



FEMYSO

European Youth Event (EYE) 2025

FEMYSO Delegation

Policy Recommendations





Policy Recommendations.

1. Anti-racism & Islamophobia

Introduction:

Across Europe, Muslims continue to face pervasive and deeply rooted racism on structural, institutional, and interpersonal levels. This is not a new or isolated trend, but a sustained and worsening reality for communities who have long called Europe home. The 2022 EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey found that half of Muslim respondents experienced discrimination in the five years prior, with 35% reporting racial discrimination in just the past year—a 10-point increase since 2016. Discrimination is most common in employment, housing, education, healthcare, and policing, with Muslim women—especially those who wear visible religious clothing—experiencing higher levels of harassment and violence.

Despite this, Muslim communities in the EU report higher levels of trust in European institutions than the general population, showing a commitment to the European project that deserves to be met with protection, equity, and recognition. Yet, EU frameworks often fall short. Structural racism and anti-Muslim hatred remain largely overlooked, and meaningful engagement with Muslim youth voices is lacking. The EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (2020–2025) was a step forward in acknowledging institutional racism and the specific harms of anti-Muslim hatred, but implementation has been inconsistent. Notably, the Coordinator on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred has failed to engage with key stakeholders like FEMYSO, the leading voice for Muslim youth in Europe. Furthermore, the absence of a formally recognised definition of Islamophobia by EU institutions continues to hinder the development of targeted and effective policies. In this context, FEMYSO puts forward the following policy recommendations rooted in the lived realities of European Muslim youth.



Recommendations for MEPs to Address Structural Islamophobia and Advance Anti-Racism in the EU:

- Push for the formal recognition of Islamophobia as a structural form of discrimination in EU law and policymaking –especially within the next revision of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, expected no later than end of 2025.
- Demand the establishment of transparent and accountable engagement mechanisms between the European Coordinator on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred and Muslim civil society.
- Ensure that all EU counter-terrorism and security policies undergo independent human rights impact assessments.
- Advocate for targeted funding and legislative support for anti-racism education and training across the EU public sector, aiming to include dedicated provisions in the 2026–2027 Multiannual Financial Framework review.
- Call for the creation of an independent EU mechanism to monitor Member States' compliance with anti-racism commitments.



2. Youth participation & democracy

Introduction:

Young people play an indispensable role in shaping democratic societies, offering vital perspectives and energy to drive progress. Their engagement in civic life—whether through protest, participation, or policy development—is a cornerstone of vibrant democracies. However, across Europe, youth civil society faces growing challenges as civic space contracts under the weight of authoritarianism, disinformation, hate speech, and the erosion of democratic safeguards. Young activists and youth-led organizations, often lacking institutional backing, are especially vulnerable to repression, legal barriers, and political marginalization.

While institutions increasingly recognize youth engagement as a democratic necessity, tokenistic practices like “youth-washing” persist, undermining genuine participation. Government actors, who should protect civic space, are often the very ones closing it—through restrictive legislation, selective engagement, and discriminatory treatment of youth organizations, particularly those representing marginalized groups. Meanwhile, digital tools offer new avenues for expression and mobilization but also pose risks of surveillance and exclusion when misused or unequally accessible.

Despite these barriers, youth organizations remain essential in defending democracy, human rights, and social justice. Their work must be supported by systemic change, including stronger civic infrastructure, meaningful institutional co-creation, and formal recognition of youth as equal partners in democracy. This requires not only political will but also legal and structural mechanisms that center youth agency, especially for those from underrepresented or historically excluded communities.



Recommendations for MEPs:

- MEPs must advocate for the legal recognition of youth organizations as independent and equal partners in policymaking and governance across all EU institutions and Member States.
- Push for the institutionalization of youth co-creation through formal, well-resourced mechanisms at all levels of government.
- Ensure the inclusion of sustainable and inclusive public funding for youth-led and grassroots civil society organizations in the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (2026–2030).
- Call for the EU to adopt and apply a mandatory “Youth Test” to assess the impact of all legislation and policies on young people’s rights by 2027.
- Advocate for binding protections that safeguard the civic space of youth activists and defenders, including legal recourse and protection from retaliation.
- Promote legislation that guarantees universal access for youth to safe, open, and neutral digital spaces, with robust digital rights and protections.
- Support the integration of inclusive and high-quality citizenship education into all levels of formal and non-formal education, aiming for full implementation across Member States.



3. AI & Digital Rights

Introduction:

As the European Union advances the implementation of the AI Act, the first major regulatory framework on artificial intelligence worldwide, it is vital that policymakers address how such technologies impact marginalised communities, particularly young Muslims. While the AI Act marks a historic step by introducing classifications of AI risks and banning certain manipulative uses, critical gaps remain—especially regarding the deployment of high-risk AI in public services, law enforcement, defence, and border control or how systems developed by EU-based companies impact people outside the EU.

Many of these systems used in state and public services, often lacking transparency and meaningful oversight, disproportionately harm racialised minorities through profiling, automated decision-making, and biased data inputs. The RADAR-iTE risk assessment tool in Germany, for example, exemplifies the opaque use of AI systems with serious implications for Muslim communities, where Muslims are categorised on a scale of ‘Moderate’ to ‘High’ risk for violent Islamist terrorism without due process, information on how this is assessed, or the impact of its assessments on state surveillance or interaction with state services.

Young Muslims in Europe navigate digital spaces where algorithmic discrimination compounds existing Islamophobia, including the silencing of Muslim voices on social media, biased content moderation, and AI-driven surveillance. While the Council of Europe’s Handbook on Human Rights and AI highlights the importance of aligning AI with fundamental rights, its voluntary standards and weak enforcement mechanisms leave users vulnerable—especially in contexts of national security and private sector dominance. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in access to education, employment, healthcare, and civic participation, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) must ensure robust legal protections, enforce accountability for both public and private actors, and uphold the principles of justice, equality, and non-discrimination for all.

Recommendations for MEPs:

- MEPs must push for a legally binding requirement for Member States to publicly declare all AI-based systems used in determining access to public services (e.g. education, healthcare, welfare).
- EU and national level bodies must document and respond to harms stemming from the use of AI in migration and policing contexts, and they must ensure protection against the violation of all peoples' rights.
- Advocate for an EU-wide ban on harmful AI practices in high-risk contexts, including a complete ban on biometric surveillance and facial recognition in public spaces, and any automated system lacking meaningful human oversight and accountability.
- Push for the reversal of the burden of proof in AI-related harm cases, requiring AI providers to prove their systems do not produce discriminatory or harmful outcomes before deployment rather than asking users to prove harm has occurred.
- Ensure EU funding is allocated to grassroots and non-governmental organisations—especially those representing minoritised communities—to independently monitor the use of AI in high-risk sectors, and publish regular impact reports to inform policy.
- MEPs should mandate the inclusion of social and economic inequality factors in all ethical approval standards for AI, and ensure that these standards must be passed before any technology is permitted for public use.
- Push for binding accountability mechanisms for private companies developing or deploying AI, including mandatory human rights impact assessments, algorithmic transparency, and enforceable redress mechanisms for affected individuals.
- Support the development of a robust cross-border AI enforcement framework under EU law, including joint investigation mechanisms, shared data protocols, and harmonised enforcement procedures to ensure coordinated oversight and remedy gaps between jurisdictions.



4. Student Rights

Introduction:

Education is a fundamental human right and a public good, not a privilege. Students are entitled to full access, participation, and protection within Higher Education without discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, or disability. Despite this, many students—particularly Muslim students—face structural barriers and exclusion due to policies that restrict religious expression (e.g., bans on religious attire) or prevent equitable access (e.g., lack of faith-compliant financial support). These forms of institutional and systemic discrimination violate the principle of inclusive, rights-based education. Public authorities and institutions must actively ensure that all students, including those from minoritized and religious communities, can fully enjoy their rights within safe, accessible, and supportive learning environments.

Recommendations for MEPs:

- MEPs must push for an EU-wide commitment to free, inclusive, and quality Higher Education, removing all financial, religious, and bureaucratic barriers to access, participation, and completion.
- Advocate for legislation that guarantees students' right to non-discriminatory education, explicitly protecting religious expression (e.g., the right to wear religious attire) and combating Islamophobic practices and rhetoric in all education settings.
- Call on the EU and Member States to provide adequate public financial support, including study grants and faith-compliant student financing, to ensure no student is excluded based on their religious belief.
- Push for legally binding standards to mandate safe, accessible, and inclusive campuses, with affordable housing, culturally and religiously appropriate food, and tailored mental and physical healthcare, to be implemented across Member States by 2027.
- Ensure students' right to participate in governance is legally protected, with equal and meaningful representation in all Higher Education decision-making bodies, and safeguards against retaliation.
- MEPs must demand institutional accountability for discrimination in Higher Education, including independent complaints mechanisms, accessible ombudspersons, and mandatory anti-discrimination and religious inclusion training for all staff.
- Defend and strengthen students' rights to academic freedom, peaceful protest, and civic participation, with specific protections for Muslim and other minoritized students facing heightened risks of repression or exclusion.



5. EU Upholding International Law – Palestine

Introduction:

As of May 2025, the European Union finds itself at a critical crossroads in its engagement with the situation in Palestine. More than nineteen months into Israel's devastating military assault on Gaza, the humanitarian crisis has escalated into one of the gravest of the 21st century.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed, vast areas of Gaza reduced to rubble, and the blockade-induced famine has reached catastrophic levels. UN agencies, international legal scholars, and major human rights organisations have accused Israel of committing genocide, apartheid, and systematic violations of international law. Against this backdrop, the EU's hesitancy and internal divisions have drawn mounting criticism, both globally and from within its own societies.

While the European public—particularly its youth—has mobilised in record numbers to demand justice and accountability, EU institutions have largely failed to adopt a coherent or principled position. Human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have denounced the EU's continued political, economic, and military ties with Israel, warning that this complicity undermines the Union's credibility as a defender of international law and human rights.

Signs of political realignment are, however, beginning to emerge. In May 2025, the European Commission announced a review of the EU-Israel Association Agreement, the legal framework governing their preferential trade relationship, citing serious concerns over violations of international humanitarian law. This followed increasing pressure from grassroots civil society and a wave of diplomatic recognition of the State of Palestine by member states including Spain, Ireland, Slovenia—reflecting growing momentum within the EU in support of Palestinian statehood and accountability.



At the same time, this shift coexists with a dangerous trend: the shrinking of civic space across Europe. Pro-Palestine student movements and solidarity organisations have faced unprecedented repression, from bans on peaceful protests and police violence to the dissolution of advocacy groups under vague pretexts of “public order” or “anti-terrorism.” Amnesty International has warned that such crackdowns represent a direct assault on fundamental democratic freedoms and endanger the right to dissent across the EU.

This dual reality—a tentative diplomatic awakening alongside intensified repression of those advocating for justice—exposes a core contradiction in the EU’s approach. It is within this context that FEMYSO and its partners call for urgent, courageous policy action. Young people across Europe are demanding that the EU uphold its own values, stop enabling impunity, and finally align its foreign policy with the principles of justice, accountability, and freedom for all.



Recommendations.

1. EU Foreign Policy and Human Rights

Demand an end to EU complicity in violations of international law:

- Suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement under Article 2, citing grave breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights.
- Enforce arms embargoes and prohibit export of dual-use goods to Israel that may contribute to unlawful military actions.
- Publicly condemn and take diplomatic action against the occupation, blockade, and annexation of Palestinian land.

Support Palestinian self-determination:

- Encourage full EU-wide recognition of the State of Palestine, building on recent momentum from Spain, Ireland, Slovenia,
- Push for meaningful inclusion of Palestinian civil society in EU delegations, peacebuilding efforts, and future negotiations.

Ensure accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity:

- Support and cooperate with International Criminal Court (ICC) investigations into alleged war crimes and crimes of genocide in Gaza and the West Bank.
- Sanction individuals and entities responsible for enabling or committing such crimes.



2. Protection of Student Movements and Academic Freedom

Defend the right to protest and organise on Palestine:

- Condemn the repression of peaceful student protests across European campuses.
- Protect freedom of expression and assembly for all students, including on matters of foreign policy and solidarity activism.

Protect academic institutions from political pressure:

- Prevent governments and institutions from penalising students and faculty who support Palestinian rights or criticise Israeli policy.
- Guarantee that no university partnerships or funding frameworks are used to silence dissenting views on Palestine.

Investigate discriminatory disciplinary practices:

- Establish a monitoring mechanism to track and report university or police actions targeting pro-Palestinian students.
- Call for the reversal of unjust expulsions, suspensions, or police charges against peaceful demonstrators.

3. Civic Space, Anti-Racism, and Democratic Freedoms

Reverse and prevent bans on solidarity organisations:

- Oppose the dissolution or criminalisation of organisations supporting Palestinian rights (e.g., “Urgence Palestine” in France).
- Safeguard the rights of Muslim and racialised youth who are disproportionately targeted when engaging in advocacy on Palestine.

Promote inclusive narratives and counter disinformation:

- Counter Islamophobic and anti-Arab rhetoric that equates solidarity with terrorism or antisemitism.
- Fund youth-led anti-racist campaigns that challenge dehumanising narratives around Palestine and the broader Middle East.

Establish protections for human rights defenders:

- Ensure that youth advocates and student organisers for Palestine are legally protected from threats, surveillance, or political retaliation.

4. Education, Awareness, and Historical Justice

Integrate Palestinian history and international law into curricula:

- Promote educational programmes that accurately address the history of the Nakba, occupation, and resistance within a human rights framework.
- Support cross-border youth dialogue initiatives that centre Palestinian voices and lived experience.

Establish protections for human rights defenders:

- Launch EU-funded youth mobility schemes with Palestinian civil society, student unions, and educational institutions.
- Invest in digital archives and cultural projects that preserve and share Palestinian identity, resistance, and heritage.

Decolonise institutional partnerships:

- Audit EU-funded academic and civil society collaborations to ensure they do not legitimise occupation or systemic discrimination.



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and vibrant Europe.

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