

# STRENGTHENING ACTIONS AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

## *Next steps for the European Commission*

By the European coalition against Islamophobia

*December 2017*

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The first official statement of the Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans on Anti-Muslim hatred on 21<sup>st</sup> September marked an important step towards more recognition at EU level. Despite EU and national legislation providing legal remedies for racist crime and discrimination, evidence from the Fundamental Rights Agency, Bertelsmann Stiftung or the Seta Foundation demonstrate that Muslims still suffer from violence, prejudice and exclusion.

On the basis of existing EU and international human rights standards, evidenced-based, proactive and specific policies are needed at national level, to address Islamophobia, including its structural dimensions and impact on economic and social outcomes for Muslims. The European Commission and its coordinator on combating Anti-Muslim hatred have the potential to guide Member States towards these policies and materialise recognition into concrete political actions.

**The following objectives could be reached** through specific actions, in close consultation, cooperation and full transparency with civil society experts:

### **Plan informed strategic actions against Islamophobia**

1. Present a **staff working document** highlighting the main gaps in equality of outcomes for Muslims in the EU and exploring a way forward for Member States to address these gaps on combating Islamophobia. The document could also include main relevant policy areas, existing EU law or policy initiative, international standards and example of promising practice by Member States. This would help gathering in one document all existing work and standards, as well as main issues, and would be a roadmap for the EC officials when interacting with Member States Officials;
2. Based on this roadmap and existing researches, develop a **list of actions on combatting Islamophobia** with concrete objectives and targets;
3. **Organise country visits** based on consultation with civil society to ensure key issues are discussed and key stakeholders are met, in relation to combating anti-Muslim hatred.

### **Engage the political level of the EU institutions to stand against Islamophobia**

4. Arrange **high-level roundtable meetings** between main stakeholders working on Islamophobia and Commissioners Frans Timmermans, Věra Jourová and Marianne Thyssen, to allow for in-depth political discussions on the issue;
5. Ensure that upcoming **EU Presidencies' events and policy initiatives on hate crime, hate speech or racism** include the specific issue of Islamophobia;
6. **Condemn publicly** islamophobic comments from high-level politicians;

### **Mainstream the fight against Islamophobia in key policy areas**

7. Explore **the adoption of guidelines for Member States** on the recent CJEU ruling on wearing religious signs in employment to foster clarity and understanding for member States and employers on the basis of the recent case law.
8. Dedicate one transposition workshops on the Directive on combatting terrorism **focusing on implementation of the Directive, including non-discrimination and the specific impact on Muslim communities**, as well as data collection methodologies to conduct impact assessment of legislation;
9. Explore the **adoption of EU standards for National Action Plans Against Racism** that would take into account specific forms of racism, and include specific targeted measures on Islamophobia with objectives and targets;

10. Adopt **guidance on hate crime data collection methodology** for Member States to ensure that islamophobic bias is fully recorded according to victims' and witness' perceptions and other bias indicators;
11. Revise the European Commission own diversity strategy to **include targeted measures for racial and religious minorities including Muslim staff members**, such as the two-day training on understanding Islamophobia;
12. Adopt **guidance on security of the Muslim communities buildings** for Member States to ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect these properties, on the model of the OSCE practical guide addressing the security needs of Jewish communities;

**Provide evidence on key aspects of Islamophobia**

13. Commission a **FRA report on the fundamental rights impact** of EU and national counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation laws and policies, including their impact on Muslims.

*Signed by European Network Against Racism, Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations, European Forum of Muslim Women, European Muslim Initiative for Social Cohesion, Hope Not Hate, Tell Mama, Collective against Islamophobia in Belgium, Collective against Islamophobia in France, Etudiants Musulmans de France, Mouvement contre le Racisme, l'Antisémitisme et la Xénophobie, Muslim Human Rights Committee, Islamic Human Rights Commission, RADAR/Art.1.*