

THE IMPACT OF 7 JULY 2005 LONDON BOMB ATTACKS ON MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE EU

November 2005



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Foreword

The four bomb attacks in London on 7 July, which claimed the lives of over fifty people and injured a further seven hundred, rightly horrified the world. Only two weeks later, four more attempted attacks followed, which fortunately failed to cause any further loss of life. The first thought of all Europeans was a feeling of profound empathy for the victims. The universal condemnation of the event, and the strong solidarity shown by European leaders, showed European cohesion at its most effective.

At the same time, there was a concern that some individuals could exploit the religious background of the bombers as an excuse for racist attacks and abuses against members of minority communities, British Muslims in particular. This is the background to this report by the EUMC. The report confirms that in the immediate period after the attacks there was a temporary and disturbing increase in faith related hate crimes across the UK. Understandably, this made minority groups – and particularly British Muslims - feel vulnerable and fear for their safety. But the longer term perspective is more hopeful: the strong stand taken by political and community leaders both in condemning the attacks and defending the legitimate rights of Muslims saw a swift reduction in such incidents. As a result of the strong stand by political and community leaders there was a largely positive response from the media across the EU which avoided making generalisations and stressed the importance of distinguishing between the act of a few individuals and the community in general. In addition, European Muslim community leaders reacted immediately and unequivocally by condemning the bombers. These factors together were decisive in countering incidents and prejudice against minorities, and preventing a trend of incidents and attacks from taking shape.

The real test will be whether this initial encouraging response translates into effective long-term action that addresses the wider questions posed in the aftermath of the London events. How to strengthen cohesion and integration in the diverse European societies, and how to counter marginalisation and discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or belief? Political leaders, the institutions, and also the media, have a particular responsibility to provide answers to this question.

Our report shows that positive change is possible provided that there is clear political leadership, support from the institutions and civil society, as well as sensitive reporting in the media. Such joint efforts are crucially important for our work towards an inclusive Europe, which values its diversity without concealing the inherent challenges. This would be the way into our future.

Beate Winkler
Director

November 2005

Executive Summary

On 7 July 2005, four bombs were detonated in the centre of London, in the morning rush hour. Three exploded in Underground stations and the fourth on a bus. Two weeks later, on 21 July there were four more attempted attacks on London's public transport system. This time only the detonators of the bombs exploded, and there were no fatalities. The victims of the London bombings were people of many nationalities, British and non-British, whites and non-whites, Muslims and non-Muslims. During London's bid for the 2012 Olympics, one of the arguments in London's favour was its multicultural and cosmopolitan character. In the immediate aftermath of the bombing attacks, this diversity became a target for some individuals who misused the religious background of the bombers as an excuse for racist attacks and abuses against members of minority communities, British Muslims in particular.

Although it is still early to draw final conclusions regarding the impact of the London events on the life of Muslim communities in Europe, the National Focal Point reports indicate that there were incidents against members and property of the Muslim community, but that these tended generally to be sporadic and isolated. The situation in different parts of the United Kingdom (UK), according to official and unofficial reports, indicates a pronounced short-term increase in the number of incidents in the immediate aftermath. The relatively minor level of incidents across the EU could be attributed to a variety of factors such as the swift responses by governments, politicians and opinion formers, supported by the police, who made serious efforts to distinguish clearly between the action of the bombers and Islam as a whole. In addition, there was a strong and immediate reaction by Muslim representatives who unequivocally condemned the bombers. The lesson of 7 July is that strong, co-ordinated action by all stakeholders works effectively. Out of concern about possible anti-Muslim incidents, the UK Government promptly highlighted its support for the legitimate aspirations of the Muslim community. The Police made clear that reprisals against members of the Muslim community would be dealt with harshly. In all EU Member States, governments and political parties responded to the attacks with statements of condolences, and in many Member States a careful distinction was drawn between the bombers and the Muslim community in general.

Across the EU, Muslim organisations were particularly strong in their condemnation of the London bombing attacks and expressed determination to oppose violent radicalism. Muslim leaders in the UK reacted at once by condemning the bombings and stressing that such acts ran counter to Muslim belief. They engaged in dialogue with Government, Police and local authorities showing their support for efforts to root out terrorism and to avert a backlash on Muslim communities. Muslim organisations in all other Member States unequivocally condemned the bombings and while in the UK they pledged to work with the wider society to remove forms of extremism in their midst, in some other Member States they asked the members of their communities to cooperate fully

with the authorities in their investigations. Muslim faith leaders in several Member States issued decrees, *fatwa*, stating that such acts were clearly contrary to Islamic beliefs. In the UK interfaith support from representatives of the Christian and Jewish communities was immediate and public.

In the week following the bombings, the media in all Member States generally went to great lengths to appear balanced. The media in the UK underlined the point that the perpetrators were not acting on behalf of the Muslim community. Once the bombers were identified as British Muslims, there was however a distinct change in reporting in the UK and the focus shifted to broader issues about the Muslim communities and prevention of future incidents. Some media focused on the place of Muslim communities in British society, in particular the evidence of alienation of young Muslim males. In other Member States some media raised the issue of regulating immigration, while others focused on the radicalisation of Muslim youth linking it to inadequate integration processes. In most cases the media were careful to distinguish clearly between terrorism and the Muslim faith.

In general terms, according to the National Focal Point reports, there was no significant increase in incidents directed against the Muslim communities in most EU Member States during the reporting period. However, in the UK the number of reported incidents against members of the Muslim community and their places of worship increased almost immediately. In the five weeks after the bombing attacks, the Metropolitan Police in London recorded a sharp rise in faith hate crimes as compared to the same period in 2004. These attacks were directed predominantly at British Muslims. Reports from other parts of the UK, including from NGO sources, confirmed that the Muslim communities had become targets of increased hostility in the wake of the London bombings. However, at the time of writing, the overall assessment for hate crime incidents is that after the rise covering the period between 7 July to beginning of August they are moving back down towards levels similar to those experienced in 2004. In the UK, the temporary increase in racist incidents has made minority groups – and particularly British Muslims - feel vulnerable. The fear of reprisals correlated with rising prejudices perceived by members of the Muslim community. In media interviews and call-in programmes, Muslims said that they felt anxious about going out publicly or to work. Various sources reported that British Muslims felt that they were “under suspicion”.

Governments, police services and Muslim communities have taken a number of initiatives to support monitoring of incidents and engagement of the Muslim community, in the UK in particular. The Muslim Council of Britain launched an Incident Monitoring Service, and the UK Government held a series of meetings with Muslim leaders to plan future joint action. The UK Home Office launched a consultation process with Muslim community representatives to develop proposals for strengthening cohesion and tackling extremism. The response by the UK Government, police services and local authorities demonstrate that positive lessons have been learned from similar attacks associated in the public mind with Islam. This particularly relates to strong political leadership against a possible anti-Muslim backlash, positive engagement with the Muslim community and the support of the police services.

In several other Member States of the European Union, the London events appear to have triggered new, or reinforced existing initiatives to reach out to the Muslim community. Proposals for an intensified dialogue between Muslim communities and the State or between faiths have also come from Muslim community leaders. In some Member States, Government initiatives aimed at greater integration of Muslim communities have been fast-tracked.

This report takes stock of initiatives launched to prevent anti-Muslim incidents and engage with the Muslim community in the aftermath of the July bombings. It is pivotal that these efforts feed into comprehensive social inclusion and anti-discrimination policies and are followed up so that they achieve sustainable results and address core issues with benefits for the entire society. Building on its previous reports relating to Muslim communities in the EU, the EUMC puts forward four principal conclusions with an aim to support policy making towards Muslim communities.

CONCLUSIONS FOR THE MEMBER STATES AND EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS:

1. Members of government, police officials, politicians and other high profile opinion makers must show decisive political leadership, avoid generalisations and continue much of the good work that was seen following the London attacks. Positive public gestures regarding Islam, and opening a dialogue with Muslim community representatives – based on the respect for human rights - must not be seen to happen only in a time of heightened tension. This will also set the agenda for the media and help avoid negative stereotyping of Muslims.
2. Member States and the European Institutions should encourage and promote the active involvement of Muslim communities in institutionalised procedures of policy-making and include them in more informal channels of dialogue at European, national and local level. Member States and the European institutions should examine ways to support Muslim communities' self-organisation through capacity building and leadership development.
3. Police services must encourage reporting of racist incidents, respond immediately to indications of tensions by stepping up policing among targeted communities, and provide adequate support to victims of racist crime. Comprehensive criminal legislation needs to recognise racial motivation as an aggravating factor to ensure full investigation and adequate punishment of such crimes.
4. Member States should establish monitoring procedures to assess the progress of social inclusion and send an unequivocal signal to all communities that efforts to combat discrimination are to be given priority. Policies that counter marginalisation of minority communities should become priorities.

Background to the report

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) commissioned this report immediately after the events of 7 July. The purpose was to collect data and information on the reactions to the incident, the initial response of Government, the police forces, the Muslim community and the media with a view to providing the Community and its Member States with an initial overview of the situation, as well as to identify initiatives to strengthen community cohesion.

This followed similar information gathering initiatives by the EUMC in relation to the terrorist attacks on New York and Madrid and the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh. The National Focal Points (NFPs) of the EUMC's European Racism and Xenophobia Network (RAXEN) were asked to provide preliminary data. Previous reports have looked at the situation of Jewish communities – for instance in spring 2002 when an increase of antisemitic incidents was noted in some EU Member States.

The present report summarises the country information received from the 25 NFPs and covers the period 7 July to at least 25 September 2005, in some cases beyond. Part I of this report covers events in the United Kingdom (UK) from 7 July until 5 October and includes information collected and provided by the UK National Focal Point. It focuses on the reaction of the Government, the impact on the Muslim community and the media reporting of the event. The information on the UK should be read in conjunction with the comparative overview of the situation on the other 24 Member States, which is summarised in Part II of this report.

The EUMC recognises that a longer period of information gathering is required to assess more carefully the impact of government action, initiatives by Muslim organisations and the police services, and the effectiveness of inter-community mechanisms. The EUMC is continuing to collect data and information related to the situation of Muslim communities across the EU and will also seek to identify good practices that can be sustainable and support community cohesion. Specific findings will be included in a comprehensive analytical report, which is to be published in 2006.

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Part I:

Situation of the Muslim Community in the UK in the aftermath of the 7 July 2005 bombing attacks in London

1. Information by the United Kingdom National Focal Point of the EUMC

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The Muslim community in the UK suffered an increase of incidents in the short term according to reports both by the police services and Muslim organisations. This in turn intensified action and initiatives by Government, the police services and Muslim organisations.

In brief, the EUMC's view is that the initial response by the UK Government, the Police, the Mayor of London and Muslim organisations demonstrated that positive lessons had been learned from similar attacks in other Member States and the United States of America. This particularly relates to the speed of the reaction by government, the police services and Muslim organisations, the decisive nature of the political leadership displayed at the national and London level, the positive engagement with the Muslim community, the inter-faith support offered by the Christian and Jewish faith representatives and the public support of the police services.

The report demonstrates the importance of clear political leadership. It particularly finds that policy-makers, commentators, civil society, politicians and much of the media largely avoided making generalisations and blaming the act of a few individuals on an entire community. Instead, a clear distinction was made and close cooperation with the Muslim community was sought.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF INITIAL REACTIONS BY THE UK GOVERNMENT, MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS AND THE MEDIA

The Government of the United Kingdom reacted initially in two ways. One reaction was to treat the London bombings as acts of terrorism and employ legal and operational measures to pursue the perpetrators vigorously and prevent any further similar event. The other reaction was aimed at averting any possible anti-Muslim backlash and ensuring that a careful distinction was drawn between the bombings and Islam or the Muslim communities. The Government made it clear that reprisals against Muslim communities (individuals, buildings, businesses, etc.) would not be tolerated and would be dealt with harshly. The Police stressed that they would pursue any such incidents with vigour, and to the full extent of the law. The Mayor of London re-iterated this approach.

Within the Muslim community, Muslim leaders reacted at once by condemning the bombings and stressing that such acts were counter to Islamic belief. For example, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), stated that any true Muslim would not carry out such acts as they were clearly contrary to Islamic beliefs.

In general, the media went to great lengths to make the point that Muslims were killed in the bombings and that the perpetrators were not acting on behalf of Islam. On 7 July, the media carried articles warning against a potential anti-Muslim backlash. However, after it became clear that the bombers were British-born, there was a distinct change in the kind of reporting, shifting to issues of integration and the radicalisation of members of the Muslim community in Britain. The later reporting by some media on the granting of UK citizenship to some of the 21 July suspects and the situation of non-British religious extremists resident in the UK, broadened the debate to issues of immigration, residency status and human rights legislation.

A rise in incidents against members of the Muslim community, or those perceived to be Muslim, was recorded almost immediately after the bombings. This is also a result of very sophisticated recording practices by the UK Police and the UK's criminal legislation relating to racially and religiously motivated offences.¹ In London, the Metropolitan Police (MET) recorded a sharp increase in faith related hate crimes with most cases being classified as verbal or minor physical assaults targeting the Muslim community, and there was also property damage and attacks on mosques. However, more efficient recording of faith hate crimes as distinct from race hate crimes may also have contributed to the rise compared with 2004. The overall total for hate crimes in London has increased by five percent since the events of 7 and 21 July (MET data as of 18 October). The South East Wales Race Equality Council (SEWREC) stated that it had seen a "very big" rise in incidents since the London bombings from ten per month, to more than thirty in just two weeks. Attacks on Sikh temples were also recorded. Reports from other parts of the UK, including from NGO sources, confirmed that the Muslim communities had become targets of increased hostility in the immediate aftermath of the London bombings. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) launched an Incident Monitoring Service for Muslims. The response from the Police services was prompt and immediate; policing among vulnerable communities was stepped up and a clear communication policy was implemented which sought to reassure targeted minorities and deter potential perpetrators. By October 2005 hate crime incidents

¹ The UK has put in place comprehensive criminal legislation to classify, record and punish racially and religiously aggravated offences. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (for racially aggravated offences) and the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (for religiously aggravated offences) introduced 9 racially and religiously motivated offences. Thus, where offences such as assault and criminal damage are found to be racially or religiously motivated, the court can impose a higher penalty. For other offences, the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 introduced a requirement for courts to take account of racial or religious motivation in sentencing. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 extended that principle to offences motivated by hatred of sexual orientation or disability. The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 raised the maximum penalty for racial incitement to seven years.

were moving back downwards towards levels similar to those experienced in 2004 after the increases recorded in the immediate aftermath of the bombings.

At the first indications of a possible backlash against Muslims, with reports of arson at a mosque in Leeds and a Sikh temple in Kent, UK Home Secretary Charles Clarke met with faith leaders. The Government later initiated a series of summer meetings with Muslim community representatives across the country to engage in an enhanced dialogue and plan future action. Seven working groups were set up to work out proposals on how to address the roots of alienation and radicalisation, and to look at issues around integration and cohesion.

Information provided to the EUMC by the UK Home Office reiterated the determination of public authorities to act against any possible backlash on minority communities:

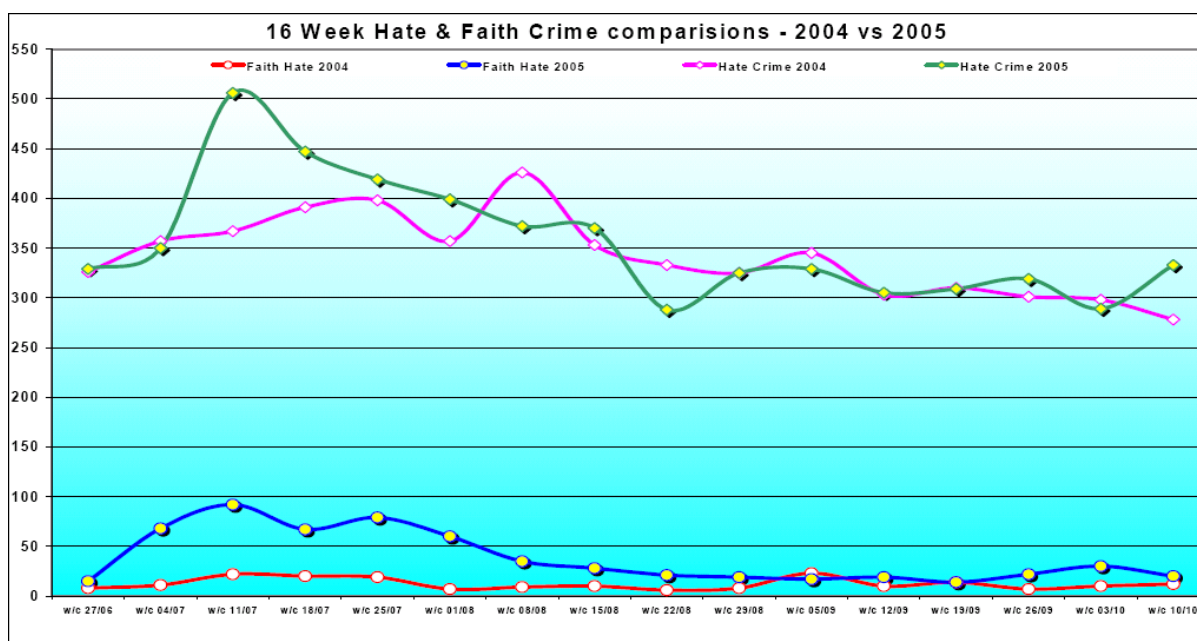
“Government, the security services, the police, local authorities and community organisations like the Commission for Racial Equality have and will continue to work closely together to ensure the safety and security of all communities at this time and to reassure communities that might feel particularly vulnerable. Any crimes should be reported to the police. The response to religiously and racially motivated hate crimes at all levels will be robust. The police are alive to the need to reassure communities that might be targeted and are liaising directly with community leaders.”

1.3. IMPACT OF THE LONDON EVENTS ON THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

1.3.1. Anti-Muslim incidents recorded by official and unofficial sources

- a) In **London** the **Metropolitan Police** (MET) recorded a sharp increase in **faith related hate crimes**² as the table below indicates. Most cases were classified as verbal or minor physical assaults targeting the Muslim community, although there was property damage and attacks on mosques, according to Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur³. However, more efficient recording of faith hate crimes as distinct from race hate crimes may also have contributed to the rise compared with 2004.

The overall total for hate crimes in London has increased by five percent since the events of 7 and 21 July (MET data as of 18 October), while overall for the ‘Financial Year to Date’ the total for offences is actually down by four percent (346 fewer offences).⁴



² MPS Hate Crime Policy: Hate crime incidents are crime reports that have been flagged as faith, race, anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic and homophobic crimes. Faith crimes are a count of crime reports flagged specifically as faith hate. The hate crime figure is comprised of all these offences gender identity or disability.”

³ More details on http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/london/4740015.stm (04/08/05)

⁴ Communities Together Information Bulletin Number 55. Dated 18 October 2005 15.00hours (available at http://www.met.police.uk/communities_together/index.htm)

Date	Faith Hate 2004	Faith Hate 2005	Hate Crime 2004	Hate Crime 2005
w/c 30/05	9	15	379	325
w/c 06/06	13	19	418	318
w/c 13/06	10	21	337	323
w/c 20/06	14	16	334	370
w/c 27/06	8	15	326	329
w/c 04/07	11	68	357	350
w/c 11/07	22	92	367	506
w/c 18/07	20	67	391	447
w/c 25/07	19	79	398	419
w/c 01/08	7	60	357	399
w/c 08/08	9	35	426	372
w/c 15/08	10	28	353	370
w/c 22/08	6	21	333	288
w/c 29/08	8	19	325	325
w/c 05/09	23	17	345	329
w/c 12/09	10	19	303	305
w/c 19/09	14	14	310	309
w/c 26/09	7	22	301	319
w/c 03/10	10	30	298	289
w/c 10/10	12	20	278	333

b) The press reported on these increases in hate crimes – sometimes blurring the distinction between faith related hate crime and other racist crime:

- *Independent* 3/8/05 "Race-hate crimes surge in London".⁵
- **Scotland:** *The Scotsman* "Scottish race hate crimes soar after bombs" 4/8/05.⁶
- Also, *BBC News* 4/8/05 "Race attacks show 'low' increase".⁷

c) **Liverpool:** The number of racially and religiously motivated attacks has risen significantly in Merseyside since the London bombings. New figures show more than 200 calls were made to the Merseyside Racial Monitoring Unit help

⁵ This can be accessed at:
<http://webmail.warwick.ac.uk/servlet/webacc?merge=linkurl&Url.linkText=http%3a%2f%2fwww.w%2efindarticles%2ecom%2fp%2farticles%2fmi%5fq%4158%2fis%5f20050803%2fai%5fn14826153%2fprint>

⁶ This can be accessed at:
<http://webmail.warwick.ac.uk/servlet/webacc?merge=linkurl&Url.linkText=http%3a%2f%2fthes.cotsman%2escotsman%2ecom%2fprint%2ecfm%3fid%3d1725512005>

⁷ This can be accessed at:
<http://webmail.warwick.ac.uk/servlet/webacc?merge=linkurl&Url.linkText=http%3a%2f%2fnews%2ebb%2eco%2euk%2f1%2fhi%2fscotland%2f4743159%2estm>

line in the six weeks following 7 July, compared with 48 in the preceding six weeks. Liverpool City Council's new racial harassment hotline has also recorded an increase in calls⁸.

- d) The **Institute for Race Relations** (IRR) news network routinely collects data from around the UK⁹. As figures reveal, incidents started almost immediately after it became clear that the 7 July bombings were being linked to a terrorist attack, and before the perpetrators were identified. Within the reporting period for this report, such incidents are being reported from all over the country.¹⁰
- e) **North Wales Police** figures showed that there has been a significant increase in the number of racial incidents in Wales since the 7 July bombings in London¹¹.
- f) The **South East Wales Race Equality Council** (SEWREC) said that it had seen a “very big” rise in incidents since the London bombings. The rate of abuse had risen sharply from ten incidents per month, to more than thirty in just two weeks.¹²
- g) The Monitoring Group continuously publishes accounts of individual racist incidents¹³ and has compiled an overview of racist attacks and events in the immediate aftermath of the London bombings (7 July to 20 July 2005)¹⁴. It should be noted that there have also been attacks on Sikh temples¹⁵.

As with other racist crime statistics, the number of actual attacks and abuses is likely to be significantly higher. This, for instance, is indicated by the results of a MORI poll for the Greater London Authority, based on a representative sample of 1,002 telephone interviews conducted on 22-26 September.¹⁶ Only 11 percent of those who had experienced racist incidents (98) declared to have reported them to the police. As ways to encourage reporting, the following statements received most agreement:

⁸ This can be accessed at: [http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/this%20week/four-fold increase in mersey racist attacks.htm](http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/this%20week/four-fold%20increase%20in%20mersey%20racist%20attacks.htm) (07/10/2005)

⁹ Full details collected by the IRR, accessed at, <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/july/ha000017.html> (28/07/05), and the following sites, <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/july/ha000013.html> (21/07/05), and, <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/july/ak000008.html> (14/07/05)

¹⁰ A most recent list is accessed at: http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf/all_racial_violence_4.doc (05/10/05)

¹¹ Full details accessed at, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/wales/4726355.stm

¹² Full details accessed at, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/wales/south_east/4704593.stm (22/07/05)

¹³ Examples of these can be accessed at: http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/News%20and%20Campaigns/this_months_news_stories.htm; and also at: http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/this%20week/racist_graffitti_leicester.htm (07/10/2005)

¹⁴ http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/this%20week/after_7_7/after_the_london_bombing.htm

¹⁵ Full details accessed at, <http://www.blink.org.uk/pdescription.asp?key=8030&grp=44>

¹⁶ Full results of the poll at: http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/consultation/docs/sep05_poll.pdf

1. "Knowing that it would make a difference" (25 percent);
2. "If people had confidence in the police being more supportive of Black and minority ethnic groups" (21 percent);
3. "Knowing that the police would take you seriously" (20 percent).

1.3.2. General impact on Muslim communities

On the very day of the London bombings and more widely on the following day, the media started reporting about a possible anti-Muslim backlash.¹⁷ The media carried reports that members of the broader Muslim community felt anxious about going out publicly or to work. The fear of reprisals featured in media reports of interviews conducted with members of the Muslim community.¹⁸ Various sources reported that British Muslims felt that they were "under suspicion" and might be targeted as suspected bombers. Among others, Lord Ahmed, the Muslim Labour peer, said that many Muslims in the north of England believed they could become victims of mistaken identity by armed police, in the wake of the accidental shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes¹⁹. Many commentators drew a parallel to the increase in anti-Muslim feeling and incidents in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks and anxieties after the Madrid train bombings in March 2004.

Multiculturalism is clearly an issue for discussion in the UK, having been taken for granted for many years, following remarks by Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Commission for racial Equality, that more emphasis should be given to integration of minorities.

A Mori poll for the BBC conducted on 8-9 August suggests that the 7/7 bomb attacks have not led to an upsurge in racial intolerance.²⁰ The poll showed that of the 1,004 people questioned²¹, 62 percent said multiculturalism made Britain "a better place to live". But 32 percent think it "threatens the British way of life" and 54 percent think "parts of the country don't feel like Britain any more because of immigration". The overwhelming majority of Muslims - 89 percent - said they feel proud when British teams do well in international competitions, a similar figure to the national population. The survey findings show that Muslims agree, as much as non-Muslims, that immigrants should be made to learn English and accept the authority of British institutions. According to the survey, 74 percent of Muslims think Britain should deport or exclude foreigners who encourage terrorism, compared with 91 percent of the population as a whole.

¹⁷ *Guardian* on 8 July: "Muslim leaders fear backlash". <http://www.guardian.co.uk/terrorism/story/0,12780,1524173,00.html>. *Independent* on 8 July: "Muslims told not to travel as retaliation fears grow". http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article297652.ece

¹⁸ *Independent* of 12 July: "Muslim leaders warn of mounting Islamophobia after attacks on mosques." <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article298513.ece>

¹⁹ Full details accessed at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4714027.stm (25/07/05)

²⁰ The details can be accessed at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4137990.stm> (12/08/05)

²¹ The survey questioned 1,004 people in the UK. A booster survey of 204 British Muslims was conducted for comparison.

The later MORI poll for the Greater London Authority, conducted on 22-26 September, showed that 64 percent of Londoners agreed with the statement that “Multiculturalism makes London a better place to live”.²² 56 percent showed themselves in favour of banning discrimination on the grounds of religion while 32 opposed such a ban. 77 percent declared to be satisfied with the way the Metropolitan Police had responded to the bombing attacks. In the same poll, 10 percent responded that they or a friend/relative had been victims of hostility or abuse because of race or religion.

According to a psychological study²³ published in the online version of the British Medical Journal, Muslim residents compared with other inhabitants of the capital far more keenly felt stress caused by the 7/7 bombings in London. 61 percent of Muslim commuters surveyed suffered substantial stress in the days following the first attacks on the city's transport system - almost double the proportion felt by other Londoners. The study was carried out before the second series of attacks on 21 July 2005.

1.3.3. Immediate Government and police responses

The British Government reacted very quickly after the bombings by making it clear that reprisals against Muslim communities (individuals, buildings, businesses, etc.) would be dealt with very harshly. The police also said that they would pursue any such incidents with vigour, and to the full extent of the law.

In his statement after the 7/7 attacks, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair explicitly welcomed the statement issued by the Muslim Council of Britain and drew a clear distinction between the bombers and the Muslim community in general.²⁴ In the following days, the Prime Minister held a number of meetings with leaders of the Muslim community in order to get their view on the events.

The Home Office set up a special website which offered useful links to a range of information services (explaining emergency procedures, how to contact them in confidence, information to assist with ongoing investigations, outlining steps the Government is taking to combat terrorism, etc)²⁵. The Home Secretary, Charles Clarke also voiced concern about some of the language used in the media and called on the media not to fuel inter-community tensions.

Media reported that within hours of the attacks, the police forces across the country were sent advice from the Association of Chief Police Officers on how to counter any backlash. Forces were supposed to make contact with “vulnerable communities”.²⁶ The Metropolitan Police (MET) contacted Muslim community organisations and stepped up patrols within targeted communities such as around

²² http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/consultation/docs/sep05_poll.pdf

²³ More details on <http://www.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-22/0508267923182323.htm> (26-08-05)

²⁴ <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page7858.asp>

²⁵ This information can be accessed at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism>

²⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/attackonlondon/story/0,,1524226,00.html>

mosques.²⁷ In a press release on 8 July, the Association of Chief Police Officers emphasised: “We have to be clear that the people who carried out these acts are criminals. Whether or not they seek to justify their acts by reference to religion, what they did was mass murder. No religion supports that. It is therefore absolutely crucial that there be no backlash against any section of the community. Any such backlash would simply play into the hands of the murderers. As well as taking action to prevent it, police will deal robustly with any such behaviour that actually takes place.”²⁸

Among the responses from local authorities, the reactions from the Greater London Authorities, particularly the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, are most noteworthy. Praising the cosmopolitan character of London, Ken Livingstone in his statement on 7 July, put in focus members of minorities among the victims and said that the attacks were “aimed at ordinary, working-class Londoners, black and white, Muslim and Christian, Hindu and Jew, young and old”²⁹. In the aftermath of the attacks, the Mayor has supported the ‘7 million Londoners, 1 London’ advertising campaign which promotes the unity of London’s diverse communities and calls upon Londoners not “to be divided by acts of terrorism”³⁰. The London Assembly on 12 July passed a motion condemning the 7 July attacks while stressing its commitment to value London’s diversity (“Uniting to protect London's communities”).³¹

Representatives of all parliamentary parties condemned a campaign leaflet of the British National Party (BNP) that appeared on 9 July and used an aerial photograph of the bombed bus with the caption, “maybe it's time to start listening to the BNP”.

²⁷ Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Brian Paddick at a press conference on 10 July. <http://cms.met.police.uk/met/layout/set/print/content/view/full/1263>

²⁸ http://www.acpo.police.uk/pressrelease.asp?PR_GUID={2552488E-0254-4637-BD5D-8ACC8D856F0F}

²⁹ http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=5306

³⁰ Full details at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/onelondon/>

³¹ http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release_a.jsp?releaseid=5326

1.3.4. British Muslim community responses to London bombings

The reaction by a substantial number of Muslim organisations³² was immediate³³. Within an hour of the bombings Muslim organisations issued statements condemning the events. Muslim leaders also stressed that these acts were not committed by true Muslims. Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), stated that this was not an Islamic problem because anyone who was a true Muslim believer would not carry out such acts, since they were contrary to Islamic beliefs³⁴. Sayed Aziz Pasha speaking on behalf of The Union of Muslim Organisations of UK & EIRE offered “support to the authorities to eradicate terrorism from British soil”. On 18 July, more than 500 British Muslim religious leaders issued a fatwa, titled ‘Not in Our Name’, in which they condemn the London bombings as being against the teachings of Islam and express their determination “to work with the wider society to remove pockets of all forms of extremism in Britain”³⁵. Islamic Relief Worldwide, a British based international development charity, made a donation to the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund, which was set up by the Mayor of London together with British Red Cross, to support the victims of the London bombings and their families.³⁶

In meetings with Prime Minister Tony Blair, Home Secretary Charles Clarke and Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair, senior Muslim leaders declared their determination to confront violent extremism in their communities and to co-operate in counter-terrorism efforts.³⁷

At the same time, all major Muslim organisations warned against a possible anti-Muslim backlash, recalling similar situations after the 11 September 2001 attacks and the Madrid bombings of 11 March 2004. A statement on the website of the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) on 7 July warned Muslims against unnecessary journeys and urged Muslims to take precautionary measures, for fear of reprisals. In a communication to British Imams and Muslim organisations on 11

³² Among those are the Muslim Council of Britain, Union of Muslim Organisations of UK & EIRE, Muslim Council of Britain & Churches Together in Britain & Ireland, National Assembly Against Racism and Muslim Council of Britain, Muslim Association of Britain, The Islamic Society of Britain, Lancashire Council of Mosques, Council of Indian Muslims UK, Anjuman-e-Ja'fariyya Shia Ithna Ashari Muslim Community of Watford, Harrow Islamic Centres & Mosques, Muslim Charity Interpal, Stop Political Terror Coalition, Bristol Muslim Cultural Society, Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain, The Muslim Jewish Forum of North London, UK Islamic Mission, Welfare Trust International, Liberal Democrat Muslims Forum, Muslim Welfare House, Da'watul Islam UK & Eire, Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), AhlulBayt Islamic Mission UK, Islamic Foundation, The National Association of British Arabs, Kashmiri and Pakistani Professionals Association, Palestinian General Delegate to the United Kingdom, International Forum for Islamic Dialogue, East London Mosque and the Islamic Forum Europe (IFE), Oldham Mosques Council, Friends of Al-Aqsa, Worthing Islamic Society and others.

³³ <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/paper/index.php?article=2051> (01/08/05)

³⁴ This can be accessed at: <http://www.muslimnews.co.uk/news/news.php?article=9550> (14/07/05)

³⁵ http://www.iccuk.org/downloads/muslims_for_britain_campaign_guardian_final.pdf

³⁶ http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=5384

³⁷ A list of Muslim leaders participating in these meetings with Government and Police is reported by the *Independent*: <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article300345.ece>

July, the MCB encouraged Muslims to report Islamophobic attacks or abuse to the local police immediately and informed the community that the police had stepped up patrols to reassure and protect them.³⁸ On 25 July, the MCB launched an Incident Monitoring Service for Muslims, a telephone hotline to ensure that the “community receives the full support and protection of the law enforcement and other government agencies”³⁹.

1.4. OVERVIEW OF MEDIA REPORTING

In the immediate post-7 July period, the press generally went to great lengths to report in a balanced and objective way, for instance by putting in focus Muslims as having been among the victims of the bombings.⁴⁰

Already on 7 July, broadsheets carried articles warning against a potential anti-Muslim backlash, followed by broad coverage of the rise in hate crimes against the Muslim community in the following weeks.⁴¹

However, after it became clear that the 7 July bombers were British-born Muslims, there was a distinct change in the kind of reporting and the debate shifted to issues of integration and the radicalisation of members of the Muslim community in Britain. The later reporting by some media on the granting of UK citizenship to some of the 21 July suspects and the situation of non-British religious extremists resident in the UK, using Islam as a conduit to propagate hate, and the protection afforded them under the UK’s human rights legislation, broadened the debate to issues of immigration, residency status and human rights legislation. Some media focused on the themes of betrayal and ingratitude towards the host society regarding two of the suspects arrested for the attempted bombings on 21 July. The focus also shifted to Muslim communities and ‘community leaders’. The key questions concerned the credibility of some current Muslim community leaders, and what potentially could be done to prevent young suicide bombers carrying out such acts in the future.

There was a sense within the Muslim community and among others that some of the reporting risked exacerbating the situation. In a communication to British Imams and Muslim organisations of 11 July 2005, MCB Secretary General, Sir Iqbal Sacranie criticised some media for disseminating “Islamophobic propaganda” and informed them that, at the MCB’s request the Home Secretary had written to media outlets requesting them to show more restraint.⁴²

³⁸ The MCB letter can be accessed at: http://www.mcb.org.uk/sh_11july.pdf

³⁹ http://www.mcb.org.uk/mcbdirect/feature.php?ann_id=1068

⁴⁰ Most notably the *Independent* on 9 July carried one of the Muslim victims on its front page and titled “Shahara Akther Islam was a lively 20-year-old, a devout Muslim with all her life before her”. http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article297924.ece

⁴¹ See for instance the *Guardian* on 8 July „Muslim leaders fear backlash“. <http://society.guardian.co.uk/emergencyplanning/story/0,,1524166,00.html>

⁴² The MCB letter can be accessed at: http://www.mcb.org.uk/sh_11july.pdf

However, in general terms, reporting has remained impartial. There is a noticeable trend in reporting about incidents from across the UK. There were also examples of the media supporting moderate Muslim voices and giving an opportunity of victims of Islamophobia to air their views and concerns.

Newspapers such as the *Guardian* and the *Independent* have produced reflective special reports in the aftermath of the London bombings, and actively interview a range of people, allowing them the opportunity to voice any (moderate) concerns.⁴³ For example, a report titled ‘Mistaken Identity’ looked at the effects of these events on non-Muslim Asians, such as Sikhs and Hindus. In particular, issues raised were how non-Muslim Asians had become victims and the target of race hate crimes⁴⁴.

1.5. INITIATIVES BY KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE UK (National Government, local authorities, Police and Muslim community) TO COUNTER ISLAMOPHOBIA AND STRENGTHEN COHESION

1.5.1. Government initiatives launched in cooperation with the Muslim community in the wake of the London attacks

Following a summit meeting on 20 July 2005, which was hosted by the UK Prime Minister and the Home Secretary and attended by senior Muslim community representatives, two main initiatives were launched to discuss further action:

- Home Office Ministers held a series of consultative summer meetings with representatives of the Muslim and other communities across the country to hear their views and concerns.
- The Home Secretary set up seven working groups which consisted of Muslim community leaders and Islamic scholars together with Home Office civil servants, and which were to develop proposals to strengthen cohesion and tackle extremism.

The summer meetings were chaired by Home Office Ministers Hazel Blears and Paul Goggings. Police authorities, local councils, members of faith communities and local MPs were invited to attend the events. Each meeting was intended to discuss issues such as engaging young people and women, tackling extremism and radicalisation, security and policing, imam training and the accreditation and role of mosques, as well as education.⁴⁵ According to Hazel Blears, these meetings

⁴³ E.g. <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article304283.ece>

⁴⁴ This can be accessed at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/race/story/0,11374,1562862,00.html> (07/10/2005)

⁴⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4731871.stm> (31-07-05)

served to discuss with Muslim leaders and activists “the ways Government can work in partnership with the Muslim community to fight terrorism”.⁴⁶ The results of the summer meetings included suggestions for an inquiry into the causes of the London bombings, suggestions that Islamic schools should teach citizenship, and complaints about Islamophobia in the media.

Complementing this consultation process, the seven working groups that were set up by the Government discussed the following themes:

1. Engaging with youth;
2. Tackling extremism and radicalisation;
3. Supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions;
4. Engaging with women;
5. Imam training and accreditation and the role of mosques as a resource for the whole community;
6. Providing a full range of education services, in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community;
7. Security, Islamophobia, protecting Muslims from extremism, and community confidence in policing.

On 22 September 2005, the working groups presented their proposals, including the following that were particularly welcomed by the UK Home Secretary⁴⁷:

- Setting up a National Advisory Council of Imams and Mosques: This would advise mosques on how to prevent them being used by extremists; on how to reduce their reliance on using ministers of religion from abroad; set standards; and increase the cohesion and leadership skills of imams.
- Creating a national forum against extremism and Islamophobia: This independent initiative would provide a regular forum for a diverse range of members of the British Muslim community to discuss issues relating to tackling Islamophobia and extremism that impacts on the Muslim community; involve both respected scholars and community activists in addition to others; and have access to Government in order to share outcomes and understandings.
- Countrywide ‘road show’ of influential, populist religious scholars: This would expound the concept of Islam in the West and condemning extremism.

Responding to these proposals, Home Secretary Charles Clarke said: “Since July, we have had an ambitious programme of work to encourage Muslim communities to confront extremism. (...) Tackling extremism is not something that can be done by Government alone. (...) We look forward to continuing the dialogue with Muslim communities and supporting the work that they are undertaking.”

Representatives of Muslim organisations, many of which participated in the working groups, broadly welcomed the main recommendations that were put

⁴⁶ See Hazel Blears’ constituency report at: <http://www.hazelblears.labour.co.uk/ViewPage.cfm?Page=6810> (6/10/2005)

⁴⁷ These details can be accessed at: [this is correct, even though the home office author miss-spelt tackling] <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news/tackling-extremism> (07/10/2005)

forward to the Government.⁴⁸ Lord Ahmed commented on the proposal for the National Council of Imams and Mosques: “I am delighted that the Muslim community around the UK has shown the willingness and challenge to lay down new foundations and policies that will shape the future and meet the challenges of a modern British society. As British Muslims we need to be prepared to modernise the way we operate, encouraging integration and helping our children to feel proud to be British.”⁴⁹

At the same time, the Home Office announced a consultation on proposals for a Commission on Integration and Cohesion, an advisory body that will work to identify and tackle ways to overcome barriers to integration⁵⁰. The Prime Minister was reported as having said that he hoped the commission would be able to give advice on how to better integrate parts of the Muslim community without interfering with their freedom to follow their religion and culture⁵¹.

The Commission is to be set up on a fixed term basis and required to report by July 2006. Following on from the summer meetings, the Commission will hold public meetings around the country and will actively engage young people and those who have traditionally had less opportunity to contribute to this type of debate.

The Home Office envisages the Commission to consider the following four themes:

- How to engender an increased sense of Britishness that is inclusive of all communities;
- How to create a shared sense of cultural norms and behaviour, particularly in relation to different faiths and cultural identities;
- How to push further to tackle inequalities which can trap people into segregated lives;
- How to encourage and incentivise communities who choose to live segregated lives to engage more broadly.

The Home Secretary wrote to faith leaders and other key stakeholders inviting views on the terms of reference and membership of the Commission. Work is now underway on confirming the scope of the Commission – the aim is that its first meeting will take place in December 2005.

⁴⁸ See for instance the press statement by the MCB:

http://www.mcb.org.uk/presstext.php?ann_id=163 (07/10/2005)

⁴⁹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news/tackling-extremism> (07/10/2005)

⁵⁰ http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/this_britain/article314259.ece

⁵¹ This can be accessed at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/race/story/0,11374,1575384,00.html> (06/10/2006)

1.5.2. Other Government initiatives in support of community cohesion (launched before the London attacks)

The UK Government has launched a number of other initiatives which are not directly linked with the aftermath of the 7 July attacks but which can equally support the wider goals of countering Islamophobia and strengthening cohesion.⁵²

The ‘Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities’ report published in 2004,⁵³ set out a strategy to increase Government consultation with faith communities. The Steering Group is currently working towards publication of a progress report on the Home Office Website.

The Government’s strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion was published in January 2005.⁵⁴ It particularly focuses on improving the life chances of those suffering greatest disadvantage and provides for programmes tailored to the needs of specific groups. It signals the government’s intention to give greater emphasis to the importance of strengthening society, by helping people from different backgrounds come together, supporting people who contribute to society and taking a stand against racists and extremists.

Part of this strategy is the ‘Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund’. With a total of £5m being invested into the sector, the aim of the fund is to improve civic participation within faith communities and improve inter-faith relations. A priority will be given to projects that build capacity for young people and women within faith communities, whilst further prioritising projects delivered in the 88 most deprived and the 50 most diverse areas.

1.5.3. Police initiatives

Aiming to provide community reassurance after the 7 July attacks, London’s Metropolitan Police (MET) developed the ‘Communities Together’ Strategy.⁵⁵ As part of this strategy, the MET produces a ‘Communities Together’ information bulletin, which is produced twice weekly and offers the opportunity for communities to return information to the Police in an electronic format. A leaflet has been produced to give details of organisations, including minority community organisations that can help victims of prejudice or hate crimes. The MET also runs a Police Message Broadcasting service with security alerts via email or SMS messaging.⁵⁶ Together with the Mayor’s Office, the MET set up a ‘Communities Together’ Help and Advice Line to offer support and reassurance “particularly to

⁵² Information on the UK Government’s wider racial equality and community cohesion strategy as well on further engagement with faith communities at:

<http://communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/>

⁵³ View the document at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/workingtog-faith040329.pdf>

⁵⁴ View the document at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/race_improving_opport.pdf

⁵⁵ Full details at: http://www.met.police.uk/communities_together/

⁵⁶ <http://www.police.uk/services/mb/default.asp>

those communities who feel vulnerable following the terrorist attacks”⁵⁷. The MET encouraged members of minority communities to contact the advice line.⁵⁸ The call centre is staffed by police officers, police staff and volunteers. The MET’s Cultural and Communities Resource Unit has assisted in identifying adequate police staff to supplement the experience given by the volunteers. Staff and volunteers offer advice and information with an aim “to increase understanding and build community confidence, and to take note of community issues and tensions”. Where appropriate, they also refer to partner organisations such as the Commission for Racial Equality.

Police in Nottinghamshire were given green ribbons, which symbolise belief in Muslims as a people of peace, to show solidarity with the Muslim community after a rise in racist attacks since 7 July. The ‘Good Faith’ ribbon is backed by Chief Constable Steve Green who said that Muslim citizens in Nottinghamshire “feel intimidated and sometimes ostracised by racist incidents and by the perception that the white community suspects everybody with a brown face of being a suicide bomber”.⁵⁹ Again it should be noted that, among several sections of the media, this action has been ridiculed.

The UK Police service also provide the Non-Emergency Crime and Hate Crime / Incident Reporting for all Police Services of the United Kingdom available online at <http://www.online.police.uk/english/default.asp> in English and Welsh.

1.5.4. Initiatives by local authorities

In the aftermath of the London bombings, many local authorities have implemented a variety of differing kinds of monitoring services, in order to make clear to all members of their respective communities that any kind of discriminatory or racist act would not be condoned. For example, Birmingham Council has a self-reporting mechanism (‘Hate Crime Reporting’), for victims or observers of hate crimes⁶⁰. It operates this scheme within its Community Safety Partnership, namely in conjunction with the local police force.

On 8 September, the London Assembly launched an investigation into the London bombings. The investigation will focus on the experience of ordinary Londoners and visitors to the capital who were caught up in the events, and pay particular attention to communications issues⁶¹. The UK NFP was informed that this is open

⁵⁷ Full details at: http://cms.met.police.uk/news/policy_organisational_news_and_general_information/partnership/s/communities_advice

⁵⁸ http://cms.met.police.uk/news/major_operational_announcements/terrorist_attacks/the_communities_together_help_and_advice_line

⁵⁹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/nottinghamshire/4144368.stm> (12-08-05)

⁶⁰ Details of this service can be accessed at: http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/GenerateContent?CONTENT_ITEM_ID=33429&CONTENT_ITEM_TYPE=0&MENU_ID=13500&EXPAND=240 (06/10/2005)

⁶¹ London Assembly press release (08/09/2005) at:

to all Londoners (Muslims and non-Muslims) whether or not they were directly or inadvertently involved in the events of 7 and 21 July. In relation to Muslims, one intention is to attempt to find out what impact these events have had on their lives. The scrutiny review will report at the end of January 2006 on lessons learnt for the future.

The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, together with representatives of Muslim and Sikh organisations, MPs, trade unionists and lawyers have raised concerns that certain proposed counter-terrorism measures could marginalise minority communities. According to a joint press statement, the signatories seek “to ensure that any measures adopted by Parliament or the government against terrorism do not exclude or criminalise people who condemn attacks like the ones on 7 July and urge communities to work with the police to find those responsible”⁶².

1.6. CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS WHICH HIGHLIGHT THE ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES BY GOVERNMENT, POLICE, MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS AND THE MEDIA

The following information is presented partly to demonstrate the importance attached to the speed of actions and initiatives by Government, police, Muslim organisations, the media and inter-faith support networks to counter incidents as they happened or prevent incidents from escalating or setting trends.

Thursday 7 July: Four bombs detonate in London, in the morning rush hour. Three explode at 08.50 [BST] in the London Underground stations at Russell Square, Edgware Road, and Aldgate. The fourth bomb explodes on the top deck of a No. 30 bus in Tavistock Place, at 9.47 am. Over fifty people are killed in the attacks, including the four suspected bombers, with 700 injured. A previously unknown group linking themselves to al-Qaeda claims responsibility.

Along with many other Muslim organisations (find a comprehensive list in Section 1.3.4), the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) issues a statement in which it “utterly condemns today's indiscriminate acts of terror”.⁶³ The MCB also issues a joint

http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=5630, *London attack inquiry launched by Assembly* (06/10/2005)

⁶² Initial signatories of the statement include the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, Director of Liberty Shami Chakrabarti, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Association of Britain, politicians from the Labour, LibDem, Green and Scottish National parties, writers and journalists, the General Secretaries of four national trade unions, representatives of a range of community organisations and faith groups, civil liberties lawyers and student leaders. See the Mayor of London press release (26/08/2005) at: http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=5565, *Only united communities will defeat terrorism and protect civil liberties* (06/10/2005) (06/10/2005)

⁶³ http://www.mcb.org.uk/presstext.php?ann_id=150

statement with the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland expressing sympathy, condemning the attacks in London and stating that religious scriptures cannot be used to justify such crimes which are contrary to Muslim and Christian teaching.⁶⁴

Prime Minister Tony Blair issues a statement on the explosions in London in which he also welcomes the statement by the Muslim Council of Britain.⁶⁵

The London-based Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) condemns the attacks and issues the advice that no Muslim should travel or go out unless strictly necessary, for fear of reprisals.⁶⁶

Friday 8 July: Key faith figures from the East End of London, including Christians, Jews and Muslims, gather near the Aldgate bomb site in a show of unity.

First reports about arson attacks at several mosques in the UK and a Sikh temple, physical attacks and verbal abuses against individuals, predominantly British Muslims.

Saturday 9 July: Police in London are reported to have recorded 180 racist incidents over the past three days, including 58 faith related crimes.⁶⁷ The backlash on Muslim communities resulting from 7 July bombing is noted by much of the media. Apart from attacks on mosques, the Muslim Council of Britain received 3,000 hate messages⁶⁸.

Prime Minister Tony Blair goes on national radio to praise Londoners' resilience and states his pride in Britain's open, multi-racial and multi-religious society and says that Britain will not be divided by the attacks.

The British National Party uses a photograph of the bus with the caption, "maybe it's time to start listening to the BNP" to campaign in the forthcoming council election in Essex.

In an attempt to distinguish between British Muslims and the bombers, the *Independent's* front page shows the photo of Shahara Akther Islam, a 20-year-old British Muslim who died in the London bombings. In an article titled "Hello bombers...and welcome to Londonistan", a tabloid attacks politicians, while calling for the Human Rights Act to be scrapped and extremist mosques shut down.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ http://www.mcb.org.uk/presstext.php?ann_id=151

⁶⁵ <http://www.number10.gov.uk/output/Page7858.asp>

⁶⁶ <http://www.ihrc.org.uk/show.php?id=1410>

⁶⁷ http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/this%20week/after_7_7/after_the_london_bombing.htm

⁶⁸ *Daily Express*, 09/07/05, p.11. There is some disagreement as to the volume of anti-Muslim messages sent. Mustafa El-Menshawy noted that the MCB received 1,000 by 22/07/05.

⁶⁹ Richard Littlejohn, <http://www.thesun.co.uk/>

Sunday 10 July: UK religious leaders issue a rare joint statement condemning the 7/7 “evil terrorist” attacks in London. Leaders of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths each read out parts of the statement.⁷⁰

A Muslim is beaten to death in Nottingham by a gang of youths. Media report that they shouted anti-Islamic abuse at him.⁷¹

Monday 11 July: Bristol police appeal for calm after two mosques have been targeted on 8 July and 10 July.

Senior police officers, politicians and 200 community representatives from around London meet to discuss the bombing and their reaction to it.

Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, reflects that the victims of the London bombings came from all communities across London. He says the bombers wanted “to divide this city because of its easy-going, multi-cultural mix. The fact that people work together and live together is an affront to them”.

Tuesday 12 July: The Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Brian Paddick says there had been several apparent revenge attacks on ethnic groups in London since Thursday. “We need people from every community to report incidents to the police of any faith-hate crime and any other hate crime.” He said police would not allow hatred to be stirred up by the bombings.⁷²

There are also reports that over the last few days there have been several arson attacks at mosques in Leeds, Tower Hamlets [east London], Merton [south London] Telford, Bristol and Birkenhead.

Ambassador Ömür Orhun, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, in a press release condemns the attacks in London but notes “with regret attempts to identify terrorism once again with Islam and all Muslims”.⁷³

Wednesday 13 July: Three of the bombers are revealed as being British-born Muslims and the fourth a Jamaican-born Muslim convert.

Tony Blair and four Muslim MPs meet to discuss how to tackle extremism within the Muslim community.⁷⁴

Thursday 14 July: Muslim leaders visit the communities in Leeds and Dewsbury where three of the four bombers lived.

⁷⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4668835.stm>

⁷¹ The Guardian, 13/07/05, p. 5

⁷² <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/farright/story/0,11375,1526585,00.html>

⁷³ <http://www.osce.org/item/15646.html>

⁷⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/4678821.stm

Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, underlines that Muslim leaders were right to point out the attacks had no link to “true faith”.⁷⁵

Sunday 17 July: The newspapers fill their editorials⁷⁶ with reflections on the fact that most of the bombers were British-born. One example, drawn from *The Observer*, raised the issue of Muslim youths being preached to by imams who speak little or no English and have scant knowledge, or understanding, of the British society in which such youths are growing up.

Media reports that about 500 faith-hate and race-hate crimes - ranging from arson attacks on mosques to Muslim women being spat at in the street - have been recorded in Britain since the London bombings. According to police sources, about 200 of these incidents are deemed significant enough to have potential repercussions within communities.⁷⁷

A peace rally is held in Dewsbury attended by both the towns’ Christian and Muslim community.⁷⁸ Around 1,000 people join a peace vigil in Russell Square called by the Stop the War Coalition and the Muslim Association of Britain.

Monday 18 July: More than 500 British Muslim religious leaders issue a fatwa⁷⁹, a decree, in response to the London bombs. A full-page advertisement outlining details of the fatwa, titled ‘Not In Our Name’ features in a number of papers on 21 July.⁸⁰

Wednesday 20 July: Leading British Muslims meet Home Secretary Charles Clarke and inform him of measures they intend to take to tackle extremism in their communities. At the same time, some extremist Muslim clerics are quoted in the media with criticism against the UK Prime Minister and blaming the UK’s foreign policy for the 7 July attacks.

Thursday 21 July: A second series of 4 explosions takes place on the London Underground and a London bus. This time only the detonators of the bombs explode, and there are no fatalities.

Friday 22 July: A suspected bomber is shot by firearms officers on a stationary train at Stockwell underground station. Identified as Brazilian national Jean Charles de Menezes, he is later found to be innocent.

Saturday 23 July: Hundreds of people from Beeston and Harehill, where two of the London bombers lived, join in a march for peace through Leeds. The march is

⁷⁵ <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4681281.stm>

⁷⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/editor/story/0,,1530519,00.html> (18/07/05)

⁷⁷ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,2087-1697168,00.html>

⁷⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west_yorkshire/4689061.stm

⁷⁹ This fatwa was an unequivocal declaration of unity amongst Muslim communities in their condemnation of the London bombings. Fatāwa are usually mundane legal pronouncements.

⁸⁰ Full details of the Muslim organisations’ declaration at:
http://www.iccuk.org/downloads/muslims_for_britain_campaign_guardian_final.pdf

organised by the group 'Faith Together in Leeds 11' to show that the community remains united.

Monday 25 July: Newspapers report Muslim leaders' pleas to the families of the bombers to report them. Representatives from the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) also publicly state that communities should not shield terrorists.

Senior members of the UK's Muslim community voice fears the London bombing hunt is making innocent people feel they are under suspicion. Labour peer Lord Ahmed says many Muslims in the north of England believe they could become victims of mistaken identity by armed police.⁸¹

Tuesday 26 July: Prime Minister Tony Blair at a regular media briefing addresses ongoing concerns that there is at present no authoritative body that speaks for the whole of the UK Muslim community. Mr. Blair also states that people need to go into the Muslim communities and tackle extreme ideologies head-on rather than just ignore or tolerate them.

The Guardian publishes the result of a poll of British Muslims, which reveals that 63% would consider leaving the UK.⁸² (Britain's Muslim population is estimated at 1.6 Million.)

Wednesday 27 July: It is revealed that two suspected 21 July bombers were refugees given asylum in the UK.

Friday 29 July: After police raids on a number of properties, three men are arrested in London, and another in Rome. Police states that they believe all four of the 21 July bomb suspects are now in custody.

Monday 1 August: London's Metropolitan Police and the Mayor's Office set up a 'Communities Together' Help and Advice Line' to offer support and reassurance to Londoners, particularly to those communities who feel vulnerable following the attacks.⁸³

Tuesday 2 August: The first of eight scheduled meetings between Home Office Minister Hazel Blears, Muslim community leaders, Government officials, Councillors, MPs, and the police, takes place in Oldham. The initiative aims to improve community relations and to discuss measures that would root out extremists, as well as offering the chance to raise concerns prompted by the London bombings.

⁸¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4714027.stm>

⁸² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/attackonlondon/story/0,16132,1536222,00.html>
Full report on <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Politics/documents/2005/07/26/Muslim-Poll.pdf>

⁸³ http://cms.met.police.uk/news/major_operational_announcements/terrorist_attacks/the_communities_together_help_and_advice_line

Wednesday 3 August: Media reports that according to the Metropolitan Police crimes motivated by religious hatred have increased by nearly 600 percent in London since the 7 July bombings. There were 273 so-called faith hate crimes reported since the suicide bombings compared to only 41 over the same period (6 July to 1 August) year-on-year. Police however stressed that the increase was partly attributable to improvements in community policing and recording practices. At the same time, other racist incidents dropped, police noted.⁸⁴

Sunday 7 August: The *Independent* publishes readers' experiences of race hate crime since 7 July⁸⁵.

Tuesday 16 August: UK Muslim groups condemn proposed anti-terrorism legislation saying it could lead to the "demonisation" of legitimate Islamic values and beliefs.⁸⁶

Wednesday 24 August: Home Secretary Charles Clarke has published the grounds on which foreigners considered to be promoting terrorism can be deported or excluded from the UK. The grounds, drawn up after the 7 July London bombings, include provoking and glorifying terrorism. The 'list of unacceptable behaviours' is considered by the MCB as "too wide and unclear".⁸⁷ Civil liberty groups express a variety of human rights concerns.⁸⁸

Thursday 22 September: UK Home Secretary Charles Clarke publishes the results of the seven working groups that had been convened by the Home Office to discuss proposals for strengthening cohesion and tackling extremism (further details in Section III). The Home Secretary also announces a new advisory "commission on integration and cohesion" which is to prepare a report by July 2006 and to focus on practical ways to overcome barriers to integration across all communities.

Senior Muslim leaders broadly welcome the proposals to set up a National Advisory Council of Imams and Mosques and the suggestions to train imams and encourage British-born Muslims to become clerics.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ [http://www.politics.co.uk/domestic-policy/faith-hate-crime-increases-\\$14016741.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/domestic-policy/faith-hate-crime-increases-$14016741.htm)

⁸⁵ <http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/crime/article304283.ece>

⁸⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4155278.stm>

⁸⁷ Details of the MCB's position can be accessed at:
http://www.mcb.org.uk/presstext.php?ann_id=161 (05/10/2005)

⁸⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4179044.stm

⁸⁹ http://www.islamonline.com/cgi-bin/news_service/world_full_story.asp?service_id=1770

Part II:

Situation of the Muslim Community in the EU in the aftermath of the 7 July 2005 events in London

2. Summary of the Reports from the EUMC's National Focal Points (except the UK)

2.1. GENERAL IMPACT OF THE EVENTS ON THE MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE EU

Although it is still early to draw final conclusions regarding the impact of these events on the life of Muslim communities, it can be maintained that the short-term effect of the London bombings appear to have affected them far less than the 11 September attacks on the United States of America. This could be attributed both to the swift responses by governments, politicians and opinion leaders, who made serious efforts to distinguish clearly between these criminal acts and Islam, as well as to the statements made by Muslim representatives reacting immediately and unequivocally condemning the events and asking the members of their communities to cooperate with the authorities.

Below is a summary of information on countries in which NFPs reported a certain impact, specific incidents or connected events. Most NFPs focused on security and legislative measures taken in response to a potential terrorist attack as having the most visible and direct impact on the Muslim community.

In **Austria**, a stone was thrown through the window of a mosque in Linz during the morning prayer on 24 September⁹⁰. On 4 October, a Turkish student reading an Arabic newspaper on a plane waiting for take-off at Vienna airport was denied transportation. The crew had called the police, as passengers feared that the student might be a terrorist⁹¹. The police investigations produced no result, yet the pilot refused to take the man on board again. While these incidents did not take place in the immediate aftermath of the London bombings, they may stand in connection to an increase of Islamophobic acts as perceived by the Muslim community⁹².

In **Denmark**, the Security Intelligence Service (PET) informed the NFP that two possibly Islamophobic incidents are being investigated. According to non-official sources on 9 July a Sikh bus driver was physically attacked in Copenhagen by an unidentified man who shouted "London" and assaulted him.⁹³ On 21 July 2005 a man was arrested in Århus for bomb threats against Muslim targets in Denmark and Sweden by e-mail⁹⁴. On 28 July 2005 the police investigated an allegation that the Copenhagen radio station *Radio Holger* advocated killing Muslim

⁹⁰ Initiative muslimischer ÖsterreicherInnen (25.09.2005), „Steinwurf auf Linzer Moschee“, available at: <http://mund.at/archiv/september5/aussendung270905.htm#04>, (06.10.2005)

⁹¹ *Kurier* (05.10.2005) „Student las im Flugzeug arabische Zeitung: Terror-Alarm“.

⁹² Information provided by the Islamic Faith Community in Austria upon request, September-October 2005.

⁹³ TV2: <http://nyhederne.tv2.dk/article.php?id=2594954> (27.07.2005)

⁹⁴ TV2: <http://nyhederne.tv2.dk/article.php?id=2639159> (27.07.2005); Newspaper *Politiken*, "Sigtet for terrortrusler" (22.07.2005).

immigrants⁹⁵. Imam Abdul Wahid Pedersen adopted a list of recommended precautionary measures that was published by UK Muslim organisations.

In **Finland**, the Imam of the Al-Ilman Mosque, Mohammed Ishaq, suggested no incidents have been noted, although that some Muslim women were more fearful for their safety⁹⁶. The Resalat Islam Congregation had a swastika painted on the door of the Mosque and closed the Mosque for three weeks. Two of their members were verbally insulted on public transport⁹⁷. *Sunnuntaisuomalainen* weekly conducted a questionnaire study that dealt with reactions to the bombings.⁹⁸ Five hundred people were interviewed, with one of the questions being: “The recent terrorist attacks have caused tensions between religious and ethnic groups around the world. Do you believe that the attacks will increase racism in Finland?” 67 percent of the respondents replied that racism would at least “somewhat” increase. Every tenth person thought that racism would increase “quite a lot” or “a great deal”.

In **Hungary**, the NFP assesses the impact of the London bombings on the Muslim community to be marginal. Two possibly Islamophobic incidents were reported in the months following the attacks. In the beginning of August, in Békéscsaba, teenage football players from the United Arab Emirates were arrested and handcuffed by the police following an argument with security guards in a shopping mall. The authorities rejected claims that racist or Islamophobic motivation had been behind the events. Yet the deputy-mayor apologised for what he called a “series of unfortunate misunderstandings”. The media referred to the incident as an unreasonable overreaction by the police.⁹⁹ The second incident involved publications by an anonymous organisation named ITT (standing for Association exploring the inseparability of Islam and Terrorism), which disseminated posters¹⁰⁰ and web-publications¹⁰¹ claiming that Islam and terrorism were “inseparable”. Being the first of its kind in Hungary, the incident received significant media coverage. While the police declined to investigate the case, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement disapproving all forms of Islamophobia.¹⁰²

In **Ireland**, it is evident from a range of sources, including Muslim organisations, media reports and Garda (police) sources that there have a few isolated incidents directed against the Islamic community subsequent to the London bombings. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) identified one possibly connected violent incident resulting in the stabbing of a member of the Sikh Community in Athlone, County Westmeath, on 9 July. As a precautionary measure, the Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI) organised a meeting

⁹⁵ Radio Holger’s website <http://www.radioholger.dk/> (01.08.2005), programme of 28 July 2005. DR: <http://www.dr.dk/nyheder/fremmedsprog/English/article.jhtml?articleID=266924> (01.08.2005)

⁹⁶ Phone discussion with Imam Mohammed Ishaq (26.07.2005).

⁹⁷ Phone discussion with Ms Paula Bahmanpour, spokesperson (27.07.2005).

⁹⁸ *Sunnuntaisuomalainen*, (07.08.2005)

⁹⁹ See for example <http://www.nol.hu/cikk/372821/> (05.10.2005)

¹⁰⁰ See for example <http://hvg.hu/itthon/20050906itt.aspx> (05.10.2005)

¹⁰¹ See <http://iszlamenterror.blogspot.com/>

¹⁰² <http://hvg.hu/print/20050916kulugy.aspx>

with their local Garda station in South Dublin. The IFI also issued precautionary guidelines to the Muslim community asking them to be vigilant against terrorist activities and also guidelines regarding personal and community safety.¹⁰³

In **Italy**, the situation was influenced by the arrest in Rome of one of the suspected bombers who was wanted in connection with the failed attacks in London on 21 July. Between 12 and 13 August, the State Police (Carabinieri and Guardia di Finanza) carried out a nation-wide operation targeting “Islamic meeting places”: 7,318 locations were visited (call centres, internet points, Halal meat shops and money transfer agents); 32,703 people were identified, 141 arrested, and expulsion procedures were initiated for 701 people who were charged with “unauthorised stay or failure to obey a previous expulsion order or illegal use of the stay permit”. Only two of the 141 arrests were in connection with the anti-terrorism measures adopted in July.¹⁰⁴

In the **Netherlands**, some minor anti-Islamic incidents have been recorded, but it is unclear if they are directly related to the London attacks. On 16 July, the police arrested a 15-year-old boy who smashed the windows of a Mosque in Naaldwijk and on 23 July, the windows of a Turkish community building in Terneuzen were broken.

In **Poland**, a number of threatening phone calls were made to Muslim organisations.

In **Sweden**, the Swedish Muslim Council launched a telephone support hotline for Muslims, but Helena Benauda, chairperson of the Council, reported later that very few had used it¹⁰⁵. Statements are made by the Security Police that there is no increased risk of terrorist incidents in Sweden. Opinion formers, politicians and the media draw a clear distinction between Islam and terrorism. Abd al Haqq Kielan, Imam at Svenska Islamiska Samfundet (Swedish Islamic Communion) has warned that restrictions of the freedom of speech and increased public surveillance could threaten democracy and civil rights¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ NCCRI interview with IFI, 21 July 2005.

¹⁰⁴ Italy, Decreto-Legge 27 luglio 2005, n.144. Misure urgenti per il contrasto del terrorismo internazionale, *Gazzetta Ufficiale* n.173 del 27/7/2005 [Legislative Decree of 27 July 2005. Urgent measures to fight the international terrorism, OJ no. 173 of 27 July 2005]

¹⁰⁵ Swedish News Agency *Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå* (16.07.2005)

¹⁰⁶ Kielan, A. (2005), “Vi når inte fanatikerna”, in: *Svenska Dagbladet* (28.07.2005) p.5

2.2. REACTIONS BY GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE EU

Throughout the EU, governments, political parties, and community leaders have condemned the bombing attacks in very strong terms, while cautioning against blaming the Muslim communities or the Muslim faith for the criminal actions of extremist individuals. In some cases there were also calls for an improved integration of Muslims into mainstream society, as well as for a stricter regulation of Muslim immigrants in the EU sometimes with clearly Islamophobic overtones.

Below are some examples covering selected countries, as reported by NFPs.

In **Austria**, President Heinz Fischer warned against overreacting after the bombings, saying that “one must not respond to terrorism with blind hatred or excessive reactions”¹⁰⁷. The government emphasised the good co-operation with the Islamic Faith Community and stressed the importance of international, in particular EU level co-operation in fighting terrorism. Alfred Gusenbauer, leader of the main opposition party SPÖ (Socialist Party), proposed more comprehensive integration policies, intensified surveillance of radical preachers in line with existing legislation, improved control of financial transactions, and ending the Iraq war¹⁰⁸. FPÖ (Freedom Party) politicians demanded that mosques known to host radical preachers be closed down¹⁰⁹, and that the preachers be expelled¹¹⁰. Peter Pilz from the Green Party voiced his fears against a restriction of civil rights through the “fight on terror”¹¹¹.

In **Belgium**, the French-speaking Socialist and Christian-Democratic parties underlined the importance of the values of liberty and democracy for the society. The Flemish party Vlaams Belang accused the Government of not acting against Muslim fundamentalism.

In the **Czech Republic**, leaders of all parliamentary political parties condemned the London attacks and expressed their compassion with the victims. The non-parliamentary National Party issued a declaration in which it demanded the expulsion of all Muslims and closing of the borders.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ *Kurier*, (11.07.2005), „Fischer warnt vor Überreaktionen“, p. 2

¹⁰⁸ *Salzburger Nachrichten*, (15.07.2005), „Lauschen gegen den Terror“, p. 2, *Pressedienst der SPÖ*, (14.07.2005), „Gusenbauer fordert Europäischen Aktionsplan gegen den Terrorismus“, available at: http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung.php?schluessel=OTS_20050714_OTSO150&ch=politik, (27.07.2005)

¹⁰⁹ *ORF ON*, (18.07.2005), „FPÖ verlangt Schließung von vier Moscheen“, available at: <http://burgenland.orf.at/stories/46161/>, (18.07.2005)

¹¹⁰ *Die Freiheitlichen Bundeskommunikation*, (15.07.2005), „FPÖ-Vize Hofer verlangt Ausweisung radikaler Islam Prediger“, available at: http://www.ots.at/drucken.php?schluessel=OTS_20050715_OTSO152, (27.07.2005)

¹¹¹ *Kleine Zeitung*, (14.07.2005), „Bürgerrechte in Gefahr“, p. 4

¹¹² Available at http://www.narodni-strana.cz/clanek.php?id_clanku=1349 (04.10.2005)

In **Denmark**, all political parties condemned the attacks. The Danish People's Party warned that there was a large group of Muslim fanatics in Denmark¹¹³ and demanded more public surveillance and tougher border controls.

In **Estonia**, on 11 July 2005 mourning flags were hoisted on public administration buildings in commemoration of the Muslim victims of the Srebrenica massacre and the victims of the bombings in London¹¹⁴.

In **Finland**, the Government issued a press release in which the ministers condemned the attacks. In a speech given at the 2005 Defence and Security fair on 30 August, Minister of the Interior Kari Rajamäki, stated that the London bombings brought the fears related to terrorism closer to the Finns than ever before.¹¹⁵ On the side of the opposition, Green League (Vihreä Liitto) leader Tarja Cronberg suggested a more comprehensive approach by the European Union in the fight against terrorism and the development of anti-terrorist measures with the active participation of the European Muslim communities¹¹⁶.

In **France**, President Jacques Chirac made a declaration expressing the solidarity and compassion of the French people and condemning the attacks¹¹⁷. A report of the DGRG (Direction Générale des Renseignements Généraux) addressed the issue of conversion to radical Islam and the role of extremist recruitment in prisons.¹¹⁸ Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy recommended monitoring places of worship, while respecting religious freedom, monitoring activities in prisons, checking associations used as cover for radical or terrorist activities, fighting against incitement to hatred, violence and discrimination (in particular on the Internet), and deporting radical Imams from third countries.¹¹⁹ He also underlined that French Muslims should not feel alienated or humiliated and asked for an enhanced dialogue.

Political parties condemned the bombings and distinguished between terrorism and the French Muslim community respecting Republican values and the law.

Philippe de Villiers, President of the MPF (Mouvement pour la France), in an interview on national television TF1 on 16 July 2005, spoke against the "progressive Islamisation of French society" and urged for the re-establishment of

¹¹³ Press release from the Danish People's Party of 8 July 2005, http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk/sw/frontend/newsletterpreview.asp?id=236&template_id=3&mbid=19123 (01.08.2005)

¹¹⁴ *Postimees*, (10.07.2005).

¹¹⁵ <http://www.tampereenmessut.fi/tiedote.tmp?id=379> (07.10.2005)

¹¹⁶ *Helsingin Sanomat* (26.07.2005).

¹¹⁷ Declaration of the President of the Republic, Gleneagles (UK), 07-07-2005. The text is available at:

http://www.elysee.fr/elysee/francais/interventions/discours_et_declarations/2005/juillet/attentats_de_londres_declaration_du_president_de_la_republique.30557.html (22.07.2005)

¹¹⁸ Smolar, P (2005) « Les conversions à l'islam radical inquiète la police française » in *Le Monde* (13.07.2005).

¹¹⁹ http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/rubriques/c/c1_le_ministre/c13_discours/2005_07_13_JAI; and AFP (2005), « M. Sarkozy veut expulser les Imams « radicaux », in *Le Monde* (12.07.2005).

border checks, control of the mosques, and more investment in districts where Muslims live.

In **Germany** the Prime Minister of the Land Baden-Württemberg, Günther Oettinger (CDU), urged the public to clearly distinguish between “extremists who misuse Islam for their purposes and fellow citizens who practice their religion in peaceful co-existence”¹²⁰. Leading politicians of CDU/CSU and of the SPD expressed support for increased video surveillance of public spaces, an extended storage of telephone/internet data and an intensification of the cooperation and data exchange between national police forces and the national intelligence services. Several CDU/CSU¹²¹ politicians also argued for closer surveillance of mosques¹²². The Federal Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily (SPD), called on Muslims to assist in banning hate speech from mosques¹²³. The CSU also called for stricter regulations concerning immigration of Muslims suggesting that it should become easier to deport Muslims who are active against the Constitution, and to withdraw their German citizenship if they have been naturalised¹²⁴.

In **Hungary**, the governing (Liberal¹²⁵ and Socialist¹²⁶) parties promptly issued declarations condemning the attacks.

In **Italy**, the Minister of the Interior, Giuseppe Pisanu (Forza Italia), challenged the idea that the recent bombings confirmed that there was a clash of civilizations between the West and the Islamic world.

In **Slovakia** all political parties condemned the attacks. The opposition party, Slovak National Party (SNS) appealed to the EU Member States and the Slovak Government to review the “liberal migration policy” since immigrants from “risk areas” represented a potential security threat. According to Ján Slota, SNS chairman, the bombings in London gave clear evidence that there was an undeclared war of civilisations between Christian European culture and Islamic extremism¹²⁷.

In **Sweden** all parliamentary parties condemned the attacks. The Swedish Democrats, which are the largest party outside parliament, claimed that the terror attacks in London were a consequence of a “mass immigration policy”.

¹²⁰ Stuttgarter Zeitung online (07.07.2005)

¹²¹ For further details on all CSU proposals concerning the fight against (Islamist) terrorism see declaration of the Bavarian Minister of the Interior (speech available at: www.stmi.bayern.de/imperia/md/content/stmi/service/reden/regerkl_is_050720.pdf).

¹²² The Berlin State Office for the Protection of the Constitution rejected the CSU proposal for stricter observation of mosques as long as there are no indicators for extremist activities (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, www.faz.net, 18.07.2005).

¹²³ Interview in: *Der Spiegel* (18.07.2005).

¹²⁴ *Financial Times Deutschland* (17.07.2005), *Welt am Sonntag* (17.07.2005).

¹²⁵ See http://www.szdsz.hu/index.phtml?op=hirek_reszletes&id=2444

¹²⁶ See <http://www.mszo.hu/index.php?gcPage=public/hirek/mutatHir&fnHid=75444>

¹²⁷ *SME*, 8.07.2005, “SNS vyzýva na prehodnotenie liberálnej migračnej politiky“ <http://www.sme.sk/clanok.asp?cl=2289723> (25.07.2005)

2.3. REACTIONS BY MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS IN THE EU

In all Member States of the European Union, Muslim organisations reacted swiftly not only to condemn the attacks, but also to underline that Islam is a religion of peace and cannot by its very nature be related to violence. Some Muslim organisations also asked their members to actively support the authorities in combating terrorism.

Below are some examples covering selected countries, as reported by NFPs.

In **Austria**, the official organisation representing Muslims (Islamic Faith Community¹²⁸), and also the regional communities condemned the attacks and called upon all Muslims to support actively peace and security of the country and its inhabitants.

In **Belgium**, the General Assembly of Belgian Muslims (Assemblée Générale des Musulmans de Belgique) and many other representative Muslim organisations immediately condemned the attacks.

In the **Czech Republic**, the Imam of the Prague mosque, El Badawy Karam, described the terrorists as insane¹²⁹ and the Muslim community of Brno issued a declaration stressing that Islam is against terrorism¹³⁰.

In **Denmark**, the Islamic Community¹³¹ (det Islamiske Trossamfund) and the organisation Muslims in Dialogue¹³² (Muslimer i Dialog) have both condemned the bombings. Several prominent Imams such as Abu Laban and Mostafa Chendid stated that Muslim communities had a responsibility to prevent extremism developing among their members¹³³. The spokesman of the Danish branch of the Islamic fundamentalist organisation Hizb-ut-Tahrir¹³⁴ while stating that the terror attacks in London are un-Islamic refrained from directly condemning the attacks as long as Iraq is occupied¹³⁵. Prominent Imams, such as Abdul Wahid Pedersen and Fatih Alev expressed concern that young Muslims can be targeted by extremist groups, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir. They are also concerned that some Imams, have been granted permission to work and preach in Denmark without understanding the local language and culture¹³⁶.

¹²⁸ Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, <http://www.derislam.at>, (25.07.2005)

¹²⁹ "Alláh teroristy do ráje nepustí". Interview with the main Imam of Prague mosque El Badawy Karam, MF Dnes 30.07.2005

¹³⁰ „Radikálové v Brně nežijí“. MF Dnes 12.07.2005

¹³¹ www.wakf.com

¹³² www.m-i-d.dk

¹³³ Televised nine o'clock news (evening) at DR, 08.07.2005.

¹³⁴ <http://www.hizb-ut-tahrir.dk/> and www.hizb-ut-tahrir.org/

¹³⁵ <http://www.berlingske.dk/grid/forside/artikel:aid=605096:fid=100100752> (28.07.2005)

¹³⁶ <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=3172406/> (28.07.2005)

In **Estonia**, Muslim leaders made statements against terrorism and any religiously motivated violence, which were published by the leading national daily *Postimees* in an article titled “Estonian Muslim Communities Strongly Object Terrorism”¹³⁷.

In **France**, the Council of the Muslim Faith (CFCM) representing several Muslim organisations condemned the attacks and expressed the solidarity of the French Muslim community with the British people. The Swiss professor and well-known intellectual Tariq Ramadan also condemned the bombings inviting citizens to fight against terror and social division. He claimed for a union of the peoples against terrorists but also against those who will exploit terrorism in order to propagate racist ideas¹³⁸.

In **Germany**, Muslim organisations¹³⁹ condemned the attacks publicly emphasising that the acts cannot be legitimised by religious arguments. Some of the organisations called on the German population not to view the Muslim community with suspicion. Nadeem Elyas, chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland - ZMD), suggested that Muslims in Germany should be partners in the fight against terror¹⁴⁰ stressing the ZMD’s willingness to cooperate with national security institutions¹⁴¹. The influential Shiite Imam Ghaemmaghami also issued a fatwa defining the support of public order and security as a fundamental religious obligation for all Muslims¹⁴². Several Muslim organisations showed their willingness to cooperate and called on their members to report on extremists in their communities.¹⁴³

In **Greece**, representatives of the Muslim community, such as Metso Jemali, Mufti of Komotini, and Mr Ilhan Ahmet, Member of the Greek Parliament, condemned the bombings and expressed grief for the victims, while stressing that Islam does not justify terrorist actions.

In **Ireland**, the two main Muslim organisations, the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland (ICCI) and the Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI), issued strongly worded press statements condemning the attacks and disassociating the Islamic community from the bombings.

¹³⁷ *Postimees*, (16.07.2005).

¹³⁸ Ramadan, T (2005) « Attentats de Londres : condamner absolument ... et faire exactement le contraire de qu'ils veulent », in *Saphirnet.info*, (08-07-2005).
http://www.saphirnet.info/article_1722.html?PHPSESSID=17cf9355b27d5f91c524a9ab72a8c486 (21-07-2005)

¹³⁹ The most significant organisations among them were the *Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland* (ZMD), the *Islamrat, Milli Görüs* (IGMG), *DITIB* and the *Islamische Föderation*. A list of more than a dozen Muslims organisations with their statements of condemnation was published on the internet on 9 July, available at: www.muslime-weltweit.de/Muslime-weltweit/Artikel/Deutschland/Stellungnahmen%20von%20Muslimen%20zum%20Terror.htm (28.07.2005).

¹⁴⁰ Press release ZMD (07.07.2005). The ZMD stated that 80% of the reactions they received to this appeal have been “positive” (*Wiesbadener Kurier*, 19.07.2005)

¹⁴¹ *Tagesspiegel*.online (15.07.2005)

¹⁴² *Hamburger Morgenpost* (28.07.2005)

¹⁴³ *Spiegel* online (14.07.2005; 26.07.2005); www.sueddeutsche.de (14.07.2005), FR (16.07.2005), p. 1

In **Italy**, Muslim organisations reacted to the attacks with public condemnations and some advised their members to keep a low profile and cooperate with the authorities in any way they could¹⁴⁴. The association “Young Italian Muslims” called on all its members to speak out against the dangers of similar terrorist attacks for all and for Muslims in Europe in particular. The largest Muslim organisation, Union of Islamic Communities and Organisations in Italy (UCOII), pronounced that “terrorism is incompatible with the doctrine, law and culture of Islam... we express our absolute and incontrovertible condemnation of actions that lead to the massacre of innocent people or which tend to destabilize society and repugnance of the exploitation and blasphemous use of the Qu’ran. We invite Italian Muslims not to attribute Islamic value to these acts, rather consider them as serious subversion (*fitna*) from which it is obligatory to distance and defend oneself with extreme clarity and sense of responsibility. Members are absolutely forbidden to provide support, material or logistic, verbal or moral to people who can reasonably be suspected of having strange habits or convictions regarding the use of violence to further the Islamic cause by attacking innocent people or the civil and political structures of society. Members should relate to the State in a loyal manner and report any plans to attack or the formation of groups with such aims”. The statement has received positive comments in the national media.

In **Poland**, the largest Muslim organisations Muslim Religious Association of the Republic of Poland (MRA)¹⁴⁵ and the Muslim League, as well as the Muslim Students’ Society and the Muslim Cultural Education Society issued declarations denouncing the bombings in London. Mufti Tomasz Miśkiewicz, Chair of the Highest College of the MRA, stated that Islam denounces terrorism and the perpetrators of the London attack should be justly punished. He also sent condolences to the British nation and families of the victims.¹⁴⁶

In **Spain**, the “Comision Islamica de España” and the “Junta Islamica de España” condemned the incidents. In April Spanish Muslim organisations issued a fatwa on terrorism warning that anyone attempting to even justify a terrorist act in religious terms would be considered an enemy of Islam¹⁴⁷. On 22 July, Mansur Escudero, Secretary General of the Comision Islamica de España, and Yusuf Fernandez, Spokesperson of the Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islamicas (FEERI), met with the British ambassador in Madrid to express their condolences and rejection of the attacks as well as to show the solidarity of Spanish Muslims with the British people.¹⁴⁸

In **Sweden**, numerous Muslim organisations condemned the London attacks. The Imam Council condemned the bombings and stated that, “responsibility lies with those who have performed this act. We do not accept any moral, cultural, political

¹⁴⁴ Lenzi Claudio: “*Moschea, una lunga preghiera per condannare il terrorismo*”, L’Unità, pagine Firenze, 09 luglio 2005.

¹⁴⁵ Acronym adopted for the purposes of this report (not official).

¹⁴⁶ Declaration of the MRA; available at: http://www.mzr.pl/index_oswiadczenie.php (01.08.2005).

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.webislam.com/default.asp?idn=1546> (26.07.2005)

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.webislam.com/default.asp?idn=1706> (3.10.05)

or religious blame for the attacks”¹⁴⁹. The chairman of the Council and Imam of the Stockholm mosque, Hassan Moussa, stressed that such “barbarian acts can never be accepted”¹⁵⁰. 22 Muslim associations in Southern Sweden condemned the attacks.¹⁵¹ The Young Swedish Muslims described the bombers as “enemies of open society”¹⁵². The Swedish Muslim Council encouraged its member organisations to clearly oppose any violent acts¹⁵³. Also the Islamic Ahmadiyya movement condemned the attacks¹⁵⁴.

2.4. MEDIA REACTION IN THE EU

In all Member States, during the first few days following the bombings there was extensive coverage of the events, reactions by politicians, opinion leaders and Muslim community representatives, as well as human-interest stories on country nationals in London at the time. Later the focus shifted largely to reporting on the security situation, the development of terrorist organisations and the relationship between Islam and terrorist violence. The events triggered a renewed interest in Islam with media reporting on the situation of Muslims in Europe and the possible causes for the radicalisation of certain members of the Muslim community. In general the media appears to have avoided linking directly the Muslim faith or Muslim communities in general with terrorism or radical groups. In many cases, mainstream media made particular efforts to differentiate between the pseudo-religious justification of terrorism and the Muslim faith. However, this distinction has sometimes been blurred by inflationary language and headlines such as “Islamic terrorism”, and in many cases the use of terms “Islam”, “Muslim”, “fundamentalism” seems to confuse rather than educate the reader.

Below are some examples covering selected countries, as reported by NFPs.

In **Austria**, there were some articles regarding the safety of the Vienna subway system and the situation of the Muslim community, in particular the impact of radical preachers. The Austrian daily *Die Presse* dedicated a full front page to an interview with an Imam, Abu Muhammad, and with the deputy director of a mosque considered radical by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism¹⁵⁵. A commentary written by an Islamic Faith Community representative, praising the Austrian way of dealing with Muslims as a model for Europe, was also printed in the same issue¹⁵⁶.

¹⁴⁹ *Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå* (07.07.2005)

¹⁵⁰ *Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå* (07.07.2005)

¹⁵¹ *Dagens Nyheter* (30.07.2005)

¹⁵² www.ungamuslimer.nu (22.07.2005)

¹⁵³ *Svenska Dagbladet* (22.07.2005)

¹⁵⁴ *Svenska Dagbladet* (22.07.2005)

¹⁵⁵ *Die Presse*, (21.07.2005), „Wiener Imam: ‚Glaube nicht an Demokratie““, p. 1

¹⁵⁶ Al-Rawi, O. (2005) „Die Integration der Muslime in Europa“, in: *Die Presse*, (21.07.2005), p. 26

In **Belgium**, a major theme was the “radicalisation of Muslim adolescents”, allegedly caused by socio-economic deprivation, alienation, identity crises and international politics. Another theme was the national security situation and the possibility of Brussels becoming a terrorist target as host of the NATO headquarters and European Institutions¹⁵⁷. Most media clearly distinguished between terrorist attacks, the Muslim communities and the Muslim faith. The views of Muslim leaders condemning terrorism were given prominence.

In the **Czech Republic**, a number of commentaries and interviews in the press focused on the need for special security measures and provisions, especially regarding *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty* which is located in Prague and broadcasts to Muslim countries. The Czech Republic’s military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan was also discussed in this context, as well as the support provided to terrorist organisations before the fall of communism in 1989.

In **Estonia**, the media focused on the likelihood of terrorist attacks in Estonia¹⁵⁸ and “Islamic terrorism” or “Islamic fundamentalism”, characterising religiously motivated terrorism as a distortion of “true Islam”.

In **Finland**, the media presented the news in a balanced way. The *Helsingin Sanomat* devoted a page to the debate and analysis of integration issues of immigrants¹⁵⁹. The same newspaper published contributions by academics such as Sylvia Akar arguing that terrorist ideology is not derived from Islam¹⁶⁰ and Teemu Sinkkonen who asserts that the fight against terrorism cannot be done at the expense of liberal democratic values¹⁶¹.

In **France**, the media focused on the question of security, evaluating the threat for France and debating the means available to the Police to prevent attacks. There were very few reports on the French Muslim community. These reports made a clear distinction between terrorism and the Muslim community or the Muslim faith. *Le Monde* published a report on the Muslim community in Paris in which the author underlined the fact that French Muslims condemned the bombings: “The majority of Muslims are victims of terrorism. The faith teaches that innocents should not be killed”¹⁶².

In **Germany**, with very few exceptions, the reaction of the media was balanced. In general, the media distinguished clearly between terrorist attacks and the Muslim faith/community¹⁶³. There were detailed reports on developments in London, but

¹⁵⁷ *Expatica*, (8 July 2005), “Is Brussels safe from attack?”, available at http://www.expatica.com/source/site_article.asp?subchannel_id=24&story_id=21772&name=Is+Brussels+safe+from+attack%3F, 25.07.2005)

¹⁵⁸ *Postimees*, (21.07.2005).

¹⁵⁹ *Helsingin Sanomat* (24.07.2005).

¹⁶⁰ *Helsingin Sanomat* (28.07.2005).

¹⁶¹ *Helsingin Sanomat* (13.07.2005).

¹⁶² Ternisien, X (2005), « A paris, à la mosquée, « on ne fait pas de politique » », in *Le Monde* (10-07-2005).

¹⁶³ A leading article in the Muslim newspaper *Islamische Zeitung* (27.07.2005) stated that a clear distinction was made in the national media between Muslims and terrorists.

also on reactions of Muslim organisations in Germany. Many newspapers published background information on several related topics such as the national security situation and Islamist extremism; in this context some newspapers also covered the topic of integration and the situation of Muslim communities. An article in *Welt am Sonntag* entitled “The bombers are among us” (10.07.2005) was a week later criticised in the same newspaper by Bassam Tibi, a political scientist of Syrian origin with German citizenship, for being biased¹⁶⁴.

In **Greece**, the media in general did not link terrorism to the Muslim faith. The events however triggered a renewed interest in Islam with several articles in the press on the situation of Muslims in Europe and the possible causes for the radicalisation of Muslim youth. The political situation in the Middle East was frequently cited as a possible factor influencing the radicalisation of European Muslims. The NFP has reported four articles published between end-July and end-August in the Sunday paper *To Vima*, which has the highest circulation among Greek newspapers¹⁶⁵. These articles blamed Europe for “tolerating extremists of Islam” and claimed that “Qur’an stands for hatred and holy war”. On the other hand, *TA NEA*, another daily of high circulation, criticised the Police for having put under surveillance several Muslim migrants who live in Athens, and especially Pakistanis and Bangladeshis¹⁶⁶.

In **Hungary**, significant media coverage was given to the events, and the issue of terrorism occupied a central role in public discourse¹⁶⁷. Among the issues discussed were the size of the Muslim population in Europe¹⁶⁸, the constitutionality and effectiveness¹⁶⁹ of anti-terrorism measures¹⁷⁰, possible backlashes against minorities¹⁷¹, and security policies in light of the stalled ratification of the European Constitution¹⁷².

¹⁶⁴ *Welt am Sonntag* (17.07.2005)

¹⁶⁵ I. Marinos, «Το Λοντονιστάν πληρώνει – οι απεριόριστες ατομικές ελευθερίες επιτρέπουν να υποστηρίξει ο,τιδήποτε» in *To Vima* (31.07. 2005) ; I. Marinos, «Ισλάμ : επίθεση ή άμυνα ; Η Ευρώπη εθελοτυφλούσα κατέληξε σε εκτροφείο εξτρεμιστών ισλαμιστών» in *To Vima* (07.08.2005), I. Marinos, «Επικίνδυνη εθελούφλωση – Ας δούμε ποιοί είναι οι πραγματικοί και όχι οι υποτιθέμενοι τρομοκράτες» in *To Vima* (21.08.2005); I. Marinos, «Τι διδάσκει ο Μωάμεθ – Εν αντιθέσει με ό,τι υποστηρίζεται, οι τρομοκράτες ενεργούν υπακούοντας στο Κοράνι» in *To Vima* (28.08.2005)

¹⁶⁶ *TA NEA*, 05.08.2005

¹⁶⁷ There were two press analyses by “Political Capital” (Policy Research and Consulting Institute), available at <http://www.hirszerzo.hu> (26.07.2005) and Gyárfás, D. (2005) „Szent háború a keresztények ellen? Az iszlám szerepe a terrorban” <http://www.hirszerzo.hu/cikk.php?id=985#founded> (28.07.2005)

¹⁶⁸ See for example Bártfai, G. (2005) “A terror diadala” <http://www.magyarhirlap.hu/cikk.php?cikk=95294>, (26.07.2005)

¹⁶⁹ See for example Kepecs, F. (2005) “Nem szakadhat a cérna” <http://www.nepszava.hu/default.asp?cCenter=article.asp&nID=745827> (26.07.2005)

¹⁷⁰ See for example Gaál, Cs. (2005): “Borult égből” http://www.vg.hu/index3.php?app=archivum&a=1000&kereses_hely=2&q1=%E9gb%F51 (26.07.2005)

¹⁷¹ See for example http://www.tv2.hu/Archivum_cikk.php?cikk=100000105344&archiv=1&next=0 (28.07.2005)

¹⁷² See for example Rónay, T. (2005) “A terror társadalma” <http://www.nepszava.hu/default.asp?cCenter=article.asp&nID=743700> (26.07.2005)

In **Ireland**, the media reaction was for the most part balanced with informative news reporting and analysis. Yet, there were also few examples of sensationalised speculation about the possible threat of Islamic terrorists in Ireland and other parts of Europe. A small number of articles used the attacks in Britain to substantiate sceptical views on cultural and ethnic diversity and immigration into Ireland. Most of the main newspapers highlighted the concerns of the Muslim community in Ireland; for example, the Irish Times reported “Irish Muslims fear being demonised”¹⁷³.

In **Italy** media reactions varied. While some newspapers failed to differentiate between Muslims and terrorists, others made a clear distinction. Calls for tighter immigration controls were also frequently discussed. The party organ of the Northern League, *La Padania*, linked the bombings to Muslim immigrants and the need for tougher immigration control. *Corriere della Sera* published an article by Oriana Fallaci on the bombings in London claiming that Europe has become “Eurabia” because it has chosen to close its eyes to the “invasion by Muslims”¹⁷⁴. Another daily, *Libero*, printed Fallaci’s interview with a Polish TV station, in which she reiterated her personal opinions¹⁷⁵. However, other media have promoted an open public debate on the bombings, offering representatives of the Muslim community the opportunity to present their perspectives on how to foster social cohesion and counteract the negative impact of terrorist attacks¹⁷⁶.

In **Latvia**, after a report on terrorist demands to withdraw armed forces from Iraq¹⁷⁷ the National News Agency LETA published comments by the Deputy Director of the Constitution Protection Bureau stressing that in the Baltic States there are no radical Islamist groups and local Muslims are fully integrated into society¹⁷⁸.

In **Lithuania** during the weeks following the events in London, the media covered related topics, including the prevention of possible terrorist acts, immigration challenges in the EU, and the situation of Muslims in European countries. In August, the news agency BNS initiated a representative public opinion poll regarding the perception of the threat of terrorism¹⁷⁹. 19 percent of those surveyed considered that there was a real threat from “Islamic terrorism” in Lithuania. The majority, 45.8 percent, however believed that the threat was real but that terrorist acts were not likely to happen in Lithuania.

¹⁷³ Irish Times 15 July 2005.

¹⁷⁴ Fallaci Oriana: “*Il nemico che trattiamo da amico*” (The enemy we treat as a friend), *Corriere della Sera* 16 luglio 2005.

¹⁷⁵ “Intervista concessa da Oriana Fallaci a Padre Andrzej Majewski, caporedattore della televisione pubblica polacca (Telewizja Polka)”, in: *Libero* (14.08.2005).

¹⁷⁶ Aly Baba Faye: “*Il nostro grido di islamici contro i terroristi*” (Our cries as Muslims against the terrorists), *l’Unità*, 26 luglio 2005. See also: Hamza Roberto Piccardo: “*Noi, islamici d’Occidente*” (We, the Muslims of the West), *il Manifesto*, 15 luglio 2005

¹⁷⁷ ‘Teroristi draud Latvijai’, in: *National News Agency LETA*, (20.07.2005)

¹⁷⁸ Sloga, G. (2005) “Teroristi draud Latvijai”, in: *Diena*, (20.07.2005), p. 6

¹⁷⁹ Poll was carried out on 24-28.08.2005 and announced on 21.09.2005 on DELFI, “Islamo terorizmo grėsmė - reali, bet mažai tikėtina, mano dauguma lietuvių”, available at: <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/print.php?id=7532516> (21.09.2005)

In **Luxemburg**, a clear distinction was made between terrorists and Muslims by the *Luxemburger Wort*, which appealed to the public not to be influenced by those few who try to incriminate ordinary Muslim citizens.

In the **Netherlands**, there was a balanced coverage of the events in the mainstream press and television. The latter carried BBC footage. BBC's reporting was also important for the Dutch as it conveyed the strong message that the British Muslim community condemned the attacks and that both UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and London Mayor Ken Livingstone clearly denounced the attackers as criminals who did not represent the Muslim community. Most media attention was on security measures, the possible links to al-Qaeda, and the fact the perpetrators of the London attacks were British (similar to the Van Gogh murderer in the Netherlands). A week after the bombings media attention shifted to the trial of the Van Gogh murderer.

In **Poland**, most media reports were initially purely informative regarding the victims and the progress of the criminal investigation. Later there were articles with a broader analysis of the events, as well as praise for the British public's response, debates on the current threat to Poland and its preparedness against attempted attacks, the causes of terrorism, links between the bombings and the intervention in Iraq, security measures and forms of combating terror, acceptable limitations of civil rights in the face of terrorism, and the situation of Muslim minorities in Europe. The media differed fundamentally in their reporting of events ranging from those adopting a 'clash of civilisations' approach ("Holy War with Jihad?"¹⁸⁰, "State of Siege"¹⁸¹) to those stressing the need to uphold pluralism and tolerance. There were examples of xenophobic articles as well as elements of hate speech. After the second London bomb attacks, the media became more aggressive towards Muslims: "They want our destruction"¹⁸² and "Throw Muslims out of Poland?"¹⁸³, "New York, Madrid, London. Genocide of the 21st Century"¹⁸⁴.

In **Portugal**, some media directly linked the attacks with rights granted to the Muslim communities in the UK and other European countries, and they advocated for stricter controls¹⁸⁵. Other media stressed the need for stronger efforts to promote dialogue and tolerance on issues related to the Muslim communities and faith to safeguard civil liberties and social rights¹⁸⁶.

In **Slovakia**, the media covered the events extensively. Most media comments described the perpetrators as "Islamic extremists" or "Islamists", but there were efforts not to identify the terrorists with the Muslim community or Islam directly.

¹⁸⁰ Ostrowski, M. (2005) „Święta wojna z džihadem?“, [„Holy War with Jihad?“], *Polityka*, (23.07.2005), pp. 22-25

¹⁸¹ Ostrowski, M. (2005) „Stan oblężenia“, [State of Siege], in: *Polityka*, (30.07.2005), pp. 22-24

¹⁸² *Newsweek*, (31.07.2005).

¹⁸³ *Polityka*, (23.07.2005).

¹⁸⁴ *Wprost, Special Edition*, (17.07.2005).

¹⁸⁵ http://dn.sapo.pt/2005/07/17/editorial/o_inimigo_dentro_casa.html (31.08.05) or

<http://www.correiodamanha.pt/noticia.asp?id=166234&idCanal=93> (31.08.05)

¹⁸⁶ <http://dn.sapo.pt/2005/07/09/opinioao/maniqueismo.html> (31.08.05) or

http://dn.sapo.pt/2005/07/13/opinioao/a_europa_contra_o_terrorismo.html (31.08.05)

The situation in Iraq and Afghanistan was frequently cited as contributing to the threat of terrorism. An opinion poll, carried out by Markant on behalf of the daily *SME*, found that almost 40 per cent of those interviewed believed that the main cause of terrorism was the “aggressive foreign policy of certain Western states”; another 40 per cent, though, attributed terrorism to religious or ideological fanaticism, and 8.2 per cent considered poverty to be the cause for terrorism¹⁸⁷. In the beginning of October, *SME* published results from another representative poll on how the Slovak population perceives Islam and Muslims.¹⁸⁸ 40.9 percent responded that their perception of Islam was worse than that of other religions. In the view of 41.7 percent of respondents Islam is equal to any other religion.¹⁸⁹ The question “Would you agree with the construction of a Mosque in the vicinity of your house?” solicited the following replies: 12.2 percent would agree, 61.5 percent would disagree, while 26.3 percent did not answer.

In **Spain**, the media focused on the possible causes and effects of the attacks. According to the Muslim organisations contacted by the NFP, the media coverage has not damaged the Muslim community, except for few negative exceptions¹⁹⁰. Mainstream media, especially the daily *El País* and media owned by PRISA, tried to make a clear distinction between terrorism and the Muslim faith. The major newspapers however did not publish statements by the representative Muslim organisations condemning terrorism.

In **Sweden**, media reporting was in general balanced, supported by reasonable statements of opinion leaders and politicians. There were no significant references to restricting Muslim immigration or blaming Muslim communities for terrorism. Representatives of the Muslim community were also given space for comments. There were some references to the possibility of small Muslim groups and individuals financing or willing to carry out terrorist acts. *Dagens Nyheter* commented on the responsibility of the Muslim community to “prevent their religion being hijacked and taken over by men who love death more than life”¹⁹¹. *Svenska Dagbladet* attributed the recruitment of terrorists in Europe among Muslim communities to shortcomings of the integration process and discrimination¹⁹². *Aftonbladet* also cites discrimination and racism as the breeding ground for terrorism adding that an “aggressive foreign policy” and Islamophobia will increase the risk for terrorist acts¹⁹³. *Expressen* described the interpretation of Islam by terrorists as “perverted”¹⁹⁴.

¹⁸⁷ *SME*, 11.07.2005, „Ľudia: Za terorizmus môže agresívna politika“, <http://www.sme.sk/clanok.asp?cl=2292126> (19.07.2005)

¹⁸⁸ *SME*, 3.10.2005, “Na Slovensku moslimov a mešity ľudia nechcú”, http://www.sme.sk/clanok_tlac.asp?cl=2406290

¹⁸⁹ *SME*, 3.10.2005, “Islam”, http://www.sme.sk/clanok_tlac.asp?cl=2406353

¹⁹⁰ Information provided by Mansur Escudero, Secretary General of Comisión Islámica de España’s, by telephone (22.07.2005); by Riay Tatary, President of UCIE, by telephone (22.07.2005); by Abdennur Prado, Secretary General of Junta Islámica, by telephone (22.07.2005); and by Yusuf Fernández Spokesperson for Federación Española de Entidades Religiosas Islámicas (FEERI) and director of Webislam, by telephone (25.07.2005)

¹⁹¹ *Dagens Nyheter* (22.07.2005)

¹⁹² *Svenska Dagbladet* (14.07.2005)

¹⁹³ *Aftonbladet* (15.07.2005)

¹⁹⁴ *Expressen* (07.07.2005)

2.5. EXAMPLES OF INITIATIVES BY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EU MEMBER STATES (public authorities, Muslim organisations and NGOs) TO PREVENT ISLAMOPHOBIA AND TO STRENGTHEN COHESION

Particularly in Member States with a large Muslim community, the London events triggered new initiatives or reinforced existing ones. While it is difficult and early to assess the impact of the 7July attacks and their aftermath, in some cases proposals for an intensified dialogue between Muslim communities and the State or between faiths seem to have gained an additional momentum. For instance, in Italy a Government initiative for a Consultative Council of Muslims was fast-tracked in the wake of 7/7. In Germany, cooperation between the State and Muslim communities on security matters is being enhanced. Also, Muslim community organisations launched new initiatives highlighting their readiness to support integration across all communities and tackle radicalisation of certain members. For instance, in Sweden the Muslim Council has decided to provide Imams with civic education classes.

Below are some examples covering selected countries, as reported by NFPs.

In **Austria**, the Islamic Faith Community plans to hold another European conference of Imams in January 2006 with a focus on fundamentalism and terrorism¹⁹⁵. Several existing initiatives of dialogue involving the Islamic Faith Community will be continued, such as working with schools¹⁹⁶.

In **Denmark**, the Prime Minister held a meeting with 19 representatives, including imams, from the Muslim community on the 20 September to enter into a dialogue on integration and the fight against terrorism¹⁹⁷. The involvement of imams has been much debated as it has raised the question of the role of religion in politics. The Islamic Community, in cooperation with other Muslim organisations, took the initiative to hold an anti-terror conference on 24 September¹⁹⁸. Main purpose of the conference “Security and Cooperation” (Sikkerhed og Samarbejde) was to send a clear message to the Muslim community and the rest of the population that Islam does not accept terrorism¹⁹⁹.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Andrea Saleh, (27.07.2005)

¹⁹⁶ Various information by the Islamic Faith Community in Austria, September-October 2005.

¹⁹⁷ Website of the political party „Venstre“, [http://www.venstre.dk/index.php?id=rss2feed&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=359&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=301&cHash=532b43f3f9](http://www.venstre.dk/index.php?id=rss2feed&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=359&tx_ttnews[backPid]=301&cHash=532b43f3f9) (29.09.2005)

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.dr.dk/pubs/nyheder/template/printarticle.jhtml?sectionID=6&articleID=265936&publicationID=1> (28.07.2005)

¹⁹⁹ www.wakf.com (29.09.2005)

In **France**, between 11 and 13 September, the City of Lyon hosted the 19th annual dialogue session organised by the Sant' Egidio Catholic Community²⁰⁰. The meetings aimed to forge solid links and find common ground between the various faiths through debates on peace. The religious leaders also discussed the ways of separating faith from war. French Islamic Council chairman Dalil Boubakeur was among the participants. Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy and former minister and President of the European Parliament Simone Veil attended the event. The French Government provided financial support for the gathering.

In **Germany**, representatives of Muslim organisations called for an intensive debate within the Muslim community on the religious obligation to abide by the Constitution and the dangers of misinterpreting the Qu'ran. The proposal to intensify the debate on Islam was also suggested by the Berlin Senator of the Interior²⁰¹. Salim Abdullah from the *Islam-Archiv* urged the German Government to bring representatives of the Muslim community together for joint meetings²⁰². Muslim organisations, such as the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD) and the Islamic Council, complained about the lack of a consistent long-term Muslim policy in Germany suggesting that politicians and opinion leaders should visit mosques to improve relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims²⁰³.

The head of the Berlin Office for the Protection of the Constitution suggested involving Muslim communities in the fight against terrorism. Her office will set up a “confidential telephone hotline” where information on terrorist or extremist activities can also be reported in Arabic or Turkish²⁰⁴.

On 22 September, the two large Muslim umbrella organisations ZMD and DITIB and leading representatives of the Federal Criminal Office (BKA), the State Offices and the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution held a high-level meeting to discuss new forms of cooperation. They agreed upon installing a working group consisting of representatives from the Muslim community and the German security institutions. This working group is instructed to identify areas of cooperation and developing common proposals for “confidence-building measures”. Such measures could include intensifying the dialogue between the mosque communities and local police departments, a mutual exchange of information, and establishing liaison persons within the police departments and the Muslim communities. The working group is expected to present first results by the meeting in December 2005. Two other large Muslim organisations, Milli Görüs and the Islamrat, were not invited to attend the meeting; representatives of both organisations expressed their disapproval of this form of cooperation.

In **Italy**, leaders of the largest Muslim organisation, the Union of Islamic Communities and Organisations in Italy (UCOII), reported positive reactions and

²⁰⁰ <http://www.santegidio.org/EN/ecumenismo/uer/2005/programma.htm> (06.10.2005)

²⁰¹ *Tagesspiegel* online (09.07.2005)

²⁰² *Westfalenpost* (20.07.2005)

²⁰³ *taz* NRW (09.07.2005), p. 1

²⁰⁴ *Berliner Morgenpost* (22.07.2005); *taz* Berlin (22.07.2005), p. 21

initiatives towards Muslims, such as in Florence where the municipal authority pledged its support for the construction of a mosque.

The Minister of the Interior set up a Consultative Council of Muslims, a new body that will advise the Ministry and put forward proposals relating to integration and Islam. The Council shall undertake research and analysis with the aim of improving the knowledge on the situation of the Muslim communities living in Italy. It will also make suggestions on integration issues. Its members will be appointed by the Minister and chosen among people of Islamic faith and culture, irrespective of whether they are representative of, or, belong to one of the various Muslim organisations²⁰⁵. Reactions by Muslim organisations to the announcement have been limited, as they seem to await the list of Council members to be made public. It remains to be seen whether the Council, once constituted, could enter into a formal protocol of agreement with the State similar to those between the State and other faiths.

In **The Netherlands**, the political discourse shifted from anti-terrorist measures to policy making to tackle the radicalisation of Muslim youth. The government produced two policy papers on radicalism and radicalisation. The first policy paper analyses the Dutch situation, circumstances under which radicalisation occurs and it sets forth a broad government anti-radicalism and radicalisation strategy – including views on how to curb “Islamic extremism”²⁰⁶. The policy document sets out three main approaches. Firstly, to strengthen the ties within Dutch society, especially by groups open to radical ideas. Secondly, to empower society, i.e. increase its defences, so that individuals as well as communities may oppose the extremism that affects them or tries to recruit them. Thirdly, to intervene actively through the creative use of existing judicial and administrative measures. These include making the glorification of violence a criminal offence and measures against terrorist statements and sowing hatred on the Internet.

The second policy paper is an action programme consisting of a total of 32 concrete project and actions that are aimed at preventing radicalisation processes²⁰⁷. The activities focus primarily on young people who are considered to be especially susceptible to radical influences. Various parts of the action programme are therefore aimed at supplying information and support to parents, spiritual leaders, youth workers and teachers. The projects are carried out with partners such as the National Consultative Committee on Minorities, the Muslim

²⁰⁵ Italy / Ministero dell’Interno (2005), *Nasce la consulta dell’Islam italiano*, Press release, 10 September 2005, available at: <http://www.interno.it/news/articolo.php?idarticolo=21310> (28.09.2005).

²⁰⁶ NL, Minister of Justice, (2005), *Nota radicalisme en radicalisering*. See also: Broad government anti-radicalism and radicalisation approach: http://www.minjus.nl/english/press/press_releases/archive/archive_2005/50823broad_governme nt_anti_radicalism_and_radicalisation_approach.asp (03.10.2005)

²⁰⁷ NL, Minister of Integration and Immigration, (2005), *Nota Weerbaarheid en Integratiebeleid*. See also: Action programme to prevent radicalisation: http://www.minjus.nl/english/press/press_releases/archive/archive_2005/50707action_programm e_to_prevent_radicalisation.asp (03.10.2005)

umbrella organisations CMO, a Liaison Committee for Muslims and the Government, and CGI (Contactgroep Islam).

In **Poland**, the Muslim League organised readings of communiqués denouncing the attacks in religious centres in Polish cities²⁰⁸. On 15 September, the Muslim League announced the Muslim Declaration, which aims to present norms and be a source of knowledge for Muslims living in Poland. It is also to further mutual interaction, understanding and respect of the Polish majority society. According to its authors, the “Declaration is a general programme, that, on the one hand, positively impacts Muslims in Poland who should enrich Polish society. On the other, it is to facilitate contacts with the non-European world of Islam, yet only with those parts which eschew extremist behaviour.”

The 6th Gniezno Convention was held on 16-18 September as a forum for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, under the slogan “A Europe of Dialogue. Being a Christian in a pluralistic Europe”. The Convention included dialogue with other religions, namely Islam and Judaism.²⁰⁹ Representatives of Christian churches, Jewish and Muslim communities and other religious groups participated as well as politicians. A prayer meeting of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, was held. According to the Polish Mufti, Tomasz Miśkiewicz, the event contributed to the improved image of Muslims, notable in press reports as well as personal contacts²¹⁰. It is considered important that the Catholic Church, which holds great authority in Poland, co-organised this event.

In **Slovakia**, during a recent television debate Abdul Wahab Al-Sbanaty, representative of the Muslim community, suggested that youth radicalisation could be prevented through targeted educational activities by the State²¹¹.

Spain’s Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero proposed to the UN General Assembly in September 2004 to create a “Civilizations’ Alliance” between Western countries and the Arab world²¹². On 15 July 2005 the UN adopted this proposal and is to create a group of experts tasked with presenting proposals to prevent the relationship among different cultures from deteriorating, to overcome divisions and to fight extremism.

In **Sweden**, Minister for Integration Jens Orback held a meeting with representatives from Muslim organisations to discuss the situation of Muslims in Sweden and to hear their perspective on a possible radicalisation of some members of the Community.²¹³ The Swedish Muslim Council decided to provide Imams with civic education classes and to arrange seminars about extremism, terrorism and Islam.

²⁰⁸ Information given to the NFP in an email dated 29.07.2005

²⁰⁹ <http://www.euroforum.pl/euroforum-en/?MID=9454>

²¹⁰ Interview, October 6, 2005

²¹¹ *Slovak Television (STV)*, 14.07.2005 „Moslimovia na Slovensku“, <http://archiv.stv.sk/tvarchiv/video/?video=12029> (26.07.2005)

²¹² <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2004/09/22/internacional/1095810596.html> (26.07.2005)

²¹³ *Dagens Nyheter* (24.09.2005)

Conclusions

This report takes stock of initiatives launched to prevent anti-Muslim incidents and engage with the Muslim community in the aftermath of 7 July. It is pivotal that these efforts feed into comprehensive social inclusion and anti-discrimination policies so that they achieve sustainable results and address core issues with benefits for the entire society. It is also important to communicate that such policies have stand-alone objectives, which go beyond the prevention of extremism.²¹⁴

Building on its previous reports relating to Muslim communities in the EU,²¹⁵ the EUMC puts forward four principal conclusions with an aim to support policy making towards Muslim communities.

Conclusions for the Member States and European Institutions:

One important lesson learned from the London events is that swift responses by governments, police services and politicians are decisive in countering incidents and prejudice against minorities, and preventing a trend of incidents and attacks from taking shape. For these efforts to support community cohesion in the longer term,

1. Members of government, police officials, politicians and other high profile opinion makers must show decisive political leadership, avoid generalisations and continue much of the good work that was seen following the London attacks. Positive public gestures regarding Islam and opening a dialogue with Muslim community representatives – based on the respect for human rights - must not be seen to happen only in a time of heightened tension. This will also set the agenda for the media and help avoid negative stereotyping of Muslims.

The positive initiatives to intensify the dialogue with Muslim communities require institutionalisation and a partner who can truly represent community needs. Member States and European institutions should:

²¹⁴ In a Communication adopted on 21 September 2005, the European Commission presented actions and recommendations to complement current national efforts to prevent “violent radicalisation” and the “potential for terrorist recruitment”. The Commission has noted the “ancillary effects” that integration policies can have on preventing radicalisation while stressing that these are also stand-alone policies. Further details at: <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/329&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

²¹⁵ These include: Summary Report on Islamophobia in the EU after 11 September 2001 http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/anti-islam/Synthesis-report_en.pdf; Situation of Islamic Communities in five European Cities http://eumc.eu.int/eumc/material/pub/islamic_com/Islamic_com-EN.pdf

2. continue to encourage and promote the active involvement of Muslim communities in institutionalised procedures of policy-making and include them in more informal channels of dialogue at European, national and local level. Member States and the European institutions should examine ways to support Muslim communities' self-organisation through capacity building and leadership development.

Vulnerable communities need to feel reassured that their experiences of victimisation are taken seriously by the authorities. For that, it is of utmost important that police services in the Member States:

3. encourage reporting of racist incidents, respond immediately to indications of tensions by stepping up policing among targeted communities, and provide adequate support to victims of racist crime. Comprehensive criminal legislation needs to recognise racial motivation as an aggravating factor to ensure full investigation and adequate punishment of such crimes.

The problem of social marginalisation must be tackled and the practice of segregation addressed. Policies that counter marginalisation of minority communities and promote social inclusiveness should become priorities. Particularly, access to education (including religious education) and discrimination in employment need consideration. Where not yet in place, Member States should:

4. establish monitoring procedures to assess the progress of social inclusion and send an unequivocal signal to all communities that efforts to combat discrimination are to be given priority. Policies that counter marginalisation of minority communities should become priorities.

Follow-up mechanisms:

The EUMC recognises that a longer period of information gathering is required to assess more carefully the impact of government initiatives, initiatives by Muslim organisations and the police services, attitudes of all communities and the effectiveness of inter-community mechanisms.

The EUMC will therefore

- Continue to collect data and information related to the situation of Muslim communities across the EU, with a particular focus on manifestations of Islamophobia;
- Identify good practices of policy making towards Muslim communities, which are sustainable and support community cohesion.
- Specific findings will be captured in a comprehensive analytical report, which is to be published in 2006.

European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

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ON MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE EU**

2005 - 53 pp, - 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-95008-95-2

A great deal of information on the European Monitoring Centre is available on the Internet. It can be accessed at (<http://eumc.eu.int>)

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