

CCIE ANNUAL REPORT ON  
**ISLAMOPHOBIA**  
**IN EUROPE**  
FOR THE YEAR **2024**





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Collective for Countering Islamophobia in Europe

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# Message of the Chairman

Never before have hostile narratives toward Muslim women and men in Europe been so normalized—this is the alarming conclusion that marked the end of 2024. Islamophobia has taken root at the heart of public discourse, continually fueled by a far right that keeps gaining ground. This toxic climate demands heightened vigilance from all those who hold the values of equality and freedom dear.

Throughout the year, we witnessed an escalation in the stigmatization of Muslim communities, with hate speech becoming normalized and surveillance policies growing increasingly harsh. In several European countries, the far right no longer limits itself to dominating the media sphere — it is now setting the agenda for governments, shaping public policy, and driving an ideological shift that poses a direct threat to fundamental freedoms.

Faced with this situation, our mission is more essential than ever. The CCIE is committed to documenting these forms of discrimination, supporting those affected, and advocating for a Europe where equality and dignity are more than just empty slogans. We are well aware of how trust in institutions continues to erode among minorities, who have grown all too accustomed to double standards. It is precisely in this context that our role becomes all the more meaningful: to provide concrete support, to denounce injustice, and to reject the notion that such outcomes are inevitable.

However, we are not naïve about the growing obstacles. Be it administrative restrictions, legal pressures, or smear campaigns, the tactics used to target human rights organizations and silence dissenting voices are becoming increasingly aggressive—especially against those who challenge structural racism and systemic discrimination, and particularly when they dare to defend the rights of migrants, refugees, and Muslims.



Indeed, the stakes of this struggle go far beyond the mere issue of Islamophobia. They strike at the heart of the kind of society we want to build and protect: a society where democratic principles are not sacrificed at the altar of fear, where the rule of law stands firm against authoritarian impulses, and where minorities are not turned into scapegoats. As the far right advances and its ideas seep ever deeper into public consciousness and debate, it is our collective responsibility to stand firm, to reject the normalization of intolerance, and to remind people—again and again—that history has already taught us the devastating consequences of such drift.

The CCIE will continue this work with determination and unwavering commitment. We extend our deepest thanks to all those who, through their support, activism, and engagement, contribute to this vital struggle. May this report help shed light on the current dynamics and equip people with the awareness needed to face the challenges ahead.



# Islamophobia and Official Statistics: A Chronic Underestimation

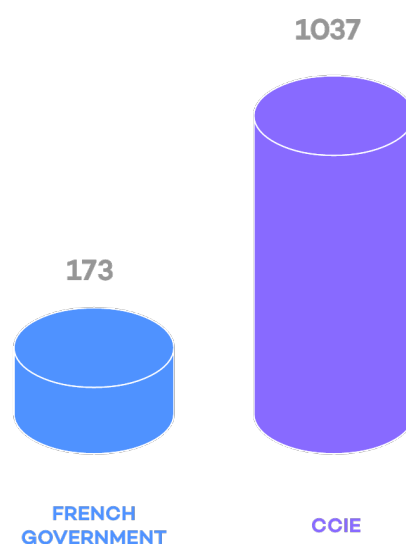
Every year, European and national institutions publish statistics on discrimination and hate crimes targeting Muslim communities, but these figures suffer from major methodological shortcomings that limit their scope and credibility. It is therefore essential to once again emphasize that official statistics on Islamophobia fall far short of reflecting the lived reality of Muslims in Europe.

The Collective for Countering Islamophobia in Europe (CCIE), which collects several hundred testimonies and complaints each year, has a unique database on Islamophobic discrimination. Thanks to its strong ties within the affected communities, it captures a significant share of cases that escape official statistics. And the findings remain consistent: the figures produced by states and public institutions are significantly lower than those recorded by the CCIE and other grassroots organizations — and this gap continues to widen.

Take, for example, the data published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in its latest report. This work is severely limited by its methodology: the small sample size of respondents, the lack of consideration for the experiences of third- and fourth-generation Muslims, and above all, the absence of analysis of structural racism distort the findings on Islamophobia in Europe. The focus on individual acts of discrimination — such as employment discrimination, abusive police checks, or verbal and physical assaults — prevents an understanding of the systemic dynamics that fuel and normalize this phenomenon.

Similarly, in France, the figures put forward by the Ministry of the Interior regarding anti-Muslim acts of discrimination are consistently underestimated. For the year 2024, authorities recorded 173 anti-Muslim incidents, implying a decrease of over one third compared to 2023. The CCIE, however, documented more than three times that number: we received 1,037 reports, showing an increase of over 25% from the previous year. This underreporting is often justified by a drop in reported incidents, attributed to victims' fatigue or the difficulties they face in filing complaints — one of the few tools authorities use to quantify the phenomenon. But if many people choose not to report what happened to them, it is primarily because they have no trust in the institutions meant to protect them, especially in a context where law enforcement is perceived as an agent of surveillance and suspicion toward Muslims.

More broadly, European and national institutions continue to define Islamophobia in a restrictive manner, denying its embeddedness in legal, administrative, and political structures. By limiting Islamophobia to direct attacks and discrimination, states conveniently ignore the role of public policies in entrenching this phenomenon, thereby evading responsibility for laws and measures that explicitly target Muslims — under the guise of combating separatism or upholding «republican values.» The bans on religious symbols in schools and public spaces, surveillance of Muslim organizations, preventive security measures targeting individuals based on their practice of Islam, and growing restrictions on freedom of expression concerning Islam or Palestine are all examples of institutionalized Islamophobia that remain invisible in official statistics.



Anti-Muslim racism cannot be reduced to a list of isolated incidents. It is rooted in exclusionary policies, mechanisms of control, and media narratives that shape collective perceptions. As long as official statistics fail to incorporate these dimensions, they will remain a partial and underestimated reflection of reality.

It is precisely to address these gaps in official data that the CCIE publishes a detailed annual report on the state of Islamophobia in Europe — to remind us that numbers alone cannot capture the scale and complexity of the phenomenon.

# Structural Islamophobia

Islamophobia is embedded in the institutional, political, and administrative structures that shape the daily lives of Muslims in Europe. What is referred to as structural Islamophobia encompasses the entire set of legal frameworks, institutional practices, and social norms that systematically target Muslims—or individuals perceived as such. It is rooted in an ideological and normative construct that associates Islam with a threat, thereby justifying surveillance policies, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and institutionalized discrimination.

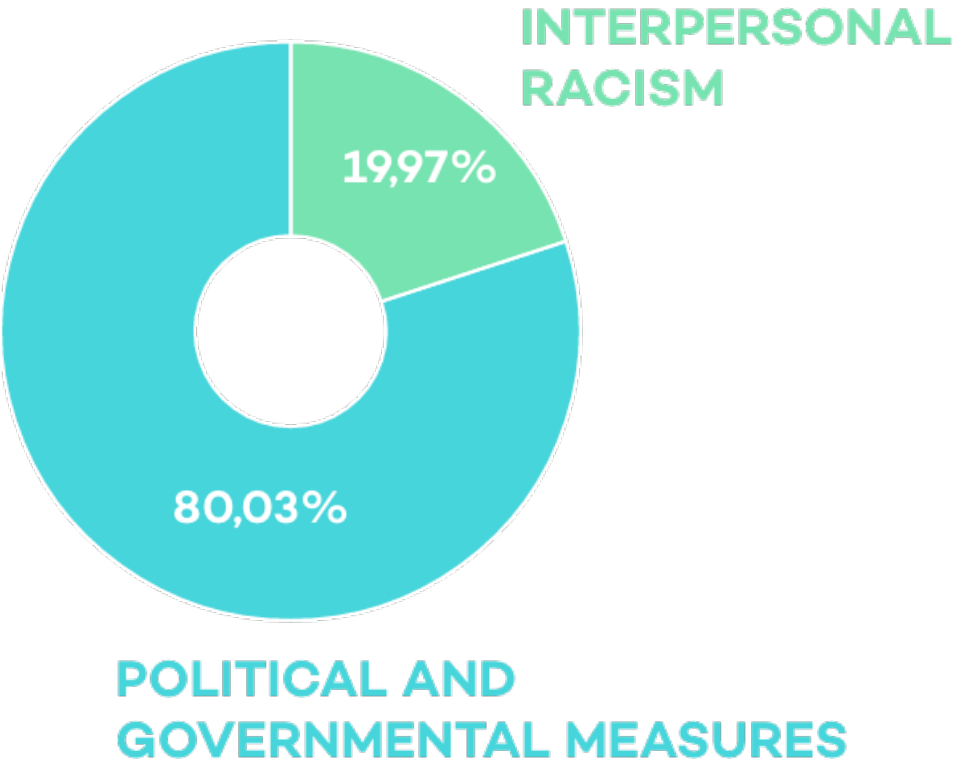
Its manifestations are manifold. In the realm of public policy, it is evident in the enactment of laws that restrict the visibility and access of Muslims to public spaces under the guise of secularism, as well as in the intensification of surveillance and filing measures. In employment and education, Muslims—especially women who wear the headscarf—face systematic exclusion, often justified by distorted interpretations of neutrality principles. In the media sphere, structural Islamophobia is expressed through an obsessive focus on Islam, portraying Muslims as unwanted others, civilizational threats, or security risks—coupled with widespread tolerance of blatant abuses.

The data collected by the CCIE paints a stark and undeniable picture. In 2024, 19.97% of reported cases involved individual based racism. A staggering 80.03% of reports concerned acts directly linked to government policies or measures: discrimination based on clothing (such as the headscarf or loose attire), denial of access to education or employment due to veiling, abusive administrative searches, or heightened surveillance of mosques. Added to this are documented instances of discrimination in housing and healthcare access. These figures confirm that such measures play an active role in constructing and perpetuating Islamophobia as a system of discrimination legitimized by law and institutions.

Recognizing structural anti-Muslim racism as a specific phenomenon—distinct from individual acts of discrimination—is crucial to understanding the full scope of the issue. As long as public policies continue to fuel and legitimize



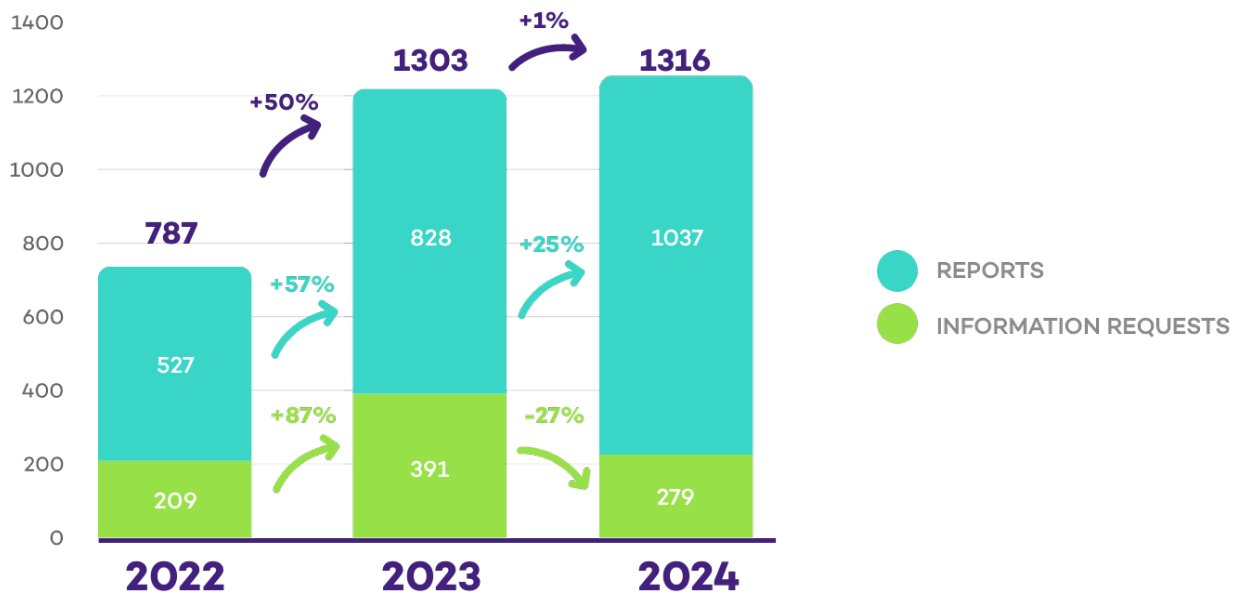
the exclusion of Muslims, any effort to combat Islamophobia will remain incomplete. This intentional invisibilization allows states to absolve themselves of responsibility for normalizing this form of racism. In contrast, this report seeks to assert that Islamophobia is not merely a matter of individual based intolerance, but a systemic problem that demands a comprehensive political and institutional response.



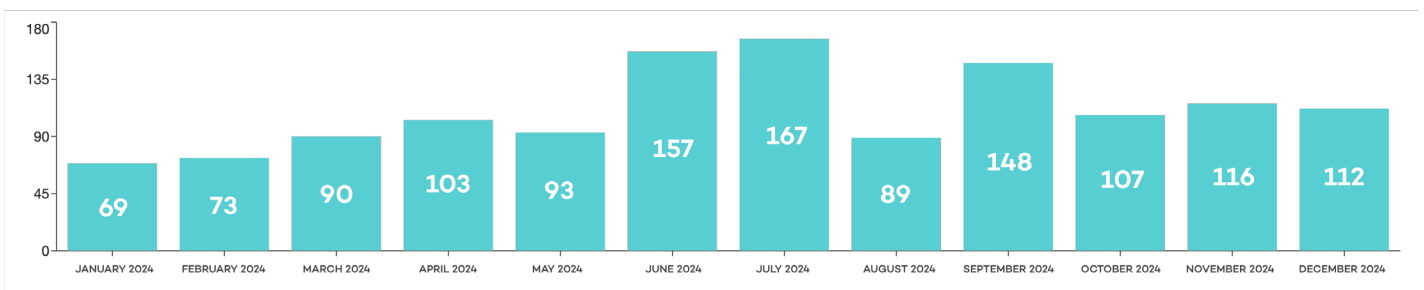
# CCIE Statistics

In 2024, 1,037 reports of Islamophobic incidents were submitted to the CCIE. In 2023, the number of reports was 828, indicating a 25% increase over a year. These figures refer exclusively to incidents that were formally identified as Islamophobic following close analysis by the CCIE's legal department.

This number does not include all inquiries: in 2024, 1,316 individuals contacted the CCIE, compared to 1,303 in 2023. As in previous years, the vast majority of these cases relate to situations that occurred in France:

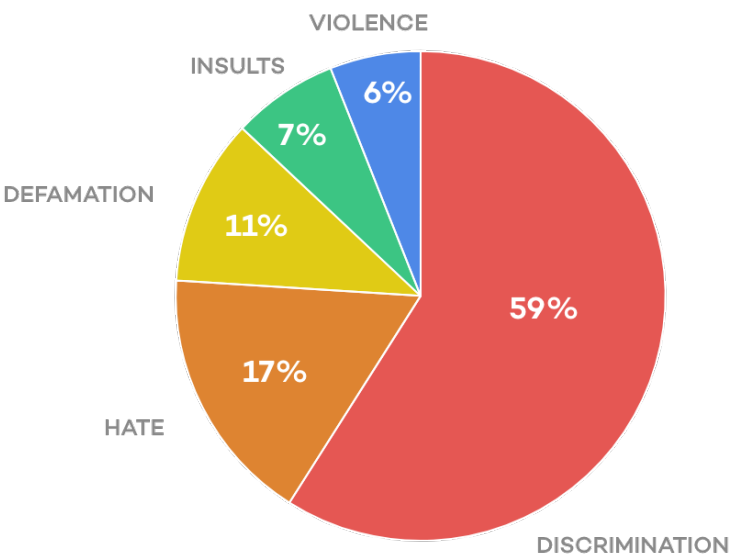


Reports for 2024 include incidents of various types:



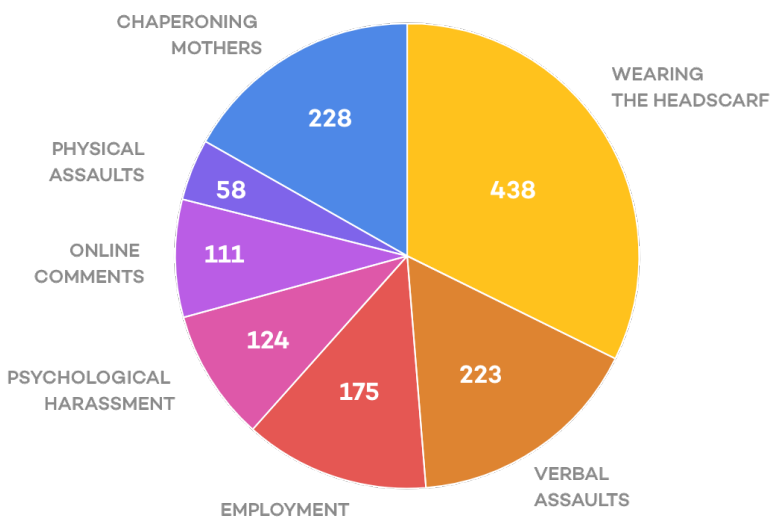
The 1,037 reports for the year 2024 encompass incidents of various kinds: acts of discrimination (59%), provocation and incitement to hatred (17%), insults

(7%), defamation (11%), and violence (6%).



These acts occur everywhere, but certain institutions and public spaces remain particular hot spots for Islamophobia, with a concentration of reports in administrations, educational institutions (nursery, primary, middle, high schools, and universities), hospitals, and digital spaces.

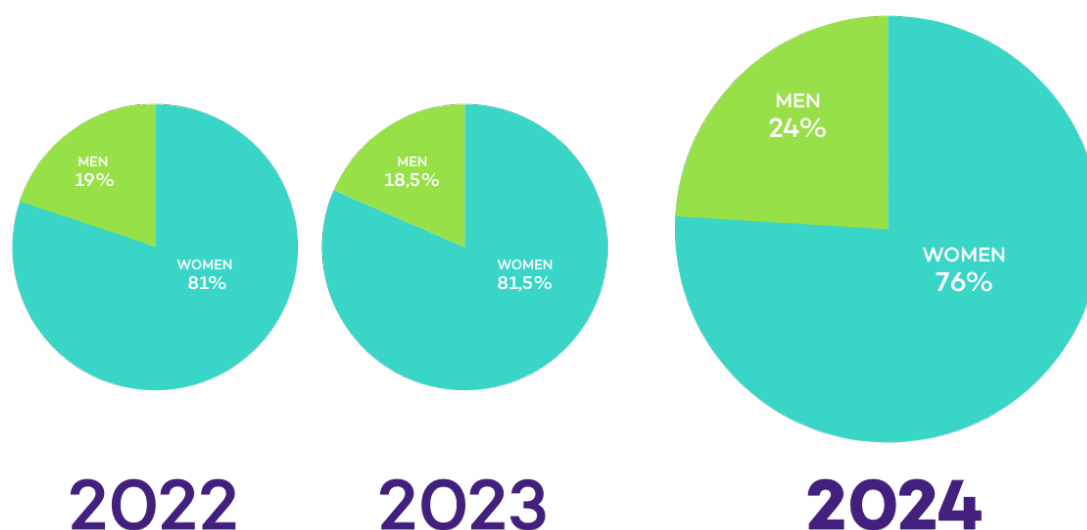
The most frequent keywords are as follows:



The majority of victims are of French nationality (889), with others primarily from Belgium (18), Morocco (19), Algeria (18), Tunisia (11), and Spain (6).

As in the previous year, and in line with a long-term trend in Islamophobia observed since the phenomenon’s tracking, these incidents overwhelmingly

affect women. Of the 1,037 reports, 76% concern women and 24% men.



Thus, 2024 confirms what we have repeatedly stated: being a Muslim woman in France means being particularly exposed to discrimination and violence. The wearing of the headscarf remains a central point of discrimination, affecting 402 cases. From professional exclusion to verbal assaults in the street, Muslim women remain the primary targets.

Regarding men, the situation is no more reassuring. The figures show that they are also increasingly affected by Islamophobia in other forms, as illustrated by the sharp rise in administrative obstruction measures imposed in 2024 (further in this report).

The year 2024 thus follows the trajectory of the alarming trends observed in 2023: Islamophobia is not weakening — it is becoming more entrenched and continually reinventing itself. While the previous year had seen a surge in reported incidents, 2024 confirms that this trend has not reversed.

# France in 2024

## MUSLIM WOMEN'S CLOTHING: A PERSISTENT FRENCH OBSESSION

In France, the policy of surveillance and exclusion targeting Muslim women and men reached a new level in 2024. Following the ban on the abaya in schools in 2023, the year 2024 saw a surge in discriminatory incidents targeting young girls wearing clothes deemed “too long” or “too loose.” High school and middle school girls were ordered to shorten their skirts or change their outfits on the grounds that they conveyed a religious message — in direct contradiction with the principles of equality and neutrality that are supposed to govern public education, as well as the very meaning of the March 15, 2004, law and its implementation decree of May 18, 2004.

It is necessary to recall — even if it now seems almost anachronistic — that neutrality applies to state officials in the exercise of their duties, not to individuals. The French government's push to ban the hijab for women accompanying school trips, supported in January 2025 by the new Minister of the Interior Bruno Retailleau, reflects an ongoing desire to further restrict the visibility of Muslim women under the guise of secularism.





This exclusionary dynamic has also surfaced in the realm of sports. In June 2023, the Council of State upheld the ban on wearing the hijab during football competitions, rejecting appeals from the collective “Les Hijabeuses,” which advocates for the right of women who wear the veil to play football. The French Football Federation (FFF) maintains this ban despite FIFA having allowed the hijab since 2014. Legal experts and human rights organizations have criticized this decision, viewing it as an infringement on civil liberties.

Additionally, during the opening ceremony of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, French athletes were prohibited from wearing religious attire — including the hijab — despite condemnation from international organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, who denounced it as a violation of athletes’ religious freedom.

## MOSQUES TARGETED: ARSON, RACIST GRAFFITI, AND THREATS

In 2024, mosques in France suffered numerous attacks and Islamophobic acts, revealing a disturbing rise in anti-Muslim violence across the continent. These assaults, chronologically outlined here — although the list isn’t exhaustive — demonstrate the scale and persistence of the phenomenon throughout the year.





As early as January, the Arrahma Mosque in Marseille was vandalized with explicit racist graffiti. On March 12, the mosque in Saint-Omer was also desecrated. Shortly afterward, the mosque in Saint-Jean-de-Braye received a threatening letter soaked in pork fat. On May 28, the Croix-Rousse Mosque in Lyon was once again targeted with Islamophobic graffiti, including insulting remarks directed at the Prophet — marking the third such attack in a year on that place of worship. On June 3, in Annecy, hateful messages such as “Death to Islam” were found scrawled on a mosque, highlighting the severity and intensity of hostility toward Muslims.

The attacks on mosques in 2024 are particularly alarming — they go beyond graffiti, insults, and property damage; they pose real danger to the lives of worshippers. On September 12, the Ulu Camii Mosque in Haguenau, in eastern France, was the target of an attempted arson attack. In November, a mosque in Amiens suffered a deliberate fire, causing significant material damage. An attempted arson in Morlaix back in January had already triggered deep concern





for the safety of Muslims in the region. These events have fostered a profound sense of vulnerability among worshippers, as the severity of these crimes continues to be overlooked in public discourse.

On top of these violent acts, there have been repeated attacks on mosques under construction. In Montauban, for instance, the construction site was vandalized five times over the course of the year, each time with racist and Islamophobic graffiti. Finally, on December 2, a man armed with a weapon stormed into the Grand Mosque of Nantes during prayer, inciting panic and further underscoring the threats to the physical safety of Muslims in France.

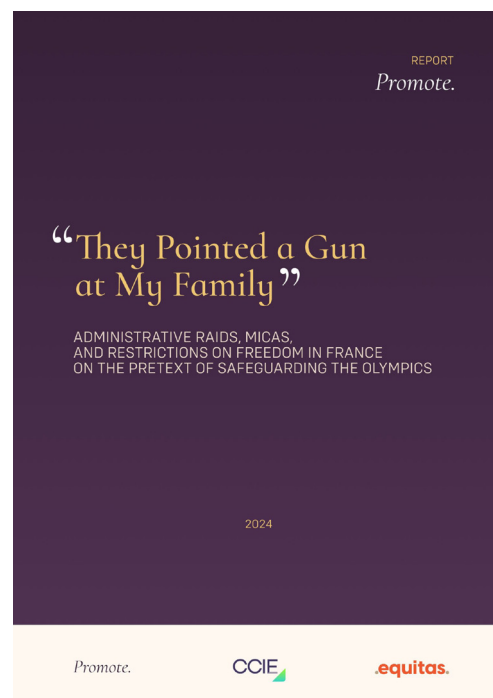
The year 2024 has therefore confirmed a deeply troubling trend: the proliferation of both physical and symbolic attacks on mosques across Europe.

## ADMINISTRATIVE OBSTRUCTION MEASURES: A NEW THRESHOLD CROSSED

In 2024, the implementation of Individual Measures of Administrative Control and Surveillance (MICAS) crossed a disturbing threshold in France, marked by a surge in house arrests and administrative searches. Justified under the pretext of national security, these measures have, in reality, institutionalized targeted repression — aimed predominantly at Muslims, based on vague and arbitrary grounds.

A report from the think tank Promote<sup>1</sup>, based on documented cases, exposes this authoritarian drift. It reveals a system where preventive repression replaces the presumption of innocence, with devastating human consequences. The scale of the phenomenon is unprecedented. While the annual number of MICAS hovered between 120

1 <https://promotethinktank.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/PROMOTE-REPORT-IS-LAMOPHOBIA-OLYMPICS-2024.pdf>



and 150 before 2024, the Interior Ministry imposed 559 MICAS in just a few months — a 17-fold increase in the monthly rate. Administrative searches also skyrocketed: from 153 in 2023 to 936 in 2024 — a staggering 510% rise.

These measures have targeted individuals with clean criminal records and, in some cases, minors as young as 14 — a historic break from fundamental rights protections. The justifications offered are often flimsy, based solely on «white notes» (“notes blanches”)— unsigned, undated documents that bypass any adversarial process. Guilt by association appears to have become the norm: praying at a mosque where an imam is flagged, interacting with a suspect on social media, or merely owning religious books can now be grounds for surveillance.

The criminalization of religious expression and political opinion is just as evident. The possession of classical Islamic texts, wearing a qamis or a headscarf, or expressing support for Palestinian civilians on social media are all now treated with suspicion. Testimonies describe police officers rifling through bookshelves, flipping over prayer rugs, and pointing to Quranic verses as evidence of incitement to violence. Freedom of conscience and expression is thus directly under attack, masked as counter-extremism efforts.

Witness accounts describe early-morning raids by masked and heavily armed units, physical and verbal abuse inflicted on those arrested — including the most vulnerable. The psychological toll is immense. The professional, financial, and social repercussions are equally heavy. Many have lost their jobs, unable to meet work obligations due to curfews or geographic restrictions. Others remain unemployable, sidelined because of their administrative filing.

The year 2024 has shown that MICAS are not a proportionate, appropriate, reasonable, or effective response to security concerns. Instead, they are tools of social control and systemic discrimination, with consequences that are bound to be disastrous in the medium and long term.

# Europe in 2024: The Rise of the Far Right and the Normalization of anti-Muslim racism

The year 2024 marked a profound shift in the European political landscape, characterized by the rapid and seemingly unstoppable rise of far-right forces and the accelerated normalization of racist and Islamophobic rhetoric. What was the language of political fringes—confined to nationalist parties and identitarian groups—has now become a central feature of public discourse, adopted and legitimized by mainstream parties seeking to capture the far-right electorate.

## A MAJOR ELECTORAL TURNING POINT: THE FAR RIGHT SETS THE AGENDA

The European elections in June 2024 confirmed this trend, as nationalist and xenophobic parties achieved record-breaking results. In France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Italy, parties like the Rassemblement National (RN), Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the Party for Freedom (PVV), the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), and Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia) made unprecedented electoral gains, reshaping both national and European institutions and further weakening moderate political forces. These parties capitalized on successive crises—economic, energy-related, security, geopolitical—to establish themselves as key players on the political stage.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this electoral period has been the growing influence of these forces on governing parties. Where, only a few years ago, traditional conservative parties sought to maintain a clear boundary from far-right rhetoric, they have gradually moved closer, adopting some of the most radical elements of far-right agendas. This strategy of convergence, aimed at



attracting an increasingly anti-immigration and anti-minority electorate, has legitimized openly discriminatory proposals and embedded Islamophobia at the heart of public policy.

In France, this dynamic accelerated amid a major political crisis, triggered by President Emmanuel Macron's surprise dissolution of the National Assembly following his coalition's crushing defeat in the June 2024 European elections. In the subsequent snap legislative elections, the Rassemblement National (RN) achieved a historic breakthrough, winning 33.15% of the vote in the first round and emerging as the leading party. This translated into the election or re-election of 140 far-right MPs. Macron's risky gamble—to regain control of the political agenda by forcing a realignment of centrist and republican forces—backfired spectacularly. Rather than weakening the far right, it allowed them to solidify their electoral base and impose their program on an increasingly hollow “extreme center.” The resulting political instability had immediate consequences on the handling of immigration and security issues. Although the RN did not secure an absolute parliamentary majority, it successfully imposed its priorities in legislative debates. Under pressure from a traditional right desperate for survival, measures once considered unthinkable have been progressively adopted, normalizing an increasingly exclusionary vision of French identity—echoing ethno-nationalist tropes such as “French citizens by paper” and the “threat of migratory submersion.”

The government's alignment with these themes led to a hardening of migration policies: an acceleration of migrant expulsions, tighter naturalization requirements, and increasing restrictions on the social rights of foreigners.

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As for hostility toward Islam and Muslims, it continued its rapid institutionalization through several government decisions, including:

- The continuation of a hardline policy in educational and sports institutions, enforced with unprecedented rigidity, reinforcing a view in which visible expressions of Islam are inherently in conflict with republican values—or even constitute a security threat to public institutions.
- The closure of numerous mosques and Muslim private schools, often justified by vague security concerns and administrative decisions lacking real avenues for appeal.
- The targeting of Muslim organizations through severe restrictions on their funding and operations, with ever-stricter requirements for transparency and oversight. As of now, there are no Muslim private schools in France under state contract.

A direct consequence of this repressive climate has been a dramatic surge in Islamophobic violence: increased attacks on mosques, verbal and physical assaults on veiled women, and death threats against Muslim public figures.

In this regard, France is not an isolated case. In Germany, the AfD, which came second in the European elections, has injected ultranationalist and anti-Muslim rhetoric into the public debate, forcing the conservative right (CDU-CSU) to reposition itself along a hardline stance. Islamophobia has intensified in political discourse, notably with the spread of conspiracy theories about a supposed “great replacement” in favor of Muslims—a narrative not without antisemitic undertones, as this “replacement” is often said to be orchestrated by Jewish individuals. The concept of «remigration,» which advocates the forced expulsion of communities deemed unassimilated, has moved from the margins of the far right into open discussion within political institutions. A bill aimed at restricting access to German citizenship for people from Muslim-majority countries has even been debated in the Bundestag.

In several Länder governed by far-right officials, laws regulating the wearing of the veil in public have been tightened, further restricting employment opportunities for Muslim women. At the same time, mosques and Muslim

cultural centers have been subjected to increased surveillance—often without legal justification. Under pressure from the AfD and a conservative faction of the CDU, the federal government has expanded intelligence agency powers to monitor imams and Islamic organizations, under the guise of combating religious separatism. This policy of escalation culminated in a historic breakthrough for the AfD in the early federal elections held on February 23,

2025, in which the party won 20.8% of the vote—double its 2021 score—securing 152 seats in the Bundestag. This rise has reinforced the normalization of the far right in Germany, particularly through Alice Weidel’s efforts to soften the party’s image, even as it remains fundamentally anti-immigration and Islamophobic.



The year 2024 in Germany was also marked by a disturbing surge in far-right violence. Several attacks were recorded against Muslim places of worship and refugee centers,

particularly in Saxony and Bavaria. In Dresden and Leipzig, neo-Nazi groups carried out violent raids in immigrant-majority neighborhoods, targeting businesses and refugee families. Mosques were vandalized and defaced with supremacist slogans and references to the Third Reich. These acts of violence are part of a broader climate of radicalization, fueled by the normalization of racism in political discourse. At a rally in November 2024, an AfD official in Thuringia declared that “Muslim neighborhoods must be reconquered”—a statement widely circulated on social media with no reaction from authorities. In the face of rising violence, the institutional response has been slow and selective, focusing more on repressing anti-fascist demonstrations than protecting minorities. Several human rights organizations have condemned what they describe as the institutions’ passive complicity with racist violence.

In the United Kingdom, the rise of the Reform UK Party, a far-right rival to the Conservatives, has further radicalized public debate. Under pressure from



Nigel Farage and his circle, the British government has increased surveillance of Muslim civil rights organizations. Intelligence agencies are now authorized to carry out warrantless searches of Muslim NGOs and ban foreign funding under the pretext of «protecting against foreign interference.» Amid a media frenzy, several conservative politicians and journalists have spread conspiracy theories about a supposed «gradual Islamization» of the country. These narratives have had direct consequences on the ground. In 2024, several racist riots broke out, notably in Birmingham and London. A horrific crime, immediately attributed to a Muslim suspect, sparked a wave of violence targeting businesses and places of worship. Far-right groups set up roadblocks to prevent non-White people from passing, while mosques and Muslim cemeteries were attacked.

These events reflect a gradual breakdown of democratic norms. Far from being spontaneous, this radicalization stems from years of political rhetoric stoking ethnic and religious tensions. Brexit marked a turning point by legitimizing a pervasive neo-nationalism in the public space. British conservatives exploited these tensions to consolidate their power, triggering a cycle that has now led to outbreaks of uncontrolled violence.



In the Netherlands, the rise to power of Geert Wilders and his Party for Freedom (PVV) marked a brutal shift. Already committed to restrictive policies, the new government openly embraced a project to dismantle minority rights. The naturalization of Muslim foreigners has been severely curtailed, making citizenship nearly impossible for people from Muslim-majority countries. An investigative report revealed that several municipalities had secretly implemented mosque surveillance programs, creating an atmosphere of widespread suspicion. Some imams were banned from preaching and others expelled from the Netherlands without explanation, while places of worship

were raided under the pretense of administrative inspections. In the media, Wilders and his allies have normalized a war-like rhetoric, portraying Islam as an «existential threat.» This propaganda has contributed to a spike in Islamophobic violence, including a rise in assaults on women wearing the hijab and attacks on Muslim-owned businesses.



In Austria, during the legislative elections of September 29, 2024, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), led by Herbert Kickl, secured 28.8% of the vote, emerging as the top party. This historic result—the far right’s best performance in Austria since 1945—allowed the FPÖ to win 57 out of 183 seats in the National Council, an increase of 26 seats from the previous election. Now firmly entrenched in the political landscape, the FPÖ has radicalized its Islamophobic positions, demanding tighter controls over Muslim schools and Islamic cultural centers. A controversial government report

suggested that adherence to Islamic values could be interpreted as a sign of radicalization, thereby justifying increased surveillance of Muslim citizens.

In Italy, Giorgia Meloni has continued a policy of anti-Muslim discrimination. Funding for mosques has come under tighter control, while new laws have limited the visibility of Islam in public spaces, particularly regarding religious dress and cultural events. Her government has also strengthened restrictions on sea rescue NGOs and criminalized humanitarian organizations that assist refugees.





## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE RADICALIZATION OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE: FROM COMPLICITY TO ESCALATION

For several decades, traditional media have played a central role in maintaining a climate of fear and suspicion toward Muslims in Europe—a widely recognized reality today. By prioritizing issues of security and identity over economic and social analysis, the media have shaped a public opinion increasingly receptive to alarmist narratives about Islam and immigration, thus contributing to the normalization of repressive policies targeting Muslim communities.

In France, the omnipresence of far-right figures on television and radio has marked a turning point. Editorialists promoting far-right ideas dominate public debate and steer discussions toward topics such as national identity, «Islamist separatism,» or «cultural incompatibility.» Any incident involving a Muslim—or someone perceived as such—is interpreted as symptomatic of systemic issues, justifying immediate and disproportionate state responses. Simultaneously, the rise of media outlets owned by the Bolloré group—especially C8 and CNEWS—has intensified this dynamic. Despite ARCOM's<sup>2</sup> intervention in 2024, which imposed sanctions and restrictions on C8, the damage had already been done. For years, these channels provided a platform for Islamophobic and conspiratorial rhetoric, deeply embedding such ideas into the media landscape.

This phenomenon is not confined to France. In Germany, the rise of the AfD was significantly facilitated by media coverage that gave the party constant



<sup>2</sup> The Regulatory Authority for Audiovisual and Digital Communication (Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique; ARCOM) is the French independent administrative agency responsible for both audiovisual and digital communications.

exposure. Popular programs incorporated its conspiracy theories about an alleged Islamization without truly challenging them. This complacency legitimized ideas that, just a few years earlier, had been considered fringe. In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders exploited this logic by multiplying Islamophobic provocations. Each time he made a new statement, the media amplified its impact by dedicating hours of airtime to discussing it. In Italy, public and private media alike have aligned their editorial stance with the Meloni government's rhetoric, shamelessly turning migrants and Muslims into scapegoats for the country's security and economic crises.

Adding to this is the growing influence of social media platforms, particularly X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and Facebook—now largely owned by individuals sympathetic to far-right ideologies. These deregulated spaces undoubtedly play a disproportionate role in spreading racist disinformation. Coordinated campaigns pushing false narratives about Islam, paired with algorithms that favor polarizing content, exacerbate social divisions and radicalize segments of the public.

The December 20, 2024, Christmas market attack in Magdeburg is a striking example of the ideological frenzy that dominates media coverage of violence in Europe. It reveals the disregard for facts and the rush to link every threat to Islam and Muslims. The main suspect, Taleb A., a Saudi-born psychiatrist naturalized as a German citizen, had publicly expressed Islamophobic and far-right views on social media. Yet in their coverage, many media outlets emphasized his Saudi origin, immigrant background, and supposed ties to Islam, rather than his ideological links to the far-right. In contrast to so-called Islamist attacks—where the media immediately highlight the terrorist nature and the assailant's ideology—this incident was framed in personal and psychological terms, downplaying the political significance of the act and the dangers of radical Islamophobia.

A similar pattern emerged after the knife attack in Southport, UK, on July 29, 2024. The assailant, Axel Rudakubana, a 17-year-old British citizen born to Rwandan parents, attacked a children's dance workshop, killing three young girls and injuring ten others. Although no political, religious, or ideological motives were identified, rumors quickly spread online falsely labeling the

attacker as a Muslim migrant. These lies sparked racist riots in several UK cities, orchestrated by far-right groups targeting Muslim communities and asylum seekers.

## THE ISRAELI GENOCIDE OF GAZA, OR THE ACCELERATOR OF EUROPE'S FASCIST DRIFT

Following the October 7 attacks and the Israeli military offensive that resulted in over 30,000 deaths, the year 2024 was marked by an unprecedented crackdown on the Palestine solidarity movement in Europe. This repression took the form of political, judicial, and security measures aimed at deterring any mobilization in support of the Palestinian cause. This climate of witch-hunting has contributed to the normalization of racist and Islamophobic discourse, reinforcing the notion that Muslims and pro-Palestinian activists pose a security threat to Europe.

As early as October 12, 2023, the French government ordered the systematic banning of pro-Palestinian demonstrations, citing risks to public order. This policy continued with increased intensity throughout 2024, despite numerous court rulings overturning the bans. On several occasions, the French Council of State emphasized the illegality of such bans, yet they persisted, making spontaneous mobilizations virtually impossible. The few protests that did take place were violently repressed. In Paris, Lyon, Marseille, and Lille, police forces used tear gas, conducted baton charges, and carried out mass arrests against peaceful demonstrators. On a single day in Paris, over 1,300 people were fined during a banned protest, and dozens of activists were taken into custody for merely waving a Palestinian flag. The repression extended beyond street protests: many individuals were arrested or sanctioned for expressing solidarity with Gaza on social media, while schools and universities imposed absurd restrictions, banning students and teachers from wearing keffiyehs or displaying messages in support of Palestine.

The criminalization of freedom of opinion took on a particularly disturbing legal dimension in 2024. In France, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands, charges of “glorifying terrorism” led to the prosecution of pro-Palestinian activists, academics, and political figures. Protesters received prison sentences

for chanting pro-Palestine slogans. Teachers were suspended or dismissed for referring to the Israeli genocide in classrooms. Humanitarian organizations were dissolved based on unproven accusations of ties to terrorist groups; others had their assets frozen. In Germany, the situation was especially extreme: the state expanded anti-terrorism laws to justify home raids of pro-Palestinian activists, the cancellation of academic conferences, and the revocation of visas for scholars and students suspected of sympathizing with the Palestinian cause. In the Netherlands, a Dutch-Palestinian lawyer was banned from practicing law, accused of defamation against Israel after denouncing war crimes committed in Gaza. Journalists were targeted for merely reporting on the Palestinian situation—for example, using the phrase “hostage exchange” on France Info to describe the release of Palestinian prisoners, some of them minors held under extrajudicial administrative detention, or for reminding audiences, in a separate case, of French colonial crimes in Algeria, which rivaled the atrocities of Nazi occupation, as in the case of journalist Jean-Michel Aphonie.

European universities—traditionally seen as spaces for freedom, reflection, debate, and critique—were swept by an unprecedented wave of censorship in 2024. Numerous conferences on Palestine were canceled under pressure from governments and pro-Israeli groups. Researchers were silenced, their academic work dismissed as unacceptable political advocacy. Students were expelled for

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organizing events in support of Palestinians. In some countries, laws were changed to ban pro-Palestinian symbols in public institutions. In Germany, France, and the UK, wearing a keffiyeh in certain schools or government offices is now considered a political act that may warrant disciplinary sanctions.

Beyond these direct repressive measures, the genocide in Gaza has served as an ideological pretext to unleash the most radical Islamophobic rhetoric across Europe. Muslims are increasingly portrayed as a constant threat to public order, merely because of their pro-Palestinian stance. Support for the State of Israel is being instrumentalized to frame the conflict in identity-based terms—opposing a so-called «Judeo-Christian Europe» to «Islamist barbarians.»

## TRUMP: THE NAME OF A GLOBALIZED FASCIZATION

Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2025 marked yet another sharp acceleration in the global trend toward fascization. From the very first days of his second term, his administration implemented a series of measures directly targeting Muslim communities—this time, those residing in the United States—reactivating patterns of control and exclusion that are increasingly echoed across Europe.

Among the first decisions of his new term, Trump reinstated and expanded the Muslim Ban, barring entry to the U.S. from an even larger number of Muslim-majority countries. This executive order, already a hallmark of his first presidency, now includes new nations, broadening the scope of this discriminatory policy. The ban has paralyzed asylum procedures for thousands of refugees and severely disrupted the lives of Muslim students and workers already living in the U.S., especially those who have shown solidarity with Palestine.

At the same time, political figures known for their openly anti-Islam positions were appointed to key government roles, directly influencing both domestic and foreign policy. Under their leadership, the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI increased surveillance of Muslim organizations and mosques, justifying these actions with vague claims of preempting terrorist threats—despite a lack of concrete evidence.

The Trump effect extends far beyond U.S. borders. By emphasizing the Christian identity of the West and the need to defend against Muslim influence, Trump provides European right-wing parties with additional justification to harden their immigration and security policies. Public figures such as Éric Zemmour in France, Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, and Viktor Orbán in Hungary have drawn on his rhetoric to call for a stronger defense of Western civilization, legitimizing practices that would have been considered extreme only a few years ago.

Trump's return to power has emboldened Islamophobic political currents, pushing European states toward a more authoritarian and identity-based approach to managing migration and religious issues. The year 2025 is thus

shaping up to be a turning point, where the consolidation of illiberal regimes may permanently reshape Europe's democratic balance—particularly in light of the rising tide of Islamophobia.

The growing power of far-right movements in Europe and the increasing normalization of Islamophobia represent a deep shift in the continent's political and social landscape. In this climate, xenophobic and discriminatory themes are becoming central to public discourse, reflecting a weakening of democratic principles. Trump's ideological influence and repressive policies have cemented these dynamics, fostering a transatlantic alignment around control, surveillance, and exclusion. At the same time, the criminalization of solidarity with Palestine, the erosion of academic freedom, the disproportionate influence of certain media outlets, and the spread of racist and conspiratorial content via social media are creating fertile ground for increasingly authoritarian regimes.

Europe now stands at a crossroads: continue down this path of systematically marginalizing minorities and legitimizing hate speech, or renew its commitment to the values of equality, justice, and pluralism that once formed its foundation. The future of European societies will depend on the ability of political leaders, institutions, the media, and citizens to resist this alarming spiral and protect a democratic space where diversity and fundamental freedoms are preserved.



## CONCLUSION

Despite a context marked by the persistence of Islamophobia in 2024, positive initiatives have emerged across Europe, reflecting a collective desire to promote coexistence. These actions, led by public figures, institutions, and committed citizens, offer glimmers of hope for the future.

In January 2025, during Holocaust Memorial Day, Queen Camilla, for example, warned against the rise of both antisemitism and Islamophobia. She emphasized that these forms of hatred often begin with «small acts of exclusion,» and that vigilance, along with education, are key to preventing all forms of discrimination. On January 27, Martha Bißmann, former Austrian MP and human rights activist, organized a conference in Vienna to raise awareness about Islamophobia, where she expressed her support for Muslim communities. In the Netherlands, King Willem-Alexander delivered a powerful message to Jewish and Muslim communities following the violence that erupted during the Maccabi Tel Aviv match. He called for unity and mutual respect and strongly condemned acts of hatred and violence.

These symbolic acts of support are, of course, not enough to reverse the worrying trend observed in 2024, but they remain necessary and, in a sense, reassuring in a context where Islamophobic rhetoric continues to spiral. These statements reflect at least a minimal awareness of the seriousness of Islamophobia, and they must be accompanied by concrete actions to show a genuine political and societal recognition of the gravity of the situation.

The year 2024 was also marked by the ongoing and courageous work of anti-racist organizations striving to raise awareness, provide support, and foster solidarity. The movement «Stand Up to Racism», for instance, organized large-scale demonstrations across Europe to denounce racism and Islamophobia. These actions mobilized thousands of people and strengthened the collective resolve to combat all forms of discrimination. In April, a major march against racism and Islamophobia took place in Paris, drawing thousands of participants. November 2024 was marked by Islamophobia Awareness Month, a campaign that highlighted the efforts of Muslims across Europe to fight back against Islamophobia.



Despite the ongoing challenges, 2024 was also a year of determined resistance and concrete, positive civil society action. These initiatives show that, in the face of hatred and intolerance, a united and collective response is still possible in Europe.

Throughout 2024, the CCIE (Collective for Countering Islamophobia in Europe) was at the forefront of this fight, taking tangible action alongside victims and organizations committed to combating anti-Muslim racism. The CCIE provided legal and psychological support to individuals targeted by discrimination, continued its advocacy strategy with European and international institutions, and produced research and analysis to better document the phenomenon. It also ramped up awareness-raising and mobilization initiatives: supporting the production of the documentary «20 Years of an Exclusionary Law» by Dhia Ben Naser, organizing multiple in-person and online events, as well as both festive and academic gatherings.

The year 2024 demonstrated that despite the obstacles, voices are rising, solidarity is being formed, and real action is being taken to push back against intolerance. In 2025, this struggle must continue with even greater determination—by strengthening alliances, expanding initiatives, and refusing to normalize Islamophobia. Because it is through constant vigilance and unwavering commitment that a truly inclusive and just society for all can emerge.

# Recommendations

Given the ongoing rise of Islamophobia across Europe, it has become imperative to adopt structural measures to combat this phenomenon, which can no longer be addressed through isolated or reactive responses. If any further confirmation was needed, the year 2024 once again demonstrated that Islamophobia is a major political and social issue requiring coordinated action at both national and European levels. The following recommendations aim to initiate a transformation in public policies and institutional practices by tackling systemic discrimination and strengthening mechanisms that protect fundamental rights.

## 1. OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE ISLAMOPHOBIA AS A STRUCTURAL PHENOMENON

More than in previous years, 2024 has made unmistakably clear the deep-rooted and persistent nature of Islamophobia within European institutions and societies. A public and official acknowledgment is essential to move beyond purely reactive or ad hoc approaches. National and European authorities must engage in deep reflection on the institutional and political mechanisms that sustain and reproduce anti-Muslim discrimination. This includes critically revisiting existing public policies, particularly in the areas of security, education, and social affairs.

## 2. DEVELOP AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Islamophobia often intersects with other forms of discrimination, such as sexism, racism, and social marginalization. An intersectional approach must be adopted to better protect Muslim women, racialized individuals, and vulnerable groups from multiple, overlapping forms of oppression.

### 3. ENSURE EQUAL ACCESS TO RIGHTS AND LEGAL REMEDIES

Authorities must implement clear, accessible mechanisms for reporting and addressing acts of discrimination and hate crimes, including by strengthening dedicated institutions (such as equality commissions or ombudsman offices). Free legal and administrative support should be guaranteed for individuals facing discrimination based on religion or origin.

### 4. REFORM DISCRIMINATORY SECURITY POLICIES

It is essential to rethink security measures that have shown clear discriminatory effects against Muslims. Criteria such as religious symbols, attendance at places of worship, or possession of common religious texts must be abolished. Law enforcement personnel should receive training on religious diversity and the psychological and social impact of their actions to prevent abuse and discriminatory practices.

### 5. STRENGTHEN OVERSIGHT OF SURVEILLANCE AND DATA PROFILING SYSTEMS AND GUARANTEE ACCESS, RECTIFICATION AND UPDATING OF DATA

Surveillance and filing systems that disproportionately target Muslims or those perceived as Muslim must be subject to rigorous and independent oversight. Individuals must have effective rights to access, correct, and delete their personal data from administrative and security files. Transparency must be increased through regular monitoring by independent bodies and by making legal remedies more accessible.

### 6. SUPPORT AND PROTECT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS FIGHTING ISLAMOPHOBIA

The fight against Islamophobia requires increased and concrete support for civil society organizations and NGOs that provide legal, social, and psychological assistance to victims. These organizations are key actors in documenting abuses, raising awareness, and advocating for the rights of Muslims in Europe. They

must receive adequate funding, institutional recognition, and protection from political stigmatization to effectively carry out their grassroots work effectively.

## **7. REGULATE MEDIA COVERAGE TO PREVENT BIAS AND STEREOTYPES**

The media play a central role in shaping public perceptions of Islam and Muslims. It is crucial to strengthen media regulatory bodies to ensure fair and non-stigmatizing coverage. Training in bias reduction and editorial responsibility should be part of journalism and media curricula.

## **8. COMBAT THE NORMALIZATION AND IMPUNITY OF FAR-RIGHT RHETORIC**

The rise in far-right discourse and related violence calls for a firm and immediate response. Public authorities must stop normalizing or tacitly tolerating hate speech by strengthening laws and judicial mechanisms to clearly punish incitement to hatred and racist or Islamophobic violence. This fight must mobilize all levels of government—national, regional, and local—and actively involve civil society organizations, NGOs, and community leaders in monitoring and publicly denouncing such abuses.

## **9. INTENSIFY THE FIGHT AGAINST ONLINE HATE**

Online hate—particularly Islamophobia on social media—requires more rigorous legislative and administrative responses. Efforts to identify, report, and sanction online hate speech must be intensified while respecting freedom of expression. Social media platforms must be held accountable for proactively moderating content. Stronger cooperation is needed between governments, tech companies, and civil society to ensure swift and transparent management of hateful content. Specialized training should be provided to moderators and authorities to better recognize hate speech and Islamophobic narratives.



## 10. RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS

Amid the growing normalization of Islamophobic rhetoric, educational initiatives must be expanded to inform the public about the mechanisms and consequences of anti-Muslim racism. Media outlets should be actively involved in this awareness-raising effort, especially in how they cover Islamophobic incidents and represent Muslim communities. Victims' voices should be systematically highlighted to humanize the conversation and break persistent stereotypes.

## 11. PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND TACKLE PREJUDICE FROM AN EARLY AGE

Education plays a vital role in preventing Islamophobia. It is crucial to implement educational programs that raise awareness among young people about religious and cultural discrimination and the value of diversity. Schools should offer courses on human rights, the history of various religions, and the impact of Islamophobia to dismantle stereotypes from a young age. Teachers should receive regular training to help identify and address discriminatory behavior in classrooms. Partnerships with organizations specialized in fighting Islamophobia and discrimination can enhance school programs and provide support.

## 12. PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

Specific protective measures must be implemented for children facing Islamophobia and religious discrimination. These include:

- Combating discrimination in schools: Educational institutions should develop robust anti-discrimination policies, including specific actions to protect Muslim children—or those perceived as Muslim—from harassment, verbal abuse, and exclusion. Clear protocols and reporting systems must be introduced.
- Training for educators and child professionals: Teachers and child-care

professionals should receive training on recognizing and responding to Islamophobia, including cultural and religious diversity awareness and methods for preventing discriminatory behavior.

- Parental and community awareness programs: Awareness initiatives should be created to help parents understand the risks of Islamophobia and how to support their children if they are victims of discrimination. These programs must be accessible to parents from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds.
- Creating support networks for child victims: Listening spaces and support services must be established to offer psychological, legal, and social assistance to children affected by anti-Muslim racism. These services must be easily accessible, confidential, and ensure the safety and well-being of the children involved.



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