



Report

Of the study session held in cooperation with the
**Forum of European Muslim Youth and
Students Organisations (FEMYSO)**

European Youth Centre Budapest, 20-27 October 2002



HUMAN RIGHTS

The contribution of European Muslims

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This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session of FEMYSO.

It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe nor of FEMYSO.

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Acknowledgments

In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

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Gratitude to the EYCB for hosting the session and to the cooperative staff especially our facilitator, Mr. Rui Gomes, for being an inspiration and motivator.

A privilege to have met with the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Appreciation to the members of the preparatory team for their work in planning and coordinating, in particular the FEMYSO secretary, Ms Brigitte Martin, our heroine.

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Introduction

This is the final report of the study session "Human Rights: the Contribution of European Muslims" held at the European Youth Centre in Budapest, Hungary (EYCB). The seminar was organised by the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) in cooperation with the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport.

Stimulated by attendees of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance 2001 in Durban, the FEMYSO executive committee expressed the importance of investing in a specific program to further relate to the themes discussed at the summit plus convey the Islamic perspective as well as responsibilities to Human Rights. Hence, the first initiative was this study session that was to cover theoretical and practical methods of learning and potential projects of action to follow-up.

The aim was to gather active young people within FEMYSO's Member Organisations who were either already involved in Human Rights activities or had potential. In the selection process, there was consideration for gender and regional balance. The speakers based upon their experience and knowledge in the area also contributed in enlightening the group on different perspectives and they acted as facilitators were appropriate.

The session was a success in many ways. The EYCB provided excellent support and facilities that helped to run the session efficiently. The group of participants despite their regional differences united upon their faith and values to work as a united family. The lectures were informative and the workshops proved to be the essence of the session by creating debate, awareness and enthusiasm to reach goals through co-operation. Furthermore, it was a privilege during the session to be invited to a discussion forum with the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe which was a pivotal in the session and on the participants encouraging their roles in the future of Europe. In addition, a live web conference with the European Commission, in Brussels, on "Muslim Women in the European Union" conveniently was also participated.

1. The EYCB and FEMYSO

The European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB)

The European Youth Centre Budapest is a residential educational establishment of the Council of Europe. At present, 44 European states are members of the Council of Europe, an international organisation founded in 1949. The Council of Europe's primary goal is to promote the unity of the continent and guarantee the dignity of its citizens by ensuring respect for their fundamental values: Human Rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe works on solutions to major problems facing European society, like racism, intolerance, discrimination against minorities, inequality, social exclusion, drug abuse, corruption and organised crime. Within the Council of Europe, the EYCB is part of the Directorate of Youth and Sport and is, like the European Youth Centre Strasbourg (EYCS) and the European Youth Foundation (EYF), an important instrument of the Council's youth policy.

The European Youth Centre Budapest is one of the instruments, which implements the Council of Europe's youth policy.

The main objectives of the EYCB's youth programme are:

- promoting participation of young people and non-governmental youth organisations in the building of a unified Europe;
- supporting the voluntary sector in order to strengthen civil society and active citizenship;
- promoting independence and self-confidence in young people;
- developing intercultural learning as a way of promoting understanding, tolerance and peace;
- facilitating encounters between young people with diverse cultural and social backgrounds.

To achieve these objectives, the European Youth Centre Budapest organises a range of educational programmes, including seminars, training courses and symposia, in close co-operation with non-governmental youth organisations, youth services and networks. In addition to this, the Centre co-operates with other sectors of the Council of Europe and other international organisations to further the objectives described above.

The educational philosophy of the European Youth Centre is based on the ideas of international exchange, shared learning and intercultural education. Being an educational centre, the EYCB provides expert support in an ideal setting for non-formal learning, innovation and experimentation by the participants in its activities, who act as 'multipliers' in local, regional, national and European youth work. In this way, forward-looking ideas and project proposals are developed right across Europe.

As a service of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) contributes to the implementation of the Council of Europe's youth policy. To this end, the Directorate of Youth and Sport brings together young people, civil movements, government agencies and experts in an on-going consultation on policy objectives and

practice in the youth and sports fields. In order to make sure that young people are strong and informed participants in the policy debate, it encourages the development of youth associations, networks and initiatives, and stimulates international co-operation between youth structures. The principle of youth participation finds its full expression in a system of co-management through which the youth policy of the Council of Europe is developed. Representatives of youth organisations, associations and services and governmental officials sit together in committees, which make proposals for the programme and priorities of the youth sector. These proposals are then adopted by the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's highest decision-making body.

Reference: www.eycb.coe.int/

Forum of European Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)

Forum of European Muslim Youth Student Organisations was established in 1996 with its mission to become a platform for youth organisations to congregate, exchange info, gain experience, benefit from each other and work alongside other Muslim and non- Muslim NGOs to create a better Europe in all spheres of life and participation.

FEMYSO comprises of over 42 member organisations which form the highest authority, the Executive headed by the President who are responsible for carrying out work plans, and the General Assembly which meets annually plus has elections on a 2year basis for a new executive.

Aims & objectives of FEMYSO are:

- To effectively represent its member organisations in all spheres of European life from political to social, private to public.
- To encourage the development of a European Muslim Identity, via the involvement of Muslim youth in discussions, educational and awareness programmes, highlighting their social responsibilities and contribution to Europe. Such as the study session we previously held at the EYB 'Towards a new Identity: European Muslim Youth' (2000, EYCB).
- To be an international network that can facilitate in providing services and global links to youth organisations (For example through our website and message boards (which are under construction)). Plus to cater for youth exchange trips transfer of experiences and cross-cultural exchange of information.
- To identify avenues of co-operation among its member organisations and, on a greater scale, its wider contacts within Europe. This includes projects of interest to other religious and non-religious youth bodies, to enable dialogue at the inter-faith and inter-cultural levels.
- To establish management and leadership programs to enhance the skills and potentials of youth.

- To continuously review the problems and challenges that youth are encountering in Europe and provide alternative solutions to the symptoms and causes, the principle goal being action rather than words (E.g. The White paper, UN Racism & Xenophobia, COMPASS).

FEMYSO envisages a Europe in which Muslims take pride in their historical contribution to the development of European civilisation and the 800-year presence in Spain, to look to the future and contribute to European Society as European Muslims. Europe is known for its tolerance and democratic values, but we also see with great sadness the rise of racist and islamophobic prejudice in many European cities. The FEMYSO is committed to fighting prejudice at all levels, so that the future of Europe is a multicultural, inclusive and tolerant one, in which all people can work hand in hand to create a peaceful and prosperous society.

Following the tragic events of September 11th, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism & Xenophobia has documented reports on Islamophobia including the 'Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU'. Unfortunately, whilst such accounts provide an essential process in the elimination of discrimination against Muslims, they generally perceive the Muslim community to be based upon asylum seekers, political refugees and immigrants. They fail to recognise that we the Muslim youth who are European born and brought up in this society face daily Human Rights discriminations in our home countries such as Italy, Germany and the UK to name but a few. Hence, FEMYSO is obligated to voice the concerns of European Muslim youth, eradicate misconceptions and stereotypes and attempt to become a catalyst in educating ourselves and others amidst this unfortunate growing Islamophobic society we are coming to be in.

Protecting and promoting Human Rights is central to the role of the Council of Europe. Hence, bearing in mind that the CoE was explicitly founded upon respect for Human Rights and the pre-eminence of law, Femyso took the initiative to apply for this study session in order to learn to better ourselves in the essential subject of Human Rights.

2. Methodology, Aims and Objectives

Meetings and Planning Process

The preparatory team held several meetings leading up to the study session. The first initiation was at the FEMYSO office during September 2001 to set up the team. In March 2002, the first prep team met in Brussels to discuss the themes and aims, the EYCB application form, venue, participants and the educational methods. The EYC in Budapest would be most appropriate due to its experienced staff, library and Information Centre which was helpful in the past and would be more so concerning Human Rights. The facilities are appropriate with seminar rooms, translation facilities, recreational areas and dietary food requirements available as well as possibilities for a prayer room plus the beautiful peaceful scenic background.

Following application acceptance by the EYCB a meeting was held at the centre in Budapest along with Mr Rui Gomes the facilitator assigned to the session in June 2002. The meeting discussed all the relevant aspects of the session that included the aims and objectives, draft of the program, participant application form, speakers and the facilities that would be required. Another meeting in Brussels during September also reviewed the progress. Thereafter, several net meetings were held regularly with the team to discuss application forms and select those who exemplified the most commitment and experience in the field of Human Rights. There was also an attempt to balance representation from Western and Eastern Europe and similarly with gender.

Educational Methods

The methodology of the session focussed on workshops to develop participants understanding of Human Rights and encourage them in further involvement in Human Rights education and co-operation with other NGOs.

The study session was to be based upon several informative lectures that would initiate discussions, debate and action plans. We aimed to enhance the learning process by integrating workshop exercises for the COMPASS Human Rights Manual. The participants were rotated in different groups for every workshop to ensure that they all became familiar with the different experiences between each other and their countries. During each workshop, a facilitator (which was a member of the prep team) was allocated to motivate the discussion, a participant to take minutes, another to present using OHPs or a white board where necessary, and another to type the minutes. On several occasions, participants chose to do power point demonstrations.

Taking into consideration our attempt to balance cultural representation, we had to decide upon working languages. The main working languages agreed upon from the participants' application forms were English and French. Several of those who attended spoke Italian and

Russian and were given the opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue during the Political Affairs Committee Meeting that provided the relevant translators. At times during general discussion out of the meetings, Arabic was occasionally used amongst a few of those attending and was a convenient alternative.

The Preparatory Team and Participants

The session was held during the 20-27th October 2002 at the European Youth Centre in Budapest and was attended by twenty-six participants alongside the preparatory team, which consisted of four FEMYSO members and the EYCB Programme and Training Administrator.

The Preparatory team included Yasin Ahmed (Sweden), Sunduss Al-Hassani (UK), Hadia Himmat (Switzerland), Chokri Mensi (Sweden) and Rui Gomes (EYCB), our facilitator.

The participants were active youth from within the member organisations of FEMYSO. These organisations ranged from all over Europe and included Ardmeria (1)-Albania; AJM (1)-Belgium; FOSIS (1), MYF (1), IHRC (2), YM (1)-Britain; IYF (1)-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; NMF (1)-Finland, EMF (2)-France; MJD (2), IISL (2)-Germany; UIC (2)-Hungary; GMI (3)-Italy; MSS (1)-Norway; MSS (1)-Poland; SUM (2)-Sweden; ARRAID (2)-Ukraine.

The gender balance was unfortunately not fully achieved, as there were 9 female and 17 male participants.

Aims

The general aim of the session was to try and develop participant's awareness on Human Rights in the context of Islam and to contribute to the work of FEMYSO in this field and related projects with other NGOs.

The session included discussion on dilemmas encountered by Muslim Youth in striking a balance between their Islamic values and European principles and focus on the Human common denominator as the principal binder and unifier.

Additionally, the session aimed also to equip the youth with knowledge and skills of their rights as individuals and organisations so they can input, and output to both FEMYSO and other NGO's in Europe through future joint ventures.

For the spiritual input, the five daily prayers were conducted in a room allocated by the EYCB after which the *mathurat*, a summary of supplications, was encouraged to be read. The Friday prayer, *juma*, was also performed with a sermon. Each day geared to begin and end with readings from the Holy Qur'ân. Throughout the session, it was always encouraged and reminders made that an Islamic atmosphere be practised which also meant trying to keep social gatherings gender segregated and entertainment modest.

The underlying *objectives* were as follows:

1. To support and motivate participants to become further involved in Human Rights (education).
2. To develop participants knowledge on Human Rights and attitude towards a culture of Human Rights, and to raise their awareness of the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of Human Rights.
3. To enable participants in developing their skills and attitudes (self-confidence, etc.) related to the importance and role of Human Rights for Muslims in Europe.
4. To analyse examples of the violations of Human Rights of Muslims in the local or national context of participants.
5. To support the active involvement of participants in Human Rights issues in their communities and within FEMYSO.
6. To equip participants with knowledge of their own rights and skills to access or use them.
7. To address and discuss dilemmas encountered by Muslim Youth in combining Human Rights and cultural/religious values or traditions.
8. To gather ideas and proposals for the follow up of a study session by FEMYSO and its members.

3. Expectations

At the beginning of the session we asked the participants what were their expectations about the study session. The following questions were asked :

1. Motivation: why we came to seminar,
2. Expectation: what we expect to get,
3. Suggestion: what we would like or need to do in the session.

To summarise the participants agreed upon the below:

- To familiarise with Human Rights from a general point of view, but also with Human Rights and their relation to Islam, or the Human Rights such as expressed in Islam. They are often unknown and sometimes this subject is akin to a taboo. However, the motivation is great because this is one of the fundamental issues about contemporary societies.
- To deepen ones own knowledge about the subject in general (a lack of information on this topic is often felt). Some wish to get useful information that could allow them to manage their relationship with other active NGOs and with politicians. They want to gather out tools that will enable them to communicate the Islamic point of view about Human Rights and to set up a common platform of dialogue. To find possibilities of partnership with other non-Muslim NGOs active on ground level (Human Rights Watch, etc) because this could allow us to obtain greater and quicker recognition and to step forward more rapidly.
- To seek knowledge that will inform young Muslims about all the related issues in Europe as well as in Islamic conception, so that they can become more able to enter positively the debate and act in the most adequate way.
- Some wanted to learn a methodology and a set of tools that would allow them to act on the ground level in cases of manifest violations of Human Rights (minority problems, immigrants policies, violence against women, for Muslims and non-Muslims). Find ways to claim and work for an equal implementation of national laws for all citizens (equality in front of justice, liberty of speech...). If every state were just applying its own legislation in a just and egalitarian way, this would already be a huge progress.
- To meet others from different countries active on the ground level on this topics or related topics in the aim to share experiences and build relationships about participation. The real aim is to come out on concrete actions on ground level to fight against discrimination and Human Rights violations against Muslims and Non-Muslims. There is really a consensus about the fact that this issue and this fight is really something shared or to be shared by all members of society. There was a proposal to create local Muslim committees about Human Rights, because often, in cases of crisis, we do not know whom to address or to get help thus it would be positive to establish a list of organisations (Muslim and Non-Muslim) committed to the defence and protection of Human Rights.

- To encourage political activism in favour of the refugee rights in Europe, and of the participation of immigrants in local political life without being bound to adopt a particular nationality.

Based upon these points the preparatory team tried to adapt the program daily to meet the expectations of the participants. The outcome of the session is summarised in the Evaluation section.

4. Presentations

Disclaimer – A special appreciation to all the speakers who actively contributed to the study session. Unfortunately, lecture transcripts had to be edited, as they were too extensive for this summary report. Responsibility for any errors is solely held with the editor.

Introduction to Human Rights *by Rui Gomes*

The participants asked what do the terms Human Rights evoke to them as individuals. The issues raised were children, discrimination, torture, human beings, human dignity, Western imperialism, UN, freedom, women's rights, duties, peace, democracy, liberty of speech, platform for multicultural dialogue, Palestine, Middle East conflicts negative and positive rights, violations, diversity, dictatorship and insecurity.

Human Rights are associated to numerous concepts and ideas, both negative and positive. Human Rights are in the same time simple and complex. It is a challenge to make them be a bit more human and understandable. They do not belong only to experts. Human Rights are from everybody and not only for experts.

One of the key concepts of Human Rights is the following statement of René Cassin: "Human Rights is what no one can take away from you". They are inherent to all human beings. It is because you are a human being that you always have your rights and dignity. What about the reality?

The fact that somebody can claim that their rights have been denied is the evidence that those rights exist. One thing is the existence of universal human rights; another thing is the level and ways in which they are respected or that individuals can access or exercise them.

The fact that Human Rights are not respected does not mean that there are no Human Rights. Throughout the history of the world people and states have shared their part of Human Rights violations and atrocities and genocides and so on. But it's nevertheless important to notice that Human Rights are not static they evolve and develop.

Somebody here referred to duty, one of the characteristics of Human Rights is that they are not associated to duties. In the same way that they cannot be taken away from you, they are not associated to duties. You cannot say you have your Human Rights if you behave well, even if you decide not to behave well you still have your Human Rights. Of course morally and socially its (relatable) that you decide to behave badly, but even if you decide to behave badly and not fulfil your duties as a husband, as a wife, as a citizen, as a daughter, as a son, you still have your Human Rights, it is not a contract.

In the exercise of right, you should respect the rights of the others that is where your duty is, and that you don't violate the other people's rights. The existence of your rights is regardless of any duty before because you have them as human being.

We should be careful and able to differentiate between the existence of rights as such and the protection or what violates those rights that states are able to put in, because my rights exists even if the state where I live does not respect it. We should be aware of this.

This implies the following question: what defines humanity? And then the Islamic conception of Human Rights can play a role because it promotes the idea that no one can take those rights away from anybody because they are given by God Himself, in an absolute way, and not given by human legislation (it is a possible approach to Human Rights).

Human Rights are not static, they are not one set of rights fixed forever, and they evolve with time passing by. Sometimes, conflict arises between individual and collective rights. There are sometimes conflicting rights (e.g. between freedom of expression and the right to be protected from pornographic stuff), so that a particular right can be limited by what society recognise as being the regular limits to liberty of speech. In reality, it is not the rights that are contradicting but interests. It is very important to differentiate between the existence of certain rights (even if they are not respected) and their application in concrete reality.

The evolution of 'rights' can be understood as follows:

1. The granted rights (by a state, a king). They are given to some people and can be taken away.
2. The natural rights (appeared in 18th and 19th centuries). Those rights are considered as being inherent to the very nature of mankind.
3. Human Rights (which are not only philosophically or morally based but which are also the results of political contracts). There is maybe a religious base, and there is very often a philosophical ground, but most of it is what we as human beings decide that shall not be allowed and shall be made possible. This is this kind of political contract that was somehow crystallized in the United Nations universal declaration of Human Rights. They express what we are allowed to do as human beings. There were some evolutions in the concept of Human Rights itself: where does it come from...

Characteristics of Human Rights

All Human Rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and inalienable. Regardless where you come from, your human dignity has the same value (even if you do not know personally that you do have rights). Human Rights cannot be negotiated: one has to take all of them or leave all of them. One cannot choose only part of them. Indeed, one cannot grant political rights and deny social rights: everything goes together.

Human Rights are indivisible, for example, you cannot say you have the right to speak but not the right to write. Human Rights cannot be negotiated. They are also interdependent, for example, the possibility to exercise the right to social participation or political participation depends sometimes on my right to education or my right to decent living conditions, and these ones are interdependent. Moreover, this goes together with the indivisibility: you cannot grant political rights and not grant social rights for example

Let us say that the Universal declaration of Human Rights contains the seeds or the ground for a series of rights that have then been developed further. Human Rights are also often explained in three "generations":

1. The *1st generation* (also called liberty rights, freedom and liberty) is the result of a covenant and insists on liberties. Civil, legal and political rights are concerned. They are mostly negative rights (states must not do this or that against individuals).
Example: the right to vote, the right to participation, freedom of association, to have a fair trial.
2. The *2nd generation* (also called equality rights) is also the result of a covenant and is concerned by the social, economic and cultural rights. This requires mostly a positive intervention of the state.
Example: the right to education, to fair remuneration for work, right to housing.
3. Collective rights concern the *3rd generation*, also called solidarity rights composed of specific conventions and instruments, for people or communities. This is a whole series of newly emerging rights. These are the right to peace, development and environment.

There are now new emerging rights such as ethics. The consequence of the interaction of human beings and how human beings negotiate somehow sharing the earth at a certain moment, are collective rights. For example, indigenous people who don't have the concept of individual property, most states would say, that land belongs to nobody so anybody can take it and of course no individual can claim that their rights have been violated because they do not recognise that they have that right on that land, but the community would. In addition, some of the rights of non-discrimination can be seen as collective rights. Finally, Human Rights need legal grounds to exist and be applied in reality.

Human Rights in Islam *by Mr. Zein Omar*

All human beings are equal in front of their Creator and a human being is the best amongst all the creatures of God. The only difference within human beings is in their accountability

to God: all human beings do not accept faith, but all of them are going to the final judgement.

Qur'ân chapter 7 verse 70, 'The children of Adam are the best among the creations of God'. We all are creations of God, we all have the same value. According to Islam, what makes us different is the degree to which we respond to the call of God from the time of Adam to the revelation of the Koran and until the end of this world, the day of judgement. We all are accountable for our beliefs, deeds and words in the hereafter.

In this presentation I will try to trace what makes the Islamic approach to the issue of Human Rights, especially today as Islam is brought in a place of accusation particularly after the sad events of the 11 September 2001 which targeted any Muslim to be guilty unless he can prove to be innocent. Another aspect is that the mass media and some scholars in the west confuse deliberately between Islam and some tendencies and experiences of Muslim countries regimes and groups or individuals and try to generalise them so that they give a wrong impression that this is what Islam is about. I think this is because the secular western European approach based on Christian culture is imposing its values to all other people. Often people try to approach Islam's Human Rights through their own Human Rights Christian values, but Islam is a strong culture that cannot be forced to enter easily in a specific reading frame.

Human Rights are among those issues that create a friction between the Islamic world and the west. As a solution I guess the only way to increase understanding about these issues is to start a peaceful systematic long and strategic dialogue that paves the ground for a solid and reliable relationship based on mutual respect instead of seasonal and occasional activities that we see now and then in Europe. All these problems and challenges and confusions that prevail the contacts between the different civilisations do not make the practise of anyone who belongs to Islam and tries to defend Islam to be an easy task.

We come to the main issue: how to define Human Rights? In Islamic definitions, it is translated by Huqûq al-Insân. Insân, according to Qur'ân and Sunna, is any creation, male and female, pertaining to the children of Adam and Eve. Another definition is also a member of the human family. They are all members of the human family, regardless of their origin, ethnicity, and colour.

The second part of the term is the word Haqq, 'right'. It is defined to be any interest or benefit of a group or individual that is legally defined and established and the right cannot be right unless it is establish according to a religion, tradition or law. The opposite of the word haqq is bâtel, false, and any right in Islam entails an obligation. Is there any benefit for groups and individuals? Bâtil is the opposite of Haqq. Every haqq in Islam brings an obligation.

How does Islam look upon the human being? These are the fundamental granted by God to the human being. I tried to put the most essential points, aspects, and honour. God has given to man four main honours:

1. God has chosen human being as vice-regent on Earth (cf. Q. II, 30).
2. He gave laws through Prophets to fulfil the rights of human beings in this life and the hereafter. God has sent His messengers and prophets and His laws and books to guide

human beings to the path of success and goodness. Briefly the goal of the missions books and laws is to fulfil the happiness of the human beings in this life and the hereafter.

3. The third honour that is mentioned in many of the Qoranic verses is the one in which God declares in heavens and the world of angels. Translation the most nearest, the divine gathering. When God decided to create Adam, He didn't do this like any occasion, it was a very huge gathering. In the Malâ' al-a'lâ, God declares in that gathering of the angels that He is going to create a new creation on earth. At the same time God orders the angels to fall down in adoration of this creation. In this occasion we notice that for Human Rights every thing happened together:

- 3.1. The creation of mankind (Adam).

- 3.2. This new fascinating creation, was accepted by them and they bowed down as they were demanded to do, although they were questioning why it has to be created. God answered that they knew very little and that it was beyond their knowledge to question.

- 3.3. The refusal of the devil to take the orders from his creator and fall down for the sake of Adam. This did not only expel the devil from the mercy of God but it created also jealousy and hatred in the heart of the devil towards us. The first expression that this hatred took its shape of Human Rights through is the efforts of the devil to take out Adam and Eve from the paradise and he succeeded. And the fact that he will keep chasing their children to lead them as tray hinder them from having a good relationship with their Creator.

4. God preferred human being above all creation.

The preference of God is for the human being over all other creations. This honour and preference takes different forms, one is that in the human being we find many of the characteristics that are found catered in the other creations. Do not forget that human beings are a combination of reason, spirit, flesh and soul. The perfection of human beings lies in the equilibrium of those Human Rights. Man needs to get a balance in those Human Rights: this is a central aspect in human being development and Islam is a proper way to achieve this. On the contrary, if there is no balance between those Human Rights aspects it leads to degeneration.

The concept of rights in Islam is that any right cannot be a right unless it is legally defined whether it comes from a religious authority or manmade legislation. In Islam what comes from God is a priority. In Islam, rights exist only if they are legally defined, but the priority stays for God's rights.

Some specificities of the Islamic Human Rights declaration of 1981:

- I.b: respect for the bodies of the deceased.
- IV.b: Muslims have the obligation to protest against tyranny.
- IV.c: Muslims have the duty to fight for the rights of others.
- IV.e: Muslims have the obligation to refuse any order contradicting law and justice.
- IX.b: Mecca is a sanctuary for Muslims.
- X.b: any minority can choose to be governed according to its own laws or according to the laws of Islam.
- XII.b: seek knowledge is an obligation in Islam.

- XII.e: it is compulsory to respect all religious beliefs => it prohibits persecutions and discriminations.
- XV.b: poor people have a right on rich people's fortune.

Anyhow, we cannot ignore that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has a strong influence. Indeed, this last one comes 33 years after (in 1981) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Though it is based on *Shari'a*, it is organised in order to be in relation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (in facts more than half of the Islamic Declaration of Human Rights agrees with or is close to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The following question arises: is it possible to create a universal culture of Human Rights? It could be possible within the European frame that is broader and somewhat more democratic. We can influence the debate around those issues by insisting on the ideas of justice and equality, and building links with other minorities fighting for the same rights.

With a great deal of mutual respect within the European context and even internationally we can achieve fantastic results in our endeavours to promote the basic Human Rights to understand each other better. We need an open and continuous dialogue between religions and cultures of the world and intercultural dialogue between the different cultures within a certain region.

Some questions we need to answer:

- 1) Is there a possibility to create a universal culture of Human Rights and a European culture of Human Rights that includes Islam as one of the religions of the world?
- 2) Whose responsibility is it to be a main actor in creating such a culture?
- 3) How can we be so influential in our countries to make our voice heard? Is the issue of Human Rights a method in our struggle as European Muslims to be respected or a goal because it is a question of equality and justice?
- 4) Polarisation, Islamophobia, segregation, discrimination, exclusion, are these problems that face European Muslims in the first hand and all other minorities in the second hand? Can we create a common platform with the others to struggle together?

Concerning the problem of homosexuality, we have to part between what is violating and not my own rights. Besides, we can legally let people living their own way, without accepting this as our own doctrine and point of view. These are two different things. My point of view is that the human being is honoured. It is an issue of difference. A human being can degenerate with himself and with the whole society. Islam doesn't defend the human being all the time but the idea of the creation of Adam, the human being in the *al-Malâ' al-a'lâ* that's what I meant by the (*ifdâliya*). The issue of homosexuality is an issue that can create some misunderstanding, we are talking about Muslims living in the west and Islam tells us to respect the law we are living under. But at the same time as a Muslim individual everyone has his own right to have his point of view about homosexuality, there's no need to go deep in this.

The members of the organisation of Islamic conference, who have signed the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights, represent all the countries that are members. Some points can contradict some of the Islamic values but they are not many. There is nothing in Universal Declaration of Human Rights really against Islam, but there are some contradictions with the values of Islam, but we should always be aware that we are living in secularist and non-Muslim European societies. This without doubt influences our relation to the question of Human Rights. We should have a clearer standpoint as individual and go forward in the same time in order to make the legal system evolve. I respect this declaration, but none of them are implemented in our Muslim countries. Just for our knowledge this does exist and we have to reflect on it and know these articles and deal with it as far as we can refer to it when its appropriate.

The violation of Human Rights affecting the Muslim community by Mrs Farkhanda Chaudhry

Welcome to this event organised by FEMYSO and the EYCB. Let me also say that I am not a scholar or a speechwriter but work directly with people and organisations that are campaigning especially on issues to do with racism.

Human rights violations of Muslims are somewhat interlinked with the structures and ideology of racism, for it is the ideology, which presents what is the norm.

The dominant culture in Europe is white, male, middle class, able bodied and Christian culture. Therefore the ideology of racism presents Islam and Muslims as coming from elsewhere out of Europe, imported as labour etc.

Also in other parts of Eastern Europe, we see that the dominant ideology is centred on communism moving towards democracy, again having the same results of oppression of freedom of expression and practice of faith for Muslims. In fact as far as Human Rights abuse in Eastern Europe and Russia things are really bad.

In exploring the issue or question in hand which is the violation of Human Rights of Muslims in different countries of Europe we must start with exploring a number of other areas which directs us to part of the conclusion that individuals human rights are being violated on a number of fronts as well as the collective demonising of Muslims as a whole.

The kinds of question we must explore is the political and social context of the countries that we come from, the anti-discrimination legislation in place, whether the societies openly embrace multi-cultural environments, and the immigration controls and rules in countries to deal with Asylum Seekers and refugees.

In addition, we must look to the European Conventions and Directives that have been established to uphold Human Rights and protection against discrimination.

Political and Social Context

At a glance we are seeing in many countries the rise of discontent which is emerging at one level with the rise in the far right in politics. We see in Britain, the recent riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, where a combination of the activity of the British National Party and issues of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion were at play.

In particular these riots have been of a different nature for as well as racism many statements made by public figures including those of the BNP blamed the riots on the inadequacies of Muslim communities who were not prepared to integrate into the rest of the community.

We also heard in a report commissioned to investigate and make recommendations on the Bradford situation stating that single faith schools do not help the process of integration as well as schools with a high proportion of Asian children.

Recently I met with the mothers of young Muslim boys who are currently awaiting trial in Bradford. The mothers told me how their children had been treated, how the police used extreme violence and control by dogs.

There are over 500 young people who are awaiting trial or have been charged with the rioting. This has a very heavy sentence; some people have been charged with eight years for throwing stones and are first time offenders.

The Judge presiding over the cases has refused to listen to the situation within which these riots occurred and the incitement by BNP presence on the day. He is going to look at the collective responsibility of the offenders. One mother felt that they are being punished for September 11th as all the young boys who have long sentences are Muslims, what also has not been taken into account is that many of the young people came forward themselves or with their parents to present themselves and admit to throwing stones.

The procurator Fiscal issued charges of rioting instead of Breach of the Peace. In comparison to other places such as Northern Ireland and riots in Brixton, people have been given extremely heavy sentences.

David Blunkett our Home Secretary has on several occasions raised many controversial proposals which coming from a so called Labour government is outrageous, but when you look at Europe his statements are not too far from the views held in many European countries.

So he has called for a greater effort on the part of the Muslim community to integrate, to introduce a declaration of allegiance and for incomers to learn about British history, for people from minority ethnic backgrounds to use more English in the home.

A measure of the rise in far right popularity can be seen when in Oldham, one of the Northern cities where the riots took place a BNP candidate has been elected. In a debate on Radio 4 current affairs Peter Skaarup, MP Deputy leader of the Danish People's Party, was making many interesting points, for example: 'There is a debate going on in Denmark saying that we want to protect what is Danish, what is our culture here. It's not a thing you could describe as populism. I think I describe it as love to your country.'

At first glance it looks like part of a classic nationalistic revenge. In France, Italy, Holland, Austria similar programmes have reshaped national elections; in other ways through regional legislatures or pressure on policy – their influence extends over most of Western Europe. Hostility to immigration is the starting point of their success. But the common features don't end there. For a start, they have all emerged from consensus, cohabitation, and cosiness – the swamp in which Euro-politics are mired. The party founded by the most ostentatious of the new populists, the LIJST Pim Fortuyn is now the second biggest in the Dutch legislature with 17 % of the vote'.

Increase in Violence

In a recent report detailing abuse against Islamic communities in EU states, the Vienna based European Union Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia noted that both verbal and physical attacks were happening.

‘ In almost all countries, verbal insults towards Muslims have been reported in the days after the terrorist attacks of September 11 in the USA. (...) The abuse of Muslim schoolchildren by their schoolmates was ‘frequent’. The report goes on to say that ‘Physical attacks were reported on Mosques in The Hague and Vlissingen; an Islamic school was set on fire in the Dutch town of Nijmegen, while in the Swedish city of Gothenburg an Iranian-born taxi driver was beaten to death, by attackers who called him a ‘bloody terrorist’.

In one attack in Britain, a 28 year old taxi driver was seriously assaulted and left paralysed from the neck down. Now in general most politicians acted quickly to counteract this rise, but it is also notable that in some countries some political parties (also in government) have taken an anti-Islamic stance and tried to identify terrorism with the Islamic community. Beatte Winkler from the EUMC goes on to tell us that for example in France the National Republican Movement (M.N.R.) has suggested an anti-terrorist plan that includes suppressing public subsidy to Islamic non-governmental organisations and in allowing only French workers into airports.

Italy’s Cooperation for the development of Emerging Countries warned,’ It must be underlined that some political parties in Italy are overtly using the attack to mount campaigns against migrants in general and Muslims in particular. The report also listed in Sweden and Austria some politicians were causing concern, particularly citing Austria’s far right Freedom Party strongman Joerg Haider.

Now what does this mean for Human Rights abuses? Amnesty international the London based human rights group has warned that the first worrying indications that the fight against terrorism may be opportunistically used to clamp down on civil liberties and Human Rights.

Let us look at the UK’s 2001 Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act. This contains measures to facilitate the implementation of EU initiatives on Police and judicial co-operation and undermine the financial capacity of suspected terrorists. One part of this legislation is PART 4, headed Immigration and Asylum. They cater for extended powers to exclude and remove from the UK foreign nationals suspected of terrorist activities, regardless of their Asylum status, and authorise indefinite detention in cases where they cannot be removed to another country. Now the provision in Part 4 of the Act are disquieting from the aspect of non-discrimination with regards to refugee protection principles. According to government sources eleven people have been detained under this section. Two have voluntarily left the UK, the rest are being held in a high security prison under a harsh regime normally reserved for category A prisoners.

It is interesting that the Special Immigration Appeals Commission is challenging the lawfulness of their detention and has recently ruled that detention without trial, to the extent that it applies only to foreigners suspected of being international terrorists, discriminates on the grounds of national origin and is not compatible with Article 14 of the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights). Anneliese Baldaccini an independent human rights consultant based in London states in a recent article for the Runnymede Trust Newsletter stated that:

‘ Attempts to undermine the absolute nature of Article 3 ECHR in light of the events of Sept 11 have more explicitly surfaced at European level. A post September European Working Paper advanced the ominous suggestion that there might be a future case law of the

European Court of Human Rights, which 'balances' state security against absolute rights: 'Anti-Terrorism now takes their association with serious crime a step further, purporting to equate asylum with a safe haven for terrorists. This equation, as pointed out by the UNHCR, is not only legally wrong and thus unsupported by facts, but it serves to vilify refugees in the public mind and promote the singling out of persons of particular races or religions for discrimination and hate-based harassment.'

Therefore as I stated earlier it is important to follow what the trends around immigration rules and asylum are, as they have an important bearing for the Muslim communities since larger percentage of these groups are Muslims.

How open is the society you live in to embrace diversity, tolerate and respect different ways of living and of worshipping God in a very open way?

I can tell you about Britain, where I think it is reasonably tolerated to have Mosques and places of different worship, there are cases of discrimination at work due to persons wishing to pray and also cases of discrimination due to sisters donning hijab at work.

There is as yet no legislation at UK level, although the Race Relation Amendment Act is now a powerful tool around race equality. We all know that in France the governments claims that the 'ostentatious' wearing of the headscarf violated laws in place prohibiting proselytising in schools.

This was modified due to pressure groups to; prohibiting the wearing of 'ostentatious political and religious symbols' in school. This case also went to the European Courts who upheld the right the two schoolgirls to practice their faith. But things have not really changed that much. You are talking about a mindset; here there is defiantly the fear of losing the French values.

In Turkey women who wear Hijab are prevented from achieving in education, we know of the case of the Muslim Parliamentarian, elected by the people but was refused to operate as an MP whilst she wore a Hijab.

I have spoken to young people from Denmark who also felt that wearing the Hijab would mean no getting on in the Danish place of work and society. It also struck me that in some countries resident young people whose parents or families have come from another southern country like Pakistan are unable to marry from Pakistan, as this is part of the immigration rules. So they are confined to look for a spouse from within Europe. In Denmark it is only recently that the Muslim community has been able to bury their own in a Muslim graveyard.

So the question to ask is how easy is it in your country to be able to develop organisations and services for Muslims and this seen as a right?

Some of the worst Human Right Violations are recorded by organisations such as Amnesty International, Human rights Watch and the UN Commission on Human Rights. They have highlighted many cases in the former Yugoslavia, where Bosnian Muslims were the victims of a widespread campaign of ethnic cleansing by Serbian armed forces and civilians. European nations watched as the tragedy unfolded and justified inaction by claiming that the conflict was motivated along ethnic lines. Yet we know that anti-Muslim rhetoric was used to fan the flames. I think that this starkly for me brought home the double standards, which

are readily used without recourse to consciousness. We see human rights abuses of the Muslim populations in Albania, Chechnya, and Turkmenistan.

Legislation

Now let us go back to anti-discriminatory legislation for a moment. As I said that at the present moment in different countries there is different levels of legislation. In terms of race it is fair to say that Britain is leading in its approach and level of experience that has been developed over the years.

It would be good to know what kind of anti discriminatory legislation exists in your own countries and the level of NGO activity as well. In terms of religious discrimination in mainland Britain there is no laws to cover religious discrimination although there are attempts to raise this on the agenda especially after Sept 11th.

There is Article 14 in the Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination with regard to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the convention. In practice, Article 14 has no independent existence and has been quite a weak measurement, which also did not recognise structural inequality in terms of gender.

We now have Protocol 12 that has been signed by 26 countries, however Britain has not signed as yet. Protocol 12 gives protection as a stand-alone component to the Human Rights Act.

Using the Human Rights Act to Police Muslims i.e. the oppression of woman, forced marriages etc

Media

How does the Media contribute to potential Human Rights abuses?
Are there allies within your country in the media?

In conclusion I would say that on some front we as Muslims in Europe enjoy living in societies where corruption is not overly rife, there is reasonable safety, relative to where you are living, we have enormous access to educational facilities and yet part of me says that there are many other ways that Muslim people do not get access to equality of rights, it is certainly seen in Britain that many of the BME communities are living in greater poverty situations, discrimination in the job market is a fact which is experienced by many, there is at one level media and academic views expressed about the threat of Islam to the values underpinning European societies, we have authors such as talking about the clash of civilisations, and of course international politics plays a major role in the perception and consequently the experience of Muslims in their every day lives. For example after Sept 11th young children in schools faced harassment from their other pupils. One person in London told me how her colleague with whom she had worked and socialised with for 6 years refused to go out with her. We also must confront the level of ignorance that exists amongst our own communities leading to the rights of Muslims being undermined. We are not all following the path of equality ourselves; we do have a very male orientated perception of what our faith allows us to do. For example, many young girls are denied access to education by parents; they are married off at young ages and not given the rights that Allah has conferred upon them. Once a question was put to Omar Radiallahooan about what did he

consider to be a society where Islam was working. He said we would know it would be working if a woman could travel alone from Mecca to Medina and feel safe.

Introduction to Human Rights Education ***by Mr. Rui Gomes***

In addition to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there are also the European Convention on Human Rights created by the Council of Europe in 1950, the American convention on Human Rights from 1978, the African Charter on Human Rights and the Arab Charter on Human Rights in 1997. All these instruments have approximately the same type of guarantees of rights some of them may have specificities on one right or the other but generally they are under, somehow, the umbrella of the universal declaration. They are meant to provide additional, or a more specific means of protection and of control of the respect of the rights in those conventions by the member states. Because of course, the point of having the rights in the convention is that once they are there the people, and organisations, can claim them.

Now we will go further into detail regarding the European convention of Human Rights. It is in fact from 1950. It was the first step towards the collective enforcement of Human Rights in the world. It was the first time that a legal instrument containing Human Rights was translated with desperation to become law and controllable with rights that can be claimed by people against the state. The state is not the only entity supposed to respect Human Rights, we are all supposed to, but at that time it was understood, and it's still the case today, that the state is responsible to guarantee that those Human Rights are in fact respected, that is why we often speak about the state.

The novelty and still the exception mostly of the European convention of Human Rights that it allows for direct and individual applications to the court. So, yourselves, as residents, citizens of a member state that has signed the European convention, if your rights are violated you can apply directly to the European court of Human Rights. The convention created the conditions for a mechanism for a Supra national supervision of the implementation of the convention and of the implementation of the judgements concerning the violations of the Human Rights. The court is based in Strasbourg. The function of the court is to examine cases, applications, based on the violation of the European convention of Human Rights. It examines the recievability of the application and than decides on the case. The committee of ministers is responsible for implementing and making sure that the decisions of the court are respected and implemented by the state.

Anybody can apply to the court but there are some conditions. The first of them is the so-called principle of exhaustion. You can only apply to the European court of Human Rights once you have tried all the systems, and judicial procedures within your country, the European court being the last instance. The protection of Human Rights should be first of all secured by each member state of the council of Europe, by each government.

Then there is the individual application, this is very important for the kind of work that we do because individual applications mean also that you must present cases on concrete violations. You have to present a concrete case where somebody, most of the time yourself, has been victim of a violation of Human Rights. It must be done within six months after the last judgement at national level. You can also apply for legal aid, and financial assistance. Application must be submitted in English or French.

One very important principle is that, in the court as in any other court, hearings are public and contradictory, in the sense that there is a defence and a prosecution and the judges decide. It's almost like any other court. Because this court has now 44 judges, each country is entitled to nominate a candidate (not obligatory from their country) for the court, then the parliamentary assembly elects the judges of the court.

So to summarize, in 1950, has been signed the European convention on Human Rights. It gave way to the creation of the Commission of Human Rights that eventually became the European Court of Human Rights. It is composed of 44 independent judges who are only judging cases concerning the violations of the rights of the Convention. This is a permanent court with 2 Grand Chambers and 4 sections. This court possesses some principles: the principle of Exhaustion (before getting to this court, all possible national legal proceedings must have been exhausted); there is a possibility of individual applications; applications must be done within 6 months after the last judgment; there is possibility to obtain legal aid to face the costs of such proceedings; applications must be written in English or French.

Human Rights are dynamic, they are always in becoming as they are constantly updating. More and more domains of Human Rights implementation are appearing, where people think they should obtain new guarantees or reinforce existing guarantees. In this frame, the Human Rights Directorate is playing an important role: it possesses a Torture and Degrading Treatments Commission that publishes reports concerning the different state policies in that matter. There are also the European Commission about racism and intolerance, the Gender Equality Commission, the Framework Convention on protection of national minorities, the European Social Charter, as well as particular Training, Education and Information activities. These educational programs are composed of activities and actions that focus on promoting equality in human dignity.

"No one is born a citizen, no nation is born a democracy" - Kofi Annan.

Intercultural learning and Human Rights **by Mr. Rui Gomes**

The lecture was about the concepts of culture, identity, equality and difference. How can we reconcile those different notions? If we are all equal, what is the use of minority rights? Let us pay attention to the fact that identity is not only what I think I am but also what others do think I am. We also have to take care to the fact that some cultural traits can be resented as pertaining to different cultures.

(The participants were asked to listen to music and write down what associations the music brought to them.) What kinds of culture are in this song? What feelings are associated to this? Discussions followed.

The same melody means different things for different people. Music (culture) has no borders. Culture (some keywords: knowledge, habits, tradition, arts, history, civilisation, language, nationality, identity, food, music, literature, way of thinking, mode, religion, family relationships, less values, attitude, ethics) is what we have in common with each other. That is what allows us to communicate and exchange ideas. Identity is what makes me unique and special, but there are things that we choose and others that we do not choose in our own identity. We have all to realise that we have to accept that there are things that we do not accept in others, so there is a great urge for empathy in intercultural dialogue and understanding.

(Different features were used here to make the participants think about who they are. These included the onion game, picture games etc). Note that the metaphor of the onion is quite pertinent: the external leaves can be a metaphor of skin colour. If every one has the same colour, it will become irrelevant, but it is the first thing people see.

(Discussions followed regarding the Onion exercise to see what the participants had placed.)

In summary, we therefore have religion, language, ethnic origin, culture, education, gender, colour of the skin, nationality, relation to countries, values, occupation, religious practice, age, name, family, social commitment.

Thus, what do you think people see of you in your neighbourhood from all this points?

Generally you are all suggesting that your family can see you in a certain way and the society see you in another way, you see the outside of the onion but not the inside. People do not react on the visible part but on the whole iceberg.

(Exercises were conducted at this point, which involved mathematics triangles, Geometry, old woman and young woman diagram, a map, to distinguish what the individual and others see differently).

To speak about intercultural learning means in fact to be aware of how our perception of others and how our limits of that perception influence the quality of our communication, relations with people of different backgrounds, religions and cultures as ours and also to be aware of how these two notions function. Stereotype is a generalising of an image. Prejudice

is a generalising with a value, most of the time a negative value. We have to learn the awareness of these words. Human Rights attitudes are fundamental for dealing with intercultural learning issues. Empathy, trying to see things from the point of view of the others, helps create an understanding, open our mind for dialogue. Tolerance of ambiguity: I have to accept that there are things I cannot understand and still I should respect them (therefore, I should also refrain from making too quickly judgements).

The European Muslim Youth Contribution to Human Rights **by Dr. Tariq Ramadan**

Human Rights are indeed a broad and difficult subject that is essentially structured around 3 dimensions:

1. The theological dimension (we have to pay attention to the fact that this term, in Islam, can be a problem insofar as it means etymologically the discourse about God, and in Islam we cannot only tell about God what God told about Himself). Therefore, there are issues at the level of the discourse about God and about what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights tells about man. This involves indeed a fundamental conception of human being, of his responsibility and of his duties, for the most fundamental question is: what is told about human being? Indeed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights only talks about man and about what are his relations with other human individuals. Converging norms can admittedly exist (between Islam and Universal Declaration of Human Rights), but conceptions differ. There is a need to point out the differences to stress their richness and not their oppositions. It is necessary to show that the conception of man in Islam is a plus and not something that would lead to an inevitable confrontation.
2. The dimension of objectives. What is man and what does he want to do out of himself? How is envisaged the projection of man in social, cultural, political and economical dynamics? Without a clear apprehension of these dynamics, we can only get an incomplete view of man. And we have to pay attention to this, for an incomplete vision betrays, in the incompleteness, what it is pretending to protect at the global level.
3. The practical dimension, the one of the concrete application of Human Rights in social, economical worlds... For we must not forget that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the fundamental law, the law above national constitutions. So, it is necessary to analyse, country-by-country, their degree of fidelity in the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a philosophy because it tells something about man. It is a tool that we have to use to control the respect of everybody's rights, but we have also to pay attention to the fact that a tool, however good it may be, can always possess dignity in its source, but open onto alienation in its application (we have to pay attention to the variable geometry in the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

As a starting point for our reflection, we will have to question ourselves about the philosophy of Islam concerning Human Rights. On the other hand, we will have to get interested in the practical side of our action: the commitment of Muslim citizens to Human Rights, wherever they are.

From the philosophical point of view, the first problem is of 2 natures:

1. A deficiency in understanding the Human Rights issue itself. This opens onto superficial standpoints, as the one consisting in saying that everything is in the Qur'ân and so that there is no problem with Human Rights. In this case, we appropriate for ourselves everything which has been done by man and we forget that the Qur'ân is what God told and not what man did. Moreover, the Qur'ân is not a dead book, it lives throughout the intelligence of the one reading it, it awakes the heart and the intelligence. Another standpoint is to say that Human Rights have nothing to do with Islam, that they are a Western creation that cannot be accepted.
2. A comparative work: we look at what the one and the other are saying and we try to make the two systems stick together, but the logic of comparison is extrinsic to the dynamics of Islam. The Islamic Declaration of Human Rights of 1981 wants just to prove that Islam has the capacity for Human Rights, but we are bound to make a real work about the internal logic of Human Rights if we want to live in the West. We cannot discuss about a revealed text with a text written by man, because their respective logics are not the same => we have to understand them if we want to avoid falling in opposition or in being swallowed up by lack of criticism. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a tool that we have to understand the logic and the use.

We also have to pay attention to the frequent use by Muslims of Human Rights when they say that they are the victims all around the world. This process of victimisation in relation to Human Rights leads to their misunderstanding. Thus, it is necessary to eradicate from the Muslim consciousness the use of this victimisation wanting that we always use Human Rights to defend ourselves but that we forget them whenever Muslims themselves are accused of Human Rights violations.

It is necessary to understand the true philosophy of man as it is promoted in Islam. There is a very strong link between the divine Will, human responsibility and Human Rights. We must enter this very debate and not a makeshift job from charters. As long as the Muslim thought in the West will be of a nature of adaptation, it will fall in such an impoverishment that it will not even be able to share into the debate.

As Muslim, my difference should not only be respected, it must bother the other. This is a fundamental message of Islam because, to know each other, it is necessary for the difference to lead to questioning and for that questioning to bother.

Islam is not only a way of life; it is also and firstly a conception of life. Everything is centred and based on the reference to tawhîd. There is one Creator and there is all what is created. There is a difference between both of them. It is also the Creator who organises all what is created, that is to say nature and all what is non-human. Islam does not pull Human Rights out of universe's and nature's rights. Indeed, there is in Islam a deep tradition of respect towards nature, while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does only notice Human Rights, without talking about the natural being and the respect towards what is created. Even while staying within the frame of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we could certainly give no respect at all to nature and what is created. Nevertheless, Islam fundamentally signals the respect due to what is created: man is only nature's vice-regent and not its master. The landowner is God. Thus, universe possesses rights given by the Creator, while man possesses duties towards all what is created.

Therefore, Islam determines a conception and a way of life. Indeed, God tells in the Qur'ân that the mission of human beings created free is to be in charge of respecting the balances in what is created, naturally (towards nature) as well as socially (towards society). What God creates possesses rights. Human consciousness towards God must know that what is created possesses rights concerning its balance for example. Thus, if there are rights, there is responsibility. The Islamic conception does not determine itself by rights, but firstly by the responsibility from which rights result. Asking for one's rights against the rights of others are not Islamic, neither asking for one's rights against all what is created.

The debate about Human Rights must be tackled in a global perspective, because it is also God who wanted our diversity. Fundamentally, Islam rips from us our right to tolerance towards others and imposes on us the respect towards others for God wanted difference and imposes on us to respect it => my protection of your rights results from my understanding of your presence and of my duty to respect it. Even before the other talks to me, I must already respect him. In this sense, tolerance is not Islamic because it is not sufficient. It is in line with a debate of reason with itself and not of faith with God.

So, God imposes knowledge on us in order to respect difference, as it is mentioned in the 13th verse of surah al-Hujurât (49th surah): [O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into Nations and tribes, that you may know each other].

God creates what is created and puts human being in it. Our respect towards God, it is firstly our respect towards what is created. The order of rights (= hierarchy, sequencing) is coming to existence out of the knowledge of what is created and of what God wanted in what is created. We are here in the domain of responsibility. And only knowledge allows opening onto mutual respect.

In another verse, God stated that He made sure that we oppose each other otherwise Earth might become corrupted. He made out of the differences among religions and nations a condition for the balance of the whole. Difference is necessary to avoid the hegemony of one man above others, or of one group above others, what would open onto the abolition of Human Rights. So there is a kind of necessity of conflict on the one hand, and of knowledge to avoid it on the other hand. In an Islamic perspective, there cannot be absolute power for men. The rights of the world, of nature, must always be respected, because it is part in itself of the relation from man to man, because just by intervening on water, a good common to everybody, this can get heavy consequences on the respect of others' Human Rights (cf. the situation in Palestine). Thus, there is a need of always inserting man in its environment.

In the Islamic conception of what is created and of man within what is created being elaborated on the basis of tawhîd, it is firstly insisted on the responsibility of man towards his Creator and not on the rights of man. So the problem does not lie so much in the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The question does not even lie in the terms of the debate but in the formulation. Would it not be necessary to think about writing a preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in which we would find a true reflection on man's responsibility? Before the discourse about rights, would not it be necessary to work out a discourse about the duties towards God? On the other hand again, would not it be necessary to question some rationalising formulations that do not refer to transcendence?

The true debate is to know what tells Islam about man and about his relation to God. We must not forget that between you and me, there is God, and that between you and me and nature, there is also God. All this legal work does not have any value if there is no education of the conscience of the one who is bearing it, who is bearing the rights resulting from it, for him to understand them really in what they are. And this is indeed the message of Islam. Islam asks us to never do from our instruments purely technical tools, for we can certainly talk about God and be accompanied by the Devil: the most beautiful instrument can certainly be used to oppress.

A primordial debate is thus the development of a true education for the one bearing rights. Because there are no Human Rights if there is no work emanating from conscience to bear them and from intelligence to understand them.

Thus, there is God, what is created and man in his respect towards all what is created. So, responsibility comes before rights, and this shows how our rationality is active from this point of view. Let's make sure that we stop having debates of adapted people and not of true participants. As Muslims, we must always look after bringing richness and not limiting ourselves in telling out our difference. Muslims should not have any problem with the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but with its formulation and the conception it stakes.

From a practical point of view, there is a certain tendency within Muslims to limit themselves to have a vague idea of what are Human Rights and to work, at national level, at reporting and compiling all violations of Human Rights. It is an important and useful work, but will we spend our time drawing up the list of what is going wrong as the only Muslim contribution to Human Rights? For they did not bring richness on the theoretical level, will Muslim limit them to be the managers of victimisation? By doing this, we put ourselves in a position of intellectual weakness and in a position of social marginality. We are just comparing ourselves to, adapting ourselves and demanding as much.

On the contrary, it is necessary to normalize our presence without trivializing it (= making it commonplace), because limiting ourselves to a thought of marginal, badly adapted people or people with complexes will not bring anything to the debate. We have to work upstream on 3 things:

1. We have to determine in the conscience of the European Muslim: "I am here at home!" It is not just enough to say it, but we have to feel it. And when we are at home, we are interested by all what is going on at home: the debate about school, about social discrimination in general... All the debates of society are primordial and not only those in which Muslims are the victims. Let's not forget that one of the sources of right in Islam is al-wâqi'a, the concrete reality, the world, and the universe.
2. We have to stop of systematically talk about the Muslim minority, even if it is true that in terms of number of practising people, it is still a minority. However, at the level of citizenship, this is not taken into account, we are part of majority in terms of values. Lots of Muslims in the West favour community logic, but this is a trap, for during that time, Muslims are expelled from mainstream society for all other affairs. In any country of Europe, people are not situated according to their

religiosity, but as citizens => we have to come back to the universal and not to the individual: the "Muslim minority" theme is becoming a trap. Let's not forget that when we play in a team, we have all the same T-shirt and the same weight. Thus, Muslims are part of majority in terms of values (rights...). When Muslims enter society with their true values, they are within the majority, but it is something else to know how to tell it.

3. We have also to make the rights speak for the rights. We must not always limit ourselves to reactivity towards their application, but we have to commit ourselves upstream to make the rights respected (for housing, school, employment...), as citizens of Muslim faith fighting for all citizens, including Muslim citizens. In addition, this is in line with Islamic logic concerning the respect of what is created. This demand emanating from rights is situated at many levels (e.g.: the evolution of school in Europe in the frame of its falling under the control of multinationals following the financial disengagement of state).

Let us pay attention to the fact that we make a minority out of ourselves because we are unable to debate about the universal. In this process, the Muslim is isolating himself. It is necessary that the Muslim be present upstream, therefore he needs a global vision that he can reach if he operates a true return to the message of Islam. There is a need to enter the real philosophical and religious debate: the meaning of human responsibility, the relationship between man and his Creator. It must also be remembered that in Islam, we do not only have duties, but we also have rights (in teachings, there is a necessity not to say only what is harâm but also what is halâl).

There is also a great need to make a true work about citizenship: "I am here at home, my house is Europe". We have to get to a global understanding of society and of its problems in which we have to make a Muslim voice heard as much as possible, a voice that would speak for everyone, about all issues, and not only for those concerning Muslims, as if the rest was not concerning them. There is a great urge to talk about Human Rights in Europe, but we must never forget to tell that we have to protect Human Rights in all southern countries, and this from Europe, because all Muslims and non-Muslims are concerned. Muslims have to learn also to be the voice of all those without voice.

Elements from the debate following the lecture

We notice that Muslims are generally upholding two positions concerning their relation to sharî'a:

1. Avoid any debate about this subject,
2. Uphold the opinion that the whole sharî'a must not be applied because Muslims in Europe have to adapt.

To use and to debate usefully about the concept of sharî'a, we firstly have to agree on a common signification of this term.

We also have to keep mind that the shahâda is the way to become Muslim, while the sharî'a is the way to stay Muslim. It is also necessary that every Muslim states that he speaks in his own name and that he declares explicitly that other Muslims are upholding other opinions.

Sharî'a concerns principally social justice and equality. If the aim is to apply it, as it is the case in some countries, to set about poor people and to clamp down on the needy, then it misses completely the point. Islam is not against the West, but is Islamic what is Islamic, and is not Islamic what is not Islamic. Not all that is hard and difficult is always Islamic, because Islam is also a way of easiness.

As citizens, our psychological approach has to change. We are citizens of Muslim faith who are standing up against all discriminations among which some of them are hurting Muslims.

We have to be clear in the way we present ourselves and the way we tell things: often Muslims have a good understanding of stakes and issues, but they cannot push it through with the appropriated ways and terms.

To be universal does not mean that we have to relativize our own beliefs. It is necessary to develop in Islam a true discourse about diversity. Talking about diversity does not mean that we have to relativize ourselves, on the contrary, we have to move away from ourselves to try to apprehend how does the other think. We do not have to envisage the fight of Muslims against everybody, but of Muslims in the name of everybody.

My link to God, to Haqq, imposes on me to think the universal and to speak to the diversity. As Muslims, we have to use the Universal Declaration of Human Rights per se and to redirect it in a direction that would be useful to everybody.

The Muslim society is lying on 4 fundamental pillars:

1. The rule of law,
2. An equal citizenship for everybody (all the people taking part in the same community own the same rights),
3. The universal suffrage (shûrâ),
4. The alternation in power (if somebody is good, we keep him, otherwise he must go away from power).

These 4 points must be at the very basis of our political thought. We also have to consider the fact that we have political principles and historical models between which there should not be any confusion. In this perspective, trying to redo the experience of Medina is nonsense. We have to start again based on our principles and think about new models. Therefore, multiparty system is not against our principles, even if it is in opposition to our historical models.

5. Round Table with the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The EYCB aims to create synergies between different parts of society such as NGOs and politicians. They try to set up links between activities taking place in parallel in EYCB buildings. Often, it does not work because the interests are often too different, but during this FEMYSO study session the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe were holding a special session during the same time. The Committee invited the FEMYSO participants for discussions. This body of people is one of the most powerful of the Parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe.

The Political Affairs Committee contains eighty seats, which include sub-committees on *the Middle East*, *Relations with Non-Member States*, and *Strengthening of Democratic Institutions*. The enlargement of the Council of Europe since 1989 has presented the Political Affairs Committee with a series of new challenges. While continuing to play a central role in the examination of the requests for accession to the Organisation, it progressively focused its work on the questions related to democratic security in Europe. These include peaceful resolution of conflicts, dialogue and reflection on how best resolve constitutional and political crises. The Committee also has the task of holding regular exchanges of views with the Chairman-in-Office of the Committee of Ministers. (*Reference and CoE website: <http://stars.coe.fr/>*)

M. De PUIG, Chairman of the Cultural Affairs Commission, introduced the session. He made a brief presentation about Intercultural Dialogue, which is summarised below:

Nowadays the earth has become a mosaic of cultures and religions. None of them should dominate the others. Therefore, there is great need to encourage the intercultural contacts and co-operations. We should beware of "clash of civilisations" theory. It is a lie and we should show by the facts that it is a lie. There, the intercultural dialogue plays its full role, but it is often too weak. Instead of thinking to an Islam-West opposition, we should go through a deep cooperation and intercultural dialogue. After the 11th September, everyone should take his own responsibilities:

- Globalisation is often perceived as an imperialist process. The North has often been exploiting, ethno centrist. It has shown its true face and it should not be forgotten. One of the role of the Council of Europe is to fight against discrimination and xenophobia.
- In the South, there is growing gap between rich and poor. Human Rights violations are unacceptable. The situation of women is unacceptable. There is a rising of the religious or radicalised extremism caused by irrational dogmatism.

In opposition to this, Mr. De Puig stresses once again the necessity of intercultural cooperation and asks that governments in Muslim countries offer guarantees for conscience and religious liberties as well as guaranteed protection for minorities. As a result, it could open the way to a profound intercultural dialogue.

Concerning education and culture, he proposes the following elements:

- North and South governments must collaborate to eliminate reciprocal untruthful elements in children education programs (in history textbooks...).
- Implement Arabic language teaching in Europe and European languages in Arabo-Muslim countries.
- Implement programs for the recognition of qualification of graduate students in every country.
- Promote student exchange programs.
- Encourage the translation of literatures in both directions.
- Develop contacts between artists.
- Encourage the exchanges concerning popular and traditional cultures.

In conclusion, there is a great need to develop a cultural approach and not only an economic approach.

Afterwards, the reports by members of FEMYSO were presented:

1. ***Intercultural dialogue***
2. ***Participation of youth in political life*** (with introduction by Mr. Wielowieyski, who insisted on the necessary courage and probity of youth entering in politics. He warned us of political tricks and hubris, encouraging us to use our ideals and high morals to confront an old guard desiring to perpetuate systems favourable to its interests. Wise politicians must respect moral values. Could *shari'a* help us to solve problems in a clear and non-equivocal way?).
3. ***Democracy, rule of law and Human Rights*** (with introduction by Mrs Durrieu, who insisted on the development of a secular Europe as a possible way to lead to a multicultural and respectful Europe. She was interested in our desire for greater secularism, but emitted some problematic statements as the fact that citizenship was intimately bound to nationality, that people were united by language, culture and religion. However, she stated that we have to give priority to right over force and that we should all participate through dialogue at the building of a democratic Europe).

In the discussion that followed, some of the following points were raised by MPs:

- What is FEMYSO members' definition of fundamentalism?
- Do we take Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a whole?
- Why there was no lady without headscarf?
- Was FEMYSO fundraising public and open?
- What about our stand on secularism and Europe?
- What are FEMYSO links with non-Muslim student organisations?
- In which measure has begun a dialogue between FEMYSO and other organisations pertaining to other cultures?

- What is the analysis of FEMYSO concerning *shari'a* and about its degree of incompatibility with European law?
- If some Muslims accept Universal Declaration of Human Rights, what should be done with other Muslims not accepting it?
- Western societies are based on individuals that can organise as groups, but law only recognise individual citizens.
- Sunna does not seem to be an overall accepted corpus. What about the stand of Alevi and Sunni on this subject?
- Why do not men cover their heads?
- Why do some Muslim women use headscarves now and not before?
- "Muslim" should not be a name, but an adjective in Europe in order to stress our common and primal European identity. In this perspective, FEMYSO should become the Forum of Muslim Europeans.
- For Azeri MPs, there is an urge to separate between the political aims and their religious clothes which have nothing to do with politics (he quoted the Christian and Muslim terrorists uniting in Azerbaïdjan against the state and the shîites).
- Mr. De Puig insisted on the fact that there was no incompatibility between Islam and Human Rights: from a legal standpoint, all Muslim states have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, from a practical standpoint, the existence of countries like Azerbaijan proves that there is no contradiction between them. In addition to this, he pointed out the fact that there should not be mixture about politics in both senses: the Council of Europe made strong statements concerning Chechnya, ME crisis, Islamophobia.
- Mrs. Durrieu estimated that Europe was missing a bit too much in today's debate. For her, liberty is the fundamental principle to built Europe, along with secularism, democracy and citizenship.

Summary of the Evaluation of the round-table by the FEMYSO participants

All the input by the participants who spoke on FEMYSO's behalf was warmly appreciated. The comments, questions and critics raised were constructive and right to the point.

Many agreed that it was a useful experience and one of the very first steps in our learning process. The element of surprise was present due to the low level of discussion which wasn't anticipated, since the Parliamentarians started asking about basic things in Islam hence trivializing the theme of discussion. But it was necessary to go through it, otherwise we wouldn't have found about it. On the other hand, they didn't expect our level of preparation and groundwork.

It was an excellent advantage for participants to speak in their mother tongue and make the most of it, they were clearly able to access an immense vocabulary thus express themselves unsurpassed. This only supports the fact of Muslim diversity in terms of languages. Another remarkable matter that had quite a good impact is that the majority of the sisters and brothers who addressed the gathering were ethnic European, who embraced Islam, speaking from their hearts. It would have been nice if the whole session was documented on tape.

There was a general feeling that the Parliamentarians took us seriously, bearing in mind that they only had about two days and surely had other important issues on their political agenda in connection with the Council of Europe. The overall evaluation is positive and of a professional character.

However there were some words of dissatisfaction with the course that the discussion took under the meeting; it wasn't our business to address issues such as Shari'a (Islamic Law) or Hijab. Yet some of us were drawn into some effort dispersing paths. We should have been focused and more attentive toward the issue of Human Rights.

Strange enough that these Parliamentarians reached their seats in their respective national parliaments by support of the voters of whom surely some are Muslims, how is it justifiable then not to seek necessary acquaintance with this minority and their background.

The discussion regarding the morning meeting continued the same evening but with fewer participants. Those who met carried on reflecting on unusual questions and comments raised by the Parliamentarians whether during the meeting or out the meeting in the hallways of the centre. Questions like; if we as young Muslims do accept the European Human Rights convention? Is it our attitude that breeds terror? Why aren't there Muslim females without Hijab? And comments like the one made by a lady overheard talking in hallways: "Well, they are all well dressed up, it is a manipulation.... they want to take everything and give nothing in return". Not to forget a Member of Parliament who was somewhat positive that there are young Muslims engaged in the political life, he had to express his satisfaction with the fact that they do speak English fluently.

Such an attitude will unfortunately continue to exist because it is easier said than done to overcome a global system of ethnocentrism. In other words the field is not even yet. Otherwise we would be spending a lot of energy, plus the fact that not all of the Muslim youth are active in our countries. However there is a need to start somewhere on the political level and we should encourage each other.

In conclusion there was agreement on the need of engagement of Muslim youth in the political process, but we should first sort our own, we should be aware of the obstacles to arise, make sure not to be drawn in different and unwanted directions and to make the most of lobbying.

7. Working Groups Reports

Intercultural Dialogue

This workshop was meant not only for ourselves as individual beings but also as a way to give some proposals to Members of Parliament of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly during the session.

There were 4 topics to be addressed:

1. The situation of the intercultural dialogue in the respective countries of participants to this workshop
2. The challenges met in their respective countries concerning intercultural dialogue.
3. The work done (by their own organisations and so forth).
4. The propositions to be communicated to MPs.

Our workshop was bringing together people from Hungary, Sweden, Norway, UK, Germany, Albania, Macedonia and Belgium. The group was representing as well people issued from immigrants (1st and 2nd generation) than native Europeans having chosen Islam as religion.

Immediately, we found out that there was a problem concerning the definition of the concept of "interculturality". Some of us thought that it was directly translated from French, English promoting the "multiculturality" concept. In addition to this, there was the underlying perception of "interreligious" dialogue. So confronted to this conceptual problems, we tried to define these notions as follows:

1. *Interculturality* is to be understood as a crossing point between different cultures: an opportunity and a will to exchange and share something among different cultures.
2. *Multiculturality* is to be understood as the coexistence of different cultures in a definite area and a definite society. It does not imply that they share something or that they dialogue. They can just coexist side by side without interrelations.
3. *Interreligious* is to be understood as a crossing point between religions taken as entities represented and supported by individuals.

The second conceptual problem that we met was the definition of culture. Is it possible to define what Islamic culture is? What can be British or German cultures? What can be the specific constitutive elements that can be considered as typically Islamic, Christian, British or German. Of course, this subject has been discussed at all level for years and the debate is still going on. Therefore, we do not intend to bring the solution but the fact is that to promote intercultural dialogue requires a deep questioning about the concept of culture. Moreover, the question was raised about the links existing between culture and religion: is one of them

prevailing on the other, or are they to be considered as mutually influencing and intermixing one another.

For example, it was pointed out that Islam encountered many different cultures while spreading around the world, but it was able to accept them and still stay a common reference and a shared religion. Though the Muslim countries are very different in their cultures, any Muslim, or even any non-Muslim, immediately knows when he enters a Muslim area. On the other side, it was noted that in Albania, people were sharing absolutely the same cultural background although they were Christians (Catholic Romans, Orthodox) or Muslims. In other situations, we remarked that the fact to be Muslim influence the culture we are living in or choosing (e.g. in Belgium, drinking beer is also cultural, like drinking wine in France: being Muslim immediately operate a separation in the cultural references [let's think to all the particular vocabulary attached to oenology]).

The main reason for this situation is that Islam is and is to be understood and conceived as a wholly integrated way of life, including all aspects of material and spiritual life. In this case, culture seems to be submitted to religion.

This implies some contradiction within the main European approach of Muslim communities in Europe. Europeans authorities are tending to see Islam as part of the culture of their immigrated communities. Positions that can be true till a certain extent, if we consider that the "membership" to Islam is just considered as the perception of a heritage from the parents. Heritage to which some people do not give particular value or just see it as a set of behaviours and practices related to their country of origin. However, the question is to be envisaged under a different angle if the person is taking and choosing the Islamic way of life as his main and most pertinent reading frame of Reality. Then, culture is to be understood as submitted to Islam in the way that the individual will operate choices in different cultural references according to Qur'ân and Sunna teachings (the set of sayings and acts of the Prophet Muhammad's every day life).

So, approaching the phenomenon of Islam through a purely culturalist point of view is absolutely not pertinent to the reality lived by millions of Muslims in Europe, and in addition to that, this approach cannot take into account the increasing amount of native Europeans converting to Islam who are totally taking part in the future development of their own country and for whom Islam is not a cultural identity but a really religious one. So at this moment of the presentation, we would like to ask you, as parliamentarians: "What would be your definition of culture and of Muslim culture?" so that we could hear at last how you are tackling this issue.

So, on the other hand, the Islamic standpoint about different cultures is quite broad and inclusive: the multiplicity and differences of cultures are the result of God's will (and are God's own concern), so that people have to share experiences as it is mentioned in the following verse (al-Hujurât, 49-13): [O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into Nations and tribes, that You may know each other]. The same goes in the surah al-Kâfirûn (109-4/6): [I will not worship that which you have been wanted to worship * Nor will you worship that which I worship * To you be your Way and to me mine]. The incitation to dialogue is also mentioned in the following verse (Âl-'Imrân, 3-64): [O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God]. Therefore, Muslims are bound to dialogue. In addition to this, they are entitled to take from every culture the best it contains to improve their own way of life.

As we did before, we had also to define the term of dialogue. Is it a discussion between people in the aim of really exchanging things and sharing experiences or just a discussion with no intention of mutual understanding at the end? As Muslims, we favour, of course, the first proposal.

Concerning the different local and national situations, everybody agreed that some efforts were done in order to promote intercultural and/or interreligious dialogue, and particularly in the emergency following September 11th. The situation was quite different from one country to another: quite open in UK and quite frightened in countries as Hungary and Germany. Some of us resented that the "multiculturalism" concept is an Occidental approach of reality because they are themselves feeling totally part of the society they are living in, not resenting differences between them and natives of this country. So this kind of reflection compels us once again to the questioning of every one's own culture and references, this process being relevant as well for immigrants than for natives.

What came out also was the multiplicity of philosophical, religious, ideological and ethnic tendencies going across the Muslim community as a whole. Indeed, it compels Muslims to set up a true intercultural dialogue among them, but this process is going on quite well in every country, although at different speeds in relation to the composition and the lasting of the presence of the different communities in place.

Some countries, as said above, are only considering Islam through a culturalist approach. In this case, their only answer to "intercultural" dialogue is to reinforce the integration policies, waiting for the guest communities to adopt most, if not all, the host nation's rules and behaviours (this can be really problematic when Christianity is perceived as a fundamental component of society and culture, bringing the schools to teach nevertheless Christian values, in spite of the officially recognized freedom of religion and thinking. E.g.: Norway).

Often came out the supposed neutrality of state agents, a standpoint that tend to consider women and men Islamic clothes as emblems of religious propaganda and thus unsuitable to supposedly neutral public agents (though it is remarked that in some parts of those countries, there are Crucifixes in tribunals and school classes which seems to be a major contradiction on this topic).

Also pointed out is the problem of the media perception of the phenomenon of Islam: often, for economical motives, they tend to publish papers about scatty individuals representing nearly but themselves in the Muslim community and to give them a determining voice and representation which they do not absolutely have in facts and thus putting shame on the entire Muslim community in the eyes of the average European citizen.

So the main challenges that we identified are the setting up of a commonly shared terminology, between Muslims and non-Muslims, when talking about culture, religion, and interculturality. The definition of a common platform of dialogue seems to be the absolute prerequisite to a really deep and fruitful dialogue between religions and cultures.

In that aspect, FEMYSO, as representing a great range of organisations and associations of every tendency, can be a true and positive partner in this process.

Moreover, we found that it would be useful for MPs in charge of religious, cultural and Human Rights affairs to get serious trainings about those issues for Muslims in Europe as well as about the effective heritage left by Muslims throughout History up till now in the construction of Europe on the cultural, economical, political, scientific and philosophical levels (a colloquium will be held on this topic by FEMYSO within the European Parliament in Brussels in November. You are all cordially invited to assist). The main problem noticed in "intercultural" dialogue is that the people often refuse to see for one moment the reality through the eyes of others, even more, they often cannot imagine that it could exist an other approach to life and reality as objective, pertinent and valuable though different from their own. Although this statement could look like a truism, when coming to Islam, minds seem to close themselves and become unable to think and accept otherness and diversity.

But this process seems even more imperative, now that Muslims are, at a level or another, depending on local situations, totally part of the future of Europe, through their simple presence, their involvement in economy, in sciences, in social and cultural associations... even in politics (e.g.: UK with openly Muslim MPs).

Another urgency is to define the concept of secularism in a way that would be common to Europe as a whole. Every country is citing this secularism as a gate against Islam that would supposedly be intrinsically against the values of secularism. Nevertheless, this concept of secularism is applied very differently when non-Muslims issues are at stake. So, it is more and more often claimed within Muslims, that we are demanding a real application of an open and egalitarian secularism understood as the possibility for everybody to express its own religious and philosophical opinions and to live according to them without being infringed or infringing other people personal lives inside the public space as well as the private one (cf. Article 9, of European Covenant on Human Rights).

In conclusion, Muslim are waiting for an open dialogue to be set up and feel that now the effort must not come from them but from the European societies themselves. Indeed, they have been ready for a long time and nearly have always found doors closed. So now, the ball is in Europe's camp: will it open a door or just let it closed? And our final question is there a future for young Muslims in Europe? Otherwise, what does Europe intend to make out of us?

The participation of young people in political life

This group studied 3 main questions: the situation of the young Muslim willing to participate in political life in the respective country of the participants, the obstacles met in their development and what are their respective NGOs making to encourage political participation. They first stated a difference in the number of Muslim citizens in every country, but there is a general weak participation of the young Muslims in political life. Most NGOs do not invest themselves, as they should in this matter. On the other hand, the political system is not adapted for the Muslims to contribute (but once again, the situation varies from one country to another). In most of case, there is a will to participate but it often meets strong obstacles as the fact that the political actors do not recognise Muslims entities, secularism, perception of Muslims by the media, prejudices, lack of finance and technical means in general, lack of positive models for young people... On the other hand, NGOs encourage young people to contribute on the social, economic and citizenship levels but it seldom comes out on real commitments.

One of the most commonly observed discrimination is the woman in hijâb. However, there are also numerous problems concerning the employment opportunities and the place of Muslims in the media. Discrimination and harassment often go by pair. There are however positive points in Europe: for instance, in Sweden, people resorting to minorities are protected by the state and benefit from recognised means of appeal. The group proposed the following methods as well for individuals as for NGOs: implement Human Rights wherever, increase the implication of people as citizens in Europe and encourage mainstream organisations to tackle seriously discrimination about Muslims.

As Muslim citizens, Islam guides our everyday actions and accordingly we are directed to abide by the rule of law of the states within which we live, unless those laws are unjust or contrary to the principles and practice of our Rights to Religious Expression.

This works in a positive sense for our democratic European states in that Muslims make daily contributions to the states they live in. Basic principles such as not stealing, respecting our neighbours and teachers and being economically responsible to our families and both Muslim and non-Muslims communities is to name but a few examples.

However, when Muslims are prevented from practicing their religion, for example women wearing hijab (the headscarf) in some European states such as France, Germany and wider field Azerbaijan, European Muslims are placed in difficult positions and consequently need to challenge the state law. Often these forms of discrimination are doubled by the denial of associated opportunities such as entrance to further education in Turkey, employment in Italy or a passport photograph if a Muslim woman wears hijab.

This presentation based upon the workshop deliberations will outline some of the prevalent issues arising for Muslims in Europe that have been derived from discussions held between Muslim representatives from Germany, Italy, Sweden, Hungary, Scotland, England, Albania, Macedonia, Ukraine, France, Poland, Finland and Switzerland.

The prevalent issues include Rights as citizens in theory and practice, insufficient channels for accountability and enforcement, and the lack of consistency in the implementation of Human Rights across European states and institutions.

First off, although Muslims are active participants in socio-economic, cultural, intellectual and historical terms in the vast majority of European states our rights and indeed status as citizens are frequently neglected, especially those who have recently come to live in Europe such as migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers.

A frequent theme is that Muslims have Rights in Principle, but often not in practice. For example, Rights appear to be recognised but then contradicted with additional legislation, which seems to place so called majority interests as priority over the interests of Muslims.

The British Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 and similar legislation illustrate this across Europe, which are viewed by many diverse organisations and Human Rights activists as potentially curtailing civil rights.

That the British Anti-terrorist Act was in response to the tragic events of 11th September that has had a significant impact on Muslim communities worldwide, the Act has served to

compound already present discrimination against Muslims as well as increase levels of personal anxiety within Muslim communities. This appears as a common theme across European Muslim communities.

That the majority of detainees under this Act are Muslims raises poignant questions for Muslim communities in terms of increased anxiety and wariness of state institutions. This brings to question for many Muslims our Rights to Protection from discrimination and harassment.

Which leads us to the second prevalent issue relating to democracy, the rule of law and Human Rights. When European Muslims have experienced discrimination and the violation of their basic Human Rights there is a widely held view that there are insufficient channels for accountability and enforcement both in terms of exercising their rights to religious expression and protection from discrimination. For example, as mentioned above if Muslim women wearing hijab are experiencing difficulties securing employment they have little or no recourse to practical support of anti-discriminatory Human Rights. Whilst in terms of enforcement Muslims from Germany, Britain and numerous other European countries reported that police use excessive force and Court sentences tend to be disproportionately long for young Muslim men.

As incidents of harassment and violence resulting from the backlash associated with September 11th have increased dramatically, they have rarely been reported to the police due to high levels of disenfranchisement and distrust of the state and its enforcing institutions such as the police.

The third prevalent issue is a lack of consistency in the implementation of Human Rights across European states and institutions. Throughout our discussions in preparation of this presentation, it was apparent that although there are shared issues there are also differences. For example Sweden was reported as having a reputation for upholding Muslims' rights as well as providing positive practical support for Muslim families who have experienced difficulties under newly introduced discriminatory Danish laws regarding so called immigrants.

So to end this brief presentation, we look to ways in which both European Muslims and the state institutions can work towards more equitable environments for the positive fulfilment of Human Rights for both Muslim and non Muslim citizens in Europe.

In consideration of ways forward, the Muslims consulted for this presentation stressed the duties of their organisations in encouraging Muslims to :

- Engage with the media to redress some of the negative stereotypes associated with Muslims
- Whilst also being more pro-active in their political participation at European and National levels

However it is also clear that for us all to make progress, efforts from European Muslims have to be met by equal if not more commitment from the relevant national and European institutions who have clear responsibilities to ensure the Human Rights of all of their citizens are positively supported.

Human Rights in Islam and violations (1)

1. How do we see Human Rights in Islam?

There is no need to reproduce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in an Islamic version – Human Rights are an integral part of Islam, justice is present in Islam and has always been. If there is any need to produce anything, use Qur'ân and Sunnah and contextualise all points.

2. What are the main violations in each country?

England

Levels of child poverty.

High levels of violence e.g. women, children, general in society.

New legislation infringes Human Rights for political activists - for Muslims and non Muslims.

Poland

The treatment of minority ethnic groups, e.g. Romanies.

Specific case of a death in police custody. A person was arrested, hands were tied, beaten at hands of drunken policemen. Witness against gang of people who stole a car. Reason for death in custody given as suicide, hanging. This was not a case specific to race or religion.

Another case of a blind man who was shouting in the post office, taken away and is now schizophrenic.

The autopsies for such cases are usually faked.

Violation of prisoner rights – corrupt state police and enquiry procedure.

Chechen refugees not given equal opportunities, detained in camps, children not allowed to go to school.

Many brothers (e.g. Syria, Algeria) are married to Polish women, even if they have been living in Poland for over 10 years they are not given citizenship. The situation with Palestinian men is different – they are given citizenship straight away – almost as if now they will not complain about not being allowed back into Palestine.

Unequal treatment of settled immigrants.

Sweden

Racism in police force – several cases of beatings of immigrants, racist remarks.

Shooting at people in demonstrations (European Union meeting in Gothenburg). Police used live ammunition against people demonstrating.

Far reaching insidious racism, blanket racism.

Ryan Air flight to England earlier this year, Swedish Muslim accused of carrying gun on board. Media reported the event using false pictures, described him as being religious, etc.

Discrimination since 9/11 – harassment when travelling, media presentation does not help.

Macedonia

According to the Macedonian people it is a Biblical holy land. Nationalist and religious violence.

The Albanian students cannot pass exams, if professor sees an Albanian student, the student will get harder exams (Discrimination against Albanian students).

Religious violence – if Muslims organize any activities, encounter problems from spies - munafiqeen.

President of Islamic Youth Forum is a registered Judge in the USA – couldn't enter back in USA because he studied in Saudi Arabia.

3. Ways of Addressing the Situation

- Making supplication.
- Contacting Human Rights organizations - when you have one! Writing letters to government, community based work.
- Contribution of NGOs.

Human Rights in Islam and violations (2)

- Human Rights given by God can only to be taken away by Him.
- We have always had Human Rights, but not used them appropriately.
- During the last century there has been a trend whereby European Countries have propagated the idea that Islam and Human Rights are incompatible.
- European countries believe they established modern Human Rights following the French Revolution. They merely tabulated what was already in the Qur'ân and Sunnah.
- What we see is a double standard – these countries, although they criticise Muslims for Human Rights violations, they themselves are the biggest perpetrators, through acts such as the slave trade.
- However, unfortunately, in the current day Muslims themselves are bit violators of Human Rights.

Finland

- Women violation, no adequate remedies in the law for rape and such things.
- Refugee Violation, depriving rights of Appeal.
- Racism.

United Kingdom

- Racial tension – unprovoked attacks on refugees
- Post 9/11 terrorism Act – allows detention of people on the flimsiest of evidence but for the first time in English law Muslims are protected from religious abuse.
- Prostitution.
- Hijab-women being attacked due to their wearing hijab.

Albania

- Women Violation – women working instead of men, esp. in terms of prostitution
- 50 years of communism resulted in the country being corrupted in every level possible
- Post 9/11 Muslims point of view was not expressed in the media
- News was imported from Italy and France!
- Muslims are not counted as part of the community and marginalized
- People in influential position are educated in western schools and they propagate the idea that Islam should be rejected as their ancestors were forced to be Muslims and they should revert back to Christianity

- Hijab, society does not want it , although not forbidden by law
- Practising Muslim women are being rejected in positions like teachers, lawyers, doctors, etc.

Sweden

- Hijab – the society does not allow it, doors are being closed for them
- Refugees – not given any rights, detained for a long period of time
- Racism – indirect/direct
- Islamaphobia – people unjustly being called a terrorist
- Assets being frozen

Switzerland and Italy

-
- Same problems as other countries
- Wealthy state, good standard of living, things may be calm on the surface, underneath this façade there is great tension
- High amount of family violence and petty crime involving Muslims

Solutions

- Establish welfare organisations i.e. shelters and advice centres
- Need to infiltrate policy making organisations and legislatures
- Enable us to develop the law to cater for Muslim needs
- Educate the populations on Human Rights in Islam, esp. Target schools e.g. Scottish Muslim Organisations met with MPs to change the Religious Education System within schools.
- In the UK, FOSIS has played a major role in developing strategies to educate university students about Islamic Human Rights

Human Rights in Islam and violations (3)

How do we see Human Rights in Islam?

The Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights was prepared according to the Qur'ân and Sunnah so this contains what God gave us, humankind. It is not only for Muslims but for all human beings all over the world (as God created Adam and from him Eve and we are descending from them). This declaration is a résumé prepared by the scholars, to let people know that Islam respects their Human Rights whether Muslim or not and these Human Rights are so similar to those declared by the UN.

“God does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, God loves those who deal with equity” (60:8).

There are several stories about the Prophet (peace be upon him), which show how Islam respected human rights. These were the basis of the present Human Rights all over the world.

As we are citizens of Europe we respect its law if it does not contradict. As it is our homeland we should keep its law and by this we become good citizens of our country.

What are the main violations that affect Muslims?

- There are violations against Muslims and Islam (as a whole) in the mass media;
- Discrimination;
- Women and their scarf;
- Immigrants: after getting their Diploma (master degree) it is difficult to get the residence permit to finish their specialisation.
- If for example they get married, they only get the residence permit if they work for the police to get some information for them.
- In Italy the Human Rights are written but not used for all cases. There is not a good regulation for Muslims.
- In France there are violations but there is a good system of legislation against violence of Human Rights.

How do Muslims deal with them?

- Using mass media;
- Making lobby;
- Working collectively;
- Publication of brochures, books;
- Co-operation with other organisations;

- Communication to the present government.

Where do we get the information from?

- The Internet;
- Islamic organisations;
- Mass media;
- Other organisations

Human Rights in Islam and violations (4)

Human Rights conventions and declarations are built on the sands of time, and based around the whims and desires of society. Rights in these documents are at times undermined by other contravening legislation and bear no guarantee of protection both in terms of this life and the hereafter.

Muslims should be wary of placing bismillah in front of any "Human Rights" convention documentation and claim it to be Islamic. Further there are ayahs in the Qur'ân that state that those who do not judge by what God has sent down are disbelievers.

However, the frameworks of such documents are such that they are intelligible to non-Muslims. Being easily understood and having the potential to dispel misconceptions we are, in another sense, obligated as part of dawah to use such concepts for the benefits of non-Muslims. In support of this, another ayah in the Qur'ân states that we should co-operate with one another for virtue and righteousness but refrain from co-operation for vice and wrong doing.

What are the main violations?

Germany

- Muslims are not allowed to slaughter animals according to shariah
- Muslim teachers are not allowed to wear hijab
- Christianity is taught in schools whereas Islam is not
- General discrimination inc. stop and search, mosques being raided with most disrespect with no apologies etc. also non-Muslim critics of Israel are both silenced and ostracised

Norway

- Mosque watched post 9/11 interrogations more frequent etc
- A deep cultural fear of anything foreign
- General discrimination / buying or renting homes / refusing to teach Islam in schools / hijab

- Employment repercussions

Ukraine

- Human Rights as a concept didn't exist till 1991
- Muslims stopped searched / general intimidatory tactics
- Employment issues i.e. hijab, children can also be excluded from school because they are Muslims
- Internal passport photo's do not allow for women in hijab whereas national ones do

Belgium

- no serious violations of Human Rights
- long judiciary delay i.e. to file a case in Belgium can mean that you wait till 4-6 years for it to be heard in court (classic discriminatory tactics)
- refugee issues, use of detention centres especially for minors unaccompanied by adults
- Muslim teachers are not allowed to wear hijab whereas the situation for school children relates to the choice of each individual school to allow or disallow the hijab. Approx 75% of state school have banned the hijab
- State finance for the construction of mosques has been denied (decisions continually delayed) although Islam has been a recognised religion for 30 years now

Britain

- Check www.ihrc.org.uk for reports on Muslim profiling, Oldham riots, (hidden victims), Backlash post 9/11, prisoners of UK law, detentions under crime and security act 2001 etc

How do we deal with them? Where do we get info?

Whilst information from non-Muslim organisations regarding the plight of Muslims is available it should be noted that they have their own agendas and or are in some ways restrained by their own members. 80 % of all Human Rights abuses are directed against Muslims, yet organisations claiming to work in aid of Human Rights issues no way reflect this fact proportionately. All organisations can be of some use in terms of the work that they do, but by no means should they be the ends all. Muslims need to activate themselves and start the hard work themselves, to build grassroots networks of likeminded activists in order to construct a defence for Muslims both in their respective countries and then internationally. Islamic Human Rights commission is willing inshâ'a Llâh to help with advice on "how to" and aid in campaign, media monitoring, research and lobbying work etc., however it must be remembered that a powerful impact can only be made if we as individuals work together in a team inshâ'a Llâh. For the future a vision of all Muslims in the European context proactively working to protect and defend each other and as a result helping Muslims across the world is both possible and achievable. As long as we put in the hard work and stop relying on other people or stale institutions to do the work for us, our own rapid reaction force is not and never will be a far fetched dream.

Human Rights in Islam and violations (5)

Comment percevez-vous la déclaration des droits de l'homme islamique?

La déclaration des droits de l'homme islamique n'est en fait qu'une réaction à celle des Nations-Unies.

Le réel problème est que cette déclaration n'est pas appliquée.

Nous avons deux opinions :

- une qui pense que nous avons besoin de cette déclaration des droits de l'homme islamique
- une autre qui pense que nous n'en avons pas besoin puisque ces principes sont inhérents à nos références religieuses : le Coran et la Sunna (la constitution de Médine)

Quelles sont les principales violations de ces droits dans nos pays ?

Dans tous les pays nous pouvons constater l'existence de les discriminations.

- un climat de suspicion généralisé plane et incite les autorités à avoir un comportement excessif vis-à-vis des musulmans
- il n'y pas l'enseignement de l'islam à l'école
- les femmes qui portent le voile ne peuvent pas exercer la profession de professeur
- la liberté d'expression est quelque peu diminuée car il est fréquent de critiquer les musulmans alors par exemple qu'il est très difficile d'avoir une critique vis-à-vis d'Israël
- la vie privée de personne est violée sous prétexte de protection contre le terrorisme
- les procédures judiciaire sont très longues

Hongrie

- Les femmes qui portent le voile sont marginalisées et ont de grandes difficultés à trouver un emploi
- Il n'y a pas d'éducation musulmane pour les enfants à l'école

France

Le problème de la discrimination est très insidieux car il n'est pas clair, transparent juridiquement, ce qui nous permettrait de recourir à la justice. C'est la dignité du musulman qui est bafouée dans de nombreux cas. Entre autres :

- on ne bénéficie pas de lieux de cultes valorisants
- on ne bénéficie pas de financements publics
- les femmes ne peuvent pas travailler avec leur voile etc.

Grande-Bretagne

La discrimination dont font l'objet les musulmans est moins explicite que celle dont faisaient l'objet les juifs et les noirs, en effet on ne trouvera pas écrit sur une pancarte de magasin "interdit aux musulmans et aux chiens". Cette discrimination s'exprime moins ouvertement mais elle est tout de même à l'œuvre.

La situation des réfugiés a été abordée par les représentants de tous les pays

Islamophobia (1)

How we can develop action to decrease Islamophobia? What do we need to do this?

At first we discussed the lecture of sister Farkhanda. We concluded that we should not act like victims, to be more active and not to be reactionary. A very important point is that we have to restrict and to avoid things that might cause discrimination.

The first question we dealt with; was "What is Islamophobia?". We agreed that the main reason for Islamophobia is the lack of information about Islam. The way people ask about typical stereotypes, like e.g. polygamy and "holy war", shows the need of getting in contact with non-Muslims and to inform about Islam. We noticed that Islamophobia is occasional and seasonal. Every time something happens it arises.

Not every one of us accepted the term Islamophobia, because it does not reflect the problem. Phobia is a natural thing, so it is impossible or not easy to fight against. Another objection was that this terminology creates an atmosphere, where people are divided in two groups.

To fight Islamophobia we have to inform about Islam.
Some actions that might be taken are:

- Visiting schools to inform teenagers about Islam. Mission is not meant, you have to be informative.
- To establish dawa-stores so people can come by themselves to get some basic information.
- To establish Islamic magazines
- To organize events like conferences, lectures and social events and to invite governmental and non-governmental groups.
- To establish media-monitoring groups to be able to react to anti-Islamic articles in newspapers and magazines.
- To join existing non-Muslim groups (like Greenpeace as far as environmental issues are concerned) and to use their structures instead of building something new.
- To train brothers and sisters to be able to give lectures and to face non-Muslim
- Well educated Muslims can represent Muslims in non-religious fields, e.g. their own field of work

Muslims have to be present in society in a variety of fields.

Islamophobia (2)

This workshop was meant to discuss the following points among participants:

- What is Islamophobia?
- How can we develop actions to decrease Islamophobia in our countries?
- What do you need to help you to do this?

The participants were from Germany, England, Finland, Sweden, Macedonia and Belgium.

Immediately, some of us did express the fact that they tended to perceive this word as negatively connoted. So we defined very basically *Islamophobia* as being the *fear of Islam* (and also Muslims). This fear sometimes transforming itself to suspicion or hate. The main cause of this fear is mutual misunderstanding.

The cause of the rising of Islamophobia is not only the result of terrorist acts, but also simply of the fact that native Europeans resent the growing visibility of external attributes of Islam (headscarves, beards,...) in their immediate vicinity as something scaring: "*They are multiplying, taking control of the city, afterwards, they'll have a majority and they will implement shari'a in our country...*" (just for quoting widespread phantasms).

But in this process, Muslims themselves share a big responsibility: on the one hand they are arousing the issue of whenever somebody is criticising Islam, but they often find it normal to criticise harshly Christianity and Judaism. So we should also make a parallel between Islamophobia and a widely spread *Westophobia* among Muslims. On the other hand, the Occidental misunderstanding about Islam is also caused by the way Muslim men have been treating women for centuries, often denying them the rights they are given by God, according to the Qur'ân and Sunna (the main reason for this is a general ignorance of the fundamentals of Islam). In fact, this subject being nowadays very sensitive, lots of Occidental women feel a kind of sympathy for the Muslim women they see sitting fully clothed on beaches while men are just enjoying the pleasures of see bathing, or when women are walking meters behind their husbands.

Another reason for misunderstanding is the sealing of hearts: some people really do not want to understand the point of view of Muslims. They are viscerally against Islam and will find every pretext for criticism. They have their own theory about it, and their theory is proof, whatever pertinent arguments could be brought to debate.

An other reason for misunderstanding is that the Occidentals tend to approach Islam through the conceptual reading frame inherited from the history of Christianity in Europe and its conflicting approach with state governance, with non-Christians or other non-Catholic Roman Christians (Protestants). In reality, this kind of perception is absolutely not relevant when applied to Islam (cf.: *fundamentalism* applied pejoratively to Islam is a nonsense because the fact of always returning back to the fundamentals of faith [Qur'ân and Sunna] is a guarantee for openness, understanding, spirituality and respect of others. So it is a positively connoted word in Islam. On the other hand, the term of *integrist* applied to Muslim fundamentalist is a gross mistake because an *integrist* (in the Christian meaning of the term, this is somebody taking into consideration the fundamentals + the afterward traditions being added to them) is someone trying to make enter in his practice elements external to Islam and thus potentially corrupting. The perfect contrary of *Islamic fundamentalism*). This is just

an example proving that when speaking about fundamentalist integrists, Occidentals did not get the point at all in their analysis of religious based movements in Islam.

On the other hand, it is compulsory for Muslims to study the history of Christianity in Europe so that they could grasp the struggles that took place between Church and secularists so that they could adapt their language to the Occidental reality and try to find a common conceptual ground for discussion.

As far as the practical means to fight Islamophobia are at stake, we made the following proposals:

- Set up "*Open Mosque*" days.
- Enter more actively in interfaith dialogue.
- Participate actively to local political assemblies as Muslims.
- Set up in every country organisations reporting on Human Rights violations against Muslims (and other minorities), Islamophobia. They should be entitled to track every violation nationally and compile them.
- These organisations should also provide advisory services in case of aggression, or manifest Human Rights violations (we think to develop widely the up till now unique concept of the Islamic Human Right Commission (IHRC) that has been very active in UK for years. Website: www.ihrc.org).
- Muslims should also work to push laws that would protect them as Muslims and no more as Africans, Arabs, Pakistanis,... in order to allow people to be heard as victim of religious hatred and not racial hatred (often, victims of Islamophobia are bound to go to court on the basis of racist acts [e.g. they're Arabs] instead of being considered as victim of religious discrimination. The problem seems to be more accurate on this topic for native European Muslims).
- Push for positive discrimination laws, not in terms of quotas, but in terms of precisely stating and defining the respect due to Islamic clothes, feasts, practices, in school, work place, housing. No one should be discriminated because of religion when seeking for a job, for example.
- Cooperate with other non-Muslim organisations active about Human Rights issues.
- Use anti-racism demonstrations to try to diffuse information about Islam, Islamophobia... because the public going to this kind of events is already sensible to this type of issues.
- Cooperate with trade unions on some important issues because they often have pro-Human Rights stand points concerning the Afghan or Iraqi crisis for example.
- Lobby (by email, phone,...) against media whenever they are really spreading disinformation about Islam and compel them to publish apologies.

Finally, Muslim should stop to be passive and should adopt a more active stance when other Muslims (regimes, individuals, groups...) are violating Human Rights, committing torture, and giving way to unfair processes....

Islamophobia (3)

What is Islamophobia?

Fear of all things that are an expression of Islam. A political fear due to the fact that Islam is seen as such a challenge as well as a religious fear in that non-Muslims are prompted to think about issues of faith that they experience to be difficult. Associated and interrelated to racism, a form of discrimination and we need to reject stereotypes.

How we can develop actions to decrease Islamophobia in our countries?

- Education of our political leaders, local populations about Islam co-operate with NGOs etc. Educate Muslims so that they know their rights, prepare new generations so that they can gain key positions in society so that they can gain influence.
- As Muslims, we need to be open and presently if we are closed, they develop fear of the unknown. As well as for ourselves, we don't want to live as strangers in our societies. We need to participate in society and use channels to communicate and challenge stereotypes. Welcome support and co-operation from non-Muslim NGOs who are working towards a greater understanding of Islamophobia.
- Muslims need to overcome their differences and work together as well as develop Islamic culture. Scholars need to teach wider acceptance of differences within Islam instead of emphasizing the differences in interpretation.
- There are examples in some countries where Muslims are doing good outreach and aiming to be open. Initiatives such as 'open Mosque' days, emphasizing Islamic types of entertainment, halal versions (music, art, poetry) to be positive in terms of what young Muslims CAN do. But why have a day, the mosques should be open all the time to non-Muslims.
- Keep the emphasis on the grass roots as well as the positions of power, such as social work, youth work and include services for non-Muslims to demonstrate the example of Islam. And Muslims need to ensure they remember the important work women do within their families.

What we need to do as Muslims.

Islamic organizations need to communicate between themselves and with non-Muslims in the societies they live in. Increase distribution of translated literature.

Greater co-ordination and unity to pool resources and not overlap the work. Rather than giving information to one another support each other to set up organizations.

Importantly Muslims need to support each other at the community level. Organizations need to be based on Islamic brotherhood and *not* national divisions. Mosques should provide a multitude of activities, to provide for *all* the community, young, old, men, women, children. To maintain Mosques as community centres, sports facilities, welfare services.

Children's Rights

In this workshop, we discussed several points regarding children, the problems children face, and the rights children have. At the beginning every participant told about their working with children, like helping orphans & caring children.

An important point regarding children rights is the fact, that children aren't able to defend themselves as adults can do, when their rights are violated. There are many kinds of children rights violations, for example: exploitative child labour, street children, child soldiers, children as victims of war and political violence, child prostitution and sexual abuse of children.

We then exchanged our information about some of the children rights violations. For example, in Pakistan, child labour is very common. Children in Pakistan make a big share of footballs. Several NGOs (without a specific Islamic background) campaign to stop child labour in this field, but none of the Pakistani Islamic organisations are known to defend those children against exploitations of child labour. We mentioned also cases of children that were not cared by their parents due to several reasons (for example, addiction to alcohol and/or drugs) or were misused by them (for example, domestic violence or sexual abuse) which also happened to families with "Muslim" background. Children who escape such mistreatments came often to children houses where the children are being cared and helped in a proper way. But there they will not get any Islamic teachings if they are of Muslim backgrounds. A similar case in this context happened also after the Bosnian war, when orphaned children (including those of Muslim origin) were being offered by agencies for adoption – unfortunately there was no Muslim awareness about this. In Ukraine a lot of parents do not have the time for educating their children in Islam because of working late.

We also mentioned the problems in the context of children prostitution – in Ukraine you'll find announcements searching young children (especially girls) as fashion models, but when looking further into the background of this company you'll find that they also use them for pornography. A lot of children (also especially girls) in Eastern Europe are victims of child trafficking to countries in Western Europe like Italy and Germany – and also in these cases the Muslim children are not excluded from being victimised.

In COMPASS (The Manual for Human Rights Education) the UN Children Rights Convention is found on page 406. We read all the articles, and it was shown that in the principle all articles are ok except for the definition of a child: At the UN a child is everyone under 18 years old, whereas in Islam a child becomes an adult when he naturally becomes adult, latest with 15 years. This difference has consequences mainly in the topics of child soldiers (for example, is a 15-year old freedom fighter in Kashmir a child soldier?) and early marriage...

We discussed ways, how we could improve the situation of children with defending their rights. We should work on two sides; we should work with Muslims to improve the awareness of children rights and its violations, and we should work within our society to improve the society as a whole. The Qur'ân and the Sunna is the basis for our work, especially for educating children in the proper way.

There is a need for a comprehensive work on Islamic basics and rules of children rights. In several verses of the Qur'ân and in the example of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon

him), as it is mentioned in several Hadiths, we see the attitude Muslims should have regarding children. Based on such a work we should work for raising awareness amongst Muslims for children and their rights. We need therefore to educate Muslims about the position of children in Islam. We should also use Muslim medias to propagate all this.

One important thing in this context is that (in our personal attitudes) we have to respect children and we have to listen to them and the problems they face (not only in the sense that we have to listen to them when they speak, but also have to pay attention for their non-verbal expressions of view. For example, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did let his grandson playing on his shoulders when he was leading the prayer...).

Even the children should know their rights, and they should know what to do, if something happened to them. For example, there are some child books (by Non-Muslims) explaining these children rights on a proper way for children.

Finally it should be said, that the Muslim's aim should be helping all children, not just the Muslims' ones.

Medina

Showing the duties of the state of Medina towards its inhabitants of all, tribes, religions and females and genders.

We shared stories of the history of Medina that increased our knowledge and faith. To give a full description of the model of medina created for all mankind is more the subject of a thick book, we only want to mention bullet points. Inshâ'a Llâh will they inspire your future studies.

- There was a division of powers into legislation, executive, and jurisdiction
- With the charter of medina, there was a written constitution (compare to "Israel")
- The rights and duties were upon all inhabitants not just for "citizens" (compare to all "modern states")
- There was freedom in the choice and practice of religion
- Non Muslims paying protection tax (jizzia) had a brave army defending them !
- Children had a right for having a childhood. Childhood as an independent phase of life worthy of protection was introduced to Europe by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the late 18th century.
- Prisoners of war were fed, clothed and treated as family members. In one occasion they were set free after having taught 10 people reading and writing.
- Women were participating in social and religious life (history of Aisha (r.a.)
- The right to divorce, marry man of choice, to inherit, to give asylum to who she wants were given women around 610 after Jesus (a.s.)
- No religion or tribe was judged by the actions of individuals
- The rulers lived very simple; they had no bodyguards, and could and were subject to the law (compare to Germany, Norway, U.K, France etc...)
- Non Muslims were judged according to their own law in particular cases (the Jew who committed adultery was judged according to Torah)
- The private sphere was not subject to law, only public affairs (>Umar (r.a.) caught people drinking wine in their home did not take them to court . He was caliph at that time)

In addition, animals and the environment were given rights.

Medina Charter <http://islamic-world.net/islamic-state/macharter.htm>

Globalisation

This report is a fruit of discussion with an engagement of thinkers from the UK, Germany, Hungary, Italy, France, and Poland.

During the workshop we were trying to answer following questions: what is globalisation? What could be Muslims' response to globalisation? And how has the situation of Muslim community changed after 11th of September? This report is a summary of expressed ideas put in a certain order.

We agreed that globalisation it is a consequence of the world evolution. It is a very complex issue and difficult to define. We shared different perspectives, some people said globalisation makes world more homogeneous. From other points of view, it is only imaginative homogeneity and real hegemony. In order to see challenges and practical consequences of globalisation we divided the subject into more specific aspects: economical, technological, political, cultural, and social. We agreed that there are positive and negative elements in all these mentioned dimensions and all these aspects are connected and have influence on each other.

1. When we talked about the economical dimension of globalisation we expressed and shared concerns regarding global capitalistic market spreading and rise of a new power - multi-corporations. We discussed the problem that strong economies only benefit and conquer weak economies in a sense of products distribution for instance. Tunisia was mentioned as an example of country entering globalisation, which leads consequently to submission of that country to the Western powers. Certain standardization or, in other words, monopoly is visible in different walks of life around the globe.
2. Technological aspects of globalisation, we noticed in the phenomenon of new telecommunication technologies, mainly global computer web (Internet). It was said that only the West benefits from the technological innovations, because people in other parts of the world cannot fulfil basic economical needs, like for instance they face a lack of water or food. Besides, on one hand wide range of Internet is a manifestation of globalisation, on the other hand, it is a kind of tool and it depends on us how we use it.
3. Cultural and social aspects are visible in phenomena like migration or domination of cultural trends from America (Americanisation of cultures). Media were discussed as an example of most powerful tool of promotion of Western imperialism. However, Al-Gazira was mentioned as a positive example to oppose Western media monopoly. Besides, the problem of domination of Western institutions was raised, for example in education as domination of authority of Western educational institutions in different fields of knowledge.
4. Political dimension of globalisation or, in other words, domination of US government in international policy raised many objections. It was mentioned that the world is becoming more and more dangerous because only one country gathers more and more economic, diplomatic and military power and misuses that power for its own interest only. And peace is becoming like a market product – if you fit in interest of America you can buy it, otherwise you do not. Another example is abusing of Human

Rights or international law as a pretext for military actions, for example American aggression on Afghanistan and US provocations on Iraq were noticed.

5. 11th of September 2001 as turning point in history and how it is influencing situation of Muslim community was also a controversial issue. First of all, simple questions came: What was before 11th of September? What is the difference before and after the date? Was it really a turning point in history? However, it is easy to notice that Islamic resistance movements and freedom fighters lost credibility in the eyes of Western societies after the date. And many countries justify their violations of human and civil rights as part of 'war on terror'.

Muslims' response to globalisation

First of all, we should recognize positive and negative sides of globalisation in all mentioned dimensions according to our religion. Islam, as mercy to the world, is also global in the essence of its message and creed. And both, globalisation and Islam give us tools and ideas to globalise Islam in the world. Our choice is not to be against or for globalisation, '*It's just happening, want it or not, with us or without us it's going on.*' Our task is to Islamize globalisation.

What we should do is to combat ignorance of Islam among Muslims in order to utilize globalisation. If we want to promote Islam we have to know it; for instance Muslims often misuse Internet when depicting Islam. Iman was mentioned as important aspect of our action. As an obstacle to promote Islam on political level, regimes and corruption in Muslim countries were mentioned as an example of clash of interest with Islamic values. As a counter-argument it was said that as Muslims living in Europe we cannot take responsibility for the Muslim countries. We are European Muslims and we can benefit from globalisation as Muslims in the West.

In order to have an influence on world economy we should use oil as our economical weapon. Also we have to use consumers power and boycott products of certain companies. However, the global market is not only the problem of Muslims because it is built on unjust interest (riba). (...) '*Globalisation it's not a question of being Muslim or not. So many innocent people are dying. We have to take their side.*' Change in the young people's thinking and mentality is visible, as for example rise of antiglobalist movements and opposition to economic and social order of the world. We can see young people who really fight and often die to change the situation. So it is not about opposition Islam vs. the West. (...) '*Get involved on every stage! Campaigning makes a difference, once we get involved, have identified routes through which we can move forward, we can also reverse some of the legislation that has already taken place.*'; Multilateral Investment Agreement, giving power for companies over nations, was mentioned as an important target in campaigning.

Globalisation is not about complaining or being a victim. There are different attitudes and approaches to globalisation. The point is not to remain passive for our own goodness in the Day of Judgment. How to do that?

'We have to have some priorities and act! (...)
'We have to make our voice heard!' (...)

(Sentences written in italics are verbatim quotations of some of opinions expressed by participants of the workshop.)

Gender Equality

- We should always be thinking to what makes Islam particular when talking about Justice and Equality (it is a recommendation).
- For some of us, this kind of debate is revealing the identity crisis of Muslims in Europe. Some suggest that Sharī'a is a set of guidelines that have to take cultural clothes in accordance to the place Muslims are living in.
- The concepts of right and duties as well as the feeling of the presence of God and others are key elements of Islamic thought.
- Muslims should really concentrate on the condition of women because the Islamic society is built on the man-woman relationship. A weak relationship is a weak point for our society and it is giving opportunity for attack in the sense that Muslim men are not behaving properly but also they are undermining their own society and future.
- The Islamic society has two wings: man and woman. If one of those wings does not function, society as a whole cannot function.

We should also bear in mind that in the "Farewell Discourse", one of the most important of his speeches, the Prophet (Pbuh) recommended to his Companions and emphasized the necessary respect of their wives.

7. Conclusions and Follow-up

At the end of the session the participants were allocated into several workshops to discuss qualitative concrete action plans.

What could/should we do to promote HR:

- ☒ *On local level,*
- ☒ *On national level,*
- ☒ *On European level.*

The following are the minutes of the conclusions:

A first remark was emitted concerning the fact that we should define about which HR we would like to talk: HR of Muslims inside Europe or of Muslims outside Europe? When dealing with this issue, we should not neglect the Muslims suffering all around the world (Palestine, Iraq...). Besides, we should not forget that we are all committed Muslims and that even if those problems are always at the heart of our thoughts – and we should always be aware of them –, we are bound to give an order of priority to our actions as Muslim Europeans. And this should be done according to the message of our Prophet (Pbuh) who advised us to begin by a reform of ourselves, than by the reform of our families, than of our surroundings, etc., in ever expanding circles. We must not mix up everything and as it has been underlined by some of us for those who are wondering about the actions that should be undertaken concerning the Palestinian problem for example: *"Palestine does not need bodies for now, they have enough of them on the contrary to support from the international community!"* On the opposite, it is compulsory to include the Palestinian issue in a perspective of a general and universal defence of HR. We have to make evolve the perception of the Palestinian issue within the European space, because Europe has a major role to play in this debate and we should help it to be a counterweight to American unilateralism. Our role here, in Europe, is our commitment to everyone, at every level, but as Muslims.

In fact, this session organised by FEMYSO constitutes already a proof that this work has begun, but we should not stop at this point. The question is: do we need to set up common projects? Are we bound to make something to change the situation?

The best approach to this problem seems not to multiply more than necessary the existing institutions and organisations. FEMYSO should be in charge of the development of guidelines that would have to be respected in every action undertaken at national and local levels by MOs. This would allow us to stress the European dimension of this enterprise.

We should always keep in mind that, to be credible, the Muslim community has the choice between 2 solutions:

1. The whole community unites and decides to take in hand its own destiny (which is highly unlikely),

2. Muslims go out of their community imprisonment and choose to insert their particular issues into global issues about HR defence. We have to learn how to communicate and to share our fights and commitments (even if it means doing some cosmetic concessions) because our own stakes could be brought up to a much higher level.

One of the major problems that must absolutely be avoided is the fact that each association always begin over and over to make the work already accomplished by others.

An important effort must be done concerning the training of the young people and particularly of the organisation executives committed to HR issues. First of all, it would be necessary to ensure a solid training as well concerning religious matters as HR matters. We also have to realise concrete action on ground level, even as individuals. It is certain that the multiplication of individual commitment examples will finish sooner or later by giving way to a broader dynamic.

We have absolutely to raise the awareness of local communities concerning HR issues, as well as we have to commit ourselves to citizen participation. There is a real *da'wa* to be done through seminars, conferences and ground level actions.

The proposals are the following:

- Claim that we *act as a Muslim organisation* (possibly opened to non-Muslims).
- *Raise the consciousness* of young Muslims first, and then of the community as a whole, about HR issues.
- *Set up partnerships* with non-Muslim organisations defending HR or even involve oneself personally and very concretely in order to built personal relations and to push through our richness within those organisations themselves. It would be necessary that Femyso communicate to each MO a listing containing the addresses and contact persons of every national and local NGOs defending HR.
- *Try to speak as much as possible of the HR* issues in the greatest possible number of conferences and seminars, particularly when they are organised by Muslims NGOs.
- *Take the advantage of the World UDHR Day* to organise manifestations (conferences, seminars...) at a European level, by each MO under the supervision of FEMYSO. This would certainly get a symbolic impact, by the very fact that the same themes would be developed at a European scale. This would also be an opportunity to make arise among participants a feeling of pertaining to a European network sharing the same values and the same objectives.
- It would be good to *set up a commission in charge of HR* within FEMYSO. It would be entitled to coordinate the European activities of FEMYSO about this particular topic, as well as giving general guidelines.
- This commission should also *develop educational material about HR* in small folders (like *At the discovery of Islam*) that could be distributed during events, in mosques...
- Whatever could be the level of action, it would be good that FEMYSO bring out, every year, a *general orientation concerning HR* with which would be in line all the particular actions of the MOs (e.g.: each year, every MO should at least organise one action about a precise theme and send a report to the HR commission within FEMYSO).

- *Set up in every country a Muslim observatory/monitoring of HR* (that would be a tool and not an aim in itself). It would be charged to monitor all HR violations, to give an annual report, but it would also have the mission to help victims of HR violations by redirecting them to the most proper service according to their cases. This implies that the repertory of all associations active on ground level should be set up. Those annual reports would be communicated to the HR commission of FEMYSO which would be charged to work out a synthesis out of them and to forward it to European and international authorities committed to those issues.
- *Use the hr_islam workgroup* to keep up relations among the participants to this session instead of creating new place of cyber meeting.
- It would be good that FEMYSO communicate to its Member Organisations a list containing all financing programs with which all our HR aimed activities could be in line.



PRESS RELEASE

The Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO) organised a study session on "*Human Rights: The Contribution of European Muslims*" during 20-27 October 2002. The session was in co-operation with the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport and was held at the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB), Hungary.

The main aim was to enable youth workers and volunteers, as European Muslims, active within national member organisations of FEMYSO to develop their knowledge and a broader understanding of Human Rights. Twenty-six selected male and female participants were present alongside the preparatory team of the session, which consisted of four members and the EYCB Programme and Training Administrator. The countries represented included Albania, Belgium, Britain, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Intercultural learning and Human Rights education (as adapted from the COMPASS Manual on Human Rights Education) was employed through different workshops and exercises facilitated by the EYCB administrator Mr. Rui Gomes throughout the week. Furthermore, interactive presentations on Human Rights in Islam and the Muslim community, Islamophobia and other related violations, Universality of Human Rights and its application in Europe were also explored each day during the session followed by interactive discussions. Guest speakers were the notables Dr. Tariq Ramadan, Mrs. Farkhanda Chaudary and Mr. Zein Omar who covered the topics of perusal.

The pivotal of the study session was a morning devoted to a discussion with the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The agenda aimed at focusing on the subjects of inter-cultural dialogue, political participation of youth plus democracy, rule of law and Human Rights.

An afternoon was also devoted to participating through the Internet to the web conference "Muslim Women in the European Union" which was held in Brussels involving the European Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou.

The study session at the EYCB led to certain project ideas for implementation and progress at local, national and European spheres. These included an e-group, a follow-up seminar next year, a project on the hijab/veil discriminations across Europe to be conducted jointly with the Islamic Human Rights Commission and further to collaborate with other NGOs for the Universal Day on Human Rights and such related events.

A detailed report of the session will be available in due course from FEMYSO and Council of Europe's offices. Transcripts of presentations and workshops are available upon request.

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APPENDICES

1. List of Participants

NAME	Organisation	COUNTRY
Mr Abassi Adil	FOSIS	Great Britain
Mr ABDULAZIM Mohammed Nabil	MJD	Germany
Ms ANWAR Klara	UIC	Hungary
Ms Bennett Ruth	MYF	Britain
Mr Chaouki Khalid	GMI	Italy
Mr Chorfi Slah ben Ali	ARRAID	Ukraine
Ms D'ANTONIO Alessandra	GMI	Italy
Ms FRYNDAK Olha	ARRAID	Ukraine
Ms GESSOUS Anisa	UIC	Hungary
Mr HASANEIN Amin	MJD	Germany
Ms HIRSI Sadia	SUM	Sweden
Mr IDA ALI OU LAHSEN Khalid	EMF	France
Mr JOHARI Mohammed Nared	IISL	Germany
Ms KHAN Momina	IHRC	Britain
Mr LAMRANI Abid	EMF	France
Mr MADENE Faouzi	NMF	Finland
Ms MAKOKI Marina	IISL	Germany
Ms MAJID Romana	IHRC	Britain
Mr OSMANOSKI Afrim	IYF	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Mr PICCARDO Davide	GMI	Italy
Mr PIKU Alfred	ARDMERIA	Albania
Mr PRIVOT Michaël	AJM	Belgium
Mr HASSAN SIDDIQ ALAMIN Sharif	MSS	Norway
Mr TUMTURK Cihan	SUM	Sweden
Mr WASYLUK Maciej	MSS	Poland
Ms CHAUDHRY Yasmine	YM	Britain

2. Daily Programme of the study session

Sunday, 20 October 2002

Arrival and registration of participants
19h00 Dinner and prayers (plus mathuraat)
20h30 Icebreakers

Monday, 21 October 2002

Chair: Yasin Ahmad
Co-chair: Hadia Himmat

05h30 Prayer
08h30 Breakfast
09h30 **Opening session**, welcome by Ms. Antje Rothemund, Executive Director of EYCB
09h55 **Opening session** by Sunduss Al-Hassani, EXCO member of FEMYSO
10h10 Presentation of aims and objectives and presentation of the programme
10h20 Break
10h30 Working groups
 1. Motivation: why we came to seminar
 2. Expectation: what we expect to get
 3. Suggestions: why we would like or need to do in the session
11h40 Reports
12h00 **Introduction to Human Rights**, by Rui Gomes
 Questions

12h45 Lunch and prayers

14h30 Working groups
 1. Inter cultural dialogue (Sunduss)
 2. Participation of young people in political life (Rui)
 3. Democracy, rule of law and Human Rights (Hadia)
17h15 Reports
17h45 Reviewing of the day and closing

19h00 Dinner and prayers (plus mathuraat)

21h00 International evening

Tuesday, 22 October 2002

Chair: Sunduss Al-Hassani
Co-chair: Chokri Mensi

05h30 Prayer
08h30 Breakfast
09h30 Discussion with the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary
 Assembly of the Council of Europe

13h00 Lunch and prayers

- 14h30 Human Rights in Islam, introduction by Mr. Zein Omar
15h20 Questions
15h40 Break
16h00 Working groups on
- How do we see Human Rights in Islam?
 - What are the main violation in the countries?
 - How these violations effects Muslims?
 - How do Muslims deal with them?
- 17h30 Reports
18h00 Closing, typing reports
- 19h00 Dinner and prayers (plus mathuraat)
- 21h00 Film

Wednesday, 23 October 2002

Chair: Chokri
Co-chair: Hadia

- 05h30 Prayer
08h30 Breakfast
09h30 Brief of the day
09h40 **The violation of Human Rights affecting the Muslim community**, by Farkhanda Chaudhry
10h45 Break
11h00 Working groups
- 12h15 Lunch and prayers
- 14h30 Working groups
17h00 Groups reports
17h30 Evaluation
18h15 Reviewing and closing
- 19h30 Dinner and prayers (plus mathuraat)

Thursday, 24 October 2002

Chair: Sunduss
Co-chair: Yasin

- 05h30 Prayer
08h30 Breakfast
09h30 Feedback from the prep team on the evaluation
09h50 **Intercultural learning and Human Rights education**, by Rui Gomes:
1. Identity and culture
 2. Minority rights
 3. Prejudice and ethnic minority
 4. Attitudes for intercultural learning
 - 5.
- 12h30 Lunch and prayers

- 14h00 Working groups:
 1. Children rights
 2. Globalization
 3. Medina
- 16h00 Web conference
- 18h00 Evaluation on the web conference
- 19h00 Dinner and prayers (plus mathuraat)
- 21h00 Quiz and entertainment

Friday, 25 October 2002

Chair: Hadia
Co-chair: Chokri

- 05h30 Prayer
- 08h30 Breakfast
- 09h30 Brief of the day
- 09h40 **The European Muslim Youth contribution to Human Rights**, by Tariq Ramadan
- 10h40 Break
- 10h50 Discussion
- 11h55 Information on how to move in Budapest
- 12h30 Jum'aa prayer
- 13h00 Lunch
- 14h00 Free afternoon and dinner in town
- 23h00 Prayers and mathuraat

Saturday, 26 October 2002

Chair: Sunduss
Co-chair: Hadia

- 05h30 Prayer
- 08h30 Breakfast
- 09h30 Brief of the day
- 09h40 **The role of Member organisations in FEMYSO and what individuals can do in FEMYSO**, by Brigitte Martin
- 10h15 Break
- 10h30 Working groups:
 1. What can/shall I do ...
 2. What we should/could do... for promoting Human Rights
 - At local level
 - At national level
 - At European level (including FEMYSO)Concrete ideas and at least one project
- 12h30 Lunch and prayers

14h00	Report typing
15h45	Break
16h00	Photo session
16h10	Evaluation
17h45	Closing, distribution of certificates
18h15	End of the program
19h00	Dinner and prayers (plus mathuraat)

Sunday, 27 October 2002

Departure of participants

3. Abstracts of Speakers

Mrs. Farkhanda Chaudhry

Currently works as an Equality Officer with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organizations.

She has a background in community development work. This includes work on issues around poverty and deprivation and work with woman's groups. She is the first Muslim woman to be appointed as Justice of Peace in Scotland. Is a management committee member of the Muslim Woman's Resource Centre in Glasgow, a member of the Scottish Interfaith Council; a member of the Islamic Society of Britain and is currently studying a postgraduate degree in Equality and Discrimination. She has raised five children all of whom are now young adults.

Travaille actuellement en tant qu' « Equality Officer » (*'officier d'égalité'*) pour le Conseil des Organisations de Volontariat d'Ecosse. Expérimentée dans le travail de développement communautaire. A travaillé sur la question de la pauvreté et de la privation. Travaille avec des groupes de femmes en Ecosse. La première musulmane en Ecosse nommée Juge de Paix. Membre du comité de direction du centre de documentation des musulmanes à Glasgow. Membre du « Conseil interreligieux » d'Ecosse. Membre de « Islamic Society of Britain », suit également un troisième cycle en égalité et discrimination. En outre, elle est mère de 5 enfants qui ont tous atteint l'âge adulte.

ummhashim@hotmail.com

Mr Zein Omar

Born in Keren-Eritrea in 1961. Primary and secondary education in Eritrea. University Education in Syria-Damascus, Graduated in English Language and Literature in 1986. Researcher in international and comparative education, Stockholm University. Studied Linguistics at Stockholm University (special orientation in Semitic languages). Studied translation and interpretation at Stockholm University. Works full-time in translation and information.

Né à Keren-l'Erythrée en 1961. Etudes primaires et secondaires en Erythrée. Etudes universitaires à Damas, Syrie, licencié en langue et littérature Anglaise en 1986. Chercheur en éducation internationale et comparée, Université de Stockholm. A étudié la linguistique à l'Université de Stockholm avec une spécialisation en langues sémitiques. A étudié la traduction et l'interprétariat à l'Université de Stockholm. Travaille à temps plein dans la traduction et l'information.

zeinshokai@hotmail.com

Dr. Tariq Ramadan

Teaches philosophy (College of Geneva) and Islamic studies (University of Friburg). He has made a longstanding contribution to the debate on the situation of Muslims in the West in general and, more specifically, in Europe. He regularly writes and speaks on Islamic revival in the Muslim world and the identity and challenges of Muslims living as a minority.

Il enseigne la philosophie au Collège de Genève et l'islamologie à l'Université de Fribourg. Il a contribué au débat sur la situation des musulmans en Occident et spécifiquement en

Europe. Il écrit et fait des conférences sur la renaissance dans le monde musulman et sur l'identité et les défis des minorités musulmanes. Tariq.Ramadan@unicfr.cr

4. List of members of the Political Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly

Members

Mr	MOLLAZADE	Azerbaijan
Mr	SEYIDOV	Azerbaijan
Mr	CLERFAYT Georges	Belgium
Ms	FERIC-VAC Mirjana	Croatia
Mrs	SEVERINSEN Hanne	Denmark
Mrs	ARNOLD	Denmark
Mr	MIGNON Jean-Claude	France
Mrs	DURRIEU Josette	France
Mr	DREYFUS-SCHMIDT Michel	France
Mr	ZHVANIA Zurab	Georgia
Mr	HORNHUES Karl-Heinz	Germany
Mr	PANGALOS Theodoros	Greece
Mr	LIAPIS	Greece
Mr	TABAJDI	Hungary
Mr	BRAUN	Hungary
Mr	O'KEEFFE	Ireland
Mr	BIANCO Gerardo	Italie
Mr	DANIELI	Italie
Mr	PROVERA	Italy
Mr	CEKUOLIS Jonas	Lithuania
Mr	Mr van der LINDEN	Netherlands
Mr	BLANKENBORG Haakon	Norway
Mr	WIELOWIEYSKI Andrzej	Poland
Mr	IWINSKI Tadeusz	Poland
Mr	MEDEIROS FERREIRA José	Portugal
Mr	BACIU	Romania
Mr	ROGOZIN Dmitry	Russia
Mr	JAKIC Roman	Slovenia
Mr	de PUIG Lluís Maria	Spain
Mr	BERGQVIST Jan	Sweden
Mr	ANDICAN A. Ahat	Turkey
	Lord KILCLOONEY	United Kingdom
Mr	ATKINSON David	United Kingdom

5. Evaluation

In order to evaluate the session several methods were prepared. We asked participants during one exercise to draw on paper what they felt best illustrated, what they were taking back with them from the session. This was an interesting exercise and positive in that it encouraged thoughts of appreciation. In addition, we provided a questionnaire that was distributed amongst each of the participants. The following are the results, comments and suggestions of the group.

To begin with we asked participants to complete on a scale of 1 (very bad) – 5 (excellent) what they felt about certain aspects of the study session. The results showed a general satisfaction amongst the group and in particular appraisal of the Political Affairs Committee Meeting. What follows is a synthesis of the individual evaluation forms.

General comments :

- I liked this study session very much . We need this kind of knowledge and information. I would like to take part in the next ones.
- Alhamdulillah we were blessed in having food three times a day.
- I very much enjoyed the entire week: this is the best time I've had away in years and I hope we all keep in touch, also have another study session in the future, so we can progress and do good for the Ummah inshâ'a Llâh on a couple of points : the timetable was far too long, it would have been nicer to see more of Budapest. The meeting with the PAC was a good opportunity to find out how ignorant the MPs are. The food was not nice at all, and there was no opportunity to get food in the site if we remained hungry (which happened in several occasions).
- We should have had more time to prepare ourselves for the meeting with the PAC.

Did the study session fulfil expectations ?

- Mainly, as far as I understood.
- It is difficult to answer this, but surely I have had a positive experience.
- Oui.
- Yes, but we did not do everything which is mentioned in the timetable.
- Je m'attendais a beaucoup mieux et beaucoup plus organisé.
- Yes, mostly.
- To 50 %.
- To some extent. I see many people with good ideas and keen to cooperate. The session itself wasn't a turning point for me. Now focus on expectations for the future this study session created, we will see what will happen.
- I was in two minds about coming, so yes this study session did more than fulfil my expectations.

- Yes but I was expecting more, still I go back home with lots of new ideas and perspectives.
- Not particularly as it was geared to much in the direction that we must adapt rather than showing what we have to offer even if it conflicts with the west-a point confirmed by Tariq Ramadan.
- Yes, absolutely.
- To some extent.
- En effet, au début de la semaine, tout ce que j'avais souhaité a été réalisé (elhamdulillah).
- As a first time of participation – yes - but I think inshaAllah the future is going to be more fruitful and more successful.
- Of course yes, I can't describe.

To follow what had been the most important function of this seminar ?

- To see we aren't alone in our problems.
- Tariq Ramadan gave the spiritual side of the meeting.
- I could hear many situations how other Muslims of other countries solve the same problems.
- To illuminate more on the issue of HR, and its interaction with Islamic rights. The interactive illustrations were very inspiring in terms of HR education.
- La qualité et pertinence de la conférence de Tariq Ramadan. Si la rencontre avec les parlementaires avait été mieux préparée, elle aurait été un moment crucial pour tout le monde.
- To open our mind that we can find a solution and we can cooperate all over Europe.
- We have the key in our hand but we should use it for opening the doors.
- Selon moi la session la plus bénéfique, c'est la rencontre avec la commission parlementaire, et aussi bien avec Tariq Ramadan et j'oublie pas le workshop.
- To realise what are HR, and their importance in the social work.
- Contacting people , knowledge, experience, imân.
- To get to know Muslim youth all around Europe, to get to know more about Islamic HR.
- Raising awareness on importance of activism,. Practical training. Obtaining new contacts and friends.
- To work for HR do good inshaAllah. To know the feeling of belonging to the Ummah.
- The session with Tariq R and sessions with Zein and Farkhanda.
- The most important function has been the opportunity to network with other organisations we did not know ever existed.
- To get an understanding of HR. HR from an Islamic point of view.

- Learning about HR and what can do together with Femyso.
- To increase my knowledge of HR and to let me know people with whom I'll be able to collaborate inshaAllah.
- Networking, exchange of ideas.
- La rencontre avec les parlementaires : c'est une bonne chose, dû au fait que c'est une 1ère fois pour eux et que nous avons pu toucher certains parlementaires. Conférence de Tariq R nous a éclairci énormément de choses.
- Recognizing brothers and sister working hard. The connections with other Muslim organisations in Europe and then cooperate with them in diff. activities.
- J'ai aimé le débat sur la globalisation et la conférence de Tariq Ramadan.
- A first for me to meet others, because I'm coming from one country where the people are living with prejudices, stereotypes, etc.
- The most important function for me is that I got a lot of information about HR in Islam and HR in Europe
- Tariq Ramadan lecture and discussion.
- Founding a base for better HR work in Europe within the Muslim community.

What would participants need as support or follow-up after the session ?

- To inform me about the main events of the main Muslim organisations, about the results of these meetings.
- Starting some kind of updating system, further gatherings, courses, seminars etc, on the regional level.
- Un rapport de toutes les conférences. Un livret de présentation des commissions spécialisées à l'UE. Et le compass en traduction française.
- To get lecturers for a local seminar.
- Nous avons besoins des échanges d'informations, des expériences dans différents pays de l'Europe comme on a besoin du support financier.
- Financial and material support for doing such a work in my country.
- Provide networking. Train us further. Provide good channel of information among participants.
- Information on getting grants. An e-group to keep each other informed of events. Meetings between us again inshâ'a Llâh.
- Network support, more « easy to use » information on specific topics (addresses, educational support)...
- I would like to be regularly informed of the activities in other countries. Also if FEMYSO is to retain my credibility it must be potential – the executive must represent everyone.
- To keep in contact. Platform for an exchange of knowledge.
- That we keep in touch and be active in the mailing list.
- Stronger local community.

- Continued contact and practical developments of ideas - and the support of Femyso to keep us updated on everything including opportunities for fundings, etc.
- Le support de la session en langue française, les photos, l'information via le net.
- To have if possible all the materials of this session and to have visitors from Femyso and its member organisations in our country for cooperating and exchanging ideas.
- Plus d'explication sur les droits de l'homme et plus de temps pour étudier des textes.
- At least all the reports about all workshops (and lecturers if written).
- We need Allah's help and support to be always on His straight path.

What else could have been included in this study session?

- The development of commitment to HR over the years, invitation of some scholars to reflect on the topic, or at least providing some articles, introducing some role-playing situations, PBL (problem-based).
- Des moments privilégiés pour l'interconnaissance, l'échange etc. Des politiciens (si possible) et des moments de rencontre en interne, exclusivement.
- Je crois qu'il faut améliorer les lecteurs en thème de droit de l'homme en Islam.
- More lectures with Tariq Ramadan.
- More Islamic references (practical examples of Medina, Qur'ân, verses, and hadith).
- The opportunity to have separate evenings.
- Project management.
- More free time around the city.
- Get more in details of court procedures, concrete actions already done by Muslims, associations and study of their results, study of cases, dynamic study of HR issues.
- Create importance on study actual Islamic HR not just HR of non-Muslims.
- More Islamic issues and topics concerning HR.
- More info about HR in Islam.
- More attention to our brothers dying for Islam in the world – their HR have not been considered here as much as ours.
- Much more practical manifestations and « how to » by experienced people-plus more free time and I am absolutely exhausted.
- Plus de conférences et l'invitation de responsables politiques du pays ou autre.
- I d suggest to be a senior person (old brother) among us....
- Can be included more lectures about HR , globalisation and islamaphobia.
- Some time for workshops. It was a good and well-done study session.
- Globalisation, islamique countries.
- Maybe more scholars who knows about HR issue.
- Short reminders after every prayer (as it was originally planned).

As a European Muslim to what extent had the seminar contributed to developing personal understanding of Islam and Human Rights?

- This seminar helped me to understand where is my place between non-Muslims. I am not in minority because I have the same human rights like other citizens. And I can be more brave in telling about my opinions.
- I see it as an argumentation towards the use of HR as a tool to help alienate European Muslims.
- A la lumière des différentes expériences, de nos références (T Ramadan), de la rencontre avec les parlementaires, les formations, j'ai compris les liens intimes qui lient le musulman aux droits de l'homme, de l'humanité et le devoir de tous vis à vis de leur conscience.
- We are not being lost. We should contribute with our society and other organisations working on this field. We can only achieve any result by this way. We are European citizens and Muslims first. To respect everybody.
- As European Muslim I should do best for intercultural dialog and implement HR in reality.
- We are first Muslim not European!!! Islam isn't just a nice slogan, it provides the real HR for all people, all around the world.
- The biggest contribution was Tariq R lecture. It made me think, I got new ideas and motivations.
- I had always understood that HR were an integral part of Islam and not two separate concepts, as we are already being told.
- Yes thanks to Tariq R, but concerning HR specifically, I already knew what was said by reading half a book and some articles, so I was expecting more.
- It has increased my understanding of HR and the role of Islam has in developing [...].
- I have seen , that there is quite a lot to do. We have to discuss these issues in our local and national organisations, so we can develop a proper point of view concerning these subjects.
- A lot masha Allah !! not only HR in Islam but HR in general too.
- It has given to me a new point of view on this topic.
- Encouraged me to develop theory understanding of HR as well as political participations.
- Islam : bonne compréhension due a la conférence de Tariq R. HR : n'ayant pas trop de notions sur les droits de l'homme, les ateliers, explications, discussion, etc. . m'ont permis de développer une compréhension.
- Somehow. I think that after this session, it's so important for brothers and sisters to know more and more about HR . In Islam and how can there been practiced in our society.
- Oui.

- I m very high extent, because I met with many things with which I hadn't knowledge of.
- I think I've become more open minded considering hr and contacts with non Muslim organisations.
- There were many questions in my mind which have been clarified.
- Much bigger understanding of Hr in Islam.

What have participants learned at the study session?

- That we are sisters and brothers even if we don't speak in the same language. We have to cooperate to be successful.
- New approaches to tackle the topic, new ideas regarding HRE.
- Plus qu'apprendre, il m'a permis de réaliser beaucoup de choses, trop pour les mentionner dans un paragraphe.
- Respect other's view. Waiting respect from the others. More separation is needed by the individuals or more moderate behaviour between us (shaitan is working).
- Un séminaire... se rendre compte d'autres expériences au niveau des pays de l'Europe.
- At first, I've learned about the meaning of HR and what is intercultural dialogue, then how can I fulfil HR and to educate others in this important thing.
- About HR , very good, teaching techniques, very good.
- I learned that we should work more together, because we all as Muslims are fighting with the same problems, all over Europe.
- It increased my practical experience.
- To be more diplomatic and less aggressive. To be better than those who hold you in contempt.
- How we should deal on political level (at least some keys), that there is still a lot more to get involved in.
- Also confirmed my view of most Islamic organisations: they have very noble ideas but the basics/fundamentals are missing: no respect for prayers, bad time keeping and the free mixing. By indulging in such bad practices we will never be successful. I had trouble listening to the preparatory team as they themselves promoted their bad practices. Please do not take offence but just friendly naseeh.
- We have to develop our own action plan and not only to react.
- That if we want to improve our situation in Europe we as Muslims must more together as one, we have to work with other non Muslim hr organisations as well.
- I've learned that we can't consider just our problems without a general understanding of the rights of all human beings. I've learned a lot about brotherhood and sisterhood. I've learned to be more respectful of the differences.
- Diplomacy.
- The standard we as "European Muslims", our awareness of HR etc. How we can improve.
- Un peu l'anglais ! A mieux me connaître pour mieux connaître le monde qui nous entoure.
- That we have to do so much as European Muslims and not to consider ourselves always as minorities.
- J'ai appris surtout la situation du travail islamique dans les autres pays et aussi quelles sont les violations les plus fréquentes des droits de l'homme.

- More things for the countries of my brothers and sisters, more things about Femyso, more for HR etc.
- A lot.
- English/french.
- I learned what Hr mean in the Occidental point of view and Islamic view.
- A lot from brothers and sisters, there's a lot to do, foundation of knowledge on hr in Islam, workshop methodologies, especially regarding intercultural learning, being always open-minded for new impacts.

Additional comments

- God reward those who organised this seminar.
- Les ateliers devraient être différents et non la même question pour 5 groupes. Les rapports sont lassants car on reprend toujours les mêmes idées. Le temps gagné sert à offrir plus de liberté d'expression, de débats, de réactions. Que Dieu agrée tous vos efforts et vous fasse entrer au paradis, barakallahufikum.
- May Allah bless you.
- En tant que musulmans européens, je doit bien définir mon identité, en tant qu'organisateur de ce type de session je dois être leader pour les autres autant qu'invité.
- In my opinion in every next program of such study session there MUST be such meeting with the parliamentarians. But let others to know what can young participants say in this dialogue and what is their role in such communication with MPs.
- I appreciate your work, all the prepteam, I am sure that it was a lot of work. May Allah bless you all. For the next time, it would be better if there were more boundaries set at the beginning.
- Next time we should try to have more practical objectives provide more clear framework of aims and sense of outcomes after as well.
- I had an excellent week. Jazakallah khair to the prepteam, Rui, Brigitte and anyone else who I may have accidently forgotten. May Allah bless you and reward you all
- As far as i I am concerned. Thursday was a day lost as much as Friday afternoon. The time for writing reports in a complete and professional way was much too short. Prepteam made a fine work, go on and thank you.
- To the prepteam next time if we have free mixing, try to not free mix yourselves and set a good example - international evening, icebreakers, and others.
- I think that this session has helped me to become a better person, and a better Muslim inshâ'a Llâh.
- For too much time spent on talking about what is HR etc and far too little on practical manifestations. Hadia and Sunduss have been brilliant and overall felt , bonded with the other European Muslims inshaAllah.
- Qu'Allah récompense Sunduss, Chokri, Hadia, Yasin, le Président et Brigitte pour tous les efforts qu'ils ont fait pour la bonne réussite de ce séminaire. Votre

dévouement et votre patience, ainsi que votre gentillesse m'ont personnellement touchés. Vous êtes les bienvenus en France.

- Jazakumullahukhairan.
- I beg Allah to reward you with his best thing in dunia en aghira. An dinshaAllah you never stop with organisations like this.
- No comments.
- Thanks to the preparatory team for their job.
- May Allah help us in this world and in the hereafter.

6. Useful Links:

Human Rights in Islam leaflet

<http://www.iad.org/PDF/WAMY10.pdf>

The Islamic Universal Human Rights Declaration

<http://www.alhewar.com/ISLAMDECL.html>

The Medina Charter

<http://islamic-world.net/islamic-state/macharter.htm>

Compass – the manual on human rights education with young people

<http://www.coe.int/compass>