



DDCP-YD/NHSM-Islamophobia (2014) 1

Budapest, 21 July 2014



## Seminar

**Hate speech and religious intolerance:**

**Educational responses to Islamophobia in Europe**

16–20 September 2014

European Youth Centre Budapest

**Seminar rationale**

**Call for participants**

**Deadline: 19 August 2014**

## The seminar rationale

A recent report overviewing online hate towards Muslims<sup>1</sup> in social media reveals that the phenomenon is rampant on various social platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. Researching three different hashtags on Twitter (#Wooldwhich, #Islam and #Muslim), the report highlights that most used phrases to deride Muslims were “*paedos*,” “*terrorists*” and “*scum*”, and that most of the tweets aimed at creating hostility, while some incited to violence. The report highlights the effects on the community of the online abuse and harassment, but as well on the consequences, it has in the offline life where it creates an insecure environment and increases the potential for hate crime.

Intolerance and discrimination against Muslims are not a new phenomenon, but the rise is in the past years in Europe is severe and can be linked with a broader context of the ‘war on terror’ and the economic crisis. This context contributed to a growth in resentment and intolerance towards Muslims and Islam and has pertained the mass media and the political speech of the last years. The consequences of limited response from governments, civil society and public can be seen in spikes of hate speech and hate crime against Muslims all over Europe.

Islamophobia, as defined by the ‘Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Addressing Islamophobia through Education’, as a form of discrimination and intolerance, encompassing discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards individual or groups that are perceived to be Muslim and/or are associated with Muslim people or Islam. The manifestations of Islamophobia range from hate speech to direct, indirect discrimination, and hostile behaviour to hate crime. In the particular case of Islamophobia, it is important to bear in mind that it is strongly interlinked with other forms of discrimination based on anti-immigrant sentiments, xenophobia, racism, gender and religious intolerance, which raises the potential for intersectionality in types of discrimination faced by individuals and groups in particular contexts.

The Council of Europe, the OSCE-ODIHR and the UNESCO have a rich history of work on the topic of Islamophobia and hate speech. The most recent endeavour taken by these three institutions was the development and publication of the ‘Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Addressing Islamophobia through Education.’ The guidelines reaffirm the commitment to counter such manifestations within our societies, and to empower and support educators worldwide in taking effective action to address the roots of such manifestations. The guidelines have been developed in cooperation with educators, but address a wider audience of policy makers, trainers, youth leaders and workers, school staff and youth organisations. The guidelines are relevant for both formal and non-formal education.

The No Hate Speech Movement campaign of the Council of Europe was launched to raise awareness about the dangers of hate speech reside in undermining the public good of an

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<sup>1</sup> Imran Awan, *A Typology of Online Hate against Muslims on Social Media*, Birmingham City University

inclusive society and to decrease acceptance of hate speech online. At the request and initiative of youth organisations, the topic of Islamophobia and religious intolerance is in the highlight of activities in 2014 within the campaign framework. Hence, the seminar on Islamophobia and religious intolerance together with the associated European Action Day in the framework of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign aim to bring attention and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and, especially, to explore how education, both formal and non-formal, as well as online and offline can come to respond to the current challenges. The online campaign is accessible at [www.nohatespeechmovement.org](http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org)

### **Aims and objectives of the seminar**

The seminar aims to explore and understand the dimensions Islamophobia and its expression through online hate speech and explore the role of education in combating it and promoting religious tolerance and understanding. The seminar will also make concrete proposals for actions and initiatives to implemented online and offline in the framework of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign, contribute to the implementation of the European Action Day against Islamophobia and Religious Intolerance on 21 September 2014 and propose ways to implement and apply the “Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims. Addressing Islamophobia through Education”.

The objectives of the seminar are:

- To assess and deepen the understanding of Islamophobia as both a form of racism and religious intolerance, its causes, manifestations and consequences;
- To familiarize participants with the Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, elaborated by OSCE-ODIHR, UNESCO and the Council of Europe and with the Bookmarks. Manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education;
- To share experiences and good practice of combating Islamophobia through formal and non-formal education;
- To support cooperation and networking among participants and the partner institutions to combat Islamophobia and other forms of religious intolerance;
- To identify practical proposals and projects to support the implementation of the “Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims” at European and especially, local and national level;
- To propose concrete initiatives and actions in the framework of the No Hate Speech Movement to counter Islamophobia and its expressions online and offline, along with its causes.

## **Programme and methodology**

The programme of the seminar will be based on the approaches of non-formal education, starting from the participants' experiences and input, and featuring expert input and hands-on sessions on educational approaches to counter intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, such as work with the Guidelines for educators, Bookmarks and Compass. The seminar will focus as well on concrete proposals and initiatives to be elaborated with participants in the framework of the No Hate Speech Movement and beyond. A detailed programme will be communicated together with the results of the selection.

## **Participants profile**

The seminar will bring together some 20 participants from Europe and beyond. Participants should fit the following profile:

- Be involved as activists or part of National Campaign Committees of the No Hate Speech Movement or be educators, youth workers or youth leaders, teachers, researchers, representatives of human rights, minority or religious organisations working on the topic of Islamophobia or religious intolerance;
- Be interested to develop follow-up activities and actions to counter Islamophobia and related hate speech in the framework of the campaign, and beyond in their work with young people and educators of young people;
- Be able to work autonomously in English;
- Be available for the entire duration of the seminar.

## **Participants selection**

All interested candidates will have to complete the application form online available at <http://youthapplications.coe.int> by 19 August 2014.

Participants will be informed by the results of the selection by 25 August 2014.

## **Financial conditions**

All participants will be offered board and lodging in the European Youth Centre Budapest.

## **Travel and visa costs**

Travel expenses and visa costs are reimbursed upon presentation of the relevant receipts, according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire seminar can be reimbursed. The payment will be made either by bank transfer after each course, or at the end of the seminar in cash (in Euros).