

**Thinkout****OSCE Meeting on Human Dimension: Session 13****Tuesday, 30rd September 2014****Sofitel Victoria - Warsaw**

Thinkout is a Belgian based non-governmental organization.

We as Thinkout have for challenge to include, integrate and enforce the different cultures in Europe in the mainstream society while respecting the human rights.

Thinkout aims a multicultural, new and strong Europe where Islam and muslims are not portrayed as enemies, but as equal citizens with cultural and social diversities.

We want to explain ourselves, our concerns and our worries about Islamophobia at the present time where the communication tools are far progressed.

Against the fast spreading of the prejudices about Islam, our goal is to defend the Muslims, just like the Muslims around the world who are faced against a profound and large disinformation.

In order to avoid these actions to result against people, we want to be the voice of those who are discriminated because of their religion.

To differentiate us of traditional non-governmental think tanks, without any relation to political and economic institutions, we want to pull out the thoughts forced in boxes.

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The European Convention on Human Rights and our Country Belgium's Constitution (which we think is probably not different in other Western countries), state that although the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion are very clear, the European Muslims experience that they cannot manifest their belief in an ideal way.

They are constantly subjected to a double standard.

Although they are not involved with any terrorist activities, Muslims are portrayed by the media as potential terrorists.

Many European politicians use for their electoral campaigns anti-Islamic elements although European Muslims don't create any issues.

For example in Belgium, although the government doesn't take any measures regarding those who want to join the terrorist group IS in Syria and Iraq, and moreover the weapons used by the Middle East terrorist groups are procured by the Western world, the European Muslims are constantly put under pressure as the only guilty ones.

For example, the Belgian conservative party NVA leader Bart DE WEVER, although he doesn't produce any real positive opinion on this subject, he puts the Belgian Muslims under pressure to condemn the actions of the terrorist group IS.

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The European countries can't somehow succeed to achieve a real multicultural cohabitation.

With another goal of Thinkout we want to lift one of the main obstacles which is the fact that the different communities don't acknowledge each other that is caused by ignorance and misperception.

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The Orient could have been observed, researched and ruled by Europe.

The Orient could not have stayed a magnificent and despite everything a rich region that is incomprehensible.

All of this could have been brought home, or in a more easy way Europe could go to the Orient to settle there and feel at home. In fact, Europe has already achieved this.

The replacement of one imperial system by another has brought two aspects with it.

First of all, the academics and experts started to have a crisis related interest of the Islam.

Secondly, the methods managed generally in the private sector, in the media and in the electronic reporting industry have known an extraordinary revolution.

After this revolution, the information stream in the written, spoken and visual social media has progressed in a high tempo.

The information stream about the Islam and the Muslims has increased. This information stream has developed very quickly that people did not have the time to find out what is real and what is not.

Therefore, in the Western world and in many other places humanity has lost the connection between facts and fiction.

The two developments above mentioned when united, (the second one more than the first) causes the fact that many academic and administrative tools, furthermore experts of the business world have been an agent to promote the research the Middle

East and the Islam.

These conclusions should not mislead us, because from the Medieval to the modern times, in the Western world Islam has not been researched and considered in a general way.

There has not been a period where prejudice and political gains are not involved regarding Islam.

Besides, these two developments has resulted into the fact that Islam has become a known subject to the news consumers.

The Muslim world, especially its news value, has been made to be a part of the Western daily life.

The spreading of frustration related news containing Muslim fundamentalism and terrorism has been allowed.

The same subjects have been examined over and over again leading to put the focus on the following same matters:

The elite, the role of the army, the prominent leaders, sensational crisis's, the jihadist groups, geopolitical strategies - especially of Europe and USA and modernisation programs.

News concerning the Islamic world that is not newsworthy is pulled out of its context.

We don't exaggerate if we state that Muslims and more specific Arabs are transmitted, discussed or perceived as oil producers or potential terrorists.

The real issue here is the fact that the Western world cannot expect that Muslims won't embrace them deeply while Europe and USA and their voluntary expert army accept and praise the leaders (dictator Asad and Sisi) who aren't beloved by the people.

After all, the Muslims constantly witness the representation of their religion and culture as being aggressive and violent by these leaders.

The Muslims witness also the killings of their brothers in Bosnia, Chechnya, Palestine, Iraq and Syria.

We tried to explain the relation between the Western World and the Islamic geography.

Of course the problems of Muslims are not restricted with these matters.

When we examine the situation of European Muslims and Muslims who live in the other Western countries we will see that their situation is not different and that Islamophobia will appear more clearly.

The recommendations of ThinkOut

1. In Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights it states that everyone has the freedom to live their religion freely. In the second part of this artikel this right of freedom is being restricted. The largest part of victims of these restrictions are muslims and especially muslim women.

They are targeted because of their visual features. The victimization and discrimination of muslim women should be adressed urgently so it is possible for them to live their lives just as any other women with any other religious or ethnical backgrounds.

2. Secondly we want to add that the next serbian OSCE chairmanships should make a priority to adress the hate crimes and discrimination agains muslims. In order to ameliorate the existing laws in a way that will protect this group of persons who are underrepresented and misrepresented by media.