

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Open Society Institute's "At Home in Europe: Muslims in EU cities" project sets out to understand the everyday experiences of ordinary Muslims living in 11 cities across Western Europe. The 11 cities covered by the research are: Antwerp, Amsterdam, Berlin, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Leicester, London, Marseille, Paris, Rotterdam and Stockholm. The research focuses on the impact of public policies aimed at improving integration and social inclusion. Integration here is understood as "a dynamic two way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of the European Union".<sup>1</sup> Social inclusion is defined as positive action taken to ensure the provision and promotion of equal rights in socio-economic spheres and greater participation in decision-making.

Although this report focuses on 11 cities in western Europe, there is a particular concentration on select neighbourhoods within the cities.<sup>2</sup> A focus on action at the local level allows for a closer examination of the interaction between residents and policymakers and politicians in areas where Muslims form a higher proportion of the population than in the city or state as a whole. By monitoring at the local level, the report also examines whether population concentrations of Muslims at the district and neighbourhood level have encouraged the development of practical solutions to social policies that respond to the needs and views of local Muslim populations.

### 1.1 Religion and identity

For this report the focus on Muslims as a group faces the challenge that Muslims are not a fixed group with defined boundaries, but rather a diverse set of individuals with different religious practices and attachments, who are currently defined and marked as such mainly from outside. Thus, it can include those who adhere to the religion of Islam as well as those who, because of their cultural or ethnic background, are

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<sup>1</sup> Council of the European Union, Common Basic Principles on Integration, 2004, available at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/jha/82745.pdf) (accessed November 2009). In the Explanation to the CBPs, "Integration is a dynamic long-term and continuous two-way process of mutual accommodation, not a static outcome. It demands the participation not only of immigrants and their descendants but of every resident. The integration process involves adaptation by immigrants, both men and women, who all have rights and responsibilities in relation to their new country of residence. It also involves the receiving society, which should create opportunities for the immigrants' full economic, social, cultural and political participation. Accordingly, Member States are encouraged to consider and involve both immigrants and national citizens in integration policy, and to communicate clearly their mutual rights and responsibilities."

<sup>2</sup> The districts/neighbourhoods studied are: Borgerhout, Antwerp; Slotervaart, Amsterdam; Kreuzberg, Berlin; Norrebro, Copenhagen; Hamburg-Mitte, Hamburg; Evington, Spinney Hills and Stonegate, Leicester; 3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement, Marseilles; 18<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, Paris; Feijenoord, Rotterdam; Jarvafeltet, Stockholm; and the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

perceived as Muslims by others in society, even though they may be atheists or followers of other religions.

The identification of a person, whether by themselves or by others, as “Muslim” is not a neutral matter, as it can entail identification with a group that is at times stigmatised and demonised in public discourse. In social and public policy Muslims are increasingly viewed as a potential security threat or a group that is unwilling or unable to integrate.

In the context of the OSI research the identification of a person as “Muslim” has been left to the self-perception of the interviewee and has not been associated with any pre-fixed religious or cultural definition. In part this is because the primary focus of this report is not on issues of religious practice or belief but instead on the everyday experiences of those who define themselves as Muslim, in four areas of life that are crucial for social integration: education, employment, health, and civic and political participation. The report examines the effects of marginalisation and discrimination and explores the different ways in which local policies address issues of integration.

## 1.2 Structure of the report

This overview report provides an analysis of findings emerging from different OSI city reports as well as analysis of the overall data set of 2,200 questionnaires and 66 focus groups. These data have been gathered in 11 cities in the EU and is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. They include questionnaires, focus groups, stakeholder interviews and a review of available and current policy and academic literature. This report seeks to place the findings emerging from this research within the wider European policy framework. The key findings from each city will be published in separate reports.

Chapter 2 examines the European contexts which shape and affect initiatives and experiences of integration at the national, municipal and neighbourhood levels. It focuses on the role of policies at the European level.

Chapter 3 explores issues of social cohesion, belonging, discrimination and interactions.

Chapter 4 looks at key issues arising in education, including those measures that aim to improve the educational achievement of different groups that impact on Muslims, the role of schools, the education system and parents in supporting educational success.

Chapter 5 examines data on labour-market participation. It then examines the role of different barriers that Muslims face in accessing and fully participating in the labour market.

Chapter 6 examines respondents’ perceptions and experiences of housing and their neighbourhood, including the tenure and quality of housing respondents live in and

their experiences of discrimination in accessing housing. The section then looks at respondents' subjective experiences of the local neighbourhoods they live in.

Chapter 7 examines Muslim experiences of health care. It examines data on the health status of Muslims, or in the absence of data on religion, of predominantly Muslim minority-ethnic groups. It notes particular ways in which religion can be relevant to health status, and the experiences of Muslims with health services that are available in the different cities.

Chapter 8 looks at issues of policing and security. It looks at levels of trust in the police and satisfaction with policing, as well as experiences of discrimination. It highlights the challenges faced in increasing the ethnic diversity of police officers and in increasing trust and support in local communities.

Chapter 9 examines the levels of civic and political participation of Muslims, including the electoral processes as voters and candidates. Political inclusion is also measured by the strength of identification with political institutions. It therefore measures the extent to which respondents feel that they can influence decisions affecting their city and their trust in key national and local political institutions. The chapter details some of the ways in which policymakers and politicians in the 11 cities have responded to political participation by Muslim organisations.

Chapter 10 looks at the role of the media in integration, social inclusion and participation. Media can act as both a means towards enhancing citizenship, and as mechanism for exclusion.<sup>3</sup>

Chapter 11 contains the recommendations. These are aimed at the EU and its Member States. The individual city reports will also contain recommendations directed at city policy officials, Muslim communities and the wider society.

### 1.3 Methodology

This report sets out to explore the needs and primary concerns of Muslim communities and to assess whether local policymakers have understood and met these needs. Who has defined these needs and how are they understood? Does delivery of essential services encompass cultural and religious requirements? What are the measures taken by local governments that acknowledge diversity and discrimination? Do policy practices and efforts include all groups? What is the state of relations between minorities and the wider society?

The selection of countries to include in the monitoring was based on methodological decisions. Any selection necessarily involves the rejection of many countries and cities. Rather than attempting to capture the full diversity of the various Muslim populations in Europe, the methodology focuses specifically on countries with significant Muslim

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<sup>3</sup> I.M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1990.

populations, whose history dates back to relatively recent waves of migration – in most cases the last 60 years. Emphasis was placed on the older Member States of the EU, in particular the northern European states, as the issues faced by these states are largely similar. This would allow for the findings of the reports to be more directly comparable. The final seven countries are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This comparison is the subject of this report.

In 2007, a series of background reports reviewing the existing academic and policy literature on Muslims in the seven EU countries were released. It was anticipated that there would be limited literature directly on Muslims as a group and therefore the reports include both literature directly on Muslims, as well as literature on ethnic groups that are from Muslim-majority countries.

In order to allow for the comparison, a common methodology was adopted across all 11 cities. In addition to the review of the existing research and policy literature, fieldwork to gather new primary evidence was carried out in areas within each city that has large Muslim populations. The fieldwork consisted of 200 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with local residents in each city (100 Muslim and 100 non-Muslim).<sup>4</sup> These questionnaires were then elaborated upon in six focus groups held in each city of local Muslim residents. Interviews were also conducted with local officials, practitioners such as teachers and health workers, community representatives, non-government organisations and experts engaged on anti-discrimination and integration issues.

The research and data for this report were collected from January 2008 until June 2009. The questionnaires and focus groups were facilitated by local researchers and research coordinators.<sup>5</sup> The latter were responsible for identifying respondents for the questionnaires and participants for the focus groups, together with a team of interviewers composed of people from different ethnic groups and with varied language proficiency. In some instances, the researcher was responsible for carrying out the field research as well as the analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> For the full OSI questionnaire see Annex 3.

<sup>5</sup> For a complete list of the city teams, please see the acknowledgements section.

**Table 1. Characteristics of OSI research respondents**

Characteristics	percent	Total Count
<b>Religion</b>		
Muslim	50.5	1110
Non-Muslim	49.5	1089
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	49.1	1080
Female	50.9	1119
<b>Age</b>		
< 20	8.5	187
20 – 29	28.1	618
30 – 39	20.4	448
40 – 49	19.2	422
50 – 59	12.4	272
60 +	11.3	249
<b>Country of birth</b>		
EU country (where person is living)	53.0	1165
Non-EU country	47.0	1034
<b>Highest level of education</b>		
No formal education	5.8	128
Primary education	11.5	252
Secondary education	50.6	1112
University	32.1	705
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed (full/part time)	45.8	1007
Self employed	6.6	145
Unemployed	8.7	192
Other	38.6	849
<b>Neighbourhood mainly consists of:</b>		
Relatives	3.5	76
Same ethnic and religious background	10.6	234
Same religion, different ethnic background	5.8	128
Same ethnicity, different religion	2.5	54
Different ethnicity and religion	12.8	282
Mixture of different backgrounds, ethnicities and religions	64.7	1423

Source: Data collected through OSI research in select neighbourhoods of 11 cities in western Europe. The full data are available at [www.soros.org/initiatives/home](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/home) (hereafter, Open Society Institute data)

Respondents are a non-random cross-section of individuals chosen from specified subgroups of the population within the selected neighbourhood of the city. The characteristics (age, ethnicity and gender) of the selected respondents were extrapolated from the available national population figures for the cities. Recognising that national statistics do not include data on ethnic or religious affiliation, the exact numbers of Muslims in each of the cities cannot be determined.

There are limitations to the research, including:

- recognition that questions answered may be affected by differing understandings of the question (efforts were made to ensure that this was kept at a minimum by translating the questionnaire verbally and ensuring that the interviewer spoke the first language of the respondent);
- the challenges surrounding the categories of Muslim and non-Muslim which do not translate easily across all EU Member States due to the varying national and political contexts of the countries;
- distinctions made by respondents between racial and religious discrimination, which is not always easily differentiated, making it difficult to fully comprehend the nature of the prejudice;
- an awareness that the sampling method means that respondents are not wholly representative of the population.

The findings contained in this report are not intended to be taken as a comprehensive reflection of the Muslim population and their concerns in these 11 cities. They should be viewed as a snapshot of the diversity and opinions of ordinary Muslims and non-Muslims through their concerns and experiences as residents of urban neighbourhoods in the EU.

The characteristics of the sample of the respondents to the 2,200 questionnaires are set out in Table 1.1. The sample is evenly split between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents and between male and female respondents. Just over half the sample were born in the EU state where they live, and 45 per cent were born elsewhere, including other EU states. In terms of education, the majority were educated to secondary-school level and almost one-third had university level education. In terms of economic status, the majority were either employed (46 per cent) or self-employed (7 per cent), while 9 per cent were unemployed. Those in the “other” category included those at home looking after their family, students and those who were retired.