkey or Morocco; so they really don't know the situation in Holland … They cannot connect with people here."* (Young male, Netherlands)

In Germany it was noted that young Muslims do not want to go to mosques, and that the mosques do not have any programmes for young people. Similarly in the UK, a respondent argued:

> *"I don't think young people expect mosques to address their issues. Because of the way mosques are, people just see them as places where you go in and do your prayers and just leave, which isn't what mosques are supposed to be in our community. I think in that sense they are failing, because they are not just supposed to be a place for prayer, they are supposed to be the centre of the community… Mosques are preaching to the converted, the people who are already religious, are practising, and go to the mosque. But the ones that aren't will run a mile. Especially because they are expected to be something that they are not or if they don't dress in a certain way they are not made to feel particularly welcome."*
> (Young female, United Kingdom)

Some identified traditional methods of learning used in mosques as a particular problem:

> *"The mosques where I grew up were, in my opinion, not really meeting the needs of the young people ... the education there was more based on memorising and telling what Islam is, but not focusing on understanding Islam and bringing it to the Muslim young people in an adequate way. The educational means they used were not up to date. It was more brought from back home. ... The imams were not familiar with the situation of the young people here in Germany."* (Young male, Germany)

> *"They just give a really patriarchal, cultural, restrictive, horrible version that just puts you off, basically. If I hadn't discovered Islam for myself I don't think I would be a Muslim today"* (Young female, United Kingdom)

The language used in mosques was cited in most groups as a critical issue. As one German respondent put it, the mosques in Germany use, for example, Turkish or Arabic or Bosnian, but the youth in Germany can't speak these languages very well. The young Muslims in the focus groups felt that mosques needed to do more to engage with them:

> *"The mosques don't offer much for youth, small things like sports activities or snooker tables. ... The older generation oppose these ... – they don't see this as part of the activities the mosque should have. They have a different understanding of what a mosque should be. It is rather sitting in front of the imam and listening and just this one way of education and less socialising and spending leisure time. It is more this old-fashioned understanding of lecturing and learning religion."* (Young male, Germany)

> *"I still think it (the mosque) is a bit insulated and isolated from the wider community and it has a lack of understanding ... but young people are now getting onto committees and they are facilitating that wider engagement with the community*." (Young female, United Kingdom)

Another respondent from the United Kingdom felt that although young people were getting involved in mosques, they were not catering for all young Muslims.

> "*...the books they read have everything to do with Islam and nothing else. But other young Muslims, those who do their five daily prayers but who are not so deep into the Islamic way of life, feel left out*" (Young female, United Kingdom)

A crucial tension was over the control and running of mosques. The older generation still remain in charge of the mosque, and focus group participants argued that more needs to be done to encourage and facilitate the participation of young people.

> *"The founders of the mosque ... are persons of the first generation so they are maybe now 55, or even 60/65 years old .... They didn't give the opportunity for the younger persons also to join the board. So, everything what's happening now in Holland and in Europe, they are not aware of it very well. They are still watching the TV, the news and what is happening in their own country ... I think a good solution for this is that they give the younger population, say 20-25, or even 30 years, who speak good Dutch, the chance to join those boards so that the communication with the younger generation in the mosque will be much better. That is a big issue at this moment."* (Young male, Netherlands)

There were also examples of mosques that successfully engaged with young people and provided them with an understanding of Islam that was relevant to their lives in the European Union today:

> *"In our town we have an international mosque and this mosque bought a youth centre so we have a mosque with a youth centre and many young people can come there and communicate with each other and learn from each other. That is one of the very rare positive examples."* (Young female, Germany)

Another respondent from France was positive about the role of the mosque today.

> *"We see it having an effect today in each neighbourhood. French is used increasingly in the mosques and the public authorities are beginning to recognise the important role played by Muslim institutions. During the recent riots, a number of Muslim associations were called upon to calm people. So I think excellent work is being done."* (Young female, France)

> *"I grew up in a very strong knit Bangladesh Muslim community, where it is quite patriarchal and cultural and traditional. The mosques were quite a safe haven, even for young Muslim women and for mothers. The imams that we had were quite good and they did give us a very strong understanding."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

Interviewees reported that significant changes were taking place in the leadership of mosques:

> *"It is a change of generations. The people who were raised here now take the leadership or the top positions in the institutions and they know what is going on in comparison to their parents or whoever founded the institutions."* (Young male, Germany)

> *"If you look at the mosques, about 20 years ago then there were no spaces for women, it wasn't discouraged but there were no facilities for women. It's changing, it's more dynamic, innovative, it's involving young people. Young people are now on committees."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

During the focus group interviews young Muslims were asked what they thought were the key issues facing young Muslims that mosques were not addressing. Among the issues identified were questions around everyday interactions and activities, relationships, and sexuality, crime and drugs. Young respondents from the Netherlands raised issues about relationships with Dutch people, at work or at school.

> *"For example, when you are a working woman, it raises different questions about how to talk with men or how to behave around men and women and how to join in parties at work or dinner. If you ask them to a general imam – because in a traditional way the woman does not work – they don't have the answers to that kind of question."* (Young male, Netherlands)

One argued that as a result, "*You have to come up with the answers yourself and go through many conflicts; external conflicts with the people around you, as well as internal conflicts.*"

> *"I think that the imams are not capable of giving the right answers, so they defend themselves by saying 'No, according to our tradition and culture you should not even think about joining a dinner or a party or whatever'. But they don't realise that when you don't do this, that you are becoming a solo person, a single person who is not joining the group so you will never enter that group."* (Young male, Netherlands)

Other respondents from the Netherlands and the UK felt that there were a whole range of problems that cannot be discussed in the mosque.

> *"Being in love, sexuality, those are things which are really a problem. You cannot say it, no matter what manner you try, that matter is not discussed. But these are really issues that are important for the youth.*" (Young male, Netherlands)

1.3   Young people's views of Muslim organisations

In many countries Muslim organisations have come together in 'umbrella' organisations. Young Muslims in the focus groups in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK generally felt that Muslim umbrella organisations did not engage with or represent the views of young people:

> *"Young Muslims don't feel they are represented. These representative organisations are just a representation to the public but I think the youth don't feel that there is any content in it. It is just like a mask*." (Young male, Germany)

> *"I think it is quite unfair to say that the leaders should represent the whole of the Muslim community, or the young Muslims, because it is kind of difficult because we are all so different. What makes us similar is our religion but otherwise we are completely different."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

In the German focus group there was also criticism of the divisions among umbrella organisations, with a lack of unity. In the UK, focus group participants differed sharply in their views about the extent to which umbrella organisations could or should seek to represent the Muslim community and young people:

> *"There's the MCB, [Muslim Council of Britain] which is everywhere, but I don't know, I just think of them as a men's club."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

> *"I think that's a misconception of MCB. It appears that they are all Asian men but they have a diverse range of people. It is actually quite interesting to see them. We expect the MCB to speak on everything and to speak for everybody. What I do think they do is that they take some of the core interests and issues that are affecting the Muslim community and they do address it, to a certain extent, like the war on terror or the war on Iraq and other issues. We don't see the work that goes on that they do ... I think that there could be more and they could be better ... I am kind of at a point where I was dubious about the leaders and about them speaking for all of us, but I don't think they do and I don't think they actually claim to do so."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

Another British respondent felt something similar about the Muslim Council of Britain:

> *"On occasions, they have held themselves up to be the representative body of Muslims. When they fall short of that there is this whole backlash against them. But I think for what they are, a*

> *bunch of middle class Asian men, they do a good job. You can't expect them to be dynamic and represent the views of young people because they are not young people".* (Young female, United Kingdom)

Another interviewee suggested that umbrella organisations in the Netherlands were treated differently:

> *"In the UK I think the situation is much better than here in Holland. They (Muslim umbrella organisations) are really recognised by the Government. Here they are recognised but they are not really seen as a player in a community."* (Young female, Netherlands)

It was also reported that many organisations have only recently begun to engage with young European born Muslims:

> *"For a long time they have just been linked to organisations or movements back home. Now they have realised what their job is in European societies, and that their main focus is in Europe and they will be staying here for a long time and they have to invest their resources and their work in Europe and not focus on the issues going on in their former countries. ... It is still a process going on, which is a good and positive step forward for the Muslims here in Europe. I think we still have a long way to go."* (Young male, Germany)

In France it was reported that umbrella organisations are beginning to gain recognition:

> *"I think Muslims do feel rather more represented in recent years than they have been in the past, and, in particular, by the French Council of the Muslim Faith (Conseil français du culte musulman, CFCM), which was established four years ago. The CFCM plays an important role in assuring the visibility and the acceptance of Islam in France... But for the moment, it doesn't represent all of the Muslim community, mainly because it's still not very well known."* (Young male, France)

> *"I think that the majority of Muslims see themselves as represented by the Muslim institutions, especially the CFCM, but also other associations: the UOIM (Union des organisations islamiques de France) organises an annual congress for example, attended by 100,000 Muslims. So people clearly feel represented, and think that organisations such as this work in the interests of their community."* (Young male, France)

2.   Identity and integration in wider society

2.1   Perceptions from within

2.1.1   Citizenship

The interviews indicate that, for Muslims, the issue of identity and belonging is complex and multifaceted. Participants identified access to citizenship as crucial to a sense of belonging and acceptance. Citizenship and nationality laws vary considerably between different EU Member States, and this, in turn, reflects the extent to which Muslims are citizens in those states. For instance, in the UK, the historical legacy of colonialism meant that most Muslims that arrived in the UK as migrants were subjects or former subjects of the Crown and were able to obtain British nationality. In contrast, in Germany, Muslims arrived as 'guest workers', and in the experience of those interviewed, they continue to be regarded as such even when they are second and third generation Muslims born in Germany. The interviews suggest that the right to citizenship is a critical issue for Muslims in Germany. Respondents estimated that, of the three million Muslims in Germany, only 600,000 have German citizenship. They underlined that those without citizenship feel like second-class residents:

> *"There is a gap between Muslims with German citizenship and Muslims without German citizenship, because people who don't have German citizenship are outsiders. They feel outsiders. They feel that they can't do anything."* (Female, Germany)

It is clear that the absence of citizenship also brings with it a sense of vulnerability that can be exploited by others. One German interviewee reported instances of Turks facing extensive and detailed questions by security services when they were interviewed for the renewal of their visa:

> *"They first tell you that you will not have any rights to refuse to answer questions, 'You are not at a court'. In a court you have a right to refuse to answer questions. So, you don't have any right to refuse. 'So, where are you going? What are you doing? Are you training? Why are you training?' ... they tell you, 'we will prolong your visa, but you promise and sign that you never visit this mosque again, this community there, you don't do this, you don't do that.' .... I know many people who have wanted to take to court cases to challenge this behaviour ... but in the end they offer to prolong their visa."* (Male, Germany)

> *"I tell you honestly, you have a huge number of people that are thinking of leaving Germany. For example, in a school in Munich, 25 per cent of the pupils left the school because their parents left*

> *Germany. They left Germany of their own will, not by force. So a lot of people are reconsidering things."* (Male, Germany)

At the same time, the interviews suggest that Muslims who have citizenship feel that their loyalty to the state is constantly under suspicion. One respondent referred to an incident, which left him feeling that even where you have citizenship you are still regarded as a foreigner:

> *"There is the famous case of Ferestha Ludin, who wanted to become a teacher in Germany. She was always described in the press as a teacher from Afghanistan, but she was a German citizen. She was for years a German citizen, but none of the newspapers took notice of that. She was always [described] as the teacher from Afghanistan who wants to practice in Germany. I mean, you have to be a German [citizen] to practice in German schools, but nobody knows that. The problem was that she wore a headscarf."* (Male, Germany)

> *"It is nearly impossible to say 'I'm German and I'm a Muslim'. So if you are seen as a Muslim then they don't understand that you are German. They can't understand. How can she be German although she is Muslim? ... They always think that you are far away, you are strange; you are something different."* (Female, Germany)

Interviewees described instances in which officials viewed involvement with, or membership of, Muslim organisations as incompatible with European citizenship.

> *"But, this is an… official democratic party that rules in a democratic state, which is supposed to be a potential* member *of the European Union. How can they ask if you are a member? If so, what does that mean? They got rid of the question in the end because it was very controversial and the media brought it up… However the incident shows you the kind of thinking that has changed after 9/11, that somebody who is a religious believer is suddenly seen as somebody who is not suitable for citizenship, which years ago nobody would have said."* (Male, Germany)

In recent years, laws in Denmark have been changed to make it more difficult for those already living there to obtain citizenship. The respondents interpret this as a signal from Danish society that they are not wanted.

In Spain, where the Muslim population is generally first generation immigrants, respondents note that there have been attempts by the government to regularise the residence status of illegal immigrants. Muslims interviewed compared the actions of the previous government in Spain, which had sought to increase immigration from South America, to the actions of the current government, which has reopened the opportunity of migration from Morocco. According to respondents, Muslims in Spain feel this government is friendlier towards Muslims.

2.1.2   Changing perceptions over generations: the first generation

It is clear that there are significant generational differences in Muslim perceptions of their relationship with wider society. Respondents in northern Europe note that the first generation of immigrants made the physical journey to Europe but not the mental journey:

> *"The first generation came here just to work and to go back, maybe they cannot feel they belong ... Unfortunately they may stay as a stranger for the rest of their lives ... I think the person born in France who has been living in France and who only knows France, they feel themselves a part of the French society."* (Male, France)

The process of family reunification means that the first generation, those who came to Europe as guest workers, were followed by a generation that arrived in the European Union as older children. Several interviewees referred to this group as the "lost generation".

> *"... they were often neither members of the society where they were living, not accepted, not integrated, neither real members of their countries of origin. They started losing their mother tongue but not learning the language of the country they were living in" (Male, Austria).*

In the experience of another respondent this was the generation that experienced some of the sharpest and most overt forms of discrimination.

> *"... facing discrimination from pupils in their class and had teachers who were not willing, or able, to understand the issues they faced. Society is now dealing with the consequences of the failure to support this generation"* (Male, Belgium).

2.1.3   Changing perceptions over generations: the second generation

Interviews indicate that second-generation, European-born Muslims differ in the extent to which they identify themselves as Muslim. One group among this second generation are those who are developing a conscious Muslim identity in opposition to European society:

> *"They went through a process which has some limits, that is, they rediscovered, not the true identity of Islamic faith and belief and behaviour but, I would say, an identity formation process that brought them to rediscover Islamic identity, but in opposition to the western culture and identity."* (Male, Italy)

However, another group who are asserting a religious identity have become conscious of the need to think about Islam in the context of the new country. A key issue for this group is the extent to which society is willing to accept difference and to allow them to express a religious identity.

> *"The French mentality still finds it difficult to accept that society has changed, that it has diversified. People still haven't accepted others. You have to be like them. But what does 'being like them' mean?… History weighs heavy in this situation. The relationship between France and its former colonies still* plays *an important part. There's still a superiority complex, despite the fact that we've lived together, we've grown up together, we've been to the same schools and lived on the same estates. But there's still a difference between them and us. They still look at us as if we're foreign rather than French. As far as legislation is concerned, differences are less obvious, as the law does not distinguish between citizens of the country. The real problem is at the level of the individual and individual mentalities."* (Male, France)

From the interviews it would seem that Muslims in this group often feel that in order to belong, they are required to assimilate:

> *"The second generation of immigrants has been asked by society to integrate itself, and it's done this well. In many ways, we respect France more than native French people; but what else do they want? Are we being asked to take our religion out of the equation, and to drink like them, eat what they eat?… If people are not prepared to accept these simple differences, then I think everyone will stay apart, and the gap between us, which had begun to close 20-25 years ago, will start to widen more and more… We've probably done all we can: I've got qualifications, I work, I live like a normal French person, but I'm not sure I'm a Frenchman in the eyes of my compatriots."* (Male, France)

> *"The question is not, 'is it possible to be a French Muslim'? The question is, 'can France accept a French Muslim as being French and being Muslim at the same time'? That is the issue in France at the moment."* (Male, France).

The interviews confirm that, for some, ethnicity is a more important marker of identity than religion. This is particularly reported to be the case for Turks and Kurds. However, the interviews also suggest that for many Muslims the interplay between ethnic and religious identity is complex. For example, respondents note that for many Arabs and Pakistanis, being Muslim is assumed as an integral part of that ethnic identity. Furthermore, respondents indicated that this complex interplay between ethnic and religious identity is reinforced by the fact that in several states, Muslims are synonymous with a particular ethnic group in the public discourse: in

France, Maghreb Arabs; in the UK, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis; in the Netherlands and Belgium, Moroccans; and in Germany, Turks:

> *"I have been a German citizen since I was 18, I don't have Turkish citizenship. If you were to ask lots of Germans they would describe me as a 'Turk with a German passport'. That is an* expression *that you hear very often in Germany… Why is that? Because I don't have a typical German name and if they know that I am not a Christian, for a lot of Germans that is something that excludes you from being a real German … So it feels as if I am a German but in reality, for a lot of people, I am not a full, real German."* (Young male, Germany)

> *"I am amazed that in my own circle of friends, very educated people, they start off saying 'you Muslims' and I always say to them 'excuse me? Who are you talking about?' Do we have two horns and one tail? Who am I? I don't pray or keep Ramadan, so why are you calling me 'you Muslims'… well, there is in Danish mind no difference between Turk, Moroccan or anybody, they are all Muslim, and as* such*, a problem for society. … So in these debates, and they have many, many debates, where you know they always say,' these Muslims', and I always ask them 'who are you talking about? Are you talking about Pakistanis, the Turks, the Moroccans, the Bosnians, the Bangladeshis? They put everything in one big box and on the top of the box is written 'trouble'"*. (Male, Denmark)

Even among participants for whom religion is an important part of their identity there is also a need to be seen as more than just Muslim:

> *"The main question is, if you are* a *Muslim or a non-Muslim. So, everything is focussed on being a Muslim. They don't care if I am a teacher or a father or grandfather, if I have children. The first thing which is important to them is the fact that I am a Muslim. So they want to know what kind of a Muslim I am. 'Are you a liberal Muslim?' 'Are you fundamentalist?'"* (Male, Netherlands)

The interviews suggest that most Muslims see the second and third generation as, in many ways, more integrated into society than the first, in terms of communication skills, knowledge and understanding of society. However, the expectations of second and third generations are also greater.

> *"… (*they are*) more angry than the elders, because the elderly were thankful to mind their own business and the young people are very vocal and they want to have their rights."* (Male, Denmark)

2.1.4 The impact of Islamophobia and racism on integration

It is clear that, for Muslims, a sense of belonging is intimately linked to the treatment they feel they receive from wider society. The interviews indicate that Muslims feel that racism, Islamophobia, discrimination, socio-economic marginalisation and a failure of society to accept Muslims are primarily responsible for disaffection. Respondents from Denmark, Germany, France and the Netherlands all made rather similar points on this issue:

> *"When it comes to emotional attachment, I think many ethnic minority groups with Muslim backgrounds feel under-siege, feel that they are not being accepted, and when you are not being accepted there comes a time when you turn your back. So I think this process of disintegration is not the making of Muslim communities, it is the making of the majority society who have refused to accept them, give them a place in their society,… most Muslim people do feel that this is their country now, they live here and they are part of it…but they are very angry".* (Male, Denmark)

> *"I have been born and brought up here … I tell you, from a very early age, I wanted to be part of this society, but in the end I found out that it is not me who decides. Even if I decide for myself to become part of this society, I can't as long as they don't accept me. In the end, many of the young people, the second generation, the third generation, have a huge problem about feeling part of society."* (Male, Germany)

> *"Basically, the French Muslim community see themselves as being totally integrated and being really a part of the French community. They live as French people and there is little distinction between being French or being Muslim on the part of the French Muslims. However, due to the Islamophobia* and *the acts of hate against the Muslim community, the society and the context make them feel like they are excluded and outside of the French community."* (Young female, France)

> *"I think if you stigmatise a group, … keep taking jobs away from them, let them live in ghettos, if you keep stigmatising these people and taking their lives away, it doesn't matter for what reason, I think [riots] might happen. Not in the near future, because we still have chances, we can still study, we can still have jobs, but you do see that some people are going away from Holland because they don't find this atmosphere right for them to live here … all the highly educated people may leave the country because of this."* (Young female, Netherlands)

The interviews show that actions by the state are viewed by Muslims as targeted specifically at them and add to the sense of alienation. Respondents note that the ban of religious symbols, such as the headscarf in schools is felt by Muslims to be a signal that they cannot be part of society because of their religion.

Respondents in Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands and the UK reported that policies and public discourse in the last five years have negatively impacted on the sense of belonging. In the experience of some respondents, even those who had previously felt part of society, now feel increasingly alienated and rejected. Other respondents suggested that the experiences of discrimination and social and economic marginalisation added to a sense of disaffection making Muslim communities defensive and inward looking:

> *"Some years ago, when we asked the young people here, especially in the Turkish community, there was a protest where the young people said 'We are part of this society and we will stay here and we think of us as part of this society.' But this position is not a position for the young people of today. They have changed. They are upset at the policies; at the way the majority of people are treating them"*. (Male, Germany)

> *"You will see two different views inside of the Muslim community. There will be one part which will be open to discussions with the different communities or NGOs or all organisations who are willing to make an effort to try to improve* the *situation of the Muslims in France. And then there is the second part, which has been exhausted by the situation and is not willing to dialogue anymore"*. (Male, France)

> *"A few years ago the youth felt as if this was their country. When we went, in my case, to Morocco, I say, 'this is a country for vacation; this is not my country. I don't feel at home here'. This [the Netherlands] is where I felt at home. ... But what happens in the four or five years until now, especially at this moment, is they don't let you feel that this is your country. You know, Morocco is not my country because I didn't live there. I lived here all my years."* (Young female, Netherlands)

> *"All the legislation that is coming out, like the immigration stuff and the citizenship stuff, it's all targeted at Muslims. I'm sorry to say it but it is. No one goes on about how the Australians will have to take citizenship tests. ... I think a lot of the Islamophobia arises from the fact that Muslims are perceived to be 'a problem' in terms of public disorder and socio-economics, and not doing very well at school and are a 'burden on the state'."* (Female, United Kingdom)

2.1.5 Developing an Islamic discourse of integration

The interviews reveal that there is a debate among growing numbers of Muslims about the need for Muslims to do more to engage with wider society, and take greater responsibility for integration. Several respondents feel that developing an Islamic discourse of integration is crucial to participation in wider society. Some respondents argued that, at times, Muslims too quickly withdrew into their own ethnic or faith community, but they also noted that the community's inward defensive posture is beginning to be challenged from within:

> *"In the past few years Muslim communities have tried to show that they are part of the society and if there is something bad happening, it is bad for the Muslims. Two years ago, when there was flooding in Germany, some mosques raised money for the flood victims, to show that they are part of German society. But, on the other hand, not all Muslims are interested in such things. Some say they are not interested because they have their own problems in the mosques, they can't communicate with the society. They say it is better to give money to Muslim communities outside Germany."* (Male, Germany)

One Austrian respondent felt that his fellow Muslims did feel that they are part of Austria, and that they have a duty to think about problems in Austrian society, such as the environment, so that now there is a real opportunity to get more involved in action on daily issues of common interest.

> *"When the floods came for example, in Austria last year, a lot of Muslims donated money for the rebuilding of* the *villages that had these floods. A lot of young Muslims went as volunteers helping to rebuild these things."* (Female, Austria)

Muslim organisations see the development of outward looking communities, in which the concerns, the problems and the issues of wider society are also seen by Muslims as their problems, as crucial to developing deeper integration.

2.1.6 Integration or assimilation?

Many Muslims recognise efforts by policy makers and politicians to support integration:

> *"There is a campaign right now in Germany started by the German media which says 'Du bist Deutschland!' 'You are Germany!' and there are several commercials and advertisements. A lot of people who are famous in Germany say something about this scheme, they talk about 'You are Germany!' and also some immigrants, people not of pure German background are involved in this campaign. The*

> *German society, at least the media, is doing something."* (Young male, Germany)

However, in some instances respondents have found that even those who think they are supporting integration will sometimes start from the assumption that religion is a barrier to integration.

> *"People have forgotten that integration is a two-way thing. Now it is only focusing on the Muslim. ... Everything that is happening is towards the Muslims, and the Muslims are always put in a position where they are obliged to defend themselves – a problem group. I think integration is a two-way thing that should also focus on the Dutch group but this is something which is not happening. Maybe the law is changed, but it is always in a negative way for Muslims that they change the laws. Like if you want to marry and bring a partner here. It is always affecting the Muslims."* (Young female, Netherlands)

Some interviewees were conscious of the fact that often, when people talk about 'integration', they really mean 'assimilation'. The interviews show that Muslims view this conflation of assimilation and integration with alarm:

> *"This is what we are heading for. So if you say 'I want to practise my religion', then the reply is 'we don't want you to practise your religion. We want you to be like us. Eat pork etc. Just to make it easy,... nothing special, just be like us.' ... This is a very, very strong message that has been given over."* (Male, Germany)

> *"There is this whole idea that if you live in Denmark you have to drink beer... eat sausages and say heil to the Queen. The whole idea is that your ethnicity is based on the country you live, even if you have lived as an individual in Denmark. They always say, as an individual we respect you, as an individual your identity is your business."* (Male, Denmark)

> *"Here in Rotterdam, the Chairman of the [ruling] party was talking about integration and assimilation. He said, 'For me integration is that the people at least will be assimilated in this country.' That is his view about integration. I also think that the most of the Dutch people are thinking so. They want assimilation but they are saying that the Muslim people must integrate. But what is integration? ... How must I be integrated into this country, they don't talk about that. If it is talking the language, we are talking the language. Is it working or participating in the society? We are also doing this. But they want to assimilate us and we don't want it".* (Young female, Netherlands)

2.1.7   'Incompatible' values as a barriers to integration

In the interviews, respondents acknowledge that there are many Muslims who use a discourse that seeks to draw boundaries between Muslims and wider societies on the basis of incompatible values:

> *"It depends on the flavour of Islam that that the young person is following. There are some Muslims who see everything as fundamentally incompatible … I think it depends on their perception of Islam and therefore that impacts on how they think about the compatibility with British values."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

One respondent noted that paradoxically in their attitudes towards, sex, marriage and married life, many Muslims in predominately Southern/Mediterranean Member States find that their values are more in line with those of the broader society than in Northern European Member States. Respondents make the point that some Muslims feel that the sense of exclusion, of not being accepted, is reinforced, not because they have differing values from the mainstream of wider society, but because the holding of such values is used as a way in which to define them as outsiders and to question their right to belong and to participate in debates about the nature and shape of society. In the Netherlands, an interviewee referred to one opinion leader who said that Dutch society can accept conservatism from Christians because in the Netherlands there are many Christian politicians who say things about homosexuals, for example.

> *"He said he could accept such views from a Dutch Christian because he is a Dutchman and their parents and the grandparents built this culture. But he could not accept it from the imam because he does not see him as having an equal standing as the Dutchman. Muslims feel that they are not allowed to hold views* that *are different from mainstream opinions. If you are coming and starting for example a discussion about prostitution then the reaction would be, "Shut up! You came here and you are a guest and you must accept what we have here. If you don't agree with this then you can leave."* (Male, Netherlands)

The interviews show that in many cases the respondents' own values are seen as quite compatible with European values:

> *"At the moment I am reading this book on philosophy and it is quite surprising to see how much these Greek philosophers are striving for justice and equity and righteousness and that is what Islam preaches. At the end of the day the one thing that matters most when we die is how we treated other people and justice and righteousness. And in that sense I think all good people in the world all want the same thing. A friend of mine who is a very strict Muslim*

> *reads Dickens books because of the fact that he wrote about justice and he is just an amazing guy and all his books are related to justice and righteousness. And I think it doesn't matter which part of the world you are from. I think those are the little things that we all look for and I think, in that sense, that is what I believe - that Islam and British values are actually quite similar."* (Young female, United Kingdom)

2.1.8   The invisibility of Muslims in public institutions

In interviews it was said that the absence of Muslims in key public institutions and organisations makes identification with such institutions more difficult. The interviews suggest that, a feeling of "institutional belonging", a sense of attachment to key political and legal institutions and the deeper psychological need that this fulfils, is difficult when such institutions are perceived to be "Muslim free zones":

> *"Muslims are not represented in the institutions, neither in the civil society, nor in the Governmental institutions or the Parliament. They are very much underrepresented in all these different institutions. There are very few signs from the wider community and wider society of accepting the Muslims in general".* (Male, Germany)

> *"Real success will be when the presence of Muslims in every level or position of society is regarded as something normal; that will be a success".* (Male, France)

Some EU Member States are perceived by Muslim interviewees as having greater success in achieving this than others:

> *"If you look to the TV all the people working there are mostly Austrian, if you see the police or you see the people working in the civil service, so it doesn't have the mixture like in many multi-cultural societies such as the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, where you see a Muslim reading the news."* (Male, Austria)

2.1.9   The Recognition of Muslim contributions to society

Interviewees felt that Muslim contributions to society are not recognised in national debates and discussions. In their view, there is little recognition of the contribution that Islamic civilisation has made to world civilisation and to European civilisation. The general narrative of European history, prevalent in the popular discourse of most states, is seen to be one in which Muslim participation in, and contribution to, European society is ignored.

> *"... as European civilisation grew and reached the high Middle Ages, there was hardly a field of learning or form of art, whether it was literature or architecture, where there was not influence of Islam. Islamic learning became in this way part and parcel of western civilisation"* (Male, Italy).

Respondents feel that the dominant understanding of the Crusades is one in which the crusaders are 'good' and the Saracens – the Turks, the Muslims – are 'bad'. They suggest that the history of south-eastern Europe Muslims, of Ottoman rule, is either ignored or taught as a threat to Europe, and not as part of Europe's history.

Respondents in France, the Netherlands and the UK argued that a clear understanding of their colonial past is important to understanding the presence of the Muslim communities there today. Many felt that there is no recognition of the role that Muslim immigrants have played in both the Second World War and in the post-war reconstruction of northern European states:

> *"They're denying the contribution made by Muslims and Arabs to French society. There's a researcher in Bordeaux who did his thesis on the Muslim presence in France since the Middle Ages. He shows how Islam and Christianity coexisted in the south of the country. But there's no trace of it in the school history books. And there's no mention made of the role we played in the post-war boom, and the development of the country, or in the Liberation for that matter. North Africans were in the first French army which arrived in the South from North Africa. It's a political issue in this part of the world, because many of the people who live here are pieds-noirs from Algeria, who hate us intensely. So when it comes to the official commemorations of the Liberation and the Armistice, they aren't going to make any effort to recognise the role we played in events."* (Young female, France)

> *"There really is no recognition at all, not even of the most basic sort. The contribution of our grandparents to the last war has never been recognised. There were whole towns which were liberated by Muslims. It's never talked about. France was rebuilt by Muslims who were brought over from Africa, and they don't have any rights. Old soldiers had to fight to have a basic pension, whereas French soldiers are treated like heroes. So there really is no recognition. And then the French pass this law, which really is an insult, the law which recognises the value of colonisation."* (Young male, France)

In contrast, respondents in Spain felt that its multicultural identity, together with its past history of Muslim rule, did provide space in which to develop a sense of Spanish Muslim identity:

> *"I think that Islam has a special place in society because of the past… Spain is not like France, Italy or England. If you see for example the customs, the geography, the ways, Spanish is full of Arabic and Islamic names and poetry and architecture, it is part of our soul, Islamic Spanish soul."* (Male, Spain)

But even in Spain, respondents reported that, in public discussions, a clear distinction was often drawn between the Moorish Islamic culture, which was seen as part of Spain's heritage, and the Islamic religion. This, respondents suggest, leaves Muslims feeling that Spain is reluctant to see Islam, as a religion, as part of Spain's current identity.

For the traditional Muslim community in Greece, it is clear that the issue of identity and belonging is entirely different to that of recent Muslim migrants in Greece, or Muslim migrants elsewhere in the EU. The Greek interviews reveal that an important issue for this community is the recognition of their ethnic identity.

2.2 Muslims' view of perceptions by wider society of Islam and Muslims

According to many of those interviewed, Muslims feel that the public has a limited understanding of the nature and dynamics that exist within Muslim communities. In their view there is very little recognition of the ethnic diversity and the diversity of traditions and movements within the Muslim community. Interviewees felt that in public discourse Islam is still seen as largely monolithic and rigid.

Respondents feel that the media and politicians have a key role in shaping stereotypes of Muslims. The two often feed off each other.

> *"I, again and again, talk about the media, because it is from the media that Mrs Jones gets her information. She doesn't know her neighbour, she doesn't say hello, but she reads the newspaper which says a man looking like that is a dangerous person. So then the neighbour also becomes a dangerous person. So that way the political statement to the media has a lot to do with that perception…They consider Islam as punitive, as violent, as militant, as unadaptable to the western way of living and also a threat. It is not only that they consider Islam as incompatible but also as a threat, a cultural and social threat to the whole fibre of Danish society."* (Male, Denmark)

> *"Throughout history, especially throughout the Ottoman history, there has always been a conflict between Christianity and Islam… There is an inherent fear of Islam deep in the hearts of many European countries."* (Male, Austria)

Suspicion may be a consequence of a lack of familiarity. One respondent pointed out that in Germany, for example, mosques are usually found in the industrial areas rather than in the town centres. Often they are in old factory buildings. As a result, they can appear to be concealed and rather suspicious, generating the impression that Muslims have something to hide:

> *"Many, many Germans have the feeling that you are producing weapons in the mosques! Really! This is what they really feel. They feel that you have something to hide and if they go to see the mosques they find many of them have doors closed. This is due to the fact that they have been built in areas where you have mainly production and trade and these things, as you know, are not in the city centres and therefore they have their doors closed. So you don't see it and it is very unfriendly. And this gives a feeling on both sides of non-belonging."* (Male, Germany)

From the interviews it is possible to identify several over-arching narratives – with a common underlying theme that identifies Muslims as a threat or danger to society. These views are most prevalent in northern European states, where, respondents suggest the emergence of second and third generation Muslims illustrates that Muslims can no longer be regarded as a temporary migrant group or guest workers but are a permanent part of society. The four predominant themes are seen a follows:

2.2.1   Muslims as a threat to European values

Respondents report that in the Netherlands, Pim Fortuyn gave a voice to those in Dutch society that felt that Islamic values were undermining the liberal nature of Dutch society. In France, respondents suggested that Muslims are perceived as "threatening the secular nature of the French state", while UK respondents suggested that they are seen as a "threat to multiculturalism".

Respondents argue that the perception of Islam as oppressive to women and the rights of women is due to ignorance about the role and rights of women in Islam both within Muslim communities and in wider societies.

> *"I think about a survey at our school. The people asked the pupils in our school 'What do you connect with Islam?' and I think 80 per cent of the pupils say they connect the suppression of women with Islam. And I and my sister, we are the only people with headscarf in our school and I say 'Look at me! Am I a woman who is suppressed?' and they say 'No, you are an exception' ... I'm disappointed and helpless, because we are not suppressed. I try to show them that, but most of them don't want to understand."* (Young female, Germany)

There is recognition by interviewees that the public image of Islam as oppressive towards women is often the consequence of the situation and treatment of women in some Muslim communities. In their view the coverage of issues, such as forced marriages, 'honour killings', female circumcision, etc, reinforces a perception of such practices as inherently Muslim rather than as unacceptable consequences of certain patriarchal cultural traditions.

2.2.2   Fear of the Muslim 'Demographic time-bomb'

Some respondents noted that the growth in the size of the Muslim population in the European Union is seen as a threat to society. In some instances this is articulated as part of a 'Muslim conspiracy to take over Europe':

> *"Some old style Catholics want to present Muslim immigrants as a new invasion because they have this belief that Muslims invade Spain, they conquer Spain. They want to pretend that the immigrants are a new kind of invasion. This view is held in a very small section in society…"* (Male, Spain)

2.2.3.   Fear of Muslims as a threat to law and order

The interviews reveal that Muslims feel that they are perceived by wider society as untrustworthy. Here again respondents feel that the media shoulders responsibility for the creation of this impression:

> *"Every time a Muslim does something negative it is the Muslim who did it. Whereas if something else happens, it is not the Christian who did it, the Jew who did it, the Hindu who did it, or the atheist who did it."* (Male, Italy)

> *"There are many, many more cases of non-Muslims mistreating women than Muslims, but when a Muslim has killed his wife then comes the headline 'it's a Muslim'. They don't say a Christian killed his wife. Everyday there are cases of mistreatment of women by non-Muslims but they don't say it's Catholic or it's Protestant."* (Male, Spain)

> *"Normally [in reporting cases] the media never give names but only initials but now they give the first name and just the initial of the last name. So … they are still not giving the full name but they say, for example, Hassan D or Mohammed E so everybody knows it is a Muslim. Before it was just initials but if it is a Muslim or a foreigner then they give the first name."* (Young male, Netherlands)

2.2.4. Fear of Muslims as terrorist sympathisers

Many interviewees feel that society perceives Muslims to be sympathetic towards terrorism. The respondents acknowledge that politicians will often make very clear statements that Muslims as a whole should not be blamed for terrorism. However, they feel that there is a suspicion that Muslims are sympathetic to terrorism which is implied in public comments suggesting that Muslims are not doing enough to publicly condemn terrorism:

> *"There is a bishop in Berlin, who says we can't talk to Muslims unless they make an expressed statement against terrorism. That's an assumption... By saying that, he kind of communicates the assumption that Muslims generally don't mind terrorism."* (Female, Germany)

2.3 Relations with other communities

Participation in inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue is seen by respondents as an important means for countering misunderstandings and negative perceptions about Muslims and Islam. Dialogue also provides an opportunity to foster understanding of, and links with, the wider community. Respondents involved in inter-faith dialogue with Christians and Jews find that it provides an opportunity to explore, not only the differences, but also the common Abrahamic roots of their faiths. Respondents in Austria and the UK felt that the fruits of their engagement in inter-faith dialogue were seen in the period after September 11 when the strong bonds of friendship, developed through such dialogue, led to expressions of support for the Muslim community from the churches.

Interviewees felt that the events of 11 September 2001 also highlighted the limitation of interfaith dialogue in reaching beyond active members of faith communities to the wider society. It therefore provided the impetus for Muslim communities to build bridges beyond faith communities to the wider society.

Participants gave examples of attempts by Muslims to be more open to wider society. One successful initiative, noted by interviewees, has been the development of open days at mosques:

> *"...people come and they lose the fear that they are in a strange territory. They come and they know they are welcomed, much has come out of that."* (Male, Germany).

In the UK, interviewees noted the importance of the annual Islam Awareness Week, during which Muslim organisations, as well as public and local authorities and educational establishments hold talks, exhibitions and other events that are aimed at increasing understanding of the Muslim community in wider society. Respondents note that in Rome, Muslims are invited by the town hall to speak to

schoolchildren about Islam as part of a programme exploring world religions. In the Netherlands, Muslim organisations developed the 'day of dialogue', which provides an opportunity for Muslims and non-Muslims to discuss issues over a meal.

2.4 Degree of civic and political participation

It seems that Muslim engagement and participation in civil and political life is growing but remains limited. There are several factors that appear to influence the level and extent of participation. Interviewees identified within the Muslim community a lack of skills and knowledge of opportunities for participation as key barriers. They also suggest that negative experiences can act as a barrier to further participation, particularly where Muslims feel that they are not listened to or taken seriously:

> *"My personal experience is that when you sit with Danes and discuss things they try to ignore you if you are not white… and speaking like a Dane. So, there have been some examples where people took part in political discussions or in the local levels and they left, because they thought that nobody was listening to them."* (Male, Denmark)

The absence of citizenship rights, discussed earlier, is also identified in interviews as a key barrier to participation. In some instances the fact of non-citizenship places legal barriers to participation, particularly in elections. Italian interviewees noted that in some Italian cities attempts have been made to overcome these barriers by organising the election of migrants as consultative members to the local city council. Such members, elected by migrants, have no voting rights in the council, but can advise on issues affecting immigrant communities.

Some Muslim organisations are attempting to mobilise Muslims to political participation by emphasising the potential they have of making a difference. One respondent noted that in one Belgian city, where he estimated Muslims are one fifth of the population, participation was encouraged by making Muslims aware of their potential as a group to make an impact. In Germany many Muslims are reported to feel that the narrow margin of Chancellor Schröder's victory in the 2002 elections was achieved with their help, as Turkish Germans voted overwhelmingly for the left. In the UK, during the 2005 general election, the Muslim Council of Britain issued a leaflet highlighting issues that were of relevance to Muslims. The leaflet suggested that Muslims should consider the position parties and candidates take on these issues in deciding how to cast their vote.

It was noted that in many instances, issues that affect Muslims trigger the initial Muslim participation in civil society. Some interviewees felt it was important for Muslims to participate in public debates beyond those that concern them specifically as Muslims:

> *"What I am kind of discouraged by is the lack of participation by Muslims in mainstream debate. The debates that are going on about education at the moment, whether we should go for city academies or things like that. I see Muslims taking a far more parochial and narrow interest … They are not engaging in things that are taking place in the wider community and I am quite discouraged to see that because I am quite interested in those issues. I would like Muslims to take a lead on that, not because they are Muslims but because they are citizens of a community, citizens of a society…"* (Young female, United Kingdom)

2.5. Future of the Muslim community

Respondents identified reasons to be both optimistic and pessimistic about the future of Muslims in the European Union. In parts of northern Europe the optimism stemmed from seeing how far the Muslim communities had progressed in the three or four decades since their initial migration to Europe, and a belief that Muslims are making a positive contribution to society:

> *"I am very optimistic… We have two or three generations, we see also that there are people who are going to university and high schools. We see that more people have some key positions within the Netherlands. I am very optimistic. But there is a lot to do."* (Young female, Netherlands)

> *"I'm very positive… We're caught up in a process of globalisation… people everywhere are in favour of diversity, recognition of the other, integration, cultural mixing, etc. However, efforts need to be made within the Muslim community, in order to build on what we've obtained, to construct a good image, to participate in the development of this country, and help peoples' views to evolve."* (Young male, France)

> *"I'm very scared. Because I think it is so uncertain. God knows what is going to happen in the next year. I feel like there are so many challenges to face. In one sense I am quite hopeful; in the sense that I think Muslims now are actually trying to engage in the wider community. They are trying to do something about the problems they are facing in this country, like normal everyday social problems because they do care. In that sense I am quite hopeful."* (Female, United Kingdom)

However, another UK respondent was particularly worried about the recent British legislation and the anti-terror laws – *"I am scared of the Government; I am scared of what they might do."* Nevertheless, she added:

> *"There are days when I feel really positive because I've met and I work with so many amazing, inspiring, articulate, intelligent, educated young Muslims…there are lots of people who are being progressive and moving forward and are very well integrated…It just depends on how everyone behaves over the next few years. And we all have a responsibility to make sure we all do the right thing. Something could happen to make everything go the other way and I think it all hangs in the balance."* (Female, United Kingdom)

Pessimism centred on events in the last few years, and the sense that there was a growing hostility in society towards Muslims. At times this is expressed in stark and alarming terms:

> *"What is clear for us is that the situation in this country is actually regressing and that is extremely scary and at this moment in time it is difficult to see how you can stop that regression, let alone go back to a situation where you are working towards a cohesive and just multicultural society. That's taking on board the many different debates there are about what is multiculturalism but at the same time trying to accept that there is a normative value to having a pluralistic or multicultural society. We are seeing that project being eroded in the media debate and at policy level, particularly with regard to Muslims by the Government."* (Male, United Kingdom)

> *"We've been asked more than others to integrate, to succeed, to have all that others have, and I don't know why we're always asked for more, why young people from the Maghreb in particular are always asked for more. We can't do more than others. Why us, rather than the others? If they want more, they won't get it. But the whole of French society needs to understand this unease… which unfortunately is passed on from one generation to the next. My parents were honest and faithful to France. We had to accept a certain way of life, and to think like the French. What are the next generations going to be asked? To be more French than the French? That's not possible. I advise young people not to accept that challenge, because it will never end. They'll always be asked for more. History has shown that peoples have always been asked for more, up until the point at which they have been exterminated."* (Male, France)

However, some interviewees argue that Muslims need to address the social and economic problems in their communities:

> *"I think [Muslims will have a positive future] if they are able really to develop themselves through qualifications and education. These are absolutely key issues. [Muslims have the possibility of]*

> *becoming a positive part of society, being a real enrichment to society. We have to admit that we are not an enrichment to society. This is one of the tragedies that we are sitting and weeping over the situation we are in, but we have to admit that we are a real problem to society. ... You look into crime rates, you look into unemployment, you look into drug use, you look into women's issues in general, you find that Muslims are really a mess."* (Male, Germany)

In several instances interviewees argued that a key element to a positive future will be a realisation by society that the problems and challenges in the Muslim community are issues of concern to all people and should not be left for Muslims to solve alone:

> *"The problems of the Muslims are problems of the community as a whole and not only problems of the Muslims. Because in the end if they don't care, Muslims will really create a tragedy for society. If we are able to overcome the problems then I see we can also have some very positive effects. Not only for Muslims in Germany, but for Islam in general, to have really some rising from the west and also having a lot of positive impact on Islam in the Muslim world and I think this is the scenario which we would love to have."* (Male, Germany)

PART II: Perceptions of discrimination and Islamophobia

The second part of this report sets out respondents' perceptions of and reactions to the various manifestations of Islamophobia that affect Muslim communities – prejudiced attitudes experienced in everyday interactions, aggressive or discriminatory reactions to women wearing the headscarf, insensitivity by the providers of local services, unfair treatment by the police or judicial system, incidents of discrimination in housing, education and employment, and perceived distortion in the coverage of Islam by the media.

3.   Prejudice, hostility and hatred

3.1.   Islamophobia in public life

Some interviewees observed that the construction of a European identity that marginalised or rendered invisible the contribution of Islamic society and culture to world civilisation provided a powerful ideological underpinning to current expressions of Islamophobia. Respondents argued that some writers have portrayed Islam as a rather ethnically exotic and under-developed culture.

Respondents noted that this perception of Islam, as primitive, backward and inferior, rather than 'equal but different', can be found even among those who are trying to be helpful:

> *"They would say 'we have to give them time, because even our Christian society needed time to arrive to this level, so they will reach it, but let's give them time'. This approach is based on the idealisation of the present western way of life."*   (Male, Italy)

As noted in Part I, interviewees felt that debates about integration are often conducted in terms of Muslims assimilating to what is seen as the superior national culture with the assumption that Muslims and their cultures have nothing of value to offer society and have nothing that is worth retaining.

Respondents felt that public discourse about Muslims focused on certain totemic issues, e.g. forced marriages, female circumcision and the veil, reinforcing a view of Islam as monolithic and authoritarian. They felt that very little coverage is given to the debates and discussions that are taking place in Muslim communities, both within the European Union and in Muslim countries, about the future development of Islam.

According to several interviewees terrorist attacks have brought to the surface a certain hostility to the Muslim presence in the European Union that had always been there, but which had until then remained concealed or contained:

> *"What happened on 11 September was like a catalyst, you know. Things which they never thought of saying publicly, from one day to another, they say it publicly now. Before, there was a lot of 'political correctness' but after 11 September all political correctness went within seconds."* (Male, Germany)

3.2   Islamophobic prejudice and attitudes experienced in daily life

According to the interviewees, when Muslims report experiencing Islamophobic prejudice and hostility in daily life, this is more likely to take the form of verbal abuse and other forms of hostility rather than physical violence. They suggest that the times that Muslims feel most vulnerable from the threat of direct physical violence are in the immediate aftermath of terrorist incidents for which in the public mind all Muslims are seen as collectively responsible.

Beyond verbal and physical abuse, respondents suggested that Islamophobia is also expressed in the small details of every day encounters; in passing comments and 'jokes'; in the way Muslims are observed and looked at by others.:

> *"We face Islamophobia in daily life: small incidents, small things. For example, somebody jokes or comments with another, but in a very loud voice, so you have to listen to this, 'Oh somebody who wears a headscarf has nothing to do in this country.' Or somebody walks his dog and says 'Fass!', which means 'catch this', to a Muslim. You try and not let these things get to you but some days they wear you down."* (Female, Austria)

> *"One example, a question that I get often ... is a simple question and I have heard it many times – 'Are you going back?' 'When are you going back?' It implies many things this question. And I ask 'Where would I go?' and they don't really have an answer to that and so they ask 'Where did you come from?' and I say I was born in Rotterdam so where would I go? ... It is really a painful question, I think, and it makes you feel like you are a foreigner, and I think you accept that you are a foreigner at some point."* (Young female, Netherlands)

Respondents suggested that the extent to which Muslims face hostility, harassment or violence is also dependent on the extent to which a person's Muslim identity is visible. Thus they report that women who wear a headscarf or men with beards or dress that identify them as Muslim feel more vulnerable and are more likely to face

hostility. Muslim women wearing a headscarf are reported to bear the brunt of Islamophobic attacks with people spitting at them or trying to remove their headscarf. It is also believed by interviewees that those who 'look Muslim' are more likely to be targeted by state officials, by security, police and immigration officers.

There are differences among interviewees as to whether the discrimination that Muslims face is racial or ethnic rather than religious discrimination. In some cases it is both.

> *"Before 11 September, we were always insulted for being Arab. Our religion was never mentioned. Since 11 September, that's all we hear - 'Muslim' has become an insult."* (Young male, France)

The interviewees from Italy, Spain and Greece felt that (in relation to recent Muslim migrants), the hostility and prejudice directed against Muslims are closely connected with hostility towards foreigners and immigrants.

One UK respondent argued that Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims cannot be easily linked to class and race:

> *"There is a fallacy that those who are in better jobs and more professional jobs and on a higher scale of income and responsibility are less likely to be doing the discriminating... If anything, it is actually the other way around. Also, we find this fallacy that Islamophobia is mainly committed by extreme groups who are uneducated, that's not true. Some Islamophobia is also being committed by black, Asian and some Caribbean communities.* (Male, United Kingdom)

In the experience of several respondents, Muslims find that, when they are seeking a change in policy or practice from a public authority, refusals are made on grounds which do not stand up to scrutiny. Respondents note, for example, that when seeking planning permission for a mosque, the town hall will often object on the basis of the impact the building will have on traffic flows in the area, when, in reality, Muslims feel that the objection is to having a mosque in the town. In other instances, cited by interviewees, local bureaucracies just ignore the requirements of the law and reject the requests and demands of Muslims. For example, one respondent reported that, in Germany, despite regulations that allow Muslim women to have a photograph taken wearing a headscarf, officials at times refused to accept such photos. Even when regulations are enforced correctly, Muslims often feel that the enforcement is selective and targeted at them:

> *"I've just seen in the paper that they have shut down a Muslim school in Milan. Now, I don't know the details about the school, but apparently it's been going on for about four or five years. The official reason is hygiene reasons, but you know...yes, there may be*

> *hygiene reasons as well, but they have [in other cases] let a lot of things go, even when they are not strictly on the rules, so it leaves you a bad taste in your mouth."* (Male, Italy)

Interviewees noted varying public responses to overt forms of Islamophobia. Islamophobic violence, as well as hostility in the form of direct and explicit verbal abuse towards individual Muslims, usually generates clear public condemnation. However, where public or prominent figures have made what Muslims perceive to be Islamophobic comments, the public reaction has been mixed. In some instances respondents find that those who articulate anti-Muslim views are praised for 'breaking the silence' and giving voice to what many are thinking.

4. Legal, policy and administrative

4.1 Policies and practices improving Muslim integration

According to interviewees EU Member States have varied in their response to requests to change existing laws and practices to meet the needs of Muslims: Campaigns for such changes have often centred on the same issues: access to and provision of halal food, planning permission for Mosques and religious education in schools. From the interviews it is apparent that the response to these demands ranges from support, through to indifference, passive resistance and active opposition. Some of these decisions are made at the local and municipal level, and the experience has therefore varied within different parts of the same Member State.

Those interviewed report that in many instances, whether or not adjustments are made to meet the needs of Muslims depends to a large extent on the good will of those in positions of power and authority. But only rarely are the needs of Muslims placed in the mainstream of the process of planning service delivery:

> *"We had some cases in which the city said, 'Ok, we want this for our Muslims.' So the initiative was coming from the local authorities and then they discussed this with the Muslims. This is the case where it went fastest because there was willingness from the local authorities."* (Young male, Belgium)

Several factors were identified by interviewees as affecting their ability to gain adjustments to existing policies and practices. Respondents feel that as a minority, the needs of Muslims are not a priority for service providers and public authorities. Furthermore, they acknowledge the lack of experience among Muslims in organising campaigns and lobbying, and building support within and across communities.

The interviews suggest that there are critical debates taking place within Muslim communities in northern Europe about the extent to which Muslim demands for adjustments in policies and practices can lead to a backlash from wider society. Some respondents argue for a more pragmatic approach that avoids unnecessary confrontation with the wider society. The disagreement is often not one of substance but strategy.

> *"Some Muslims are provoking Islamophobia and Islamophobic statements. In Belgium, the Muslim woman can wear the scarf on their photographs on identity cards and passports provided the face is recognisable. So we had a case recently that a woman of Turkish descent went to renew her passport and she was wearing the headscarf with some cap with it and so the headscarf was covering a large part of the forehead. So when she came to the administration, they said she could wear the headscarf but not this kind. The forehead must be visible and you can cover your ears as well, but at least the forehead must be seen to identify you easily. Then the parents came and said, "You are racist! You do not accept our religion!".* (Young male, Belgium)

In this case the administration accepted the photograph but asked the woman to sign a disclaimer which said that they were not responsible if other people did not accept the photograph. The interviewee noted that, following this event and others of the same kind, the administration chose to promote a charter saying that they "should respect diversity but that the respect has to go in both directions for there to be efficiency". The respondent argued that:

> *"When you have rights, why ask for more, which are not necessary? The behaviour of some has a negative impact on the civil servants and of course the civil servants are just a few and they deal with all the population. So this has an impact afterwards on the whole Muslim population. Sometimes this creates real tension - so* the *roots of Islamophobia are also in the Muslim communities themselves*." (Young male, Belgium)

The interviewee argued that it was important for Muslims in making requests for changes to accommodate them so as to be more strategic and take into account the impact of the general climate of suspicion and fear about Muslim people. He saw it is as not simply a question of rights. For him it was a question of adapting and working with people in dialogue.

> *"If you are creating so much trouble in the people's mind, what are you winning in terms of integration and participation? … The problem is that many Muslims do not have real, deep contact with others to be able to feel their feelings and the intensity of their fear."* (Young male, Belgium)

4.1.1   Ritual Slaughter and the Provision of Halal Food

Respondents described how in Denmark and Austria there have been attempts to introduce legislation to ban methods of slaughter required for halal and kosher food. Respondents report that in Austria, Muslims had a positive experience of working with the Jewish community in campaigning against attempts to ban the slaughter of animals using methods required for halal and kosher meat.

In other Member States, respondents suggested that, while there is a clear legal right to slaughter animals in accordance with the requirements of halal, Muslims feel that sometimes local authorities try to prevent them from accessing this right through imposition of conditions:

> *"The court gave the Muslims the rights of the slaughter. But they said we needed additional permission… For example, North Rhine-Westphalia, which is the biggest state of Muslim presence, around 30 per cent of its population is Muslim, yet they don't have one single permission, not a single permission. It is unbelievable! When you go to ask for permission, they say first of all you have to tell us where is the demand. You are only allowed to slaughter for your own demand so you have to prove your demand. It's stupid. That means somebody, a butcher, has to go and search for customers and make a list of what people want to buy."* (Male, Germany)

4.1.2   Building Mosques

Some interviewees described the resistance encountered by Muslims from local authorities and communities when they have requested permission to build new mosques. In Austria, for example, Muslims report being told by officials to conceal their plans to build a mosque:

> *"The mayor told them 'yes, you are allowed to build a mosque, but please don't say openly that you are building a mosque. Say you are building a cultural centre, and bring me the plans, but I don't want to see a minaret drawn on it'. So, that means he himself doesn't have a problem but he is really thinking that if it comes public, the people will be against it, he will not be re-elected."* (Male, Austria)

One interviewee remarks that in Denmark, there were public protests at plans to build a Muslim cultural centre in the 1990s. It was reported that, as a consequence of the protests, the Ministry of Defence cancelled a contract to lease the land on which the centre was to be built. In one Italian city, it was recalled that when the local Muslim community submitted plans to build a mosque, the mayor set up a cross party commission on integration to look at the issue.

4.1.3   Religious Education and Islamic Schools

There are various arrangements in the MS. Education and schools are a key area in which Muslims seek adjustments of policies to meet their needs. Respondents report that in Spain there is public funding to support teaching of Islam to Muslim pupils in schools and that pilot programmes are beginning in the cities where Muslims are most concentrated. In Germany pupils have the right to have religious education in state schools, delivered by organisations from the pupil's religion. However respondents stated that attempts to utilise this provision have faced resistance from education authorities. The recognition of this right in Berlin was only achieved after an 18-year struggle.

In the Netherlands there is state funding of faith schools, including Islamic schools. As a result Muslims have set up a few Islamic schools. However, interviews indicate that Muslims feel that the rules on state funding of religious schools have been changed to make it harder for them to access such funding:

> *"They are indeed making it more difficult now because it was very easy to start a school in Holland. When they saw all these Islamic schools they became a little bit afraid, and also afraid of the quality. So, they make it more difficult. For instance, before you needed only 150 children to start a school, now you need 250, or you need a certain amount of parents."* (Male, Netherlands)

In general, however, the interviews show that Muslims in the Netherlands feel that they are able to access funding for services and to request changes of services to meet their needs.

4.1.4   Other Service Providers

In Austria, interviewees report an increase in interest by healthcare providers in finding out about the needs of Muslim patients. This is based on an understanding that for efficient healthcare, it is important that a person feels comfortable and that their needs, based on religion, can be met. Similarly, in the Netherlands, respondents note that hospitals are able to provide for halal food and some have hired Muslim chaplains.

4.1.5   The headscarf

The issue of the headscarf is complex and multifaceted, but Muslims interviewed in France perceive the ban of religious symbols in schools as clearly directed at the headscarf:

> *"In France, the Government explain the ban on the veil, as a law banning all the religious symbols in the schools, but what did they forbid? They forbid wearing the hijab! They forbid wearing some big crosses, but there are no Christians who are wearing big crosses…"* (Male, France)

In Germany, interviewees report that the process of introducing legislation to ban the headscarf at the local level has had the effect of making it more difficult for Muslim women wearing a headscarf to gain employment in the private sector:

> *"Until this step there was not a great problem in the economy, for example, for a woman to get a job with headscarf. There were cases which made it clear that an employer can't reject a Muslim woman because she is wearing a headscarf. He has to give her the work. He can't fire her. After this law which doesn't allow Muslim women with the headscarf to work in schools, the same problems started in businesses."* (Male, Germany)

> *"The ban on the hijab had* an *effect on all of us. It started at a state level, but now it is even on a private sector level. Female Muslims find it very, very difficult to get a job because people think "If the state does not want to employ these people why should I do this?"* (Female, Germany)

One interviewee suggested that banning the headscarf provided a way for schools to reduce the visibility of Muslims:

> *"Banning the hijab is a way to 'clean' your school; you get rid of them [Muslims]. Of course, the Muslims will still go but it cleans the image of your school. …if you are a school with a good reputation, if there were too many hijab it would be too visible that there are young Muslims or young immigrants … And so you have some public schools which accept the hijab and then you have the majority of Muslims going there. For most of the schools that ban the hijab, I would say this is this reason."* (Young male, Belgium)

Interviewees report that Muslims in Belgium had feared the report by the Commission for Intercultural Dialogue on this issue would recommend banning the headscarf. However, the Commission report remained equivocal and, respondents indicate that the report is seen by Muslims as fair and balanced:

> *"They [the Commission] said they couldn't decide. So after all their hearings they said, 'If we forbid it there will be a lot of problems. If we do not forbid it there will be problems. We cannot choose because both options are okay and both will have advantages and disadvantages.' So they did not really give any clear idea … So, for us, it is very interesting to have this kind of report, because it means, from an objective point of view, we cannot reach this total banning."*
> (Young male, Belgium)

In France, respondents believe that the ban in public education has contributed to the development of a negative climate for Muslims:

> *"Since this law has been applied in France there is a feeling in the whole society that Muslims should be denied their rights. Stories have been spread in France that it is the right position to be against the Muslims and to be against the freedom of worship and the freedom of religion. It has been observed as well that Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims have increased between the time that they started to debate about this law (banning the headscarf) and the time when the law was entered into force."*
> (Young female, France)

In France, respondents have also reported feeling an increasing unwillingness by state institutions to take the needs of Muslims into account in areas of service delivery. They link this to the debate on the ban of the headscarf:

> *"It is now becoming kind of exceptional that they take into consideration the Muslim needs and the Muslim community. This is due to all the campaign that came at the time of the banning of the headscarf in France So, … the guide is that the Muslim needs should not be taken into consideration, this has been spread in every instance. You can see that in hospitals and every different institution, like the universities as well."* (Young female, France)

A Dutch respondent noted an incident of a café in The Hague which banned customers wearing hats. The measure was regarded by Dutch Muslims as clearly targeted at women wearing the headscarf. In Germany, Muslims reported that even when there are regulations allowing them to wear the headscarf, or to have picture taken for official documents wearing a headscarf, they are still faced with resistance from officials. They feel that officials take advantage of the fact that in most cases significant time and effort is needed to challenge a decision, and as a consequence Muslims are forced into practical compromises. In areas such as housing, interviews suggest that those who are visibly Muslim face the most acute discrimination:

> *"When you take your wife, who has a headscarf, and want to rent a flat, you can forget about renting it if you go with a headscarf. You must just go alone or send someone else!"* (Male, Germany)

4.2   Protection and support arrangements against hostility

In the experience of interviewees, in most cases where Muslims face discrimination or hostility, it is unlikely that such behaviour will be officially challenged. In Germany, interviewees cite the historical absence of legislation providing protection against religious discrimination as one problem in challenging Islamophobic discrimination. Even where legislation has been introduced which could protect religious groups from discrimination, it might not be accompanied by any campaign to inform people of their rights.

> *"We have, you know, the discussion about this new anti-discrimination law, and it is a real problem that people don't even know about this law. There was no information in the media… The Government hasn't reported it."* (Male, Austria)

Where people are aware of their rights, interviewees cited the cost of bringing a claim, in terms of time and money, as factors that deter people bringing a claim. And where Muslim organisations help people challenge discrimination, such organisations find that the public views them with suspicion.

Interviewees felt that in the UK there is a lack of institutional support and assistance for Muslims challenging religious discrimination and Islamophobia, and only limited financial support for legal representation in employment discrimination cases. Existing equality bodies do not directly address issues of religious discrimination or Islamophobia. Thus they felt that, as victims of discrimination, Muslims are left with legal rights but no realistic access to remedies:

> *"The problems we find with our case work is that although now discrimination is made illegal because of the European law in the workplace, there is no infrastructure of support for victims. There is no legal aid for them. Very few lawyers are willing to do 'no win, no fee' on discrimination, so really although they have protection, in reality they have nowhere to turn."* (Male, United Kingdom)

In the Netherlands and Belgium, the interviews suggest that, among Muslims there is support and confidence in human rights and equality bodies. In Denmark, however, the interviews indicate that the effectiveness of the Human Rights Institute's work on discrimination is undermined by a lack of resources. In the UK there was a feeling that the main body for addressing racial discrimination has not focused sufficiently on Muslim experiences of Islamophobia.

In general, the complexity of discrimination, the subtle ways in which it operates, and the difficulty of gathering evidence means that it is very difficult to prove discrimination in a court.

For some respondents the lack of citizenship prevents Muslims from having the confidence to challenge discrimination. Others feel that many Muslims believe that complaints are unlikely to lead to action:

> *"For example, my wife went to the supermarket and someone said to her, 'Go back to your country!' This is a form of verbal molestation. But is she going to complain about this? Maybe if you had known about a Muslim anti-discrimination organisation, then she could call them to register the incident, which would be very positive. People… don't have the confidence that something is going to happen".* (Young male, Netherlands)

Furthermore, interviewees argue that there are limits to challenging institutional practices that disadvantage Muslims through individual cases. Even where individuals within institutions are trying to improve matters, they are limited in what they are able to do:

> *"Often, change relies on structures within institutions and their relationship with the Government. So, we might be talking to people within institutions who are not only willing, but desperate, to change the way the internal culture of that organisation works but actually can't do so because they are constrained in what they do as well".* (Male, United Kingdom)

Despite some of the difficulties identified in France, Muslim groups there see the law as an important tool with which to challenge discrimination. A French respondent thought that French laws against discrimination were very good, but that it was now important for the Muslim community to advise and support victims of discrimination in using litigation, going before the tribunals and winning their case.

> *"I think times have changed. The previous generations, that's to say my parents' generation, … they suffered plenty of injustice and discrimination; but they couldn't react, they couldn't claim their rights, perhaps because they didn't have the means to do it, they weren't fully aware of their rights. But this generation has lived here, and knows its rights, it's conscious of its citizenship… so wants to lay claim to them. As soon as there's a problem, this generation reacts. There are associations which work to bring cases against those who are responsible, whether it be individuals or institutions, and the approach is bearing fruit."* (Young male, France)

4.3 Treatment by the police and the criminal justice system

There were a diverse range of views and experiences among interviewees about the treatment of Muslims by the police and the criminal justice system. The interviews reveal several examples of policies regarded by the respondents as examples of good practice. In Belgium, interviewees report that professional training has increased the ability of police officers to deal sensitively with the Muslim community. As a result the respondents believe that Muslims do feel able to contact the police when a serious incident occurs. In the Netherlands, respondents report that, after the murder of Theo van Gogh, the police and local authorities worked with local Muslim organisations to take steps to ensure the safety and security of Muslims. In Austria, interviewees suggest that Muslims supported the provision, in police training programmes, for officers to spend time in community organisations like a local mosque. In Greece, it was reported that Muslims do generally have confidence in the judicial system. Similarly, in Italy the interviews show that Muslims feel that the judicial authorities were impartial and fair.

Muslims interviewed reported increasing communication between the police and members of the Muslim community through such mechanisms as liaison groups or a community forum. In Germany, for example, there have been meetings between the Muslim Council and senior police officers to discuss community concerns. However, Muslim experiences of such arrangements are, at times, also negative.

In the experience of an interviewee that participates in such a forum, they are felt by many Muslims to be just 'cosmetic', a public relations exercise used by the police to inform the community of decisions that had already been made and to gather intelligence and information about the community rather than to engage with the community and discuss options. The interviews suggest that the biggest challenge for the police remains gaining the confidence of young people.

Muslims feel that they are sometimes treated as a suspect community. A UK respondent was angry about the case of a young Muslim man doing post-graduate studies at university who was physically assaulted on the street and beaten up so badly that he ended up in a coma.

> *"He was totally disabled and blind after he came out of the coma. While he was in a coma, the police, in investigating the attack on him, were investigating him as a terrorist. This is outrageous! The guy has been beaten up on the street, he is in a coma, and yet, the police in carrying out the investigation into his attack are going around asking his friends how religious he was, how many mosques he went to, what his religious beliefs were. This is absurd!"*
> (Female, United Kingdom)

According to some interviewees, experiences were particularly negative when it came to the treatment by police involved in anti-terrorism policing. There were several expressed concerns. One was the conduct of the police when questioning people. Another was the conduct of police in relation to mosques. Respondents

reported instances of police entering mosques wearing shoes, and with police dogs. They argued that such actions leave Muslims feeling that the police do not show respect for them; in the view of interviewees such action is counter productive and not helpful in generating trust.

Interviewees report that Muslims are often frustrated and angry at the way that the initial raids gain large amounts of media coverage, with unfounded and unproven allegations reported as fact, while there is no media coverage when the investigations are concluded and it transpires that those arrested or questioned were innocent.

> *"There have been cases against Muslims, who are interrogated without reason, and then later on the police didn't even apologise. Like one of my students, the police turned up at her parent's home one morning, fully armed and everything, and took a television camera along with them, as if they were really the culprits. Then they searched the place, they searched the parents, and they took the parents for interview, and later on, it turned out that they didn't find anything. They didn't find any evidence and it was completely unjustified. Okay, somebody said sorry, but not in public."* (Female, Germany)

Experiences differ among Member States: In Italy, interviews suggest that while Muslims see police arrests as *"fishing expeditions",* unfairly targeting Muslims, there was confidence expressed in the fairness of other parts of the criminal justice system:

> *"In Naples about two years ago I think, when they rounded up about 20-25 Pakistanis in one building, 'Osama Bin Laden's outreach in Naples' it was said. Hold on, if that's what they are, would they all be living in the same building? It was reported that they found metal pipes which could have been used for bombs and things and some sort of strange powder. The powder turned out to be some spices that were used in cooking, the metal pipes turned out to be wind-chimes that you hang on your door so that when the wind blows they ring and chime. At least the Italian tribunals and courts have been pretty above board and when they see that this is just rubbish they chuck the case out and free these people."* (Male, Italy)

However, in some other countries it was reported that Muslims felt that they were treated unfairly by parts of the justice system.

> *"We could not say that today the French Muslim community is being treated fairly by the law enforcement agencies. There was one case in a tribunal where there was one Muslim woman who had been selected to be part of the jury. She was a Muslim wearing the*

> *headscarf and the Minister of Justice, who was in Spain, called France to ask that the tribunal remove this person from the jury. In this kind of condition there is no trust or confidence in these authorities."* (Male, France)

5. Discrimination in socio-economic fields

5.1 Discrimination in housing

As economic migrants, recruited to do mostly low paid jobs, Muslims in northern Europe settled in some of the most deprived parts of industrial towns and cities. In many instances, the economic downturn of the 1970s and 1980s meant that many low paid jobs soon turned to high unemployment, thus locking some communities into a cycle of deprivation. Respondents mentioned several factors undermining housing opportunities for Muslims, e.g. lack of financial resources, a desire to remain close to areas with community institutions, as well as direct discrimination. According to interviewees, Muslims regularly face direct discrimination when they attempt to rent accommodation.

> *"I was looking for a flat and I went there with my wife and the first question I was asked was 'Is your wife wearing the headscarf all the time?' I said 'Yes, what's the problem?' 'Well, maybe you should write a letter [on] whether you are integrated here or not.' I wrote this letter. I didn't get the flat, it was obvious why."* (Young male, Germany)

Discrimination against Muslims can sometimes manifest itself in less direct ways:

> *"When applications are made for social housing, questions are always asked about the number of children, whether the local language is spoken (French or Flemish), about your origins, and so on. In other words, your private life is brought straightaway into the public domain. Questions are never asked about a person's status (do they have a residence permit or an identity card), but always about their private life."* (Male, Belgium)

In the Netherlands one respondent felt that local housing policy resulted in increasing segregation:

> *"Where we live now is really a poor part of Rotterdam. We are also poor so that is why we live there! But now all those buildings, they are houses for rent, they will be pulled down. What they will make instead of those houses are very expensive houses and not for rent, just to buy…when the new houses are ready they say you have first*

> *choice to buy but they are very expensive houses. So you say 'Excuse me I can't afford it.' And they say 'Okay, well we have another house for rent for you' in parts of Rotterdam which already have a large number of foreigners ... The Dutch people have kind of migrated to outside the towns... What I see is a trend going through making ghettos, not because they want to make ghettos but because they want Dutch people living together. Dutch don't want their children to get mixed with foreigners."* (Young female, Netherlands)

5.2 Discrimination in education

According to interviewees for young Muslims the educational experience has been at times deeply negative:

> *"The first thing about the culture of my forefathers that was mentioned in school, when I went to a German school, and we were talking about the Ottoman Empire, the way it was explained was that the Ottomans marched to Vienna. Then the teacher took a deep breath and said, 'Thank God we beat them because otherwise you guys would have big problems.' He looked to all the boys and said 'You all would have been circumcised'. Next, he looked to all the girls and said, 'You all would have to wear headscarves.' Then, finally, they looked at me altogether and said, 'It's very good that your boys lost the war, otherwise then we would have had a problem.' When I went home I had a guilty feeling about what a bad culture I come from and I always had this feeling that I'd have to excuse myself because my parents come from Turkey."* (Male, Germany)

> *"We have a two-speed education system: on the one hand, there are the prestigious schools which are really very good, and other schools where standards are very low. Muslim parents have realised this, and have started to send their children to the better schools. But the authorities have realised this, and have started to limit the number of children from Arab or Turkish families, with the pretext that the quality of teaching of the school needs to be maintained. Muslim families thus find themselves before a major hurdle to integration. Muslim children are restricted to the less good schools, where they will receive a less good education, and so will end up living on the margins of society. Unfortunately, it is difficult to prove that this discrimination goes on, as head-teachers tend to respond to parents verbally rather than in writing."* (Male, Belgium)

During a focus group interview in the Netherlands, participants referred to a school where students were segregated between those who were (white) Dutch and those

referred to as foreigner, who in this context even included second and third generation non-white Dutch:

> *"At my school where I went to, my high school, at this moment they have classes for just Dutch students and for foreign students. There was a father, a friend of my husband, who asked "why are you doing this? I have taken my son to school to be mixed with Dutch people" and their answer was 'We want to keep the Dutch students, and they won't come to this school if they are going to be mixed with the foreigners.' This is in Rotterdam. It is a big school. They have six classes. They segregate the children of different nationalities, so Dutch are in one class and foreigners in another. It's an ethnic division. If the Dutch family was Muslim, which is rare, even if they are born here it doesn't matter, if you are a foreigner, if you have a name that implies you are a foreigner… you are put in that class…"* (Young female, Netherlands)

She described how another man attended the parents day to see how his daughter was doing at school, was surprised to find his daughter in a class of 'foreigners', completely separated from three other 'white' classes.

> *"He was really shocked and said 'This is not possible. In what country are we living now?' They asked the teachers 'What is happening? What is this?' And they said 'Otherwise we don't have white students at the school because they are sending them to other schools'. But you know what is also a sad thing is that the teachers for those 'coloured' classes are also foreigners and her teacher for mathematics doesn't speak Dutch well. So she [his daughter] is speaking better Dutch than her teacher."* (Young female, Netherlands)

5.3   Discrimination in employment

Respondents recognised that Muslims face both racial and religious discrimination, and most believed that such discrimination is pervasive in hiring and in the workplace. In many examples, cited by interviewees, discrimination was direct and overt.

According to respondents, it is believed by many Muslims that when a person with a Muslim name applies for a job they are likely to be rejected. In the experience of one interviewee, references to involvement in Muslim voluntary sector organisations in the CV can result in discrimination:

> *"I had finished studies a while ago and was involved in some projects with a Muslim youth organisation… After that I wanted to apply for a job. So I was writing on my CV that I am active in*

> *different Muslim institutions… This seemed to be a mistake because I didn't get any invitations to job interviews. I decided to change my strategy. I took out reference to the Muslim organisations, I just wrote "migrant organisation" and this time I got some interviews."*
> (Young male, Germany)

Interviewees report instances of temporary employment agencies receiving requests from companies not to send them Muslim workers. They also report examples of Muslim employees in Germany being sacked on suspicion of being a security risk. One respondent referred to research by Muslim organisations in the UK which found that discrimination in employment is more likely to be found in skilled jobs and in the professions where there are few Muslims, rather than in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Fear of facing discrimination in the work place is also reported in interviews, which creates reluctance by Muslims to apply for mainstream jobs. Interviews suggest that those who have experienced discrimination remain reluctant to speak out, for fear of being victimised.

Interviews indicate that Muslims can face difficulties where they seek accommodation of their faith in the workplace:

> *"I applied for a job as a clinical practitioner and we had a meeting with the person I would work for as well, and this person knew some Muslims and she said 'Muslims pray. Do you pray?' So I said, 'Yes, if there is an opportunity to pray I would like to pray at my work.' And she thought about it and we discussed it again and she said 'I didn't like what you said. If you can pray, we don't have a space at this moment in our health centre' (there are a lot of rooms) and she said 'We don't have any place for you to pray but if you really insist you can use the disabled toilet."* (Young female, Netherlands)

Interviewees were in agreement that in most of the Member States it is Muslim women who wear the headscarf who experience the most acute discrimination:

> *"You don't find many women wearing a scarf in jobs that involve interaction with the public. You don't find that in Germany, it doesn't work here. That is unheard of. There are very, very few Muslim women teachers who wear scarves. Nowadays Muslim women are not easily employed because people think that they might one day turn up and start wearing a scarf. So even if they are not wearing a scarf, they face discrimination because they might come to work one day wearing a scarf."* (Female, Germany)

> *"I wanted to have a part-time job and they didn't give me the job. It was to clean the rooms and they said 'No, our firms are against headscarf and so we can't give you the job'. They said 'You take your headscarf off or we can't give you the job' and I say 'Okay, goodbye!'"* (Young female, Germany)

> *"It's a real struggle. Veiled women are very rarely taken on, often only in places such as call centres, where they have no direct contact with clients. On the whole, they are refused jobs."* (Male, France)

> *"I'm at secondary school. Last year, I did a placement in a company, and I had a problem. I was supposed to be there for four weeks, and I ended up doing three weeks. Then the relationship with my supervisor in the company started to deteriorate. I knew this person well, they knew I wear the headscarf. One day, I arrived for work as usual, and I was told that someone had seen me in the street wearing my headscarf. He'd called the boss, and "the boss has asked me to dismiss you. And if I don't do it, then it'll be me who loses my job" ... Anyway, the end result was that I didn't complete my placement, and I've had to retake the year. I didn't realise the consequences it would have. I didn't realise I'd have to retake the year because I didn't complete the placement"* . (Young female, France)

Muslim women are open to the triple discrimination of gender, race and religion, and in some cases it is not clear as to which is operating:

> *"There's often a feeling of having been rejected. I come from Paris. At the moment, I'm on the lists of an employment agency, and I got a call about a month-long contract. I went to the company and sat tests. They already had my CV, which made clear that I know how to use office software. When I'd sat the test, they said they'd call me back the next day. ... When they didn't call me, I called them myself, and was told to phone the agency. ... So I got back in touch with the agency. They told me that the company wasn't looking for a temporary post anymore, but they want to take you on full-time. That was great. So they told me to go back to the firm the next day to sign my contract. Then I got a call to say they weren't interested anymore. They reckoned my test results weren't good enough ... But they'd told me before that I'd passed the test. ... So I felt that I'd been discriminated against, whether as a Muslim, a French woman, a Moroccan, I don't know. It's a feeling you have."* (Young female, France)

In some cases employers argue that they will lose customers if they employ women wearing the headscarf:

> *"Their argument is that they are selling a product and have to please their customers... In some ways this is worse than saying 'I will discriminate against you because I don't like you as a Muslim'.*

> *Here they are saying 'I will discriminate because society does not like you'."* (Male, Belgium)

A French respondent described his wife's encounter with an employment agency, after she had been unemployed for two years.

> *"She went to see an advisor, who asked her why she kept turning down all these job offers. She said that she hadn't, and that it was when people saw her wearing the headscarf that they turned her down. They'd say that it wasn't so much a problem for them, but that they had to think of their clients. So the advisor said to her, 'Do you realise that you're starting off with a handicap?'"* (Male, France)

On the other hand, interviewees were also aware that there are experiences of good practice by employers some of whom are willing to make accommodations to meet the needs of their Muslim employees. One respondent noted how a railway company in Demark has designed a scarf for Muslim women that reflected its uniform colours.

Interviewees from Italy and Spain indicate that where the Muslim community remains largely first generation economic migrants, Muslims face discrimination largely as migrants. In Greece, Muslims state that they face indirect discrimination arising from the official reluctance to give recognition to qualifications obtained in Turkey.

6.   Participation and Representation

6.1   Politics and policy making

Some respondents felt that that Muslims' views are not taken into account even where policy makers consult them. It was suggested that, at times, Muslims feel that invitations to participate in policy forums are not genuine attempts to engage with them.

> *"Muslims are used for show. The government invites Muslims just to have them there. In February, there was a meeting in South Africa with the [local] Minister who was a Muslim. So they [the local German government] were very keen on taking a Muslim with them to show that we have a Muslim community and so on. So, you see, they are very keen on involving us for show."* (Male, Germany)

Respondents also thought that Muslim organisations themselves need to improve the quality of their contribution to policy-making discussions. Organisations face difficulties in terms of resources as well as knowledge and understanding:

> *"It is a catch-22 kind of situation because Muslim bodies just do not have sufficient funds, ... the Muslims themselves are possibly not of the calibre and professionalism that they would like, the work that comes out from these organisations is very poor quality and even though the Government does now consult the Muslims on a number of issues, we just can't keep up and cannot present our case as well as we would like to."* (Female, United Kingdom)

In most countries where the interviewees came from, there are members of national and regional parliaments who have a Muslim background. It was noted that in most instances, Muslim who do participate in civil and political life usually participate as 'individuals with a Muslim background' rather than as 'Muslims'. Muslims standing for election rarely emphasise their religious background, either because they do not see themselves primarily in terms of their religious identity or because in the process of getting elected this is not an issue. In most instances the party affiliation of candidates and their stance on political issues are regarded as the most important issue by Muslims. However, some interviewees observed that Muslims involved in politics have indicated that in the last five years or so they have increasingly found themselves drawn into debates about the Muslim community as a whole by the media and by politicians. For example, in the immediate aftermath of the London bombings the government invited Muslim Members of Parliament to Downing Street for discussions. One British interviewee expressed discomfort with the way in which British MPs, elected to represent their constituency, are then required to represent the Muslim community.

6.2   Media and popular culture

Respondents gave examples of biased or distorted reporting portraying Muslims in a negative light. An interviewee reported one incident in which a Danish television news programme began with a story *"immigrant gangs are preparing themselves for war"* featuring young men holding a rifle, their faces covered with a Palestinian scarf, and saying *"We are going to take over all of f..... Zealand"*. The young men were alleged to be from a gang called "Triple A". A Danish newspaper subsequently investigated this story and found there was no evidence that this group existed; the police also confirmed that they had not heard of the group. Evidence then emerged that the footage of the young men was supposed to have been used for a music video and instead was edited into the news story. One of the young men in the video began an action for defamation. In the end an executive from the news department was forced to resign and the story was referred to the press commission.

> *"One of the largest public service state TV channels, Channel TV2, has come up with this kind of story, and this is not the first time. There have been times when journalists went to a school and gave some money to twelve, thirteen year old kids and asked them to kick the camera and it was presented by them as 'violent Muslim youths', … If there is a young guy who rapes a woman, if it is a Muslim, an immigrant youth, the media say 'because of their culture they are raping our women'"* (Male, Denmark)

Similar problems are noted by respondents from other countries:

> *…. They are focussing on the excesses, the extreme things and not the normal. If 99 per cent of the Muslims are normal people, normal citizens who are trying to earn their living and have a good family life and everything, the 1 per cent, who is not that way, is represented in the media as a Muslim."* (Male, Netherlands)

> *"There are some who are more favourable, at times, less hostile. But, the mainstream television networks, both the public and the private commercial channels, are very much anti-Islam…"* (Male, Italy)

Interviewees also acknowledged that the Muslims themselves have a responsibility to improve their communication and interaction with the media:

> *"It is not only the fault of the media; it is also from the Muslim communities. We do not properly format our message; we do not know the people to pass the message to. We do not speak with an understandable voice."* (Male, Belgium)

Some interviewees also reported negative experiences among those who cooperated with the media: of being misquoted or having comments taken out of context to place individuals or organisation in a bad light:

> *"Making statements is one thing but getting them across is another thing. I was sitting here on 13 September 2001 with a set of statements [condemning the events of 11 September 2001] from all sorts of Muslim organisations and the press people came, they weren't interested. I said I wasn't doing an interview unless you read this stack of papers first and they pretended to because they wanted to have the interview. But they didn't record any of it."* (Female, Germany)

Nevertheless, since 11 September 2001, there have been signs of increasing numbers of Muslim voices being represented in the media. Where contact and connections with the media are being made, Muslims are finding that they can respond effectively and in some northern European countries, respondents feel

there is evidence of an increasing participation by people of Muslim background in the print and broadcast media.

7.   Foreign Policy

Whilst the focus of the interviews was mainly on the experiences of respondents within a country, several interviewees expressed strong views also about issues of foreign policy, such as the war in Iraq. This was seen to be relevant to the interviews primarily because it has implications on the experiences and perceptions of Muslims within the European Union.

British interviewees indicate that the role of the UK in the Iraq war has generated anger and resentment among many Muslims:

> *"Dismayed would be the milder way to put it… We can't stand the hypocrisy of it! We can't stand the injustice of it… Muslims are quite sophisticated and also see hypocrisy in many other levels of foreign policy… we are angry not because of just the treatment of the Muslim community but we are angry because we see that these policies are going to create conflict and create a very divisive society, an unjust society, which is not based on justice, international law and fair play."* (Male, United Kingdom)

> *"A lot of UK foreign policy is seen as a double standard and because of that it makes young people feel as though they are not part of Britain because they have… different standards for Muslim and because we are Muslim we then feel that they are against us as well."* (Female, United Kingdom)

Muslims in France and Germany express different views:

> *"I think that Muslims in Germany were very, very happy about the German stance on Iraq, for example. They were very proud of being part of a country who had a clear stand against [the war]."* (Male, Germany)

> *"Generally they have a good impression. They feel that the position of the French Government is a better position regarding other Government positions, like the situation that we have to face about Iraq and that we have to face in Palestine as well. The position of the French Government on those issues made the Muslims feel there is nothing really bad about the position of the French Government." (Male, France)*