

Statement of the European Coalition Against Islamophobia

The Decathlon case : The depths of gendered racism in Europe

Following "violent controversy and threats", Decathlon, a multinational French company, announced that it was suspending the commercialization of its runner's hijab in France. In effect, Muslim women who were hoping for solutions for inclusive sporting practices with appropriate sportswear are being stigmatized in a new hysterical debate over their headscarves.

Many editorialists, legal personalities, intellectuals, Internet users and xenophobic and Islamophobic groups, sink their teeth into a climate of hostility, spreading rejection and violence. With the exception of some well thought out counter-narratives meant to bend this trend, deceptive arguments on public freedoms, secularism and feminism are widely disseminated to mislead the public. This leads to public debate seethed with irrationality and misinformed emotions leaving behind all sense of logic.

Despite the turmoil provoked, it is essential to underline that the Decathlon case is only one episode in a long series of gendered racism in Europe. There have been and still are many heated European scandals around the marginalization of European Muslim being targeted because of the intersection of their religion, culture and gender. From the French Burkini controversy to the Belgian ban on the access to education and physical aggression, European Muslim women are hit with gender racism on a daily basis, and rarely find solace in the media. However, beyond cultural and religious differences, it is important to remember that these women undergo multiple and repeated injustices first and foremost for being women, and deserve appropriate defense and advocacy.

Thus, on this International Women's Day, it is the European platform against Islamophobia's duty to highlight the danger of the intersectional discriminations and different forms of racism that European Muslim women, and women more generally, are victims to every day. It is the time to unite, for the equality and respect of all women.

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