



European Network on Religion & Belief

RISE OF FAR- RIGHT EXTREMISM AND HATE CRIME

Seminar 7

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REPORT ON SEMINAR 7 – Summer Workshop on rise of Far Right Extremism and Hate Crime

Context and Background

The context for this workshop was the European Parliamentary Elections of 2014 - reports in the media were dominated by stories of a 'Far Right triumph' in the elections. This, in addition to the rise of hate crimes against religions and minorities in many European countries, some in East European countries where inward ongoing migration was a very recent phenomenon, primarily associated with refugees from the conflicts in the Middle East. But countries traditionally associated with European values and traditions of equality, tolerance and hospitality to minorities, such as UK, Netherlands, France and Scandinavian countries, had increases in hate crimes and far-right representation.

The actual figures, as reported by MEP Dennis De Jonghe, were much less dramatic: the total number of MPs from the far right was only 52 (an increase of 15 on 2009), entirely due to the increased seats of the Front National in France. Far Right parties gained MEPs in 6 countries, but lost seats in 7 countries, but only 10 countries have any Far-Right MEPs. (NB 5 Star in Italy and UKIP in UK are not defined as extreme right, but anti-European.) They are divided into three different factions. The results are not an 'earthquake' but a wake-up call for Europe.

The rise in the number of terrorist attacks - the Woolwich murder in particular and the rise of ISIS were a factor in the rise of the far right, and in the rising number of hate crimes, mainly against Muslims, but also against Jews and Sikhs as visible religious minorities.

(OMIT?) The most damaging effect of all these factors is the impact on political discourse in Europe, hate speech against minorities - religious and ethnic minorities, and also LGBT groups - has been to a certain

extent legitimised through their election successes.

But they will shift the focus of the debate - against EU and Europe - which has been the source of much of the anti-discrimination legislation across Europe - and in favour of nationalism, protectionism against immigration, multi-culturalism.

- they oppose the liberal democratic tolerant consensus - working for mutual understanding across religions and national and ethnic boundaries
- they exploit issues which worry ordinary people - jobs, poverty, insecurity, the impact of the economic crisis, lack of housing
- there are now several groups of the religious right across Europe - opposing liberal groups and abuses and human rights with an appeal to 'family values'

They adopt the politics of identify - national, regional, religious - and seek to re-create the populist rhetoric which has led to the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe's past.

Raphael Liogier - Populism - collective emotion - return to 30s

Hitler - Far Right and Socialist programme = National Socialist

Mussolini - Far left programme and Fascist discourse - Italian Fascism

Populism - around emotional discourse

Not different - stilted in appealing to voters

Not Close to the People - but claiming to speak in the name of 'real people'

Therefore you don't need a Parliament - they (MEPs and MPs) are all bought by the system so bring in a dictatorship.

So collective realisation, we've lost it, (?????)

Was not possible again until recently - now feeling of cultural war - being surrounded - they are global and against 'us' - small, unprotected (Islamophobia/paranoia - it's not just a minority, it's something to be feared (i) if there is a spider in the room you are afraid (ii) if there is a spider outside - he's trying to get me, it has a plan to get in (iii) if there is no spider - it's hiding. If you can't win.)

Limited to Eurocentric - centre of world.

Now - lost military dominance, - to US; then

- economic dominance to US; now - symbolic/cultural dominance – to Islam. We're on the way down. We've lost identity – focus on Muslims – we need them as an enemy – they are the problem – they are powerful (reverse colonisation) they are confident in what they are. 2000s terrorism, replacing 20th century extreme left opposition 'they' want to take us over.

30s populism – based on real racism

60-90 – not possible to be racist – culture, values exclude it.

So you have a populism where Muslims can be anything – enemies of religion (Christianity), and also enemies of our 'secular heritage' – laicism etc.

Far Right colonises – the normal basic values to use in their own discourse – eg Sweden Democrats, French Laïcité, British values, Poland Justice Party - European Fundamental Rights – supporters need to take back the language, and demonstrate EU values as positives, not negative prohibitions – against Muslims, Refugees, LGBT people, religious minorities.

FOR REPORT 6

Romania Conneli – 89 Persecution of Yoga School – 40,000 – non-registered association

Macedonia – Arben Sulejmani – beeny.art@hotmail.com

Bektashian Muslim (Sufi) minority

Hate-crimes and violence against mosques and community

Official Status – 1998 – 5 registered, Mac Orthodox, Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Islamic

Formerly 77 mosques, now 3! – Bechtaslian not recognised

- 2000, but 2007 de-registered and Mosque occupied by Islamic community

- Big Issues – Recognition – 2009 – UN Space Rapporteur report

– Restitution – Discrimination from state, churches, and Muslim community

Czech Republic

Atheistic, secularist tradition – communist – post-communist

Key areas of discrimination – Roma

Fear Muslims – prejudice against headscarf -

Headscarf case – 2 girls – excluded from nurse training school – on grounds on Hijab

Pagan – registration as an association is difficult because of need to own property

Poland

No issues re religious symbols

Racism is a big issue – Far Right, Roman, Black communities

Economic expansion – more immigration, Muslim (Halal slaughter banned – despite opposition of Church,

Utilisation of other issues – Animal Rights, as a proxy and racism

Lalita Mohan – Spirituality

WORKSHOP 1 – Hate Crime

Framework Decision “Victims Directives” a ???? Perspective 2015 and a Particular Focus on Hate Crime, also crimes committed with a “discriminatory motive”, and Hate Speech on any form of minority (ie R&B, LGBT)

Priorities: Improving Data Collection - Enhancing Recording Methods

Points from Workshop

1. Negative Factors

ECHR has several cases where member states have failed to support individuals who have been discriminated against on religious grounds. It appears to be moving towards the French “laiciste” version of secularism, rather than the pluralist version embedded in the EU treaties and Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Bulgarian delegate – no legal Article - hate crimes in statute book, but police don't identify it as such

Latvia - Alex Kusmin - in law racial and religious, but not homophobic – no action on politicians etc, only internet

Malta delegate – NGOs offices are being torched because of links with migrants

Netherlands project – Respect Human

UK – Hate crime as an aggravated form of violence or verbal attack

Germany – Reporting is based on affiliation to political partners

Spain – Sr. Valentin (ENAR) – official Hate Crime Prosecutor at Supreme Court – also one specialist in each of 52 regions

Greece – Tina – Hate Crime not even a concept yet in Greece

Next Steps

1. EU Officer - Improve Under Reporting

- Civil Society action – churches, mosques, (create a noticing and reporting culture)
- Improve state funding for information structure, legal advice, police who understand/ are sympathetic with
- Public Consultation at national and local level with community organisations on what is really happening

Workshop 2 – Rights Awareness

Estonia – Equal Treatment – no legal framework means implementation in education on R&B minorities, LGBT, Civic Partnerships is not given

Latvia – migrants advice, but all money channelled through state – therefore state interference

Poland – Donimika Bychawska-Sinarska – Helsinki Foundation Warsaw – rights awareness among prisoners

LGBT awareness but in schools sometimes priests in classroom saying the opposite

Czech -

Equinet – Introduce Standards for Independence etc the opposite of Equality Bodies