



Annotated Agenda

Roundtable Meeting with the NGOs addressing Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims:

“Youth and Education”

Vienna, 17 December 2008

<p>9:00 - 9:30</p> <p>Introduction:</p>	<p>WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ambassador Ömür Orhun, Personal Representative of OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims ▪ Jo-Anne Bishop, Head, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) <p>Taşkın Tankut Soykan, Adviser on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, ODIHR</p>
<p>9:30 - 13:00</p> <p>Moderator:</p> <p>Introducer:</p> <p>Discussant:</p>	<p>YOUTH</p> <p>Bashy Qurashy, European Network Against Racism, Brussels</p> <p>Prof. Yasemin Karakoşoğlu, University of Bremen, Intercultural Education, Bremen</p> <p>Jovana Bazerkovska, The Bureau of the European Youth Forum, Brussels</p>
<p>9:45 – 13:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Themes:</i></p> <p>(I) The Impact of Intolerance against Muslims on Young People: Causes and Consequences</p> <p>Unfortunately young people are not exempted from the impact of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Various studies indicate that young Muslim boys and girls in minority position are often subject to exclusion and discrimination across the OSCE region. Some surveys also highlight the increase of anti-Muslim attitudes among the majority youth populations in North America and Europe. Although Muslim young people with immigrant background have different ethnic, linguistic, cultural and political affiliations, they often face the challenge of reconciliation of different identities (e.g. Muslim v. European). This can create serious emotional problems especially at younger ages in instances where the majority society's perception of Muslims as an alien element, combined with a lack of equal opportunities for a better future. Such problems could contribute to a vicious circle of inadequate housing, educational deficiencies, and unemployment. The situation gets worse when intolerance and discrimination against Muslims increasingly manifest itself as violent attacks against Muslim individuals and property, thus threatening social cohesion. Furthermore, in some occasions, the feeling of insecurity, alienation and exclusion among Muslim youth could lead to greater crime and unrest.</p> <p>(II) Youth Response to Intolerance against Muslims: Good practices and lessons learnt</p> <p>Muslim youth organizations and other youth NGOs dealing with racism, xenophobia and intolerance have developed several initiatives to confront the rise of intolerance and discrimination against Muslims in the recent decade. They sought to enhance inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and raise awareness about Islam and Muslim cultures. Some of these initiatives have provided support and advocacy services for young Muslim individuals who are facing the consequences of a range of social problems, including the feeling of insecurity, lack of confidence, mental health, cultural taboos, educational underachievement, inability to access to job market, drug abuse and criminal activity. Although Muslim civil society in Europe and North America has made a very significant progress in addressing these issues in recent years, many Muslim youth NGO representatives feel that the available funding for their projects is reducing and funds are mostly made available for the activities to counter “radicalization,” indicating that Muslim minority youth are still seen as a security problem at the first hand.</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>

14:00 - 18:00	EDUCATION
Moderator:	Veysel Filiz, COJEP International- Conseil de la Jeunesse Pluriculturelle, Strasbourg
Introducer:	Dr. Jeremy Henzell-Thomas, the Book Foundation, London
Discussant:	Nuzhat Jafri, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Toronto
14:15 – 18:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Themes:</i></p> <p>(I) Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims in Education: Exclusion and Alienation As other minority communities, Muslims put a high premium on education as way out of problems associated with economic marginalization and social exclusion. However, Muslim students continue to experience intolerance and discrimination in school settings at varying levels. In many countries, Muslim students attend certain schools, where the quality of education is very low, or are sent to special schools for children with learning and behavioral difficulties. Although there is usually no official data on the religious background of students, some surveys indicate that non-native born students have much lower literacy than native students with no immigrant background. Many Muslim students feel that current integration discourse focuses on only assimilation, at times depriving them from learning their mother tongue, culture and religion and forcing them to become invisible. This intolerant attitude at times leads to expression of anti-Muslim stereotypes, even in text books, which mostly go without any challenge. Most worrying, as exemplified in the ODHR's 2007 Hate Crime Report, anti-Muslim attitudes also manifest themselves as violent attacks, including bullying of Muslim students and vandalism of Muslim schools.</p> <p>(II) Educational Responses to Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims: Cooperation between Educational Authorities and Civil Society As intolerant attitudes tend to develop at a young age, educational institutions have a special role to play, and teaching inspired by core human rights principles as well as principles of mutual respect and understanding can have positive consequences. However, educational initiatives to confront intolerance against Muslims have still remained considerably limited across the OSCE region. Only very few States have developed guidelines for educators to accommodate the needs of Muslim students. There is a lack of comprehensive educational policies, programmes or strategies dealing with intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Although various teaching materials on anti-Semitism and racism are available today, teaching materials on anti-Muslim stereotypes have yet to be developed. NGOs addressing intolerance against Muslims, in particular, youth NGOs, can play a very positive role in improving this situation.</p> <p>Open Discussion</p>

18:00 - 18:30	Closing Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on Recommendations • Follow-up • Concluding remarks by Amb. Orhun and Mr. Soykan
---------------	--