



CCIE ANNUAL REPORT ON
**ISLAMOPHOBIA
IN EUROPE**
FOR THE YEAR **2023**

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COLLECTIVE
FOR COUNTERING
ISLAMOPHOBIA
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Collective for Countering Islamophobia in Europe

Table of contents

4	A word from the Chairman
6	2023 at the CCIE
6	The stakes of statistics on Islamophobia
8	Figures in brief
13	Harassment and Islamophobia: French inflexibility
13	The Republican school in question
16	The “abaya”-hunt and sexist harassment
20	The far right harasses, the authorities remain silent: France’s mosques
22	Europe in 2023
23	The growing influence of the far right
23	The electoral successes of the far right in Europe
24	A climate of simmering violence
26	Increasing and accepted criminalisation of migrants from the South
29	Europe after October 7
30	A wind of repression and censorship against supporters of Palestine
32	Muslims and European anti-Semitism
33	Islamophobia on the rise
35	Verbatim
36	Conclusion
37	Recommendations

A word from the Chairman

Few would deny it: 2023 has been, in many ways, a trying year. Throughout the year, the subject of Islam in Europe in particular has not ceased to animate public debate, giving rise to new regulations, new concerns and new tensions. In a climate of ever-increasing tensions over the Muslim presence in Europe, it is therefore crucial to examine the past year in order to gain a better understanding of the hardships endured and to better apprehend the future.

This report aims to respond to this imperative, by providing the tools for an in-depth analysis of the developments and challenges encountered in the fight against Islamophobia over the past year. Through this report, the Collective for Countering Islamophobia in Europe (CCIE) hopes to contribute to a more general effort of understanding, which could be the basis for action adapted to the issues of our time. The aim is to give ourselves the means to combat Islamophobia effectively by grasping its most topical form.

The CCIE is a non-profit association (ASBL) that defends human rights and fights against discrimination, acts of violence and incitement to hatred targeting individuals, legal entities and institutions because of their real or supposed affiliation to Islam. We are therefore an organisation that fights for the rights of minorities and works with vulnerable groups. Hence, we have an advantageous view of the needs of these groups. As a result, our collective can give a voice to people and groups suffering from Islamophobic discrimination, while helping them to assert their rights. Given the erosion of trust in official bodies and the authorities among minority communities, this work is vital.

Yet the activities of civil society organisations such as the CCIE are constantly under attack: in her July 2023 report, the UN Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor, notes that human rights defenders working with minority groups are particularly affected by threats, attacks, administrative, legal, practical and societal obstacles and various restrictions in some EU Member States. According to the

EU Fundamental Rights Agency's report on the protection of civil society in 2023, threats and attacks against civil society organisations and human rights defenders persist throughout the European Union. These obstacles take various forms, such as defamation campaigns, the criminalisation of certain associative activities and excessive surveillance targeting organisations, staff and volunteers. Faced with this constant threat to the work of defending human rights, we need to raise a collective awareness.

The current challenges are alarming: we need to respond to the persistent dehumanisation of minorities in Europe, particularly Muslim minorities, their constant suspicion and the increasingly explicit and easily assumed desire to see them leave the European countries in which they live. In the media, in politics and even in academic circles, the most outrageous comments are accepted and even acclaimed, and hate speech proliferates with relative impunity. While this situation is frightening, it does not mean that it is unsolvable. In this context, it is up to each and every one of us to take responsibility for disrupting this deterioration in the public sphere, for instilling a spirit of solidarity and respect for diversity in Europe, and for recalling the values of equality, freedom and plurality that are the bedrock of democratic life. This is the task that the CCIE has set itself, and it is the one that we undertake to honour in each of our actions.

We would like to take this opportunity to look back and express our gratitude to all those who make our work to defend the rights of Muslims possible year after year, and to those who show their support for our commitment every day. Through this report, we hope to help make the phenomenon of Islamophobia clearer and more tangible for as many people as possible.

2023 at the CCIE

We cannot be aware of the reality of Islamophobia in Europe without any measuring tools that make it quantifiable and comparable from year to year. Its very reality is regularly denied. One of the missions of the CCIE is to fight against this tendency to make the phenomenon invisible, in particular through the publication of its annual data.

THE STAKES OF STATISTICS ON ISLAMOPHOBIA

In its successive annual reports, the CCIE publishes figures from the largest available database on Islamophobic incidents in Europe: every year, the CCIE collects several hundred complaints, testimonies, calls for help and information requests from victims of Islamophobia. With a strong history and credibility among victims, the CCIE is viewed as a reliable and effective interlocutor and therefore has a unique perspective on this phenomenon.

While the CCIE has vital data for understanding the extent and nature of Islamophobia, its work is hampered by a remarkable unwillingness on the part of the public authorities. It is as if the calls for precise figures on Islamophobia were not motivated by a genuine intention to grasp the reality of the phenomenon, but rather to justify the inaction of the public authorities..

An eloquent example is provided by the figures published by the Central Territorial Intelligence Service (SCRT), a department of the French Ministry of the Interior, which counted 188 anti-Muslim acts in 2022 (compared with 527 according to the CCIE). According to the SCRT's figures, we should be pleased to see a 12% drop in anti-Muslim acts compared to the previous year. In presenting these figures, the Minister of the Interior also alluded to **the underreporting of discrimination**, stating that there are also «*all [the acts] that one doesn't report, because one has decided not to take any further steps with the police and gendarmerie, because one has grown used to it*». Firstly, if victims of Islamophobia choose not to report the acts of discrimination or attacks they undergo to the police, it's not simply because they've «grown used to it», but because the police, in a context of increased surveillance, intimidation and police violence, are no longer trusted partners in the eyes of many members of racialised and minority communities in France. **It is hardly surprising that at a time of intense stigmatisation of Muslims, who are suspected and accused ad nauseam of being radicalised, separatists or Islamists, they no longer have the reflex to turn to those who are watching them.**

There is an obvious cognitive dissonance at work in the comments made by the

French Ministry of the Interior and Overseas France: **Islamophobia suffered by Muslim individuals has also been powerfully reinforced and even encouraged by the French state**, particularly through the successive plans to combat radicalisation and separatism drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior. By way of example, the fight against separatism led to the dissolution in 2020 of the Collectif contre l'Islamophobie en France (CCIF), the only independent body capable of providing institutions with figures on Islamophobia. The circle is thus complete: **by cracking down on the actors and associations capable of developing a complete account of Islamophobia, the French Ministry of the Interior can then put forward relatively reassuring figures** to justify the scant political attention paid to the issue of Islamophobia in France. It is also because of a very restrictive definition of Islamophobia, which denies its structural dimension, stemming from the very institutions of the State or decisions emanating from them, that figures for Islamophobia are further weakened.

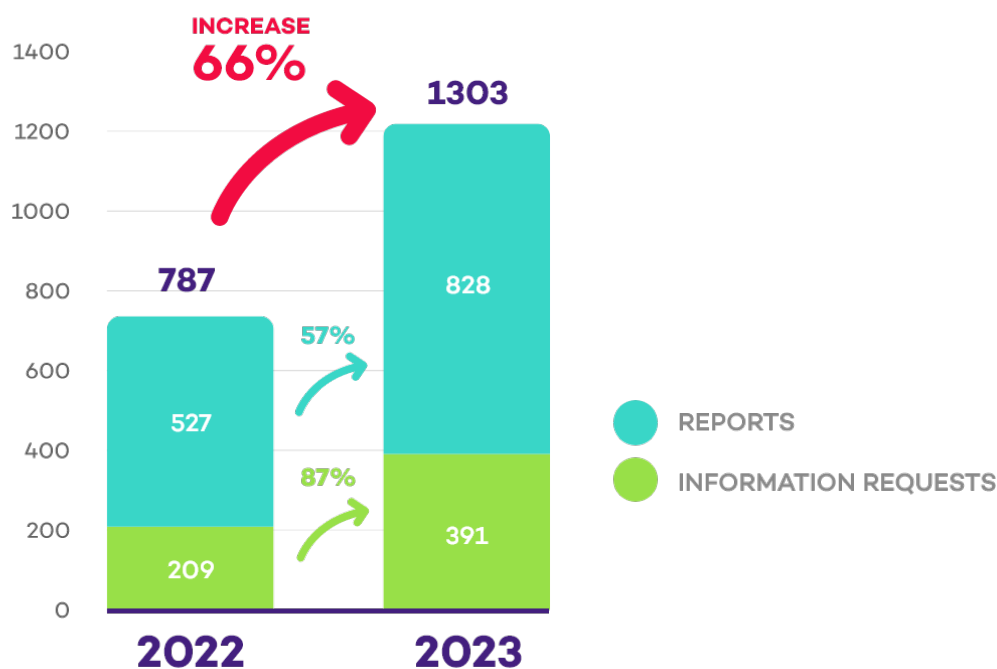
In the face of these **attempts to conceal the reality of Islamophobia**, it is all the more important to highlight the indicators of Islamophobia that we have. The purpose of this report is to provide evidence to ensure that Islamophobia is not relegated to the status of an epiphenomenon.

The figures presented here should, however, be viewed with a number of factors in mind. In general, racist discrimination is still under-reported, and the statistics available to us therefore fall far short of the realities experienced by the victims of racism. This state of affairs is even truer for Islamophobia, which is the subject of **constant denial and particularly virulent debate: those who fight against Islamophobia are regularly accused of actually promoting Islamism, or even terrorism**. For this reason, many victims of Islamophobia trivialise their experience of racism and are afraid to denounce it or simply report it. The widespread suspicion that surrounds the use of the very term «Islamophobia» can **discourage victims of Islamophobia from reporting** what has happened to them.

FIGURES IN BRIEF

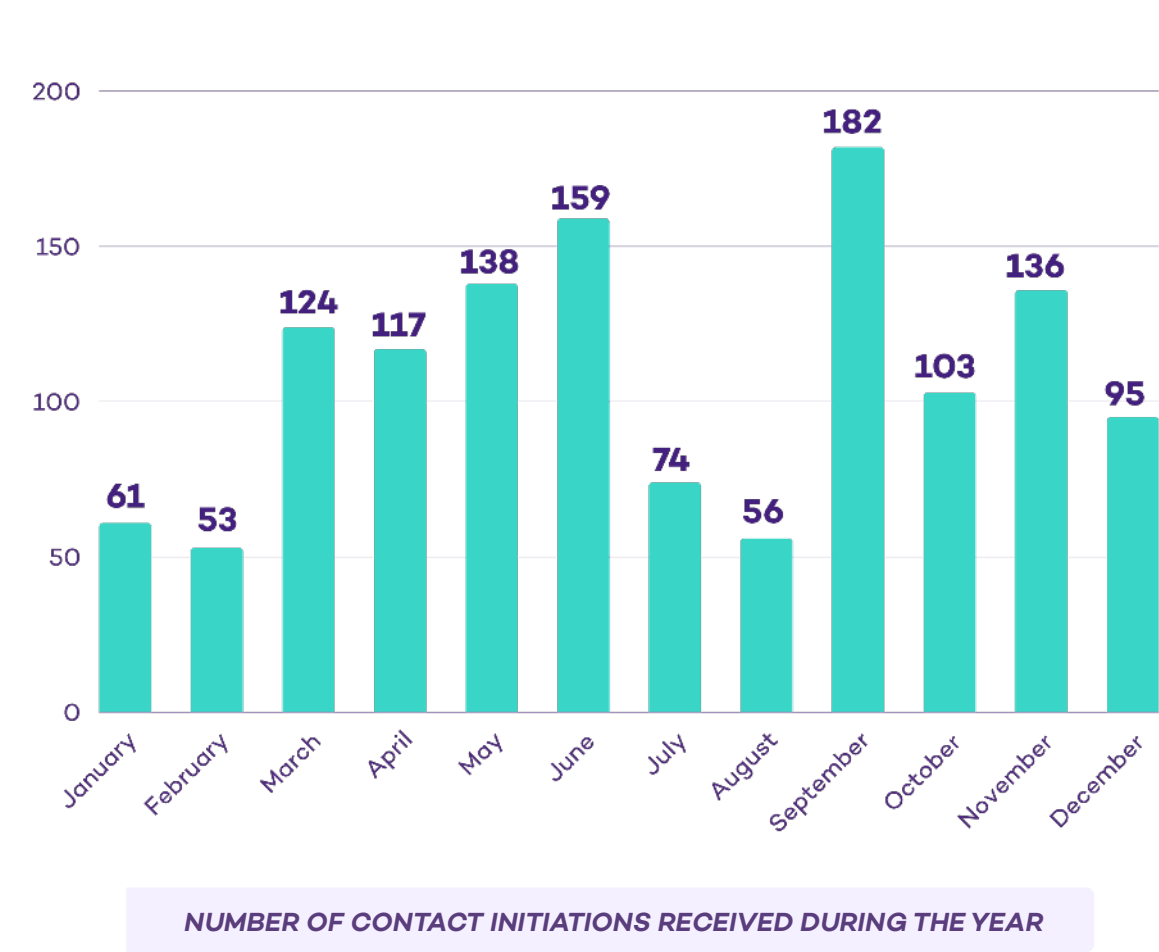
In 2023, **828 cases** of Islamophobic incidents were reported to the CCIE. In 2022, 527 cases have been reported,, an **increase of 57%** in the span of one year. These figures relate exclusively to reports of incidents that have actually been established as Islamophobic by the CCIE's legal department.

Therefore, this figure does not include all requests: in 2023, **1303 people contacted the CCIE**, as compared to 787 in 2022. These requests were made for a variety of reasons, including information requests (391 in 2023, 209 in 2022), testimonials (17 in 2023, 20 in 2022), and contacts (67 in 2023, 31 in 2022). The vast majority of requests concern cases that take place in France: this is the case for 1183 requests, or 90.8% of the total number of requests, and for 794 alerts, or 96% of the total number of alerts.



EVOLUTION OF CONTACT INITIATIONS BETWEEN 2022 AND 2023

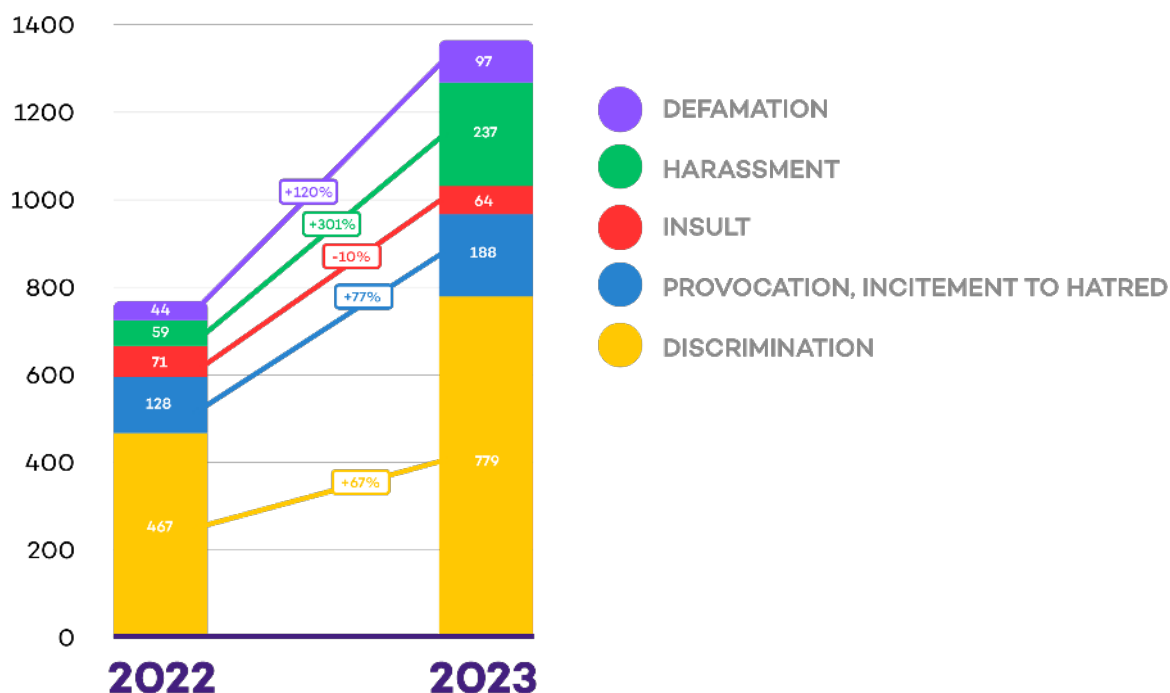
The number of contact initiations received during the year was as follows:



A SPECTACULAR INCREASE IN INCIDENTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT IN 2023

The 828 reports for 2023 include incidents of various kinds: **discrimination (779)**, **provocation and incitement to hatred (188)**, **degradation or desecration (11)**, **insults (64)**, **moral harassment (237)**, **defamation (97)**, **physical assaults (23)** and **incidents linked to the fight against radicalisation and separatism (72)**.

The changes between 2022 and 2023 for these different categories are as follows:



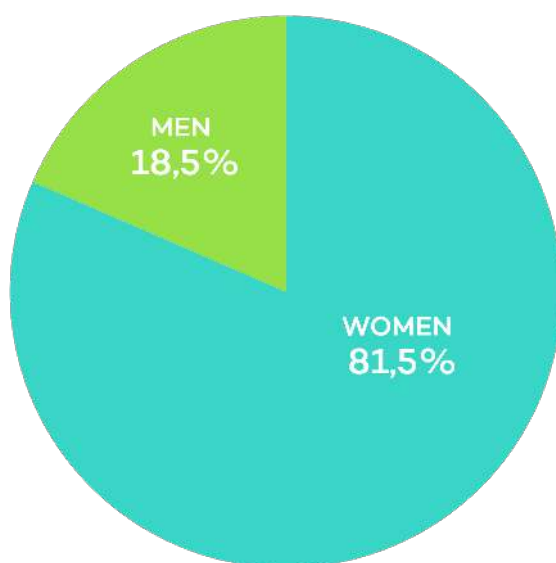
EVOLUTION OF THE TYPES OF REPORTS BETWEEN 2022 AND 2023

Reports of defamation, discrimination, hate speech and incitement to hatred have therefore sharply risen. **The most striking change, however, concerns moral harassment, which rose by 301.7% in the span of one year.** It is worth noting that of the 237 reported incidents of moral harassment, 151 took place on the premises of a middle school or high school.

GENDER AND ISLAMOPHOBIA: A PERSISTENT TREND

As in the previous year, and in line with a major trend in Islamophobia since the phenomenon was first observed, the vast majority of these incidents concerned women. Out of **828 reports, 675 (81.5%) concerned women** and 153 (18.5%) men.

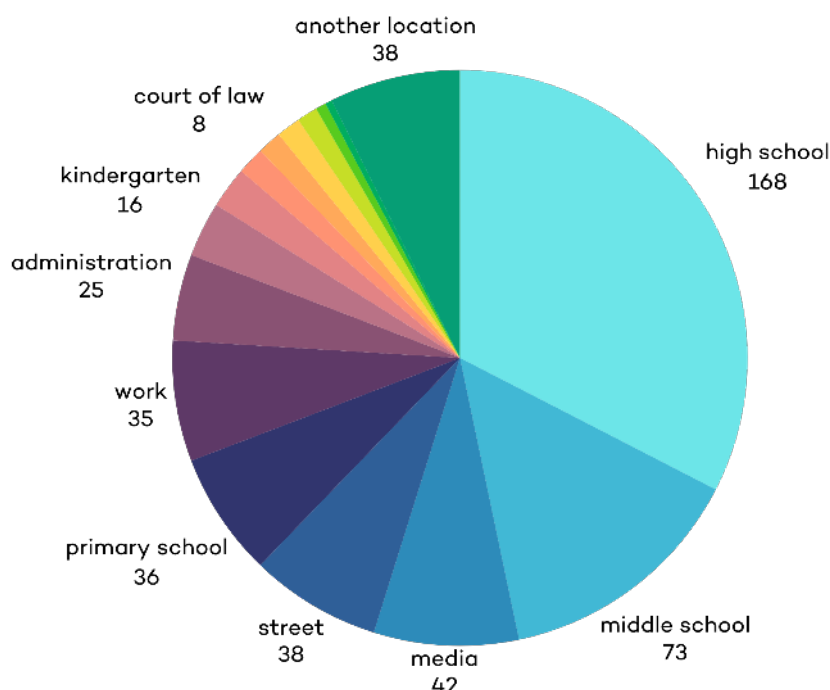
The gender proportions are almost the same as in 2022 (81% of reports concerned women and 19% men), but the figure for reports of Islamophobic incidents concerning women has risen from 427 in 2022 to 675 in 2023, an increase of 58.1%. Reports of Islamophobic incidents against men rose from 100 in 2022 to 153 in 2023, an increase of 53%.



DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTS BY GENDER

EDUCATION STILL TOP OF THE LIST FOR ISLAMOPHOBIA

The majority of Islamophobic incidents took place **in public places**: This was the case for 516 reports, or 62.3% of all reports. Here are the details of the public places where the reported incidents took place for the year 2023:



RÉPARTITION DES FAITS SIGNALÉS DANS L'ESPACE PUBLIC PAR LIEUX

In 22.7% of Islamophobic incidents in schools and universities in 2023, the victim was alone at the time of the incident. More generally, in 2023, in **36.7% of all cases (304 reports), the victim was alone at the time of the incident**. In 81.7% of cases, i.e. 677 reports, the respondent (discriminator or assailant) was accompanied at the time of the incident.

Harassment and Islamophobia: French inflexibility

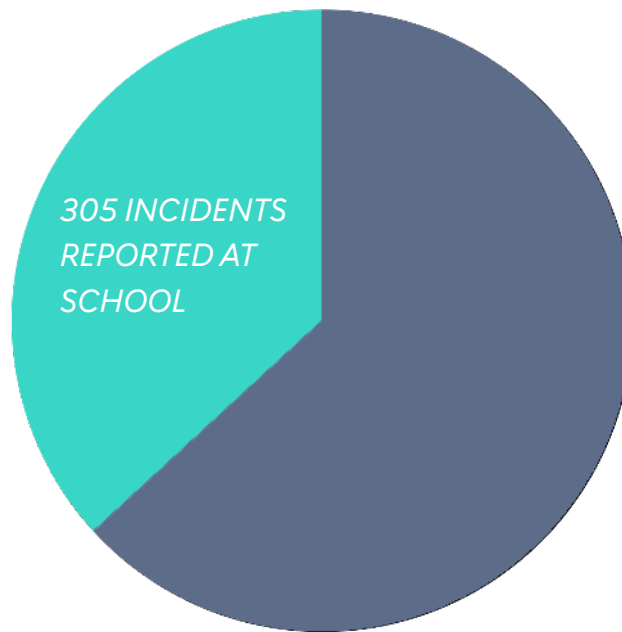
The figures presented above must be set against the current political climate in France, where the stigmatisation of Muslims seems to be fully accepted, and even proudly claimed by a portion of the political class. In January, President Emmanuel Macron said in an interview with the newspaper *Le Point* that **«no country in the world bans the headscarf in the public space. We are the country that goes furthest in this direction, and I defend it by explaining that this is what differentiates a universalist model like ours in France from any other multicultural or racist model.»** These statements send a message of rare clarity to the Muslim community in France and reveal a disconcerting obstinacy: despite the many forms of discrimination suffered by Muslim women because of their dress, there is **no room for reassessment**.

The cases of discrimination reported to the CCIE thus seem to reflect a deliberate intention to marginalise Muslims, an attitude that seems to be supported at the highest level of the French state.

THE REPUBLICAN SCHOOL IN QUESTION

Developments in the relationship between schools and Muslim pupils since the 2004 law banning ostentatious symbols in schools validate the concerns of those who saw the law as opening the way to a series of discriminations against Muslims, in schools and elsewhere.

State schools continue to be a key focal point for Islamophobia. Schools and universities are the main places where Islamophobic incidents are reported: 240 reports concern secondary education (168 in high schools and 72 in middle schools), 36 reports concern primary education, 16 concern nursery schools and 12 concern higher education. In **2023, 304 reports were received in nursery, primary, secondary and higher education, representing 41% of all reports.** In 2022, reports concerning nursery, primary, secondary and higher education amounted to 168 reports, or 31.9% of all reports received during the year. **This is a 80.1% increase in reports concerning schools and universities from 2022 to 2023.**



PROPORTION OF INCIDENTS REPORTED AT SCHOOL OUT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REPORTS

The recurrence of controversies involving - and victimising - Muslim pupils is well documented. At a time when home schooling has become virtually impossible in France for Muslim families since the law against separatism of 24 August 2021, school has become a site of increasingly explicit Islamophobia. From one school year to the next, the CCIE receives numerous testimonies from teenagers who are victims of multiple forms of discrimination within the school system. In state schools, teaching staff are expressly asked to **monitor and report** Muslim pupils under their responsibility: if they **express support for the Palestinian cause, if they say anything remotely resembling an incitement to terrorism, if they say anything in Arabic - the reasons for vigilance are as many as they are arbitrary, despite the very young age of the pupils concerned.**

In November, **the accreditation of the Averroès Muslim high school was withdrawn without any real material or legal justification**, leading to the end of public subsidies. The Lille-based school was founded in response to the 2004 law banning religious symbols in schools. In the wake of this law, the fact that a significant proportion of young women were prevented from attending school led to the creation of Muslim educational spaces which, although a minority (counting Averroès, there are only two Muslim lycées under contract with the French government), nonetheless enabled those who wished to do so to benefit from a quality education validated by the French Ministry of Education. By attacking an educational institution as reputable as the Lycée Averroès, the aim is to tell the Muslim community that, no matter how hard they try, their very existence poses

a problem to French society, or at least to the government in charge.

The target is nothing less than transmission, i.e. the ability of the Muslim community to maintain intergenerational continuity in harmony with the society in which it lives. Another striking fact of 2023 confirms this logic: **the number of reports of accompanying mothers being excluded from school activities because of their headscarves has tripled since the previous year**. Despite the opinion of the Conseil d'État authorising mothers to wear headscarves on school outings, their exclusion remains a persistent reality.

The year 2023 saw a succession of cases which, in a public debate less degraded than that in France, would all have caused a scandal. At the end of April, several headteachers or headmasters of primary schools in the Hérault and Haute-Garonne regions received a letter, sent directly by the local police or via the rectorate, asking them to list the **number of children absent from schools during the Eid holiday** and, in Montpellier in particular, the **number of pupils absent during Ramadan**. In Nice in the month of June, the mayor **accused Muslim children of separatism at school for praying in the playground**. It was later revealed that the pupils in question were neither Muslims nor praying. Nonetheless, the mayor's office did not apologise for this accusation. In October, at the Roman Rolland high school in Ivry-sur-Seine, a pupil was **reported for incitement to terrorism for shouting «Allahu Akbar»**.

REPORT OF A DISABLED PUPIL'S PARENT:

My son is deaf and dumb and goes to a special school, where he is in a class of five pupils. The day of the tribute to Samuel Paty, the teacher explained in sign language what had happened that day. My son, who is 10, had recently experienced an extremely traumatic event and he couldn't bear to see the teacher's signs, so he asked her to stop talking about death and slitting throats. That evening, I received a message from the headmaster informing me that the teacher had lodged a complaint against my son for advocating terrorism and making death threats. The headmaster then expelled him from the school.

Yesterday he went before the disciplinary board. When my son arrived in front of the school, he was escorted by security guards from the school entrance to the disciplinary board room. The guards were security people who didn't work at the school, but who had been hired especially for that day. They then decided to exclude my son

from the school for good, knowing that his teacher had withdrawn her comments. But they ignored his statement. I had a lawyer with me who had statements from the five pupils in his class, as well as from other teachers. At the class council, an AESH (Accompanying teacher for pupils with disabilities) who was not present in class on the day of the incident testified that the child had made a cutthroat gesture, even though she was not present and no one else had seen it.

It's the only class in the region that can accommodate a child with his disability, otherwise he has to go to a school nearly 400 km away. Thank you for your help.

At a time when Islamophobic violence is unleashed on even the most vulnerable individuals, we can only conclude that it is unfortunately encouraged by the French state. The withdrawal of approval for the Lycée Averroès, and the recurrence of discrimination against Muslim pupils in state schools and homeschooling, are further evidence that children and teenagers are the prime victims of France's Islamophobic obsession.

THE “ABAYA”-HUNT AND SEXIST HARASSMENT

In August, French Education Minister Gabriel Attal announced **a ban on the wearing of full-length dresses in schools**, claiming that he was responding to the need of school principals for clear guidelines and justifying the ban on the grounds that the wearing of abayas would constitute an attack against secularism and the educational establishment.

To justify this measure, French President Emmanuel Macron said the following in September: *«Make no mistake, we also have in our society - albeit in a minority - people who, using a religion, **come to challenge the Republic and secularism, and I'm sorry, but that has sometimes led to the worst.** We can't pretend that the terrorist attack and the murder of Samuel Paty didn't happen in our country, and it did. (...) The worst has happened. So **there are people in our country who are capable of the worst, and we must not give in**»*. With this statement, he affirmed that it was the most abject terrorist violence that was motivating the government's policy of once again excluding Muslim women from school.

Unsurprisingly, this ban marked a peak in the number of requests made to the CCIE in September: **182 requests** were in fact made during this month, compared with a monthly average of 96.

Since 2023, the CCIE has received **234 complaints** relating to the ban on long, loose-fitting clothing in schools, the vast majority of which concerned young women studying **in high schools (159) and middle schools (33)**. However, it is not just secondary schools that are affected, and women have also been discriminated against for wearing loose-fitting clothing at training centres, universities, civic services and in the workplace.

Even though they were wearing only dresses, long skirts, loose-fitting tunics and baggy trousers (and not headscarves), these pupils were singled out, questioned and humiliated by the staff. This focus on the dress of these young women constitutes both a **discrimination** and an **attack on their privacy, dignity** and on the **principle of equal access to education**.

All of them are adamant that they are simply ordinary, loose-fitting clothes and that they are not religious garments. However, the teaching staff systematically refuse to believe them, and force them to expose their personal religious beliefs, following Pap Ndiaye's circular, which in November 2022 called for **«signs or dresses [which] are not by nature signs of religious affiliation, but indirectly and manifestly become so, given the pupil's intent to give this meaning, in view of his or her behaviour»** to be considered as an infringement of secularism. This extremely vague wording authorises educational staff to carry out real interrogations in order to determine whether or not a pupil's dress should be considered religious.

Pupils report that these summonses were also an opportunity for staff to discuss subjects such as their relationship with the Quran, religious practices, their parents' country of origin, or their views on terror attacks, particularly the one that led to the death of teacher Samuel Paty. These questions tend to establish an **abusive link between pupils' dress and forms of religious radicalism or rejection of France**. The testimonies gathered by the CCIE reflect a tenacious desire to pry into the personal lives of pupils: what are their religious beliefs? What are the religious practices within their family? Does the pupil wear a headscarf outside the school? etc. Thus, while it has been stated that *«we must not be able to guess the pupil's religion»*, the exact opposite has become true, since teaching staff are encouraged to «guess» and to actively seek to determine the pupil's religiosity. In at least one school, this desire to link dresses inside the school to private religious practices has led teaching staff to draw up a **list of pupils wearing headscarves when they leave the school**.

These attacks systematically concern young girls considered to be of Maghrebi or African **origin, since they are implicitly perceived as Muslims**. The same outfits worn by other pupils considered to be non-Muslim do not pose a problem in the school, as their dress is not perceived as being of a religious nature.

REPORT FROM A PARENT:

My daughter is at high school and yesterday she was dressed in a slightly low-cut tunic in a flashy colour with long sleeves. Three people stopped her at 2PM and put her in a separate room. She felt watched all day and during the interrogation they told her it was because she was wearing an 'abaya'. My daughter said it was a normal dress. They told her: «We tried to find out what religion you were. We think your dress is too loose. What did you wear yesterday?» My daughter replied, «I wore jeans and a T-shirt». They replied: «It would be better for you if you came back like this so that you're not put in a Muslim box, otherwise you risk being harassed by the other pupils». Throughout the interview, they looked her up and down (without looking at her face). They also fixed their gaze on her necklace, where her name was written in Arabic.

The complaints concern harassment, insults and threats to impose various disciplinary sanctions, which in many cases result in temporary exclusions. In most cases, this focus leads to **situations that are degrading for the girls** concerned: some head teachers have ordered pupils to wear clothes that allow them to «see their curves» or clothes that do not «cover their buttocks». They have asked pupils what they are wearing under their skirts, asked them to undress, etc. In addition, some cases concern overweight pupils who simply wish to dress in such a way as not to reveal their curves.

REPORT OF A PUPIL'S SISTER:

My little sister, who has just turned 18, is currently in police custody. Since the beginning of the year, she has been harassed by her philosophy teacher, who makes racist and Islamophobic comments because he thinks her clothes are too long and baggy for school. He says he would like to see her wearing shorter, tighter outfits.

A few months ago the situation got out of hand and the teacher attacked my sister because he thought her outfit was too revealing. Three pupils came to her defence because the whole class felt that

the teacher had gone too far in his comments since the beginning of the year. He excluded my sister from his class and no longer accepts her in class. The teacher asked for a disciplinary committee meeting, which took place. My sister was not expelled from school but given a warning of suspension. The teacher refused this decision and decided to lodge a complaint on Friday. She received a summons on Saturday for Monday. Today, she is in police custody and we have had no news.

Banning the wearing of long, loose-fitting clothes can only fuel a climate of discrimination in French schools: this measure is liable to be misapplied because of the confusion it implies between religious clothing and clothing that is simply deemed too revealing. It furthermore **encourages and validates sexist and racist excesses** and attacks on pupils' private lives, their dignity and the principle of equal access to education.

THE FAR RIGHT HARASSES, THE AUTHORITIES REMAIN SILENT: THE CASE OF FRANCE'S MOSQUES

It is undeniable that Muslims in France are one of the most targeted groups by far-right hatred, as evidenced by the constant attacks on mosques in France. **Incidents like tags, damage, ransacking, armed robbery, attempted murder and arson still fail to alert political decision-makers**, but they do point to a clear desire to intimidate France's Muslim communities.

On February 3, 2023, the Saint-Etienne cultural association in the Loire department was tagged with the words «*Die Arabs C-19*». In Gironde, several mosques were tagged between early February and mid-March 2023: first the Nour El Mohammedi mosque and the Al-Houda mosque in Bordeaux («*Vivre ensemble tue!* "«*Living together kills!*»), then the Talence mosque («*L'Afrique insoumise. Crise mondiale. Solution Nationale*» which translates to "*Unsubmissive France* (with a play on words between Africa and France). *Global Crisis. National Solution*"), then the Al Farouk mosque in Pessac («*From Paris to Cenon, remigration*»).

On the night of 17 to 18 March, the premises of the future Wattignies mosque were **ransacked from the floor to the ceiling**, rendering the space unusable. On April 25, the words "*Islam hors d'Europe*" («*Islam out of Europe*») were spray-painted on building site partitions near the Al Houda mosque in Alsace. On July 3, an individual broke into the Auch mosque in the Gers department and spray-painted racist slogans and pieces of sausage. On July 4, the main mosque in La

Roche-sur-Yon was found spray-painted with the words “Islam dehors” (‘Islam out’) in red letters. On the night of 7 to 8 October, the wall of a mosque in the Loire was also tagged, this time with the words “Mort à l’islam” (‘Death to Islam’).

On November 5, death threats (*«Vos cercueils ou vos valises»* (‘Your coffins or your suitcases’) and *«La France aux Français»* (‘France to the French’)) were discovered on the mosque in Pessac, which has been targeted several times by these attacks. On November 11, the building site of the Angers mosque was tagged (*«Massacre de Français, stop! autodéfense»* meaning “Massacre of French, stop! Self-defense”). On November 15, the Koba mosque in Lyon was tagged with the words *«L’islam est antisémite»* (‘Islam is anti-Semitic’). On November 25, tags were discovered on the walls of the Cherbourg-en-Cotentin mosque in the Manche department (*“Death to the bougnoules* (racist slur) and to those of the Valence mosque (*«Un bon musulman est un musulman mort»*, translating to “A good Muslim is a dead Muslim”). On the night of December 1 to December 2, individuals tagged the walls of the Millau mosque in Aveyron (*«Patriotes emprisonnés»* (‘Imprisoned Patriots’). On the night of 2 to 3 December, the mosque at La Roche-sur-Yon in Vendée underwent a **Molotov cocktail attack**. On December 23, the mosque in Chavanoz was tagged (‘Islam dehors’, (‘Islam out’)). On December 24, the word ‘singe’ (‘monkey’) was discovered on the Hamza mosque in Beauvais in the Oise department. On the same day, in Vigneux-sur-Seine, the head and body of a boar were found impaled on a post at the mosque gate. Yet this sad litany offers only a partial overview of the attacks on mosques in 2023.

Moreover, it is not just mosque premises that are targeted: the physical integrity of people praying in the mosque has been seriously endangered on several occasions during the year. On March 30, for example, **a man armed with a knife entered the Grande Mosquée d’Échirolles**, south of Grenoble, threatening worshippers. Although he was quickly subdued by two worshippers, he still had time to strike a man in the face. On October 10, the Bayonne mosque was targeted by a bomb threat: in a letter addressed to *«Muslim, Islamist and Salafist friends»*, the perpetrators stated that they had planted a ‘well-designed’ bomb that was *«small enough to be very difficult to detect but sufficiently dosed to cure our country of the cancer that is eating away at it, i.e. your visual, religious and fanatical pollution»*. *«Of course»*, the letter warns, *«there will surely be innocent Muslim victims»*.

In mid-November, a man was taken into police custody for **encouraging the planting of a bomb at the site of the new mosque in Romilly-sur-Seine** (Aube). Even more alarmingly, on the morning of January 13, 2024 in Saint-Martin-des-Champs, near Morlaix in Finistère, while the mosque was full of worshippers in prayer, **an individual poured a can of petrol at the entrance and tried to start a fire** before fleeing. The French Minister of Interior was content with only a tweet

referring to a «*deterioration*», and not to an attempted murder.

The relative impunity enjoyed by the far right in France is fuelling a latent climate of violence, particularly for Muslim minorities: the threat posed by the far right is still largely **overlooked by authorities** who are more concerned with repressing social unrest, thereby reinforcing an alarming situation for the safety of the groups targeted.



Europe in 2023

Unfortunately, the climate in France regarding the normalisation and growing legitimacy of the far right is no exception in Europe, where racist, xenophobic, nationalist and reactionary rhetoric continues to grow in influence.

The growing influence of the far right

Today, the most racist and virulent extreme right is on the rise in Europe. This trend is inextricably linked to an increase in dehumanising rhetoric and practices towards minorities in general and Muslims in particular.

THE ELECTORAL SUCCESSES OF THE FAR RIGHT IN EUROPE

In 2023, the **rise in legitimacy and power of the far right** across Europe is an undeniable fact. In Italy, the party that inherited Mussolini's fascism has led the government for more than a year under President Meloni; in the United Kingdom, the British Conservatives in power compete in racist and ferociously anti-migrant excesses; in Sweden, several decades after the denial of the Scandinavian social-democratic model, the extreme right is in charge of the country's destiny, supported by an explicitly neo-Nazi party. In Slovakia and Hungary, far-right populism has already taken power, while Germany and France face the increasingly likely prospect of supremacist forces taking power.

However, in a European landscape already partly conquered by far-right fever, the **triumph of Geert Wilders** in the Netherlands in November stands out. His outspoken Islamophobia and the abandonment of any form of censorship in what he says about Islam and Muslims have made him an indispensable reference point for all the trends in contemporary racism. In 2007, for example, he declared that the Quran is «*the Mein Kampf of a religion that aspires to eliminate others*»; he does not use the term «religion» to describe Islam, but rather «*the ideology of a retarded culture*»; and he has also described the headscarf as a «*mop*». An advocate of banning the Quran and mosques in the Netherlands, Wilders is a trailblazer. In the early 2000s, he founded the **ideological matrix for the revival of the European far right, based on criticism of the welfare state on the one hand and extreme Islamophobia on the other**. Almost twenty-five years after its first electoral successes, the supremacist agenda is now flourishing. Following the success of Geert Wilders' party, the Party for Freedom (PVV), Martin Bosma, a far-right ideologue known for his Islamophobia, has been elected as the new President of the Dutch House of Representatives.

The political situation in Germany is also of great concern, particularly in view of the results of the regional elections in Hesse and Bavaria in October 2023. The radical far-right AfD party (Alternative for Germany) achieved major

successes, gaining 14.6% in Bavaria and 18.4% in Hesse. As a result, the AfD has become the second most important political force in Hesse; in Bavaria, it is just behind the conservative Free Voters. The AfD maintains a right-wing nationalist stance and has close links with notorious neo-Nazis. The party actively disseminates Islamophobic and xenophobic propaganda, claiming for example that Islam is not part of Germany. **The far right is thus gaining ground in Germany**, a fact also highlighted by a study carried out by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and published in September: the study shows that 8% of Germans share a far-right worldview, an almost five-fold increase on the previous year.

In Switzerland too, the populist far right took the lead in the National Council elections in October. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) won eight more seats in parliament, making it the strongest party. The SVP is known for its **Islamophobic rhetoric**, and the party's mobilisation led to a ban on minarets and the wearing of the niqab in Switzerland.

A CLIMATE OF SIMMERING VIOLENCE

Numerous incidents in 2023 reveal an underlying climate of violence, particularly targeting Muslim communities.

As an example of this poisonous climate, a Telegram loop entitled «FrDeter» was discovered in April, **bringing together thousands of far-right activists** in France with a view to organise violent actions locally. The 8,000 members were divided into departments to make it easier to organise physical meetings, and there was also talk of staging a «*nationalist coup*». The CCIE has had access to the documents in the file: the exchanges on the group are a continuous stream of **racist insults, calls for rape, murder and attacks, accompanied by images of torture, hangings and videos of assassinations**. Arabs, Blacks, Muslims, Jews, antifa, «wokists» and homosexuals are singled out as the enemies to be slaughtered if France is to rediscover «*its white, Christian roots*» and «*white children are to have a future*». The plan is clear and unanimous: «*exterminate*» them, «*eliminate*» them, or if that doesn't work, intimidate them.

The political response to the discovery of the «FrDeter» group and, more broadly, to the rise of the far right in France, has struggled to match the threat. There is a tendency within the government to play down the phenomenon and even to legitimise it, as illustrated by Minister Jean-François Carenco's response to a question about the wearing of Nazi symbols by military personnel on April 3: «*Is it an offence to have an extreme right-wing mentality and language? No, you can't condemn people - fortunately, in fact! - simply for what they say or how they appear in a picture, even if they are in the police or the army. That's not our Republic*». This response betrays the extent to which the rise of the

far right is struggling to be taken seriously in France and is still not seen as a fundamental problem requiring the mobilisation of substantial resources and the implementation of a specific strategy on the part of the government.

On November 17, a gardener of Maghrebi origin had his **throat slit** by a neighbour in the Val-de-Marne who shouted racist slurs at him. A few days later, on the night of November 25, the town of Romans-sur-Isère in France was the scene of an **armed raid by a neo-Nazi militia**. More than 80 fascists travelled from various parts of France to commit acts of violence against minority groups living in the district of La Monnaie district.

REPORT OF VICTIMS OF ASSAULT:

We were taking a family walk in the zoo when two women attacked us, shouting «We're in France, they're not allowed to wear the headscarf», «in other countries, we fight to take it off and they put it on», «I'm going to take off her headscarf and cut it in 4, you'll see what I'm going to do to her». My sister went to tell them, «My headscarf is on my head, not yours». The woman then tried to remove her headscarf, but she didn't succeed. My two sisters were beaten. I tried to intervene, and they hit me, knocked me to the ground and kept beating me. I have nail marks around my eyes. They also pushed my mother, who had just had an operation for a heart attack. She fell on her arm and knee. We were called «dirty spics» and «dirty Arabs». Our children are shocked and terrified. My son cries constantly. I don't know what to do.

In Austria, during three searches in May, firearms, knives and gas pistols were seized from a member of a neo-Nazi group, the *Feuerkrieg Division*, which was disbanded in 2020. The suspect was accused of inciting far-right terrorist attacks in other countries, distributing instructions on how to make bombs and 3D printed weapons, and to train other members in data encryption.

In Spain, on October 17, a police operation dismantled the Spanish branch of an international white supremacist organisation, the neo-Nazi group Combat18, resulting in the arrest of sixteen people. Combat18 is considered to be the armed branch of the far-right organisation Blood and Honour, which aims to establish a neo-Nazi regime through a clandestine armed struggle, to destabilise the normal functioning of political, social and economic institutions, and to seriously disrupt

public order with the aim of promoting white supremacist control.

In Rome, Italy, in January 2024, hundreds of activists from the Italian neo-fascist party CasaPound gathered, dressed in black and lined up in tight rows, shouting «Present!» as they made the fascist salute. Despite repeated and undeniable evidence of the danger it represents across Europe, far-right violence continues to be underestimated.

INCREASING AND ACCEPTED CRIMINALISATION OF MIGRANTS FROM THE SOUTH

The review of 2023 in Europe highlights the extent to which **anti-migrant racism and Islamophobia intersect** in several European countries.

The trend towards **criminalising migrants and the associations that seek to support them** continues to be confirmed in 2023. This criminalisation of solidarity can be seen in the tightening of controls on people helping migrants, including through search and rescue operations, reception activities and the provision of food, accommodation and services. It is also expressed by the relative impunity enjoyed by those who attack associations fighting for migrants' rights. On January 5, 2024, for example, **a Cyprus-based anti-racist organisation called Kisa was the victim of a violent, targeted attack on its premises**. Not a word was heard from the authorities denouncing these acts, which represent a mortal threat to the organisation's activists.

In France, the Immigration Act, despite its partial censure by the Constitutional Council, **significantly undermines the right of asylum** and continues to raise major concerns. The law **weakens the asylum system and the reception of people in need of protection**, in particular by imposing much shorter deadlines for processing asylum applications, and by restricting access to the material reception conditions to which asylum seekers are entitled.

In Spain, in October, the far-right Vox party submitted a proposal to Congress to **end the granting of Spanish nationality and residence permits to individuals from «countries with an Islamic culture, unless it is possible to guarantee their integration in a correct and peaceful manner»**. These statements highlight the place of Islamophobia in the xenophobia expressed in anti-migrant discourse.

In the UK, repressive measures against lawyers defending the rights of migrants and refugees were announced in August. This move, which reflects Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's plan to «*stop the boats*», is evidence not only of the **criminalisation of migrants** but also of the criminalisation of **their support**, in this case by lawyers accused of «*helping migrants to exploit the immigration system*». The work of the *Professional Enablers Taskforce* is based in particular on training

aimed at teaching border staff to identify and report suspicious behaviour, which is reminiscent of the methods used in the Prevent programme to combat radicalisation and terrorism, whose influence and consequences in terms of Islamophobia have been highlighted many times.

In Austria, a report on «extremism and migration» (Lagebild Extremismus und Migration) presents the results of a survey funded by the Ministry of Interior to assess the risks of extremism in migrant communities, particularly Chechen, Turkish and Arab, and to understand «how extremism arises in migrant groups». The discriminatory scope of this research, which **singles out migrant communities in order to assess their degree of threat, contributes to the stigmatisation of migrants from Muslim cultures** and equates their presence in Austria to a potential terrorist threat.

In Germany, recent repressive measures against supporters of solidarity with Palestine have also **rekindled the debate on Muslim immigration**. The leader of the CDU, Friedrich Merz, has demanded that a commitment to Israel become a precondition for citizenship. In November, it was revealed that a meeting had been held in Potsdam to discuss a **plan for the mass expulsion of people of foreign origin deemed «unassimilated»**. Members of the AfD took part, causing a stir in Germany.

A Swiss study published in August and conducted by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich reveals clear differences in the way migrants are perceived and treated, depending on their gender, religion and age: according to the results, the people questioned are more in favour of Ukrainian immigration than Syrian or Afghan, and are more open to welcoming young people, women and Christians than Muslims.

Europe after October 7

On October 7, 2023, armed Palestinian factions carried out an unprecedented attack on Israeli towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. Several hundred civilians were killed, while many Israelis of all ages were taken hostage in Gaza. The Israeli response was one of rare violence, leading to the systematic annihilation of Gazan society: in other words to genocide. At the time of writing, the Israeli war in Gaza has led to over 30,000 Palestinian deaths, the vast majority of them women and children, while a major part of the Israeli state apparatus is satisfied with the idea of expelling the Palestinians once and for all. At the same time, the West Bank was abuzz with the violence of Israeli settlers, who - with the support of the occupying army - cynically seized the opportunity to continue their atrocities against the Palestinian population.

The legitimate and rare outpouring of emotion following the massacre on October 7 was redoubled by the worldwide consternation at the Israeli genocide in Gaza. As the conflict and the Israeli attack deepened, millions of people took to the streets to demand a ceasefire and worked to block corporate and state support not only for the Israeli regime's recent offensive, but also for its decades-long colonial occupation of Palestine. However, there has also been **exceptional repression** at all levels across Europe. As a result of the European states' massive support for Israel and the European elites' spontaneous identification with the Israelis, any expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people was officially considered to be **a sign of explicit support for Hamas, and therefore a form of incitement of terrorism.**

Punitive measures ranged from dismissals and defamation campaigns to the withdrawal of funding, visas, police custody and court sentences, the cancellation of events and the withdrawal of online platforms. All were justified by a rhetoric historically linked to the ostracism of racialised and minority groups in Europe. Indeed, although they came to the forefront after October 7, **the logic of suspicion and repression of support to Palestine is based on racist practices that already exist and are well established in Europe, such as racial profiling, police violence and intimidation, abusive arrests and restrictions on freedom of expression for racialised people.** In several national contexts, these logics are intertwined in various ways with contemporary forms of **hostility to Muslims in Europe.** The repression of the struggle for Palestinian rights and the unbridled support of European governments for Israel seem to represent a projection of Israel's war against Palestine onto the European stage. The repression seen in Europe after the attack on 7 October is the culmination of a decades-long attempt to equate Palestinian identity with indiscriminate violence and terrorism. Through this racist

characterisation, **the massive support of European Muslims for the Palestinian people is seen as confirming the Muslim tropism for violence.**

A WIND OF REPRESSION AND CENSORSHIP AGAINST SUPPORTERS OF PALESTINE

Although the right to demonstrate is considered fundamental in Europe, several countries, including Germany, France, Austria and Hungary, have undermined this right by banning demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people. In France, pro-Palestinian demonstrations were banned throughout the country by a ministerial instruction issued to prefects on October 12, 2023, on the pretext that there was a risk of disturbing public order. France's Minister of the Interior and Overseas Territories also threatened to deport foreign nationals who took part in these actions. Nevertheless, the demonstrations that did take place were met with **heavy-handed police repression**. On 28 October, during a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Paris, more than 1,300 demonstrators who defied the ban were fined. The repression of support for the Palestinian people has also been applied to all areas of social life, particularly in the world of work, where numerous **dismissals** and other sanctions have taken place, justified by employees' expression of support for Palestine on social networks. The field of French academic research has also been widely affected by **censorship, intimidation and restrictions on academic thought**. Extreme right-wing attacks and intimidation of expressions of support for Palestine have **failed to provoke a response from the authorities and the forces of law and order**, notably on the evening of November 10 in Lyon, when extreme right-wing militants attacked a conference on Palestine with mortars, iron bars and glass bottles, injuring 3 people.

In Germany, the Berlin police have banned almost all solidarity gatherings with Gaza since October 7, whether organised by Palestinians, Jews or other allies, on the grounds that such events could potentially incite anti-Semitic hatred and violence. There have been numerous reports of **police violence, arrests and harassment** for any sign of solidarity with Palestine. On October 14, the police banned a demonstration for peace in the Middle East at the last minute, violently repressing the demonstrators. In Berlin alone, 600 people were arrested by the police between 11 and 20 October 2023. This crackdown also extended to schools: the Berlin Senate for Education, Youth and Family Affairs sent a letter to all Berlin school authorities asking them to **ban pupils from wearing keffiyehs or using slogans such as «Free Palestine»**. School authorities have also been asked to **report any breaches of the ban to the police**, and in at least one case a head teacher has been suspended for refusing to comply.

The Austrian police have also cracked down on demonstrations in support of

Palestine. On October 11, the Vienna police cancelled a vigil in tribute to the Palestinian victims, justifying the ban by the fact that the organisers had posted the slogan «*From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free*». The police and intelligence services were deployed in large numbers at the events held in solidarity with Palestine. Austrian Vice-Chancellor Werner Kogler has called for **increased surveillance of mosques and organisations seen as sympathetic to Hamas, attributing a priori support for the group to Europe's Muslim communities**. A new **counter-terrorism centre** has also been opened, suggesting that Muslims are likely to be further stigmatised, given the Islamophobic tone that the fight against terrorism has taken in Austria in recent years.

In the United Kingdom, Secretary of State Suella Braveman instructed the police to **clamp down as hard as possible on expressions of alleged support for Hamas**, particularly during demonstrations (which she did not hesitate to describe as «**hate marches**»), and to consider slogans such as «*From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free*» or the presence of Palestinian flags as offences of incitement of terrorism. On October 30, the British Labour Party suspended a member of parliament, Andy McDonald, for using the expression «*from the river to the sea*» at a pro-Palestinian rally. Finally, the aftermath of October 7 also saw **hostility towards foreigners and migrants** expressed once again: the Immigration Minister, Robert Jenrick, threatened to deport foreigners who committed anti-Semitic acts or praised Hamas.

In some European countries, support for Palestine has also revived the rhetoric of **failing nationhood**: Denmark's Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, said on November 9 that she was concerned about certain pro-Palestinian attitudes in the wake of the conflict, which «*clearly show that there are people in Denmark who have not adopted our Danish values*».

MUSLIMS AND EUROPEAN ANTI-SEMITISM

In a bold attempt to rewrite the history of European anti-Semitism, **European Muslims are regularly singled out in European public debate as the main perpetrators of anti-Semitism on the continent**. This accusation would be confirmed by their stated support for the Palestinian people and their condemnation of the genocide perpetrated by the State of Israel in Gaza, which would only serve to conceal their primordial anti-Semitism. This stigmatisation of Muslims by denouncing anti-Semitism offers an interesting opportunity for the European far-right: to restore their image by trying to **make people forget their anti-Semitic past (and present) while reinforcing their hatred of Muslims**. The far right's appropriation of the fight against anti-Semitism systematically takes an explicitly Islamophobic turn.

This characterisation of anti-Semitism in Europe, which is suddenly supposed to be the sole province of Muslim communities, serves both to **further stigmatise an already discriminated-against minority and to absolve the dominant majority of their historical anti-Semitism**. Speeches targeting Muslims were heard all over Europe after October 7. In Switzerland, journalist Kurt Pelda declared in December that *«those who know the situation well have known for a long time that a significant proportion of anti-Semitism comes from the Arab-Muslim world and that many of these anti-Semites arrived in Switzerland through asylum. But politicians and the media have preferred to look the other way, not wanting to expose themselves to the accusation of 'Islamophobia'»*. In Germany, the Cardinal of the Catholic Church in Munich has called for an end to Islam, which he describes as *«a religion demanding the annihilation of the Jewish state»*. The mayor of Berlin's Neukölln district said concerning the need to cooperate with mosque associations that *«anti-Semitism among the Arab population has increased with mosque associations and the activities of many imams who preach hatred against Israel»*, once again confusing Islam, anti-Semitism and support for Palestine.

In France, **Islamophobes, conspiracy theorists and racists have** been allowed to make **statements** on television with astonishing impunity: journalist Pascal Perri speaks of *«couscous anti-Semitism»*, while Arno Klarsfeld talks of plans to murder Jews allegedly hatched by Muslims working on building sites. Alain Finkielkraut asserted that *«there are ten times fewer Jews than Muslims in France, and that's how they feel; faced with the globalisation of hatred towards them, they are no match, even here»*, **thus likening Muslims to the natural enemies of Jews**.

The march against anti-Semitism in Paris on November 12, the rallying call of which left little doubt as to the confusionist purpose of the demonstration (*«Our secularism must be protected, it is a bulwark against Islamism»*), in which the far right party Rassemblement National, even though it was founded by the former Waffen-SS, noisily staged its participation, is a striking illustration of the attempt by a reactionary national(istic) consensus to reappropriate the fight against anti-Semitism. Fortunately, this shameful and cynical reappropriation of memory and current events by the extreme right in France was not uncontested: the Golem association, for example, made up of Jewish activists, had the courage, while taking part in the demonstration, to physically challenge the presence of Jean-Marie Le Pen's heirs.

ISLAMOPHOBIA ON THE RISE

Unsurprisingly, the outrageousness of the comments and the climate of constantly renewed tension in Europe over support for Palestine led to an **exceptional rise in Islamophobia**.

A study by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) has quantitatively demonstrated an increase in Islamophobic online hate following the Hamas attack on October 7, as well as a sustained increase throughout Israel's war on Gaza. Comparing the four days before and after October 7, the study shows that the volume of Islamophobic comments increased 43-fold. Several Islamophobic tropes are highlighted by this study: Islam as a **breeding ground for terrorism**, Muslims as naturally **lying, anti-Semitic** and **motivated by global conquest**. Worse still, **genocidal language** is regularly used against Muslims.

This trend is confirmed by data from *TellMamaUK*, a UK-based organisation, which notes that between October 7 and October 19, 291 cases of anti-Muslim hatred were recorded, including 159 online, representing a six-fold increase compared to the same period in 2022. The same phenomenon is described in the Netherlands, where the Dutch association *Report Islamophobia* (*Meld Islamofobie*) reports an **exponential increase in cases of Islamophobia since October 7**, ranging from restrictions on freedom of expression imposed by employers and university councils to physical and verbal attacks. In France, the CCIE has also received a large number of complaints of Islamophobia that were directly linked to expressed support for Palestine: **intimidation, threats and slanderous denunciations**, particularly affecting young people in schools, as well as **dismissals and sometimes physical assaults**. Numerous cases of **damage**, particularly by Islamophobic tags, have also been reported.

Verbatim

While these insults, reported on our platforms and presented here in their raw form (translated into English), are shocking in and by themselves, it is important to bear in mind that they are often accompanied by threatening attitudes, discriminatory practices and, in the most serious cases, physical attacks.

«I KNOW YOU ARABS». «DIRTY RACE, THAT'S A DIRTY RACE». «AREN'T YOU PLANNING ON BECOMING A TERRORIST?» «DIRTY SAND-NIGGERS AND ARABS, GO HOME! «RETURN TO YOUR COUNTRY» «TERRORIST WHO FINANCES MOSQUES» «DIRTY ARAB AND DIRTY MONKEY» «ISLAMISTS, FUNDAMENTALISTS, INTEGRISTS» «THE SAND-NIGGERS HAVE MADE 3 GREAT INVENTIONS! 1 PAEDOPHILIA 2 ZOOPHILIA 3 UROPHILIA!» » «THE SHACK FOR NIGGERS AND SAND-NIGGERS! IT'S A MONKEY CAGE, IT'S AN INFAMOUS STENCH, IT'S A WORLDWIDE RUBBISH DUMP, IT'S A RACIAL CESSPOOL [...] WE NEED TO CLEAN IT UP, PERFORM AN ETHNIC CLEANSING [...] WHAT MATTERS IS NOT TO INCREASE OUR NUMBERS BUT TO REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF OTHERS [...] IT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED UP. WHAT'S NEEDED IS TO EXTERMINATE AS MANY SAND-NIGGERS AND NIGGERS AS POSSIBLE, TO REDUCE THEIR NUMBERS SO AS TO INCREASE OURS [...] I'M NOT CALLING FOR MURDER, IT'S POINTLESS. IF IT WORKED, I'D TELL YOU TO DO IT! I'M VERY FOND OF BRENTON TARRANT, I'M VERY FOND OF THAT BOY, HE'S FULL OF GOODWILL». «I'VE BEEN HERE SINCE 85 AND THERE HAVE NEVER BEEN ANY PROBLEMS, BUT SINCE THE ARABS ARRIVED THERE HAVE ONLY BEEN PROBLEMS.» «DIRTY ARAB, DIRTY MUSLIM, DIRTY WHORE, CUNT, SLUT». «WHORE AND PROSTITUTE» «FUCK ISLAM» «ARABS, YOU'RE ALL THE SAME». «SAVAGES» «GO HOME, YOU'RE MAKING FRANCE DIRTY, YOUR PARENTS FORCED YOU INTO THIS, WE DON'T WANT THAT HERE...». «IT SHOWS WHERE YOU COME FROM». «GO BACK TO YOUR COUNTRY, FUCK YOUR GOD». «LOOK AT HER, SHE THINKS SHE'S AT THE MOSQUE». «GO BACK TO IRAN», «SAND NIGGERS», « «YOU'RE NOT FRENCH», «YOU DON'T EVEN SPEAK FRENCH» ,»YOU'RE EATING OUR ALLOWANCES»... «WITH YOUR VEIL, YOU ARE 2000 YEARS BEHIND IN TIME. YOU LIVE IN THE TIME OF CAMELS. YOU WOMEN ARE SUBMISSIVE TO MEN. THE MORE WE SEE VEILED WOMEN, THE MORE WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S MEN WHO DOMINATE.» «TUNISIAN SON OF A BITCH - FUCKING RACE OF ALLAH - SAND NIGGERS - FUCKERS». «DIRTY BLACK» «WE ARE IN A UNIVERSITY OF THE REPUBLIC AND THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE», «AREN'T YOU ASHAMED TO WEAR THE VEIL AT THIS UNIVERSITY?» «I ONLY PAY TAXES FOR THE FRENCH». «GO TO AFGHANISTAN OR IRAN» «FAGGOT» «FIRST OF ALL, TAKE OFF YOUR VEIL, SLUT». «GO HOME!» «DIRTY ARAB» «YOU'RE GOING TO END UP A DRUG DEALER. WE'RE VOTING MARINE LE PEN AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?!» «BITCH» «BOMBER» «RADICALISED» «IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME PEOPLE WHO MAKE A MESS» «NO COUSCOUS ALLOWED» «BITCH» «VERMINS» «STUPID, STUPID» «SCUM» «DIRTY ARAB, BEARDED BASTARD, ILL-BRED». «RADICALISED, LAZY AND A RELIGIOUS PROSELYTE». «DIRTY SPADE» «EXTREMISTS, ISLAMISTS, ANTI-SEMITES, CAMEL-EATERS». «GO HOME, THIS IS MY HOME». «TERRORIST» «YOU'RE STUPID, YOU'RE USELESS».

Conclusion

This report highlights the rapid intensification of Islamophobia in Europe and the resulting policies throughout 2023. No one can deny that Islamophobia in Europe is closely linked to the clear rise in power of a far right that is increasingly daring to display itself, to parade itself, and is increasingly successful in spreading its slogans. It is becoming clear that empty rhetoric about European values and declarations of intent are not enough to curb this phenomenon and halt the electoral, ideological and moral advance of the far right.

In this climate of tension, which raises the spectre of an imminent tipping point towards the worst, it is necessary to act, to redouble our efforts and not to let ourselves be discouraged by the apparent inevitability of the advance of far-right forces. It is crucial to convince all the driving forces of European societies of the mortal danger posed by an Islamophobic far right now on the doorstep, if not at the heart, of state institutions.

The mission of the Collective against Islamophobia in Europe is to identify and help individuals who are victims of Islamophobia, but also to alert civil society and public authorities to the risk that Islamophobia represents for everyone. It is therefore essential to highlight the experience of European Muslim communities in this context of growing threat from the far right, and to rebuild alliances with all parties of goodwill. The CCIE therefore appeals to all those who refuse to see the European political climate deteriorate: solidarity and self-organisation have rarely been more necessary than at this time of supremacism.



Recommendations

1. FINALLY RECOGNISING THE STRUCTURAL NATURE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE

Islamophobia is not limited to isolated incidents or individual behaviours, it is also deeply rooted in the social, institutional and cultural structures of the various national contexts in which it takes shape. It manifests itself through systemic discrimination and institutional practices that marginalise and undermine individuals and communities of the Muslim faith. By continuing to deny its structural dimension, the European authorities are stubbornly putting in place purely reactive measures and neglecting the deep roots of Islamophobia. Taking account of this dimension requires in-depth reflection, a re-evaluation of existing policies and their effects, raising awareness of the issue of structural racism within institutions and promoting anti-racist education at all levels of society.

2. RAISING EUROPEAN PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE FIGHT AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

It is essential to increase understanding of the nature of Islamophobia and to prevent anti-Muslim racism through appropriate educational policies and activities. Awareness-raising measures must be integrated into formal and informal education, including adult and teacher training. Supporting scientific research dedicated to helping people and groups exposed to anti-Muslim hatred is also crucial.

The media play an important role in raising awareness, and media professionals should be encouraged to recognise their particular responsibility in portraying Islam and Muslim communities. Media coverage of acts of discrimination and physical violence linked to Islamophobia should be strengthened, in particular by giving a voice to those affected.

Finally, it is necessary to support the activities of non-governmental organisations working to raise awareness of Islamophobia, providing an open and democratic space for discussing the various aspects of this phenomenon with State bodies, regional and local authorities and other private stakeholders.

3. COMBATING THE TRIVIALISATION OF EXTREME RIGHT-WING DISCOURSE

Faced with the growing threat posed by the far right to the integrity of Muslims in Europe and European minorities more generally, it is imperative to prioritise the fight against all forms of racist and Islamophobic expression emanating from these movements. It is also crucial to take measures to counter the public manifestations of these increasingly outspoken extreme right-wing groups. The relative impunity they enjoy must be replaced by a real recognition of the danger they represent for the future of minorities in Europe. The fight against the extreme right must be conducted at all administrative levels (European, national, regional, local), encouraging the participation of a wide range of actors from different sectors of society.

4. PUTTING AN END TO THE CLIMATE OF WIDESPREAD SUSPICION TOWARDS EUROPE'S MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

Legislation and policies related to the fight against terrorism or extremism should be reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate directly or indirectly against Muslims, and all provisions considered discriminatory should be repealed. The impact of these laws and policies on Muslim communities should be regularly assessed, taking into account respect for fundamental rights. It is essential to involve groups particularly affected by these measures in the debate on their application. The idea that simple behavioural signals can suggest a process of violent radicalisation must be profoundly challenged. Ongoing training must be provided at local, regional and national level for law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, judges and other judicial actors, with a focus on combating and preventing anti-Muslim racism.

5. COMBATING DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

As the CCIE figures show year after year, two key spheres of social life are particularly affected by Islamophobia in Europe: education and employment. Measures must be taken to combat discrimination in these areas, in particular by encouraging public and private sector employers to adopt codes of conduct both in the recruitment process and in the workplace.

Particular attention must be given to Muslim women, who often suffer threefold discrimination because of their gender, their religion and their national or ethnic origin. People of the Muslim faith must be able to exercise their rights without hindrance or discrimination, while respecting plurality of beliefs and individual freedoms.



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