

Muslims in Hamburg

Findings and Recommendations

THIS CITY REPORT is part of a series of monitoring reports titled *Muslims in EU Cities* that examine 11 cities in the European Union with significant Muslim populations.

Each report focuses on the following neighbourhoods within each city for more in-depth study: Slotervaart, Amsterdam; Borgerhout, Antwerp; Kreuzberg, Berlin; Nørrebro, Copenhagen; Hamburg-Mitte, Hamburg; Evington, Spinney Hills, Stoneygate, Leicester; 3rd Arrondissement, Marseille; 18th Arrondissement, Paris; Feijenoord, Rotterdam; Järvafältet, Stockholm; and Waltham Forest, London.

These reports are a response to major trends regarding the situation of Muslims living in Europe. Whether citizens or migrants, native born or newly-arrived, Muslims are a growing and varied population that presents Europe with the major public policy challenge of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all in a climate of rapidly expanding diversity.

Background

- Hamburg has a long history of immigration and is home to diverse minority communities. The city has a population of 1,720,632 originating from more than 180 countries. Among the city's residents, 26.8 per cent are of a migrant background, and 14.3 per cent hold a foreign passport.
- Hamburg's longstanding commitment to diversity has created an environment where inter-religious dialogue and inclusion of its Muslim residents are important parts of the political and civic landscape.
- There are an estimated 90,000 Muslims living in Hamburg, with at least 71,000 of them living in the newly created administrative district of Hamburg-Mitte.
- Over 300 residents of Hamburg-Mitte took part in the research for this report, which includes 200 detailed interviews with residents (100 Muslims and 100 non-Muslims), six focus groups, and over 15 in-depth discussions with leaders from civil society and local government.

Key Findings By Major Issue Area

Identity And Belonging

“Look, there are 3.5 million Muslims [in Germany], that makes 4 per cent of the population. We know from experience that not more than 25 per cent are really practising people. ‘Practising’ means that they go to Friday prayers. That means that approximately 1 per cent of the population is actively religious. Yet if you consider the public fears you hear about Muslims in Germany—a country of 70 million people—you find a situation in which 70 million people seem to be afraid of 1 per cent of the population.”

—Focus group participant

- Both Muslims and non-Muslims in Hamburg have a strong sense of belonging to the city, especially at the local and neighbourhood level. For many Muslim participants,

a feeling of alienation and exclusion from other parts of the city has strengthened residents' connection with their own neighbourhoods. This sense of alienation and exclusion was perceived by Muslims even more strongly at the national level.

- A majority of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents agreed that their local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get along well.
- Over one third of both Muslims and non-Muslims felt a “fairly strong” sense of belonging to the city of Hamburg. The sense of belonging decreased for both groups when describing their relationship with the country of Germany.
- Non-Muslims were more likely to see themselves as German than Muslim respondents. Over half of Muslim respondents with German citizenship see themselves as Germans.
- Both Muslims and non-Muslims see lack of language skills as the main obstacle to being German. For Muslims, “not being Christian” is seen as the second main barrier to being German.

Education

“When my child was [in Germany], they said that he was not doing well in school. They said he was mentally not capable. We then brought him to Turkey and there they took him into the third grade. Now he has finished university. He went right from the first to third grade.”

—Focus group participant

- Religious discrimination is perceived by Muslims to be an important barrier to academic achievement.
- Multilingualism is valued positively in the Hamburg Integration Plan with language support integrated into mainstream teaching. Some schools offer Turkish as a second language in high schools.

CHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The Hamburg Action Plan on Integration includes a proposal for smaller classes, more schools covering a full day (*Ganztagschulen*), providing language support, and more integration among students from different ethnic backgrounds.

Employment

- There are no legal provisions prohibiting the wearing of headscarves in Hamburg. However, the research conducted for this study indicates that visible forms of faith can be a barrier to employment in public professional careers, including teaching and policing.
- Access to the labour market is particularly difficult for asylum seekers and refugees due to legal restrictions on their right to seek employment. In the context of Hamburg's integration plan, this issue requires further consideration.
- Workers Councils in large companies play an important role in ensuring that religious and cultural needs of employees are taken into consideration.
- Hamburg was the first municipal government in Germany to monitor the migration background of its employees. While the current law on discrimination may prohibit monitoring of ethnic or religious background, Hamburg's municipal government is seeking ways to collect such information in order to better inform their recruitment and employment policies.

CHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The Hamburg Chamber of Crafts (*Handwerkskammer*) is targeting the lack of qualified workers in Hamburg through specific measures to integrate migrants into the Hamburg craft industry. It supports enterprise networks to include migrant enterprises and it is going to open up all craft schools for migrant participation.

Policing And Security

- Survey results for this report show that Muslims have a higher level of satisfaction and trust in policing and the courts than non-Muslims.
- Visible neighbourhood police officers are viewed positively by Muslims. This popularity and acceptance highlights the fact that there continues to be a need for more multilingual officers in neighbourhood policing.
- While Muslims in Hamburg indicated a high level of trust in the police, they also felt that they are often stopped and questioned by the police due to profiling based on their ethnicity or religion. To sustain the high levels of trust, it is important that such complaints are independently investigated and research is carried out examining this issue.

Participation And Citizenship

“When elections are approaching, there is talk in many mosques about how the Muslim community is invited to participate. Along with noting elections, leaders also explicitly state: ‘We as a mosque cannot give you an idea about which party to vote for. Vote the party you think is closest to your interests.’ I think that is really important that people get informed, but not manipulated in a certain direction.”

—Focus group participant

- Mainstream political parties are increasingly recognizing the importance of voters from minority backgrounds. Both the SPD, and more recently, the CDU have established German-Turkish Forums to attract voters with a Turkish background.
- The city administration in Hamburg has made significant efforts to include Muslims and faith-based organisations in policy debates and to support their participation in society and its institutions.
- Muslim respondents are more likely than non-Muslim respondents to trust political institutions. Across both groups, levels of trust were higher for local city councils compared to the national parliament or government.
- Muslim respondents who are eligible to vote did exercise this right with slightly more than half of the Muslims (57 per cent) in the survey eligible to vote in national elections, and 88 per cent of non-Muslim respondents eligible to vote.
- Forty-five per cent of non-Muslim and 40 per cent of Muslim respondents believed they could influence decisions affecting the city. However, the majority of Muslims (54 per cent) and non-Muslims (52 per cent) did not.

CHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The Hamburg Senate has fostered dialogue with the Council of Muslim Communities by creating a legal instrument granting Islam equal status to Christianity.

Housing

- Both groups indicated that they enjoyed living in their neighbourhood, with an overwhelming majority of non-Muslims (98 per cent) and Muslims (91 per cent) expressing an appreciation of their neighbourhood.

- In both groups, more than a third agreed or strongly agreed that the neighbourhood where they lived was closely knit, but half of Muslims disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Health

- Although there is a fair amount of satisfaction with the health services, almost a quarter of Muslims (23 per cent) and non-Muslims (24 per cent) are not satisfied with the health services. Some Muslims called for free and equal access to the health system and more funding for health.
- Many Muslims noted that all patients are treated equally, regardless of religion or ethnicity. Some Muslims also reported that doctors have received extra training on cultural issues, such as avoiding behavior and procedures that Muslims, particularly women, might perceive as inappropriate.

CHANGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Since 2004, the city of Hamburg has been supporting health projects in their redevelopment programme for areas in need. The programme, A City Worth Living In (Lebenswerte Stadt), emphasises the need for education in physical exercise and sports for health.

Media

- Muslims surveyed indicated a certain criticism toward the media for what are perceived to be sensationalist and hostile attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. Despite recent attempts at more balanced reporting, Muslim voices remain largely absent in Hamburg’s various media organizations.
- Participants in the study point to the under-representation of Muslims and migrants in the media and media-related infrastructure such as local media organisations.

Key Recommendations

- The citizens of Hamburg should be encouraged to make an all-party declaration of their purpose to create an environment free of discrimination for the city’s entire population. This includes raising awareness about antidiscrimination laws, accompanied by support (including access to legal advice) for those seeking redress against religious discrimination.

- The Hamburg city council and the Department for School and Vocational Training should ensure that issues related to religious and cultural stereotyping and discrimination are addressed as part of existing language support and teacher training.
- City administration departments and their regional equivalents, along with employers and trade unions, should provide systematic, on-the-job employee training that meets the needs of Muslim and migrant workers.
- Regional and relevant city administration departments, as well as specialised NGOs should consider—on the basis of the recommendation of the German Institute for Human Rights—collecting data on minority groups, specifically Muslims, in order to understand the level of trust and concerns about the criminal justice system.
- Regional and relevant city administration departments should explore opportunities to facilitate an increase in multilingual officers in the police force and identify barriers that hamper the recruitment of Muslims and migrants into the police force.
- Federal, regional, and relevant city administration departments together with specialised NGOs, should establish an independent police complaints commission, as suggested by Amnesty International, with a general

complaints procedure and an ombudsman within the police force, to deal with complaints and to monitor the improvement of police services.

- Policymakers and media organisations should agree on steps to support young Muslim and migrant journalists to achieve and guarantee an appropriate representation of Muslims and migrants at all levels of the media infrastructure.
- Muslim and minority organisations should take steps to encourage active and heightened engagement of Muslim residents in city and district politics with a view to increased participation in local decision-making. Such organisations can also be instrumental in encouraging greater interaction between faith-based organisations and with other civil society groups.

For more information

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