

## Taking a closer look at Racism: Preventing and Combatting Anti-Muslim Hate Crimes in the EU

Etterbeek, 13 June 2024

The European Commission, several EU Member States and third countries recently signed statements<sup>1</sup> condemning the alarming rise in antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred in the current challenging geopolitical context.

Anti-Muslim incidents and hate crimes targeting Muslim individuals, or persons perceived to be Muslims, challenge the values of free, democratic and inclusive societies. They have a negative impact on the daily lives of Muslim individuals and communities and their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is based on the EU Treaties and reaffirmed in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Anti-Muslim hatred, which often intersects with race and ethnicity, permeates all spheres of life, including education, social protection, justice and health system. It also being present in mainstream media, social media, and other online platforms. What is more, it intersect with other grounds of discrimination such as e.g. gender and sexual orientation. Negative opinions, stereotypes and bias regarding Muslims become more common, as reports of cases of radicalization and extremism of individuals are applied to whole communities, and as Muslims are being labelled as subject to “foreign religious influence”.

In recent years, a perceived increase in anti-Muslim hate speech and hate crimes, including violent attacks against Muslim individuals and individuals perceived as such, Muslim organizations, mosques, and cemeteries, in several places in the EU and across the broader OSCE region, have created a sense of fear and insecurity among Muslim communities. This in consequence underscores the urgent need for greater efforts to address anti-Muslim racism.

To respond to this sense of fear and insecurity and rise in worrying anti-Muslims hate speech and hate crimes, some Members States, NGO’s and international organizations propose useful tools and could share some good practices.

Respect and tolerance are the founding values of our societies. More than that, the unique diversity we have within the EU, is a core part of our European identity. Only by working together we can protect our fundamental values and preserve our identity.

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<sup>1</sup> [Greater efforts needed to halt alarming rise in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred, OSCE human rights head says | OSCE](#)  
[Joint Statement of the Coordinators, Special Representatives, Envoy and Ambassadors on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred and Discrimination | EEAS \(europa.eu\)](#)

That is why the Commission has put forward **a proposal to steps up efforts to combat hatred in all its forms in the European Union**. This includes

- more funding to protect people and places of worship;
- a new Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online;
- engaging the society as a whole to ensure the various initiatives at EU level can reach their full potential.

This event underlines the renewed commitment of Member States to combat hatred and discrimination and to promote a more inclusive and equitable society.

To take it one step further, the objective of the meeting is also to share some good practices in data collection between Member States with a view to propose joint actions points.

**Expert-level event with EU Member States on addressing and preventing discrimination, hatred and racism against Muslim communities in the European Union:**

**Purpose:**

- 1) **How to objectify the “alarming level” of anti-Muslim hate speech and hate crime and the sense of fear and insecurity among Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim?**
- 2) **How to help Muslims, or those perceived to be Muslims, feel and be safer? The idea is to exchange useful tools and good practices among Member States' experts.**

## Introduction

### 14:30-14:50

Welcome by Marion Lalisse, European Commission's coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred, moderator of the event

Opening speech by Marie-Colline Leroy, State Secretary for Gender equality, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Belgium. Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Opening speech by Alexandre Guessel, Special representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on antisemitic, anti-Muslim and other forms of intolerance and hate crime

### **Part.1. Setting the Scene: A rise in anti-Muslim hate speech and hate crime has increased fear and insecurity among Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim**

### 14:50-15:00

**Understanding hate crimes and its contemporary manifestations: Sabrina Saudi, Adviser on Combating Intolerance against Muslims, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR**

### 15:00-15:30

First Panel Discussion with:

- ENAR (TBC)
- Ahmed Gaafar, Jugendstifting
- Mohamed Derraz, Office of the Dutch National Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred
- Mustapha Chairi, CIIB (collectif pour l'inclusion et contre l'islamophobie en Belgique)

Q&A session

### 15:30 -15:45 Comfort break

**15:45-16:20 Part.2. How to help Muslims, or those perceived to be Muslims, feel and be safer?**

**16:20-17:00 How do Equality bodies help Victims of Hate against Muslims? Patrick Charlier, Chair of Equinet**

**15:25-16:00**

The objective is to present tools and good practices

Second Panel discussion with

- Sabrina Saoudi, Sabrina Saoudi, Adviser on Combating Intolerance against Muslims, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR.
- Cihan Sinanoglu (Dr.), Director of the office of the DeZIM Racism Monitoring.
- Mohammed Derraz, Office of the Dutch National Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred.
- Inés Mazarrasa Steinkuhler, Director of foundation pluralism and living together (pluralismo y Convivencia) Spain.

Q&A session

**17:00 – 17:15 Part.3. Wrap-up. Action points based on the discussion – Marion Lalisse, European Commission's coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred**

**17:30 Closing, Seppe Brantegem, Director. Fundamental rights, Belgian Ministry of Justice**