

First poll amongst the muslim population in Switzerland regarding experiences in anti-muslim racism / islamophobia

With the initiative of the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD), the Muslim Community in Switzerland participated in a poll conducted by the well known swiss polling institute gfs.bern ag between January and February 2017. This is the first time that a part of the over 350'000 muslims in Switzerland, whose total population consists of 7 million inhabitants, are asked in greater numbers about their experiences. The Muslim Community in Switzerland delivered more than 5000 addresses of interested participants. Participants were selected randomly. Finally 511 muslims participated in this poll.

This poll is intended to serve as a basis for further research. The figures we are presenting here are first results of this pilot study.

7 Muslim NGO's are carriers of this pilot project:

- Koordination Islamischer Organisationen Schweiz KIOS
- Vereinigung der Islamischen Organisationen in Zürich VIOZ
- Verband Aargauer Muslime VAM
- Türkische Gemeinschaft Schweiz TGS
- Föderation Islamischer Vereine der Schweiz
- Türkisch Islamische Stiftung
- Verein unabhängiger Industrieller und Unternehmer MÜSIAD Schweiz

The main objective was to find out how the Muslim Minority interacted and reacted with and to the majority society and to find out what their experiences as muslims in Switzerland were.

For detailed information about the poll we refer to the presentation for the swiss public after October 2017. You can follow us from our website (www.uetd-switzerland.ch) and from social media (www.facebook.com/uetd.isvicre/ twitter: @uetd_ch).

Hate Crime Experiences of the Muslim Minority in Switzerland

The polling institute gfs.bern ag asked the Muslim Minority also about their individual discrimination experiences. 35% of the participants told that they experienced hate crime themselves. It does not matter how educated, how old muslims are or which gender they belong to. Also the residency place or how long muslims live in Switzerland are not relevant for hate crimes. 73% of the victims of hate crime are sure that the crimes were committed because they were muslims. 16% saw their religion as a possible motive for the crime. 53% of the participants answered they know somebody in their personal environment. Muslims who are visible e.g. with their veil, hijab, their beard etc. are likely to be more victims of hate crime in Switzerland.

Most of the experiences are not recorded. Only about 1/5 make claims to the authorities. From the minority of reported cases only 17% are recorded as hate crimes.

Group Discrimination Experiences

To the question whether muslims experienced personal discrimination, 30% answered with 'yes, I myself experienced discrimination'. 25% answered they knew persons from their personal environment who experienced discrimination. 37% of the participating muslims said they did not experience discrimination in the last 12 months. 8% did not know or did not answer this question.

In 54% of the cases the offenders were private persons, 34% institutions, 12% did not answer or did not know.

Working place

To the question whether muslims experienced discrimination at the working place, 35% answered "never", 31% said "multiple experiences". 15% said they experienced discrimination one time on their job. 19% did either not answer or did not know the answer. In cases where the religion was visible like for example with a muslim name, the rate of discrimination rises.

Government, state institutions and politics regarding muslims

On one hand the Muslim Minority is for the emancipation of the muslims. On the other hand the discussions of the majority have negative effects on the muslims. While 86% think that muslims should have a more visible role in the daily life, 45% would like to participate themselves in politics. 86% of the Muslim Minority find that some politicians are provoking Muslim Hostility willingly. 79% observe discriminating statements. In this environment 39% see politicians fighting a hostile mood against Islam. 86% see the political and social discussions regarding Muslims as discriminatory. 53% of the Muslims find that the Swiss Democracy is allowing the Minority to participate. Only 14% of the Muslims find that they are represented by the established political landscape. The majority of the participating muslims say in 2017 that they trust state institutions. 60% say they trust the police, the municipality or the judicial systems.

Media

The media is viewed in all cases as critical. A clear majority see the media as responsible for the worsening of the attitude of the non-muslim majority against the Muslim Minority. 28% say that the Muslims in Switzerland are responsible for this worsening of the attitude. 80% see the media riding a hate campaign against the muslim community in Switzerland. 72% say that the way the media reports about muslims around the World is worsening the daily life of muslims in Switzerland.

Outlook

After the publication of the report to the public, the muslim minority and muslim NGOs will have the opportunity to explain to the majority in their country what they read out of the answers of the Muslim minority.

Next year we will report at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018 how this poll was received by the media, the public, by politicians, by experts, by the institutions, by the civil society, by NGOs and Human Rights Groups.