

Launch of the ADVISE Project

ADVOCATES AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EDUCATION

Brussels, 21 March 2016

On the occasion of the European Action Week Against Racism, a consortium of NGOs from around Europe is pleased to announce the launch of the **ADVISE project: Advocates Against Islamophobia in Education.**

The consortium brings together **Fryshuset** (Sweden), **Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations** (EU/Belgium), **International Alert** (UK), **Etudiants Musulmans de France** (France) and **Symbiosis** (Greece), as well as the **European Network Against Racism (ENAR)** as policy advisor.

The project aims to **identify and address gaps in national policies to protect against Islamophobia in education** and to **develop advocacy strategies towards stakeholders** (such as education authorities, policymakers, student unions, educators and human rights NGOs) in order to make progress in introducing **better protection for students who face Islamophobia in education, and mechanisms for reporting and recording of incidents as well as supporting victims of Islamophobia.**

The project is taking place in 5 countries: UK, France, Belgium, Sweden and Greece. In these countries, the rise in far-right, the populist discourses activity and the increasingly hostile environment towards Muslims is a reality of daily life. Already, in 2009, the Fundamental Rights Agency— warned about the scale of discrimination against Muslims in Europe. “On average, one Muslim respondent out of three reported having experienced discrimination in the last 12 months. These respondents (...) said they had experienced an average of eight incidents of discrimination over a period of 12 months”. In 2015, discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin continues to be regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination in the EU, figures reaches 64% followed by religion or belief 50% (10/2015- European Commission, Special Eurobarometer 437 discrimination in the EU in 2015 report).

The ADVISE project will train and empower around **60 young people between 16 and 35** on how to advocate against Islamophobia, with a focus on improving reporting, recording and support mechanisms in the education sector.

The project will have **a strong cross-community element, by bringing together Muslim and non-Muslim youth** to learn how to advocate against discrimination, as well as bringing advocates from different communities together to share their experiences and expertise on advocating against discrimination.

We look forward to working with our partners and local and national stakeholders towards better protection of young people from the harmful and damaging impact of Islamophobic acts.

Project supported by **Open Society Initiative for Europe**



SYMBIOSIS



More about the partners

FRYSHUSET  Fryshuset is a non-profit non-political and non-religious foundation (NGO), founded in 1984, with its headquarters in Stockholm. Fryshuset is often referred to as the largest youth activity center in the world. It runs several schools, sports, music and dance activities, and a lot of different social projects in the fields of migration and community building. Fryshuset is established primarily in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö and some of its activities are also running in other parts of Sweden. All in all Fryshuset employs around 600 people and receives around 40,000 visitors every month, both in the cities and in the suburbs. <http://fryshuset.se/in-english/>

 **FEMYSO** was founded in 1996 in Sweden at a time when Muslim youth from across Europe felt the need to come together to create a united body, to share ideas and experiences, help develop the capacity of Muslim European youth and represent their concerns and views to the European institutions. Since then, FEMYSO has grown into a wide network of 34 student and youth organisations throughout Europe, all working to benefit their communities and societies. The FEMYSO vision for European Muslim youth is proactive youth participation and service to humanity. We have trained thousands of young Muslims, contributed to the emergence of a strong confident identity of young European Muslims, and built strong partnerships with organisations across Europe. <http://www.femyso.org/>

SYMBIOSIS  **SymBiosis** was founded in 2011 in Thessaloniki by an international group of committed citizens grounded on common belief in the need for a new paradigm for global civics, European citizenship and social cohesion, in order to define, promote and establish new forms of binding democratic participation in political processes, free of discrimination and exclusion. Its mission is building social capital for democracy and develop civic awareness on institutional practices regarding rights and acceptance of diversity, based on the premise that practicing human rights protection equals democratic rule of law. SymBiosis focuses on intercultural and interfaith dialogue, information and political education, advocacy and awareness raising, marginalized citizens' journalism, documentation and analysis, public debate and active civic participation, so that people and communities voice their needs and ideas. <http://www.symbiosis.org.gr/en/>

International Alert  **International Alert** is an independent peacebuilding organisation established in 1987 that works with local people around the world to help them build peace. We have over 200 staff in 12 field offices and our London headquarters. Our board is comprised of experienced diplomats, business people and peacebuilding and development practitioners from around the world. International Alert takes a broad view of peacebuilding, understanding peace as a situation in which everyone lives in safety without any form of violence, is equal before the law, able to participate in shaping political decisions with government accountability, and has fair access to the basic needs for their wellbeing and equal opportunity to work and make a living, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other identity. <http://www.international-alert.org/>

 **Etudiants Musulmans de France** is an association created by students for students. EMF is designed to accompany the Muslim student during his or her studies in higher education, improve their lives, and help them to integrate into the campus. It facilitates the integration of students on campus, including that of foreign students, tries to fight the isolation that sometimes affects the student, and participates in improving their sense of wellbeing. EMF also organizes a range of activities regarding Islamophobia on university campus. It organizes seminars, conferences, exhibitions and other activities open to all. <http://www.emf-asso.com/>

 **ENAR** is the only pan-European anti-racist network that combines advocacy for racial equality and facilitating cooperation among civil society anti-racist actors in Europe. The organisation was set up in 1998 by grassroots activists on a mission to achieve legal changes at European level and make decisive progress towards racial equality in all EU Member States. www.enar-eu.org



@FEMYSO @Fryshuset @EMFASSO @Intalert @SymbiosisOrg @ENAREurope

If you forward this release, do please use the hashtag **#Islamophobia21**

For further information, please contact: najatte.kaaouss@femyso.org

Project supported by **Open Society Initiative for Europe**

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