

OSCE MUST BE MORE ACTIVE IN TERMS OF ISLAM AND MIGRATION

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The German genius Goethe once said: “Everyone hears only what he or she understands.”

Considering the fact that in the post-9/11 world and the economically driven political developments, Islam will continue to be on top of the agenda surrounding the immigration and integration challenge in Europe. By putting the root cause of wars, the general imbalance of power and resources, namely imperialism aside, Islam appears to be at the core of the migration and participation challenge in Europe.

Leading statesmen of Europe such as Helmut Schmidt and Valery Giscard d’Estaing have once declared their reservations against Islam as well. These counterproductive assumptions, which we might imagine here, are widespread among most of the mainstream political parties, consequently among the mainstream media and educational institutions.

This fact is endangering peace, stability and prosperity in Europe. Today, there are about 50 million people of Muslim descent living in Europe, while in the EU there are about 25 million Muslims.

Somehow, even in countries with less than 0,2 percent Muslims such as in Poland the topics of Muslims and migration are of crucial importance occasionally playing a major role in times of elections and beyond. Like 100 years ago or 500 or even 1000 years ago, migrants still continue to help the power elites to shift the focus away from major economic problems such as regional disparities or the income gap or international conflicts. In this sense migrants also contribute to the integration and stability of the immigrated country itself, namely via the construction of the other. The topic is obviously much more complex going beyond the scope of the talk here.

The OSCE must systematically combat the instrumentalisation of Islam itself. We urgently recommend this. So the question is: how?

Before answering the how-question, we would like to underline that the main thesis of this speech asserts that decoding the historic and current role of Islam in European urban centers is not only from the humanitarian point of view important but beyond, it is necessary for peace, stability and prosperity in Europe.

Historians know that for instance the European renaissance has been sparked by Islam in the 14th century in Italy. Islam has a huge philosophical tradition surrounding the development of human beings. What is known as the Farabian era in Islam is today only considered among philosophers or social scientists. Living 12 centuries ago Farabi founded the rational stream of thought in Islam which was not only a theoretical debate, but had significant implications on

multiple branches of science. It is our task to revitalize this component of Islam which highlights rationality.

The second – if you want to use the term “renaissance within Islam” was realized in Ataturk’s Turkey. The German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere informed the public about this fact in May 2016 saying that Turkey with its “secular and old state tradition is an exception in the Muslim world.” Thus, Europe can benefit from the secular legacy and power of Turkey even it is in the past fifty years systematically eroded. There is still a huge secular potential in Turkey which can be useful in order to promote the participation of Muslims in Europe.