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MUSLIMS in EUROPE: Don Quixote's Windmills ?
Recognition, Toleration, Integration

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Today in this beautiful Italian town, I would like to share with you my opinions on the question of Islam and Muslims in Europe.

- Is this a political problem?
- A religious question?
- A Historical bias?
- Or a Real THREAT or a MYTH?

The answer depends on what we know about the facts and where we stand.

I would like to use a metaphor to open this talk to a discussion in advance. The Metaphor I use here is ***Don Quixote Metaphor***.

What or Who is Don Quixote? What is its relevance to our talk today?

- As you all might know, Don Quixote de La Mancha of Miguel de Cervantes mistakes inns for enchanted castles, and their peasant girls for beautiful princesses.
- He confuses windmills with oppressive giants and dreams up Dulcinea.
- Sancho knows his master is off square but sticks by him with patience.

The characters in our Metaphor are

- *Don Quixote :   Islamophobists in Europe*
- *Windmills :   Muslims in Europe*
- *Sancho Panza :   the silent majority in Europe*
- *Dulcinea: Multiculturalism & Pluralism in Europe*

Don Quixote the knight with sword in his hand metaphorically represents Europe and the windmills are Muslims. The result is ISLAMOPHOBIA.

European Comissions have `Islamophobia reports` that warn against xenophobia and islamophobia.

Sancho Panza (the silent majority) is Helpless…   Dulcinea (multiculturalism and pluralism) is still dreamed.

`It's a book that means all things to all people" and "*It's hard not to see yourself in Don Quixote and Sancho.*"

Today I would like to use this Don Quixote analogy from this great Spanish novel.

Why Don Quixote Metaphor?

What's most amazing about this novel is that despite its humour and playfulness and literary strength, <u>it's really a novel about how people APPROACH LIFE AND REALİTY</u>.

NOW LET S LOOK AT THE FACTS and HISTORY

The recent historic expansion of the European Union (EU) has brought to focus issues relating to European Muslims, raising questions about the impact of the expansion on their current and future conditions. What can Muslims do to positively influence their current situation and play an active role in the decision-making processes that impact their existence at various levels in European societies?

Estimates of the Muslim population in the recently expanded EU vary considerably owing to the lack of accurate statistics. Out of a population of 450 million, Muslims are estimated at between 15 and 25 million. In countries like France , Germany and Britain , the Muslim population reaches into the millions. During the height of the hijab crisis in France, voices emerged in the Western media calling on Muslim women to leave France if they would not abide by its laws. The question then arose: Where should they go, and by what justification when France is their motherland?

European Muslims need to actively interact with other segments of society, rather than presenting themselves as a minority attempting to claim its rights from a majority that can deny or withhold these rights. In general, using extreme measures to demand these rights is not only an ineffective position, but also a harmful one.

The overwhelming majority of Muslims in Europe are part of the fabric of society. Like other groups, Muslims have certain peculiarities that distinguish them from the rest of society. Irrespective of their cultural heritage or religion, all these other groups remain an integral part of the society, which has become a mosaic of cultures, creeds, nationalities and religions. Dialogue, co-existence, and even conflict govern the relationships between them, but none is excluded or marginalized as a minority. This should also apply to the Muslim populations of the EU countries.

European Muslims do not represent a transient historical phenomenon, and there is no evidence of a decline in their presence. On the contrary, there are many indications that the Muslim presence in Europe will increase. According to European and UN studies, the results of these drastic demographic changes in European countries will play themselves out in the coming decades. Amongst the factors that contribute to this change is the increase in European Muslim birth rates in comparison with those of other groups. Other projected changes are a decrease in the working-age population and an increase of the retiring-age population - a situation that is impossible to balance without opening the door to immigrants, which can hardly be achieved without including millions of Muslim immigrants.

Muslims in European Society

The presence of Muslims in continental Europe probably goes back to the earliest days of historical Islam.[1] Four periods can be distinguished.

1- The first of these has passed into history — the period of Islamic Spain and Muslim rule in Sicily and southern Italy. The Normans put an end to the latter in the eleventh century,[2] and the Spanish *reconquista* erased the last Muslim foothold in Spain in 1492.[3] All that remains today is the rich contribution Islam made to many aspects of European culture.[4]

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[1] The influential Italian Catholic historian Andrea Riccardi, pondering the relationship of Christians and Islam around the Mediterranean places Islam in another context. 'Can a region of the world with seventeen countries and territories, twenty-two languages and three world religions be thought of as single entity? Or is the Mediterranean merely a geographical expression, a frontier zone between North and South, between Christendom and the world of Islam?' Riccardi takes issue with the 'Clash of civilizations' thesis espoused by Samuel Huntington, arguing that the Mediterranean, in spite of - and indeed perhaps because of its diversity, exhibits all the characteristics of a united whole. Riccardi evokes the French historian Braudel's vision of the Mediterranean as a sea of diversity that over the centuries had been 'melded into larger units such as empires or cosmopolitan cities'. His was the Mediterranean of coexistence, until it entered a period of crisis between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the great empires (most notably that of the Ottomans) fell by the wayside, they were replaced by several different 'nations', each one affiliated to a distinct religion, culture and ideology. But by employing what Braudel once termed a 'long-view lens' to observe the current fragmentary state of things, Riccardi suggests that one can detect the persistence of an underlying unitary fabric. 'The Muslim south and the European north are obliged by geography and history', to find a way to live together in that set of common circumstances that is the Mediterranean.' Andrea Riccardi, *Mediterraneo: Cristianesimo e Islam tra coabitazone e conflitto,* (Milan: Guerini e Associati, 1997).

[2] Georges Peyronnet, 'Coexistence Islamo-Chretienne en Sicile et au Moyen-Orient (fin du XIIeme siecle)', *Islamochristiana (ISCH)* vol. 19 (1993), pp. 55-73.

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2- The second phase was the result of the spread of Mongol armies during the thirteenth century. After only a few generations, their successor states became Muslim, and one of these, the Khanate of the Golden Horde, centred on the Volga river basin north of the Caspian and Black Seas, left a permanent Muslim population of various Tartar groups stretching from the Volga down to the Caucasus and Crimea. As itinerant traders and soldiers, many of these groups later traveled around the Russian Empire and established colonies in Finland arid the area which today straddles the border between Poland and the Ukraine.[5]

3- The third phase is marked by Ottoman expansion into the Balkans and central Europe. This was the context for the settlement of Turkish populations, which still survive today in parts of Bulgaria, the former State of Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece.[6] Albania became a country with a Muslim majority, and Slav groups in Bosnia and parts of Bulgaria also became Muslim.[7]

4- The fourth phase is relatively new, namely the establishment of Muslim communities in Western Europe.[8] The last half of the twentieth century saw the arrival in Europe of an increasing number of Muslim immigrants. The majority came seeking work, while

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[4] W. Montgomery Watt, *The influence of Islam on medieval Europe,* (Edinburgh University Press, 1972).

[5] Mark Batunsky, 'Islam and Russian medieval culture', *Die Welt des Islams.* n.s. vol. 25 (1985), pp. 1-27. For Muslim-Christian relations see Chantel Lermercier-Quelquejay, 'Les missions orthodoxies en pays musulmans de Moyenne-et Basse-Volga, 1552-1865', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique (CMRS)* vol. 8, n. 3 (1967), pp. 369-403; Alexandre Bennigsen and Ch. Lermercier-Quelquejay, ' Musulmans et missions orthodoxies en Russie orientale avant 1971', *(CMRS)* vol. 13, n. 1(1972), pp. 57-113.

[6] See in particular the work of Alexandre Popovic: *L'Islam balkanique: Les musulmans du sudest européen dans la période post-ottomane* (Berlin: Otto Harrassowitz Wiesbaden, 1986); *Un ordre de derviches en terre d'Europe: la Rifâ'iyya* (Lausanne: Éditions l'Âge de l'Homme, 1993): 'L' Islam et l'état dans les pays du sud-est européen' in *L'Islam et I'état dans le monde daujourd'hui,* ed Oliver Carré (Paris: PUF, 1982), pp. 121-142: "Le 'radiclisme islamique' en Yougoslavie" in *Radicalismes Islamiques,* ed Oliver Carré and Paul Dumont (Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1985). vol. 2, pp. 151-161: and Harry T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: religions and society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: C. Hurst, 1993).

[7] Nathalie Chaser, *L' Albanie pays des derviches : les orders mystiques musulmans en Albanie à l'époque post-ottomane* (1912-1967), (Berlin: Otto Harrassowitz Wiesbaden, 1990). See also the very interesting account by the French Jesuit Islamicist André d'Alverny, 'L'Albanie : terre d'Islam au bastion de chrétienté', *En Terre d'Islam,* n. 6 (1939), pp. 95-103.

[8] J. Nielsen, 'Muslims in Europe', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, vol. 31 (1987), pp. 58-73.

other sought political asylum.[9] The growth of Muslim minority populations in the West since the early 1970's generated increasing concern about their presence and settlement in areas that have for centuries been considered the heart of Christendom.[10] Their presence has, in some quarters, provoked fear and suspicion while in others it has proved a stimulus for intercultural and interreligious exchange.

In the past, European Muslims were viewed as foreigners, alien to society. This, however, is no longer the case, as the vast majority of Muslims are either of European descent, descendents of immigrants, or are themselves immigrants who arrived a few decades ago. They are part and parcel of European society. If Muslims are peculiar by virtue of their religion, then this applies to all religious groups, including Catholics, Protestants, Zoroastrians, Buddhist and others.

Although there are no accurate statistics on the Muslim population of the EU countries, available information can provide an outline of their demographics.

1.   The ratio of Muslims to the total population of the EU countries ranges between 3.5 and 5.5%. However, the ratio of Muslim youth (between 45 and 50% of the Muslims) to EU youth is between 16 and 20%. In other words, in a few years Muslims will constitute 16 to 20% of the European workforce, and could therefore influence policies and decision-making.

2.   On average, the educational level and professional qualifications of Muslim youth is lower than that of European youth, and the unemployment rate among Muslims is higher than average. However, the introduction of programs aimed at integrating Muslims into the mainstream could improve this situation.

3.   The percentage of Muslim laborers in Europe is in decline. This is offset by a steady increase in the percentage of self-employed academics and professionals in fields like medicine, engineering, education, business and trade.

During the past few decades there has been a religious revival amongst European Muslims. Their assimilation into Western society has thus slowed, and the number of practicing Muslims has increased. This is reflected in the increased observance of the hijab among women, and in the increase in the number of mosques and prayer facilities. This has in turn generated an increasing demand for Islamic education, which explains the growing attendance at Islamic conferences and seminars, the increased demand for Islamic literature, and the active involvement of youth in Islamic activities and the media.

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[9] Classical Islamic thought has divided the world up into two spheres. *Dar-al-Islam* (The House of Islam) and *Dar-al-Harb* (the House of War). In the former, Muslims govern Islamic society according to its practices, and in the latter, unbelievers rule. The presence in Europe — *Dar-al-Harb* — of large numbers of Muslim intellectuals articulating dissent towards Islamic states *Dar-al-Islam* — is creating tensions within contemporary Islamic thought over how to square the circle within classical parameters. Maurice Borrmans, 'Future prospects for Muslim-Christian coexistence in non-Islamic countries in the light of past experience'. *Journal of the Institute for Muslims Minority affairs,* vol. 10, n. 1 (1989), pp. 50-62, and Bernard Lewis, 'Legal and historical reflections on the position of Muslim populations under non-Muslim rule', in B. Lewis and D. Schnapper (ed), *Muslims in Europe*, (London: Pinter, 1994), pp. 1-18.

[10] The best overall guide to Muslim presence in Europe is J.S. Nielsen. M*uslims in Western Europe* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, second edition, 1995). See also the bibliographic guide: Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and I. Qurqmaz, 'Muslims in the West: a select bibliography', *ICMR*, vol. 11, n. 1 (2000), pp. 5-49.

Existing Islamic organizations and centers are no longer able to cater to the growing needs of the Muslim community; many cannot accommodate the increasing number of worshippers, let alone actively participate in providing Islamic education in a systematic manner or setting up institutions to meet the cultural, social, recreational, and professional-training needs of Muslims.

Allegations of the spread of religious extremism and terrorism amongst Muslims are being hyped by the media, spurred on by political bias. But even the strongest of these allegations, which are based on intelligence reports -- few of which provide convincing evidence -- do not go as far as claiming a widespread extremism amongst Muslims. According to these reports, it is estimated that radical groups account for less than 0.5% of the Muslim population.

The envisioned goal for the future of the EU states is to achieve a successful integration of Muslims, an integration that is balanced, objective and well planned. A number of factors should be taken into consideration, such as that the vast majority of decision makers sectors are Europeans from a generation brought up in the 1970s; a period that coincided with vicious campaigns against Islam and Muslims. Additionally, according to opinion polls, despite the negative image of Muslims propagated in the wake of the September 11 attacks, European youth are open and fair towards Muslims, and have a better understanding of Islamic issues.

Islamic organizations and institutions are still divided on how to deal with these new realties. While most of these organizations are on their way towards integration, there are a few small and scattered organizations that are influenced by the demagogic attitude of their leaders. Although the latter organizations do not enjoy much support from mainstream Muslims, they could have a negative impact on the entire Muslim population, as their statements are used in the West to paint all Muslims with the same brush.

The broad-based mainstream Muslim population, which includes doctors, engineers, businessmen and students, has not yet fully succeeded in strengthening their presence in society in a way that could help Muslims realize their interests.

It is estimated that there are currently 20 to 25 million Muslims in the whole of Europe including Russia and the Balkans, and some ten to twelve million in Western Europe.[11] They are partly a by-product of earlier relations established between expanding European Empires of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the Muslim world. The vanguard of these Muslim settlers in Europe were soldiers who fought under the banner of European nations: North Africans and Senegalese for France; Tartars and Bosnians for Germany; Indonesians and Surinamese for the Netherlands; South Asians and Africans for Britain.

A Breakdown of the countries of provenance of Muslims in Europe shows that they form an extremely heterogeneous group. While those in Eastern European countries are descendants of Tartar and Turkish military and civilian administrators and Slavic converts to Islam, the Muslims of Western Europe come from the great waves of migrants in the recent past. They exhibit great linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. It cannot be over stressed that beyond

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[11] Estimates of Muslim population in European countries: Austria - 100.000: Belgium - 250,000; Denmark - 60.000; France - 3.000,000; Germany - 2.500,000; Ireland - 5.000: Italy - 500,000; Luxembourg - 1.000; Netherlands - 400,000; Norway - 25,000; Portugal - 15,000; Spain 450,000; Sweden - 100.000; Switzerland - 100.000; United Kingdom - 2.000.000.

their profession of Islam, the various groups often have little in common. Frequently, the only common language among them is that of the European host country. Even those who come from the same country of origin stem from diverse and often antagonistic ethnic groups, such as Berbers and Arabs from the Maghreb or Turks and Kurds from Turkey. Their civil status varies greatly from country to country.[12]

Their ways of understanding and identifying with Islam show a rich diversity. Many, possibly the majority, of those coming from Turkey and the Maghreb come from village societies where Islam was part of popular religion. Islam offers them a global culture and a means of social structuring. They are thus strongly attached to the religion, although they may have but a vague knowledge of what it teaches. The local Islamic leader, whose position carries great authority especially among the first generation migrants, may himself have only and elementary knowledge of classical Islam. Many of the social and cultural problems faced by Muslims in Europe are similar to those faced by other, non-Muslim, migrant groups, while others are unique to them. The culture shock of moving into the highly mobile culture of modern industrial Europe and the difficulties of social integration, are considerable.

However, Muslim migrant groups face another complex issue connected with their Islamic faith. They are often both culturally and religiously alienated. Islam has determined the familial and social relationships, the rhythm and structure of daily life, the moral and value systems of their previous way of life. But in Europe they find themselves in a pluralist, secular environment in which there is little place for religious observance in the pattern of daily activities. Second and third generations of these immigrants continue to experience in their lives a real and deep tension, finding themselves more and more integrated into the society in which they live and yet still influenced by the religious and cultural values and ideals held so dear by parents and elders in their communities.

Many adjust to a dichotomised existence and take refuge in traditional values of behaviour in the private spheres of home and ghetto neighbourhood.

Unity and diversity

Muslims themselves are ambivalent about their situation. They debate whether it is Islamically acceptable to live in a non-Muslim environment, they worry about the influence of western culture and education on their children, they debate whether they should become citizens, or opt to be transients in perpetuity. Some argue for establishing Islamic ghettos in order to maintain their children in the faith and deep the alien culture, out, while others see the possibility of living in a pluralistic society where Islam is recognised as a religion of divine origin with a divine mission to the world.

In early 1989 the 'Rushdie affair' hit the public, with Muslim protests in Britain against the perceived insult of The Satanic verses and the subsequent Iranian fatwa. This was followed by another celebrated incident when a group of Muslim girls were excluded from a secondary school north of Paris for insisting on wearing headscarves. This aroused a heated public debate across Europe about the place of Muslims in European society, about the relationship

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[12] Thomas Michel, 'Muslims in Europe', *Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis* (Rome), Bulletin n. 60 (1985), pp. 265-269.

between religion and state, as well as about perceptions of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations.[13]

Many younger people have reacted by rediscovering Islam. International Islamic movements give them a sense of belonging to a larger, self assertive community. Paradoxically, their religious identity as Muslims, with the great demands it makes upon the individual, offer values which seem both absolute and unimpeachable. Observers in various countries have noted, for example, the increased practice of the Ramadan fast in recent years among Muslim youth.

In this context of unity and diversity, **two major responses** have evolved among Muslims in Europe.

Preservation, integration, mission

The first is the effort to reproduce the Islamic way of life of the country of origin: In order to protect itself from a society where Islamic traditions could easily crumble, there is an inclination towards exaggerated rigidity. The host society is considered decadent, dangerous, contact with it is undesirable and should be avoided as for as possible. Dress, behaviour, relations between, the sexes and patterns of worship should differentiate the Muslim from his or her European counterpart.[14] 'The myth of the return home', for instance, which was entertained by the first-Muslim migrants after the Second World War, has raised two questions. Can Western Europe accept the existence of Muslim communities within them? Can Muslim communities cope with a minority situation?[15]

A second response is that Muslims should develop a religious identity adapted to their cultural surroundings. They should work to build a 'European Islam', integrating what is good from the local cultures and making their own Islamic contribution to the future of European societies. This point of view, which often challenges traditional interpretations of Islamic doctrine, is based on the belief that lslam is a way of life which can be fully lived in any political and cultural context. This approach to Islamic life in Europe, however, presupposes a positive cultural experience of life in the various European countries in which Muslims-live.[16]

In Eastern Europe, more settled Muslim communities offer a further variation. In Yugoslavia Muslims came to define themselves by way of opposition. They were not Serbs or Orthodox, they not Croats or Catholic. They were simply Muslims, marked by a wider membership of the Islamic world. This was their difficulty at the demise of the Federation. The Croats had Croatia to fall back on, and the Serbs had Serbia, but the Muslims only had Bosnia, which had been dominated by the Serbs since 1918. Yet the Muslims did not want to be forced into

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[13] S. Nielsen, 'Muslims. Christians and loyalties in the nation-state', in *Religion and citizenship in Europe and the Arab world,* ed. J. S. Nielsen (London: Grey Seal, 1992), pp. I-6: and Claude Galliot, 'Islam et pourvoir : la commanderie du bien et l'interdiction du mal', *Comnuinio, v*ol. 16 (1991), pp. 127-152.

[14] Gillies Kepel, *Allah in the West: Islamic movements in America and Europe* (London: Polity, I 997).

[15] Michael L. Fitzgerald, 'Christians and Muslims in Europe: perspectives for dialogue', *Encounter: Documents for Muslim-Christian understanding,* n. 247 (1998), p. 7.

[16] For an extended reflection on this theme, in contemporary Islamic thought, see J. S. Nielsen, *Towards a European Islam,* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

leaving for Turkey. Contrary to allegations of their identification with Turks, the Bosnian Muslims have always had a strong sense of their Slavic and European identity.[17]

Views of the Varieties of Islam

The prism through which others view the nature of the unity and diversity of Islam as a global tradition continues to inform encounter and dialogue. In their views of Islam. both Muslim and non-Muslims seem on the whole to gravitate towards the notion that all Muslims are really the same, but they say so for very different reasons. For non-Muslims — especially some European and American secularists — images of a monolithic Islam often arise out of a fear of the unknown, or of organised religion: or autonomous spiritual values, that encourages oversimplification in dealing with 'the other.' That fear is in turn exacerbated by long standing stereotypes of Muslims as bellicose and generally given to religiously motivated and sanctioned violence.[18]

For their part, Muslims tend for several reasons to dismiss the notion that there are varieties of Islam. **One** is that their tradition's characterisation of Christian disunity poses an unacceptable image, of a religious community. **Another** is that their own understanding of, and wish for, a truly global community of Muslims leaves no room whatsoever for any significant diversity within it. If non-Muslims' consistent attribution of a seamless unity to Islam rests on an unjustifiably negative reading of Muslims as humanly homogeneous, that of Muslims is built on an equally uncritical idealisation of Islam as religiously uniform.

The first characterisation is unfair the second unrealistic.

'EURO-ISLAM' OR MUSLİMS İN EUROPE

The newly coined phrase 'Euro-Islam' is a novelty both in English and in other European languages. In orientalist literature, it is hardly to be found at all, and in particular is a real rarity in older orientalist works. In the case of Arabic, the term 'European Islam' or al-islam al-urubi is also very uncommon. In fact, it is to be found in works influenced by European writings, coined as a straightforward translation of 'Euro-Islam', which indicates that it is of 'alien' origin.

'Euro-Islam', however, is not just a terminological issue, not just a matter of the intonation of terminology dictated by politics, ideology, religion or other factors. 'Euro-Islam', therefore, is both a political and ideological matter, a matter of both culture and civilization and of coexistence in Europe.

What is 'Euro-Islam'?

There are several definitions of 'Euro-Islam', none of which is generally acceptable either to Muslims or to European governments, for reasons that are to be found in the diversity of groups with an interest in defining 'Euro-Islam'. European Christians employed in government offices dealing with matters relating to Muslim non-nationals see 'Euro-Islam' as

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[17] This *dilemma* and others are powerfully told in Michael A. Sells, *The bridge betrayed: religion and genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (University of California Press, 1996): see also the essays in Mark Pinson (ed), *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina,* (Harvard University Press, 1996).

[18] M. Lagarde, 'Violence et verité : etude de texts islamiques', *Pontificium Consilium pro Dialogo inter Religiones,* Bulletin n. 81 (1992), pp. 282-327.

a means of Europeanizing Islam and Muslims so as to give rise to a kind of 'civil Islam', a 'secular Islam', an Islam professed at the level of lay or secular culture. Their aim is, in short, to create Islam as 'Euro-Islam', to create a manifestation of Islam that will be 'socially desirable' in Europe; an unobtrusive Islam, in fact.

In this context, the approach to 'Euro-Islam' is utilitarian, and as a result there are numerous definitions of it.It should be pointed out here that this essay will not deal with the past, since the topic of 'Euro-Islam' is not appropriate to a treatment of the eight centuries of Islamic presence in Spain, as a civilization, society, culture, religion, legal system, state and so on, for example. It is true to say that this too was 'Euro-Islam'; many historians would unhesitatingly say that this period, together with the experience of Islam in Bosnia and in the Balkans as a whole, was in fact the sole authentically European expression of 'Euro-Islam' as a civilization and living cultural experience.

This page of a long-gone 'Euro-Islam', however, has come to an end, and the book of which it was a part has long since been closed.
Be that as it may, the term 'Euro-Islam' will be used here in reductive form, to mean a theoretical definition of the present-day complex presence of Islam on the European continent.

As can be seen from its very complexity, 'Euro-Islam' is a two-pronged term, including on the one hand the name of a continent, Europe, that has held a central political, cultural and civilizational position in the history of the world ever since the 17th or 18th century AD. But on the other hand it also includes the name of a faith, a religion: Islam. The very name of Islam indicates that it is not linked, as a faith, to any particular continent nor determined by any particular continent, nor is it limited to the people through whom it made its appearance in history, nor even to the person of its founder, nor is its name determined by any other historical or geographical element.From the very outset, then, the word Islam, meaning submission to God, even at the terminological level, radiates a universal call. If one compares the term 'Euro-Islam' with, say, 'Euro-Hinduism', it becomes clear that the first has to do with Islam as a universal faith seeking a place and expression for its universality in the contemporary European environment. It is here that a universal (the Islamic) is experienced in specific circumstances (European).

It is not so with a hypothetic 'Euro-Hinduism'. This is a notion that is difficult to explain, because it implies the idea of physically transferring or overlapping the Indian subcontinent to the European continent. It is probably for this reason that there is no such thing as 'Euro-Hinduism', nor is it a possible construct, while 'Euro-Islam' is very much possible.
Here, then, is why the 'Euro-Islam' agenda is of interest in so many ways, though still in the early stages of emergence, and why it has been the subject of such a large number of analyses in recently published material, with very diverse intonations and interpretations.
 It should be said at once that from the moment it was first floated a few years ago, the term has aroused great interest in many quarters, in particular on both shores of the Mediterranean, the Arabic-Turkish-Islamic on the one hand, and the Western Christian on the other – particularly in France, Germany and Great Britain.

To anyone who is aware of the significance of the Mediterranean in both European and Islamic history it will be clear that it is perfectly natural for interest in 'Euro-Islam' to derive

from various motives and to have given rise to such diverse interpretations.
On both the European and the Islamic side there are interpretations of 'Euro-Islam' that are energetic, spirited, cordial; but on both sides there also exist intereptations, and their protagonists, that reject the 'Euro-Islam' agenda, reading ulterior motives into it and seeing it as conspiratorial.

And on the subject of conspiracy, it is not difficult to come to the conclusion that some interpret 'Euro-Islam' as an anti-European conspiracy, and others as anti-Islamic, a distortion of Islam.

Nor is 'Euro-Islam' exhausted purely at the geographical level. It is a complex phenomenon , one that has to do with faith and ideology in Europe, with culture and civilization – or rather, multi-culture and multi-civilization – in Europe, and above all with the civilization of the shared and common living of several faiths in a single European city or country, in this single European continent.

These indications already to a large extent suggest the difficulties encountered in any attempt to speak competently and seriously on the definition of 'Euro-Islam', and in particular of the different interpretations of the term in situations marked by urgency. Europe is interested in multilaterality these days, particularly the Europe that seeks to make a clean break from the ideologies of fascism and communism. It is happy to see the topic of 'Euro-Islam' being taken seriously in many European universities, particularly given that throughout its history Europe has had no long-lasting experience of common living and the peaceful encounter of several religions, with the exception of certain European regions such as Spain prior to 1492, and Bosnia and the areas of the Balkan peninsula where the Ottoman Empire established the phenomenon that can be called Pax Ottomanica.

Many contemporary experts and scholars dealing with the phenomenon of relations between Islam and the West suggest the reasons for Europe's lack of long-lasting experience of multi-religious life. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu has the following to say on the subject:

'Throughout history, North Africa, Eastern Mediterranean lands and Anatolia had a cosmopolitan coastal population, and their hinterlands were meeting places for migrant and sedentary peoples from different backgrounds. The same situation is observable in east and southeast Asia. Europe for its part preserved its Christian character for most of its history. European contacts with the rest of the world generally took place outside the continent. For this reason, Europeans were historically less experienced in accommodating foreigners in their homelands.'

There is now also a resistance to 'Euro-Islam'. It comes from those circles in Europe that are not accustomed to the Other, to those who are different. To judge from the mass of anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic literature that has appeared in Europe in the last two decades alone, 'Euro-Islam' has its enemies among the citizens of Europe who have not become citizens of the world and who still persist in political, philosophical, cultural and civilizational Eurocentrism.

Hundreds of different publications, books, treatises and newspaper articles now deal with the issue of Islam in the West. This, too, indicates that the issue of Islam in the West is not a

simple question of geography in the phrase 'Euro-Islam', but a serious and, for many, urgent element that has to be properly defined, monitored and supplied with a valid interpretation.

These hundreds of publications on Islam in the West had what may be called direct causes. One of these, known is the Rushdie affair, gave rise to dozens of anti-Islamic books, and when a group of Muslims burned Rushdie's book in Bradford as a sign of protest (an unseemly act, certainly, deserving condemnation), throughout the West Muslims were described in abusive terms, and there were frequent and wholly irrelevant comparisons made between Muslims and Nazis.

Muslims were described in the media as uncivilized and intolerant, and it was often suggested that Muslims were such 'by the very nature of their faith'.

While the English-speaking regions were particularly inundated with the anti-Muslims campaign that arose from the Rushdie affair, in the French-speaking regions the balance was restored by media coverage in 1994 and 1995 of l'affaire des foulards, when Muslim girls in hundreds of French schools were looked at askance for wearing hijab, and in some parts of the country there were even written decrees banning the wearing of hijab in schools.

Ziauddin Sardar, deriding l'affaire des foulards in France (see the book edited by Sardar, Muslim Minorities in the West, London, 1995), half-ironically notes, 'Thus, a French woman with a scarf is chic, but a Muslim woman with a scarf is a threat to civilization'.

Many serious people in the West, Christians, Jews and Muslims, have drawn attention to the dangers to France's much-praised democracy that could arise from *l'affaire des foulards*. Some years earlier, and in particular when these two affairs had become the daily fodder of newspaper columns, hundreds of books and thousands of newspaper articles were written , and hundreds of television programmes broadcast, in which the Muslims of Europe were vilified, defamed, and stigmatized as a 'non-European element'.

Among European Muslims themselves there are signs of a change of mind-set. The vice in which European Muslims found themselves gave birth, as can be seen from numerous publications, to 'a new self-consciousness for European Muslims', which is a common phenomenon at times of crisis.

At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, Muslims in Europe have embarked on the task of defining their European status. But this status cannot be defined without a valid determination of their identity. Identifying and justifying that identity is what many have called 'Euro-Islam', which is a further indication of the hopes that reside in this term.

Confirmation of Euro-Muslim identity – for many, the chief task of 'Euro-Islam'

The problem of conserving the Islamic, but also the national and cultural, identity of Muslims in western Europe is a central issue, of particular importance for the second and third generations of Muslims in this continent. It is also a central theme in all debates on 'Euro-Islam'.

The 'Euro-Islam' agenda in Europe has been accepted by the Muslim middle classes (businessmen, lawyers, fashion designers, university professors, the merchant class and so on).

However, there is still a long road to be travelled before a valid and integral articulation of 'Euro-Islam' can be achieved, a 'Euro-Islam' that would be of benefit in many ways to the Muslims of Europe and to Europe itself.
The 'Euro-Islam' that is affirmed and articulated by educated and culturally mature European Muslims is one that emphasizes the universal aspects of Islam. In their writings they stress that the origins of Muslims (Bangladeshi, Pakistani, African, Turkish, Bosnian and so on) must play only a secondary role and, as such, be restricted to the private and domestic sphere. 'Euro-Islam' would be a universally interpreted Islam, which would liberate European Muslims from their self-ghettoization and from the ghettoization of Islam in Western Europe.

However paradoxical it may seem, Islamic communities in Europe are a particular obstacle on the road to full, and for Muslims beneficial, affirmation of 'Euro-Islam'. For Islamic communities are divided along national lines, defined by prejudices and hostility between one madhhab and another, and – the major problem – are dependent both in mentality and organizationally on the country of origin of Muslim newcomers (India, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco and so on).
In conclusion, a major problem on the road to full affirmation of 'Euro-Islam' is that European Muslims have no single, united European Islamic community. For Muslims in Europe are not represented 'continentally' anywhere, nor are they even considering the possibility, which is a tragedy in itself.

> **There is no cause to fear 'Euro-Islam', for the 'Euro-Islam' agenda is not a conspiracy theory.** If in the future it defines European Muslims, taking account in that process both of Islam and of its homeland of Europe, 'Euro-Islam' might provide Muslim children, young European Muslims, with the immeasurable benefit of a dignified survival.

CRITICISM and TOLERANCE ?

- It is not intrinsically phobic or prejudiced, of course, to disagree with or to disapprove of Muslim beliefs, laws or practices.

- Adherents of other world faiths disagree with Muslims on points of theology and religious practice.
- By the same token, agnostics and secular humanists disagree with Muslims, as with all religious believers, on basic issues.
- In a liberal democracy it is inevitable and healthy that people will criticise and condemn, sometimes robustly, opinions and practices with which they disagree.
- **It is legitimate to criticise policies and practices of Muslim states and regimes, for example, especially when their governments do not subscribe to internationally recognised human rights, freedoms and democratic procedures, or to criticise and condemn terrorist movements which claim to be motivated by Islamic values.**
- However, Muslim states are as muslim as Germany or Italy or Belgium are Christian states.
- **Debates, arguments and disagreements on all these issues take place just as much amongst Muslims, it is important to recognise, as between Muslims and non-Muslims.**

How, then, can one tell the difference between legitimate criticism and disagreement on the one hand and Islamophobia, or unfounded prejudice and hostility, on the other?

In order to begin answering this question it is useful to draw a key distinction between closed views of Islam on the one hand and open views of Islam on the other.

Phobic dread of Islam is the recurring characteristic of closed views. Legitimate disagreement and criticism, as also appreciation and respect, are aspects of open views.
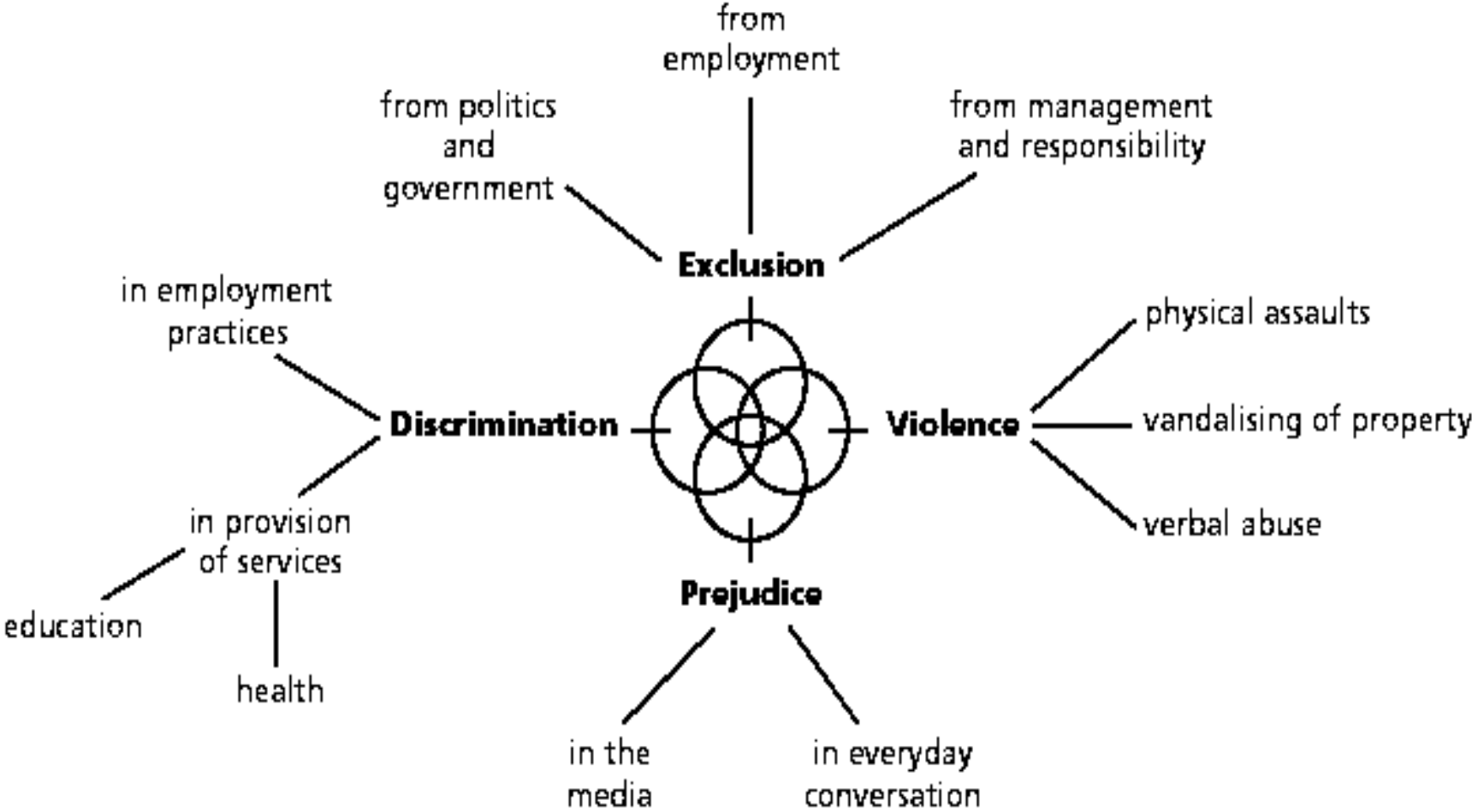
- In the following tabulation, (*taken from the 1997 Islamophobia Report by the Runnymede Trust, an independent research and social policy agency in UK*) eight main features of CLOSED VİEWS are itemised, and contrasted in each instance with eight main features of open views.
- PROJECTION for the AUDIENCE::
- In point of fact closed views feed off each other, giving and gaining additional resonance and power and giving each other kickstarts, as it were – they are joined together in vicious circles, each making the others worse. Also they sometimes provide codes for each other, such that whenever one of them is explicitly expressed some of the others may also be present, tacitly between the lines.
- Similarly it happens that open views feed off each other, and give each other additional clarity – they interact in virtuous circles, each making the others stronger and more productive.

Closed and open views of Islam

Distinctions	Closed views of Islam	Open views of Islam
1. *Monolithic / diverse*	Islam seen as a single monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to new realities.	Islam seen as diverse and progressive, with internal differences, debates and development.
2. *Separate / interacting*	Islam seen as separate and other – (a) not having any aims or values in common with other cultures (b) not affected by them (c) not influencing them.	Islam seen as interdependent with other faiths and cultures – (a) having certain shared values and aims (b) affected by them (c) enriching them.
3. *Inferior / different*	Islam seen as inferior to the 'West – barbaric, irrational, primitive, sexist.	Islam seen as distinctively different, but not deficient, and as equally worthy of respect.
4. *Enemy / partner*	Islam seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, engaged in 'a clash of civilisations'.	Islam seen as an actual or potential partner in joint cooperative enterprises and in the solution of shared problems.
5. *Manipulative / sincere*	Islam seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage.	Islam seen as a genuine religious faith, practised sincerely by its adherents.
6. *Criticism of West rejected / considered*	Criticisms made by Islam of 'the West' rejected out of hand	Criticisms of 'the West' and other cultures are considered and debated.
7. *Discrimination defended / criticised*	Hostility towards Islam used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.	Debates and disagreements with Islam do not diminish efforts to combat discrimination and exclusion.
8. *Islamophobia seen as natural / problematic*	Anti-Muslim hostility accepted as natural and 'normal'.	Critical views of Islam are themselves subjected to critique, lest they be inaccurate and unfair.

The biggest obstacle in challenging Islamophobia, is the lack of monitoring on the basis of religion, the lack of hard information and statistics on the experience of Muslims.

Islamophobia, a visual summary

from employment

from politics and government

from management and responsibility

Exclusion

in employment practices

physical assaults

Discrimination

Violence

vandalising of property

in provision of services

verbal abuse

education

Prejudice

health

in the media

in everyday conversation

Considering the new realties of the EU, the main issues that the Muslim population should focus on are:

1- Working towards putting the war against terrorism into perspective.
2- Promoting the idea of dealing with Muslims as an integral part of the society through dialogue - not confrontation, which is not conducive to integration.
3- Focusing on the education and professional training of Muslim youth.
4- Supporting youth activities aimed at raising Islamic awareness among Muslim youth, without disconnecting them from mainstream youth.
5- Supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role of Muslim women, especially the younger generation, in society.
6- Critically reviewing the traditional role and operation of Muslim institutions and developing them to cope with changing realities.
7- Encouraging prominent Muslim intellectuals, journalists, and other professionals to develop a mechanism for constant interaction with their non-Muslim peers.

As for Muslims, what do they claim to find in the Prophet Muhammad`s Example is as follows:

``You will not have genuine faith unless you WISH for others what you WISH for yourself``

HERE then we have THE QUESTION OF the `self` and the `other`……..

CONCLUSION

What is rather called for <u>is</u> mutuality of understanding and of appreciation, a critical perception which is already incipiently self-critical, Rather than reach for commonality, we are invited to expand our horizons in the face of diversity. The goal is not an expanded scheme, but an. enriched inquirer: discovery of one's own self in encountering the self of another. The time has come for all of us to place our cultural understandings of peace, through closer attention to SELF at the center of cross-cultural dialogue, so as to gain deeper understanding of our respective conceptions of "the inner good" and of the instrumentalities through which the protection and production of positive social values can be furthered. We need new ways of relating to one another, on the basis of what we might create together and not merely on the basis of that which we fear and desire to avoid. Thank you.