

# *The Culture of Islam and the concept of European Citizenship: antagonism and compatibility*

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## **Introduction**

The impact of modern western cultures on Islamic societies has created an interesting debate regarding the compatibility of democracy and secularization with Islamic values. The rise of political Islam in the 1970s has intensified this debate leading it towards new perspectives regarding the compatibility of Islam with issues such as development, citizenship, identity, democracy and globalization. Western Academic discourse about the relationship Islam and modernity revolves around the distinction between essentialist and reductionist approaches<sup>1</sup>. While Orientalists (or essentialists) claim that the essential background of Islam opposes modernization, secularization and democracy, reductionists argue that Islam is not a significant factor preventing the development of secularization.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is aimed to analyze the role of citizenship identity in Muslim communities of European continent aspiring to integrate into European family. Moreover, the content of the paper can be extended to the discussion of the impact of rising Islamic culture in Europe on existing values as well as the concepts of European citizenship. The core component of the paper seeks the answer for the question of possibility of the compatibility of European Citizenship concept with Islamic values. As an answer of this antagonist question, I will argue that two concepts are compatible; however there is a need for specific policy strategy to achieve this compatibility at European level. Secondly, the paper discusses the potential policy options, particularly on youth policy at European level and governmental level of the countries with sizeable Muslim community to achieve this compatibility. To achieve this goal, the paper will explore how international and national youth organizations can more effectively engage and address their needs so as to establish conditions that might eventually facilitate contact and interaction between young people of European community and Muslim societies.

## **Secularization and citizenship in Islamic Societies of Europe**

The study of secularization in both, Islamic and Western societies has attracted significant attention from scholars, media, policymakers, and ordinary people and has emerged various concepts concerning its definition and patterns. The term “secularism” in translation from the Latin *saeculum*, means both “an age (or

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Hoebink, *Thinking about renewal in Islam: Towards a history of Islamic ideas on modernization and Secularization*, Koninklijke Brill, Leiden, 1998, p. 29

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Also Regarding of this dispute see: Al Braizat, Fares. *Is Islam compatible with democracy? An Empirical critique of pedantic Culturalist methodology, paper presented at the Conference on Culture, Democracy and Development*, Monte Verita (Switzerland), 6-11 October, 2002 and Talal, Asad. 2003. *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford Univeristy Press, Stanford, California

era)” and “the world”, probably as an extension of the idea of a “spirit of an age”<sup>3</sup>. At present the term secularization is used to describe the separation of the religion from the state.

What is affected by the secularization? This is the central question for the definition. As Mark Chaves suggests “secularization is best understood not as the decline of religion, but as the declining scope of religious authority”.<sup>4</sup> It means that secularization does not mean the rejection of religion, rather than decrease of religion’s influence on other institutions of society and individual behavior. This is the used definition in this paper.

Dobbelaere identifies three dimensions of secularization: “laicization”, “internal secularization”, and “religious disinvolvement”.<sup>5</sup> According to Dobbelaere, *laicization* – is the “process of differentiation whereby political, educational, scientific and other institutions gain autonomy from the religious institutions of a society”.<sup>6</sup> The main result of this process is the transformation of the religion from the superior social institution to the equal social institution that does not have any special or primary status. *Internal secularization* includes the process which leads to “the adaptation of religious organizations to the secular world through internal development of them that is resulted with decline of their power”.<sup>7</sup> The third dimension, *religious disinvolvement*, includes the decline of religious beliefs and practices among individuals.<sup>8</sup> According to this conception secularization mainly affect the institutional arrangement, religious organizations and individual persons.

Another important issue is connected with the understanding of the role of religion in society. There are diverse attitudes about the conceptualization of religion as one of the important institutions of society. Goddard distinguishes between “Islam” and “Islamic world”, by emphasizing that “Islam” and “the Islamic world” are not identical, because the former includes “certain ideals or aspirations”, while the latter “represents concrete realities, and as with all ideals the Islamic world practices Islam to differing degrees”<sup>9</sup>. The main conceptual principles of Islam should be distinguished from that Islam which is experienced in different Muslim countries. Islam was influenced by various factors<sup>10</sup> through the history in different societies; therefore, “Islam in practice” has become very different from conceptual Islam, which is declared in the Koran and other sacred foundations of Islamic religion. In this paper, I will consider Islam in practical terms rather than its fundamental principles.

How can the secularization process emerge and survive in societies with predominately Muslim population? Authors differ regarding secularization in Islamic societies. Adherents of one viewpoint argue that Islam is the main factor preventing development of the Muslim countries. For example, Fukuyama identifies

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<sup>3</sup>William H. Swatos, Jr., Kevin J. Christiano, *Secularization Theory: The Course of a Concept*. *Sociology of Religion* 1999, 60:3 209-228, p. 209

<sup>4</sup>Chaves, Mark. *Secularization as Declining Religious Authority*, *Social Forces*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Mar, 1994), 749-774 , p. 750

<sup>5</sup>Dobbelaere, Karel. *Secularization: A Multi-Dimensional Concept*, *Current Sociology* 29, 1-216, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 757

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Hugh Goddard, *Islam and Democracy.*, The Political Quartely Publishing Co.Ltd.2002, p. 3

<sup>10</sup>For example, in Former Soviet Union Muslim countries Islam has become less significant element of the cultural system by the influence of communist ideology, or different tarikats (sects) have been developed by influence of various religious movements (Shiism in Iran, vahabism in Saudian Arabia, sunnism in Turkey etc.)

Muslim countries as “resistant to modernity” and the reason of this resistance is Islam.<sup>11</sup> According to this wing to achieve secularization in Islamic countries is not possible. Charles Taylor, on the contrary, sees the applicability of secularism to the modernized societies all over the world, though he argues for the roots of secularism as specific to Western Christendom's problems at the dawn of modernity.<sup>12</sup>

Within the framework of the analysis of secularism in an Islamic society, the impact of national identities (or citizenship identity) on self-identity building should be considered with particular emphasize. Even though the religion of Islam states as a superior identity only the religious one, all predominantly Muslim countries of Europe have strong national ideologies and the national self-identification. The formation of the nation-states in Muslim countries can be explained by wide range of historical events influencing ideological changes affecting the decline of the religion. While the collapse of the Ottoman Empire led to the shift from Islamic Empire to nation-state in Turkey, other Islamic societies of Europe have been affected by dominant communist regimes lasting almost for one century. Even though recent Islamic revival have taken place almost in all Muslim countries of Europe, this process only influenced individual disinvolvement, but not secular framework of the state institutions. Moreover, all these countries have included European Integration in their foreign policy strategy implying the further development of secular institutions and the governance. To conclude, the rise of the nationalism and the formation of the nation-states in an Islamic societies because of the different historical events resulted by the decline of the religion and emergence of the secularism. Moreover, secularism in these societies survives because of historical legacy as well as aspirations to join Europe (since secular institutions are the requirement for European Integration).

Considering the above mentioned relationship between the citizenship and Islam puts a light on the contemporary issues of the interaction between rising Islamic culture in Europe and socio-political implication of it. The cases of discrimination towards Muslims and social, political and economic exclusion of the Muslim groups in European countries negatively affects on the development of the national/citizenship identity among Muslims which subsequently leads to the conflict between the secular European values and strong religious beliefs. What is level of secularization among Muslims living in European Union? Doubtlessly, the answer of the question will be quite vague and ambivalent, but still it is possible to define common principles identifying the level of secularization. Firstly, Muslims of European Union live in societies governed by secular institutions and legal system, which can not be challenged by religious movements. In other words, the requirements of secular political system of the West imposed on Muslims living in Europe, which leads to secular behavior and attitude among Muslims. Though the individual religious (dis)involvement is diverse in Europe, however the implications of the religious identity at individual level do not conflict with the domestic citizenship identity of European countries. The last phenomenon can be identified as a second common feature of the relationship between Islamic culture and national/citizenship identity in European countries.

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<sup>11</sup> Fukuyama, Francis, *The West has Won*, The Guardian October 11, 2001, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,567258,00.html>

<sup>12</sup> Charles Taylor, “*Modes of Secularism*”, in Rajeev Bhargava, ed., *Secularism and its Critics*, Delhi: Oxford university Press, 1998, p.3

## Citizenship and nationhood in Europe

The concept of the citizenship embodies twofold character- it unifies individuals with different backgrounds granting them common identity embodying certain rights and some duties, at the same time it excludes some individuals who might benefit the same opportunities. Historical process dramatically influenced the notion of the citizenship binding it to the ethnic and national backgrounds. What should European Citizenship rely on? How can it embody people with different cultural, social, political and economic background, even in some cases contradicting each other?

As it is defined above, twofold character of the citizenship is the main factor influencing the legal status and participation issues. In other words, only granting the legal citizenship status to the person can ensure his or her full participation in the political life of the state. It is also very important to note that citizenship can also be defined as a tool for the recognition, acceptance and integration of non-citizens to society by eliminating the exclusion. Kastoryano refers to the citizenship as “a principle of equality” and “a way of struggle against political, social and cultural exclusion”.<sup>13</sup> In the modern multicultural Europe, the role of the citizenship as a common identity integrating different cultural groups can be understood as a tool against discrimination as well. However, incorporating of different identities to one common identity and finding the “golden equilibrium”, satisfying all identity groups, creates a need for further development of the concept.

Analyzing the relationship between the identities at nation-state level evokes the link between nationhood and citizenship. Nationhood as an identity having a natural character embodying one or more cultural symbols (such as language, alphabet, names, historical myths, race, territory, religion etc.) is represented by the cultural community. Citizenship as a legal status implying certain rights and responsibilities leads to the formation of the political community or the state which requires active participation of its members. Analyzing the immigration within the concept of nation-state can bring to the mind the question about the status of immigrants who might found themselves excluded from both cultural community because of the different cultural particularities and political community because of the lack of legal citizenship status. Particular cultural desires of immigrating groups, which differs from the dominant culture lead to the cultural isolation establishing the hostile negative source for the future cultural clash. Furthermore, being deprived of the citizenship status leads to the political passiveness or non-participation and further political isolation of the immigrants. Usman Sheikh states two main observations among the British Muslim minority which can be a supporting example of above mentioned arguments. He identifies *indifference* and *hostility* as the main predominant attitudes in British society resulted of the cultural segregation.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, acceptance of the cultural differences “imported” by the European-nation states together with the immigrant should also accepted and considered as a part of the common cultural community. Moreover, granting the citizenship status to the immigrants can foster their participation in the political community giving to them more opportunities to express their needs and to participate in the decision making process concerning their daily life.

Recently, the role of nation-state has declined, giving its place and losing its sovereignty to supra state bodies such as European Union. European Integration creates a need for the conceptualization of a new

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<sup>13</sup> Riva, Kastoryano, Citizenship, Nationhood, and Non-Territoriality: Transnational Participation in Europe, October 2005

<sup>14</sup> Usman, Sheikh, Muslims and Society in Western Europe: lessons from Bosnia, 21 November, 2002

European identity, which can reflect multicultural background of Europe. The notion of the citizenship has also been affected by this process. The new concept of European citizenship should be defined in terms of law, culture, politics and territorial scope. What are the boundaries of European Citizenship?

In contemporary discourse Europe is considered to be a modern society relying upon secular institutions of state and law. McCrone and Kiely reflect on the identities of citizenship and nationhood as following:

“Liberal social science in the twentieth has, by and large, treated civic identities (citizenship) as good, and what it defines as ethnic identities (nation-ness) as bad. Modern societies in other words, are seen as those in which people are bound to the state as social political actors rather than as cultural-ethnic beings.”<sup>15</sup>

The last argument reflecting the cultural ethnic background can also be applied to diverse cultural groups in Europe providing citizenship opportunity for them. In brief, European Citizenship should have multicultural character ensuring inclusion of diverse cultural groups.

The concepts of the “European Citizenship” and “Citizenship of European Union” should be distinguished in order to apply former identity beyond the scope of other people living in Europe. Moreover, “Citizenship of European Union” as a concept lacks the ideological bases, or more exactly it is ambivalent in political terms. “European Citizenship” as an identity can be applied on individuals living in European continent committed to accept and respect equality in diverse environment sourced by cultural, social, political, economical and other differences. According to the Article 8 of the Maastricht Treaty 2002, “citizen of the Union” is a person holding the nationality of the one of member states. As in the case of nation-state, Citizenship of the European Union refers to nationality (or domestic citizenship of Member States). On the other hand, it defines the dual character of the citizenship binding it legally to the domestic legislations of the member states on the citizenship. The lack of cultural component can be considered as the main problem of this definition. For me the Citizenship of Europe should refer and reflect European-ness and should be inclusive. In this regard, European-ness can refer not only to the legal status given by the member states but also, territoriality, historical and cultural background and finally personal self-identification. The answer of the question “Who are the Europeans?” is the core element of the definition. In culturally diverse Europe, the answer should have a multifold character, instead of focusing on one cluster of identity building. It should be noted that in this perspective multicultural loyalty represented by the one common identity (European-ness) should be based on the principles of the mutual respect and understanding among the adherents, who possess one or more levels of the perceptions of self-identity building. In other words, individuals obtain the freedom of self-identification, which is respected by others and treated equally. Thus, the accepted and respected diversity can serve as the main core principles of the European citizenship.

In comparison with other cultural groups, Muslims living in European continent as a “visible minority” group as well as with their particular cultural needs or desires creates a need for specific approach. The academic discourse on the relationship between Islamic culture and the secular European institutions, as well as citizenship differs widely. Is Islam a threat for the Europe? How Muslims living in Europe can be incorporated to cultural and political communities? Is European Citizenship can be suitable option for ensuring participation and combating discrimination against Muslims?

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<sup>15</sup> McCrone, David and Kiely, Richard, Nationalism and Citizenship, Sociology, Vol.34 No. 1, pp. 19-34

## Islam and Muslims in Europe

The first question which should be answered is about the definition of the status of the Muslims. Are they a group of people who can be combined under one certain social class as a race or ethnicity, or Muslims are people representing diverse cultural groups? On the one hand, many cultural features are common for all Muslims such as using Arabic language for religious rituals, dressing, religious holidays and finally, the notion of *ummah*, which defines religious identity as the supreme one over other identities for all Muslims. On the other hand, adherents of the religion of Islam can be regarded as a diverse group according to their countries of origin, nationality (being Turk, Arab or Pakistani), everyday spoken language and traditions formed because of the different historical pasts experienced by certain groups.

Modood refers to Islam as not a homogenous group even though according to him 15 million people in Europe identify themselves as a Muslim, because of this or that reason.<sup>16</sup> In order to depict a fool picture of the Muslims in Europe and understand the diversity, it is enough to assess the level of their political involvement, affiliation with the countries of origin, attitudes and behaviors to different political, social and cultural events. Ramadan also argues in favor of the existence of the cultural diversity within Islam, while referring to the existing universality of Islam not “to standardize the culture” but “to accept [...] the diversity of cultures”.<sup>17</sup> Emphasizing the possibility of the co-existence of the various layers of self-identification, the author states that “I am European by culture, Muslim by religion, Swiss by nationality, Egyptian by memory, and universalist in my principle”.<sup>18</sup> To conclude, it is important to underline the diverse character of Muslim groups, which can not be unified as a certain race or ethnicity.

Within the framework of the identification of the racism towards Muslims, it is important to conceptualize the main terms of anti-discrimination law. For example, in British anti-discrimination laws and policies, “color” and “ethnicity” has been defined as the main grounds of the discrimination.<sup>19</sup> As Modood describes, it can be considered lawful to discriminate against Muslims as Muslims, while the court system does not consider Muslims as an ethnic group, when Jews and Sikhs are recognized as an ethnic group within the legislation.<sup>20</sup> Even though discrimination on the basis of the Muslim-ness can be regarded as a violation of the right of a religious freedom, it is still important to define the main basic requirements which should be included in the anti-discrimination legislation evoking racist attitude towards Muslims in Europe.

The second important question is the compatibility of the Islamic culture with the “European-ness”. The opinion of the Islamic political movements on this regard also differs widely from each other. Some Muslim scholars and groups argue that legal framework of modern European countries provide freedom of worship and freedom of conscience, so Muslims can fit in these societies without facing any major obstacle. Moreover, supporters of this wing rely on the fact that Islam consists in itself the obligation of the Muslims to respect the social contract and to be “a committed good citizen” who abides the laws and policies. Furthermore, rejecting the notion of the minority or the second class citizenship in Europe, Muslims are considered to be equal

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<sup>16</sup> Modood, Tariq, Muslims and European multiculturalism, 15 May 2003, published by Open Democracy

<sup>17</sup> cited in the Rosemary Bechler, Democracy, Islam and the politics of belonging, 02 March 2006, Published by Open Democracy

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Modood, Tariq, Muslims and European multiculturalism, 15 May 2003, published by Open Democracy

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

members of the society. Other wing having more radical attitude towards the compatibility, supports the argument that in the case of the non-suitability of the European values to particular cultural desires of Muslims, this can be changed by re-considering so called dominant values of Europe. It is also important to note that reconsideration of the nation building strategies in European countries should definitely address inclusiveness strategies of the minorities ensuring their full participation in cultural and political community lives.

As the Citizenship of Europe has a dual character in its essence, analyze of the domestic citizenship regulations of the European countries is also a factor taken into account. Granting the citizenship to the immigrant groups differs from a country to country based on the different historical legacies as well as the character of the nation-state building. The attitude to the migrants and their particular cultural behavior also plays crucial role in the elaboration of the national legislations on the citizenship. Muslims, as a “visible minority” group with the strong religious background are the single largest group who evokes public debates and anxieties. In terms of the granting the citizenship for a long time Germany has relied upon the principle of “German descend” which automatically grants this status to people with German background, while excluding the other groups of the different cultural background, even the second and third generations of Turkish immigrants.<sup>21</sup> But in France, even though different cultural groups have been granted citizenship status through the long immigration historical past, the concept of the French citizenship has restricted any other cultural self-identification. The UK-style citizenship has twofold character allowing different minority groups recognizing their ethnic background as well. These various approaches open the place for the discussion on the inclusion or assimilation of Muslims as the religious migrants in Europe.

Delwar Hussain, while discussing the cultural transformations among the Bangladeshis living in UK, compares the older and younger generations emphasizing the changes in religious identity building. According to him:

“An older generation of British Bangladeshis saw Islam as one aspect of a plural, many layered identity; for their children and grandchildren it has become the basis of a monolithic ideology, the supreme identity in the struggle for political and socio-economic interests. It is also both reaction to and defense against the experience of poverty and racism”<sup>22</sup>

In fact, a political and cultural isolation might influence on the identity-building fostering the solidarity among the Muslims representing different cultural backgrounds as well as establishing a religious identity as a political tool to express the grievances and struggle. Thus, Muslim-ness becoming a common identity for the multi-traditional Islamic communities creates favorable conditions for the establishment of the “Islamic Nationalism” in European continent. Emerged as a result of the cultural and political isolation, “Islamic nationalism” can become a source of the further conflict in Europe. In this sense, both the functions of the equality and commonality of the citizenship can be applied to relinquish the radicalism of Islam. Granting this status also implies the inclusion of the religious minorities in the cultural and political community, as well as considering their culture as an element of the common cultural system of the general public.

The attitude of the main policy makers and general public about the religious traditions of Muslims is also an important component affecting the minority issues in Europe. Amiraux, argues that the ban of the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Hussain, Delwar, Bangladeshis in East London: from secular politics to Islam, 07 July 2005, published by Open Democracy

Muslim women headscarves in French schools mainly were adopted as a consequent of the perception of the headscarf as a Muslim male dominance and violence over their female partners, while it was less concerned with the religion.<sup>23</sup> Existing of the stereotypes and wrong perceptions indeed affects the attitude of the general public of the coexistence with the Muslim communities. According to Valenta, majority of Dutch people view Muslims unfavorable (51 %), almost half of the Germans do the same (47%), while the French and British societies find Muslim favorable, “even very favorable.”<sup>24</sup> Fostering the faith dialogue can be a useful option to avoid the emergence of the wrong perceptions and the hostility.

Considering multicultural character of European identity I would argue that Muslims living in Europe should be considered as “an eligible group” for European citizenship. Furthermore, European citizenship identity should also be applicable for the Muslim populations of the other countries territorially situated in Europe or culturally affiliating themselves with European values. Recent EU enlargement involving Cyprus as a member state, the country with geographically Asian location, proves one more time that territorial boundaries of Europe are flexible. Having the citizenship of Cyprus subsequently granting the citizenship of European Union to the people living in Asia (or for scholars even in the Middle East) can be justified more by the cultural ties with Greek culture, rather than geographical expansion of Europe. Moreover, European citizenship is not solely tied with the cultural-ethnic background, but more with the social political actors and secular institutional framework. Other interesting cases can be Norwegian and Swiss citizenship, which legally can not be considered as the “Citizenship of European Union”, but Swiss and Norwegian citizens are Europeans or European citizens because of the territorial situation or social political value system. Thus, flexibility of the territorial connotation of the European identity and the secular institutions as well as a behavior based on the mutual respect and acceptance are the core elements of the European citizenship. Therefore, diverse communities of the Muslims in Europe should be perceived as a part of Europe, not as aliens or “others”.

### **Youth Policy strategies for achieving the compatibility of Islam and European Citizenship**

The theoretical framework presented in the previous parts of the paper should also be transferred to the practice by effective policies to achieve harmonization in multicultural society. Working with young people and application of efficient youth policies addressing the issues of diversity and citizenship have more sustainable perspectives. First of all, in its deep character the concept of European Citizenship is an active concept requiring active participation of young people acquired this identity. To achieve an active participation of diverse youth groups, the strategies addressing inclusion are the most crucial ones. Which kind of strategies can be applied to achieve practical coexistence of Islam with the identity of European citizenship?

As Modood states Muslims has put two main demands: “the state funding of schools” and “the law on blasphemy” as a prerequisite for the equality.<sup>25</sup> Referring to the British government policy, the author describes that few schools has been funded which emerged disagreement by secularists asserting that the parity should be achieved by decreasing the state funding from all religious schools. In this regard, I would argue that state intervention is crucial to ensure mainly two aspects. First of all, state funding of the schools implies that the education at the religious schools will correspond to the national curriculum providing not only cultural

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<sup>23</sup> Amiraux, Valerie, Representing Difference, 15 November, 2003 Published by Open Democracy.

<sup>24</sup> Valenta, Markha, Facing up to Islam in the Netherlands, 09 February 2006, Published by Open Democracy

<sup>25</sup> Modood, Tariq, Muslims and European multiculturalism, 15 May 2003, published by Open Democracy



component but also education for the citizenship. The second component of the state funding is related to the support of the multiculturalism, as well as the assistance to the inclusion of the minority groups by eliminating their isolation.

The laws on blasphemy might assist to the establishment of the mutual trust and respect as well. In general this issue can be understood as a conflict of two fundamental principles. On the one hand respect to the sacred social law can create a favorable environment for the multiculturalism and promotion of the respect towards diversity; on the other hand freedom of speech is the solid principle of European culture which should not be undermined. However, the definition of the exact boundaries of the freedom of speech or reconsidering the conceptualization of it for the sake of multiculturalism is very important as well.

The existence of Islam in Europe emerged the specific type of racism defined as an Islamophobia. As it is stated in the final declaration of Diversity Youth Forum held in Budapest, 2006, “Islamophobia constructs the extremely diverse ethno-religious community of Muslims as a “race” and therefore leads to multiple forms of discrimination with a severe negative impact on young people”. The youth policies at governmental and local/international non-governmental level should have clear strategy to address the issues existing because of Islamophobic attitude and behavior in Europe. The best policy option can be promotion of the diversity and elaboration of inclusive strategies for active participation of young people. Even though youth groups operating at European level have input significant efforts to achieve this goal, there is a need for transferring positive practices to the governmental and grassroots levels. Moreover, the initiatives addressing to combat Islamophobia should target it as a type racism avoiding the promotion of Islam as a religion.

Education for European Active Citizenship at different levels of society, including grass-root level and youth with fewer opportunities should also be a priority for youth and education policy. Contemporary formal education systems of European countries highlight the importance of ethnic and national identity neglecting the education for European identity and diversity. Existing formal education structures should be assessed for both revealing the level of their adequateness with European identity and culture which is under construction and to identify the main policy gaps negatively affecting the Integration processes in Europe. The question of finding the appropriate equilibrium between Islam and European identity should also be an important pillar of elaborated youth and education strategies. The conceptual definitions developed within this paper can serve as a possible option to achieve a practical compatibility of Islam with European Citizenship.

Elaborated youth and education policies should consider the conflict sensitivity of the interventions addressing young people. Within the framework of this paper conflict sensitivity refers to the understanding of the interaction between existing conflicts related to Islam in Europe and the policy interventions. Application of the conflict sensitivity means acting upon the understanding of this interaction in order to avoid negative and maximize positive impacts on the socio-economic and political tensions, root causes of conflict and structural factors. In conclusion, youth policy strategies addressed to achieve compatibility between Islamic culture and European citizenship, in order to be able to prevent existing conflict from taking violent, the context needs to be observed with the “conflict lenses on” and understood as a conflicting environment.

## **Conclusions**

Culture of Islam and European Citizenship can be compatible within the defined conceptual framework of this paper. This compatibility can be achieved by specific youth policies addressing education and cultural issues, including education for diversity, active citizenship, intercultural learning and many other related to both concepts. To achieve the integrity of individuals living in Europe as well as inclusion of Muslim population of Europe the concept of Active European Citizenship can be the best policy option to be promoted at different levels of youth work.

To describe the compatibility of Islamic Culture with the concept of European Citizenship, the relationship between secularized Islam and respected/accepted diversity should be analyzed. As it was defined above the respected diversity as cohesion ideology of the European Citizenship is able to include several levels of different cores of self-identity formation. Therefore, Muslims living in secularized countries of Europe can believe in the supreme power of the God, and at the same time to identify themselves as European citizens. Respect to (or acceptance of) diversity as the central element of European Citizenship identity can also be followed by Muslims who live in the institutionally secular societies of Europe. In fact, mutual respect serves as a ground principle for the mutual self-preservation and secure self-identification among different groups. Thus, threatening the concept of respected/accepted diversity by Muslims, who are additionally minorities with less voting potential of European political system, can ruin the mutually favorable environment of the coexistence. To conclude, within the frames of the above defined concepts of Islam and European Citizenship are mutually compatible and they can coexist.

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