



Combating Islamophobia through Intercultural and Interreligious Work

Report of the study session held by the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) in co-operation with the European Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 8 – 13 May 2011



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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Executive Summary

This is the final report of the study session “Combating Islamophobia through Intercultural and Interreligious work” held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg, France (EYCS). This study session was organised by the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) in co-operation with the Council of Europe’s youth sector.

Directed by the urgency of the situation in front of the rise of xenophobia and racism in Europe, FEMYSO has launched a long-term campaign to fight Islamophobia in Europe. The first phase of the campaign consisted in running a research process in order to understand the mechanism of Islamophobia and its effects on European Muslim Youth.

Hence, the first initiative was this study session that was to cover theoretical and practical methods of learning how to tackle Islamophobia by designing potential projects of action to follow-up. One of the main aims was to gather active young people within FEMYSO’s Member Organisations who were either already involved in human rights activities or had potential to invest this scope. In the selection process, there was consideration for gender and regional balance. The speakers based upon their experience and knowledge in the area also contributed in enlightening the group on different perspectives.

The session was a success in many ways. The EYCS provided excellent support and facilities that helped to run the session efficiently. The group of participants despite their regional differences united upon their faith and values to work as a united family. The lectures were informative and the workshops proved to be the essence of the session by creating debate, awareness and enthusiasm to reach goals through co-operation.



Main outcomes and follow-up

The most important outcomes of the session are:

- Building of a strong network of young Muslims involved in tackling Islamophobia.
- Familiarisation with concepts of human rights, non-formal education, intercultural and interreligious dialogue.
- Projects designed by the participants.

One of the main results of the study session was to have a forum of discussion and analysis of Islamophobia and the way to counteract it by implementing intercultural and interreligious initiatives. The result is, in this case, also to strengthen FEMYSO strategy in this respect and to reflect, within the FEMYSO network, on the next steps in working on the topic of combating Islamophobia.

Another key result of this study session is bring together participants from different contexts and youth Muslim organisations and train them on ways of combating Islamophobia with capacity-building and greater youth participation.

This study session has also equipped local Muslim youth with the tools to counter Islamophobia, in the most proactive and constructive manner, through greater intercultural and inter-religious engagement through civic projects. Several projects were proposed as a result of the study session, both for the local and the international level and FEMYSO will continue to develop its strategy with the input from the study session.

Among other results mentioned by participants in the study session, there are the increase in the awareness about different realities of Islamophobia in Europe, being more competent in using intercultural and interreligious dialogue methodologies in youth projects, the sharing of experiences and good practices between participants and the links to other bodies that work on the same topics (for example, ENAR and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe).

The cooperation with the Council of Europe was also a topic discussed during the study session and the involvement of FEMYSO in the policy making level was one of the conclusions of the study session. The cooperation with the European Youth Foundation was also developed and participants expressed their commitment to making it more valuable and functional to the implementation of their projects.

One learning point of the study session is that young multipliers need to address the topic of Islamophobia by using an interreligious approach.

On the level of strategy, FEMYSO has widely benefited from the study session, as participants have provided valuable input on the topics to address in FEMYSO in order to fight Islamophobia. Some of the examples are: a mass-media strategy, a stronger involvement

in civil and political life of communities, using arts as a means of expression in fighting Islamophobia, acting and proposing projects on the topic of social justice for all.

The study session has supported participants to develop their understanding and competences related to adopting an interreligious and intercultural approach in their projects and practices in their youth organisations. As a follow-up of the study session, 7 projects have been developed and participants made partnerships in order to start implementing them.

Another conclusion of the study session was the need for more encompassing research on Islamophobia all over Europe and from different perspective. This need is particularly obvious in the Eastern European countries, while it is also needed in the Western countries. More tools and training opportunities are to be sought in order to prepare young people to take action against Islamophobia.

In terms of follow-up, the following occurred after the study session:

- We created an active group on Facebook for sharing articles, buzz, news, videos and pictures. The group is animated by 10 actives participants. And followed by the rest of the group.
- We created a Google group for sharing emails and following projects.
- The project of Islamophobia research of FEMYSO has been rejoined by several participants who did research and development before.
- One of the French participants started to work on the Media project he presented during the project session in collaboration with the president of FEMYSO, a team member and a UK company.
- A meeting between the participants in order to discuss the follow-up is planned during the European Muslim Youth Conference organized by FEMYSO in Brussels.

Among the main follow-up activities by the participants, there are:

- The three projects selected: Islamophobia research-action project, Media projects, Cultural Festival will need serious follow-up, especially if we want it to be ready before 1st of October 2011 for EYF applications.
- The management of the network newly launched will also require follow-up, the course director has be designed for this task.
- The conclusion of the study session will be presented during the European Muslim Youth Conference organized by FEMYSO which will take place in July 2011 in Brussels, Belgium.
- A sub-committee in FEMYSO's Campaign department will be composed by identified participants of this study session.

Recommendations to the Council of Europe

This study session aimed to identify priorities and recommendations related to Islamophobia. We, as a youth NGO, are aware about the fact that combating racism, xenophobia and most specifically Islamophobia is a long path. It needs a real effort and the results could not be visible immediately or in short term view.

Nonetheless, the situation is urgent and many actors of the human rights field have sounded the alarm. If Islamophobia is not considered seriously by public institutions, it will have disastrous impact on the Muslim community in Europe and especially Muslim youth.

The rise of extreme-right and xenophobia political parties all over Europe should be considered with attention by the Council of Europe as a main human rights protection body in the continent.

FEMYSO recommends:

- Creation of forums for discussion and co-operation.
- Awareness-raising for the protection of freedom of religion and belief
- Education to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and develops educational materials and tools to counter Islamophobia (develop guidelines for teachers and educators)
- Gathering of specific data on Islamophobia and anti-Islam acts/hate crimes by public institutions
- Taking legal actions against perpetrators and have wide media coverage when it happens
- Encourage NGOs to conduct field work to convince victims to report islamophobic acts.



(Workshop)

Introduction to the European Youth Centre Strasbourg (EYCS)

The European Youth Centre Strasbourg is a residential educational establishment of the Council of Europe. At present, 47 European states are members of the Council of Europe, an international institution founded in 1949. The Council of Europe's primary goal is to promote the unity of the continent and guarantee the dignity of its citizens by ensuring respect for their fundamental values: human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe works on solutions to major problems facing European society, like racism, intolerance, discrimination against minorities, inequality, social exclusion, drug abuse, corruption and organised crime. Within the Council of Europe, the EYCS is part of the youth sector and is, like the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) and the European Youth Foundation (EYF), an important instrument of the Council's youth policy.

The main objectives of the EYCS's youth programme are:

- Promoting participation of young people and non-governmental youth organisations in the building of a unified Europe;
- Supporting the voluntary sector in order to strengthen civil society and active citizenship;
- Promoting independence and self-confidence in young people;
- Developing intercultural learning as a way of promoting understanding, tolerance and peace;
- Facilitating encounters between young people with diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

To achieve these objectives, the European Youth Centre Strasbourg organises a range of educational programmes, including seminars, training courses and symposia, in close co-operation with non-governmental youth organisations, youth services and networks. In addition to this, the Centre co-operates with other sectors of the Council of Europe and other international organisations to further the objectives described above.

The educational philosophy of the European Youth Centre is based on the ideas of international exchange, shared learning and intercultural education. Being an educational centre, the EYCS provides expert support in an ideal setting for non-formal learning, innovation and experimentation by the participants in its activities, who act as 'multipliers' in local, regional, national and European youth work.

Introduction to Forum of European Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)

The Forum of European Muslim Youth Student Organisations was established in 1996 with the mission to become a platform for youth organisations to congregate, exchange information, gain experience, benefit from each other and work alongside other Muslim and non-Muslim NGOs to create a better Europe in all spheres of life.

FEMYSO gathers over 33 member organisations which form the highest authority (General Assembly). The Executive Committee is headed by the President, who is responsible for carrying out work plans, and the General Assembly which meets annually plus elections on a 2 year basis for a new executive.

The aims and objectives of FEMYSO are:

- To effectively represent its member organisations in all spheres of European life from political to social, private to public.
- To encourage the development of a European Muslim Identity, via the involvement of Muslim youth in discussions, educational and awareness programmes, highlighting their social responsibilities and contribution to Europe.
- To be an international network that can facilitate in providing services and global links to youth organisations and to cater for youth exchange trips transfer of experiences and cross-cultural exchange of information.
- To identify avenues of co-operation among its member organisations and, on a greater scale, its wider contacts within Europe. This includes projects of interest to other religious and non-religious youth bodies, to enable dialogue at the inter-faith and inter-cultural levels.
- To establish management and leadership programmes to enhance the skills and potentials of youth.
- To continuously review the problems and challenges that youth are encountering in Europe and provide alternative solutions to the symptoms and causes, the principle goal being action rather than words.

FEMYSO envisages a Europe in which Muslims take pride in their historical contribution to the development of European civilisation and the 800-year presence in Spain, to look to the future and contribute to European Society as European Muslims.

Today, young Muslims in Europe face a very difficult climate, where they are often being transformed into a demonized and feared "other," and even subjected to legal, social, and political discrimination. What is particularly worrying for young European Muslims is that a new virulent form of anti-immigrant hatred seems to have spread at the highest levels of political discourse across Europe. Newspaper articles, TV shows, books, popular movies, political debates, and cultural conflicts over immigration and security are producing an atmosphere of stigmatization of Muslims within dominant culture.

Through FEMYSO's work, we have witnessed this having a considerable impact on the lives and wellbeing of European Muslim youth and their organisations and youth work. Yet there has been little or no research into trying to understand how these debates are impacting on European Muslim youth and shaping their identity and experiences, and on how they engage with wider society.

Following the tragic events of September 11th, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia has documented reports on Islamophobia including the 'Summary Report on Islamophobia in the European Union'. Unfortunately, whilst such accounts provide an essential process in the elimination of discrimination against Muslims, they generally perceive the Muslim community to be based upon asylum-seekers, political refugees and immigrants. They fail to recognize that the Muslim youth who are European born and brought up in this society face daily islamophobic discriminations in their home countries in Europe.



(Sanaa Laabich writing down grounds rules)

Aims and objectives of the study session

The aims and objectives of the study session were:

- To develop a common understanding about Islamophobia regarding contexts, origins, causes and consequences.
- To encourage participants to advocate on the issue of Islamophobia through civic and political action.
- To situate Islamophobia in a wide anti-racist and human rights perspective.
- To share best practices and to give space to projects development by participants.
- To equip participants with tools to combat Islamophobia.
- To counteract/combat Islamophobia through interreligious and intercultural and civic engagement.
- To explore opportunities for follow-up in a long-term view.

These points were developed through a long reflection with the preparatory team and the educational advisor in concordance with the priorities of FEMYSO and the Council of Europe.

The preparatory team held three meetings leading up to the study session. The first initiation was at the FEMYSO office from 17th to 19th of December 2010 to set up the team, define the aim and objectives and design a first draft of the programme. In January 2011, the prep team met again, in EYC Strasbourg this time, with the educational advisor, Mara Georgescu to discuss the themes and aims, the application form, the venue, participants profile and the educational methods which would be used. The meeting discussed all the relevant aspects of the session that included the aims and objectives, draft of the programme, participants' application form, speakers and the facilities that would be required. Thereafter, several online meetings were held regularly with the team to discuss application forms and select those who exemplified the most commitment and experience in the field of intercultural dialogue and human rights. There was also an attempt to balance representation from Western and Eastern Europe but also to have a strong gender balance. (Annexe I¹)

¹ The minutes of the meeting shows the evolution from preparatory meetings till the study session.

Profile of participants

The selection of participants is particularly interesting in the case of this study session because the facilities and financial help offered by the Council of Europe enable a large category of young people to participate to the activity. Then, it permits to constitute a strong and skilled team regardless to their financial situation. This situation is favourable to young people living in the Eastern part of Europe, who usually could not pay integrally for their trip and avoid penalising the youth organisation who cannot support their participation because of financial reasons.

Hence, we have set strong eligibility criteria when defining the participants' profile to this seminar. For us, as a youth organisation deeply involved in tackling Islamophobia through a long-term campaign, it was necessary to identify young people who would be able to get involved in the future in order to be part of the voluntary team, to bring new idea and to be multipliers in their local community.

Participants group criteria of selection were:

- Members from our Member organisations: preference and permission from MO or signature from the President
- Country balances which mean around 5 participants / country
- Gender balance
- Experienced people
- Social balance which means that we will involve people with few opportunities
- Long-term committed people after the seminar in order to get long term benefit from the study session

56 young people applied for the session.

The preparatory team included the course director Saida Ounissi (Vice-President FEMYSO, France), Intissar Kherigi (Vice-President FEMYSO, UK), Bilal Hassam (FEMYSO member, UK), Youssef Boughattas (FEMYSO Executive member, France), Julie Pascoet (FEMYSO member, Belgium) and Mara Georgescu (educational advisor, Council of Europe).

The participants were active youth from within the member organisations of FEMYSO. These organisations ranged from all over Europe and included FOSIS (UK), IHCR (UK), EMF (France), JMF (France), La Ligue (Belgium), GMI (Italy), JMD (Germany), Ardhmeria (Albania), JMS (Switzerland), SUM (Sweden), ALRAID (Ukraine), AKOS (Bosnia-Herzegovina) and as invited organization from Algeria, the Union EuroMed Jeunesse.

A thorough selection process has permit to reach a geographical balance among the participants. The richness of the seminar in term of cultural diversity was one of the causes of the achievement of this project. Gender balance was also respected as we had 18 ladies and 17 gentlemen. In terms of age, the average was 25 years old, we gathered participants from 19 to 31 years old. The majority among the group of participants was aged between 22 and 27 years old.

Educational methods and programme flow

The methodology of the session focused on workshops to develop participants understanding of intercultural and interreligious dialogue as well as human rights. This practical approach aimed to encourage them to take initiative and to be pro-active.

The study session was to be based upon several informative lectures that initiated discussions, debates and action plans. A bibliography had been sent to the participants before the session². We aimed to enhance the learning process by integrating workshop exercises from the COMPASS - A Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People developed by the Council of Europe.

We also used widely the different resources available on the Salto Youth website³. In the same time, we had the great opportunity to send one of our team members, Julie Pascoet, to the Facilitators Training (TC4) held by the Council of Europe in February 2011. As team member, she produced a useful report that showed the main principles of facilitation in the framework of youth work. It presents non-formal education mechanisms and helped us as a group of young leaders to learn more about how to run a workshop and to facilitate a session during a seminar. The report produced by Julie has been used as a precious tool during the preparation of the session⁴.

The participants were rotated in different groups for every workshop to ensure that they all became familiar with the different experiences between each other and their countries. During each workshop, a facilitator (which was a member of the prep team) was allocated to motivate the discussion, a participant to take minutes, another to present using flipcharts when necessary.

Taking into consideration our attempt to balance cultural representation, we had to decide upon working languages. The main working languages agreed upon from the participants' application forms were English and French. Thanks to the commitment of the Council of Europe, we were able to beneficiate from the services of the translation team during the whole week of the study session.

Conceptually, the methodology was based on three axes:

- INSPIRE : Motivate / Think about

In order to understand Islamophobia in all its complexity and manifestations, it is important to include it in a wider context. That is why there was a need to be engaged in a wide area of combating all forms of discrimination and xenophobia. When thinking about backgrounds, education and knowledge, Islamophobia appears within multiple factors phenomena. It is linked with the concept of multiple discrimination. Participants were engaged in activities during the session that allowed them to understand the complexity of this phenomenon.

- EMPOWER: Participants will do something

² Annexe II

³ www.salto-youth.net

⁴ The report will be available on FEMYSO website (www.femyso.org)

In the wake of the theoretical inputs, there was also time for action. To empower youth leaders is to make them find opportunities around themselves for combating Islamophobia. During the last days of the seminar, the program gave time to develop practical solutions for combating Islamophobia (taken from experiences of participants) realisable in projects.

➤ EQUIP : Skills / Practices/Tools

The educational method privileged was non-formal education and the main idea was for participants to develop their skills to put things in practice.

Other important elements in terms of methodology were:

- Importance of Safe Space

In term of methodology, we privileged the building of a safe space, by defining the ground rules and common rules to be followed till the end of the Study session. It include values, respect each others, respect of dialogue.

- Importance of Sources

What already exists in this field? What about the data produced and how you can improve them or use them in a right way? These two fundamental questions were raised during the seminar in order to make people aware about the tools which could be used and capitalise in the framework of their research. The dissemination of existing documents was ensured thanks to the Council of Europe who provided printed reports but also thanks to ODHIR who sent to FEMYSO some useful reports prior to the study session to be distributed to the participants. A package of document has been used and reading lists were sent to the participants before to prepare them and after the seminar go further.

- Importance of sharing experiences

What are the real experiences of Islamophobia? How could we share our story and make this process worthy for our actions, within our organisations? What are the potential within intercultural exchanges and case studies?

- Importance of time and space

We had to pay attention to the need to speak of each participant. Giving space and time for reflection was a priority when we chose to use non-formal education. The preparatory team was there to help and facilitate the process.

An issue like Islamophobia covers different themes. It could be studied from different points of view. It was not realistic to pretend to deal with all the aspects, that is why we had to focus on limited items in order to increase the quality of the programme flow.

The main themes of the program were declined as follow:

- Entering the debate: setting the scene, exploring terminology and definitions
- Exploring the facts: breaking down the statistics

- Origins and causes: taking a deeper look, making the diagnosis
- The spiritual diagnosis: Islamophobia through Islamic lenses
- Understanding the ‘Other’: can we empathise with what is involved in Islamophobia? This is where we explored the thornier issues
- Contextualizing Islamophobia: placing the problem in the wider context of racism and human rights violations and reaffirm that a problem for one is a problem for all
- The impact: understanding the wider ramifications of Islamophobia, economic, intellectual, social etc
- Conflict transformation: cross-cultural management elements and how to use it in practical actions
- The power of diversity: moving from tolerance to respect
- The potential for intercultural and interreligious encounters: expanding our horizons
- The intercultural prophet: exploring Islamic precedents for intercultural and interreligious encounters, with examples from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) tradition
- Community organising: a workshop about how to be the change we want to see in our communities
- Bridging the gap – tools for tackling Islamophobia - how to engage proactively, using different tools
- From protest to engagement: developing skills, attitudes and values to make changes in our communities
- Looking at best practices across Europe in combating Islamophobia
- Developing in small groups anti-Islamophobia campaigns and presentations of projects
- Closing presentation to empower and inspire us to be the change we want to see in the world
- The role of FEMYSO in coordinating and supporting participants after the study session

Daily Programme

Time	Monday 09th of May	Tuesday 10th of May	Wednesday 11th of May	Thursday 12th of May	Friday 13th of May
09:30-11:00	<i>Session 1:</i> Presentation of the EYCS <i>Tina Mulcahy</i> Introduction of the programme	<i>Session 6 :</i> Entering the debate on Islamophobia, with <i>Liz Fekete</i>	<i>Session 10 :</i> Introduction to intercultural and interreligious dialogue, with <i>Rui Gomes</i>	<i>Session 11 :</i> FEMYSO strategy in combating Islamophobia Workshops	<i>Session 14 :</i> Project development space
11:30-13:00	<i>Session 1 :</i> Getting to know each other Ground rules, expectations and fears	<i>Session 7 :</i> Exploring facts and contextualising: FEMYSO's research on obstacles to tackling Islamophobia	<i>Session 10 :</i> Sharing practices and case-studies (parallel workshops)	<i>Session 11 :</i> Workshops	
14:30-16:00	<i>Session 2 :</i> Group building	<i>Session 8 :</i> Human Rights simulation	Visit to the Council of Europe Free afternoon	<i>Session 12 :</i> Empowerment and interfaith dialogue, with <i>Tariq Ramadan</i>	<i>Session 15 :</i> Presentation of projects
16:30-18:00	<i>Session 3 :</i> Islamophobia in our countries and organisations' experience regarding Islamophobia	<i>Session 8 :</i> Human Rights simulation Introduction to civic engagement		<i>Session 12 :</i> Active citizenship: Islamophobia from a human rights perspective, with <i>Tariq Ramadan</i>	<i>Session 15:</i> Evaluation of the study session
18:00-18:30	Review of the day	Review of the day		Review of the day	
20:30-22:30	<i>Session 5 :</i> Youtube evening	<i>Session 9 :</i> Intercultural evening	Dinner Out	<i>Session 13:</i> Space for building projects teams	Farewell Party



(Expectations and Fears Session)



(Workshops Session)

The themes described in the previous part were divided into 15 sessions including conferences, workshops, interactive sessions and work groups.

The programme began with an intense day of familiarisation with the Council of Europe, the aims and objectives of the study session, but also some team building and getting to know each other exercises. The cohesion among the participants has been reinforced thanks to sharing experience sessions which helped to create a strong 'group spirit'.

The main issues discussed were at the same time dealing with interreligious, intercultural and conflict transformation aspects related to Islamophobia.

a) INTERRELIGIOUS PROBLEMATIC:

- Islamic Ethics in social actions, spirit of activism and volunteering.
- Islamic approach, Prophetic approach facing Islamophobia.
- Islamic inspiration for intercultural work (case studies)

b) INTERCULTURAL PROBLEMATIC:

- The role of intercultural work and how to reach a state of true coexistence in our societies.
- The shared principles and values
- The power of diversity as reason for intercultural work
- Moving from tolerance to respect

c) CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATIONS:

- How to manage conflicts?
- Negotiations skills
- Peace building
- Case studies and best practices from successful experiences
- Community building and its rules
- Engaging mass-media and building partnerships

d) ADDRESS ISLAMOPHOBIA IN THREE WAYS:

WHAT in Islamophobia?

- Defining and its difficulties
- Understanding
- Causes

HOW Islamophobia?

- Data about Islamophobia [the 3 Cs : counting, credibility, conveying]
- Question of freedom of expression (when it is freedom, when it is racism)

WHY Islamophobia?

- There are several impacts linked to Islamophobia: economic, social, psychological, identity related issues
- Contextualise: racism, human rights and communal narrative and common values



(Plenary Session – Getting to Know Each Other)



(Ahmed Ehtisham Uddin, presenting the result from his group work)

Day 1

Session 1 - **Introduction and getting to know each other** (Monday 9 May, 9.30 – 13.00)

Participants arrived the day before and during the evening they began to get to know each other and to meet other participants.

We opened the morning session with Tina Mulcahy who gave a presentation of the Council of Europe and the European Youth Centre of Strasbourg.

The course director presented the program of the week and described briefly each session with a short presentation of the lecturers (a biography has been sent with the pack-doc before the meeting). The specific methodology of the seminar and the non-formal education concept were introduced at this moment.

The main aim of the session was to get to know each other and to break the ice. It was also about to make sure that the aims and objectives of the study session were clearly announced and that they were shared by the whole group.

Participants, at the end of this interactive session, were mainly aware of the aims and objectives of the seminar. Nonetheless, despite this first presentation, it was important to remind at the beginning of each day the organisation of the sessions and to make sure that there is a programme available on the wall of the plenary room, with the help of a sign, we could see how we progressed from the beginning and how long is the path until the arrival at the final destination. To have a first idea about the programme enabled the participants to prepare themselves to the journey. The rules of the EYCS were introduced; hence, each one knew to what he/she had to stick to, what are his/her rights and duties within the European Youth Centre. The main outcome in terms of knowledge was the possibility to know more about the Council of Europe, its role and mission but also its functioning and the people who are running it. Finally, participants felt as one team and were ready to spend one entire week living as a community or let's say a family.

Session 2 - **Photo Scavenger Hunt!** (Monday 9 May, 14:30-16:00)

Straight after the introduction of the programme, aims and objectives, the participants had lunch together and slowly be getting to know each other. In terms of team building, the process had begun from the day before. But prior to enter to the discussion in itself, there was a need to reinforce the link between the members of the participants' team.

There were two main aims in this session. In one hand, to build the group spirit and break down barriers and in another hand, it is about taking risks and be innovative in the framework of the main problematic of the study session. The objective reached was to encourage participants to mix outside their geographical and cultural groups.

The rules of the exercise were presented in this way:

The photos must be ready on a USB to show on screen in the time given. Points are given for creativity and fun factor in the framework of the competition between groups. Each picture has to be named and at least one team member wearing his/her badge had to be in each pictures. No photo-shopping or editing was authorised.

Rules for pictures to be taken:

- The best photo with a tree (3 members min.)
- The most interesting picture with a kitchen item (3 members min.)
- The most interesting pictures with a suitcase (3 members min.)
- The most European picture you can take.
- The best picture of someone else taking a picture.
- The best picture involving water.
- The best picture with an animal.
- The best picture with a car.
- The most interesting picture with modern methodology.
- The most islamophobic picture you can take

The bonding between participants evolved very quickly and was very strong. The time allocated to the exercise was quite short. Hence, the team of participants, still at the beginning of the week, was not confident with the place and the people. They had to find a solution which would permit to achieve the work and to deal with 'new' people. The difficulty of this exercise was to conciliate creativity, reflection and rapidity.

Session 3 - **Islamophobia in your country** (Monday 9 May, 16.30 – 18.00)

Participants had only started working together; so far they mainly focused on getting to know each other and group building. This session was the first intense content-related input. Participants were not yet familiar with the main topic of the study session. Therefore a basic introduction and building a common understanding of Islamophobia context in each participant's country was necessary. This session enabled participants to reflect about their own experiences and their reality. It was also about sharing information and putting together similarities and differences with others places and countries.

The aims of this session were double: first, to introduce the concept of Islamophobia in different cultural contexts and then to find out about differences and similarities between countries. There were manifold objectives to reach during this session:

- To allow participants to share and learn about each others' countries context
- To enable participants to link Islamophobia to their daily life
- To exchange different experiences of Islamophobia in participants' lives
- To discuss and raise awareness of the importance of intercultural action
- To discuss ideas and exchange best practices on civil actions to raise awareness on Islamophobia issues

Participants were split into multinational groups, they had to discuss and prepare a poster/presentation and present the outcomes to the rest of the participants. They used flipchart to draw their living realities and to expose them to plenary.

Participants understood that Islamophobia is a relevant issue for everyone and everywhere and has to be understood in a cultural context. Participants realised the different Islamophobia situations in different countries. Participants related Islamophobia to their daily life and had to deal with instruments to safeguard Muslim rights and civil action to raise awareness on Islamophobia issues. Participants could ask all open questions related to Islamophobia and Muslims' rights and exchange with each other. They realised how different the context is between Western and Eastern Europe and how the Muslim community is dealing with this issue from one part to another.

Session 4 - **Review of the Day** (Every day from 18.00 to 18.30)

The aim was to collect feelings of participants and take in consideration their remarks. This help the preparatory team to identify potential issues at the sources, but also to involved participants in the process of the study session. The outcomes of this session were:

- Participants felt included in the seminar and felt their opinions were taken into account
- Participants shared their emotions and thoughts after each day
- Participants felt as a team and were ready to spend one entire week living as a community.

Session 5 - **International YouTube Evening!** (Monday 9 May, 20.30 – 22.00)

Being the first day of the study session, participants arrived to the last stage of the getting to know each other process. This evening was a relaxed and informal night that allowed participants to share a comedic side of their culture and country.

Objectives:

- To create a relaxed environment that facilitates friendship building and sharing amongst participants.
- To provide an informal and enjoyable environment to balance the content of the other days.
- To allow participants to share and learn about each other's countries and cultures.

Participants have been told prior to the study session to send in YouTube links that showcase a funny side of their country/culture. These videos are between three to five minutes in length. On the YouTube night, country by country, participants presented their videos themselves and then gave a short explanation/de-brief around what the video illustrates about their country/culture.

The outcomes of this session were that:

- Each participant felt included and had an enjoyable evening
- Participants learnt about each other's countries/cultures through a comedic lens

Day 2

Session 6 - **Entering the debate** (Tuesday 10 May, 9:30 – 11:00)

Participants spent the previous day getting to know each other through different exercises and team building activities. They also had talked about their perception of Islamophobia in their own countries and their actions to counter it through their own national organisations. This session set the scene by giving the participants a broad knowledge of the concept of Islamophobia, its origins and causes through an analysis of the historical background and the discrimination mechanisms of the phenomenon.

The objectives were:

- To have a good understanding of the concept
- To explore terminology and definitions
- To make a full diagnosis of the problem
- To explore the origins and causes, either historical or psychological
- To explore the different mechanisms of discrimination

Liz Fekete, deputy director of the IRR gave a lecture regarding these objectives. The first question Liz Fekete asked was how we can enter a debate especially when the framework for that debate has been set already? Who is allowed to enter the debate and how? Are all ways of entering the debate equally effective? Or could some of these methods be counter-productive?

First of all, Liz Fekete addressed the issues of definitions. Her point was that Islamophobia is what Islamophobia does. Therefore, legal definitions are necessary, but to all other extents and purposes, Islamophobia is what Islamophobia does. The Runnymede Trust report is one of the first paper who proposed a clear definition of Islamophobia. A historical location of it via Edward Said's "Orientalism" book is the first step to take in term of theoretical positioning. But we also need to look at the connections between Orientalism and colonialism and imperialism – and between Islamophobia and racism today. Otherwise the whole breadth of Islamophobia will be lost or confined to an academic discussion – Christianphobia, Judaeophobic. In another hand, the historical context of Occidentalism is central to understand how Islamophobia has growth and developed (see Occidentalism: the West in the Eyes of Its Enemies by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit).

According to Liz Fekete, what is important in Said's work is the demonstration of the fact that we had overlooked an aspect of imperialism. We understood that racism had grown out of colonialism and imperialism and had been linked to rationalisation for conquests and subjugation. We saw how anti-black racism grew out of slavery and how the dehumanisation of black people, Jews, Roma, Gypsies was justified through scientific racism and the rise of eugenics etc.

Said showed us another aspect in Orientalism when he showed how orientalist experts in the nineteenth century began to essentialise the East and established the binary of Western superiority and Oriental inferiority. Hence, what Said argues in this context is supported by many voices, for example, Walter Rodney, Amilcar Cabral, A. Sivanandan, Martin Luther King, Steve Biko, Angela Davis, Hannah Arendt, Franz Fanon, Jean Paul Sartre. These academics have helped us to understand the problematic relationship between racism and colonialism.

We consider that Islamophobia is a hostile mindset towards the Muslim world. When that mindset dominates, it has effects on how we treat people, for example, deny equal access to jobs or their rights to public space. But also discrimination on religious grounds.

When Islamophobia becomes structured into society it becomes institutionalised racism – structured anti-Muslim institutionalised racism. Institutionalised Islamophobia, said Liz Fekete, does not work. A prejudice once it is institutionalised becomes something else, it becomes institutionalised racism.

We always need to keep the relationship between race and religion in view. Especially because religion has become racialised – we don't talk of Judaophobia we talk of anti-Semitism. Jews was not only a religious category but a racialised category.

Diverse Muslim communities are held to have mass characteristics and are essentialised and demonised– they are treated as a racialised category, held to have common cultural/racial characteristics, even though race is not religion. They are turned into outsiders promoting whole host of enemy images around a false cultural binary of us against them.

This goes along with major change in racism in the post-war period where it is no longer acceptable to say that someone is inferior due to their race or skin colour, but acceptable to talk of cultures being inferior. We have moved to culture and religion – with racists promoting culture wars or civilisational racism.

The IRR's body of work on Islamophobia

E.Said warned that Orientalism had a 'durability' – it could transmit, or reproduce itself from one era to the other. The greater circulation of Orientalist ideas is directly linked to the War on Terror. And that is what IRR began to observe, study and educate against since 2001 – trying to assist groups on the ground and fighting against bans on mosques, minarets, hijabs and the general promotion of 'enemy stereotypes' of Muslims.

And that struggle has been both on the ideological level but also on the practical level. That is why we have to keep both in our sights.

Said showed how Orientalist experts of the nineteenth century once essentialised the peoples of the East seen as living under despotic regimes and in need of superior western Enlightenment values. That's how began the setting up of the rhetoric of Western superiority and Oriental inferiority.

Today Islamophobia reduces Europe's diverse Muslim communities into a monolithic mass. It leads to generalisations about Muslim culture and the Islamic mindset. The main issue is that, today, the Orient is treated not as a separate geographical region but as a problem located within the boundaries of Europe itself.

War on Terror – led to the growth of acceptance of Huntington's clash of civilisations theory- the civilisational racism – intervention justified in terms of a need to take the ideals of freedom and democracy, by force if necessary, to those living in darkness. All sorts of theories were developing, and people associated with American neoconservatism were defending the idea of Eurabia. Indeed, they were trying to discuss issues related to freedom of speech and the cartoons crisis, or around media campaigns against the veil.

This is what has been explored in IRR journal Race & Class. 'Now what we find is the ideological – intelligentsia aspect – and the strategic/practical aspect combine' said Liz Fekete. The Stop the Islamisation of Europe movement, the attacks on multiculturalism, the international freedom alliance promoted by Wilder and the English Defence League and other leagues across Europe are worrying signs that need to be taken in attention.

Many obstacles need to be identified and tackled in relation to the following points:

- The definition matter reveals the difficulty to identify Islamophobia but also to avoid the accusations of instrumentalisation when a violent act against Muslims occurs.
- The measure of Islamophobia's impact is a challenging point because of the absence of reliable statistics.
- The need to get over stereotypes and to encourage the emergence of new voices.
- The media gatekeepers and the fact that alternative voices are avoided in mainstream channels is one of the biggest obstacles. At the same time, this could be the occasion to develop new ways to communicate and to use new tools.
- In terms of politics, there is a need to keep an eye on extreme-right provocations and the rise of their electoral results all over Europe at the local, national and European level.
- The marginalization of Muslim Youth and disadvantaged young immigrants both from economic and cultural side make them an easy target.

Session 7 - **Exploring the facts and contextualizing** (Tuesday 10 May, 11.30 – 13.00)

This session gave participants a statistical knowledge of the concept of Islamophobia and to place the problem in the wider context of racism and human rights violation as well as understanding its context within economic and migration issues.

The objectives were:

- To give participants the tools to be able to read the statistics available and to see what is the reality behind it
- To explore the different quantitative and qualitative data available, their relevance and their weaknesses
- To give participants the tools to be able to mainstream the problem in order to make it a question of human rights and equal treatment
- To show participants that Islamophobia is not a phenomenon different from all discrimination issues: a problem for one is a problem for all
- To analyse the impact: either economic, social, psychological, on identity

This session was split into three parts. First, the FEMYSO team made a short presentation of 20 min. In the second part, the lecturer delivered a short lecture as a reaction to the presentation of data collection presented by FEMYSO. During the third part of the session,

participants were split into different groups and made the statement exercise while the lecturer was participating and given inputs related to the questions raised.

At the end of the session, we had a clearer and more precise picture of the situation of Islamophobia in Europe. Moreover, participants became able to contextualise the issue within a wider anti racist discourse as a tool for inter-cultural and inter-religious work.

Session 8 - **From Islamophobia to civic engagement** (Tuesday 10 May, 14.30 – 18.00)

With this session participants had the chance to experience Islamophobia and move directly to the topic of civic engagement and making links with different stakeholders to take action against Islamophobia. This session included two parts, namely a group simulation related to discrimination based on religious grounds (see appended, “Mosque in Sleepyville”) and a session during which participants explored civic engagement. In order words, this session made the link between the situation of Islamophobia and civic engagement as a way of combating it.

The aim was to explore Islamophobia and make links with the possible ways of fighting it through engaging participants in a common experience on the topic. Participants became aware of the complexity of discrimination and namely Islamophobia from a human rights perspective. Participants identified different solutions to combat Islamophobia which are related to civic engagement.



(Discussions during Sleepy Ville Exercise)

Day 3

Session 10 - **Introduction to intercultural and interreligious dialogue and case studies (Rui Gomes)** (Wednesday 11 May, 9.30- 13.00)

Participants explored in the previous days the reality of Islamophobia. Just the day before, they also made links with human rights. During this session, participants moved one step further and explored the concepts of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and also, very concretely, they explored some case studies of intercultural and interreligious projects.

The central aim was to explore intercultural and interreligious dialogue both from the conceptual point of view and from the concrete point of view.

Objectives

- To understand what intercultural and interreligious dialogue means and their main aspects
- To understand the work done by the Council of Europe on these topics
- To analyse concrete examples of projects where intercultural dialogue is present

The methodology included a presentation with questions and answers, and a session dedicated to case-studies and analysis and finally a plenary presentation.

Participants learnt more about the intercultural and interreligious dialogue concepts. They also developed their capacity to analyse concrete examples of projects related to these concepts. Last, they also got inspired by initiatives to combat Islamophobia around Europe.

Rui Gomes, from the youth sector of the Council of Europe, gave a lecture about the definition of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Here are some points made by the presented during his lecture.

The central problematic was to understand while we decide to enter into intercultural dialogue process, what subjects do we dialogue on? What are the manners to dialogue? How can we set up honest and effective dialogue? It is surely not about dialoguing with ourselves or people who looks like us but to extend the target group at the maximum.

One of the main threats for intercultural and interreligious dialogue is when we find a situation where the dignity and the human rights of the people are not respected and valued. This threat is not only directed to one group but could have effects on the general population in Europe and beyond.

Human rights are the guarantee of the protection of the people against the arbitrary of the state. To defend human rights is not the role of the state only, but is the responsibility of the civil society. It should be a serious question for every organisation and especially the youth organisations who want to act for a better social situation and a better representation of youth. The fight against discrimination, xenophobia and arbitrary justice has to be carried out by youth as well. When we let this question of human rights away and do not pay attention to the abuses which could take place, we find ourselves in dangerous situations regarding public

liberties. One of the most meaning examples is the arbitrary detention of young Muslims in Europe who are suspected of terrorism.

Day 4

Session 11 - **FEMYSO Strategy on Islamophobia** (Thursday 12 May, 9:30-10:00)

The strategy of FEMYSO was introduced. Here are the main points discussed.

In the framework of its 2010 – 2013 strategy, FEMYSO has decided to run a campaign to raise the urgency in tackling Islamophobia. The 2011 and 2012 work plans include different type of actions related to this issue. We launched, as first stage, a research to identify the impact of Islamophobia on Muslim youth. This research is articulate into two phases, the first one is looking at the figures and statics produced regarding this problem; the second one will present testimonies from young Muslims and will consists on deep interviews. The second stage of the campaign will stress on media actions directed to Muslim and non-Muslim population. The central Islamophobia has to become a public question which concern every citizen and not only Muslims.

The strategy of FEMYSO to counter Islamophobia is divided in 5 points:

- To ensure participation of Muslim youth in European policy-making
- To raise awareness of Islamophobia and its impact on European Muslim youth and fight for a European strategy against Islamophobia
- To combat Islamophobia through lobbying, advocacy and awareness raising
- To support, motivate and train Muslim youth to fight Islamophobia and promote Human Rights approach of this issue
- To develop a coordinating network of organisations working to combat Islamophobia

One of the main sides of the strategy is to negotiate a strong engagement from the European political institutions. In one hand, we need an engagement in terms of principles but also a strong condemnation of Islamophobia both as a sentiment and as an act. In the other hand, it is about getting a commitment in terms of means and resources from the countries to act at the national level. This is to be achieved by legal and political capacities but also by financial support of the research effort in this field.

The second side of the strategy is the networking and the necessity of building strong relationships within the civil society, especially with organisations who are already engaged in the fight against Islamophobia, xenophobia or for the defence of human rights.

To make this strategy more efficient, it has to be shared by the rest of the 'Muslim civil society' like CCIF in France, ENAR or COJEP for example.

The planned outcomes are:

- Participate in key international meetings, conferences, consultations
- Write to key European institutions to raise issue of Islamophobia
- Build relationships with key organisations (see list below) – meet or contact them at least once a year.
- Build European coalition against Islamophobia
- Conduct a Europe-wide Campaign – 2013

The Key Relationships are:

- *Develop existing relationships*
 - Council of Europe – Advisory Council, Commission for Human Rights
 - European Parliament
 - Organization for Security & Cooperation in Europe (ODIHR, Ambassador Orhun)
 - European Network Against Racism – EU Coordination
 - British Council

- *Set up new relationships*
 - COJEP (Conseil de la Jeunesse Pluriculturelle)
 - Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)
 - EMISCO
 - European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)
 - European Commission
 - UN Alliance of Civilisations
 - Amnesty International
 - European Union’s Fundamental Rights Agency



Session 11 (cont.) - **Workshop** (Thursday 12 May, 10.00 – 13.00)

This session was composed of workshops in different groups aimed at developing participants’ understanding and skills on the topic of conflict transformation within the wider framework of intercultural and interreligious youth work.

The objectives were:

- To explore the need for solutions to Islamophobia calling for long-term solutions and enhance paths to intercultural work based on social and change
- To introduce and experience conflict transformation as reframing of issues regarding Islamophobia
- To analyse examples of good practice of conflict transformation

The workshops were based on an interactive methodology, giving participants a chance to learn more about conflict transformation and its opportunity but also to experience it in an interactive way.

The flow of the workshops was:

- Introduction to the topic and its opportunity as means of intercultural and interreligious work (10 minutes)
- Interactive exercise based on reframing a real situation and transforming conflict (30 minutes)
- Debriefing and evaluation of the exercise focused on developing guidelines for starting conflict transformation processes (20 minutes)
- Q/As - Discussion on conflict transformation within intercultural and interreligious youth work (15 minutes).

We had four workshops that were repeated allowing each participant to attend two workshops: Lobby, Crosscultural management, Media and Project management.

Session 12 and 13 - **The Intercultural Prophet and Spiritual Ethics / Empowerment (with Tariq Ramadan)** (Thursday 12 May, 14.30 – 18.00)

The main points taken from Prof. Tariq Ramadan's keynote lecture are:

- Prophet Muhammad came with a universal message of Islam, a divine message. The method that these universal messages are realised in society is human.
- This universal message is based on fundamental elements, like peace, openness and justice.
- Every peace message does not always face peace. Sometimes the outcome of peace messages does not result in peace.

Quranic surah: "*we created you into tribes and nations so that you may know each other*" (Qur'an, 49:13)

- Diversity is a divine will. Muslims have to respect this mission and must be humble. One is not in peace with others until one is not in peace with themselves. If your foundations are solid then the outcome of the tree is solid.
- Love is the centrality of this message.

Prof. Ramadan also gave an input on active citizenship as a response to Islamophobia from a human rights perspective. When social involvement is the best way to fight misunderstanding and Islamophobia:

- Muslim youth needs to adopt a post-integration vision. It is not about integrate themselves in Europe anymore, it is about being pro-active citizens in our respective countries.
- What do we give to our societies? We need to move from cultural integration to a real intellectual integration of Muslims in Europe. This is the best way to tackle Islamophobia and prejudices.
- European Muslim Youth has to contribute to the settlement of ethics of society.
- If you react, people will take you where they want but if you ACT, YOU decide about your priorities.
- Troubles exist between marginalised people because of social and economic difficulties not cultural differences.
- Muslims need to abstain from Arabic cultural interpretations of the Quran and to challenge existing interpretations.
- Everyone should have in mind that the main purpose of Islam is not converting people, its about being a good person and the right behaviour conduct to the right result.
- Justice is a global question. For example: why are women with same skills as men get salaries 30% less than men? Muslims have to stand up against these issues as well.
- As part of Europe, we must defend justice, Human Rights, universal values in general not just issues that affect Muslim communities.



(Plenary Session)

Day 5

Session 14 and 15 - **Project Development** (Friday 13 May, morning)

At the end of the study session, it was time to act and to get active. It was mainly about to move from theory and taking knowledge to actions and building projects. We started the day with a couple of minutes of contemplation.

The first session started by Najatte Kaaouss presenting FEMYSO and how one can engage in the organization and projects carried out of it. After that Jean-Claude Lazaro from the EYF (European Youth Foundation) talked about the cooperation between EYF and FEMYSO and he welcomed applications in the field of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. After that Karen Palisser from the EYF presented in which ways they can fund projects and European youth activities.

After the introductory presentations Bilal Hassam presented our project building assignment and gave us key areas in which we can find inspiration. Some examples are social justice, mass-media or arts. We were also given some foundations which the projects should be built upon such as feasibility, how the project is tackling Islamophobia, how the project empowers youth, how the project included an intercultural/interreligious dimension as well as how human rights are taken into consideration in the project.

After being divided into groups by the key area fields having worked for a couple of hours with project ideas, we were to present our ideas after lunch. Each group presented their projects and were given feedback from Jean-Claude Lazaro from the EYF and from Mohamed Adil Rehman, the president of FEMYSO. The projects had the following topics: media, environment, social justice, arts, and involvement in political life etc.

All the projects included innovative elements, especially the one on environment proposing a cycling tour around several European cities by an interreligious group of young people, and at each stop conferences and public activities organized on topics related to Islamophobia.

Group 1

The team presented a project which consists on supporting ex-prisoners. The principle objective is to organize activities including young people and ex-prisoners.. While presenting this project the team was aware about the principle difficulties which are “how to reach the target group” and how to link dialogue and re-insertion process.

Group 2

The second group presented a media project which aims to raise public opinion’ attention around Islamophobia’ effects on Muslim Youth. Figures and facts will be the main information diffused in order to make Islamophobia looks real and palpable.

Group 3

The third group came with the idea of an interreligious training on leadership and political engagement. The aim of the training is to raise the common objectives and interests of both groups. The collaboration which will emerge from this seminar would have to be alimented by a long-term following process.

Group 4

By investing a different field, the 4th group suggested to run an academic research which would set definitions and manifestations of Islamophobia in Europe from Muslim and non-Muslim views.

Group 5

Creativity and originality were the credo of the last credo. Indeed, this team suggested tackling Islamophobia via Arts. A European Art Festival against Islamophobia and Religious discrimination will be organized in Brussels with main actors in this field and the support and commitment of public European institutions.

Evaluation of the study session

After the presentations we were given evaluation forms to write feedback about the whole week of training. After handing in our feedback we gathered in our groups with the facilitator where each one was given time to contemplate and lift their opinions and reflections of the training week. Lastly we had the diploma ceremony where each was given a certificate for participating in the course.



(Intercultural Evening)

Appendix I - List of participants

Name	Surname	Country
Saida	OUNISSI	France
Bilal	HASSAM	United Kingdom
Youssef	BOUGHATTAS	France
Esmâ	BASBAYDAR	United Kingdom
Julie	PASCOET	Belgium
Persianda	DODA	Albania
Beşjana	STURCE	Albania
Suada	HAJREDINAJ	Albania
Abed	CHOUDHURY	United Kingdom
Khaled	GHRISSI	France
Hamza	HAMMAMI	Switzerland
Khaoula	AMOURI	France
Emina	BOUEBDELLI	France
Saoussen	HAMMAMI	Switzerland
Amjaad	AGIL	United Kingdom
Ouissem	SATOURI	France
Linda	ELIAN	Italy
Yassine	LAFRAM	Italy
Sanaa	LAABICH	Germany
Amir	DABOUSSI	Sweden
Khaled	ELSADAT	Italy
Ahmed	UDDIN	United Kingdom
Simane	SULTAN	France
Najatte	KAAOISS	Belgium
Hajib	EL HAJJAJI	Belgium
Seif Eddine	TRABELSI	France
Edo	OMERCEVIC	Bosnia-Herzegovina
Mohamed Cherif	BEDREDINNE	Algeria
Levgen	GLUSHCHENKO	Ukraine
Olga	FRYNDAK	Ukraine
Kotaiba	ABDUL AAL	Sweden
Alaa	EL SAMARRAI	United Kingdom
Alyaa	EBBIARY	United Kingdom
Mohamed Adil	REHMAN	United Kingdom
Ola	HIMMAT	Italy
Tariq	RAMADAN	Speaker - Switzerland
Liz	FEKETE	Speaker - UK

Appendix II – Publications

Youth sector / Publications / secteur jeunesse

Islamophobia and its consequences on Young People

[Consult on line](#)

L'islamophobie et ses conséquences pour les jeunes

[Consulter en ligne](#)

Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work (Symposium Report) (2008)

[Consult on line](#) *en anglais seulement*

Committed to Making a Difference: Racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance and their impact on young people in Europe (Symposium report) (2008) *en anglais seulement*

[Consult on line](#)

Diversity Youth Forum Report (2008) - *en anglais seulement*

[Consult on line](#)

Youth sector: more publications / autres publications du secteur jeunesse

[on the Youth website / sur le site Jeunesse](#)

Council of Europe / Publications / Conseil de l'Europe

Manuel sur le port des symboles religieux dans les lieux publics (2009)

[Présentation sur le site des éditions du CdE](#)

Manual on the wearing of religious symbols in public areas (2009)

[Presentation on the Council of Europe Publishers site](#)

Dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education – Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12 and explanatory memorandum (2009)

[Presentation on the Council of Europe Publishers site](#)

Dimension des religions et des convictions non religieuses dans l'éducation interculturelle – Recommandation CM/Rec(2008)12 et exposé des motifs (2009)

[Présentation sur le site des éditions du CdE](#)

Gods in the city - Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue at local level (2008)

[Presentation on the Council of Europe Publishers site](#)

Des dieux dans la ville - Le dialogue interculturel et interreligieux au niveau local (2008)

[Présentation sur le site des éditions du CdE](#)

[Thematic file](#) – Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue

[Dossier thématique](#) - Le dialogue interculturel et interreligieux

Study sessions reports / Rapports de session d'études

FEMYSO Reports

2006

Overcoming Islamophobia: promoting inter-religious dialogue and co-operation
(in collaboration with EYCE - Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe)

2003

Islam in Europe – A dialogue between cultures
(in collaboration with EEE-YFU & FEMYSO - European Educational Exchanges–Youth for understanding)

2002

Human rights: the contribution of European Muslims
Droits humains: la contribution des musulmans d'Europe

Other organisations

2009

Looking at immigration in Europe through human rights perspective
JECI-MIEC - International Movement of Catholic Students

2007

Methods and practices for facilitators dealing with intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in international youth exchanges
YEU-EEE-YFU – Youth for Exchange and Understanding, European Educational Exchanges –
Youth for understanding

Educational Exchanges involving people with Muslim Cultural Background
EFIL-AFS & EEE-YFU – European Federation for Intercultural Learning, American Field Service
& European Educational Exchanges – Youth for understanding

Respect for religious diversity: fighting Islamophobia
IFLRY – International Federation of Liberal Youth

Religious Rights - Human Rights? Developing an inter-religious concept of Human Rights and Human Rights Education
EYCE – Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

2006

Youth and Minorities: Achieving Integrated Multicultural Society
IFLRY – International Federation of Liberal Youth

2005

“All Different All Equal” - New challenges for European youth in a multicultural Europe 10 years after the European youth campaign
MOE-YWM – Minorities of Europe / Young women from minorities

[European Youth against Racism and Xenophobia](#)
RYE – Rural Youth Europe

[Interfaith dialogue: Religious dimension in youth work- Contribution of young people today's religious-based conflicts](#)
EFIL/EPTO - European Federation for Intercultural Learning/European Peer Training Organisation
[Discrimination and racism - overcoming a threat to human dignity](#)
EYCE – Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

All study sessions.../ Toutes les sessions d'études...

[On the Youth website / sur le site Jeunesse](#)

Training courses reports and documentation

[Beyond Religious Differences – The Baku Youth Initiative](#)
Religion and religious diversity in youth work – [Seminar documentation](#)
Seminar documentation – [Session outlines](#)

All training courses / Tous les stages de formation...
[on the Youth website / sur le site Jeunesse](#)

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe / Assemblée Parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe

[Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia in Europe – Doc 12266](#)
Report
Committee on Culture, Science and Education

[Recommendation 1927 \(2010\) – Doc 12544](#)
Reply from the Committee of Ministers
adopted at the 1109th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (16 March 2011)

[L'islam, l'islamisme et l'islamophobie en Europe – Doc 12266](#)
Rapport
Commission de la culture, de la science et de l'éducation

[L'islam, l'islamisme et l'islamophobie en Europe - Doc. 12544](#)
Recommandation 1927 (2010)
Réponse du Comité des Ministres adoptée à la 1109e réunion des Délégués des Ministres (16 Mars 2011).

Reading List suggested by Liz Fekete, Deputy of IRR (Institute for Race Relations).

Orientalism

- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon, 1978)

- Edward Said, *Covering Islam: how the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world* (Vintage, 1997)

Racism, colonialism and imperialism

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (New edition published by Pluto Press Get Political series, 2008)
- A.Sivanandan, *Catching History on the Wing: race, culture and globalisation* (Pluto Press Get Political Series, 2008)

For those interested in looking for parallels with the Black Civil Rights and Black Power movements in the US look out for the work of Angela Davis, George Jackson, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King. A recent publication that deals with the history of this period in biographical format is:

- Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (Allen Lane, 2011)

Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia

- Islamophobia: a challenge to us all (Runnymede Trust, 1997)
- Islamophobia: issues, challenges and action by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 2 June 2004 (Trentham Books)

Information on further work on Islamophobia carried out by Dr Robin Richardson and others connected to the earlier Commission consult the website of Insted (In Service Training and Educational Development) - www.insted.co.uk/islam.html

IRR publications

Institute of Race Relations work/authors that deals with Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism

- Liz Fekete, *A Suitable Enemy: racism, migration and Islamophobia in Europe* (Pluto Press, 2009)
- *Integration, Islamophobia and Civil Rights in Europe* (IRR, 2009)
- Arun Kundnani, *The End of Tolerance: racism in 21st century Britain* (Pluto Press, 2007)
- See also A. Sivanandan, *Catching History on the Wing* (above)
- Matt Carr, You are now entering Eurabia, *Race & Class*, vol 28, no 1, July-September 2006
- Arun Kundani, Islamism and the roots of liberal rage, *Vol 50*, no 2, October-December 2008

The following reports are downloadable free of charge from our website. We also have a free weekly email news service that has many important articles on racism and Islamophobia. (www.irr.org.uk) and our journal *Race & Class: a journal on racism, empire and globalisation* is also a good source of scholarly pieces.

- *Alternative Voices on Integration in Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK*
- *Islamophobia and progressive values: Proceedings of IRR Seminar (1) 'End the Isolation: building solidarity networks against Islamophobia in Europe'*.
- *Islamophobia and the anti-terrorist laws: Proceedings of IRR Seminar (2) 'End the Isolation: building solidarity networks against Islamophobia in Europe'*.

Parallels between anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism

(Mostly in German). See the website of the Centre for the Study of Anti-Semitism (Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung) < fa.kgw.tu-berlin.de>

Consult the work of Dr. Sabine Schiffer, Media Responsibility Institute, Erlangen. Sabine Schiffer and Constantin Wager, '*Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: a comparative analysis*' (Wassertrüdingen, 2009)

(in English) '*Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia – new enemies, old patterns*', Race & Class Vol 52, no 3 (January-March 2011)

Some recently published titles

Hamid Dabashi, *Brown Skin, White Masks* (Pluto Press, 2011)

Julian Petley and Robin Richardson, *Pointing the Finger: Islam and Muslims in the British Media* (Oneworld, 2011)

Patrick Bahners, *Die Panikmacher: Die Deutsche Angst vor dem Islam* (CH Beck, 2011)

Other publications

- Report of FEMYSO research produced by the prep' team under the responsibility of Julie Pascoet and presented during the Session "Exploring Facts and Contextualising Islamophobia": available soon on FEMYSO website (www.femyso.org)
- Report Summary: "Personal Development for facilitators of Study session", produced by Saida Ounissi and used as an essential tool for team members: available soon on FEMYSO Website (www.femyso.org)

Appendix III – FEMYSO observations on Islamophobia

Straight after the Study Session and while redacting this report, FEMYSO had to participate to the drafting of the OSCE Education Draft Guidelines for Educators to Counter Intolerance against Muslims through Education prepared by ODIHR, in partnership with UNESCO and the Council of Europe. We submitted the following comments to the OSCE.

Firstly, FEMYSO congratulates the OSCE, UNESCO and Council of Europe on its valuable work in this field. Islamophobia, or discrimination and intolerance against Muslims, has become the acceptable face of racism and hatred in Europe and elsewhere, and the urgency of taking action becomes more apparent with each Islamophobic attack which takes place.

FEMYSO welcomes these guidelines, which have been carefully and thoughtfully crafted, and which we feel will be vitally important in international standard-setting and in the fight against intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. They are vital because they address an issue that has immediate relevance for millions of young people around Europe – the principles of equality and respect for all. These principles are being threatened by the rise in Islamophobia and hatred in the past decade.

These developments call for urgent political, social and pedagogical responses. The education system produces future leaders, policy makers, teachers, writers and citizens – it plays a vital role in shaping our views towards others in our societies. It is crucial that the values of peaceful co-existence, respect and support for equality should be a fundamental part of the educational curriculum.

We put forward the following comments, for the consideration of the drafting committee:

Importance of addressing Islamophobia per se:

It has been noted that the guidelines specifically focus on intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, and that standards and policies already exist on tackling discrimination and tolerance as a whole. However, we feel that there is undoubtedly a clear need for targeted guidelines to tackle discrimination and intolerance against Muslims, as this is a particular form of discrimination, which has certain features, manifestations and causes specific to it, which require specific solutions. Islamophobic attitudes are not just an extension of racist attitudes, but are based on their own distinct system of power and domination which manifests itself as individual and ideological forms of discrimination and intolerance.

Thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of earlier generations of activists, there has been a widespread recognition of sexism, racism and anti-semitism at the policy, academic and public levels. However, there is, as yet, no coherent policy response to Islamophobia in most European countries. Few countries have developed a strategy to tackle this form of intolerance, or integrated it within their policy frameworks.

Meanwhile, extreme racist groups have manipulated this policy vacuum and used it as an opportunity to reorient their hatred towards Muslim communities in particular. Their racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric has been redirected towards anti-Muslim rhetoric, which has allowed them to operate much more freely, and to make statements and policies which would be illegal and widely criticized if they were made about any other minority. Thus, Islamophobia is fast becoming the acceptable face of racism and must specifically be tackled.

Terminology

FEMYSO believes that Islamophobia is the most appropriate term to use when talking about intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. It is a widely used term, common in much literature in this field. The suffix 'phobia' has already been used to describe many other forms of discrimination or intolerance, such as 'homophobia' and 'xenophobia'.

Contrary to some arguments, Islamophobia is not a term which delegitimises criticism of Islam as a religion or set of principles. It simply correctly refers to the way in which individuals are singled out and treated in a discriminatory manner simply for their perceived affiliation to Islam, which is unacceptable.

For purely practical reasons, the term 'Islamophobia' must be used to ensure that those searching for material in this area can easily find the guidelines on Google and other search engines.

Executive summary

An executive summary should be included at the beginning, providing a brief overview of the guidelines. Extension of guidelines to include primary school children

Research indicates that there are two important social cognitive transitions for a child – the first when aged 5, when the child gains an awareness of race and culture and begins to develop a sense of racial constancy, and the second between the ages of 7 and 9, when the child develops a greater awareness of self, community and culture.

Introduction to the guidelines

The introduction should refer to the benefits to teachers and policy-makers of implementing the guidelines. Tackling Islamophobia in schools provides increased opportunities for integration and social inclusion and increased trust between students and teachers/school authorities. It can also increase civic and social participation. Research indicates that prejudice is a serious obstacle to integration and a feeling of belonging among young European Muslims. When young people do not feel welcome or included in their school (or in wider society), this will impact on their ability, willingness and confidence to participate, learn and contribute. This can affect not only their future achievement, but also the school environment as a whole.

The introduction should emphasise that the school is the first mainstream institution with which the child comes into contact. The way in which schools deal with diversity sends a very

strong message to the child, their family and wider society about the value society places on diversity.

The second paragraph should be amended so as to read, “These developments have contributed to a growth in resentment against or fear of Muslims and Islam, which is often fuelled by the media and political discourse”. It is incorrect to suggest that it is the media alonewhich has fuelled prejudices. Political discourse, both from extreme right wing and mainstream parties have played a significant role in this regard.

Recognition of religious discrimination

There is still a serious problem of lack of recognition of discrimination against religious groups. In many countries in Europe, anti-discrimination policy in education only recognizes racial and ethnic discrimination. This leads to a situation where, when pupils approach teachers to tell them they have been bullied or victimised due to their religious affiliation, the teachers take no action or do not recognize the pupil’s experience as discrimination, because

it does not fit within the anti-discrimination framework in place. Thus, schools must be encouraged to expand their anti-discrimination or equality policies to recognize the fact of discrimination and intolerance against religious groups. It should also be included in all training programmes on discrimination and bullying.

Greater understanding of world civilisations

In an increasingly globalised, interconnected world, it is crucial that young people are taught about other cultures and civilisations, and about the interdependence of these cultures and civilisations. Without this, young people will not be adequately equipped to contextualise their own place in the world or to deal with the reality and effects of globalization.

Current teaching does not adequately educate young people about the interconnections in history – how different civilisations and cultures have interacted and built upon each other’s contributions, to create a shared human heritage of cultural and scientific achievement. This can lead to a very narrow and myopic understanding of our place in the world and how our own history in Europe has been shaped. European history makes no sense without learning about the many civilisations that helped to shape it both within and outside its borders.

The Muslim world has made a valuable and fundamental contribution to European learning and culture. Yet, while pupils are taught about Egyptian, Greek and Roman civilisations, they are rarely taught about the Islamic civilization which was very close to Europe and played a valuable role in laying the basis for the development of modern fields of mathematics, medicine, astronomy, music and many others. When teaching pupils in the United Kingdom, for example, in religious studies classes or history, when discussing other civilisations, mention should be made of the interactions between the UK and these civilisations to contextualise the learning and understand the connections within history.

This point could be integrated at paragraph 3.5 on page 11 of the draft guidelines.

Greater ‘media literacy’ and critical thinking

The media has become one of the most central institutions in young people’s lives and is decisive in shaping their development, perceptions and experiences. The educational system can no longer ignore the role played in pupils’ lives by all forms of media and popular culture, which form the basis of many of their values and opinions. In any one day, young people absorb hundreds of ideas and images through advertising, television and print, which mould their thoughts and behaviour.

Research shows that the vast majority of people obtain their perceptions of minority groups through the media, rather than through direct interaction. Thus, media portrayal is critical in perceptions of diversity and our views and opinions on particular groups within society. In the relentless negative and sensationalist stories in the media on Muslims and minorities, Islamophobia and prejudice are seeping into the sub-conscious of young people via media, films, computer games and popular fiction.

For this reason, pupils need to learn to critically analyse media and how it shapes public opinion – looking at language, the selection of stories, what is deemed newsworthy, etc. Thinking critically is a skill, which needs to be learned and continually developed and strengthened through education and training. Including this in the national curriculum is absolutely vital in today’s media-driven world.

Pupils should also be taught important skills for living in increasingly diverse societies – mediation, communication and negotiation skills. This could be inserted at paragraph 4.4 on page 17 or at paragraph 3.3 on page 10 of the draft guidelines.

Mainstreaming of teaching about diversity

Teaching about diversity should not be isolated and confined to a particular school subject, e.g. religious studies classes. This encourages a view of other faiths and cultures as “the Other”, something alien, strange, exotic and outside the mainstream. We believe teaching about other faiths and cultures should be integrated holistically into the school curriculum using a multidisciplinary approach – drawing on art, music, poetry, literature, and other means as vehicles for exploring the intertwining of cultures and civilisations and the diversity of the world we live in.

Textbooks and teaching materials should include individuals from minority backgrounds in normal roles, to reflect the diversity of society and the participation of all groups in public life. This should be integrated at page 11 of the draft guidelines.

Involvement of parents in school governance

We agree with the recommendation to involve students more in school governance activities as this can help to ensure the school environment more closely addresses the needs of the students. We feel that this should also be extended to parents – the engagement of parents in school governance activities is very important, to ensure that parents are aware of the school’s anti-discrimination and equality policy. This engagement can be educational for the parents,

in understanding the school's approach to diversity and ensuring it reflects the needs of the local community.

Annexes

We strongly commend the drafting committee for the excellent annexes, which provide a very wide range of teaching resources to assist teachers in this field. We would like to make the following additions:

The teachers' journal 'Race Equality Teaching' provides practical advice for teachers in working with children to increase understanding of cultural diversity and challenge discrimination.

1001 inventions Teacher's Pack – this is an educational tool to support teachers that ties into the successful 1001 inventions exhibition launched in the UK a few years ago.
<http://www.1001inventions.com/media/teachers-pack-download>

Show Racism the Red Card, Islamophobia pack

<http://www.srtrc.org/uploaded/ISLAMOPHOBIA%20ED%20PACK%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf>

NASUWT, Islamophobia: Advice for Schools and Colleges

<http://www.nasuwat.org.uk/TrainingEventsandPublications/NASUWTPublications/Publications/TacklingIslamophobiaadviceforschoolsandcolleges/index.htm>

Global Dimension <http://globaldimension.org.uk/index.aspx?id=40&rs=cs>

Teaching on Controversial Issues: guidelines for teachers

<http://www.teachablemoment.org/high/teachingcontroversy.html>

Who makes the news?

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4010000/newsid_4013000/4013021.stm

Headlines: War & Conflict

<http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s421>

We work together: can you?

<http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s170>

Muslim Heritage

<http://www.muslimheritage.com/>