11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following set of recommendations are aimed at the European Union and national and local level policymakers. Whilst aware that a report on integration cannot ignore the role that ethnic minorities, and in this case Muslim communities, play in advancing social cohesion this report does not contain overt recommendations to these groups. Muslim communities across Europe are engaged in combating and correcting prejudice and negative stereotypes directed towards Muslims. A number of efforts are recognised as having had an impact and influence on bringing about some change in respective cities. However, there is a need for continued and more concerted effort. Enfranchising the disenfranchised to participate and engage requires public policies to address fundamental inequalities and address discrimination. At the same time, responsibility lies with communities to initiate actions and efforts which bring about change in policy, practice and behaviour. Recommendations to Muslim communities will be contained in the forthcoming individual city reports of the At Home in Europe project of the Open Society Institute.

TO EUROPEAN UNION POLICYMAKERS

11.1   Recognise that religion is not a barrier to integration for Muslims

Overall, the report reveals positive signs of integration. Both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents felt that their neighbourhoods were ones where people were willing to help and trust each other and where people of different backgrounds got on well together. Muslim and non-Muslim respondents agreed that respect for the law, equality of opportunity and freedom of expression were key values in the country where they live.

1. The OSI data are consistent with existing research which finds that religion is an important aspect of identity for Muslims. Existing research suggests that, religion can, in fact, be an important form of social capital that supports participation and integration. The OSI research found that, in responses to questions on cohesion and belonging, levels of trust or cultural identification with the state, there was little difference between Muslims who displayed a visible religious identity and those who did not. However, prejudice and discrimination against those with a visible religious identity is significant. Prejudice against Muslims is not purely the result of prejudice towards migrants. Existing research finds that the level of prejudice against Muslims is greater than that towards immigrants. The qualitative data from the OSI research point to the persistence of discrimination and prejudice in corroding a sense of belonging amongst Muslim groups. EU Member States should respond to the study's findings that most people are not threatened by visible displays of religion, by focusing instead on the discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping directed by a few against those who visibly display their religious identity.

11.2 Improve efforts to address discrimination

The OSI research suggests that religious discrimination against Muslims remains a critical barrier to full and equal participation in society. The findings of the OSI survey, consistent with other research, suggest religious discrimination directed towards Muslims is widespread and has increased in the past five years.

2. European policymakers should encourage the adoption of principles of equal treatment to cover discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in education, housing, transport and the provision of goods and services. These are all areas where the OSI research finds that Muslims continue to face discrimination.

3. Equality bodies should include promoting good community relations as part of their mandates. The Commission and Council should support European organisations such as Equinet and the Fundamental Rights Agency in championing specific race relations and anti-discrimination work.

4. Work on challenging racism and discrimination being carried out by the EU and by Member States should include a specific focus on challenging prejudice and stereotypes against Muslims. For measures to tackle prejudice and stereotypes to be effective it is important to ensure public support and commitment to the values underpinning the EU's commitment to equality and non-discrimination. This requires developing effective and alternative instruments alongside legislation in the areas of education, media, culture, arts and sports.

Levels of trust in the police are generally high amongst Muslims. The OSI research suggests that discrimination from the police remains a key concern for some Muslims, particularly amongst young Muslim men. Existing OSI research also finds that young people from minority groups are subject to ethnic profiling.

5. The European Commission (EC) and Council should provide guidelines for national data protection, setting out adequate safeguards against ethnic and religious profiling.

6. The European Commission and Council should support, (including through technical guidance and programme funding), the development of anonymous statistical data on ethnicity and law enforcement. Such data are essential to detect, monitor and address ethnic profiling practices at the national and local levels in Member States.

7. There is a need for the EC to provide financial support for pilot projects, research and dissemination of best practices for the recruitment of a more diverse police force.

11.3   Improve and reform policies on integration and minorities

8. The Common Basic Principles (CBPs) provide an important framework for the development of integration initiatives at the national and local levels in Europe. To be effective they need to be understood, embraced and owned at the local and city levels. At the European level, action is needed to increase the profile and awareness of the CBPs amongst civil society and local policymakers. OSI supports the recommendation of EUROCITIES for the Commission to develop a consultation framework with larger cities and their associations to create sectoral dialogue in the field of integration. This is to be done under the umbrella of Territorial Dialogue between the Commission and European and national associations of local and regional authorities.

9. The CBPs define integration as a two-way process. To make integration a genuine two-way process it is important for integration polices to include and address majority communities. The OSI research identifies some of the areas where action involving the wider society is needed. For example, while half the Muslim respondents identify with the country where they live (i.e. they see themselves as Belgian, Dutch, French, etc.), they do not feel that the general population sees them in this way. A majority of non-Muslim respondents feel that people in their neighbourhoods do not share the same values. Members of the general public rather than a particular institutional or professional setting were the most frequent source of religious discrimination. This suggests that efforts are needed to ensure that the general population sees Muslims as part of mainstream society. This could be achieved through increased efforts to ensure greater knowledge and understanding amongst the general population of Europe of the contribution made by Muslims to European values, culture, society and economy. This contribution of Muslims to European society should be a natural part of the narrative of European identity.

10. Robust data are needed to provide a clear and better understanding of the experiences of Muslims in Europe. Few EU countries collect information or data on religious beliefs and identity. Some policymakers assert that race, ethnicity or migration status are more important than religion as an explanation of social exclusion experienced by Muslims. They may be right. However, without data on religion, it is not possible to know whether and when religion may be a significant factor in the experience of Muslims. A valuable contribution to addressing this knowledge gap is made by two EU wide surveys: the European Social Survey (ESS) and EUMIDIS. These surveys should be developed through continued financial support. Consideration should be given to include a booster sample of minority groups in the ESS. EUMIDIS should extend its research to the UK and other countries in Europe currently not covered, but which have a significant or growing Muslim population. Eurobarometer should consider including a question in its survey

on religion, perceptions, and attitudes towards Muslims and other minority groups.

11. The OSI research reveals many good examples of the efforts of those working in the public services across Europe to respond to society's growing ethnic and religious diversity. Much training was developed at a time when there was less acknowledgement and recognition of such diversity. The Integration Fund should prioritise funding in supporting initiatives for improved diversity training for public sector workers, including police and teachers.

12. The Council of Europe and other organisations should continue and expand research efforts, focusing on the impact of media coverage on Muslims, and its effects on social cohesion at the local level.

11.4   Address diversity and discrimination in the workplace

Evidence from the OSI research confirms the central role of labour market participation to integration and inclusion. Amongst Muslim respondents, higher levels of employment, (particularly full-time employment) correlate with cultural identification with the country. The workplace is also the space where Muslims are most likely to have meaningful contact with people from a different ethnic and religious group.

13. Levels of participation in the labour market for Muslims are lower than those of the general population. Labour market participation for Muslim women is particularly low. While some of this is due to religious discrimination other factors are relevant. Greater understanding is needed of the barriers that Muslims, and in particular Muslim women, face in accessing the labour market. At the same time, the OSI research has found examples of initiatives working effectively to address some of these challenges. This includes initiatives that work with Muslim community organisations and civil society in ensuring that advice and information reaches those furthest from the labour market. There are also projects which recognise the need to employ individuals whose ethnic and cultural background reflect and connect to those who employment initiatives are seeking to reach. The European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities should compile and share examples of good practice used by European cities to increasing diversity in the workplace.

14. Muslims face higher unemployment and lower employment rates compared to the general population. Some of this disadvantage can be explained by human capital but other factors include a lack of social networks, knowledge and understanding of the labour market and language fluency. There is also evidence to suggest that some Muslims face both an ethnic and religious penalty. Discrimination on the grounds of religion is a particularly a concern for women who wear the veil and the headscarf. The EU is encouraged to

support Member States to establish or maintain city based bodies which monitor and evaluate access to the labour market with a view to increasing Muslim and ethnic-minority economic integration. The bodies should monitor recruitment procedures, the diversity of employees in public services and private enterprises as well as the procedures for the award of public-service contracts.

11.5 Make education more accessible and responsive to a diverse student body

Schools are amongst the first public institutions confronted with the changing demographics in Europe's cities. Many good practices are emerging from the OSI research in the field of education at the local level. The EU should work on developing a forum among cities on the following areas:

15. **Data collection.** Robust data are needed for the development of evidence-based education policies. The OSI research suggests that at the local level, cities are considering different ways in which to collect data which gives a useful picture of the experiences of pupils from different minority groups. For example, in Antwerp the collection of information on languages spoken at home has been adapted to take into account the experiences of the second generation. In Leicester, the city is developing systems for a more accurate and comprehensive system of data collection. The European Commission and Council should support, (including through technical guidance) research and the sharing of best practice in the development of appropriate statistical data on ethnicity and religion in education

16. **Education approaches incorporating cultural heritage.** There are many good examples emerging from the OSI research of schools where the cultural heritage of pupils and their families is used to support and encourage their education and learning. This includes the "Rucksackprojekt" in Berlin, the development of an initiative called CREAM (Curriculum Reflecting the Experiences of African Caribbean and Muslim Pupils) in Leicester, and the use of students' bi-lingual heritage as a positive asset in Amsterdam and Marseille. The European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture should explore ways in which schools across Europe can share good models which have effectively utilised the cultural heritage of pupils and have harnessed it into improved learning. A number of international and national organisations have existing projects which contain educational components offering effective support for teachers and policymakers.

17. Low aspirations and discrimination from teachers emerged as an important issue in several cities: there were examples of teachers ridiculing Islam and insensitivity about pupil's religious obligations. For many educational staff, teaching an increasingly culturally and religiously diverse student population is

a challenge for which training and support is needed. This is recognised by the EU, where the Comenius Programme aims to promote intercultural understanding. The programme should include (amongst its priorities) support for teachers in acquiring a greater understanding of the cultural heritage and background of different faith groups, including Muslims. There are many innovative and timely projects run by organisations and civil society which could provide much needed resources to support teachers and students.[431]

TO NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICYMAKERS

11.6   Increase awareness of discrimination

18. Muslims continue to experience racial and religious discrimination. National governments should initiate and support campaigns that raise awareness about anti-discrimination laws. Where necessary they should also ensure legislation covers discrimination in education, housing, policing and access to goods and services. Awareness-raising must be accompanied by support (including access to legal advice) for those seeking redress against religious discrimination.

11.7   Recognise the benefits and challenges of ethnically mixed neighbourhoods

19. OSI research finds that neighbourhoods with a good mix of people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds are vibrant and dynamic areas. Both Muslims and non-Muslims enjoy living in and are proud of their mixed neighbourhoods. The majority of people feel that their neighbourhood is one where people are willing to help each other, trust each other and where people from different backgrounds get on well together. But challenges remain. While the OSI research finds that the majority of respondents feel that their neighbours are likely to help each others, they did not feel that people would work together to improve the neighbourhood. The majority of respondents did not feel that people in their neighbourhood shared the same values. This suggests a need for a stronger focus on a shared local identity and policies (including urban regeneration) to encourage collective investment and upkeep of local neighbourhoods.

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[431]   See for example: www.maslaha.org

11.8 Recognising Muslim civil-society bodies as legitimate participants in community consultation and engagement

20. The OSI research finds recognition from local policymakers of Muslim community organisations to be a crucial part of the social fabric in their local areas. Where city and district officials have worked with Muslim community and civil society organisations, there has been greater confidence and an increased sense of integration in the city. It highlights examples of local policymakers and Muslim civil society working together in a broad range of areas including employment, health and policing. Muslim civil society bodies are able to support access to parts of the community that public bodies may otherwise find hard to reach, and provide advice and information that ensures the effective and efficient delivery of services which takes the needs of local communities into account. Engagement with Muslim civil society must occur while acknowledging the full diversity of Muslim communities and recognising that no single body or organisation can reflect that diversity.

11.9 Consider reform to definitions of nationality and voting rights for non-citizens

21. Naturalisation should be seen as the goal of settlement (as it is in the USA, Canada and Australia). Where necessary there should be a reform of nationality laws to ensure access to nationality for those who are long-term settled migrants and to those born in the country. At the same time, dual citizenship should be permitted

22. The OSI research finds that local-level policymakers are concerned about the democratic legitimacy of actions taken by city authorities in areas where a significant proportion of long-term settled populations are disenfranchised. This can be addressed by extending the right to vote in local elections to all those who are long-term settled residents in a city.

23. The OSI research points to some encouraging trends, as well as persistent challenges to ensuring political and civic participation. Trust in local institutions is higher than that in national institutions amongst Muslim respondents; however, the perception that they can influence decisions affecting their city is lower amongst Muslim voters than amongst non-Muslims. This suggests a need by city officials to engage in creating mechanisms which can create greater political inclusion, feedback and empowerment.

24. Many non-EU Muslim respondents in the OSI research remain disenfranchised. This is particularly the case with respondents in Germany and France, where they do not have the right to vote in local elections even though many are long-term residents. Political participation can be considered a necessary condition for integration. Recognising this, the City Hall of Paris set

up the Citizenship Council of non-European Parisians (Conseil de la Citoyenneté des Parisiens Non Communautaires, CCPNC) in 2001. This is an advisory committee which reflects the diversity of non-EU nationals in different Parisian districts and offers input into key areas of everyday concern such as housing, culture and education, and quality of life in the district. In the absence of voting rights, local governments should create similar or other mechanisms which allow for the voices and views of third-country nationals to be a key tool for better integration.

11.10 Promote opportunities for interaction

25. There is evidence that increased interaction between varied ethnic and religious groups can lead to a reduction in prejudice and offer opportunities to decrease segregation. Across the cities examined by OSI, research indicates that there is a great desire by Muslim and non-Muslim groups for opportunities and spaces to be created for people of different backgrounds to interact. Muslims in the OSI research did not want to live "parallel" or "segregated" lives. They appreciated living in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods and were concerned about the impact of the "native" population leaving their area. Thus, while the research finds significant levels of interaction between people of different backgrounds in the city and neighbourhood already taking place, there remains a great desire for increased and varied contact. City and district councils can play a facilitating role by examining schools, businesses, and workplaces for opportunities to increase interaction between various ethnic and religious groups within the community.

11.11 Develop and promote inclusive civic identity

26. There is strong sense of belonging to the local area and city. For Muslims, belonging to the local area is stronger than belonging to the city, while non-Muslims felt a more intense belonging to the city compared to the local area. In Amsterdam, for both Muslim and non-Muslim respondents, a stronger sense of belonging to the local area was supplemented by an even stronger sense of belonging to the city. This suggests that the Amsterdam Municipality's campaigns, that emphasise a common and inclusive city identity, have been effective in increasing cohesion and belonging. Stimulating debate and consultation mechanisms bringing in members of varied faith communities is another effective method of creating greater cohesion and ownership of the city. Leicester City Council, which supports the Leicester Council of Faiths, brings together representatives and members of different faiths from across the city. These examples have succeeded owing to the political will and leadership of the city councils in creating and funding possibilities for interaction and space for different communities residing in the

cities. Municipalities are urged to seek ways to replicate the above and other interesting models outlined in this report.

11.12 Engage with communities to ensure awareness of rights

27. Urban cities in Europe are providing delivery of services to a wide variety of groups and individuals. A diverse and qualified public sector is better equipped to offer culturally sensitive and effective services. At the same time, a diverse public sector can foster a greater sense of trust and confidence in its decision makers. Local policymakers and representatives from Muslim and other minority communities should work together to ensure that public sector agencies and enterprises have staff that reflect the diversity of their city.