

Yearbook of Muslims in Europe

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Volume 1

Edited by:
Jørgen S. Nielsen

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Ahmet Alibašić
Brigitte Maréchal
Christian Moe



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- Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, 1

The presence of Muslims in Europe has attracted increasing attention over the last two, three decades. Researchers started devoting attention to the subject during the mid- and late 1980s. In the last two decades it has also attracted growing political attention and public debate. The events of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington DC, followed by a number of other terrorist attacks, dramatically increased the general interest in Islam and Muslims, now often driven not only by security considerations, but also by social apprehension. It has become clear from these events that there is a serious lack of reliable

and up-to-date information about the situation of Muslims in individual European countries. Answers to simple questions, such as “How do (other) countries deal with Muslim burial?”, “Which countries have Islamic schools, and how do these function?”, or “Do other European countries make space for Islamic family law?” are not easily found. Things are changing rapidly and published data is quickly becoming outdated.

The *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* will provide an up-to-date account of the situation of Muslims in Europe. Covering 37 countries of western, central and south-eastern Europe, the *Yearbook* will consist of three sections and will be supported by additional material on a website. The first section presents a country-by-country summary of essential data with basic statistics with evaluations of their reliability, surveys of legal status and arrangements, organizations, etc. providing an annually updated reference source. The second section will contain analysis and research articles on issues and themes of current relevance written by experts in the field. The final section will provide reviews of recently published books of significance.

The *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe* will be an important source of reference for government and NGO officials, journalists, policy makers as well as researchers.

Editor-in-Chief

Jørgen S. Nielsen, Ph.D. (1978) in Arab history, American University of Beirut, has researched and published extensively on Islam in Europe, including *Muslims in western Europe* (3rd ed., Edinburgh University Press, 2004). He is currently Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Copenhagen.

Editors

Samim Akgönül, historian and political scientist, is Associate Professor at Strasbourg University and researcher at the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). He studies the evolution of minority concepts as well as religious minorities in Eastern and Western Europe.

Ahmet Alibašić, M.A., is a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Sarajevo, and director of the Center for Advanced Studies in Sarajevo. He was educated in Kuala Lumpur (Islamic studies, political sciences, and Islamic civilization). He also served as the first director of the Interreligious Institute in Sarajevo (2007-2008).

Brigitte Maréchal, Ph.D. (2006) in sociology, graduated in political sciences and Islamology, is Professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain. She is director of Cismoc (Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etudes de l'Islam dans le Monde Contemporain) and has published extensively on European Islam.

Christian Moe, Ph.D. candidate, history of religion, University of Oslo, is a freelance writer and researcher in Slovenia, focusing on Balkan Muslims, human rights, and religious reform. He is co-editor of *New Directions in Islamic Thought* (I.B. Tauris, 2009).

Editorial Assistant

Nadia Jeldtoft is a Ph.D. Fellow at the Centre for European Islamic Thought at the University of Copenhagen. She works on minority issues and religious identity of Muslim minorities in Europe and is currently focusing on everyday forms of Islam with non-organized Muslim minorities in Germany, England and Denmark. She has recently published “Other Muslim Identities - a study of non-organized Muslim minorities” (Andre Muslimske identiteter - et studie af ikke-organiserede muslimer) in *Islamforskning* 1:2008.

Countries covered

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Austria
Belgium
Bosnia/Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany

Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Kosovo
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macedonia FYR
Malta
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway

Poland
Portugal
Romania
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom

MALTA

3

of Ramadan. The Imam is appointed by the WICS, his appointment is endorsed by the Maltese state, and he has diplomatic status. He enjoys substantial autonomy in the local affairs of his community. The Imam is the official point of contact between the Muslim community and the Maltese administration. In accordance with a protocol between the WICS and the government of Malta, the Islamic Centre and its members enjoy diplomatic immunity. In 1997, the Mariam Albatool Mosque was established within the Islamic Centre's precincts.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat is also represented in Malta. There are no Muslim political parties in Malta and Muslim communities are not officially organised on an ethnic basis. All Muslims endeavour to integrate into Maltese political life.

4. MOSQUES AND PRAYER HOUSES

Apart from the official mosque at Paola, Muslims use five other places of worship. In addition, Maltese prisons and illegal detention centres have spaces reserved for Muslim worship, and a mosque has been allocated for interfaith worship at the Mater Dei Centre. The mosque at the Islamic Centre is regularly frequented by foreign Muslims, including students.

In 2007, the Malta Environment and Planning Authority cited the closure of a space used for Muslim prayer in the town of Paola as a planning violation of the local planning code.

5. CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Roman Catholic religious education in state schools is compulsory. Neither state nor private schools include Islam in their curriculum. Muslim students are given the option of either attending a religious education class or following alternative subjects. This situation prompted local Muslims to establish the Mariam Albatool Mosque, which was opened in 1997 and is situated within the precincts of the Islamic Centre, Paola. A board of volunteer trustees administers the mosque, which operates at kindergarten, primary and secondary levels. The Ministry of Education licenses (1998 and 2007). While following

⁴ The Imam is Sheikh Muhammad el-Sadi and he is of Palestinian origin.

POLAND

7

(from the late seventeenth century in the village—the Bohoniki cemetery that is in use is located outside the village) and Młynarska St., Warsaw (used 1838–1868) (<http://www.mzr.pl/pl/info.php?id=18>). Special sections are reserved for Muslims in communal cemeteries in Gdańsk.

8. 'CHAPLAINCY' IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

There are no Muslim 'chaplains'. This is due to the fact that numbers of Muslims are small and their needs can be met on a communal basis, rather than to any official obstacles.

9. RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Muslim religious festivals are not public holidays. Muslims can have a day off provided that they make up for their absence. Qurban Bayram (*Id al-Adha*) is celebrated by MZR members in one of the north-eastern locations. It is a public event. Sometimes non-Muslims are invited as guests. Ramadan Bayram (*Id al-Fitr*) has generally been celebrated more privately, though the LM started a practice of organising so-called *Wieczór ramadanowy* (Ramadan evenings), an iftar for representatives of Muslim communities and invited non-Muslims.

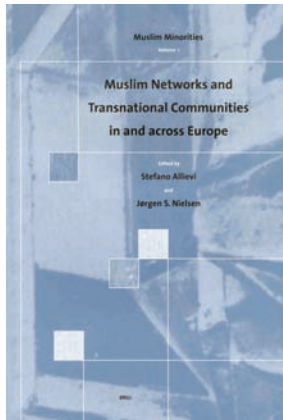
10. HALAL FOOD

An Act of 17 May 1989 (art. 2, act 9) allows for exceptions from the approved method of animal slaughtering (i.e. permits for not stunning animals prior to slaughter). The Council of Imams of the MZR traditionally (according to the Act of 1936) has the sole right to issue halal certificates for food products in Poland (in agreement with the Chief Veterinary Officer) (www.halalpoland.pl).

11. DRESS CODES

There are no regulations restricting the wearing of hijab or *niqab*. Some young Muslim women (mainly converts of Polish origin) wear hijab in public.

Muslim Minorities



Editorial board: Jørgen S. Nielsen, *University of Copenhagen*, Felice Dassetto, *University of Louvain-la-Neuve* and Aminah McCloud, *DePaul University, Chicago*

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