



Muslim Europe

With increasing economic migration the total Muslim population of Europe is similar in size to that of Germany and has a rising cultural/political influence.

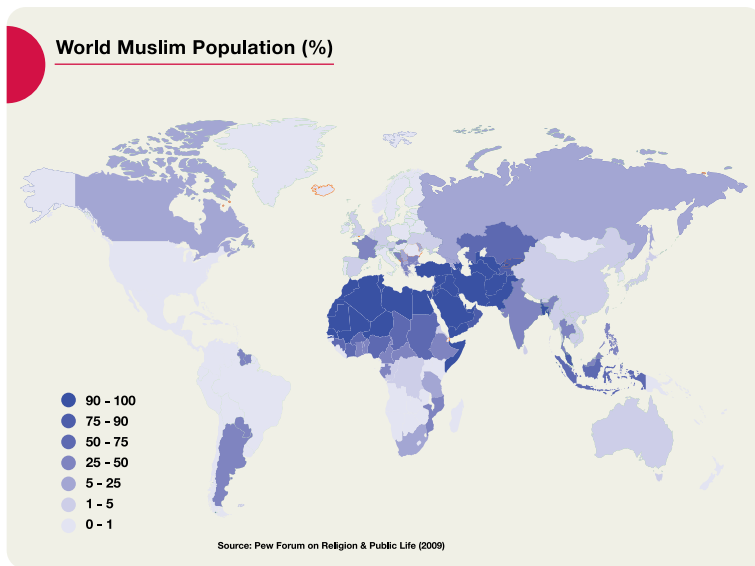
Migration has been a contentious subject for a number of years and, as politicians continue to avoid the heart of the issue and media misrepresent many of the arguments, the real implications are misunderstood. Yet, in terms of impacts on other issues, migration is perhaps the archetypal cross-cutting issue. In his initial perspective on the future of migration, Professor Richard Black stated that 'immigrant integration and increasing diversity in Europe and the North are significant questions for today's societies'.

From the varied discussions around the topic it is clear that in Europe there is a mounting population challenge that will lead to a shift in society. 'The low white birth rate in Europe, coupled with faster-multiplying migrants, will change fundamentally what we take to mean by European culture and society,' is one pertinent view. Many increasingly see that, to sustain competitive growth in the face of declining fertility, Europe will support increased migration – and this will largely come from North Africa and the Near East. Although raw data is highly sensitive and hard to come by, leading commentators see that, by 2020, economic migration will have started to change the multicultural balance in a new direction. Europe will become increasingly Muslim and, if current trends continue, over 10% of European nationals will be Muslim by the end of the decade.

There are a number of different scenarios being discussed regarding Europe's overall future population.

UN figures predict a 6% decline by 2050 but also that, having peaked in 2015, by 2020, the total number of Europeans will be around 730 million, which is largely the same as today. In several projections, bearing in mind the impact of Germany's low birth rate, some analysts expect that the UK will be Europe's most populous country by 2060, with nearly 80 million inhabitants. While fertility rates and life expectancy in different countries can be used for base-case models, a big uncertainty is the impact of migration within and immigration into Europe.

In an early comment to the Future Agenda programme, Professor Robin Cohen, Director of the International Migration Institute at Oxford, commented that 'the major challenges are to predict the size, direction and character of global migration flows and to manage the social and political consequences' and that 'the level of irregular – undocumented, trafficked, illegal – migrants is likely to remain high and probably increase as a proportion of the world's mobile labour force'. That said, some trends are becoming clear: according to recent EU reports, 'since 2002, net migration into the EU has roughly tripled to around 2 million people a year' and 'migratory pressure at the EU's borders ... could increase in the future'. Eurostat data from 2008 suggests that, within the EU, from 2015, deaths will outnumber births and so natural growth will cease. From that point on, positive net migration will be the source of population growth. 'Migration from other



regions, through northern Africa to reach Europe, is likely to intensify.' Although Europe has a long history of welcoming migrants, over recent years immigrants have increasingly come from developing economies and in accelerating numbers. By 2020, there will be more international migration than ever and Europe is expected to be a primary destination. As Robin Cohen stated: 'The economic case for migration has always been strong. Migrant labour is often cheaper, more reliable and (in certain cases) flexible.'

Islam has been part of Europe's culture for many years. From the conflicts between Arabs and the Byzantine Empire in the 7th and 8th centuries to the conquest of Russia and the Ukraine by the Golden Horde in the 14th century and then the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, Eastern Europe has included a Muslim population for many years. Equally, on the Iberian Peninsula, from the 8th century, Muslim

forces exerted influence across Spain and even into France. However, it has been in the past fifty years that the numbers of Muslims in Europe have started to grow steadily. As 'guest worker' immigration to support growth drew in people from the former colonies of France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, the Muslim population in the EU has risen, doubling in the past thirty years to around 20 million today. According to a 2008 Brookings study, the countries with the largest percentages of Muslims are France at an estimated 8%, the Netherlands at 6%, Germany at 4% and the United Kingdom at 3% of the population. Significant numbers of Muslims have congregated in a numerous urban areas and many observers are aware that certain neighbourhoods in several European cities are becoming more Muslim, and that the change is gathering pace. According to Karoly Lorant, a Hungarian economist, 'Muslims already make up 25% of the population in Marseilles and Rotterdam, 20% in Malmo, 15% in Brussels and Birmingham, and 10% in London, Paris and Copenhagen.' Taking Europe as a whole into consideration, beyond the boundaries of the EU, the German Central Institute Islam Archive calculated that the total number of Muslims in 2007 was about 53 million.

An EU report from 2008, stated that:

"Europe's immediate neighbourhood, the Middle East and North Africa region, has the world's second fastest growing population, after sub-Saharan Africa. Future migration flows towards the EU will mainly arrive from the Mediterranean region, in view of differences in living standards and population trends exacerbated by natural resource constraints."

Over the next decade, there will be continued change in the European populace, with the largest shift coming

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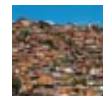
from the possible entry of Turkey into the EU. This alone would increase the Muslim population by around 70 million. Several commentators expect that, excluding Russia, Europe's Muslim population will easily double by 2020 and that, by 2050, one in five Europeans will probably be Muslim. Even without Turkey in the EU in the next decade, with a Muslim population equal to that of Germany, this will have a significant impact on not just Europe's culture and societal make-up but also in how the region operates on the international stage. For example, in 1999 Germany started to reform its voting laws, granting certain franchise rights to the large Turkish population.

In the short term, we can possibly expect more cultural conflict as, since 9/11, Europe's growing Muslim population has been the focus of debate on many issues. Several incidents in recent years have increased tensions between some Western European states and their Muslim populations: the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London attacks, the 2004 ban of the hijab veil in schools coupled with 2010 regulation to

ban the niqab and the burqa in France, the 2005 Paris riots, the 2006 Danish cartoon incident, and several high-profile murders. However, while today most of Western Europe's Muslims are still poorly integrated into society and are self-segregated for reasons such as language barriers and different cultural norms, like prohibitions against drinking, the reality is that, despite the anxiety, Muslim integration within Europe is improving. Going forward towards 2020, several analysts see that there is hope that a stronger Euro-Islam identity will emerge as Muslims continue to grow into European culture. Some experts believe that middle-class Muslims are much more likely to favour assimilation: 'Muslims in Europe are working hard to try to find ways to educate their own communities and talk about the balance between being Muslim and Western, not Muslim or Western'. There are clear unemployment, cultural and political challenges to be addressed, but with overall economic growth in Europe dependent on sustaining its population, and an increasing recognition that this can only occur through immigration from Muslim countries, the reality of a more Muslim Europe is on the horizon. As the Muslim population grows – most likely concentrated around twenty to thirty key cities across Europe – we can expect multinationals to start to focus on this group as a new segment. Previously a niche marginal market that was largely uneconomic to support due to size or dispersion, improved connectivity and declining costs of access will make the 80 million European Muslims an increasingly addressable mainstream.



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