



27 September 2016

Warsaw, Sofitel-Victoria Hotel

ORGANIZED BY OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

---

Dear delegations of the OSCE, Ladies and Gentleman,

I am Nadia Khedachi, member of FEMYSO, which stands for the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations.

In October 2015, the European Commission organized its first Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights focusing on Antisemitism and Islamophobia.

One year after, what is the current situation in Europe?

The shocking rise in Islamophobic acts in the last few years, and in more recent months, is affecting the lives of millions of Muslims across Europe. The numbers tell their own tale. In France in the first six months of 2016, 100% of the victims reporting Islamophobic acts were women (CCIF-2016). In Belgium, in the aftermath of the Brussels attacks, one Islamophobic act was collected per day (CCIB-2016). These figures represent only attacks, which are recorded and reported - the tip of the iceberg essentially. Hate crimes also imploded after the Brexit referendum in the UK. Added to that, we witness the mainstreaming of far-right and populist speeches that is now on most of political party's agenda.

Minorities are also in danger in Germany<sup>1</sup> where a recent report from Amnesty International revealed the incapacity of strongly addressing hate crimes. The situation is no better in Hungary, in Poland, in Czech Republic, in Bulgaria, just to name a few.

FEMYSO is currently developing an advocacy program on Islamophobia called ADVISE<sup>2</sup>. A consortium of NGOs from 5 European countries launched the ADVISE project, which stands for Advocates Against Islamophobia in Education. The consortium brings together Fryshuset (Sweden), Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (EU/Belgium), International Alert (UK), Etudiants Musulmans de France (France), Symbiosis (Greece), as well as the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) as policy advisor. The project aims to identify and address gaps in national policies to protect youth against Islamophobia in education. The project is taking place in five countries: UK, France, Belgium, Sweden and Greece.

I will finish this statement with three recommendations towards the European countries and EU institutions:

- The official recognition of Islamophobia with a clear (working) definition. We understand Islamophobia as a specific form of racism that refers to acts of violence and discrimination, as well as racist speech, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping and leading to exclusion and dehumanisation of Muslims, and all those perceived as such. Islamophobia can also be the result of structural discrimination. Islamophobia has nothing to do with criticism of Islam.
- The harmonization of data collection related to Islamophobic hate crimes. EU hate crime legislation (Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA) falls short of providing detailed indications on how law enforcement and judicial authorities should investigate and prosecute hate crimes. According to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, only five Member States collect comprehensive data on hate crime. Member States should therefore make sure that bias is properly investigated and prosecuted in cases of hate crime against Muslims and should collect data on Islamophobic crime.
- Work in close collaboration with the Gender Equality Unit, to address the specific issue of multiple discrimination affecting Muslim women.

For more information, please contact: [info@femyso.org](mailto:info@femyso.org)

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/06/germany-failing-to-tackle-rise-in-hate-crime/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.femyso.org/news/2016/launch-ADVISE>



### About the consortium:

**Etudiants Musulmans de France** is an association created by students for students. EMF is designed to accompany the Muslim student during his or her studies in higher education, improve their lives, and help them to integrate into the campus. It facilitates the integration of students on campus, including that of foreign students, tries to fight the isolation that sometimes affects the student, and participates in improving their sense of wellbeing. EMF also organizes a range of activities regarding Islamophobia on university campus. It organizes seminars, conferences, exhibitions and other activities open to all. <http://www.emf-asso.com/>

**FEMYSO** was founded in 1996 in Sweden at a time when Muslim youth from across Europe felt the need to come together to create a united body, to share ideas and experiences, help develop the capacity of Muslim European youth and represent their concerns and views to the European institutions. Since then, FEMYSO has grown into a wide network of 34 student and youth organisations throughout Europe, all working to benefit their communities and societies. The FEMYSO vision for European Muslim youth is proactive youth participation and service to humanity. We have trained thousands of young Muslims, contributed to the emergence of a strong confident identity of young European Muslims, and built strong partnerships with organisations across Europe. <http://www.femyso.org/>

**Fryshuset** is a non-profit non-political and non-religious foundation (NGO), founded in 1984, with its headquarters in Stockholm. Fryshuset is often referred to as the largest youth activity center in the world. It runs several schools, sports, music and dance activities, and a lot of different social projects in the fields of migration and community building. Fryshuset is established primarily in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö and some of its activities are also running in other parts of Sweden. All in all Fryshuset employs around 600 people and receives around 40,000 visitors every month, both in the cities and in the suburbs. <http://fryshuset.se/in-english/>

**International Alert** is an independent peacebuilding organisation established in 1987 that works with local people around the world to help them build peace. We have over 200 staff in 12 field offices and our London headquarters. Our board is comprised of experienced diplomats, business people and peacebuilding and development practitioners from around the world. International Alert takes a broad view of peacebuilding, understanding peace as a situation in which everyone lives in safety without any form of violence, is equal before the law, able to participate in shaping political decisions with government accountability, and has fair access to the basic needs for their wellbeing and equal opportunity to work and make a living, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other identity. <http://www.international-alert.org/>

**Symbiosis** was founded in 2011 in Thessaloniki by an international group of committed citizens grounded on common belief in the need for a new paradigm for global civics, European citizenship and social cohesion, in order to define, promote and establish new forms of binding democratic participation in political processes, free of discrimination and exclusion. Its mission is to build social capital for democracy and develop civic awareness on institutional practices regarding rights and acceptance of diversity, based on the premise that practicing human rights protection equals democratic rule of law. Symbiosis focuses on intercultural and interfaith dialogue, information and political education, advocacy and awareness raising, marginalized citizens' journalism, documentation and analysis, public debate and active civic participation, so that people and communities voice their needs and ideas. <http://www.symbiosis.org.gr/en/>

**ENAR** is the only pan-European anti-racist network that combines advocacy for racial equality and facilitating cooperation among civil society anti-racist actors in Europe. The organisation was set up in 1998 by grassroots activists on a mission to achieve legal changes at European level and make decisive progress towards racial equality in all EU Member States. [www.enar-eu.org](http://www.enar-eu.org)