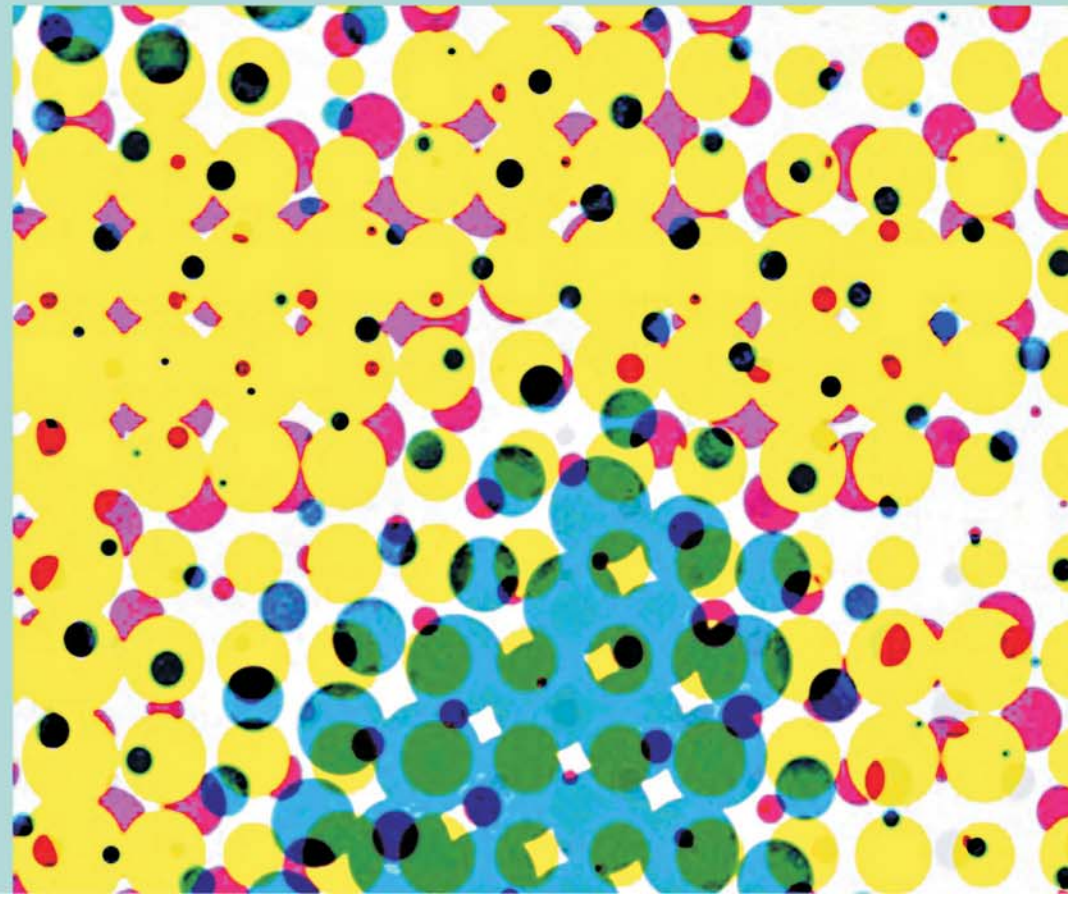




# Citizenship

## A User's Guide for European Muslim Youth



## Citizenship

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## Introduction

It is FEMYSO's pleasure to publish this guide meant for European Muslim youth. This guide presents our organisation's overall approach to the concept of "Citizenship", a concept often referred to when talking about minorities. "Citizenship" is invoked not only when minorities claim their rights but also to get them more involved in social and public matters. Thus you will find in this guide FEMYSO's position on citizenship: it is seen as a notion that combines rights and duties, a notion which encourages young Muslim Europeans to be active citizens in their respective societies. This guide also provides young Muslims living in European societies with answers to a number of questions that they express and that can sometimes discourage them from getting involved in public matters. Clear legal opinions that foster the blossoming of Muslim young women and men in harmony with their European societies are displayed here to challenge those perceptions.



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Moreover, this document is one of the actions undertaken by FEMYSO, such as the *Brussels Talks*, as part of its contribution to the promotion of an active and engaged citizenship among the European Muslim youth.

Abbass SEMAH  
FEMYSO Executive Committee member  
Head of the Department of Citizenship



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### A USER'S GUIDE FOR EUROPEAN MUSLIM YOUTH

The term citizenship means at the same time a formal status - belonging of an individual to a state on the basis of a set of rights and duties - and also a state of mind. Citizenship is not only about attaining rights, but more about participation. Participation in the political and civil process. To talk of citizenship is to discuss rights, duties, participation and identity, because citizenship was always seen as a function rather than as a political end in itself, not something to be attained but to be done, and practiced. In the modern world effects such as globalisation, voter apathy and loss of trust in politics, the settlement of people of different culture, language and religion and the erosion of the nation State have created a fascination with the term citizenship in policy circles.



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As a Muslim youth body we expect young Muslims to be active and engaged citizens of Europe at all levels of society. Muslims need to play a leading role in participating and contributing - doing their duty - rather than merely asking for rights. We feel there to be no contradiction between living in a society that is assumedly not based on Islamic values and taking up full active roles as citizens. Especially when we consider that, at times, there is more freedom to practice Islam in some European countries than in some traditionally 'Muslim' countries.



As citizenship is the fulfilment of rights and duties, at the same time as fulfilling their duties to society, young Muslims have every reason to expect their rights to be granted. These include being valued as full members of society, to be given equal opportunities to fulfil their potentials and to be protected from discrimination and stigmatisation, especially when the world political climate is so tense in relation to Islam. Without this fulfilment of rights true belonging cannot be actualised in order for true citizenship to be practised.

Once Muslim youth accept and realise that they belong to European society and European society belongs to them it is only natural that they should see how they can be of benefit.



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They should take inspiration from their Muslim predecessors who passed on to Europe such amazing things which are now taken for granted as the numerical system, algebra, paper and so much more in philosophy, mathematics, art, science and literature.

