



Anti-Islamic reactions in the EU after the terrorist acts against the USA

**A collection of country reports from RAXEN
National Focal Points (NFPs)**

Second report: Reactions from 25th September to 19th October
The national reports are only available in English

Réactions anti-islamiques dans l'UE à la suite des actes terroristes commis à l'encontre des États-Unis

**Un recueil des rapports nationaux
des points focaux nationaux (PFN) de RAXEN**

Second rapport: réactions du 25 septembre au 19 octobre
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Anti-Islamische Reaktionen in der EU nach den Terroranschlägen gegen die USA

**Eine Zusammenstellung von Länderberichten
der nationalen Anlaufstellen von RAXEN**

Zweiter Bericht: Reaktionen im Zeitraum vom 25. September bis 19. Oktober
Die Länderberichte stehen nur in Englischer Sprache zur Verfügung

Annex

NATIONAL REPORTS

These national reports are edited versions of the reports written by the National Focal Points (NFP) of the RAXEN international network following a request of the EUMC.

The task of the RAXEN network is to collect reliable and comparable data (including examples of and models for “good practices”) at the European level on the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in order to help the EU and its Member States to take measures or formulate courses of action. This time it is composed by 14 NFPs. For further information please visit the EUMC homepage <http://eumc.eu.int>

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AUSTRIA

Research Centre "Discourse, Politics, Identity" (DPI),
in cooperation with the
Institut für Konfliktforschung (IKF) and the
Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Menschenrechte (BIM)
(located at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW))

In comparison to the first period of observation (from September 11 to September 25) the second period (from September 25 to October 19) includes much more reactions related to the terrorist attacks in the USA. This is not only due to the fact that the second period covers three and a half weeks, while the first period just covered 14 days, and that the topic of the attacks and their consequences (including the military reprisal by the USA) is still one of the main issues in public and private discourses extensively reported by the Austrian media. It also relates to the fact that - after the first shock about the horrible attacks has slowly faded away - the general initial prudence and wariness, characterised by deep compassion with the terrorists' victims, has made way for political "everyday life". Some Austrian politicians have started to make political (including party political) capital out of the disastrous attacks – which has given rise to intensive controversial discussions in public.

1. Acts of violence or aggression towards ethnic, cultural, or religious minorities, especially Muslim/Islamic communities

1.1. Acts of violence or aggression

The increase in media coverage related to the terrorist attacks and their consequences can also be related to the increase of aggressive acts against Islamic communities in Austria. There is a growing number of verbal threats via telephone and letters directed against the Islamic Community.

According to a spokesperson of the Islamic Faith Community ("Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft"), no reports on physical attacks on Muslims have been made to them until now. However, this perception of the present situation is not shared by other NGOs (see below) and regional Islamic communities like the one in Upper Austria (see <http://www.religionsfreiheit.at/zorres.htm>).

In contrast, verbal harassment stays on the scene. Many Muslim citizens feel at least molested by jokes in their workplaces, in the streets or in public transport. Popular expressions are "What have you done again?" and, in allusion to Austrian history, "What for did our ancestors fight off the Turks, when we now let them sweep in like a flood?".

Members of the Islamic community also experience the need of many people talking about issues of Islamic religion and fundamentalism to them. The spokesperson already mentioned said: "People want to talk and check – even people that do not know me. Sometimes I feel like I should carry a sign saying: 'Don't worry, I'm also against terrorism'."

1.1.1. ZARA Report

The NGO ZARA – providing counselling to victims and witnesses of racism - reports two very awful cases:

The first one is a physical attack on a Turkish woman in Vienna, who was beaten by a man when just standing in the street. He walked up to her and without any warning, hit her in the

face and shouted “stop terrorism”. Then he went off. The woman was injured and the case was notified to the police.

The second incident concerns a man of Arabic descent, who applied for a job advertised. In reaction to his very polite letter of interest and CV he received an e-mail insulting him as “crazy Muslim” and suggesting for him to “go to Afghanistan and die”.

1.1.2. The defilement of 28 graves in the Islamic part of the municipal cemetery in Linz (October 6)

Another striking act of anti-Islamic violence has caused a good deal of alarm in Austria and especially among members of the Austrian Islamic community. On Saturday, October 6, an Upper Austrian Muslim discovered 28 graves in the Islamic part of the municipal cemetery in Linz that had been defiled during the night. The grave-stones of these 28 graves, which were in part cemented in, were pulled out of their anchorage and knocked over by feet, the grave parts made of wood were ripped off. The damage of property approximately amounts to ATS 300.000 (= €21.801,85).

In a first reaction, this offending and provocative violation was heavily condemned by Günther Ahmed Rusznak, speaker of the Islamic Community in Upper Austria, as well as by Andrea Kuntzl from the Social Democratic Party and by Alexander van der Bellen from the Greens (see *Der Standard*, October 8). Rusznak explicitly viewed the defilement as an anti-Islamic reaction to the terrorist attacks on September 11 in the USA. He reported that the Austrian Muslim citizens had not suffered any direct physical aggression since the attacks in New York and Washington until then (= October 8), but massive verbal assaults. According to Rusznak, women with headscarves have increasingly been insulted and Muslims have been called “terrorists”. Since everything starts as a small thing, so Rusznak, things must be nipped in the bud. All in all, (subliminal) fear for “islamophobia” seems to have grown among Muslims (see *Der Standard*, October 8).

In contrast to Rusznaks view, the Upper Austrian political representatives of the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP), of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the Austrian Freedom party (FPÖ), who all condemned the defilement, unison argued that Muslims in Upper Austria needed not fear for massive hostilities (see *Der Standard*, October 10). The head of Upper Austria’s Government, Josef Pühringer (ÖVP), declared that there would not be a “revenge on suspicion” and that making Muslims in Upper Austria responsible for the terrorist attacks in the USA would be equivalent to “Sippenhaftung” (i.e. to a liability of all the members of the Islamic community for the crimes of a few). Pühringer decisively rejected such a “Sippenhaftung” and pleaded for a peaceful “living side by side of religions and cultures”.

That verbal aggression against Muslims is nothing unusual in Austria, was also reported by Hüsamettin Büyükkal, the president of the Islamic Religious Community in Linz, Upper Austria and Salzburg, at a press conference following the “inter-religious hour of commemoration” (see next section). However, following Büyükkal there has not been any institution of legal proceedings against anybody for racist attacks against Muslims in Upper Austria since the beginning of 2001 (= including October 10, see *Der Standard*, October 10). In his press conference, Büyükkal condemned the terrorist attacks from September 11 in a declaration of several pages in length. The president of the Islamic Religious Community in Linz, Upper Austria and Salzburg stated that the terrorist attacks must not become an occasion for transforming Muslims into “potential targets” - as was the case by the violation of the 28 graves in Linz which has filled more than 30.000 Muslims in Upper Austria with indignation.¹

¹ In Upper Austria, several anti-Islamic aggressions have taken place recently. In Traun, for example, a fierce controversy arose about the local mosque (see *Der Standard*, September 5, *profil* No. 42, October 15, pp. 30-31, see also <http://www.religionsfreiheit.at/>). The mosque was destroyed on March 28 2001, after long debates

At first the police assumed either a racist act of vandalism (near the scene of the crime, a sticker was found with the right-wing extremist labelling “Replace the politicians before the politicians replace the people”) or an inner-Islamic conflict. Even after the arrest of a 17-year old unemployed skinhead who confessed the violation of the 28 graves, the Upper Austrian executive forces assumed that the defilement had not been politically motivated (see *Der Standard*, October 17). Norbert Kapeller, Upper Austrian security officer, argued that, although the presumed perpetrator had explicitly characterised himself as “skinhead”, the state security police in Linz did not assume the crime to be politically motivated, since the young offender is just a single perpetrator and not an organised group. Besides, the police did not find any literature or other propagandist material that would prove an ideological motivation.²

As for the facts of crime, the young culprit devastated most of graves in the night from September 28 to September 29. A week later, he allegedly returned to the scene of the crime after a brawl with a “foreigner” and demolished two further graves.

1.2. Changes in the attitude of the EU population towards Muslim/Islamic communities³

Since September 11, the Islamic Faith Community and other Muslim Organisations have been receiving numerous phone-calls, letters and e-mails, directly or indirectly relating to the events in the US. These reactions mirror an atmospheric picture of the attitudes in the population towards issues of Islam and people of Islamic Faith.

Most of these reactions show solidarity, they warn against general condemnation, report on biased media coverage and criticise unqualified statements by opinion leaders. Besides that, people want to know more about Islam. There is more need for information events and encounters of tolerance, especially by schools and parish groups, but also by individuals. The Islamic Faith Community is more often asked to provide participants for discussions.

The hostile reactions mirror very well the specific challenges for the inter-religious dialogue. These findings are not new and the challenges were there before September 11. Especially the following controversial issues demand clarification: women and the headscarf, the idea of Islam as an “archaic”, static religion, its alleged absolute claim to power and the fear of “Jihad” – often wrongly interpreted as “Holy War”, the image of human rights, Islam being in need of “enlightenment” according to the European model, the relationship between state and religion.

Taboos relating to what can (negatively) be said about an officially recognised religious community and its fellows – either explicitly or insinuatingly – seem to be overcome. Resentments, fears and constructions of the enemy, which have been formed due to historic burdens and a lack in information, now come to the surface. The terrorist attacks seem to confirm old prejudices and give support to anti-Islamic voices.

during which anti-Islamic insults were uttered by SPÖ and FPÖ politicians. The destruction had initially been asked for by local FPÖ-politicians. On August 31, Walter Erhard, the Social Democratic Party major of Ansfelden opposed in a radio interview with *live radio* the plan of building a new mosque near the Western highway (A 1): “We still prefer the Ansfeldian shrieks of chicken to the muezzin calling down.” Both the SP-youth and the Greens asked for Ernhard’s resignation. After September 11, Erhard demanded the resignation of those who previously wanted him to resign. Erhard justified his demand with reference to the terrorist attacks in the USA and argued that it had been shown what the Muslims are all about (see , *profil* No. 42, October 15, pp. 30-31). Apart from this, FPÖ politicians have recently placed advertisements in newspapers promoting the banning of slaughtering according to Islamic rules, which caused further controversies. Slaughtering according to Islamic and Jewish rules is a religious ritual protected by the Austrian constitution.

² No clear definition of „political crime“ is offered by the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry just feels responsible for investigating the details of what has happened. It is the task of the courts to subsume the findings under a specific type of crime.

³ The following information and assessment is based on a text provided by Carla Amina Baghajati, media referent of the Islamic Faith Community in Vienna.

Even before the terrorist attacks, Muslims criticised that they had been asked to justify events in the Muslim world, which they themselves did not approve of, due to their interpretation of Islam. Now a point seems to be reached where Muslims persistently have to demonstrate that they oppose terrorism. Muslim women, for instance, are asked to dress like western women in their own interest.

Quotes (Letters and phone calls to the Islamic Faith Community in Vienna):

“I am a Catholic woman, not fundamentalist, not racist.....

You as a man are unable to understand the fears for Islamic men. We, the women, fear that the Islam sees it as its task to create a pure male world totally suppressing all women. This to me seems to be the real face of Islam.

Excuse me for not telling you my name, this is out of fear and I do not normally do that.”

01/10/01

“You should be ashamed for what your brothers in faith did to the Christians. Go back to the Arabic countries. You do not fit in with us and Europe!”

anonymous, directly after the attacks

“...or they will wear the headscarf persistently until the crusades have reached Europe....

The headscarves have always been hated – Islam will never be accepted!!!

Jewish bitches (orthodox) also have to cover their heads (...and more antisemitic expressions concerning “Jewish criminals” that were also adopted by the Koran [e.g. Moses being one of the first war-criminals])

How about assimilation???”

anonymous, end of September 01

“You pack of terrorists! Get lost!”

one of many similar phone calls

“I want to understand Islam and the role of women therein better and not to be led by the mass. It is not that I want to defend Islam, but I want to better understand, especially the women and I don’t want to criticise.”

letter requesting information, 15/10/01

“Bishop Krenn’s⁴ report is the opinion of a malevolent ignorant. Most Austrians think differently.”

01/10/01

“I can well understand your anger about Bishop Krenn. His expressions about the Islam are shameful, inappropriate and like most of his unwanted statements demagogic.”

01/10/01

“As a Catholic Christian who works within the Catholic church, I think that the statements of the Bishop of St. Pölten are an attack on good manners, Islam and also on Christianity, how I see it. All I can do is assure you of my commitment to you and to keep on stressing the necessity and chances of dialogue and tolerance.”

⁴ Bishop Krenn’s statements can be found under section 3.2.

30/09/01

“First I want to express my hope that the racist gossip of politicians and journalists about the “civilized world” and the “clash of cultures” does not lead to any assaults of Muslim people in Austria.”

30/09/01

“We want to express to you and the Muslims in Austria our esteem, respect and our commitment.”

02/10/01

“I felt the urge to hug you to make you feel how I feel with your people... We shall not ask WHO did that, but WHY it was done.”

30/09/01

“We feel the need to tell you that we are explicitly against any generalizing judgement of Islamic people!!!!”

30/09/01

2. Good practises and positive case studies established in order to reduce prejudice and violence

2.1. The hour of commemoration in remembrance of the victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11

In Austria, there was no any big, officially supported protest rally comparable to the demonstration "Standing against terror - standing with the United States of America" that took place on Friday, September 14 at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin and at which the German Federal President Johannes Rau gave an official address.

Instead of an official rally, on October 8, the Austrian Federal President Thomas Klestil invited the highest representatives of the three major religious communities to join an “inter-religious hour of commemoration” in remembrance of the victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11 in the USA. The commemoration took place in the representative room of the *Redoutensaal* in the Viennese *Hofburg* in the morning of October 8. It was broadcasted by the Austrian state television ORF.

In his speech, the Austrian Federal President stressed the necessity of dialogue between religious communities, cultures and civilisations. He emphasised that the future only lies “in the cooperation of Jews, Christians, Muslims and all people of good will”. (see Der Standard, October 9 2001; the whole speech can be retrieved on <http://www.hofburg.at/de/vorg/d1tk/rd2001/inla/Gedenkstunde.htm>). With respect to the US-military attacks of Afghanistan starting on October 7, Klestil expressed that “we” would stay on the side of justice and should pray for the soldiers that are fighting for “all of us”.

In his speech, the Catholic Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, president of the Austrian Conference of Bishops, underlined the common responsibility of the religions for justice and peace.

Paul Chaim Eisenberg, the official head of the Austrian Jewish Community as well as the chief Rabbi of Vienna, claimed in his speech that faith would not be allowed to turn so fanatic as to allow for doing damage to somebody.

The president of the Islamic Faith Community in Austria, Anas Shakfeh, declared that a culture of mutual tolerance was a guarantor of peace.

2.2. Activities by the Islamic Faith Community

The Islamic Faith Community reported many invitations from schools and Christian church groups to meet with them and talk to them about Islam. The increase in the number of invitations has been so great that they are hardly able to handle all the requests. They also get a real load of mail these days, the vast majority of letters expressing understanding and solidarity.

Many people also seem to realise that “islamophobia” is not only a phenomenon to be handled with pure information. Therefore, many people and institutions are now coming to see the mosques and other Islamic places. The book market is making a lot of business with books on Islamic issues and even the holy Koran has become a bestseller.

The Islamic Faith Community attributes the lack of more severe attacks in Austria to the special structures in Austria provided by the official recognition of Islam as a religious community and the status of the Islamic Faith Community as an organisation under public law. Therefore, Muslims can identify themselves with Austria and themselves become active in various projects (e.g. “Tage der Offenen Moschee”/Days of the Open Mosque) with the aim of better learning to live with each other.

2.3. Information offensive

Recently, book stores have massively increased the display of books on Islam in their shop windows (see above) and also the media concentrate on the information on Islam and trying to reduce anti-Islamic prejudice.

TV-coverage

TV-discussion on the issue “Feindbild Islam?”/Constructing Islam as an enemy? September 18, 23:05 ORF 2 (“kreuz & quer philosophicum”):

Participants: Bassam Tibi (expert on Islam), Gudrun Harrer (head of the foreign policy department of Der Standard), Richard Potz (legal expert), Bert Fragner (specialist in oriental studies).

TV-discussion on the issue “Zwischen Angst und Hoffnung”/Between Fears and Hope September 30, 22:05 ORF 2 (“Betrifft”):

Participants: Matthias Horx (futurologist), Hans-Peter Haselsteiner (entrepreneur), Johannes Rath (biologist), Hans-Joachim Giessmann (Institut of Peace Research, Hamburg) und Carla Amina Baghajati (Islamic faith community in Austria).

TV-discussion on the issue “Feindbild Westen?” Constructing the West as an enemy? October 2, 23:05 ORF 2 (“kreuz & quer philosophicum”):

Participants: Gernot Rotter (specialist in oriental studies at the university of Hamburg), Ridwan Al-Sayyid (head of the institute of Islamic studies in Beirut).

Report “Ein Afghane für alle“ October 9, 22:30 ORF 2 („Am Schauplatz“).

Radio coverage

„Die vielen Gesichter des Islam“/Many faces of Islam, Ö1 September 21 („Dimensionen - Die Welt der Wissenschaft im Überblick.“).

„Islam und Toleranz“/Islam and tolerance (Nasr Abu Zayd, critical Muslim), „Kampf der Kulturen“/Clash of civilisations (Dietmar Mieth, Tübingen), „Gibt es den gerechten Krieg?“/Is there a just war? (W. Palaver), Ö1 September 24 („Praxis - Religion und Gesellschaft“).

„Ehevorbereitung für christlich-muslimische Paare“/Matrimonial preparation for Christian-Muslim couples, Ö1 September 30 („Erfüllte Zeit.“).

„Islam und Terror“/Islam an terror: Interview with Anas Schakfeh, president of the Islamic Faith Community in Austria, Ö1 October 3 (“Von Tag zu Tag”).

“Der ganz normale Rassismus. Eine Bestandsaufnahme des Alltagsrassismus“/Everyday racism – an assessment of the status quo, Ö1 October 8 („Moment – Leben heute“).

3. Further Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders, including initiatives to reduce polarisation and counteract negative national trend.

3.1. Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) – Fingerprints and the tightening of asylum policy

About two weeks after the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Freedom Party demanded that fingerprints should be taken from all future migrants. Peter Westenthaler, parliamentary party leader of the FPÖ, said that these fingerprints would be necessary to prevent terrorists from moving freely around the world (see *Der Standard*, September 26). On the following day, during a parliamentary discussion, the FPÖ extended their demand. In a first step fingerprints should be taken from all migrants and in a further step from all Austrians (see *Der Standard*, September 27).

Only two days later Jörg Haider, head of the Carinthian government, demanded that the EU should only accept asylum seekers from European countries. Asylum seekers from other continents should not be allowed to wait for the final decision on their asylum application in Europe, but in a secure third country outside of Europe. The EU should conclude agreements with safe third countries to be able to “dispose” of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers from Afghanistan should for instance wait in a secure third country in Asia, like Pakistan⁵. Besides Haider did not understand why much more Afghans fled their country than people from India, because the Afghans could seek asylum in Pakistan. He did not see his suggestions in conflict with the Geneva Conventions, because Europe must defend itself against the infiltration of terrorists (see *Der Standard*, September 28).

Tererzija Stoisits, migration speaker of the Greens, called Haider’s suggestions „disgusting“, and Andrea Kuntzl from the SPÖ “a ‘xenophobic’ campaign”. Michael Landau, head of Caritas, sent an open letter to Federal President Thomas Klestil and warned against the shattering of human rights (see *Der Standard*, September 28). Klestil invited Landau to the Hofburg on the following day and told Landau that he was of the same opinion as the Minister of the Interior, who had rejected Haider’s suggestions (see *Der Standard*, September 29/30).

Wolfgang Schüssel, federal chancellor, condemned the intervention from Haider. He explicitly rejected Haider’s suggestions. In return Haider asked him to put more emphasis on the security interests of the population than on praise by multicultural society (Multikulti-Gesellschaft) (see *Der Standard*, October 1).

A survey by the ‘Market’ institute showed that 57 % of the interviewees favoured a tightening of the asylum policy, 24 % wanted a less strict asylum policy (see *Der Standard*, October 8). Ever since the beginning of the discussion on fingerprints and the tightening of the asylum policy the FPÖ has stuck to their suggestions and emphasised their demands whenever they had a chance to do so. Peter Westenthaler held these measures to be absolutely necessary to

⁵ Pakistan is still seen as a secure third country by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, even after the American attacks on Afghanistan have begun. (see *Der Standard*, October 9)

protect Austria from “radical elements”, because “multicultural society has to be declared dead” after September 11 (see *Der Standard*, October 15).

This discussion has to be watched in close relation to the developments of the so-called “Integrationsvertrag”/ integration contract, that obliges immigrants to learn German and attend courses in “Austrian history and culture”.

3.2. Reactions by Kurt Krenn and Egon Kapellari, representatives of the Catholic Church

Kurt Krenn and Egon Kapellari, two representatives of the Catholic church, displayed their attitudes towards Islam in interviews with different newspapers.

Kurt Krenn, Bishop of Lower Austria, said in an interview with the weekly *Format* that Islam was characterised by “a certain degree of fanaticism and nationalism” and that it would “conflict with human rights” (see *Der Standard*, October 2). Furthermore he said that it would not be good “to speak of a few fanatics” and to generally declare the Koran to be “unobjectionable”. He demanded proof of this thesis. Above all, he added, Christianity would have “a better measure of humanity” (see *Der Standard*, October 3) at its disposal.

Anas Schakfeh, president of the Islamic Faith Community, judged Krenn’s statement as “catastrophic” in the present situation. Uninformed Christians could be misled by statements like that and think that one of the highest representatives of the Catholic church would surely judge Islam correctly (see *Der Standard*, October 2).

Karl Prenner, a religious scholar, said that too little knowledge of Islam was responsible for opinions like Krenn’s and that the well functioning inter-religious dialogue in Austria would be jeopardized by such a statement (see *Der Standard*, October 2).

Egon Kapellari, Bishop of Styria, called Islam “a radical religion with a very low level of tolerance” in an interview with the Styrian daily *Kleine Zeitung*. He opposed isolationism against Islam, but favoured strengthening the “identity” of Christianity. “In some German cities the muezzin will soon be allowed to call down from the minaret, why are Italian guest workers not allowed to celebrate mass with a curate behind the closed doors of a hotel room in Kuwait?” Islam would much more respect Christian societies if they were not so “weak” and “worn out”, but if Christianity were “more lively”. He knows many Muslims talking about the west as “ruined” – “no children, breaking up of marriages, only technology, a rotten society” (see *Der Standard*, September 22).

3.3. Reactions to the building of Alevite cultural centres in Lower Austria and Vienna

Construction of the Alevite cultural centre in St. Poelten, Lower Austria, has begun. Franz Marchart, general secretary of the Lower Austrian FPÖ, called the centre a “danger to the security of St. Poelten”. Naciye Eroglu (the Greens) and Hasan Dogan (SPÖ), both candidates for the city council elections of St. Poelten on October 7, defended their religious community as not being extremist. (see *Der Standard*, October 3)

Construction of an Alevite cultural centre in the 21st district of Vienna will start soon. The future neighbours of the centre were invited to an information evening, in order to react to the campaign against the centre by the FPÖ. Kurt Mörz, head of the FPÖ in the 21st district of Vienna, said that he would not care about the Alevites, but he was told that another potential buyer of the property, now owned by the Alevites, was disadvantaged. (see *Der Standard*, October 17)

4. Overall assessment of the situation of Muslim/Islamic communities in Austria

It is still too early to tell whether the attitudes towards Muslim/Islamic communities and other vulnerable groups are going to change persistently. Nevertheless, some things have become clearer in the course of events: Issues of Islam and people of Islamic faith are getting much more attention than before the attacks. Media interest is still very high. "Islamophobia" was latent before these events, but we can assume that more people dare to explicitly express their hostility. Many people seem to feel that their assumption of Islamic people to pose a threat to Western societies was now confirmed.

The whole Austrian society is still in a status of uneasiness, and there is a great need for more information. On the other hand, a lot of people feel the need to explicitly express their solidarity with the Muslim community and show a benevolent interest in their religion.

Medium or long term changes might be brought about by the political development. If the politicians further attempt to merge immigration and asylum issues with those of national or individual security, the climate of tolerance will dissolve. The Freedom Party (FPÖ) is trying to keep up a climate of fear, in order to tighten the asylum law.

BELGIUM

Centre Centre pour l'égalité des chances et la lutte contre le racisme – Centrum voor gelijkheid van kansen en voor racismebestijding (Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism) (CEOOR)

Introduction

In the direct aftermath of the US attack on September 11, 2001, no major assaults on the Muslim/Islamic communities have been reported in the press or registered within the department of the racism complaints at the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, hereafter called CEOOR. This might be explained by the extreme shock and general disbelief the attack has generated in the Belgian society, as elsewhere.

However, starting from Monday September 17, different forms of attacks, mostly situated at the verbal level and mostly targeting the Muslim/Islamic communities, in various forms have been reported in the press.

The period September 11-24 has been analyzed in the preliminary report. The data included in this report starts from September 25/01 until October 19/01. Concurrently to the reports of anti-Islamic attacks in the media, complaints relating to changing attitudes towards ethnic, cultural and religious minorities, especially the Muslim/Islamic communities have also been registered at the department of the racism complaints of CEOOR. The data in the report are based on these two sources, namely reports in the media and the complaints the CEOOR has been receiving since September 25. Although it is not our intention to provide an exhaustive list of anti-Islamic acts, it seems fair to state that these two sources are solid, reliable and representative since they cover a broad area of public life and thus representative of the main trends of anti-Islamic reactions in the Belgian society.

The report is divided in three parts:

- 1) acts of violence or changing attitudes towards ethnic, cultural and religious groups, with specific attention for the Muslim/Islamic communities;
- 2) good practices and positive case studies established in order to reduce prejudice and violence; and finally
- 3) reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders and their initiatives to reduce polarization and countering the increase of racism in society.

1. Acts of violence (verbal attacks, racist discrimination and physical assaults) and changing attitudes of intolerance towards ethnic, cultural and religious groups, especially the Muslim/Islamic communities

1.a. Verbal attacks and racial discrimination

On the Internet several instances of verbal attacks and racial discrimination have been registered.

Internet

- A text has been available on Internet, inciting racism and hatred since it portrays immigrants as criminals and people unwilling to work for a living while benefiting from social welfare. Furthermore it extends an invitation to Bin Laden to come to Belgium to benefit from the generosity of the Belgian welfare state.

- On October 10/01 the department of racism complaints was notified that there were many chat forums on Internet using racist and violent language.

- Rumors were spread on the Internet that in fact it was the Mossad that is the master brain behind the US attack. The evidence given for this assumption was that not one Jewish person working at the WTC was killed by the attack on September 11.

Racial discrimination

- On October 8/01 a second round of violent language appeared on the discussion forum of the popular TV program Big Brother, targeting a participant of this program, who is of Moroccan descent. The first racist statements on this forum appeared in September. In these racist statements a direct link is made between the events in Afghanistan and the presence of the Muslims in Belgium.

- In general Planet Internet noticed a significant increase of racist statements and reactions on the Internet since September 11. Planet Internet contacted the CEOOR for a proper treatment of these racist statement, conform the antiracism law.

In the media and other communication means (such as SMS messages through portable phones, snail mail, etc.)

Verbal attacks

- Television channels receive many calls charged with racism from viewers, who do not seem to make a clear distinction between Islam and Islamism, calling the Muslim/Islamic communities the 5th column, thereby substituting the communists as 'the bad guys', etc.

- On October 9,01 an elected female MP of the Brussels Region of Moroccan descent has received a letter containing insults and threats.

- On October 9, 01 one person found a SMS message saying: 'You have killed an Arab.'

Publications circulating in the public sphere

Verbal attacks

- On September 26/01 a letter was sent to political parties containing strong anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic statements. It also contains the menace that in case political parties do not take actions against the September 11 attack they would take justice in their own hands. There is no explicit indication of the exact source of this letter in the form of names of people or addresses. However there is founded assumption that the letter originated from a Belgo-American group.

- On September 26/01 a document issued by the Blok Wallon was found in a cafeteria in Louvain-la-neuve, a city in the Province Brabant Wallon. In this document the term 'terrorists' was employed to refer to the so-called gangs of delinquents, who are threatening the order in the Province of Brabant Wallon.

- On October 2/01 an anonymous document was circulated in the University Library of the Facultés Universitaires de Namur. The document with a pro-Christian preference, strongly condemns Islam.

- A small poster of 35 by 25 cm, issued by the 'Ligue anti-impérialiste' with the message 'Israel assassin! Palestine vaincra!' (Israel murderer. Palestine will win) has been put for sale. Such a poster has been found posted on a window of a center for youth in Molenbeek, a commune in Brussels.

In schools, directors as well as parents and students have noticed an increase of racism

Verbal attacks

- In a school in Watermael-Boitsfort (Watermaal-Bosvoorde), commune in Brussels, a mother states that her child, a pupil in the second year of middle school has been scolded for 'terrorist' since he was critical about the moment of silence for the victims of the September 11 attack. He asked the teacher why these victims were given the public attention and not for the Palestinian or Rwandan victims? His teacher refused to enter in a discussion.

- In one school drawings of bombs are found on the notebooks of the pupils. This school refuses to observe the moment of silence for the victims of the September 11 attack.

- An anonymous complaint originating from Vilvoorde (Vilvorde), a town at the outskirts of Brussels, informs us that racist statements and insults were addressed at Muslim pupils.

Racial discrimination

- One unidentified school has issued a sanction against Muslim children who refused to observe the moment of silence. The pupils were prohibited from attending the school during one month.

- On October 5 in a school in Mouscron, a town in Wallonia immigrant pupils were set apart by their teachers during the moment of silence, dedicated to the victims of the US attack. The argument of the teacher was that these youngsters might disturb this act. This case is currently being examined within the department of antiracism complaints. The outcome of this case is not available at this moment.

- On October 5 a teacher complained to the CEOOR that there is a letter going around the school, written to Oussama Bin Laden, containing statements that all foreigners are thieves, lazy and good for nothing misfits, etc. Although the letter is meant to be a 'joke' she fails to see the humor in it.

In the larger society, different forms of verbal attacks and racial discrimination have been registered

Verbal attacks

- A police officer blamed Moroccan youngsters for siding with the attackers. His reaction was that 'They are all the same. They are also part of the attack'.

Racial discrimination

- On October 1/01 a Belgian citizen of Moroccan descent was not allowed to board a plane of American Airlines, allegedly following the request of the pilot. The airport authorities did not give him any reason or other explanation for this refusal.
- On October 9/01 a person of Moroccan descent was scolded for 'terrorist' when he consulted an interim-office. He said that he was discriminated against. The director of this company denied the incident. This case is under investigation.
- On October 11/01 an employer of the Office National du Ducroire has put a poster of the portrait of Moussad. For this he has nearly lost his job.
- On October 18/01 50 passengers of a Sabena flight Brussels-Tel Aviv demanded to prohibit 4 passengers with 'Arab' phenotypical traits from boarding. In spite of the reassurance by Sabena that all security procedures have been followed up, the 50 passengers refused to board and decided to take the following flight. The 5 targeted passengers, however, flew with the original flight.

1.b. Physical assault

- On October 2-3/01 youngsters of Moroccan descent in Forest, a commune in Brussels, have launched verbal insults towards traditional Jewish family (a rabbi and his family) who either was on their way to or on the return from the synagogue. Besides verbal attacks, these youngsters threw chestnuts to this family.
- An important incident in terms of physical attack is the assault on the mosque in Turnhout, a town in the Province of Antwerp. It has attracted nation-wide attention. It was broadly covered in the major national newspapers and in the news of the main Belgian television channels. The factual account is as follows: On the night of Thursday of October 11-12 four rifle shots were directed towards the mosque. This is the first assault on this mosque since the US attack. As of October 21/01 two white Belgian men have been identified as the main suspects of the attack. On October 11/01 the two men were talking about the war in Afghanistan. After some drinks and a heated discussion, they decided to kidnap Osama bin Laden. One man had two rifles at his house. They went there to fetch the weapons and then drove off to the mosque. They each fired two shots. One man has already confessed, whereas the other denies his share in the attack. They are accused of 'destroying buildings'.
- On October 13/01 two asylum seekers were punched in their face during a Saturday night party. The two asylum seekers, originating from Djibouti and Bulgaria, were staying in the asylum reception center in Arendonk, Antwerp. They were in the company of four other asylum seekers and a voluntary worker from the already mentioned reception center. They were sitting in a circle with other Belgian youngsters, chatting and having a good time when four Belgian men forced in the group and hit the two asylum seekers, who happen to have a darker skin than the rest. According to the report of the director of the reception center, the attackers were extreme rightist people, uttering racist remarks, while the apparent leader made a Hitler salutation prior to leaving the premises. According to one newspaper, the police officer, in charge of this attack has said: 'They are to blame. Arendonk is not ready for

an asylum reception center'. The mayor is of the opinion that the director of the reception center is exaggerating this case.

2. Good practices and positive case studies established in order to reduce prejudice and violence

In the aftermath of the US attack the CEOOR has immediately launched a platform, which regroups 13 umbrella organizations so far, to fight increased racism. These organizations and their actions to fight racism and promote a peaceful multicultural society can be consulted on the website of the CEOOR, www.antiracisme.be/educatie . More organizations will join this platform in the near future. If necessary the different organizations agree to act as one front speaking with one voice in case of blatant eruptions of racism in the future.

Actions at the level of the Flemish and the French community.

- The CEOOR distributes, with the help of the Minister of Education of the Flemish Community, an overview of pedagogical tools against racism, see Website of the Centre. The CEOOR also starts a campaign "racism sucks".
- The CEOOR participates in a campaign sponsored by the French Community for the repartition of pedagogical tools. The campaign tries to mobilize the whole "Société civile". Name of this campaign: "La haine? Je dis non".

3. Reactions by politicians and other opinion makers including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends

- The CEOOR

It has launched a first small-scale campaign on September 18/01 one week after the US attack. It prepared a statement supporting a democratic, peaceful and open society targeting labor unions, NGO's, immigrant organizations, foundations, integration centers, etc. at the **local** level. In total 53 organizations have signed this statement.

Two weeks after the September 11 attack on October 4/01 the Center again launched a campaign, this time targeting the chairpersons of **political parties**. The campaign consists of a common declaration of 'mutual respect'. The chair, who sign this declaration on behalf of his/her political party, subscribes to the following values:

- equality;
- condemnation, of course, of terrorism
- the commitment not to confuse/equate terrorists with ordinary people from whatever group of the society
- avoiding simplistic theories in the media and schools, following whatever event in society.
- an open society, which respects everyone regardless of national, religious descent
- prominent alertness towards the fight against discrimination

The chairpersons of all democratic parties (excluding Vlaams Blok) have signed the declaration.

One month after the September 18/01 attack, the chairpersons of political parties and representatives of the different officially recognized religions, notably the Islamic,

Jewish and Christian religious communities, met at the Brussels Hotel de Ville to reiterate publicly their unwavering support to 'mutual respect'.

- Political figures

The Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt has declared shortly after the US attack that the war is launched against terrorist and not against the Muslim communities

- Academics

One University Professor, an expert in Islam states that 90% of the Muslim community in Belgium are working class. They are more concerned with their day-to-day problems instead of with religious.

Other University Professors try to explain the difference between muslims in Belgium and international terrorism.

- Muslim Leaders

More than once Muslim leaders have called their community not to respond violence with violence. This statement was reiterated when the mosque in Turnhout was attacked with rifle shots.

- Individuals

Many calls from individuals have been made to the CEOOR asking for more support and liaison work in youth centers.

An adolescent girl e.g. called the CEOOR for organizing a march countering the growing intolerance and racism towards Muslim communities.

DENMARK⁶

Naevet for Etnisk Ligestilling (The Danish Board for Ethnic Equality)

Since the 25th of September, 2001 Denmark has not experienced a decrease of cases of violence or aggression that might be related to the attack on USA.

The list below contains all recorded incidents that seem related to the terrorist attacks on USA and not listed in the first report. The incidents are not yet all confirmed by the police or otherwise. Some are just reports from people's own personal experience and not reported to the police and others are incidents reported in the press. The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination is currently working on confirming all the incidents. In the final report we will give as complete and correct a picture of the development of the situation as possible. The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination has registered other acts of discrimination that are not included in the report due to the fact that they can not be linked to the terrorist attacks.

Acts of violence or aggression after the 11th September

The Parliament stylist - a Muslim woman - several times experienced a person gesticulating that he was shooting her. *B.T. 23-09-2001*

A taxi-driver is assaulted verbally and threatened by a man on a bicycle. *Several newspapers*

In Elsinore a shop owned by people belonging to an ethnic minority was vandalized. *TV2-Lorry (the local news programme for greater Copenhagen and surrounding areas)*

A 14-year-old Muslim girl had her headscarf torn off while shopping in a supermarket. The incident took place in Odense suburb Vollsmose that is inhabited by a large proportion of ethnic minorities. *The news (Profilen) on DR1 (public service channel) 17-10-01*

After 11-09-01: A woman of Palestinian origin was assaulted at a bus stop by an ethnic Danish woman. The woman spat on her and shouted, "Are you Muslims happy now?" (Har I Muslimer nu fået det, som I vil have det?). *The news Profilen on DR1 (public service channel) 17-10-01*

A young Muslim girl wearing a head scarf was thrown out of a taxi after being accused of being responsible for the bombings. *Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke (The Danish Association for International Cooperation)*

A woman cyclist had eggs thrown at her by a group of young men driving by in a car whilst they accused her of being a Muslim. The woman is of Indonesian descent and a Christian. *Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke (The Danish Association for International Cooperation)*

In the light of the bombing, sociologist Mustafa Hussain was verbally assaulted in the street of a Copenhagen neighbourhood. *Mellempfolkeligt Samvirke (The Danish Association for International Cooperation)*

⁶ Author of the report for Denmark is Peter Hervik, ph.d, AnthroWise, s.m.b.a.

The former national telephone company, Teledanmark notes an increase in the amount of hate speech-SMS´ received at www.dingelink.dk . The web-site is an exchange service for customers leaving “funny” messages or pictures on the site so that others can down-load them to their cell-phones. Teledanmark removes racist and other offensive SMS´ several times a day. *Teledanmark employee*

A well-known Muslim living in Copenhagen has been subjected to telephone harassment late at night. *The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination client - not reported to the police*

An Iraqi refugee driving a three-wheeled moped, was held at gun-point one evening by a group of young men driving by in a car. They threatened to kill terrorists like him. The incident took place in one of the wealthiest municipalities in Denmark. *The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination client - is being reported to the police*

16-09-01: An Iraqi refugee couple has explained how the woman had a miscarriage, and bled a lot. Her husband called emergency services but they refused to send an ambulance. In stead the couple was told to take a taxi. At the hospital the woman had a cardiac arrest after having waited for 3 hours without being attended to. She was brought back to life but felt so uncomfortable with the hospital services that she chose to return home the same day. *The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination client - a complaint is being filed*

12-09-2001: A Pakistani restaurant in Copenhagen had the windows smashed to pieces with cobble stones. *The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination client - reported to the police*

13-09-2001: On their web-site, the president of the ultra-rightwing organisation, Dansk Forum (Danish Forum) urges people to boycott the local greengrocer´s that are by and large owned by ethnic minorities. *B.T. 23-09-2001*

14-09-2001: A man of Pakistani descent was passed by a man in the street who in a gesture showed that he was shooting him. *The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination client - not reported to the police*

15-09-01: At Asylum Centre Hinnerup a group of approx. 15 boys turned up shouting abusively and waving baseball bats. The police knows the identity of the boys and are checking up on them to prevent further harassment and to protect them from vindictive attacks. *Danish Red Cross*

App. 15-09-01: A Muslim girl wearing a head scarf was assaulted by a man in the street. He tore off her scarf and spat in her face. The incident took place in Copenhagen. *The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination client - not reported to the police*

15-09-2001: On their web-site, www.danskforum.dk , a member of Dansk Forum encourages people to leave a blob of snot on the windscreen of a car belonging to a Muslim who had supported what was happening in USA on national television. He also encouraged spitting on the man. *B.T. 23-09-2001*

18-09-01: At Asylum Centre Broens empty bottles were thrown at the buildings. *Danish Red Cross - reported to the police*

18-09-2001: In a letter to the editor a local council member of Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party) connected immigrants and refugees to the spread of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis and to the increase of serious crimes - such as rape and murder. The letter was a comment to the attack on USA. *Nordjyske Stiftstidende 18-09-2001*

19-09-01: At Asylum Centre Brovst the driver of a blue Ford Sierra twice attempted to hit an asylum-seeker walking on the side walk. The attempts took place at 2 and 5 p.m. *Danish Red Cross - reported to the police*

20-09-2001: Fire was set to a house under construction for a refugee family. The roof burned down. *Morgenavisen Jyllandsposten 20-09-2001*

30-09-01: In an Aarhus suburb, Gjellerupparken, a bomb exploded at a bus stop. The offender left an emergency flash light with a note saying, "Danish - Denmark now!" The suburb is inhabited by a large proportion of ethnic minorities. *As informed by the local police*

06-10-01: In Broens village the Danish National Socialist Movement (DNSB) dispersed flyers saying, "Denmark for the Danes" (Danmark for danskerne) in letter boxes and on the wind shields of cars. Three unknown young men seen in Broens village are prime suspects. *Jyske Vestkysten 07-10-01*

07-10-01: In a Copenhagen suburb, Roedovre, unknown offenders set fire to a kiosk owned by a man of Pakistani origin. No persons were injured though it was late at night and several people were sleeping in the flat above the kiosk. The kiosk was severely damaged. *Nordjyske Stiftstidende 08-10-01 - police is investigating but has no leads*

14-10-01: In Asylum Centre Galten unknown offenders painted a swastika on a wall. *Danish Red Cross - reported to the police*

App. 12-10-01: A pizzeria in the small town Birkerød was vandalized by unknown offenders. *TV2-Lorry (the local news programme for greater Copenhagen and surrounding areas)*

07-10-01: Several people were put in great danger when unknown offenders set fire to a mini market in Copenhagen suburb, Roedovre. The shop is owned by a person of Pakistani origin. *MetroXpress 09-10-01 - under investigation*

Changes in attitude

Since the 11th of September several opinion polls have been taken measuring attitudes to Muslims in Denmark.

A poll in the newspaper "Soendagsavisen" (14.10.01) carried out by the consulting group PLS Ramboell showed that 21% of those asked said that their opinion of Muslims in Denmark has become "more negative" since 11th September. 75% saying that their opinion had not changed.

In the weekly journal "Ugebrevet Mandag Morgen" the results of an internet opinion poll carried out by Zapera A/S showed that 64% of those asked believe that the events of 11th September will have a negative effect on people's attitudes towards Muslims. 36% believe that "Western culture" is superior to "Muslim culture", and that 83% believe that Muslims in Denmark should receive tuition in Danish democratic values.

An opinion poll conducted by Sonar and printed in the newspaper "Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten" reveals that 59% of those asked, believe that the "terror attack on USA" has had a negative effect on their attitude towards Muslims living in Denmark.

However, the Institute for Societal Trends (Institut for Konjunkturanalyse) conducted an opinion poll for The Ministry of Justice which showed that "the Danes'" concern about "immigrants and refugees" has fallen since the 11th of September (Politiken 15-10-01). However, the director believes that this is because people are focusing more on "bigger" issues at the moment like the likelihood of war.

It can also be remarked that the sales figures of the Koran are increasing drastically. This is seen both as a positive and a negative trend. Some people have bought it to broaden their horizon and find out what the religion is really about. They might read it and ask questions to Muslim organizations or opinion leaders. Others find verses to support their theory of Islam as medieval, repressive towards women or extremist. Muslim opinion leaders that The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination has been in contact with or who have appeared in the media, report that they have received numerous questions about and comments on Islam.

The magazine Ugebladet Soendag had planned to bring an article about a Christian/Muslim family and how they celebrate Christmas. About a week after the terrorist attacks on USA, the family was notified that the interview was cancelled because Muslims - according to the magazine - no longer was interesting reading. The case was mentioned in the newspaper Urban (23-09-01).

The Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination has also received the following reports from Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke (The Danish Association for International Cooperation) about individuals and their experiences in change in attitude:

A person with ethnic minority background working for a local council feels isolated at work after the attacks. Her colleagues also make funny remarks like "did you bring a bomb in your bag?".

The chairman of a Palestinian association says that a volunteer has dropped out of a homework project. Further, people who usually support his work for the integration of ethnic minorities now claim that it is a waste of time trying to integrate the Palestinian thugs in Vollsmose (an Odense suburb). And the chairman faces disbelief from his surroundings when he claims that he fled to Denmark from the terror - and that he will not tolerate terror.

A teacher in Danish at a language school claims that a colleague expressed disgust for Muslim students and their reactions upon what happened in USA. All Muslims are alike, the colleague said.

A girl of Moroccan descent says her boss who was usually kind and open-minded towards ethnic minorities now says that all "immigrants" are alike whether they live in Vollsmose or Noerrebro (Copenhagen neighbourhood).

A postal service employee of Palestinian descent describes suddenly how colleagues accuse her/him of sympathizing with terrorism although she/he has condemned the attacks on USA and the jublations of a small group of young boys of Palestinian descent in Vollsmose. The employee is unhappy and no longer looks forward to going to work. She/he expresses that jokes about Palestinian terrorism have long ceased to be amusing. She/he feels that her/his colleagues' behaviour is forcing her/him into a "being more Muslim than I originally am". "My son is harassed at school by his classmates". And finally she/he says, "15,000 Palestinians in Denmark are now paying the price of the bad behaviour of 20 Palestinians in Vollsmose and Noerrebro".

Good practices for reducing prejudice, violence and aggression

On the 15th of October Copenhagen's Police Force met with several well known ethnic minority organisations and the city's Board for Integration. They publicly announced that the police has intensified its efforts around the city to secure the safety of Copenhagen's ethnic minorities and their meeting places. This is being done in order to stem the increased amount of attacks on ethnic minorities since 11th September and to counteract the general feeling of insecurity that many ethnic minorities are presently feeling. Methods include extra street patrols and "house-calls" to shops, etc. owned by people belonging to ethnic minorities.

Many leading Danish politicians have emphasized that terrorism is not related to Islam and that the events of the 11th of September must not lead to revenge attacks on Muslims and ethnic minorities living in Denmark. (See below for further comments)

Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders

It must be emphasised that the Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen and other leading figures within the social democratic government, like the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mogens Lykketoft, have consistently appealed to the Danish population to distinguish between terrorists and the Islamic community in Denmark, stressing that this is not a war against Islam but a war against terror. This also applies to the leaders of the main opposition party Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and the leaders of all other mainstream parties. The only exception being The Danish Peoples Party (Dansk Folkeparti). The Danish People's Party has on several occasions publicly attacked Islam and drawn a direct connection between terror and Islam, with the party leader, Pia Kjærsgaard stating that Islam needs to be fought and Mogens Camre (MEP, The Danish People's Party) directly connecting terror to Islam.

Although the government has clearly distinguished between Islam and the occurrence of terrorism, the Danish Prime Minister has, however, called for leaders of the Islamic community in Denmark to actively denounce terrorism and state that the Danish constitution is above the Koran and that religion and politics should be kept separate. This has aroused resentment amongst some ethnic minority organisations in Denmark as they believe that this should not be necessary and by asking them to actively take a stance throws suspicion on all Muslims in Denmark.

On the 1st of October the Danish Prime Minister together with the Minister for Ecclesiastic Affairs met with representatives from Denmark's Islamic community. This meeting was a replacement meeting for a similar meeting which had been cancelled the week before, because the Prime Minister believed that some of the 15 participants were too extremist.

Out of the original 15 only 7 were invited to the second meeting. The remaining invitations went to politicians with an Islamic background, and one went to a politician who has converted to Christianity.

After the meeting the Prime Minister announced that all participants had agreed to denounce terrorism, that democracy comes before religion and that religion and politics should be kept separate.

In line with the Prime Minister's statement on the separation of religion and politics he has as yet not visited a Mosque. The Prime Minister has explained that he refuses to discuss politics in a religious meeting place.

Parliaments opening day debate after the summer recess (4.10.01):

The debate started with an appeal from the chairman of the social democratic party emphasising that the attack in New York and Washington on 11th September in USA was not carried out by Muslims but by a few fanatical Muslims. This appeal was supported by the mutual agenda for the debate agreed upon by all parties, except for The Danish People's Party, stating that no ethnic or religious groups should be made responsible for the terrorist attack in USA. However, the main content of the rest of the debate was a mixture of the Danish official reaction to 11th September and immigration and integration policy, including rules for gaining Danish citizenship, and whether international terrorists are living in Denmark.

A focal point within the debate was when Pia Kjaersgaard announced that after the events in USA and because of its fundamentalist tendencies that Islam should be fought intensely. This resulted in a strong reaction from all other parties. The leaders of Venstre and The Conservative People's Party, who constitute the main opposition coalition, disassociated themselves strongly from Kjaersgaard's remarks, and Keld Albrechtsen from the leftist party Enhedslisten accused Kjaersgaard of breaking the Danish constitution which secures the individual's right to religious association.

Danish People's Party Annual General meeting

After their annual general meeting several members of Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party) were reported to the police for violation of section 266 b of the Criminal Code.

Member of the EU Parliament, Mogens Camre, was quoted by the journalist in a news paper (Politiken 17-09-01) the following day for having said "All Countries of the Western World are infiltrated by Muslims - some of them speak to us politely, whilst they wait until they are enough to kill all of us".

Another member of Dansk Folkeparti Michael Rex proclaimed that "Islam is not a religion in it's proper sense. It's a terrorist movement".

Also Kenneth Kristensen member of Dansk Folkeparti proclaimed, "in Denmark you are not allowed to say things how they are - call a spade for a spade - call a so-called second generation immigrant that which he is, a dense deviant. The fact is that the majority of these young Arabs are criminals who, with their worshipping of violence and their intense hate, continue the traditions their parents have given them". (Politiken 18.09.01).

FINLAND

Ihmisoikeusliitto Ry
(Finnish League for Human Rights)

General comments

This report will cover the time period starting already on 12th of September, as some of the relevant and important opinions of politicians and citizens were expressed during the first days after the terrorist attacks in newspapers and in other media. Most of the articles are quoted from Helsingin Sanomat, which is the biggest newspaper in Finland. The circulation of the newspaper is about 500.000 copies and there are ca. 1,2 million readers every day. Basically, 27 % of the Finnish population and 68 % of the people living in the capital area reads the newspaper.

One mayor problem to follow-up the hostile attacks is that people don't report them. But, we have contacted different Islamic communities, Parishes, kindergardens etc. in Finland in order to ask them to report us on any related or any relevant situations in the up-coming months. All of them are very cooperative and willing to help us with the research.

In our report, there are some cases on harassments of Muslim people. Of course, in some cases, it is very difficult to know, whether the attack or harassment is connected to the terrorist attacks, if it is not especially expressed verbally or literally.

Acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the Finnish population towards ethnic, cultural, religious minorities (especially Muslim/Islamic communities, but also other vulnerable groups or new types of victims), related to the recent terrorist attacks in the USA

Verbal reports

There are different registered Islamic communities in Finland, for instance the Finnish Islamic Congregation (Suomen Islam-seurakunta) and the Finnish Islam Society (Suomen Islamilainen Yhdyskunta). The Finnish Islamic Congregation, which is also a Tatar society, is established already in 1925 and majority of its 700 members are the 5th generation minority from the Tatar villages of the Volga area. The Tatars have been able to keep and practice their mother tongue, religion and culture during the integration process into the Finnish society, but at the same time they have strong Finnish identity.

The Finnish Islamic Congregation told the Finnish League for Human Rights that there has not been any verbal or physical attacks or threats against their members. Obviously this is because of the long history they have in Finland and of the successful integration process into the Finnish society and also because they look like Finnish people. They said they have felt a bit embarrassed of the fact that all Muslims are connected to these terrorist attacks and they have been following up the related events with a great concern as any other Finnish people. The Finnish Islamic Congregation has although increased the security control at their graveyard in Helsinki and also they are more careful at locking the doors and gates of their offices and of their other property. They also use security cameras. The Tampere region's Finnish Islamic Congregation has also reported us that there have not been any changes in the attitudes of citizens or any verbal or physical attacks to their knowledge.

The Finnish Islam Society was established in 1987 and most of its 500 members are immigrants from the past two decades. Majority of its members look different than Finnish citizens. The Imam of the Finnish Islam Society told the Finnish League for Human Rights that their Islamic kindergarden had gotten some threats by phone. He mentioned that their society had received two letters. The other letter was a threat one and in the second, the anonymous writer wanted to convert Muslims to Christians because of the terrorist attacks. Finnish League for Human Rights has asked for the copies of these letters. The Imam said that Muslim people have felt changes in the attitudes of the majority of the citizens. These changes of attitudes have come up, e.g. at their workplaces and on the street. The attacks have been more verbal than physical, e.g. "You are speaking the same language as the terrorist!" and many ordinary Arabs and Muslims feel that people stare at them. But there has been at least one physical attack in Espoo, (city next to Helsinki), where some days after the terrorist attacks some people had thrown stones towards a Muslim woman. Also, there was a situation where a Muslim was pushed in a tram.

From another source the Finnish League for Human Rights heard that a group of Finnish and immigrant women, who were wearing veils, had gone together for a cruise some days after the terrorist attacks. During the trip Finnish people had accused and attacked the immigrant women verbally, blaming them to be terrorists and demanding them "to return home".

Another situation was when a policeman stopped a Kurd woman, when she was driving a car. When she asked for the reason, the policeman told that they had been reported that she acted in a suspicious way. This is quite clear reflection of the suspicious attitude people have against foreign looking people.

Reports in media

We are positively surprised of the many anti-racist and anti-xenophobic reactions citizens have expressed e.g. in Helsingin Sanomat and we want to point out those in the results of the research, too. There have been a lot of comments from the readers in the opinion page in which they have expressed their concern on possible rising of racism and xenophobia. Also, some people have criticised stereotyping all Muslims as fundamentalists because of the terrorist attacks. Many people have hoped that there wouldn't be revenge attacks against any country.

Also, people have connected the terrorist attacks to a wider perspective of the current unequal situation of the world politics, economics and distribution of wealth and they are concerned on the attacks towards Afghanistan. Also, many foreign researchers and citizens e.g. Palestinians, Americans and Israelis have been able to express their opinions and views on the whole situation. Most of their articles have underlined tolerance and peaceful way to deal with the issue.

There has been a lot of concern about the new stricter security checks and the possible changes in law in different countries and in Finland and how these changes would affect on the status of refugees, immigrants and foreign looking people.

On the 19th of September, Helsingin Sanomat mentioned a situation where they had wanted to interview a manager of a travel agency, which arranges flights to Iran. The manager did not want his company's name to be published. He said that he did not want that his travel agency would be related to the Islamic and terrorist states. He described veil using people as "rag heads" and accused that these people can carry guns under their veils.

There has been a lot of reporting on what is happening on the world and in the other states concerning the attacks towards Muslim and rising of racism and xenophobia. For a certain time period Helsingin Sanomat has also published daily an article “World discussing on terrorism”, in which different reactions all over world were reflected. Helsingin Sanomat reported also on the EUMC report release concerning the changes of the attitudes in European Union countries. The newspaper reported also on the creation of the Swedish Committee against Islamophobia in Sweden. On one hand, this news might influence the Finnish citizens to understand the meaningless of attacking ethnic minorities. On the other hand, the news which report the violent clashes between Muslims and other groups and pictures of demonstrators against USA create anger and xenophobia.

On the 21st of September, Helsingin Sanomat reported that there have been harassments against Muslim people. Verbal attacks, letters and phone calls have been typical ways of harassing Muslim people. One of the worst events was a threat call to a kindergarden in Helsinki.

Also, Kansan Uutiset, which is another smaller national newspaper, had reported that some kindergardens, which have Islamic children, have got many threats. The newspaper analysed that only a minority racist group is behind these threats, but the danger is that majority of the citizens will react neutrally in racist violence, or they might even tolerate racist violence more than ever.

Helsingin Sanomat has reported that books about Islam and Koran have been recently very popular. The bookstores have reported they have sold these books three times more than before. People are obviously curious about Islam and are looking for some answers.

There has been demand for stricter security checks in the borders in order to avoid the entrance of possible terrorists. Helsingin Sanomat published on the 17th of October that one of the terrorist had applied tourist visa to Finland last year. In our mind, this news might create more similar demands.

Good practices for reducing prejudice, violence and aggression

On the 19th of September, Helsingin Sanomat reported on a demonstration, which had taken place in front of the Embassy of the United States in Helsinki two days before. There were about 50 people demonstrating and hoping that USA would not use revenge against the terrorists, but instead bring the terrorist in front of the justice. There have been similar expressions against revenge from the readers of Helsingin Sanomat.

There has been constructive criticism on the low knowledge in Finland about the other countries and cultures, e.g. on Islamic culture. Researchers and Muslim people have taken an active role in correcting the wrong terminology and beliefs, which people have about Muslims and Islam. It is a positive thing that Muslim people have been able to express their views and concerns about the situation, as well.

Helsingin Sanomat reported that there was a big praying event in the Senate's Square in Helsinki on the 24th of September. It was attended by all the different religions in Finland.

On the 1st of October, Helsingin Sanomat wrote an article about Islam, in which it explained the terminology and the basic information on Islam. The article was a good informative overview and informed people, who don't know much or anything about Islam.

On the TV, there have been many documentaries on Islam and also many discussion programmes, where people from different background (Muslim, politicians, NGO's, army people etc.) have been able to speak about Islam, possible rise of racism and the terrorist attacks.

The University of Joensuu has started a Master's Degree programme on Islam and west. The programme had started already before the terrorist attacks, but it will take into account the recent events. The purpose of this programme is to promote the dialogue between cultures and religions through politics and culture.

Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends:

On the 16th of September the Islam workgroup of the Finnish Lutheran Church expressed its concern on the possible intolerance towards the Muslim people in Finland (see attachment 1). Although our society is secular, the Church has certain authority, because almost 90% of Finns are Lutherans.

On the 17th of September the Minister of Labour, Mrs. Tarja Filatov pointed out that collective accusing of all the Arabs and Islamic world should not be done. She also stressed that there should be always a dialogue between the Arab countries and the western world: that helps to enhance human and social rights. (See attachment 2).

On the 18th of September the Imam of Finnish Islam Society expressed his gratitude to the Finnish government and the Lutheran church on their solidarity in an interview in Helsingin Sanomat. He mentioned that after the attacks Muslim people were harassed verbally, by staring and also by e-mails. He told that the first days Muslims stayed inside as much as possible and avoided going out. He said that fortunately the expressions of politicians etc. have decreased the tension. On the same page also Bishop of Helsinki City was interviewed and he hoped people would stay calm. (See attachment 34).

On the 19th of September the vice-president of the Centre party, Mrs. Maria-Kaisa Aula stressed that there should not be accusations of whole nations, cultures or religions because of the terrorist attacks. Mrs. Aula warned about the possible conflict of civilizations. (See attachment 4).

On the 21st of September the previous president of Finland, Mr. Mauno Koivisto wished calmness in the battles against terrorists. Mr. Koivisto also underlined that Islam is not a violent religion and that no religious motives are real reasons behind the terrorist attacks. Mr. Koivisto analysed the situation between the poor and rich countries and the historical background of exploitation by the western countries. (See attachment 8)

On the 22nd of September the Head Councillor of Bangladesh in Helsinki, Mr. Harry Blässar wrote a letter to the editor of Helsingin Sanomat. He underlined that humankind shouldn't be divided into south and north and it would be wrong to see all the Muslim people as terrorists. (See attachment 12)

There was a discussion in the Finnish Parliament on Finnish foreign policy and Human Rights on the 4th of October. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja expressed his concern on the strict security acts and possible effects, i.e. human rights violations and racist phenomena. (See attachment 21).

FRANCE

Agence pour le développement des relations interculturelles (ADRI) (Agency for the development of intercultural relations)

This French report covers a time-period between September 14th and October 19th 2001. It is based almost exclusively on a selection of French national press clippings.

1. Verbal or physical attacks

The national media did not report any verbal attacks and insults against Muslims people in France. Nevertheless, through different articles, some tension is mentioned in everyday life in suburban areas where the Islamic community is concentrated (*la Croix*, 17/09/01-*Libération*, 29/09/01). However, except for a racist attacks against Moroccans in Corsica (seven young people have been arrested in Corsica for racist attacks against twenty Moroccans workers; they were accused of shouting and hurling stones on slum where Maghrebian people are living, *Le Monde*, 23/09/01), no new aggressions against Muslims have been certified by the media.

Only few anecdotal press clippings are notifying these tensions:

- An Egyptian writer has been arrested by mistake after having done in his hostel a phone call to London in Arabian language during a cultural congress in Aix-en-Provence and then he has been released. (*Le Monde*, 14/10/01).
- Two local authorities have declared their intention to suspend deliverance of residential attestation for Foreigners because of the present context after the terrorist attacks. These attestations are necessary to obtain a visa for visitors. But the State administration has quickly denounced this illegal refusal of an official document.

Various reports are describing signs of distrust against Muslims and Arabs (*Le Monde*, 30/09/01) :

- Maghrebian young people have been treated as terrorists in Sevran, a town located in the periphery of Paris
- Some complaints are mentioned after verbal aggressions done by policemen during control of young people in Paris (*Le Parisien*, 19/09/01)
- Some anti Arabs graffiti have been relieved in Marseille (*Le Parisien*, 19/09/01)
- Bearded men are object of mistrust in some suburban cities (*Le Parisien*, 19/09/01)
- Witnesses observed that some people decided to change their subway train when Maghrebians got in (*Le Parisien*, 19/09/01)

2. Good practices

- Symposium:
A symposium has been organised in Paris about the thematic of “The current scene of tradition and presence of Islam in Europe”. The meeting has concluded on the process of integration of Islam in the European context despite some difficulties. (*Libération*, 8/10/01)

- Opinion poll:
An important opinion poll about French Muslims attitudes has showed that their attitudes and positions are in a large majority moderate when facing the USA attacks (*Le Monde*, 5/10/01)
- Educational actions:
The emotions expressed by the children after TV report about terrorist events have persuaded the French teachers to explain and debate on the situation in many schools in France (*L'Humanité*, 3/10/01)
- Creation of an Islam council of France:
After terrorist attacks against U.S.A, the French public authority is aware of the emergency of helping the constitution of a new Islam council of France. On this purpose, some official talks have been open between different leaders of the Muslim community since last year and they should lead up on a representative comity. (*Libération*, 3/10/01)
- Ecumenical meetings have been organised in different places in France (*La Croix*, 26/09/01; *Le Monde*, 4/10/01). Different religious leaders have declared that they wish to extend ecumenical dialogue.

3. Reactions of French politics

The French public authority and different leaders of political parties have called for calm and for making a clear-cut difference between the Islamic populations and terrorism. Extreme right political organisations have adopted two different attitudes. On the one hand, the National republican movement (M.N.R.) have linked the “immigration policy of different governments” and Islam fanaticism. This political party has suggested an Anti-terrorist plan that consists in suppressing public subsidy to Islamic Non Profits Organisations and in allowing only French workers into airports. On the other hand, the French National front (F.N.) has more insisted on the American political responsibility into this current situation in France. (*Libération*, 19/09/01)

Reaction of the French government:

The Prime minister Jospin has congratulated the populations living in suburban areas for their maturity in this crisis. (*Libération*, 3/10/01)

Reactions at local level:

Local mayors have declared that they want to take advantage of this international crisis to increase their relations with the Muslim community (*Le Monde*, 30/09/01).

4. The French Media

The position of the French media after the attacks against U.S. has been generally moderate in such a crisis context. Nevertheless the arrests France of Maghrebian people related to Anti-terrorist inquiry could generate some trouble and mistrust within the French public opinion. Press reports about the personality of some young French Muslims who have been accused to be connected to terrorist networks could create new xenophobic stereotypes. Some current trials of different Islamic groups, and more recently, some anecdotal news concerning cases

of “urban violence” might well complicate the situation of Muslim populations in France. Some public debate on Islam could develop a form of Islamophobic arguments as well. Moreover, incidents during the so-called “historical” football game between France and Algeria bring about a controversial debate on the French model of “integration” and on what is today the patriotic feeling.

GERMANY

Europäisches Forum für Migrationsstudien (efms) (European Forum for Migration Studies)

1. Acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU population towards ethnic, cultural, religious minorities (especially Muslim/Islamic communities but also other vulnerable groups or new types of victims), related to the recent terrorist attacks in the USA

1.1 Introduction

First of all there is a broad consensus among the media, the politicians and in public discourse that the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington have nothing to do with the Muslim community in general. A sharp differentiation is made throughout all political parties, governmental organisations and newspapers, so that in public the situation seems to be quite calm.

Nevertheless, there are some indicators for a change of attitudes towards Muslims. Infratest, one of the leading opinion research institutes, asked a representative sample of interviewees, whether there is greater scepticism towards Muslims than before the terrorist attacks. 19 per cent agreed that they personally feel more sceptical than before. That means on the other hand that an overwhelming majority reported to not have changed their attitudes towards Muslims (Der Spiegel 39/2001, p. 13).

1.2 Physical Attacks

Despite of the quite moderate public debate, a few physical and some verbal attacks have been reported.

- The spokesman of the “German Speaking Muslim Community” (“Islamische Gemeinschaft deutschsprachiger Muslime”) said that in Berlin some Muslim women have been spit at and torn down their scarves. He himself received murder threats because he converted to Islam (die tageszeitung, 29.09.01)
- The chairman of the “Metal Workers Trade Union” (“IG Metall”), the largest trade union in Germany, reported occasional physical attacks against Muslims at workplace. Though these have been only a few cases, he took the position that there is a latent suspiciousness towards Muslims (or people who look “differently”) among non-Muslim Germans (Frankfurter Rundschau, 29.09.01).

1.3 Verbal Attacks and Suspicious

This seems to be the most important point. Physical attacks have been very rare, verbal attacks happen more frequently. So some Muslim children have been verbally abused at school by other pupils (TV magazine “Monitor”, 18.10.01) and this seems to be no singular case.

When asking Muslim organisations in Germany (or even friends and acquaintances of Muslim or “foreign looking” background) there is definitely a perception of a certain mistrust. “They stare at me when I take the underground”, “I noticed that they whispered behind my back”, statements like these published in newspapers and heard in personal conversation show the uncertainty among many Muslims living in Germany.

The “Muslim Central Council” (“Zentralrat der Muslime”) remarked that verbal attacks “keep within the limits”, but the development depends on a possible international or even worldwide political escalation (die tageszeitung, 29.09.01).

1.4 Public Desire of Information

Figures about verbal abuse against Muslims are still not available, but some other figures show a demand for information about Islam throughout the German society. The Koran is sold out in most bookshops, the same is true for many books about Islamic history and law, Afghanistan and other related subjects. At the “Frankfurt Book Fair” (“Frankfurter Buchmesse”) many publishers announced reprints and new books concerning these topics because of the risen interest (Der Spiegel, 08.10.01).

The “Day of the Open Mosque” (“Tag der offenen Moschee”, arranged by the Muslim Central Council), a regular event on October, 3rd, where non-Muslims are invited to visit mosques and talk to members of Muslim communities all over Germany, received very much more attention and attracted many more visitors than in the years before (Frankfurter Rundschau, 04.10.01).

1.5 Conclusion

In general, violent attacks have been rarely reported, so that the situation in itself cannot be seen as critical. But the international crisis and questions of national security definitely have a strong impact on the public discourse. The lack of information in the past produces both a suspiciousness in certain parts of the German non-Muslim society and also an enormously increasing interest for information on the Islam.

2. Good practices for reducing prejudice, violence and aggression

To report about “good practice that has been successful in avoiding the increase of prejudice...after the terrorist attack...” is almost impossible. Good practice in the sense of projects and initiatives is mostly orientated towards success in the long run. Judging the success of certain projects being initiated after the terrorist attacks would be much too early. Without knowing any lasting effects there have been and are numerous initiatives and actions to fight Anti-Islamic prejudice. To give only one example:

The Youth of the United Service Trade Union (ver.di) started an initiative called “Courage on the Workplace” (“Zivilcourage im beruflichen Umfeld”) on October, 12th. This initiative offers one-week seminars and project days, where members of work committees, instructors, vocational school teachers and others learn to handle with prejudices, discrimination and violence against employees of foreign background (not only Muslims). The launching of this project is directly related to the fact that Trade Unionists reported a certain climate of suspiciousness and mistrust in several companies (referring to point 1.2; www.zibu.verdi-jugend-bayern.de and Nürnberger Nachrichten, 13.10.01).

Good practice in the sense of speeches and symbolic acts are also numerous. Representatives of all political parties, of the Federal Government and ministers of the Länder used the “Day of the Open Mosque” (mentioned in Point 1.4) to visit Muslim communities and mosques throughout the country, often accompanied by a strong response of the media. For example, the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Interior gave a speech in Berlin where she appealed for an intensified “dialogue of cultures and religions”.

3. Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends

3.1 Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders

Many politicians have expressed their solidarity with the Islamic community in Germany verbally and/or by symbolic acts. Some of them visited mosques (for example the chief minister and the interior minister of Bavaria) to set a sign for tolerance and to show the necessity to differentiate between the Islamic community and terrorists.

Also on the local level there are numerous initiatives to counteract negative trends. In Nürnberg, for example, representatives from mosques and Muslim organisations have met the Lord Mayor and representatives from other religious and social groups. They have decided to constitute a working group of the Muslims of Nürnberg organized by the municipality (Nürnberger Nachrichten, 19.10.01).

On a common press conference with the president of the Council for Muslims, the Federal Government's Commissioner for Foreigners' Issues pointed out that the planned security measures (see under 3.2) could endanger the integration of foreigners in Germany (press release from "Muslim Central Council", 18.10.01).

3.2 Legislative and security measures

- The so-called screen search (Rasterfahndung), a computer based investigation trying to find suspects by looking systematically at certain selected categories of people, was introduced to discover potential "sleepers" living in Germany. Especially students from Arab countries are kept under intensified observation by the police. This method is criticised from different sides. Representatives of the students said that screen search puts all students with Muslim faith under general suspicion (Frankfurter Rundschau, 26.09.01). The president of the Muslim Central Council reported that the apartments of some members of the Islamic community had been searched unfounded. Other persons are reported to have been called for interrogation in the middle of the night (Tagesschau, 02.10.01).

After the terrorist attacks against the U.S. the following legislative measures are being discussed:

- The Federal Minister of Interior has submitted a draft for the change of the law of association (Vereinsgesetz). According to this draft the "privilege of religion" (Religionsprivileg) shall be abandoned, which means that extremist associations could no longer enjoy protection as "religious communities" or could be forbidden at all (www.bmi.bund.de).

- The Minister also intends to introduce identity characteristics of all visa-applicants like fingerprints and other biometric characteristics. Moreover it is intended to subject all applicants for German citizenship to a security check by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Regelanfrage beim Verfassungsschutz) (www.spiegel.de). That means to check whether there are any indications of unconstitutional activities of the respective person.

- Both the Federal Minister of Interior and the federal states of Bavaria and Lower Saxony want to change the Aliens Act so that it would be easier to expel criminal and extremist foreigners.

GREECE

Information Centre for Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non-Violence (Infocenter)

1. Acts of violence or aggression against ethnic, cultural, or religious minorities, especially Muslim/Islamic communities, but also other vulnerable groups as a result directly or indirectly of the terrorist attacks

There have been no reports of direct acts of violence or aggression against either the indigenous or the migrant Muslim communities in Greece.

However, Infocenter feels that the treatment of Afghan and Iraqi refugees by the Greek state should be noted. According to evidence provided by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees there are almost 15.000 Afghan refugees on the Turkish coast waiting to cross the sea to the Greek islands. On a daily basis 70 – 80 refugees arrive by any means on Greek islands. The National Council for Refugees has stated publicly that it has no more resources to accommodate the increasing numbers of refugees, since hotels, camping sites and any other available accommodation is now full. The National Council for Refugees accuses police authorities for refusing to allow Afghan refugees to petition for asylum in violation of the 1951 Geneva Convention ratified by Greece in 1959.

The Greek police in response to a request by the FBI and Interpol have recently raided a number of unofficial Mosques⁷ in Athens in search of several hundred Muslims assumed to reside in Greece (Newspaper Sunday Eleftherotypia 14/10/2001, http://www.enet.gr/online/online_p1_text.jsp?dt=14/10/2001&c=112&id=59545). No mistreatment of any individuals was reported, but NGOs have claimed that such actions may create a climate of mistrust.

2. Changes in the attitude of the Greek population towards ethnic, cultural, or religious minorities, especially Muslim/Islamic communities but also other vulnerable groups

The recent terrorist attacks against the USA have had mixed and contradictory effects upon political attitudes in Greece. As indicated in the previous report there are now more anti-American incidents (anti-war demonstrations, burning of American flags, etc.), rather than anti-Muslim, although this may change in the future depending mainly on political developments in the Balkans.

Since the Infocenter has no objective and reliable research data at this stage we can only speculate on the basis of media reports and discussions with NGOs. The observations that are presented should therefore be treated with caution, as they are not based on research findings.

Nevertheless, the Infocenter feels that the recent media focus on Islam and Muslims is gradually beginning to affect the attitudes of Greek society towards Muslims in both a negative and a positive way.

⁷ There are no Mosques in Athens despite repeated requests by many of the almost 250.000 Muslims who live in the Greater Athens area. The planning permission to officially designate a building as a place of worship has to be approved by the Greek Orthodox Church that refuses to grant such a request. Mosques are officially allowed only in those areas in Thrace where the indigenous Muslim minority lives according to the 1923 Lausanne Treaty.

In a negative way in so far as Muslims are presented in the media discourse either as a possible “internal security threat” through their association with terrorism or a through their identification with Turkish or Albanian nationalism as a “national threat”. Lately some newspapers have carried articles claiming for the first time that although unemployment among Greeks is rising “Muslim immigrants are used as slave labour by subcontractors for the building of the Olympic Village.”

In a positive way in so far as Muslims are also presented in media discourse as champions of anti-Americanism and fighting for the preservation of religious and national identity in a globalised world.

The Muslim community in Greece is composed of two distinct groups:

A.1. The indigenous Muslim community in Northern Greece (Region of Thrace) composed of ethnic Turks, Pomaks and Roma and the islands of Rhodes and Kos composed of ethnic Turks.

A.2. Muslim immigrants (mostly unregistered) and asylum seekers coming mainly from Albania, Turkey (Kurds), Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran who reside mostly in the metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki.

** Albanians are overall not practicing Muslims and do not fit the Muslim stereotype constructed by the media.*

The Muslim minority in general has traditionally been a favorite target for nationalists from both the right and the left, some of which are academics and influential politicians – members of the Greek Parliament or elected representatives in Local Authorities – from both major political parties (PASOK and New Democracy). Although they will rarely publish their views on newspapers, they appear very frequently on long chat shows in certain private popular TV stations (Alter Channel, Alpha TV, Extra Channel, High TV, TeleCity). Although their rhetoric and arguments are rarely openly racist, they will stress that Muslims are “foreign” to Greece in ethnic as well as cultural terms. In their discourse the distinction between ethnicity and religion is blurred implicitly identifying all Muslims with either ethnic Albanians or ethnic Turks and thus suggesting that Muslims are “by definition” enemies of Greece since they are either Albanians or Turks. One common characteristic of their discourse, however, is also a fervent anti-Americanism. This element, characteristic of the left political discourse, has become lately an integral part of the conservative nationalist rhetoric especially in view of the support given by the USA to Turkey in the Cyprus question and recently to ethnic Albanians in the Balkan conflicts.

Racist views and discourses do not necessarily take the form of open verbal attacks. The same message “Foreigners out” – “Auslander Raus” that could under certain conditions constitute in itself a criminal act in Greece (Article 1 of the 927/1979 Act of Parliament that defines any public incitement to acts that could cause any discrimination against persons or groups because of their race, national origin, or religion a criminal act), can easily be disguised as an “analysis” of the consequences of the presence of immigrants and minorities in Greek society, like the threat they are supposed to be for public safety, unemployment, etc without this act considered as criminal or politically condemnable.

The government, the Greek Parliament, politicians and opinion leaders have made repeated statements condemning terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, but also carefully distinguishing between Islam and terrorism. They are presented and examined in the context of the third question.

In addition it is worth noting that the recent sudden rise in the number of refugees and immigrants coming from Afghanistan and Iraq has led to a large number of alarmist

newspaper front page articles describing the situation as an “invasion”. Some of the articles are sympathetic to the plight of the refugees, while others are critical of the lack of proper facilities and care. All articles are strongly critical of the policy of Turkey to turn a blind eye to the wave of immigrants that gather in the cities of the Aegean coast waiting for the opportunity to cross the sea to a Greek island, but only a few will go as far as suggesting that this is the result of a “plot” to smuggle “Muslim terrorists” into Europe. Nevertheless ultra nationalist groups have been campaigning unsuccessfully for the repatriation of Muslim immigrants.

Also, it should be noted that a small section of the press published anti-Semitic articles concerning the rumor that Jews were not among the victims of the New York terrorist attacks (for instance the leading article of the newspaper Hora (18/09/2001). The ultra nationalist party LAOS led by Member of Parliament George Karatzaferis launched a combined anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic campaign through its TV station (TV-Asty) that was echoed by the newspaper Hora. The effect of this campaign cannot be considered politically significant.

3. Good practices and positive case studies established in order to reduce prejudice and violence

There have been no such examples yet. The Infocenter is at the moment preparing the publication of a leaflet explaining Islamic religion and culture for primary and secondary schools, but the Ministry of Education has not yet indicated its willingness to allow its circulation in schools. The Network of Social Support to Migrants and Refugees is also planning a similar campaign.

4. Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends

Politicians and opinion leaders from all political parties condemned the terrorist incidents without reservation.

A significant number of influential politicians, however, also declared their sympathy with the Arab world and dissociated terrorism from the national liberation struggles of people like the Palestinians. Indicative of this climate are the recent events during the Conference of the ruling party of Pasok, where the speech by Yasser Arafat was greeted with a long standing ovation, while the Israeli Minister of Labour who also addressed the conference was jeered (newspaper Eleftherotypia, 13.10.01, page 7).

Here is a list of significant statements made by politicians and other opinion leaders:

1. The Foreign Minister of Greece Mr. George Papandreou met with the Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomeus in Istanbul to discuss the organisation of an international summit meeting of all religious leaders in 2002 under the auspices of the European Union. This proposal has already been discussed with Israeli Foreign Minister Mr. Perez, the Palestinian leader Mr. Arafat, the Russian Foreign Minister Mr. Ivanov and the President of the European Commission Mr. Protti. The objective of this meeting will be to develop a climate of mutual understanding between mainly Islam and Christianity.

Archbishop Christodoulos, head of the Church of Greece, announced a similar initiative proposing a meeting in Athens of various Muslim, Christian and Jewish representatives.

2. The Archbishop of the Church of Greece Christodoulos in a speech attributed the recent terrorist attacks on “the wrath of God that descended upon those who believed that they were wise and powerful, but were proved to be unwise and powerless.” Greek Americans reacted angrily to this statement and the Press Office of the Greek Orthodox Church issued a statement arguing that the statement was taken out of context.

3. The Archbishop of the Church of Greece Christodoulos in a recent speech claimed that we should not confuse Islam with terrorism: “This terrorism is not the true image of Islam. We must not develop hate even suspicion against the Muslim world who are moderate peace loving people.” The Archbishop warned of the terrible risks of extremism involved in considering Muslims collectively responsible for the acts of a few terrorists. Collective responsibility he said is a terrible concept that historically has led to the perpetration of crimes.

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- 4. Many prominent members of the Muslim Community in Greece like the Muftis, Minority Members of the Greek Parliament, and representatives of Muslim minority groups and organisations have made public statements condemning terrorism and disassociating terrorist activity as well as Islamic fundamentalism from the Muslim faith.

The Mufti of the city of Komotini in Thrace Metso Jemali in an extended interview that was published in all national newspapers criticised openly Islamic fundamentalism and condemned terrorism, which he characterised as a crime against humanity, but also any form of war and aggression. Metso Jemali, a well-known scholar of Islam argued that Al Kaida is conducting “kital” (an unjust war of destruction) and not “jihad”.

Yusuf Iglu Ali, Chairman of the Muslim Organisation of Alexandroupoli, a city in Thrace with a sizable Muslim minority, in recent statements openly condemned both terrorism as well as those states that use the Qumran against the interests of their own people. He added that the Muslim community in Greece lives in friendship and peace with Christians.

Hassan Patsaman, publisher of the Muslim religious periodical “Invitation to Justice” also condemned terrorism, but was also critical of the USA indiscriminate bombings that result in the deaths of innocent civilians.

Abdullah Dede, publisher of the newspaper “Trakianin Sesi” also condemned terrorism, but also questions the bombings against innocent civilians.

5. **Muslim Members of the Greek Parliament Mr. Galip Galip and Mr. Mehmet Ahmet issued statements condemning terrorism and accusing the Al Kaida organisation of mass murder. Mr. G. Galip stated that the attack on Afghanistan is a necessary consequence in the fight against terrorism and it does not represent an attack against Muslims. Both Members of Parliament stressed the importance of the peaceful coexistence of people belonging to different faiths citing Thrace as an example to be followed.**

6. The ultra nationalist party “Greek Front” has issued posters warning of the danger of Muslims in Greece being terrorists and citing “statements” (taken totally out of context) by the representative of the Pakistani Migrants in Greece attempted to incite racial hatred and fear. According to this poster thousands of Muslim migrants constitute a security threat, as they are possible terrorists and should be incarcerated and deported immediately.

IRELAND

Equality Authority (EA) / National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI)

There was an upsurge in the reporting of racist incidents following September 11th. The report shows that almost one fifth (20%) of all 41 incidents recorded between May and October 2001, are directly related to September 11th. Some of the incidents which have been directed at the Islamic community in Ireland have been well reported by the Media. The leadership role of An Taoiseach and other government ministers who have condemned such attacks has been strongly welcomed by representatives of the Islamic community.

However the reports that have been submitted to the NCCRI show that the full picture of the consequences of September 11th is now only beginning to emerge. In addition to racist incidents being reported by the Islamic community there has also been a number of verbal and physical assaults directed at people perceived to be of Middle Eastern or Asian origin, including asylum seekers and towards the relatively small Sikh community in Ireland and towards visitors to Ireland of perceived Asian origin.

While it is important to note that many of these incidents appear to be isolated and uncoordinated all of them also give rise to particular concern, particularly as some of the incidents have involved serious assaults, abuse, and destruction of property.

Acts of violence/aggression

The following are a summary of the incidents experienced by 1) the Islamic community in Ireland and 2) other communities or individuals linked to September 11th.

1. Incidents experienced by the Islamic Community

It is estimated by the NCCRI that there are 15,000 Muslim people in Ireland, many of whom have been living in Ireland for many years and are Irish citizens. They comprise about 0.02% of the population in the Republic of Ireland. Around 10% of the Muslim community in Ireland is asylum seekers are refugees, mostly from countries such as Bosnia Kosovo, Algeria and Somalia

To date three types of incidents have been reported to us:

1. The report of a small number of abusive phone calls being made to members of the Islamic community in Dublin. However most calls to the foundation and the Islamic Cultural Centre have been of a supportive nature. There have also been some reports of an increase in verbal insults directed at women in Islamic dress.
2. The attack on a Mosque in Belfast. Bricks were thrown at the Mosque in Wellington Park, Belfast on 14th September 2001. No one was hurt in the incident.
3. Concern about the speculation and sensationalized nature of some of the stories in the Irish and international media about alleged existence and links between Irish based Islamic militants and events related to September 11th.

2. Incidents Reported by other communities in Ireland related to September 11th

The following are examples of incidents reported by other communities in Ireland related to September 11th.

1. A young woman of Japanese ethnic origin and who is a French national and a visitor to Ireland was walking down a street in Dublin in broad daylight and was assaulted by a man on a motorbike. The man stopped his motorbike (he had a child as a pillion passenger), he slapped the young woman across the face and blamed her for the attacks on America, the impact on the woman was profound. She stayed in her house for four days after the attack. She has since returned to France.
2. In Tralee a male Yemeni national who is an asylum seeker in Ireland was hospitalized following an attack outside a supermarket as he was making a phone call. His assailants allegedly blamed him for being responsible for the September 11th attacks on the United States. The case is currently being investigated by the Gardaí.
3. A teenager who is a member of the Sikh community in Ireland was assaulted outside the RDS in Dublin 4 area with a thrown bottle and with verbal abuse and blamed for September 11th.
4. A doctor, a member of the Sikh community in Ireland has reported a significant increase in verbal abuse towards him in the wake of September 11th.
5. An Algerian asylum seeker who arrived in Ireland just after the September 11th attack requested and was granted relocation to a larger town as a consequence of his perceived fears living in a small rural town in County Cork.
6. An asylum seeker had his motorbike destroyed by an arson attack directly after the September 11th attack. He believes that the attack was a direct result of the September 11th attack and was connected to a number of youths who shouted verbal abuse shortly before the damage to his property.

Changes of attitudes

There have been no opinion polls undertaken in Ireland prior or subsequent to the September 11th attacks on the United States. However the data provided through the NCCRI's Racist Incident Reporting Procedure would indicate that there has been an upsurge in incidents of Islamophobia since September 11th. Since the Beginning of November the number of reported incident has fallen dramatically. A public attitudes survey will be commissioned in the new year which will include the issue of Islamophobia for the first time.

Good practice to reduce prejudice

The NCCRI has responded to these incidents in a number of ways:

- Drawn up a report of incidents that has been submitted to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism (EUMC).

- Contacted the reporting agencies to offer support and to investigate what further action is being taken, including reporting to the Gardaí, Equality Authority or local authority.
- Offered support to and participated in events at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Dublin.
- Met with representatives from the Sikh Community in Ireland.
- Drawn attention to this issue in respect of the need to tackle Islamophobia be included in the recently launched Government national anti-racism awareness programme (The 'Know Racism' Programme).
- Organised a press conference to highlight the problems faced by communities in Ireland

Reaction by politicians and other opinion leaders

The Government, including the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and other Government Ministers have issued statements in support of the Islamic community in Ireland and have visited the Islamic Cultural Centre in Ireland. The Taoiseach recently stated 'Here in Ireland, some reactions to the attack have regrettably lacked humanity. In particular, the attacks on a mosque in Belfast and the abusive calls received by the Islamic Community in Dublin are to be condemned in the strongest terms. The Islamic Community in Ireland and throughout the World has condemned last week's attacks. We have a significant Muslim community in Ireland. It is very important that we acknowledge their positive contribution to our society. This community is a respected part of our national life. We must not allow their good name to be damaged by those who carry out evil deeds in the name of Islam. Indeed many innocent members of the Islamic faith died in the Tragedy.' (Reference www.irlgov.ie/taoiseach/press/current/18-09-01.htm)

The media's response to the Islamic community in Ireland has been more mixed. All national newspapers have highlighted the problems experienced by minority ethnic groups in the aftermath of September 11th. However others, in particular tabloid newspapers have sought to sensationalise links between organisations allegedly linked to Osama Bin Laden and Ireland. It should be noted there has been insufficient evidence to either charge or convict anyone of a crime related to these allegations in Ireland.

ITALY

Cooperazione per lo sviluppo dei paesi emergenti (COSPE) Co-operation for the Development of Emerging Countries

Acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU population towards ethnic, cultural or religious minorities, especially Muslim / Islamic communities but also other vulnerable groups

There have been no reports of physical attacks against Muslims living in Italy, or against other foreign citizens. So far, there have been reports of Muslim-owned shops in Milan being painted with racist graffiti (<http://www.repubblica.it/> – 15/10/2001).

- After September 11, companies employing migrant Muslim workers and Italian nationals are reported to have seen an increase in informal discussions on Islamic culture. Some of these discussions, witnesses say, have been heated, but without ever finishing in verbal or physical aggression.

On October 14, the Union of Islamic Organisations and Communities in Italy (UCOII – <http://www.islam-ucoii.it/>) organized a congress in Bologna in order to discuss the serious political situation created by the attacks on New York and the beginning of the war in Afghanistan. In a declaration adopted at the end of the congress, concern was expressed over the conditions of Muslims in Italy, saying that “the international situation created by the criminal attacks of September 11, is having negative consequences on our community due to daily aggression by the media and an unusual police attention.”

On more than one occasion, the Imam of a major industrial city, has been said to have expressed doubts about Bin Laden’s responsibility in the WTC bombing and to have justified the stance of the Afghan government (www.lastampa.it/ – October 15, 2001). These remarks have been widely commented on, including by among others, the Minister of the Interior who declared that: “the out of line statements made by some Imams in the past few days are not to be tolerated, and they should, in some way or other, be prosecuted.” (<http://www.repubblica.it/>, <http://www.corriere.it/>, October 14-16, 2001). In a poll taken by a major research institute between the 15th and 17th of October, respondents were asked whether Imams who express “understanding” for Bin Laden should be expelled; 38% were in favour of expulsion, 42% against and 20% did not know. The media have tended to keep in constant public focus anything short of an outright condemnation of Bin Laden as a criminal by Muslim leaders in this country.

The opinions of the Italian population towards Muslim migrants do not seem to have changed after the attacks of September 11. The research institute, PEOPLESWG (<http://www.peopleswg.it/>) published, on October 11, a study entitled, “Islam and the West: A Dialogue of Difference”. A national poll taken by this group from October 5-7, asked the question: “*Do you think that the presence of Muslim migrants in Italy could raise issues that are significant, of little significance, or completely unimportant with regards to a peaceful co-existence in our country?*”, the answers were as follows:

- 22.1 % significant
- 10.2% of some significance
- 38.4% of little significance
- 18.1% not significant

- 11.1% do not know / no answer

The authors of the above opinion poll say that these results do not differ substantially from those obtained by asking similar questions earlier in the year.

Good practises and positive case studies established in order to reduce prejudice and violence

- There is an increase in the attention given to, along with a desire for, public discussion on Muslim culture. Testimonies to these are the numerous TV programmes on Islam and articles carried in the national and local press. However, in all this media coverage, Islam is often presented in stereotypical terms.
- Many meetings and conferences at the national and local levels have been organized concerning Islam and the West. The most important ones have been those held at the *Comunità Sant'Egidio* in Rome and in the City of Florence.
- The *Comunità di Sant'Egidio* (<http://www.santedigdio.org/>) organized the **Christian-Islamic Summit** in Rome, on October 3-4. This summit was attended by, among others, the President of the Republic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and important leaders from both the Islamic and Christian communities. The President of the Republic made the following declaration: "Islam is a great religion and culture deserving our full respect. Christianity and Islam, even in their diversity, share universal principles."
- The *City of Florence* (www.comune.fi.it) held a conference on Islam and the West on October 11. It was attended by journalists, academics, Italian and foreign Muslim and Christian experts.

Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends

- The Prime Minister was reported, by both national and international media, on September 26th to have said in a press interview given in Berlin, that Western culture is *superior* to Muslim culture. His statements were subsequently criticized by EU leaders. The Arab League requested an informal apology. On September 27, during a debate in the Senate, the Prime Minister said he was "sorry" that his "words had been taken out of context" and that these "may have offended my Arab and Muslim friends" (<http://www.repubblica.it/> – 28/10/2001).
- He later invited and met with ambassadors from Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Palestinian National Authority on October 1st at the Government House (www.palazzochigi.it). According to the official press release, the Prime Minister "took the opportunity to speak of his profound respect for Islam. It is a great religion which includes more than a billion faithful, and one which preaches tolerance, the respect of human rights, peaceful co-existence between nations, and reciprocal understanding, to provide an important contribution to humanity."
- On September 29, the *Corriere della Sera*, a newspaper with the largest number of copies distributed daily (<http://www.corriere.it/>) hosted a 14-page article entitled "*Anger and Pride*" written by a well known writer and journalist. The theme of the article was the New York bombing and Muslim culture; the tone was violent and insulting; the contents explicitly anti-Muslim, anti-arab and anti-migrant. The article has led to a wide and heated debate on a national level which is still going on. Many on-line fora have been opened on the subject by the major national newspapers. The newspaper has announced that the article will be part of a book on post-September 11

events in the US, about to be released by the same author. The same newspaper is publishing rejoinders to that article and many of those so far published have expressed regret that such articles legitimate public expression of hate and racist ideas and worst of all, could have negative impacts on the young. To this effect, a renowned writer commenting on the former recently wrote: “That which is not of secondary importance, and which should worry all of us, including politicians, religious leaders and educators, are certain expressions, or worse, entire and passionate articles which have, in some way, legitimized such expressions, to the point of becoming the topic of general discussion, gaining a place in the minds of the young, and maybe leading them to passionate conclusions dictated by temporary emotional responses.” There is a broad consensus among actors in the struggle for equal opportunities and against racism that editorials like the one mentioned above have more far-reaching negative effects and so should not be under-rated.

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- Some political parties, as already mentioned in the first report, are continuing their anti-migrant campaigns, especially against Muslims. The Northern League Group in the Senate has published a report entitled “*Islam Advances*” in which it outlines the *potential dangers* posed by the increasing presence of Muslims in Europe. This report states that: “with its more than 5 million Muslims, France must adapt to the traditions of Islam. Rights in France are being “*Islamised*” since the granting of the right to wear a veil in schools and that of polygamy”. Needless to say here that this account of events in France is inaccurate to say the least. Nonetheless, one possible effect of these types of claims would seem to be to instil fear in the population. The report goes on to quote passages from a document attributed to a high prelate in the Catholic church, the Archbishop of Izmir, Turkey which says that “Islamic domination began with petro-dollars, used not to create jobs in the poor countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East, but to build mosques and Islamic cultural centres in those countries which are targets of immigration from Muslim countries; an example of this is the large mosque built in Rome, the centre of Christianity. The permission to use Catholic churches for their religious services is not seen by Muslims as a friendly gesture, but indeed, as a clear sign of the lack of faith and moral weakness of Christians”. The report further claims that a high-ranking Muslim authority once said that: “Thanks to your democratic laws, we shall invade you and our religious laws shall then eliminate you”.

An under-secretary at the Ministry of Reforms and a member of the Northern League Party, in a television interview on the 16th of October, called on the government to stop issuing entry visas to Muslims as a preventive measure in a war situation (*la repubblica, Interni, page 10; il Manifesto*, October 17; www.ilmanifesto.it).

LUXEMBURG

Association de soutien aux travailleurs immigrés (ASTI) Association for the support of immigrant workers

According to the Islamic Cultural Center of Luxembourg, the community of practicing Muslims in Luxembourg is formed by about six thousand persons.

Mid of the seventies, Luxembourg counted about three hundred Muslims. At the beginning of the nineties, they were already about three thousand, ten times more in less than twenty years. In the few last years, the community grew about the double due to the asylum seekers from Ex-Yugoslavia. These persons often stay only two or three years, and then they have to go back to ex-Yugoslavia. From these 6000 registered practicing Muslims, 65 % come from the former Federative Republic of Yugoslavia; 1900 persons from Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1800 from Montenegro.

It's important to specify that in Luxembourg no Mosque exists, it is replaced by a Cultural Center, which serves as a praying room.

- **Acts of violence or aggression and changes in the attitude of the EU population towards ethnic, cultural, religious minorities (especially Muslim/Islamic communities but also other vulnerable groups or new types of victims), related to the recent terrorist attacks in the USA**

In Luxembourg, physical aggressions are rather rare. Luxembourg's model is: you don't interest yourself for another culture, but at least you are tolerant. This model seems to be effective. The imam of the Islamic Cultural Center says that he didn't hear about violence acts, neither about aggressions towards his community.

This doesn't mean that there are no changes at all in attitude, only no physical attacks were done. This phenomenon could partly be explained by the fact that Luxembourg wants to keep the good image of a peaceful and tolerant country. Also, Muslims are well integrated and not seen as different. This phenomenon could also be explained by the fact that in Luxembourg, no visible element of the Islam exists. For example, in Luxembourg, there is no typical Mosque and women who wear a veil in public are rather rare.

The only aggression that took place after the 11th of September toward Muslim community, and known by us was the following happening on the Luxembourg's TV channel:

Luxembourg's television, which presented a few days after the terror attacks, a special broadcast about the Muslims in Luxembourg. They interviewed Saleem Shaikh, speaker of the Islamic Culture Center. He presented his community and explained that he doesn't feel that there is a change in attitude towards Muslims in Luxembourg. After the broadcast, RTL got three anonymous calls: According to the chief editor of RTL (Radio Television Luxembourg) these calls were about lowest racist level. At the same time he says that these calls are absolutely not representative of the present public opinion about Muslims and that they shouldn't receive too much attention.

Apparently some kids were insulted by their classmates for being "nasty Arabs", but we give these information without any details or sources.

Representatives of the Islamic Cultural Center of Luxembourg, asked by Asti, do not think that the opinion about their community has changed a lot since the 11th of September. They

said that Luxembourg has always been more tolerant than his neighboring countries thanks to its multiculturalism. They think that with the help of Luxembourg's authorities and social interlocutors they could present to the non-Muslims in Luxembourg that the Islam is a religion which helps the human to live in peace.

- **Good practices for reducing prejudice, violence and aggression:**

Halil AHMETSPAHCIC, the Imam of the Islamic Cultural Center is an Islamic theologian from Sarajevo. Since four years, he is the chairman of the Islamic Cultural Center. He was present during the ecumenical Mass for the victims, hold on the 18th of September in the capital cathedral. He prayed for peace and tolerance. He informed that according to the Koran, a person who kills someone without a reason is going to be killed by all the others. "*Terrorists cannot be believers, believers cannot be terrorists*" he said in English to close his dialogue, like this everyone could understand him.

In an interview on RTL radio, Servet OCAKTAN of the Islamic Cultural Center explained that the Islamic Cultural Center has always had a policy of openness. He proposed that persons who are interested in knowing the Islam, can contact them and are always welcome to visit the Center. They are ready to expound their religion and to take part at conferences to debate the religion. He thinks that it is important to open the discussion and to confront people by searching the dialogue. Not everyone knows very well the foundations and ideas of the Islam, that's why it is so important for them to openly show their religion. He wants his religion to be understood and tolerated.

From the side of non-Muslims, some initiatives were taken to reduce and prevent racism. For example special broadcasts on Luxembourg's television, which were shown after the attacks. Special reports and articles appeared in newspapers and magazines, to inform about Islam and the difference between Muslims and terrorists.

These practices helped to reduce prejudice and prevent violence and aggression.

- **Reactions by politicians and other opinion leaders including initiatives to reduce polarization and counteract negative national trends;**

The 10th of July 1998 a law was passed to encourage the development of different religions in Luxembourg. This law concerned roman-catholic church, the Israeli community and the Greek-orthodox church. It excluded one religion: The Islam.

The Muslim community appeared reinforced in media. Rare are journals, newspapers and magazines or a television channel, which do not speak about the Islam. Imam Ahmetspahic think this phenomena is positive, but thinks it would still have been better if it would already have happened before the 11th of September.

The media interest that concerns at the moment the Islam could perhaps bring more interest and more understanding for the community. These days, the Imam got for the first time an invitation for a speech about his religion in a public school: Possible that these wouldn't have happened without the crisis after the attacks from 11th of September.

THE NETHERLANDS

Dutch Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (DUMC)

1. Acts of violence or aggression

An overview of incidents, prepared by the DUMC in the period: 25 September-19 October 2001

(in addition to the first review of cases in the period 11 September until 20 September)

1.1. What

The incidents are divided in categories.

* Controversial treatment:	1
* Hostile treatment: (27)	
- insult	9
- graffiti, pamphlet, e.d.	9
- other (head scarf, threats)	9
* Violence: (8)	
- attempt at violence	2
- violence (arson)	6
* Destruction (vandalism)	3
* Other (fear, e.d.)	3
A total of	42 incidents

The category *graffiti, pamphlet* contains mainly incidents with racist pamphlets, five incidents in total. The pamphlets have an anti-Muslim tendency. The three other incidents deal with graffiti on mosques.

The category *other* in the category hostile treatment contains incidents in which Muslim women are verbally insulted or their headscarf is pulled off. Other incidents contain letters with threats against mosques or threats to Muslim school and local and national politicians.

The category *violence* contains mainly incidents in which mosques, a café (Arabic) or a Turkish gas station (4) are set on fire. There are no personal injuries.

The category *other* contains mainly incidents in which people, Muslims, express fear for being attacked.

1.2. Where

The incidents took place all over the Netherlands. A view at the cities with the largest numbers:

Amsterdam:	3
Rotterdam:	6
Den Haag:	4
Eindhoven:	2
Apeldoorn:	2
Vlissingen:	3

1.3. Examples of incidents

A closer look at some of the incidents:

- * A Turkish mosque in the north of the Netherlands was damaged. Three windows were broken (25-09-2001). Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities
- * A teacher in one of the largest cities of the Netherlands told her 8-year old Muslim pupil that she was to blame for the terrorist attacks (25-09-2001)
- * Moroccan women were spat on and their head scarf has been pulled off in one of the largest cities of the Netherlands (27-09-2001)
- * Threatening letters to all mosques in a city in the middle of the Netherlands (27-09-2001)
- * A mosque in the west of the Netherlands was set on fire (30-09-2001).
- * A gas station in the east of the Netherlands was set on fire and was covered with racial graffiti (30-09-2001).
- * Bomb threat at a mosque in one of the largest cities of the Netherlands (02-10-2001)
- * Moroccan men were pelted with bottles in the south of the Netherlands (04-10-2001)
- * Racial pamphlets were spread in the west and east of the Netherlands with the slogans: “New York 11 September 2001, Islam = murder, No mosque in our districts” (14-10-2001)
- * A continuation of incidents reported on the hate speech against Muslims on internet
- * Moroccan woman was called “a member of the group from Bin Laden” in one of the largest cities of the Netherlands (11-10-2001).

1.4 Remarks

The preceding overview is based on reports in media and incidents reported to the local and regional anti-discrimination agencies in the Netherlands. Anti-discrimination agencies were asked to report incidents which are (probably) linked to the 11th of September. There is no knowing whether some of the cases reported would not have occurred without the attacks of the 11th of September.

Most of the incidents (18) contain verbal harassment. This also goes for the majority of the 90 reports which were gathered by the Dutch local and regional anti-discrimination agencies. Although they constitute the vast majority of all incidents reported, experience shows that especially cases like these are strongly underreported.

Also some quite serious cases of threats go unreported, because of fear to attract further negative reactions. In one of the larger cities in the Netherlands, a large Pakistan Mosque was covered with racist graffiti and members of the board of the organization were individually threatened, but this was not reported in the media or in police reports because of fear to attract further negative reactions.

There have been some reports of anti-Semitism connected to the USA-reactions to the terrorist attacks on the 11th of September. The mechanism seems to be: an anti-Israeli (or pro-Palestinian) attitude leads to anti-Americanism, leads to anti-Semitism, not necessarily in that

order. It is remarkable that the more severe incidents (arson and physical violence) did not take place in the largest cities of the Netherlands, but in the somewhat smaller municipalities, whereas most ethnic minorities live concentrated in the larger cities.

An explanation can be that the largest cities are more used to and have accepted the multicultural society.

It is hard to discover a pattern in the incidents reported. There are no signals which point at organized or collective actions. In The Hague and Gorinchem three men were arrested for arson in a mosque and writing graffiti on a mosque. The men were about 18 or 20 years old and two of the men were drunk. The impression is that the actions were undertaken on the individuals' own initiative.

Apart from specific and documented incidents being reported, there are a lot of signals that Muslims in particular, and ethnic minority population in general, fear negative reactions by the majority population. Papers contain numerous anonymous stories of Muslims leaving their head scarf off when going out, of ethnic minority parents worrying about letting their children go to school unaccompanied by grown ups. These feelings of being threatened are hard to express in numbers of incidents, but are symptomatic for the climate experienced by ethnic minority population at the moment.

2 Changes in attitudes

After the attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 some opinion polls were held in the Netherlands. This contribution refers to three opinion polls in which the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims was assessed. Two opinion polls were held under Muslims in the Netherlands, one was held under the entire Dutch population.

2.1 The Foquz-poll

The first opinion poll was held on 13 and 14 September by Foquz Etnomarketing for *Contrast*, the weekly which is published by Forum, the Dutch institute for multicultural development. This poll tested what Dutch Muslims think about the attacks. The poll was conducted among 426 persons. Of these, 62% disapproved of the attacks, 25% did not approve nor disapprove of the attacks and 6% approved of the attacks.

Of the respondents questioned, 48% had complete understanding for the attacks in the US, 27% had some understanding and 27% had no understanding at all.

The respondents were also asked if they could imagine the joy of some Muslims over the attacks. More than a third (37%) could imagine it, less than a third (29%) could not imagine it and again 29% could imagine it a little. Of the respondents, 49% disapproved of showing joy after the attacks, 34% remained neutral and 8% did not disapprove.

Moreover, the respondents were asked about the consequences of these attacks in the Netherlands. They were asked whether they were afraid that discrimination against Muslims would increase in the Netherlands as a result of the attacks. 14% said they were very afraid, 37% were a little afraid and 31% were not afraid at all. Only 7% of the respondents had actually noticed an increase of discrimination, 75% did not notice it and 18% did not know it.

Finally, questions were being asked about the media coverage after the attacks. 57% was of the opinion that media coverage was not neutral, 15% thought it was neutral and 20% thought it was a little neutral. Most respondents thought the media coverage was pro-western. Sex, age and education proved to be of little influence on the outcome.

The reaction on the results of this poll resulted in a certain level of political anxiety. The Prime Minister, Wim Kok, and the Minister of Integration Policy, Roger van Boxtel, said they were shocked by the understanding for the attacks and especially by the approval for the attacks by 6% of the interviewed Muslims.

Contrast magazine, which commissioned the poll, concluded that a large gap exists between Muslims and the Dutch population. The results of the poll should prompt the start of a dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. Some people, many of them migrants, were unhappy with the results of the poll. Conducting such a poll right after the attacks would rouse feelings of hatred and insecurity.

There was also criticism on the poll itself. The poll was said not to be representative and to be too unbalanced. Many people were disturbed by the use of the word 'understanding' in the poll; it was said to have been too indistinct.

2.2. The Netwerk-poll

In order to check whether the results of the *Contrast*-poll were correct, another poll was conducted by Intomart (a firm specializing in opinion polls) on the request of the television programme *Netwerk*. Intomart interviewed 400 Muslims. The results of this poll were presented on Sunday, 23 September 2001. The *Netwerk*-poll showed that around 10% of the respondents approved of the attacks in the US. 73% of the respondents disapproved of the attacks. In this poll, a difference in ethnicity was found. Of the ethnic Moroccan respondents, 26% approved of the attacks. Of the Turkish and Surinamese Muslims, 3% supported the attacks. The results of this poll confirmed the *Contrast*-poll. The respondents were asked other questions as well. One question was about their support for a holy war against the United States. 11 Percent said they would support such a war, almost three quarters of the respondents said not to support such a war. A further result of the poll was that most of the Muslims in the Netherlands are of the opinion that Islamic groups or persons should be able to say what they want. One in ten Muslims thinks that some statements must be punishable.

In the media, this poll did not attract much attention. Possibly because this poll more or less confirmed the results of the *Contrast*-poll.

2.3. The NIPO-poll

On Wednesday 26 September, a large national daily newspaper, *de Volkskrant*, published the results of an opinion poll, conducted among 800 Dutch people. They were interviewed about their views on the 11 September attacks. The poll was carried out by NIPO, another polling agency, on 22 and 23 September. The most striking result was that 62% of the respondents was of the opinion that Muslims who supported the attacks, should be expelled from the country. Furthermore, 62% of the respondents thought that the integration of Muslims would be hampered by the attacks. Besides, 66% was of the view that a general obligation to carry identification papers (which does not exist in the Netherlands) should be introduced, as well as border checks in Europe. 51% was prepared to accept a reduction in personal freedom in exchange for security and 52% of the respondents supported retaliatory attacks.

Reactions to this poll concentrated especially on the high number of Dutch citizens who wanted to expel Muslims who support the NY attacks. This result was seen as an indication that the gap between ethnic groups, Muslims and non-Muslims, is still wide. Many Muslims have obtained Dutch citizenship and cannot be expelled, even when they support the attacks. Also *de Volkskrant* was accused of creating a negative atmosphere by the way the questions were posed and the way the responses were reported. The paper gave the report the headline: *Radical Muslims to be expelled*.

The above mentioned opinion polls were termed a kind of terror themselves in an article by Wouter Knapper in the daily *NRC Handelsblad* of 27 September. He argued that media want to make the news, preferably cheap and fast and that the polling agencies collaborate. This leads to dubious questions in which no form of shade or differentiation is possible. Responses to these questions are being presented as facts in an article or press release and they are being turned into the subject of public debate.

3. Reactions by politicians

3.1. National Government, local government and politicians

There have been many and repeated *calls for tolerance* and mutual understanding by members of the national government (i.c. Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities), by representatives of local governments (Queens Commissioners of provinces and town mayors), and by many politicians.

There have been *dialogues* between representatives of the national government and local governments with representatives and members of minority communities.

A third important initiative was a large number of *visits to mosques* and “mixed” schools by ministers, representatives of the local governments and politicians.

3.2. Rightwing extremism and populism

Since September 11th the neonazi group Stormfront Nederland has increased their activities - public provocations on an almost weekly base – but there is no crystal clear relationship with “September 11th”.

More clear is the case of the extreme right “Nieuwe Nationale Partij” (New National Party). On its website The NNP promotes posters with the slogan “the Netherlands against terrorism”. The poster shows a picture of Bin Laden in a red circle with a red bar across the face. In this way the NNP uses the anti-Islamic tendencies for recruiting supporters.

A leader of the Populist Party “Leefbaar Nederland” called for “a cold war against the Islam”. Formally “Leefbaar Nederland” opposes against racism and discrimination.

4 Good practises and initiatives to reduce polarization

On October 1st the Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities announced a series of “integration-debates”, to be held in the capital cities of the 12 Dutch provinces and in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. This initiative is based on the assumption of a possible negative impact of the “September 11th developments” on the integration-process.

On October 11th the Netherlands Association of Journalists - known by its Dutch abbreviation NVJ – organised the conference “A month after”. Main theme of the conference was the covering by the Dutch news media of interethnic tensions, conflicts and the opinion polls – see above - after September 11th. The meeting was supported by the Ministry of Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities.

In one of the large cities in the Netherlands, the mayor and aldermen got together a working group of internal and external communication experts and representatives of the Muslim population. This group was asked to advise the mayor and the aldermen on communication on issues related to incidents following the 11th of September, to set up a program of visits to several mosques and to exchange information on incidents on a day-to-day basis. In the longer run, the working group is asked to give advice to the city-council on the issue of reinforcing social cohesion between majority and minority populations and people of different religions.

The role of the media in reporting on the consequences of the 11th of September has been questioned in a number of ways. It is clear that Dutch media received a lot of letters to the editor to their reports on (the consequences of) the 11th of September. Therefore, a local anti-discrimination agency suggested to the union of journalists and to the association of chief editors to engage in research of the public reaction's to media reports, through analysis of post-11th of September public reactions. An agreement was reached on the execution of this research and several media have already agreed to give researchers access to their files with reactions.

PORTUGAL

NUMENA – Centro de Investigação em Ciências Sociais e Humanas (Research center on human and social sciences)

The Islamic Community in Portugal comprises two main branches: the Sunnite community and the Ismailian community. The main thing that should be noticed about the Islamic Community in Portugal is his smallness. In fact, Portugal presents the lowest proportion of Muslim in all European countries (0,3%). Two main fluxes of Islamic people are of importance. A first one that arrived after the decolonisation period and came from Moçambique and Guiné-Bissau; and other that is more recent and also more fragmented in terms of origin, that span from Guiné and Senegal to Pakistan. The first flux was foremost from the middle class, notably entrepreneurs and liberal professionals. Concerning the more recent fluxes, almost those arriving from Pakistan are of poor condition.

It is not possible to fully understand the phenomenon of the relation of the Portuguese people with the Islamic culture without looking at some cultural and historical aspects of our country. Unfortunately, we had no time to present here a thorough characterization of the Muslim community in Portugal, who no doubt has some specific aspects that make it different from the muslim communities in other European countries, mainly due to our colonial past. It is also important to distinguish a Muslim community settled in Portugal for many years, of about 30 000 people, that came mostly from Mozambique, from a recent wave of immigration from Muslim countries, mainly from Pakistan. The degree of integration of this people is completely different, and goes back, among other aspects, to its legal status in Portugal, for the rights of someone who already has Portuguese nationality are considerably different from the rights of someone who is still in an illegal situation, or is a bearer of an “Autorização de Permanência⁸”.

Therefore, it is important to determine who are the Muslims in Portugal, what kind of relation they have with each other, what kind of integration they have in our society, and also what is the nature of their relationship with other immigrants. This last topic is also important because recently Portugal as been receiving a significant wave of immigration, mostly from countries from the former Soviet Union who, unlike people who came from the former Portuguese colonies, don't have any common cultural background with the Portuguese people. Besides that, some of these people where involved, in a more or less direct way, with the conflicts in Tchetchenia or even in Afghanistan, or other less known problems. There are also people who come from countries that are now mainly muslim, like the Uzbekistan. For these reasons, we find it pertinent to refer this phenomenon in a more profound way in further reports.

Another aspect that cannot be forgotten is the occupation of the Portuguese territory by muslims for over 8 centuries. The Arabians conquered almost all the Iberia Peninsula in the year 711, and where only totally expelled in 1492, with the taken of Granada by the Catholics. Muslims held Lisbon until the year 1147, and the conquest of the region of Algarve (this name has an Arabic provenience) was only completed in 1249. One very important

⁸ This Autorização de Permanência consists in a Visa that allows immigrants who enter the Portuguese territory to legalize their situation, as long as they present a valid passport and a work contract obtained already in the country. This Visa grants them the right to remain in the Portuguese territory and work there paying social security and taxes and enjoying the rights associated to it for 1 year, eventually renewable for 4 more years.

aspect to consider is that the autochthon people were never forced to accept the Islamic faith. However, the Muslims left an important legacy, including some technical knowledge that was fundamental for the posterior adventures of the Portuguese people in the sea, which brought “new worlds to the world”.

We don't intend to present here an intensive historical analysis, for this would take us from our objective. Nevertheless, and as it was said before, we can not fully understand the effects that the attacks in New York had in the Muslim community in Portugal without situating these events in the particular context of our society, which we intend to do in the next reports.

Verbal and physical attacks

- After more than a month from the terrible incidents in the United States, the police and Islamic authorities have still no notion of any physical violence towards Muslim or other minorities' people. Besides the earlier acts of vandalism perpetrated against the Lisbon Mosque, no such actions were noticed. In addition, the major organisations in combating racism contacted by Numena did not report any incidents of this kind or any complaint of aggression. However, verbal injuries were told to have happened, especially towards Muslim women

The Islamic Community leader informed Numena that women carrying scarves were importunate when walking in the streets. The Community has advised women to avoid walking alone and not pay attention to any disrespect that they may be the target. The Ismaili community did not report any complaint from their members. It stated to Numena that verbal abuse had not suffered any change comparing the usual pattern.

It seems that Sikh community voiced most of the complaints (Público 12/10/2001 – annex 7). Because Sikh people usually wear turban they have been seldom named “Bin Laden” or “taliban” The more expressive case was that of a Sikh stopped by the police who asked him his papers stating “Bin Laden, show me your documents”. Other cases of this kind have been reported to happen in public transports. Soon after these events the television broadcasted some journalistic pieces showing the everyday life of the members of the Sikh community. Those television pieces intended to emphasise the peaceful way of life of the Sikh community, dissociating them from Islam.

We also know by a testimony of Portuguese professors in immigrant classes (notably in the Jesuit Refugees Service in Portugal) that soon after the events in the USA acts of verbal aggression occurred between Russians and Pakistani pupils. At the employment sector level, Pakistani have been rejected in favour of eastern workers; and some long employed Pakistani workers, especially in the tourist sector, were lay off with no justification whatsoever.

Politicians discourse and opinion makers attitudes

- The overall picture has been one of conciliation between Portuguese and Islamic people living in Portugal. As we mentioned in our first report summing up the events that had happened since 11 September, almost after the tragedy a great meeting of all major religious confessions in Portugal was organised by the Portuguese Government. That was the first assertion of unity between creeds and inscribed a frontal repudiation of prejudiced and intolerant voices. This happening sought to propel an image of a tolerant and united society where multiculturalism is welcomed. The president has

addressed the country conveying the same message and politicians have been cautious in reaffirming that many Islamic states are Portuguese allied.

Nevertheless, the security problem is at the front of most arguments. According, those who state that we should act carefully in the future to prevent the free entry of every kind of migrants, make it in the name of security. A statement made by the Internal Affairs Ministry is illustrative: “Naturally the equation integration-migration has as counterpart in the equation liberty-security” (Público 17/10/2001).

On the other hand, right-wing politicians have been hasty to establish a direct link between security and migration. This is one of the most interesting developments in political rhetoric after the USA events. In fact, a somewhat overvalued “securitizing” thought has been conveyed to the media and to the public. The Popular Party (PP) leader speaks overtly in this tone, stating that security and migration restrictions go hand in hand. This discourse features a direct link between migration and a potential threat to order. Therefore, vehement appeals were made seeking the implementation of a more restrictive migrant policy. Regarding the implementation of a new security model, the leader of the Popular Party suggests the “instruction of the intelligence services in order to surveill the movements” of people that “came from countries where the social base or the State are under a strong influence of the Islamic fundamentalism” In the same vein, the Popular Party leader considers the surveillance of the Muslim communities a priority, following the Spanish example where 200 persons are under investigation. This piece had the appealing title “Portas wants to surveill Muslims” (Público, 11/10/2001 – annex 1. See also annex 2 “PP wants to debate security with the Prime Ministry”). This same idea was more emphatically reiterated through the next statement “The Occident needs more than ever to defend security, by enforcing the secret services and measures towards migrants” (Expresso 7/10/2001 – annex 3)

The most significant opinion makers in the newspapers, although they use abundantly the “Clash of Civilizations” rhetoric, point out the importance of keeping things in perspective, meaning that we should be aware of the dangers of enhancing “Islamophobia” However, this is not without perils. What most of these perspectives seems to take at face value is the moral superiority of the Occident towards Islam. As a corollary, the Islamic Community filled the necessity to justify their pacifist creed and, in doing so, was put before trial.

Correspondingly, the Imam of Lisbon Mosque – Sheik Munir – made a plea to the Portuguese Government to not neglect the Islamic Community. In several occasions, the Islamic Community theologian stated that Government representatives did not make any effort so far to dwindle negative reactions towards the Community. In a recent conference (*Portugal Facing the International Crisis*) promoted by “Sá Carneiro Foundation” (16/10/2001), Sheik Munir point out the fact that no Portuguese authority had visited the Mosque after the 11 September events. He also underlined the essential dissociation between Islam and those radical forms that do not portray with fairness the Islamic world, ending by stating that, though the Islamic Community in Portugal never had before problems of integration – by the some token, of approval -, for the time being is traversing a period of particular frailty. The same declarations were written in an article in Público (17/10/2001 – annex 5).

One case should, however, be stressed. The “Expresso” front page showed the title “The Islamic Menace” regarding the battle against terrorism. Many protest voices were heard and critics were published. Even in the Parliament, one member – from the left-wing – accused the newspaper of taking an Islamophobic stance. However, in the subsequent week, the

Expresso Editorial repeated the analogy between Islam and Terrorism (Expresso 5/10/2001 - annex 4).

Specific Reactions to the Terrorist Attacks

In the 16th of October the Imam of the Lisbon Mosque, Sheik David Munir, took part in a conference about the international situation that the world is facing today after the terrorist attacks. There he expressed his disappointment for the lack of support and interest from the Portuguese government in relation to the muslim community in Portugal since the events that took place in the USA.

He regretted that, until now, no member of the government visited the Mosque or had any word of comfort, and referred to the fact that the Portuguese muslim community is a pacific community. We questioned himself and the Portuguese community about the isolation of the muslim community in relation with the Portuguese society, and of the Portuguese society in relation with the rest of the world. "...We are with you, you have our comfort"... "Have you forgotten us? We are with you, we want to be with you". A Portuguese radio station – TSF, broadcast his intervention, and its site in the Internet was invaded by commentaries of several Portuguese citizens, which we consider pertinent to refer here. Of the about 50 commentaries presented we must say that there seems to be a balance between manifestations of support and disagreement to his intervention.

Among these, there are different kinds of approaches to the problem that mean more than just to be in favour or against, as they reveal the importance of other factors that are related to this and other problems of Portuguese society.

First, there are a group of commentaries that we can consider highly racist, for there is no intent whatsoever to support the opinions presented and put the events in its context. Due to the "strong language" used, we cannot present here a literal translation of some of these commentaries. However, what seems to be important is to express the ideas contained there, what can only be done by presenting their utterances: "Go back to your land. There certainly you will be well taken care"; "Al-Qaeda has its home base in the Lisbon Mosque"; "The terrorists can only be hidden in Islamic communities who sympathise with them"; "They are not here for long, they don't speak Portuguese"; "We should do to you what you do to Catholics in Muslim countries"; "For a terrorist you don't pretend very well"; "Death to all Abduls. Arabians go home. Signed: American Racist"; "No one called you here and you can leave, because you are not needed"; "We did not forget you. We just don't care. The Islam does not interest anyone, and what is going on is all the fault of your stupid religion"; "Let it be clear that we are not with you, and you don't have our comfort, only our tolerance"; "I never visited an Islamic country and I don't want to; "Who are these people who inspired by a pseudo-religion turn women into slaves"; "I don't like these people, and I think I can speak for all women"; "What a nerve! In a country that was always mainly catholic, these people came I don't know from where, when no one asked them to, and want us to kneel at their feet to comfort them"; "You can be with us, but we are not with you, and if your conscience is clear, you don't have to be worried, because the people is quiet. But don't expect too much. In here we don't give our blessing to strangers. We learn to tolerate them with our democracy and with the defence of what we consider to be the fundamental rights"; "My dear sir, don't mess with us. Prey all you want, but don't ask us for explanations; "Its time for new inquisition! Well taken care of, the Abduls can still be used for paving roads!; "I would like to join all Islamic people and offer them a trip to Afghanistan".

- Then there are also some softer critics. Those disagree not with the religion itself, but with the specific attitudes taken by the Muslim community in Portugal and by the Sheik. For instance: “Messages of peace can not be obtained by setting unnecessary fires, and that’s just what this man as done with this declaration: he just gave a contribute to the appearance of conflicts. If you don’t like this country why don’t you leave? Did anyone here ever do you harm, or those of your faith? I was born in Mozambique, and there the “Arabians” were good people, and I miss many of them, who where my companions in childhood”; “No one as yet heard these Mohamed talking about Bin Laden’s organisation or about the Taliban”; “The Portuguese Islamic community is pacific. So are we Portuguese people. So What? There is no need for visits”; “Let’s just stay pacific”; “I think that all muslim community should give an explanation, or at least a clarification of its position: Are you against or in favour of the terrorists? If these community has in fact nothing to do with what happened, then help to find those who hind behind your religion”; “Unfortunately, no one heard the Sheik strongly condemning terrorism and its fanatic interpretation of his religion”; “It as to be said that the Occidental society is not at war with Islam, but Islam as to say that those among them who want to make war against the Occidental world don’t represent them”; ”Don’t ask what this country can do for you, ask what you can do for this country; “For when the sheik-mate to the enemies of our society. Let us hope that the Islamic community can condemn, with strong words, the fanatics who use the name of the Islamic Community”.
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- There are also some critics who point out to the discrimination in the opposite way, that is, from Muslims in relation to the Catholic. For instance: “We have to understand and accept the Islamic faith, but when we want to be Christians in an Islamic country we are segregated and persecuted”; “Yes, but it is not in Portugal that Islamic people can t find work just because they are Islamic, like it happens with Christians in some muslim countries”.

Then we have some interventions that lay emphasis on a problem that we intend to develop in future reports, due to its extreme importance “the role that the Portuguese government takes in these events, which is naturally connected with its usual proceedings in complex situations. Some remarks can highlight this point: “Do you want more equality than this? The Portuguese government treats the Muslim community exactly like all the others”; they don’t give a damn. We are all in the same boat, and no one is in command”; “Take your flock and go join your people; “These guys here don’t care for anyone, not even for me that I am white, pay taxes, and am natural from Lisbon for 6 generations”.

Finally, there are some opinions in favour of the intervention of Sheik Munir, and who some times present critics to the Occidental society in general, and to the USA in particular. Sometimes there is also an implicit reference to our colonial past. We consider fundamental to present these testimonies for only by confronting the different opinions is possible to have inaccurate idea of the general trend: ”I, as a Portuguese citizen, agree with the Sheik. In this religion, as in all others, exist fundamentalist idiots, and people of good that just want to leave in peace with all human kind. The Portuguese government should have told the muslim community that his subservience to the USA doesn’t mean that we don’t respect people and religions that should be respected”; “To mix Islamic fundamentalism with Islam is like mixing inquisition with Christianity, or Stalinism with Marxism. Is also not knowing our own history, and the pages of civilization and tolerance written by the peninsular Islam. Almutâmide and Ibn Amar are not the other face of what enriched so much the identity that became ours?”; ”It seems that we are afraid of loosing the lands that we conquered from the

Arabians, for the ones we took from black people and used for more than 500 we already lost forever.”

Another event worth noting was that a migrant from Iraq may have been a victim of discrimination due to the terrorist attacks in USA. He went to the Jesuit Refugee Service in Lisbon and said that he had been fired from the hotel he had been working for the last months. According to his testimony, the employers gave him a few days to leave the hotel and did not pay him all the money they owed. It seems that the events that took place in New York had something to do with what happened, but he started suffering psychological harassment in the work place some time before. This man came in to Portugal in December 1999, and requested political asylum. His request was denied and he made an appeal, with the support of the Portuguese Council for Refugees, which is still under evaluation. As his former employer did not give him a contract, he could not legalize himself by the new law (Autorização de Permanência), and is still in an illegal situation. That makes it almost impossible for him to defend himself from this situation by legal ways. Besides that, his family who is still in Iraq has been calling him constantly, because they are terrified with the idea that the country will be attacked by the USA. He cannot go back to his country because he asked for asylum, and he cannot bring his family to Portugal because he is not legalised and has no money. He wants to go to Jordan, where he has some contacts that may help him to take his family from Iraq. He is trying to go by the International Organization for Migrations, who as a program who helps people to return voluntarily to their countries when they cannot pay for the travel. However, it has been difficult, first, because his country is Iraq and not Jordan, and second because there are no direct flights to these countries, and for him to stop in Madrid he needs a letter explaining the situation from the organisations who have been helping him. This has only been necessary since the attacks, and only for the citizens of some muslim countries.

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), who helps refugees and immigrants in Portugal, as registered some incidents that have some relation with the events that took place in the USA. Recently, Portugal has become a country with a significant influx of migrants, mainly from countries of the former Soviet Union, but also from Brazil and Pakistan. This organisation helps these migrants to find work, but it as been very difficult to find jobs for Pakistani migrants, for the employers prefers people from other nationalities. Usually the reasons presented are not very clear, but sometimes religion is referred. The situation became worst since the terrorist attacks.

Usually, after some divulgation of the activity of this organization with migrants in the *media*, there are new offers of work. However when there was news about the Pakistani migrants in the eight o'clock news in the television, after the attacks in the USA, there was not a single proposal of work for these Migrants.

Good practices

To our knowledge, no measures explicitly intended to react against a presupposed spur of “Islamophobia” and scapegoating were taken so far. Partly because Portugal still have a small Islamic Community; partly because there were not any integration problems with Muslim, this kind of actions were still not adopted. In fact, this “invisibility” of the Islamic community was recently classified by a researcher as some sort of “exceptionalism” among European

countries⁹. Nevertheless, the Islamic Community, trying to clarify the true message of Islam, has conducted several initiatives. In their media interventions all leaders of the Islamic community had took a pedagogic stance. The peaceful message of Islam is underlined so it is the misinterpretation made by some Muslim of the “Alcoran” teachings. The president of the Islamic Centre at O’Porto stated that Muslims there, had not suffered harassment of any kind; instead, people has been most sympathetic and helpful showing “that they know how to dissociate religion from terrorism” (Público, 14/10/2001 – annex 6).

As stated before, criticisms targeted the Government accusing it of passivity. To Sheik Munir it would be of the utmost importance the visiting of some Government member to the Lisbon Mosque, symbolizing, he says, the solidarity between Portuguese authorities and the Muslims living in Portugal. This act should signal that the Islamic Community “was not abandoned in Portugal”.

Also, in a chapel in Lisbon was conducted an oration for the peace in the world, regarding the attacks in New York. The service was organized by the Portuguese section of the pacifist movement “Pax Cristi”, and had the participation of the Imam of the Lisbon Mosque, Sheik David Munir, that read an Islamic text about peace and invited people to reflect about this subject.

⁹ See, for instance, Tiesler, Nina Clara “Muslim at the fringes: the new Islamic presence in Portugal” in *Sociologia – Problemas e Práticas*, nº34, 2000, pp. 117-44.

SPAIN

Movimiento por la paz, el desarme y la libertad (MPDL)

(Movement for peace, disarmament and liberty)¹⁰

1 - Acts of violence or aggression and changes of attitude towards the Muslim communities

None of the organizations which we have contacted has reported any racist acts of violence against members of the Muslim communities they represent.

Below press articles related to the topic of violence and racism towards the resident Muslims in Spain are listed in details:

13/9/01. El País newspaper reports that a young man of Moroccan nationality without papers was shot by a hunter in the municipality of Tolox, province of Malaga. The victim was hurt by three shots in the shoulder, the thigh and the knee. The description of the aggressor led the Police to the detention of a neighbour, though he initially claimed his innocence. The reason for the aggression is still unknown.

16/9/01. El País newspaper reports on the fear of the Muslim community in Spain of possible racist outbreaks as a consequence of the attacks in the USA; the article recalls that eggs were thrown at a mosque in Madrid on September 14, 2001. The article also includes declarations of the Iman of the mosque, of the President of ATIME, Abdelhamid Beyuki, of a counsellor of the Moroccan embassy, Faris Yasir, and some Moroccan residents in Spain. They all express their fear of the possible reprisals for the attacks in the USA and stress the difference between the terrorist and the Muslim community.

16/9/01. The newspaper El País reports in an article "Do not blame all the Muslims of the world!" An analysis on the origin of the attacks in New York. The author tries to clarify that "this is neither a war of religions nor a struggle among cultures or nations, but it is a battle among fanatics, for whom objective - any objective: religious, nationalistic or ideological - justifies the way selected, and the rest of us, for whom life is a value in itself".

19/9/01. The newspaper El País reports on the situation of Islam in Spain: number of religious communities, situation, trends, problems, etc..

20/9/01. El País newspaper publishes an article in which the NGO Granada Acoge denounces that certain bars of Zafarraya's village (Granada) prevent Maghrebians from the entrance to the bars. Fifty agricultural temporaries have signed the denunciation. Zafarraya is a village of 2.300 habitants that receives, between May and June, approximately 1.500 temporary Maghrebians; there are also immigrants that have been living there for ten years. The mayor of Zafarraya declares that "*the owners of the establishments have denied the entry to persons who were going drunk and who previously have disturbed and bothered the customers*" and that, except a few disputes that happened in the beginning of this summer, in the village there have not been registered incidents of racist. For the president of Granada

¹⁰ This report covers the period from the 12 September to the 19th October and it is based on national and regional media reports and on information provided by the following organizations:

- Association of Immigrant Moroccan Workers in Spain (ATIME). ATIME's delegations in Spain, ATIME Andalusia and ATIME Almeria
- The Iman Ryay Tatari of the Mosque of Madrid.

Acoge (NGO) *"the incidents do not limit itself to a certain case and it is sure that connivance exists between the owners of the bars and the local authorities"*.

23/9/01. The newspaper El País reports on the opinion of three resident Muslims in Spain, that show their worries after the attacks in the USA.

28/9/01. The newspaper ABC reports on the declarations of the Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi in which he proclaims the superiority of the Christian civilization.

28/9/01. El Diario de Sevilla, a newspaper of Sevilla reports on the detention of a presumed collaborating terrorist of the organization led by Osama Bin Laden in the town of Lepe (Huelva). In this locality there are almost 500 Moroccan residents, in addition to the great number of immigrants who work during the season of the strawberry collection. In different declarations the pacific coexistence that reigns in the town and the absence of the terrorist movement in the rest of the Muslim population is underlined.

30/9/01. The newspaper El País reports of another image of the Muslim world related to peace. The article gives basic information on the Muslim religion and its sacred book, the Corán, and of the subjective interpretation that the Islamic fundamentalists do of its verses.

30/9/01. The newspaper El País informs about the coexistence of the three monotheistic religions in the city of Melilla, the Catholicism, the Islam and the Judaism.

30/09/01. La Vanguardia: "Alert police officer to protect the Islam". To that date insults against Islamic representatives, especially of the Arab group, but no physical aggressions have been detected in Barcelona and other Catalan cities. It was reported that the number of controls in front of mosques in the city has remarkably increased.

3/10/01. The newspaper El País reports on the ideological and religious tendencies, to be separated clearly from fundamentalism, of the French Muslim community, the most important one in Europe.

3/10/01. The newspaper El País reports on some repercussions from the attack in the USA in the province of Malaga, where 10,000 Muslims live.

- The National Day of Saudi Arabia, which has been organised annually by the consulate of Saudi Arabia in Malaga, has been suspended.
- Four congresses of North American companies have been postponed and this has caused the cancellation of more than 300 reservations in luxury hotels.
- The building of the 'Sea Palace' of king Fahd, who has spent more than 32,000 million pesetas, remain interrupted although it was predicted that the works were to be started again after the summer.

4/10/01. The newspaper El País reports on the attack against a mosque in Marbella, Malaga, to which fire was set to the main door of the building. Nevertheless, the Iman of the mosque, Mofaddla Mohamed Alí, has denied that the attack relates to the attacks in the USA, since it is the third time in the last years that the doors of the mosque were set afire. The delegate of the government in Malaga, Carlos Rubio, declares that investigations have begun to determine if the aggressors belong to some violent or racist group and that they will be persecuted.

11/10/01. La Vanguardia: "Fear and condemns in the Catalan Islam". The Muslims struggle between the rejection of the bombings and the fear to speak. They fear that their words are

misinterpreted and the majority refuses to speak openly. The Pakistan Muslims are most sensitive to what is happening.

17/10/01. El País: headlines "A mosque in Malaga exhibits a pro-Taliban manifesto on its facade." The writing emphasizes that Afghanistan has protected the honour, the life and the properties of women, "who can now leave their houses without fear to be kidnapped, to be robbed or violated". The text indicates that the country applies "a serious and effective" Islamic educative program to improve the "precarious" situation.

19/10/01. La Vanguardia: "Squabble by a mosque". Moderate Muslims denounce that a group of integralists occupied a mosque in Malaga. There are several fractions of the Islamic community of Malaga with different interpretations from the Islamic religion. A group of Muslims of integralist tendency assumed the control of the mosque that has been occupied for about six months. The controversy was ignited by planks placed in the outside of the mosque with a document that justifies the application of measures of restriction of women's freedoms in Afghanistan. This action was criticized heavily on the one hand and more moderately on the other hand by the community.

Not only acts of violence against Muslim communities have been reported, but also acts of violence against Christian and Jewish buildings and symbols have taken place; especially in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, as following press articles report:

16/9/01. The newspaper El País reports on the attacks on the church of San Jose, located in the Ceutí district of Hadu, and the commerce of a Jewish Ceutí. The church, located in a district of the city of Ceuta inhabited to equal parts by Christians and Muslims was attacked by several non-identified individuals that threw an incendiary bottle with gasoline through one of the windows of the building. Also a shop belonging to a Ceutí of Jewish religion was attacked with stones. The delegate of the government in Ceuta, Luis Vicente Moro, avoided to tie the fire with the terrorist attack in the USA, but he did not excluded that the attack on the church and the commerce have been caused by groups that try to destabilize a border city with the Maghreb. One third of the population in Ceuta is of Muslim religion.

30/9/01. The ABC newspaper dedicates a special article to the last events that happened in Ceuta and Melilla:

- in Ceuta, several minors threw a bottle with gasoline into the interior of the church of San José and burned its archives and additionally they appeared to have painted Jewish buildings in several points of the city;
- in Melilla also a church and a synagogue have been attacked and a Jewish cemetery has been profaned.
- Additionally the article reports on a small racist bud that took place in a bar in Ametilla del Mar between an American and several Muslims. As a result of this small fact posters against the Arab world have appeared.

In the news article the normal atmosphere of the otherwise pacific coexistence in the two multicultural cities is reflected. The article also includes declarations of people in the street, the Iman Hamid Liqid, Maxima Muslim authority in Ceuta, the advisor of Social welfare, Mohamed Chaid, the president of the Hebrew community of Melilla, Jacobo Wahnou, the president of the Islamic commission of Melilla, Abderramán Benyaya, ex- Eurodeputy of Izquierda Unida, Abdelkader Mohamed Alí, and of the delegate of the government in Melilla, Arturo Estebal Albert.

The representatives of the Muslim communities which we have contacted are worried about the anti-Islamic language that they have detected in some mass media, and make explicit

reference to the wireless social gatherings of the audience of the two Radio leaders like CADENA SER and ONDA CERO, and the newspaper of general information El País the most read of the Spanish newspapers.

As a result of the events of the 11 of September and to prevent possible reactions towards the immigrant population of Muslim religion, the Coordinator of Organizations for Immigrations (CEI) of the Baix Ebre (Catalunya) has organized a series of interventions in the mass media of the region:

- A program of debate in the local TV (Channel 21) with participation of leaders of the CEI and Islamic representatives (11 of October of 2001).
- Articles to be published in local press (an article already published)
- Small explanatory press notes on concrete aspects of the culture and Islamic and Moroccan religion, to be published in the local press.
- Interviews on radio.

SWEDEN

EXPO Foundation

The picture emerging in Sweden currently seems to be one of contradiction. While extremist parties in their propaganda have worked hard to add fuel to anti-Moslim sentiments, and while there has been an increase in the number of islamophobic incidents, incident reporting by the authorities suggest that the situation is far from the worst case scenario expected immediately after the September 11 World Trade Center bombing. At the same time representatives of the Moslim community in Sweden are reporting an increased fear and insecurity among its members.

POLICE INCIDENT REPORTING

There are certain problems in obtaining exact figures for anti-Islamic or anti-Arab incidents. Statistics on racial violence is annually compiled by the constitutional protection branch of the **Swedish Security Police (Säkerhetspolisen, Säpo)**. However, for ongoing investigations, cases are filed at the **Criminal Intelligence Service (Kriminalunderrättelsetjänsten, KUT)**, a division of the National Police Authority. The KUT is unable to quote exact figures due to the fact that all incidents relating to September 11 are gathered in the same computer file; this includes anti-American and anti-Semitic incidents as well as anti-Arab incidents. In addition, the case file includes alarms to the police which later turned out to be erroneous or mistaken, or cases where the investigation has proved inconclusive.

Police Officer Mr Thord Modin, attached to the Analysis Unit of the KUT, says the days following September 11 saw an increase of reported incidents. He estimates that there has been a daily 5-10 cases reported, with a peak on September 14, when 18 incidents were reported. However, these cases include both anti-American, anti-Jewish and anti-Arab incidents.

– Off hand I would say there is a rather equal distribution of anti-American and anti-Arab incidents, with possibly a slight lead for anti-American incidents, Mr Modin says.

– Don't misunderstand me, but this can be interpreted as a good and positive development. Following September 11 we feared the worst. When two sky-scrapers are attacked and some 5 000 people killed, and Arabs generally identified as the »bad guys«, you could expect a far stronger reaction from extremists. As it is, the reaction has not been anything close to what we expected, and this may suggest that the Swedish people are not anti-Arab or prone to listen to anti-Arab propaganda.

Mr Modin's estimate would put the number of reported anti-Moslim incidents somewhere in the region of 200-plus cases following September 11.

MOSLIM COMMUNITY REACTIONS

Mr Mostafa Kharraki, head of the **Swedish Moslim Council**, doesn't entirely share the police assessment. Although there hasn't been any massive outbreak of anti-Arab or Islamophobia, members of the Moslim community are reporting a distinct change in daily lifestyle.

When the September 11 attack took place, a new mosque has recently opened in the heart of the Stockholm south-side district. For several years places of worship for Stockholm's

Muslims had been temporary places located in basements or backstreet warehouses. Due to the growth of the Muslim population, demands for a permanent and serious place of worship were raised, and in the early 1990s it was suggested that an abandoned electricity plant in the heart of Stockholm would be rebuilt to house a permanent congregation.

This decision initiated a massive racist campaign trying to generate popular support against the building of a mosque in Stockholm. Various leaflets and handbills spread in the neighbourhood claimed the mosque would become a »terrorist centre«, and that this was only the first step in a Muslim masterplan to gain control of the city centre. The campaign was never successful, although there were several small rallies against the mosque.

– Since the mosque recently opened we have had a steady stream of visitors, not the least from the local population on Stockholm south-side, Mr Kharraki explains. This summer we had almost daily visitors, either by individuals or groups, and there was a very positive feeling that we were building a close relationship with people in the neighbourhood. In this we also had the support of the nearby St Catherine's Church, which is one of Stockholm's largest Christian churches.

– Following the September attack, the number of visitors to the mosque dropped to almost zero, and still two months after World Trade Center the situation remains the same.

– Although the situation has been very calm, there is no doubt that members of the Muslim community feel more insecure and uncertain about the future.

Mr Kharraki says several members of the community have reported incidents or voiced concern.

– For instance, a Muslim woman who works in a children's day care centre is opening or closing the center once a week. She has always walked back and forth to her workplace. Since September she feels so insecure that her husband now must follow her to her job.

The Muslim council also reports a marked increase in telephone hate calls or hate mail arriving to the mosque offices or to individual Muslims. Sample quotes:

---Item: *»We don't want justice. We demand revenge. We want them (the Muslims) all dead.«*

---Item: One letter contains a picture of Usama bin Laden with the text: *»OUR ENEMY – KILL ALL MUSLIMS«*.

---Item: *»We would like an enormous blood bath in the Middle East. All Muslims are responsible. They are no humans. Smash terrorism. Smash Islam. Smash the Arabs.«*

---Item: *»I will hate the Muslims as long as I live. I will teach my children to do the same. Why do you live in our Christian nation!«*

---Item: *»Damned Muslim. We really hate you all. Death to all bloody Muslims.«*

– Although there has not been any massive repression against Muslims in general, there has been a string of incidents, and of course hate mail and telephone terror to individuals increase the fear and insecurity among our members, Mr Kharraki claims.

Mr Pierre Durrani, head of the **Moslim Council Youth Organisation**, issued a forceful statement condemning the WTC attack. »Terrorism is a crime against God and his supreme creation, mankind«.

NOTABLE ISLAMOPHOBIC INCIDENTS

As with other institutions, the Moslim Council does not compile any independent systematic incident reporting. Mr Kharraki says that he bases his claims on telephone calls or visits from individual moslims.

At the same time the police incident reporting is not reliable, because it only shows cases actually reported to the KUT Analysis Unit from various police districts. From previous experience we know that such reporting is anything but complete for the simple reason that many cases of racial crimes may be reported as, for instance, »plain robbery« or »assault«, but with no specific reference to it being racially motivated. We can also expect that some of the cases reported on closer inspection will prove to be false alarm etc. A final compilation will only be presented in the Security Police annual report next year.

With this in mind, we can state that appx. 200 cases have been reported to the police and that additional cases – hate mail or telephone terror – have been noted by the Moslim congregation but (with few exceptions) not reported to the police.

Several of the cases reported are of minor nature – insults, cases of graffiti vandalism with a racial slant etc. Some of the cases are of more serious nature and have made media headlines.

(+) In Märsta, north Stockholm, a local mosque was targeted by arson, when a fire was started by the entrance of the building. The fire was discovered by a local shop owner, and was put out before any substantial damage was made.

(+) The Intercultural School in Stockholm, with predominantly Moslim students, was targeted in a firebombing, when a bottle was thrown through a window and set fire to a carpet. The fire died out by itself and was discovered as student arrived in the morning.

(+) In Södertälje, south of Stockholm, a 27-year-old Moslim woman has been targeted by several attacks by a racist youth gang. The harassment began following September 11, and has included both verbal and physical abuse. As violence escalated she was hit by a stone and eventually reported the incident to the police.

(+) In a much publicised incident, three men of Arabic origin on their way to a week's vacation in Spain, were ordered to leave the air craft shortly before take off. The Captain on board refused to fly the three men. The airline company, Premair, claim the three men acted »strangely« and »nervously«, which frightened other passengers. The three men all claim they had a week vacation and opted for a last minute flight to Spain; they boarded the aircraft and didn't even notice anything strange until the captain turned up with airport security:

– I am shocked, say **Mr Ismail Fouda**, one of the three. It is obvious that were given a special treatment only because we all have Arabic names.

The case has been reported to the Discrimination Ombudsman.

(+) The Moslim council has reported an incident where a member of the congregation on his way to his work was suddenly picked by the police at a bus stop for, as he told the story, »no valid reason at all«. Brought to a nearby police station, he was informed that he was a suspect

in bank robbery. Protesting his innocence, he was kept in a cell while police raided his apartment with drawn handguns, which took the wife of the suspect by surprise and scared her. The man was later released without apology or explanation. (Please note – this story is based on information from the Moslim Council, but is unconfirmed by police sources.)

ACTIVITIES TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA

Several activities to counter anti-Islamic tendencies have been carried out.

In a statement, the **Swedish Christian Council (Sveriges Kristna Rad)** has urged people to »do everything possible« to prevent racial harassment and threats in the wake of the World Trade Center bombing«. The Christian council is working closely with the Moslim Council.

The Christian Council, as well as several other Christian organisations, has severely criticised **Reverend Stanley Sjöberg**, a priest in an independent congregation, which launched a frontal assault on Islam at the end of September. In an article, Reverend Sjöberg claimed »Islam has declared war on the Western World«. The article, was full of islamophobic sentiments.

Ms Yvonne Ruwaida, a Green Party member of parliament, took the initiative to launch a **Swedish Committee Against Islamophobia (SCAI)**. She was joined by **Mr Kurdo Baksi**, a well-known Kurdish author and journalist in Sweden. The SCAI board is made up of, among others, **Mr Pär-Axel Sahlberg**, a priest and Social Democratic member of parliament, **Mr Jan Hjärpe**, a professor of Islamology, **Ms Ann-Sofie Roald**, a Dr. of History, and other prominent individuals. The Committee is non-partisan.

Several prominent politicians, among them Minister of Integration **Ms Mona Sahlin** and Deputy Prime Minister **Ms Lena Hjelm-Wallén**, both from the Social Democratic Party, have visited the Stockholm mosque. Other politicians which have made high profile statements against islamophobia is **Mr Alf Svensson**, leader of the Christian Democratic Party, **Mr Lars Leijonborg**, leader of the Liberal Party, and **Mr Matz Hammarström**, a spokesman for the Green Party.

In a separate statement, prime minister **Göran Persson** has condemned any tendencies of islamophobia in Sweden, stating »there is no link between ordinary Swedish Moslims and the terrorists operation in the New York attack«.

EXTREME RIGHT PROPAGANDA

Immediately following the September 11 attacks, a division could be seen among extremist groups in Sweden. Explicitly Neo-Nazi organisations such as the National Socialist Front and others, voiced support for Usama Bin Lades and celebrated the attacks, while the so called »respectable racists« from parties such as the Sweden Democrats have taken every opportunity to incite anti-Arab and Islamophobic sentiments.

Sweden Democrat internet propaganda, as well as propaganda disseminated through various »non-political« chat pages, claim the Christian World is under attack by »Moslim invasion«.

The Sweden Democrat homepage quoted Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, claiming:

»We must be aware that our civilisation is superior and that our value system guarantees respect for human rights. Such respect does not exist in the Islamic countries.«

Sweden Democrat propaganda claim dozens of »Moslim terrorist organisations« are active in Sweden – most of the organisations referred to are ordinary immigrant organisations. In a text bordering on silliness, the Sweden Democrats claim Swedish prime minister Göran Persson »helped finance« the WTC attack. The argument is that by giving financial aid to immigrant organisations in Sweden, money will end up in terrorist bank accounts.

UNITED KINGDOM

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