



# Muslims in Europe: Promoting Integration and Countering Extremism

**Kristin Archick, Coordinator**  
Specialist in European Affairs

**Paul Belkin**  
Analyst in European Affairs

**Christopher M. Blanchard**  
Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs

**Carl Ek**  
Specialist in International Relations

**Derek E. Mix**  
Analyst in European Affairs

September 7, 2011

Congressional Research Service

7-5700

[www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)

RL33166

## Summary

Many European countries have large and growing Muslim minorities. This is particularly true for the countries of Western Europe that have experienced influxes of Muslim immigrants over the last several decades from a variety of Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries, as well as Turkey and the Balkans. Today, although some Muslims in Europe are recent immigrants, others are second- or third-generation Europeans. While expanding Muslim communities pose significant social and economic policy questions for European governments, the realization that some segments of Europe's Muslim populations may be susceptible to radicalization and terrorist recruitment has also sparked security concerns in the decade since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

The vast majority of Muslims in Europe are not involved in radical activities. However, events such as the 2004 and 2005 terrorist attacks in Madrid and London, respectively, that were carried out by Muslim citizens or residents, have raised the question of whether European countries have done enough to integrate their Muslim communities and prevent feelings of social exclusion and marginalization. Although not the sole cause of radicalization and terrorism, some experts believe that past failures to fully integrate Muslims into mainstream European society may make some Muslims in Europe more vulnerable to extremist ideologies.

Over the last several years, European governments have stepped up their efforts to improve Muslim integration. These have included introducing new citizenship laws and language requirements, promoting dialogue with Muslim organizations, developing "homegrown" imams more familiar with European culture and traditions, improving educational and economic opportunities for Muslims, and tackling racism and discrimination. At the same time, European governments have also sought to strengthen security measures and tighten immigration and asylum policies to prevent radicalization and combat terrorism.

Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, U.S. officials have expressed concerns that Europe may be a potential recruiting ground for attacks on the United States or U.S. interests abroad. Successive U.S. administrations and Members of Congress have welcomed European initiatives to promote better integration of Muslims and curtail Islamist extremism in the hopes that such efforts will ultimately help prevent future terrorist incidents. U.S. interest in how European countries are managing their growing Muslim populations has also been motivated by worries about the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP), especially given that terrorists with European citizenship have entered U.S. territory on the VWP in the past. Recently, U.S. and European policymakers have also sought to enhance cooperation on measures aimed at countering violent extremism, especially the brand promoted by Al Qaeda. In light of the July 2011 killings in Norway by a right-wing extremist disturbed by what he viewed as Islam's growing influence in the West, some note that in addition to improving measures to counter Islamist extremists, U.S. and European security services should cooperate on combating threats posed by domestic radicals on both the extreme right and left.

This report examines policies aimed at promoting integration, combating terrorism, and countering violent extremism in five European countries with significant Muslim populations: France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The report also evaluates the role of the 27-member European Union (EU) in shaping European laws and policies related to integration and counter-radicalization.

# Contents

Introduction.....	1
Europe’s Muslim Populations.....	3
Demographics, Debate, and Implications.....	3
European Integration Efforts: Past and Present.....	6
Combating Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism.....	8
France.....	10
The Muslim Population in France.....	10
Foundations of French Integration Policies.....	10
French Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration.....	11
Restrictions on the Wearing of Head Scarves and the Ban on Full Face Veils.....	13
French Measures to Combat Extremism and Counter Terrorism.....	14
Germany.....	15
The Muslim Population in Germany.....	15
Foundations of German Integration Policies.....	16
German Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration.....	17
German Measures to Combat Extremism and Counter Terrorism.....	19
The Netherlands.....	20
The Muslim Community in the Netherlands.....	20
Muslim Immigration: The Political Dimension.....	21
Dutch Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration.....	23
Dutch Measures to Combat Extremism and Counter Terrorism.....	25
Spain.....	26
The Muslim Population in Spain.....	26
Violent Extremism in Spain.....	27
Spanish Integration Policies: Past and Present.....	28
Spanish Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration and Combat Extremism.....	29
Spanish Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Measures.....	30
The United Kingdom.....	32
The Muslim Population in the UK.....	32
Extremist Elements.....	32
The Debate Over Multiculturalism in the UK.....	33
UK Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration and Combat Extremism.....	34
Improving Dialogue and Promoting Moderate Islam.....	35
Addressing Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Discrimination.....	36
New Citizenship and English Language Requirements.....	37
UK Law Enforcement and Security Measures.....	37
The European Union (EU).....	38
The EU’s Role.....	38
EU Integration Efforts.....	39
Preventing Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment.....	41
Conclusions and Challenges Ahead.....	43
Implications for the United States.....	45

## **Figures**

Figure 1. Muslims in Selected European Countries..... 4

## **Appendixes**

Appendix. Terminology ..... 47

## **Contacts**

Author Contact Information..... 48  
Acknowledgments ..... 49

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Many European countries, especially those in Western Europe, have experienced significant influxes of Muslim immigrants over the last half-century.<sup>2</sup> Although studies indicate that Europe's share of the global Muslim population is relatively small (3% or less), they also suggest that the number of Muslims in Europe is increasing as a result of continued Muslim immigration and higher birth rates among Muslims than non-Muslims. While the growing presence of Muslims in Europe poses a wide range of social and economic policy questions for European governments, the realization that some segments of Europe's Muslim population may be susceptible to radicalization and terrorist recruitment has also sparked security concerns on both sides of the Atlantic in the decade since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States.

The vast majority of Muslims in Europe are not involved in radical activities, and the July 2011 killing spree in Norway by a far-right extremist serves as a stark reminder that the perpetrators of violent extremism may be of any ethnicity, religion, or political ideology. However, events such as the March 2004 Madrid bombings by an Al Qaeda-inspired group of North Africans, the November 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a young Dutch Muslim extremist, and the July 2005 attacks on London's mass transit system carried out by young Muslims born and/or raised in the United Kingdom, have brought the issue of "homegrown" Islamist extremism to the forefront of European political debate. In particular, such incidents have raised questions about whether European governments have done enough to promote the integration of Muslims into mainstream European society. Many experts believe that while far from the sole cause of radicalization and terrorism, past failures to fully integrate Muslims into European civic, political, and economic life may leave some European Muslims more vulnerable to extremist ideologies. European governments have responded with a mix of strategies aimed, on the one hand, at improving the integration of Muslims, and on the other hand, at strengthening security measures and tightening immigration and asylum policies to prevent radicalization and combat terrorism.

U.S. officials have been concerned that U.S. allies in Europe have become targets of Islamist terrorism. Over the past decade, European countries have been strong law enforcement partners for the United States in the fight against terrorism; many have also supported U.S. military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. officials worry that some attacks or attempted attacks by Islamist terrorists in Europe are aimed at influencing European public opinion and changing European foreign policies, especially those that seek to cooperate with or buttress U.S. efforts in the Middle East. Some analysts, for example, point to the March 2004 Madrid bombings three days before Spanish parliamentary elections, which resulted in a defeat for the incumbent conservative government that had backed the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003; the new Socialist government withdrew Spanish forces from Iraq shortly after assuming power. Others assert that Spain's involvement in the U.S.-led war in Iraq was long opposed by a large majority of the Spanish public, and that the Socialists had made a campaign promise to withdraw Spanish troops from Iraq long before the terrorist attacks.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Kristin Archick, Specialist in European Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, "Europe" refers to the 27 member states of the European Union (EU), plus non-EU members Norway and Switzerland. The report focuses in particular on European countries in which Muslim immigration and the establishment of Muslim communities are a relatively recent phenomenon. Also, for the purposes of this report, "Europe" does not include the non-EU countries of the Western Balkans, Russia, or other parts of the former Soviet Union, which have sizeable but centuries-old Muslim communities, nor does it include Turkey, which is predominantly Muslim. See "Europe's Muslim Populations" below for a fuller discussion of Muslim demographics.

Moreover, U.S. authorities and some Members of Congress worry that Europe may be a potential recruiting ground for attacks against the United States or U.S. interests abroad. Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, U.S. and European leaders and law enforcement authorities have cooperated closely to investigate terrorist suspects, prevent terrorist attacks, and deny terrorists sanctuary on both sides of the Atlantic. Despite some U.S.-European differences on issues ranging from data protection to terrorist detainee policies, U.S. and European officials have worked together to enhance police and judicial cooperation, improve information-sharing, stem terrorist financing, and strengthen border controls and transport security in an effort to better combat terrorism.

In the last few years, U.S. and European policymakers have also begun focusing greater attention on ways to prevent radicalization by undermining the appeal of violent extremist ideology. According to the U.S. Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Daniel Benjamin, such “countering violent extremism” measures (or CVE, as often termed by U.S. officials) seek to “stop those most at risk of radicalization from becoming terrorists” through social programs, counter-ideology initiatives, and working with civil society to de-legitimize the Al Qaeda narrative.<sup>3</sup> The United States has sought to partner with other countries, including many in Europe, to share information and discuss “best practices” aimed at preventing radicalization and countering violent extremism. In 2010, the United States and the European Union (EU) convened an expert-level dialogue for the first time on preventing violent extremism.

Previous Congresses have held hearings on Islamist extremism in Europe. Congressional interest in how European countries are managing their Muslim populations has been motivated, in part, by concerns that violent Islamist extremists with European citizenship may enter the United States under the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The VWP allows for short-term, visa-free travel to the United States for citizens of participating countries, many of which are in Europe. U.S. officials note that Zacarias Moussaoui, the “20<sup>th</sup>” September 11 hijacker, and Richard Reid, the airplane “shoe bomber,” travelled to the United States on the VWP. Although successive U.S. administrations and many Members of Congress continue to support the VWP as a means to facilitate legitimate transatlantic travel, tourism, and commerce, the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress instituted changes to the VWP that, among other measures, seek to strengthen its security components.

This report examines policies aimed at promoting integration, combating terrorism, and countering violent extremism in five European countries with significant Muslim populations: France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom. All of these countries are key U.S. allies in the fight against global terrorism. All five countries are also members of the European Union. Although responsibility for shaping laws and policies related to integration and countering radicalization largely rests with the national governments of the EU’s 27 member states, the EU’s role is far from negligible. EU member states have come to believe that the EU can and should play a role in encouraging good integration practices. Also notable since 2001 are EU efforts to boost its collective ability to counter terrorism and combat violent extremism. As such, the report includes a section on EU policies that may significantly affect Muslim populations.

Given the wide breadth of potential economic, social, and security policies that could be employed to promote integration and counter extremism, the various policies and programs

---

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Benjamin, Coordinator, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, “U.S. Government Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism,” Testimony before the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 10, 2010.

discussed in each country section should be considered illustrative and not exhaustive. Moreover, the report focuses mostly on European domestic policies to promote integration, prevent radicalization, and combat terrorism. It does not deal extensively with European foreign policies or efforts to engage the wider Muslim world, although these elements are also viewed by many as crucial to countering violent extremism and terrorism.

## Europe's Muslim Populations<sup>4</sup>

### Demographics, Debate, and Implications

Estimates of the number of Muslims in Europe vary, depending on the methodology and definitions used, and the geographic limits imposed. It is believed that 15 to 20 million Muslims (out of a total population of roughly 500 million) currently live in the countries of Western and Central Europe that make up the 27-member European Union, as well as non-EU members Norway and Switzerland. Studies indicate that Belgium and France have the largest proportion of Muslims as a percentage of their populations (between 6 and 8 percent), followed by Denmark, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland (with 4 to 5 percent). Significant Muslim populations also exist in Spain, Italy, and Norway, although constituting a smaller proportion of the overall population (between 2 and 3 percent). A January 2011 study by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life projects that over the next two decades, Muslim populations will increase in particular in Sweden, Belgium, Austria, the United Kingdom, Norway, France, and Italy. Most Central European countries have smaller Muslim communities (0.3% or less of their populations). Given continued levels of immigration and above-average Muslim fertility rates, Western and Central European countries that currently compose the EU (plus Norway and Switzerland) could be home to 30 million Muslims by 2030 (out of a total projected population of roughly 425 million in 2030).<sup>5</sup>

Europe's Muslim populations are ethnically and linguistically diverse, and Muslim immigrants hail from a variety of Middle Eastern, African, and Asian countries, as well as Turkey. There are often significant cultural, religious, and ethnic differences and rivalries among these groups. Many Muslim communities in the countries of Western Europe have their origins in European labor shortages and immigration policies of the 1950s and 1960s. Varying colonial legacies and historical ties resulted in different European countries attracting certain nationalities. For example, the UK drew Muslims mostly from South Asia, especially Pakistan; the majority of Muslims in France emigrated from North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia); many Turks went to Germany as guest workers; the Netherlands attracted Muslims from Indonesia, a former colony, as well as from Morocco and Turkey; and many Morrocans and Turks also settled in Belgium. In the last few decades, there have been influxes of Muslim migrants and political refugees into Western Europe, including Scandinavia, from other regions and countries such as

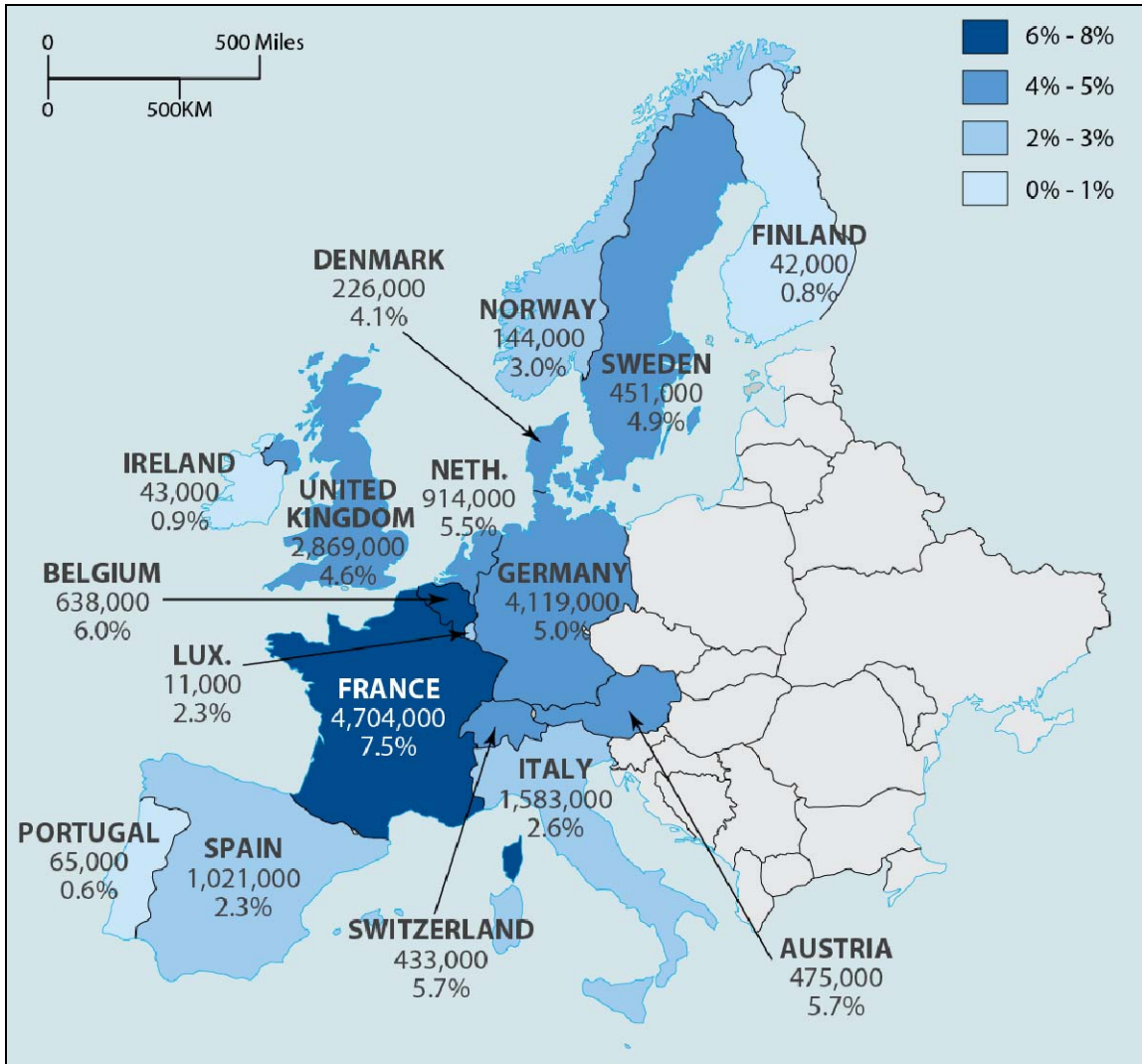
---

<sup>4</sup> Prepared by Kristin Archick, Specialist in European Affairs. Muslim population statistics in this section are largely drawn from *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, a study by The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life released in January 2011. The Pew report projects that Europe's overall Muslim population will exceed 58 million by 2030, but the Pew study defines "Europe" more broadly than does this report; its figure of 58 million by 2030 also includes Muslims in the Western Balkans and countries such as Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia. It is available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1872/muslim-population-projections-worldwide-fast-growth>.

<sup>5</sup> The projection of 30 million Muslims by 2030 does not account for the possible EU accession of the countries of the Western Balkans, which have sizeable, largely indigenous Muslim communities, or Turkey, which is mostly Muslim.

the Balkans, Iraq, Somalia, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The political upheaval and unrest in North Africa and parts of the Middle East since the start of the Arab Spring in early 2011 have sparked new refugee flows (of Muslims and non-Muslims), especially from Tunisia and Libya, to European countries such as Italy, France, and Malta.

**Figure I. Muslims in Selected European Countries**  
(Estimated Population and Percentage of Total Population by Country)



**Source:** The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, January 2011

Over the last several years, a debate has emerged (on both sides of the Atlantic) over the implications of Europe's expanding Muslim communities for European society, domestic policies, and Europe's foreign relations with the Muslim world. Some observers contend that Islamic culture is at odds with European traditions (such as respect for freedom of expression, the separation of church and state, and women's rights) and worry that Europe's growing Muslim



populations will significantly transform European politics and society in the decades ahead. Some who support this view warn of “Europe’s decline” and a possible “Islamification” of Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Other experts criticize assessments that foresee a Muslim “takeover” of Europe as alarmist and exaggerated. They counter that Muslims currently account for only about 4% of Western and Central Europe’s total population; while this figure will likely increase in the future (current projections put Muslims as comprising about 7% of the total population by 2030), they also note that studies indicate that the fertility gap between Muslims and non-Muslims in Europe is shrinking as children of immigrants gradually conform to the prevailing social and economic norms of the societies in which they live. The January 2011 Pew study points out that in annual percentage terms, Europe’s Muslim population is projected to grow at a declining rate over the next decade. Moreover, some analysts assert that for the majority of Muslims in Europe, Islam is not an exclusive identity and that most European Muslims do not view being Muslim as incompatible with their national identities or their commitment to European cultural or political norms. Although they acknowledge that cultural tensions exist, they attribute them more to economic and social disparities rather than religion.<sup>7</sup>

Whatever the future may hold in the longer term, some commentators point out that continued immigration to Europe and the growing presence of Muslims are having immediate political effects. Most notably, right-wing populist parties appealing in part to fears of lost national identities have been gaining ground across Europe. Such parties have experienced new success in recent parliamentary elections in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Denmark, and the Netherlands. In April 2011 elections in Finland, for example, the True Finns, a populist nationalist party, became the third largest party in parliament after winning 19% of the vote. Anti-immigrant and right-wing parties in both Denmark and the Netherlands represent crucial swing votes for minority governments. In France, the far-right National Front party has been doing well in opinion polls ahead of the country’s upcoming presidential election in 2012, although analysts doubt it will be able to gain enough traction to seriously challenge either of the two mainstream parties for the presidency. Some commentators suggest that many of these populist movements are explicitly anti-Islam. Others contend that a variety of factors are contributing to the rise of populist and nationalist parties in Europe, including growing fears of globalization, the recent global financial crisis and economic downturn, and concerns in EU member states about what some view as the continued relinquishing of national sovereignty to the Union.<sup>8</sup>

Some experts worry that increasing anti-immigrant and anti-minority sentiments in Europe may encourage right-wing extremists to violence. As a prime example, they point to the July 2011 killing spree in Norway by a native Norwegian that left 77 people dead and many others wounded. Although the suspect in the case, Anders Behring Breivik, did not specifically target Muslims or other minorities, it is believed that he was motivated by what he perceived as a growing threat to Western culture from Islam and Muslim immigrants; he focused his deadly rampage on government workers in Oslo and young people at a Socialist party political camp

---

<sup>6</sup> For examples of those who view Europe’s growing Muslim population with concern, see Bruce Bawer, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West from Within* (New York: Doubleday, 2006); and Christopher Caldwell, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West* (New York: Doubleday, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> For examples of those who refute the view that changing Muslim demographics will significantly alter traditional European ways of life, see David Rieff, “Fermez la Porte: The Oversimplification of Europe,” *World Affairs*, January/February 2010; Justin Vaisse, “Eurabian Follies,” *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, “The Dis-Integration of Europe,” *Foreign Policy*, March 28, 2011; Nicholas Kulish, “Norway Attacks Put Spotlight on Rise of Right-wing Sentiment in Europe,” *New York Times*, July 23, 2011.

because he held them responsible for Norway's immigration policies that he deemed as too permissive. Press reports suggest that Breivik was also influenced by American bloggers and authors who have warned for years about the political and social threat from Islam to both the United States and Europe. Such "counterjihad" activists and writers assert that they do not advocate or support the use of violence. Others point out that the bombings and shootings in Norway should serve as a wake-up call for both U.S. and European security services to the potential threats from domestic radicals, including those upset by what they view as Islam's growing influence in the West.<sup>9</sup>

A number of commentators note that growing Muslim populations in many European countries have also further complicated EU-Turkish relations. The EU and Turkey, a country of nearly 80 million Muslims, have a long and somewhat tumultuous history. For decades, Turkey has aspired to join the EU, but EU concerns about Turkey's ability to meet the political and economic criteria for membership and the on-going dispute over the divided island of Cyprus, have slowed Turkey's progress. Although Turkey and the EU have been engaged in official accession negotiations since 2005, some EU member states and many EU citizens are increasingly wary about Turkey joining the Union in the longer term given not only its size (it would be the largest EU member state in terms of population), but also its Muslim culture, which some fear could fundamentally alter the character, policies, and identity of the Union.

## **European Integration Efforts: Past and Present<sup>10</sup>**

European countries have historically pursued somewhat different policies with respect to managing their immigrant and minority populations and integrating them into their societies. For decades, some countries such as Germany and Austria made little effort at integration, viewing Muslim immigrants as temporary "guest workers." The UK and the Netherlands most fully embraced the notion of "multiculturalism"—a term used broadly to describe policies by which the governments sought to promote tolerance and equality while also permitting immigrants and ethnic minorities to maintain distinct cultural identities and customs.<sup>11</sup> France professes that it has long adhered to a policy toward immigrants that encourages assimilation, or the adoption of French cultural norms and values.

However, none of these various European approaches have been completely successful or prevented the development of parallel societies, in which discrete ethnic, linguistic, and/or religious communities function apart from the culture of the host country. Many Muslims in Europe, for example, live in almost exclusively Muslim neighborhoods, and a disproportionately large number are poor, unemployed, or in prison. European societal tensions were highlighted by the widescale riots that erupted in France in 2005 and again in 2007; although a large number of

---

<sup>9</sup> Scott Shane, "Killings in Norway Spotlight Anti-Muslim Thought in U.S.," *New York Times*, July 24, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this report, "integration" refers to a wide range of public policies aimed at ensuring that immigrants and other minorities may fully participate in a society's economic, social, cultural, and civic life.

<sup>11</sup> "Multiculturalism" has different meanings and interpretations. Multiculturalism may be thought of simply as a sociological reality, referring to the cultural pluralism of societies. It may also be thought of as a public or government policy in which ethnic or religious minorities are viewed as distinct communities and where public policy to one degree or another encourages that distinctiveness as a way to manage a society's growing diversity, promote equality, reduce racism and discrimination, and decrease social tensions. For more information, see Zaynep Yanasmayan, "Concepts of Multiculturalism and Assimilation," in *Interculturalism: Europe and Its Muslims in Search of Sound Societal Models*, (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies), 2011.

the rioters appear to have been of Muslim descent, most observers agree that a lack of economic opportunity and upward social mobility were key factors behind the unrest, rather than religion. At the same time, many ethnic and religious minorities in Europe, including Muslims, also feel a sense of cultural alienation and discrimination because of their religion. Many Muslims viewed the publication of cartoons of the prophet Mohammed in European newspapers in 2005-2006 as deeply offensive, while many native Europeans asserted the primacy of the right to freedom of expression, regardless of whether the cartoons were insensitive to Islamic values or beliefs; the cartoons sparked protests by Muslims in several European cities.

Following the 2004 Madrid bombings, the 2005 London attacks, and the 2004 Van Gogh murder, the concept of multiculturalism in particular came under attack from some European officials and social commentators. They proclaimed that as government policy, multiculturalism had largely failed. More recently, key European leaders—such as British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel—have publicly agreed with such assertions.

Some commentators note that multiculturalism—as an active government policy that purposefully allowed immigrant or ethnic communities to live apart from mainstream European societies—has long been abandoned by most European countries; over the last decade, European governments have stepped up efforts to integrate their Muslim populations. A number of analysts contend that some of the recent political rhetoric about the failure of multiculturalism from European leaders like Cameron, Merkel, and Sarkozy is largely aimed at heading off far-right political challengers. At the same time, experts acknowledge that in the past, some European countries had a “laissez-faire” attitude toward integration that essentially consisted of not worrying about it; to the extent that governments were concerned with the issue, the focus was largely on promoting tolerance and discouraging discrimination rather than addressing socio-economic disadvantages or instilling a sense of common national identity and values. Others suggest that some Muslims in Europe have also resisted integration and prefer to live in separate, parallel communities.<sup>12</sup>

Although most European countries view integration as a social need beyond combating terrorism, the terrorist attacks on European soil over the last decade have given greater impetus to initiatives aimed at promoting Muslim participation in European political, social, and economic life. European governments have been pursuing a variety of strategies to improve integration, especially of Muslims. Such strategies include introducing new citizenship laws and language requirements in an attempt to instill a common identity, promoting dialogue with Muslim communities in an effort to generate greater Muslim political participation, developing “homegrown” imams more familiar with European culture and traditions, improving educational and economic opportunities, and tackling racism and discrimination.

Certain measures imposed or under discussion in a number of European countries remain controversial. For example, France has passed legislation that essentially bars women from wearing full face veils in public and head scarves in public schools; local governments in some other countries such as Belgium, Spain, and Italy have also imposed limited bans on Islamic dress. Supporters of such restrictions view them as a means to encourage secularism and reduce societal tensions; critics counter that these Islamic dress bans infringe on basic human rights and increase the sense of alienation among Muslims. Similarly, many commentators view the

---

<sup>12</sup> “The War of the Headscarves,” *The Economist*, February 7, 2004; Richard Bernstein, “A Continent Watching Anxiously Over the Melting Pot,” *New York Times*, December 15, 2004; Laurence and Vaisse, *op. cit.*; Kulish, *op. cit.*;

November 2009 public referendum in Switzerland that imposed a national ban on the construction of minarets (the prayer towers of mosques) as counterproductive, sending a troubling signal to Muslims that they are not accepted in Swiss society. Advocates of the minaret ban (which was opposed by the Swiss government but supported by the far-right Swiss People's Party) contend that it does not seek to curtail Muslim religious freedom but conveys that Muslims in Switzerland should adapt to Swiss culture and customs, rather than the other way around.

Many European governments are also struggling with the question of what types of Islamic organizations they should engage with as they seek to encourage dialogue and greater Muslim political participation. Some analysts view working with socially and theologically conservative Muslim organizations as necessary precisely because such groups may have greater credibility with key Muslim constituencies. Others argue that European governments should focus instead on engaging with more moderate groups willing to blend Islamic religion and culture with the political values of mainstream European society.

## **Combating Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism**

No European government has expressed belief that large parts of its Muslim population are engaged in radical activities. However, Islamist extremists and fringe communities that advocate violence exist (see the **Appendix** for a discussion of terms such as “Islamist” and “violent extremism”). Such Islamist extremists in Europe have served as a source of radicalization and some are believed to have links to terrorist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere. Germany and Spain have been identified as key logistics and planning bases for the 2001 attacks on the United States; radical mosques in London apparently indoctrinated Richard Reid, the airplane “shoe bomber,” and Zacarias Moussaoui, the “20<sup>th</sup>” September 11 hijacker.

Since then, terrorists with European citizenship or residency have carried out or attempted numerous attacks both in and outside of Europe. Although some have apparently acted on their own, others have received support and training from abroad. The 2004 Madrid bombings that killed 192 people were carried out by a group of North Africans, mostly Moroccans resident in Spain; some reportedly had links to a Moroccan terrorist group affiliated with Al Qaeda. Three of the four perpetrators of the 2005 London attacks that killed 52 people were “homegrown” second-generation British Muslims who had recently traveled to Pakistan, where some suspect they received terrorist training. Other terrorist incidents involving European citizens or residents include a 2006 plot by a group of mostly British Muslims to detonate liquid explosives on airliners flying from the UK to the United States; a 2007 plot to attack U.S. military and diplomatic sites in Germany planned by three German citizens and a Turkish resident; a December 2010 car explosion and suicide bombing in Stockholm by a Swedish citizen of Iraqi descent (which injured two but killed only the perpetrator); and a March 2011 incident at Germany's Frankfurt airport in which a Muslim resident from Kosovo opened fire on a bus carrying U.S. soldiers, killing two and seriously wounding two others.

Islamist terrorist groups believed to be active in Europe include Al Qaeda (and its offshoots), the Islamic Jihad Union, Hamas, Hezbollah, Ansar al-Islam, and the Somali group al-Shabaab. Many of these groups use Europe as a fundraising and logistics base, and seek to recruit Europeans for terrorist activities elsewhere in the world. Law enforcement authorities in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain (among other European countries) have reported that they have disrupted efforts by Islamist extremists to recruit European youths to fight in conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite the death of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in early May 2011, many terrorism experts expect that the “Al Qaeda narrative” will continue to attract European followers.

It should be noted that nationals aligning their beliefs with Al Qaeda or radical Islam are not unique to Europe. The United States has captured or identified several U.S. citizens with similar views in the course of the fight against terrorism. However, some observers assert that the failure of European governments to fully integrate Muslim communities into mainstream society leaves some European Muslims more vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Experts say that some European Muslim youth, many of whom are second- or third-generation Europeans, feel disenfranchised and alienated in a society that does not fully accept them and appear to turn to Islam as a badge of cultural identity. Such individuals may become susceptible to radicalization by extremist Muslim clerics or fundamentalist youth groups. Some analysts also highlight the role that information technology and the Internet now play in increasing the ability of Islamist extremists to communicate their ideology, especially among tech-savvy youth.

Other experts note that integration problems are far from the sole factor behind violent extremism, and that the specific radicalization process often differs widely from one individual to the next. Some terrorist attacks carried out or attempted by European Muslims (either in Europe or abroad) have been undertaken by seemingly well-integrated, well-educated, economically-comfortable individuals. Experts assert that some European Muslims claim common cause with fellow Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories, Chechnya, and elsewhere. Those of this view tend to perceive the “war on terrorism” as a “war on Islam” and see an unjust double standard at work in the foreign policies of many European governments, especially those that have supported the U.S.-led military operations of the last decade. Some analysts also suggest that religious converts to Islam may be more susceptible to radicalization as a result of a mistaken desire to prove themselves according to their conceptions of their new faith. In 2005, for example, a Belgian convert to Islam blew herself up in an attempted suicide attack on U.S. forces in Iraq.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to promoting better integration of Muslims into their societies, European governments have sought to combat Islamist terrorism and prevent radicalization by enhancing law enforcement and security measures and by reforming immigration and asylum policies. For example, UK and French security services have reportedly increased their monitoring of mosques; Germany has changed its laws to allow authorities to investigate religious groups and has banned several Muslim organizations; and France and Italy have expelled some Muslim clerics for hate crimes. Following the 2005 London attacks, the UK passed several pieces of legislation criminalizing the dissemination of terrorist propaganda (including via the Internet), giving the government the right to ban groups that glorify terrorism, and making it easier to exclude or deport foreign individuals who incite hatred. Some countries have also sought to institute programs to train police in local communities for signs of radicalization and to counter radicalization in their prison systems.

At the same time, European countries have encountered a number of challenges as they seek to strengthen their capabilities against terrorism and counter violent extremism. In particular, many European governments have struggled to find the right balance between combating terrorism and radicalization and upholding civil liberties. Some European officials also worry that certain tools in the fight against terrorism—such as police stop-and-search policies—may weaken their efforts

---

<sup>13</sup> “The War of the Headscarves,” *op. cit.*; “Identity Crisis: Old Europe Meets New Islam,” *Frontline*, January 25, 2005; Sebastian Rotella, “Europe’s Boys of Jihad,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 2005; “Officials Concerned About Muslim Converts,” Associated Press, January 16, 2006; Marc Sageman, “The Next Generation of Terror,” *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2008.

to win the battle for Muslim “hearts and minds,” particularly if perceived as being applied unfairly or exclusively to Muslims.

## France<sup>14</sup>

### The Muslim Population in France

France is considered to be home to Europe’s largest Muslim population. As discussed below, France does not collect statistics on inhabitants’ racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, and forbids businesses, for example, to ask for such information from job applicants or employees. Unofficial estimates of the number of Muslims in France range from 3.5 million to more than 6 million (out of a total French population of over 60 million). A January 2011 study by the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life puts the number of Muslims in France at 4.7 million, or 7.5% of the total population.<sup>15</sup> Overwhelmingly, France’s Muslims trace their origins to the former French colonies of Algeria and Morocco. There are also Muslims in France with roots in Tunisia and other parts of the Middle East, and former French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>16</sup>

In terms of number of adherents, Islam is the second religion in France after Catholicism. However, Muslims living in France today do not represent a coherent community. They are divided by traditions attached to their countries of origin, by language, and by ethnic background. It is estimated that there are between 1,600 and 2,000 Muslim associations and mosques in France, which represent a variety of traditions and viewpoints.

### Foundations of French Integration Policies

The French approach to integration and assimilation is rooted in the French Revolution of 1789 and the resulting republican ideal that guaranteed religious freedom but built a firm wall between religion and the state. In keeping with a long-standing commitment to the equality of rights of all French citizens, the government chooses not to provide special consideration in public life for different religions or political groups. France, for example, rejects a quota system or any form of affirmative action for minorities in every aspect of public life; in this view, equality of rights theoretically brings equality of opportunity. France’s vigorous public education system has traditionally been considered one of the key guarantors of equal opportunity and assimilation of immigrants to France.

A 1905 law reaffirmed the French ideal of separation of church and state—known in France as *laïcité*. The law designated Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism as recognized religions and laid out means for them to develop representative bodies that might discuss with the French

---

<sup>14</sup> Prepared by Paul Belkin, Analyst in European Affairs.

<sup>15</sup> French government officials have cited figures as varied as 2.1 million (self-identified Muslims) to 6 million people. For more information, see Jonathan Laurence and Justin Vaisse, *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2006), pp. 18-20; and The Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life, *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, January 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Estimates suggest that between 1.5 and 2 million Muslims in France are Algerian or of Algerian descent and 1 million of Moroccan origin. See Laurence and Vaisse, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

government matters of importance, such as recognition of religious holidays and construction of places of worship. However, it was not until the 1980s that France gave a measure of official recognition to the Muslim faith. In 2002, Muslims gained the right to create an institution to represent Islam before the French government.

There is a widely held view in France that many Muslims are not well-assimilated. Significant socio-economic disparities between “native” French and those of North African and/or Muslim descent have led many to question the effectiveness of traditional French models of assimilation rooted in the republican ideal of equality. These disparities often manifest themselves in sharp differences in employment rates, access to housing, and education levels. The unemployment rate among immigrant groups in France is estimated to be double the unemployment rate of the overall population and even higher among those with roots in North Africa. Few Muslims are visible in the top levels of French politics, media, the judiciary, business, or the civil service. A significant number of France’s Muslims, and particularly Muslim youth, live in public housing projects located on the outskirts of urban centers. These areas, known as *banlieues*, are marked by poverty and high unemployment. The percentage of Muslims who fail to finish secondary school appears to be considerably higher than that of non-Muslims.

Opinion polls indicate that while a clear majority of French citizens believes that Muslims are not well integrated into French society, a growing number may be attributing the failure to integrate to Muslims themselves as opposed to inadequate French integration policies. A December 2010 survey found that 68% of French people believe that Muslims are “not well integrated into society,” with 61% of these citing Muslims’ “refusal” to do so as the primary factor.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, 42% of those surveyed viewed the presence of a Muslim community as a “threat” to their country’s identity. Thirty-one percent of French people associated Islam primarily with a “rejection of Western values,” compared to 12% in 1994 and 17% in 2001. Some Muslim advocates argue that France is not granting its Muslim population a true equality of rights when the government demands that elements of Muslim traditional life and culture be abandoned in order for Muslims to enjoy full participation in French life.<sup>18</sup>

## **French Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration**

Over the past 10 years, the French government has adopted new measures to help better assimilate Muslims and to address potential security threats emanating from Muslim communities. These measures place a high value on preserving the ideals of republicanism, and reflect an institutional approach in keeping with a long tradition of using a highly centralized government apparatus to ensure public order. The French government remains reluctant to advance measures that would give Muslims special consideration and treatment. Rather, the emphasis has been on establishing structures for dialogue between representatives of Islam and the government, and on enforcement of the law to ensure public safety. French officials and most observers believe that only a small fraction of the Muslim population is engaged in violence or other disruptive behavior.

---

<sup>17</sup> Stephanie Le Bars, “Integration of Islam Perceived as Failure in France and Germany,” *LeMonde.fr*, January 5, 2011, Open Source Center EUP20110104029007 (“French Survey Reveals Changing Public Attitudes to Muslim Community”); the cited survey of a representative sample of 809 French people over 18 years of age was conducted by the *Institut français d’opinion publique* (IFOP) for Le Monde.

<sup>18</sup> Yazid Sabeg, “Les Oubliés de l’égalité des chances,” Institut Montaigne (Paris, 2004), pp. 25-45.

The 2003 creation of the French Council of the Muslim Faith (*Conseil français du culte musulman*, or CFCM) is considered one of the most significant efforts to improve ties between French Muslims and the state. Observers viewed the government-led founding of the CFCM as an attempt to reduce foreign influence on France's Muslim population and to thereby promote a French brand of Islam that is not in conflict with the values of the republic. CFCM represents the Muslim religion, but is not meant to represent all Muslims in France. Rather, it is a forum for discussion with government officials about construction of mosques, observance of religious holidays, and ensuring, for example, appropriate food for Muslims in the French prison system. Through its cooperation with the CFCM, the French government provides funding and training to imams and has supported the development of more prayer spaces and mosques.

In most assessments, the CFCM is a functional apparatus that can represent mainstream French Muslims before the French government. However, due to the "atomization" of the French Muslim community, few believe that it is an apparatus for clear, well-developed political dialogue that can contribute in the near future to greater integration of Muslims into French life.<sup>19</sup> This view was reinforced in June 2011, when two prominent Muslim associations boycotted elections to the CFCM's administrative council. Both the Union of Islamic Organization in France (*Union des Organisations Islamiques de France*, or UOIF), which reportedly has links to the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Federation of the Grand Mosque of Paris (FGMP), which has ties to the Algerian government, pulled out of the elections due to displeasure with the electoral process.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has offered strong rhetoric on the need for those of foreign descent to respect the law, learn the French language, and adopt French cultural norms. Several of his government's most high-profile integration initiatives have been criticized by Muslims and immigrant rights advocates for unfairly targeting Muslims and for perpetuating negative images of the role of Islam in French society. They argue that Sarkozy's policies are increasingly guided by his desire to win support from conservative voters ahead of the 2012 presidential election, particularly as he faces growing political pressure from the far-right, anti-immigrant *Front National* (National Front) and its leader Marine Le Pen.

In November 2009, the government launched a nation-wide "debate on national identity" that consisted of a series of town-hall meetings across the country to address the question of what it means to be French in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the view of many observers, the open debates often provided a platform for offensive and racist rhetoric, that served to heighten tensions between Muslims and "native" French. Critics point to Sarkozy's strong support of a 2010 law banning the wearing in public of full face veils (discussed below) and an April 2011 follow-up to the national identity debate entitled the "Convention on Islam and *Laïcité*," as further evidence that the president is seeking to ignite nationalist sentiment to win political support. For example, in comments that led to his firing in March 2011, Sarkozy's former advisor on diversity, Abderrahmane Dahmane, openly criticized the president's approach to integration, calling his party "a plague for Muslims," and adding that the April Convention was planned by a "handful of neo-Nazis."<sup>20</sup>

Sarkozy has in the past signaled a willingness to pursue a policy of "positive discrimination" to assist economically disadvantaged Muslim youth. As France's interior minister from 2002-2004,

---

<sup>19</sup> "L'Europe est devenue un lieu de radicalisation islamique," *Le Monde*, July 9, 2005, p. 7; Interviews with French academics and other observers, August-September 2005.

<sup>20</sup> "France's Sarkozy Sacks Diversity Head Dahmane," BBC News, March 11, 2011.



he played a pivotal role in establishing the CFCM and after his election to the presidency in 2007, he appointed several people of Muslim descent to cabinet positions in his government. However, critics contend that new programs intended to promote the assimilation of immigrants into French society have fallen short of expectations. These include a requirement for schools to fly the French flag and for each classroom to display the universal declaration of human rights; widespread distribution of a young citizens' manual in which French students can record their "civic actions;" and proposals for a more "solemn" citizenship ceremony and stricter language and civic knowledge requirements for prospective citizens. Little if any notable progress appears to have been made on the government's 2008 "New Policy for the Suburbs" (*Une Nouvelle Politique Pour Les Banlieues*), which identified initiatives aimed at increasing employment, education, and housing opportunities in the *banlieues*.<sup>21</sup> The most controversial government proposal related to Muslim integration has been the aforementioned ban on the wearing of full face veils in France, passed by the French parliament in September 2010.

### **Restrictions on the Wearing of Head Scarves and the Ban on Full Face Veils**

A 2004 ban on the wearing of religious symbols in schools and a 2011 law barring women from wearing full face veils in public have caused controversy in France and pitted some Muslims against the government. In March 2004, after an extended debate, France enacted a law banning "conspicuous" religious symbols in public schools through the secondary level. The law prohibits the wearing of head scarves. It also bans religious symbols such as large crosses and the yarmulke. The government argued that the bill was necessary to "set limits" in the face of growing religious militancy in French society. Proponents of the law, including some moderate Muslim groups in France, supported it as a means to reduce tensions in the school system and broader society. Critics of the ban warned that it was essentially a negative instrument that could alienate Muslims in French society.

In September 2010, the upper house of the French parliament overwhelmingly passed government-supported legislation that would forbid the wearing in public of garments that cover the face (the lower house passed the legislation in July 2010). The ban, which took effect in April 2011, applies to dress worn by an estimated 2,000 Muslim women in France, including the *burqa*, a full body veil with mesh over the eyes, and the *niqab*, which also covers the face, but leaves an unobstructed opening for the eyes. It imposes a €130 (about \$170) fine on anyone wearing a face covering in public, and a €30,000 (about \$39,600) fine and up to one year in prison for anyone who forces someone to wear such a face covering.

French government officials and other proponents of the ban cite principles of human dignity and equality between men and women as well as public safety concerns in justifying the policy. Among other things, they argue that the full face veil is a symbol of female submission that prevents the wearer from integrating into French society. They also contend that the veil could present a security threat by preventing law enforcement officers from identifying individuals in public places. Public opinion polls indicate that the legislation enjoys the support of 82% of the French population.<sup>22</sup> However, critics of the new law, including many French Muslims, have argued that it will do more to stigmatize Muslims than address real integration problems. They

---

<sup>21</sup> "Hope for the Suburbs," and "Une Nouvelle Politique Pour Les Banlieues," both provided by the French Embassy to the United States, February 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Pew Global Attitudes Project, "Widespread Support for Banning Full Islamic Veil in Western Europe," Pew Research Center, July 8, 2010.

point out that relatively few French Muslims support the full face veil as religious prescription, as evidenced by the fact that only a small minority of French Muslims wear the *burqa* or *niqab*. Indeed, some critics contend that in advocating the ban, President Sarkozy may have been mostly concerned with garnering political support from conservative voters and in demonstrating to the public “that the government is doing something” to address concerns about the integration of Muslims in France.<sup>23</sup>

## **French Measures to Combat Extremism and Counter Terrorism**

France has long experience in combating terrorism, aided by a tightly centralized system of law enforcement, and a far-reaching intelligence network that gathers information on extremist groups. Violent radical groups have been active in France for many decades, and strong state action has been used in response. Since the 1960s, Algerian, Basque, and Corsican terrorists have struck French targets. By most accounts, a more forceful law enforcement policy against Muslim extremists took hold in the French government after the September 1995 bombing of the Paris subway by Algerian militants belonging to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The reaction of the French government, according to U.S. and French officials, was swift, ruthless, and effective, and the bombings ceased.<sup>24</sup>

Observers tend to agree that France has been “adept at dismantling and prosecuting terrorist networks.”<sup>25</sup> In 1986, a French law created special judicial and police authorities to respond to terrorism. Efforts to find and arrest terrorists are overseen by a senior anti-terror magistrate. The anti-terror magistrate’s prosecutors have greater authority than other French prosecutors to order wiretaps and surveillance, and they may order preventive detention of suspects for up to six days without filing a charge. Under the 1986 anti-terror law, there are special judicial panels that try cases without juries.

While France has long championed free speech and freedom of religion, there is also a prevailing requirement for public order. Strong central authority in France has traditionally meant that the government constrains civil liberties when there is a real or perceived threat. Police frequently check individuals’ identities and inspect carried items, particularly in large public places such as airports. Since the subway bombing of 1995, France has pursued vigorous surveillance of suspected terrorist groups with, for example, increased authority to eavesdrop on conversations and to view electronic mail. Over the past five years, the government has also increased video surveillance in major cities.

Today, France regards Al Qaeda and related extremist groups as the country’s greatest terrorist threat. Al Qaeda has carried out a number of successful attacks against French interests. Over the past several years, Al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has claimed responsibility for several attacks against French citizens, including a 2009 suicide bombing at the French Embassy in Mauritania that injured three people and the kidnapping of French hostages in

---

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Laurence, Interview on National Public Radio, *The Dianne Rehm Show*, July 13, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> The details of this operation are not in the public domain. Elements of the GIA are now reportedly linked to Al Qaeda.

<sup>25</sup> Marc Perelman, “How the French Fight Terror,” *Foreign Policy*, January 2006, p. 2; Interviews of French officials, October 2005-February 2006.

the Sahel region, including the murder of at least one. French officials have stated that France is “at war with Al Qaeda,” and that the fight against AQIM will “intensify.”<sup>26</sup>

The presence of radical imams promoting fundamentalism and, in some cases, violence led the French government in the 1980s to establish more direct contact with Muslim communities in France. The government began to discourage foreign governments from sending imams to France if those individuals did not speak French, knew little about French society, or had extremist tendencies. When this step did not yield adequate results, the government began to demand that mosques appoint imams who had been born or at least educated in France. France wished to secure a body of imams whose views had been to some extent framed in France and in the French language, and to have access to information about their personal histories. In 2010, the French government supported a training program for imams run by mainstream Muslim leaders.<sup>27</sup>

According to the U.S. Department of State’s 2009 and 2010 *Country Reports on Terrorism*, French officials are increasingly concerned about Islamist radicalization in French schools and the French prison system.<sup>28</sup> The government has initiated a number of programs, some in conjunction with other EU member states, to limit radicalization in the prison system. In 2010, the government also began to consider introducing after-school programs targeting at-risk youth.

## Germany<sup>29</sup>

### The Muslim Population in Germany

Approximately 4 million Muslims live in Germany, making up roughly 5% of the general population of 81 million people.<sup>30</sup> Almost two-thirds of Muslims in Germany (2.5 to 2.7 million) have Turkish roots; about 14% come from the southeastern European countries of Albania, Bosnia, and Bulgaria; approximately 8% come from the Middle East; and 7% from North Africa, primarily Morocco. Muslims form the third-largest religious group in Germany, after Roman Catholics and Lutherans. The Muslim birthrate is three times higher than for non-Muslims, and close to one-third of Germany’s Muslims are under 18. Forty-five percent are German citizens.

Unlike in France or the UK, Muslim immigration to Germany was not linked to a colonial legacy, but was primarily the result of a post-World War II “guest worker” program. In the 1950s and

---

<sup>26</sup> “France–Hostage Death May Spur Shift in Tactics Against AQIM,” Open Source Center, July 28, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010*, August 2011.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*, August 2010; U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010*, August 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Prepared by Paul Belkin, Analyst in European Affairs.

<sup>30</sup> A January 2011 study by The Pew Research Center puts the number of Muslims in Germany at 4.1 million. A 2009 study commissioned by the German Islam Conference put the number of Muslims living in Germany at between 3.8 and 4.3 million. The figures are significantly higher than previous estimates of between 3.2 and 3.4 million. Observers note, however, that the more recent estimate includes individuals from predominantly Muslim countries who may not consider themselves Muslims. See German Islam Conference and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, *Muslim Life in Germany*, June 2009; German Ministry for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, *Bericht der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung fuer Migration, Fluechtlinge und Integration ueber die Lage der Auslaenderinnen und Auslaender in Deutschland*, June 2010; and the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life, *The Future of the Global Muslim Population*, January 2011.

1960s, Germany sought to address an acute labor shortage during a period of rapid economic development by inviting guest workers from less developed countries to perform jobs for which Germans were not available. Under agreements with foreign governments, these workers were expected to stay in Germany for a fixed term and to leave the country once their services were no longer needed. However, many stayed and eventually brought their families to join them.

Although the vast majority of Muslims living in Germany are seen to be religious moderates, support for more extremist views may be on the rise, especially among some younger Muslims. It is thought that some Muslim youth do not identify with Germany and are increasingly motivated by pan-Islamic notions of Muslim humiliation around the world, the plight of the Palestinians, and perceived U.S. subjugation of Arab countries. It is within this group that violent extremists are most likely to find sympathy.

## **Foundations of German Integration Policies**

Post-war German governments, conscious of the country's Nazi past, have had a strong record of openness to foreigners seeking asylum or wishing to reside and work in Germany. They have been far less successful in integrating or assimilating outsiders who chose to stay in Germany permanently, especially the growing number of citizens and residents of Muslim descent. As mentioned above, after coming to Germany in the early 1960s, many guest workers from Turkey and southeastern Europe remained in the country and eventually settled with their families. However, they and their children were largely segregated from broader German society, living in their own communities. In later years, many Germans came to accept this as a form of "multiculturalism" in that these groups were allowed to live in Germany as they chose and to maintain their own cultural identities.

Historically, Germany has not seen itself as a country of immigration. Critics of German integration policy, or the lack thereof, highlight the fact that prior to 2000, eligibility for German citizenship was based solely on German ancestry and not country of birth. Foreigners residing in Germany, even second- and third-generation residents born in Germany, had little prospect of naturalization. The government sought to compensate by granting foreigners extensive civil and social rights, as well as social benefits. Under a new citizenship law, passed in 1999 and implemented in 2000, second-generation foreigners born in Germany became eligible to apply for citizenship, assuming at least one of their parents had legal residency for a minimum of five years. However, old notions of who is "really" a German have persisted among ethnic Germans. To this day, many Germans identify their nationality in ethnic and cultural terms and do not consider those without German ancestry as German.

Despite advances in some areas, overall Muslim integration into German society has been minimal. Germans and Muslims often blame each other for this. Many Germans see Muslims as refusing to accept German norms and values and as wanting to stay apart from the majority population. German attitudes toward Muslim communities, though rooted in differences in culture and values, also have been exacerbated by persistent social and economic problems facing the country as a whole. Many Muslims view German society as unwilling to fully accept people of different races, regardless of whether they assimilate or not. Some observers say that this

reluctance could play into the hands of fundamentalists “by both defining German-ness in opposition to Islam and deepening the Turkish community’s sense of being Muslim.”<sup>31</sup>

Unemployment and poverty are much higher and education levels much lower among Muslims in Germany than in other segments of society, especially among Muslim youth. Experts believe Germany’s biggest integration challenge will be to reach some level of equality in schooling, job training, and employment. Wide disparities in educational achievement are thought to stem largely from language difficulties that can lead to disadvantaged access for children from homes where German is not spoken. Turkish students are twice as likely as Germans to be classified as “special education” cases and more than twice as likely as Germans to leave school without a diploma.<sup>32</sup> Language and educational disparities are in turn reflected in a Turkish unemployment rate that is more than twice the national average.

Public debate over the role of Muslims in German society increased after the August 2010 publication of a controversial but popular book whose author argues that immigrants and a growing German “underclass” will lead to Germany’s decline. The book, titled “Germany Does Away with Itself” (*Deutschland Schafft sich ab*), was written by Thilo Sarazin, a member of the board of governors of the German National Bank (*Bundesbank*), who has since resigned. Sarazin’s arguments garnered a large degree of public attention and appeared to strike a cord with many Germans wary of the role of immigrants and Muslims in German society. In the course of the public debate surrounding the book’s release, German Chancellor Angela Merkel pronounced that German integration policies have failed and that immigrants must do more to integrate into society. Some of Merkel’s colleagues from her governing coalition partner, Bavaria’s Christian Social Union (CSU), have gone so far as to claim that Germany is not an “immigration country” and that Islam is not a part of Germany.<sup>33</sup> In his first press conference after taking office in March 2011, Germany’s interior minister, Hans-Peter Friedrich, drew attention by stating “That Islam is a part of Germany is a fact that cannot be proven by history.”<sup>34</sup> Other German politicians, including German President Christian Wulff, have consistently countered such statements by affirming the importance of immigrants and the role of Islam in German society.

## **German Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration**

As noted, until 2000, the German state’s relationship with immigrants and their descendants was characterized largely by a belief that immigrants would not and need not become German citizens. Exclusion from citizenship was long considered a key obstacle to Muslim integration. Since the change in citizenship law, German authorities have begun to develop and implement so-called integration plans. In 2007, the federal government, the governments of the 16 federal states, local authorities, and a range of non-governmental organizations reached agreement on Germany’s first National Integration Plan. The Integration Plan and other similar efforts have focused primarily on promoting the German language and German values of equality and civic engagement; improving education and vocational training; enhancing employment opportunities; and improving the life and situation of women and girls. In a related initiative, in 2006, the

---

<sup>31</sup> International Crisis Group, *Islam and Identity in Germany*, March 14, 2007, p. 22.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> “Is multi-kulti dead?” *The Economist online*, October 22, 2010; “Berlin Passes New Integration Measures,” *Spiegelonline*, March 18, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> “German Minister Slammed over Proposed ‘Security Partnership’ with Muslims,” *Spiegelonline*, March 30, 2011.

German government inaugurated the National Conference on Islam in Germany, intended to be a first step towards greater integration of Muslims in the German political process. Most assessments indicate that the national conference has had mixed success, with some Muslim organizations barred from participating because they espouse views considered to be overly conservative and others voicing concerns that the government has been overly focused on using the conference to address security concerns.<sup>35</sup>

Conservative politicians have led an effort to tie the naturalization process to new integration requirements. Germany's states have adopted naturalization guidelines requiring prospective citizens to establish German language proficiency, take a mandatory integration course on German democratic principles, and participate in a naturalization ceremony that includes an oath or equivalent component. The federal government has instituted a multiple choice citizenship test that every immigrant must pass to receive a passport. Some critics of the citizenship test contend that the questions are too demanding or that they perpetuate stereotypes of Islam and Muslim beliefs by asking, for example, about views of gender equality and tolerance for homosexuals.<sup>36</sup> Others argue that fulfilling the naturalization requirements will better prepare immigrants to succeed in German society.

Observers note that Germany's evolving integration policies reflect "an increasing tendency to demand more integration effort of migrants."<sup>37</sup> A 2005 immigration law provides funding for mandatory "integration courses" for all new immigrants who lack German proficiency. The courses focus on German language, history, culture, and rule of law. Social benefits can be cut off for those who refuse to attend. Efforts to promote integration through public education have focused largely on language training. The 2007 National Integration Plan called on state governments to test linguistic ability prior to school admission and offer remedial language courses at all levels. Some German schools have implemented policies mandating that only German be spoken even in the schoolyard during recess.

Islamic education in German public schools has become a major topic at the state level.<sup>38</sup> Public schools are slowly incorporating Islamic education into their curriculum, but policies vary greatly among the states. The wearing of head scarves in schools has also become an issue in some states. While there is no federal law against the wearing of head scarves in schools, most states have passed laws banning teachers from wearing head scarves in public schools.

Although church and state are separate under German law, a strong partnership exists between the government and dominant religious groups that have official status as public corporations. These include the Roman Catholic Church, several Protestant denominations, and the Jewish faith. As part of its tax system, the German government collects "church taxes" from which the construction and activities of churches and synagogues are subsidized. As yet, Islamic organizations have not gained such formal public status or access to public funds. The government has been slow to fund the building of mosques or to subsidize mosque-centered Islamic social services.

---

<sup>35</sup> German Minister Slammed over Proposed 'Security Partnership' with Muslims," *Spiegelonline*, March 30, 2011.

<sup>36</sup> International Crisis Group, *op.cit.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> Under the German federal system, education is largely under the purview of the individual states.

## **German Measures to Combat Extremism and Counter Terrorism**

The attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, and other more recent terrorist incidents have heightened German public suspicions of Muslims residing in the country and have led to an escalation of anti-Muslim incidents, especially in the eastern part of Germany. The terror threat has also caused German authorities to give far greater attention and scrutiny to Muslims residing in Germany.

After the September 11 attacks, it became apparent that Germany faced a serious threat from Islamist terrorists on its own soil. Three of the 9/11 hijackers had lived and plotted in Hamburg and other parts of Germany for several years. Other subsequent terrorist incidents are also believed to have had a German connection, indicating that terrorists may have seen Germany as one of the easier places in Europe from which to operate. Some analysts note that terrorists were able to take advantage of Germany's liberal asylum laws, as well as strong privacy protections and rights of religious expression that had long shielded activities taking place in Islamic mosques from surveillance by authorities.

Terrorist plots uncovered in the past five years have shed light on a possibly growing number of German citizens who have joined violent extremist organizations. In March 2010, three German citizens and a Turkish resident in Germany were convicted of plotting what German investigators say could have been one of the deadliest attacks in European postwar history. The group, all members of the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), was arrested in September 2007 as they prepared to carry out attacks on Ramstein Airbase and other U.S. military and diplomatic locations. On March 2, 2011, Arid Uka, a long-time resident of Germany from predominantly Muslim Kosovo opened fire on a bus carrying U.S. soldiers at Frankfurt airport. Two U.S. airmen were killed and two seriously injured. The attack was reportedly the first deadly Islamist-motivated attack in Germany. At the opening of his murder trial on August 31<sup>st</sup>, Uka confessed to and expressed remorse for the killings, stating that he had been influenced by Islamist "propaganda" promoting violent extremism.<sup>39</sup>

Since 9/11, Germany has adopted a series of new anti-terrorism laws that limit the protection accorded to Islamist extremists. Germany is increasingly concerned about radical clerics who may be preaching in German mosques. Since there has been no training of Muslim clerics in Germany, most Muslim religious leaders come from outside of Europe and may come to Germany with negative and often hostile views of Western institutions and values.<sup>40</sup> Under anti-terrorism laws passed in 2001, authorities are no longer barred from monitoring what goes on inside mosques. Some German states have considered laws to make imams preach in German. Some would like to see programs to train imams in Germany.

Other anti-terrorism measures have targeted loopholes in German law that permitted terrorists to live and raise money in Germany. The immunity of religious groups and charities from investigation or surveillance by authorities has been revoked, as have their special privileges under the right of assembly, allowing the government greater freedom to act against extremist groups. Under this legislation, terrorists can now be prosecuted in Germany, even if they belong

---

<sup>39</sup> Matthias Bartsch et al., "The Radical Islamist Roots of the Frankfurt Attack," *Spiegelonline*, March 3, 2011; "German: Sorry I Killed U.S. Servicemen," *News24.com*, August 31, 2011.

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Congress, House Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats, Hearings on Islamic Extremism in Europe, April 27, 2005. Statement by Claude Moniquet, p. 32.

to foreign terrorist organizations acting only in other countries. Additional legislation has broadened the authority of the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (BKA) in counterterrorism investigations, including by granting preventative powers to act based on a suspicion that individuals are planning a crime. The government has also criminalized terrorist-related preparatory actions such as participating in terrorist training.

The government has undertaken a major effort to identify and eliminate Islamist extremist cells. German authorities report that at the end of 2009 there were 29 Islamist extremist organizations in Germany, with 36,000 members—1,500 more than in 2008.<sup>41</sup> According to the U.S. State Department, German officials estimate that about 220 individuals—both German nationals and permanent residents—have undergone paramilitary training since the early 1990s at Islamist extremist centers located primarily in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region. Approximately 110 have returned to Germany and 10 of them were in custody at the end of 2010.<sup>42</sup> In July 2010, the German Interior Ministry announced the launch of an “exit program” to provide assistance to violent extremists seeking to turn their backs on extremism. The initiative is modeled on a similar program for right-wing extremists launched in 2001.

Since the 9/11 attacks, several Islamic organizations have been banned in Germany (including Kalifatstaat, Al-Aksa e.V., and Hizb-ut-Tahrir). In August 2010, authorities in Hamburg shut down the Masjid Taiba mosque where some of the hijackers involved in the September 11 attacks had met. Officials claim that the mosque, known in 2001 as the Al Quds mosque, remained a source of radicalization. At any given time, German law enforcement and intelligence officials have hundreds of suspects who are thought to have links to international terror networks under surveillance. A 2005 change in immigration law has made it easier to deport suspected foreign extremists.

Personal privacy and individual civil liberties are strictly guarded in Germany and legislative proposals to broaden computer, Internet, and other forms of surveillance have at times met stiff opposition. In March 2010, Germany’s highest court ruled that a 2008 data-retention law arising from an EU directive was unconstitutional on personal privacy grounds. The law would have required telecommunications companies to retain all citizens’ telephone and Internet data for six months.

## **The Netherlands<sup>43</sup>**

### **The Muslim Community in the Netherlands**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands once administered two predominately Muslim colonies: Indonesia (formerly known as the Dutch East Indies), which became independent in 1949, and Suriname, which achieved autonomy in 1975. Large numbers of Muslims began immigrating to Holland from Indonesia in the early 1950s. A second wave followed during the economic boom of the 1960s and 1970s, when large Dutch companies recruited “guest workers” from Morocco and Turkey, among other countries. Although the labor recruitment ceased, many workers who

---

<sup>41</sup> See “Germany to Offer Exit Program to Help Quit Islamic Extremism,” Open Source Center, June 21, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010*, August 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Prepared by Carl Ek, Specialist in International Relations.



came to the Netherlands stayed on, and a further inflow of Muslim immigration followed as a result of family reunification. Many Surinamese came over during the mid-1970s, around the time the country achieved independence. Finally, in the 1980s and onward, Muslim refugees and asylum-seekers came from Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Somalia.

Today, over 900,000 Muslims live in the Netherlands; studies indicate they constitute about 5.5% to 5.8% of the country's population of almost 17 million.<sup>44</sup> The number of Muslims has grown from an estimated 54,000 in 1971 and 225,000 in 1980.<sup>45</sup> The Netherlands reportedly also has an unknown number of illegal immigrants. Roughly three-quarters of the country's Muslims are from Turkey and Morocco. Most live together in communities in the major cities—Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague, and Utrecht. About one-half of Amsterdam's population is Muslim, the highest figure in any European city.<sup>46</sup> As of early 2009, there were about 475 mosques in Holland.

Muslims in Holland tend to be much younger than the general population—their average age is 25, compared to 38 for native Dutch. Turkish and Moroccan immigrants have had higher school drop-out rates, an important factor in their higher unemployment, lower income, and disproportionate dependence upon welfare benefits. However, the number of Dutch Muslims completing higher education has improved significantly in the past decade; this has been particularly true for women. Muslims also have established a small number of primary and secondary schools in recent years.

## **Muslim Immigration: The Political Dimension**

Some have argued that thousands of Muslims have been able to move to Holland as a result of the centuries-old Dutch tradition of cultural tolerance, and the adoption of a multiculturalist policy since the 1970s. Once there, however, some conservative Muslims reportedly resent the social latitude prevalent in Holland. In such a socially permissive atmosphere, according to this view, devout Muslims may develop feelings of isolation or alienation. In addition, second- or third-generation Muslims, who lack roots in their parents' culture and feel adrift in Holland, may be attracted to groups with extremist views.<sup>47</sup>

Holland's political scene over the past decade has been a tumultuous one; much of the turmoil has revolved around the assimilation of Muslim immigrants. In particular, the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States prompted a candid debate in Holland. Polls taken in the period after the attacks showed that more than 60% of all Dutch endorsed expulsion of Muslims who supported the attacks; a similar percentage thought that the attacks would hamper the integration of Muslims into society. Newspapers and politicians criticized the anti-western attitudes of some Muslims

---

<sup>44</sup> The January 2011 study by The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life puts the number of Muslims in the Netherlands at 914,000, or 5.5% of the population; available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1872/muslim-population-projections-worldwide-fast-growth>. The CIA World Factbook 2011 estimates that Muslims make up 5.8% of a Dutch population of 16.8 million; available at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/nl.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Islam in the Netherlands*, November 2002; available at <http://home.deds.nl/~quip/archief/culture/Islam%20in%20Nederland.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Forum Institute for Multicultural Affairs, *The Position of Muslims In the Netherlands: Facts and Figures*, March 2010; "Netherlands: Integration Policies Show Limited Results," *Oxford Analytica*, December 22, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), pp. 18, 32.

living in Holland.<sup>48</sup> In an October 5, 2001, “Open Letter to All Muslims in the Netherlands,” a Dutch journalist accused the country’s Islamic leaders of temporizing and challenged them to unambiguously condemn the attacks.<sup>49</sup>

During the campaign for the May 2002 parliamentary elections, the country was stunned when populist leader Pim Fortuyn was gunned down by an animal rights activist. An openly gay academic, Fortuyn had gained a great deal of attention—and support—by criticizing the country’s liberal immigration policies. In November 2004, film maker Theo van Gogh was shot and stabbed to death in an apparent act of vengeance for a controversial film he had made on Islamic culture—particularly the alleged mistreatment of women. Mohammed Bouyeri, a 26-year-old militant Dutch-Moroccan who was born and raised in Holland, was convicted of murdering van Gogh and sentenced to life in prison. The home-grown radical Bouyeri was believed to have been a member of the Hofstad Group, an extremist Muslim organization, several of whose members were later tried and convicted for plotting various terrorist attacks in the country.

In recent years, two extremist populist opposition parties, the Freedom Party (PVV) and Proud of the Netherlands, have sought to inflame anti-immigrant sentiments, particularly against Muslims. In March 2008, Geert Wilders, the flamboyant PVV leader, aired *Fitna*—an incendiary anti-Koran film that he had produced—over the Internet. Some observers feared it might result in rioting in Holland and acts of terrorism against Dutch soldiers and diplomats abroad; however, the reaction was relatively restrained. Wilders was denied entry into the UK in March 2009; the refusal was intended to prevent him from spreading “hatred and violent messages.”<sup>50</sup>

In the June 2009 elections to the European Parliament (a key institution of the European Union), Wilders’ Freedom Party scored a surprising success by capturing the second-largest vote percentage of all Dutch parties. And in Holland’s June 2010 parliamentary elections, Wilders’ party won the third largest number of seats, while Proud of the Netherlands failed to win any. In October 2010, after much political wrangling, the Liberals (VVD) and the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) formed a minority coalition, with VVD leader Mark Rutte as Prime Minister. The two center-right parties are governing with the informal support of the PVV, which remains outside of the coalition and has not received any cabinet posts; the PVV’s cooperation gives the coalition a one-vote majority in the lower house. In exchange for backing the VVD/CDA government, the PVV reportedly has extracted commitments for changes in immigration policy. For example, under consideration are proposals that would: 1) place restrictions on the wearing of burqas; 2) levy fees for compulsory Dutch language education; and 3) tighten employment requirements for family members seeking to immigrate. Some observers believe that inter-party strife over these and other issues may lead to early elections. Shortly after assuming the reins of government, Prime Minister Rutte stated, “We cannot continue to allow so many people without prospects to come to the Netherlands.”<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> John Vinocur, “Dutch Frankness On Immigrants Treads Where Many Nations Fear To Go,” *International Herald Tribune*, October 1, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> An abridged version of the letter was published in the *Washington Post* on October 14, 2001.

<sup>50</sup> “Secrecy About Anti-Koran Film Worries Dutch Govt.,” Reuters, March 19, 2008; “Dutch Relief At ‘Mild’ Anti-Islam Film,” *Agence France Presse*, March 28, 2008; Dutch Anti-Islam MP Says Britain Refuses Him Entry,” Reuters, February 10, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> “Dutch Far-Right Party Second In EU Poll,” *Agence France Presse*, June 5, 2009; “Not Exactly Dutch Courage,” *The Economist*, October 9, 2010; Mariette le Roux, “New Dutch PM Promises Immigration Cut,” *Agence France Presse*, October 14, 2010; “Netherlands: Fragile Coalition Has Strong Policy Aims,” *Oxford Analytica*, October 18, 2010; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Netherlands*, March, 2011.

## **Dutch Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration**

Efforts in the Netherlands to encourage—or compel—societal integration predate the 9/11 attacks on the United States. In 1994, the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations launched a policy aimed at integration, “the goal of which was to improve the socio-economic position of disadvantaged ethnic minorities.” The policy emphasized cooperation between the government, which would facilitate integration, and immigrants, who were obligated to take responsibility for assimilating with Dutch society.<sup>52</sup> In 1998, the government enacted the Newcomers Integration law, which requires immigrants who receive state benefits to participate in a government integration program or be fined. Nearly a decade ago, the Dutch Foreign Ministry stated that the government “pursues policies aimed at the integration of ethnic minorities, to which the majority of Muslims belong. The objective is to enable them to participate in democratic society, to combat disadvantage and to prevent and counter discrimination and racism.” To achieve these goals, the municipalities established integration programs intended to familiarize immigrants with Dutch cultural mores and social customs, and also to provide language training. Programs were also formed to help educationally disadvantaged ethnic minorities.<sup>53</sup>

In 2006, the government of the Netherlands considered proposing a law to prohibit Islamic veils, but decided not to introduce legislation after government attorneys determined that it would probably be ruled unconstitutional. The government opted instead for legislation banning the use of full-face veils by educators and government employees; however, parliament has yet to pass such a bill.<sup>54</sup>

In a November 2009 letter to parliament, the Dutch Minister for Housing, Communities, and Integration, Eberhard van der Laan, outlined his government’s integration policies, stating that immigrants have a “moral obligation” to “conform to Dutch society and contribute to it.” To assist them, he said, the government has developed a policy that requires newcomers to learn about the Dutch culture and language, encourages them to participate in society, and emphasizes the importance or rule of Dutch law. The government has also attempted to address unemployment—especially among young people—and combat discrimination. Van der Laan explained that the government’s immigration policies are intended to ensure that the country is able to absorb and assimilate the number of people who are permitted to enter.<sup>55</sup>

To facilitate integration, the government has introduced several programs and practices. One such has been the active cooperation with Muslim civic groups. The government’s Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Integration liaises with two national Islamic organizations: the Muslims and the Government Contact Platform, and the Contact Group Islam. Also, organizations for Muslim women have been established; these include the National Islamic Women Network and the Amsterdam group *al Nisa*. In addition, the Dutch government has had a Muslim-oriented broadcasting organization since 1986. There are currently two Muslim

---

<sup>52</sup> Monica Raymunt, “The Politics of Integration: Can the Netherlands Get Immigration Right?,” *Atlantic.com*, May 17, 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Islam in the Netherlands*, November 2002; available at <http://home.deds.nl/~quip/archief/culture/Islam%20in%20Nederland.html>.

<sup>54</sup> “A Look At Legislation and Debate Concerning Muslim Veils In Europe and Beyond,” *Associated Press*, January 15, 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Dutch Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Integration, Letter to the Dutch Parliament on Integration, November 17, 2009.

broadcasting corporations in the country, and government-run television stations such as MTNL (Netherlands Multicultural Television) broadcast programs aimed at ethnic minorities.

To improve law enforcement efforts, the government has established programs to “increase community trust and engagement with the police.” For example, the government has provided funding for the Neighborhood Fathers project begun by Moroccans, which functions similar to U.S. community watch programs. Through recruitment of ethnic minorities, the Dutch have sought to increase the diversity of their police forces.<sup>56</sup>

Immigrants are required to take tests on Dutch culture and language.<sup>57</sup> For approval of family reunification immigration, proof of gainful employment must be shown. Prospective spouses must be at least 21 years of age.

One important step to encourage integration has been the creation of programs intended to thwart discrimination. In June 2009 the government passed a Law on Municipal Nondiscrimination Services, under which local governments must make available nondiscrimination offices to assist people who have a complaint about discrimination, and to assist them to register that complaint. Also in June 2009, the Dutch amended their Health and Safety at Work Act to require employers to prevent discrimination, and if it arises, to take action against it.<sup>58</sup>

Another approach to help immigrants integrate has been to solicit political and social participation. In 2009, there were 7 Muslim members of the House of Representatives, one in the Senate, and one in the cabinet. Muslims also hold elective offices in provincial councils and municipal governments. The Mayor of Rotterdam, Holland’s second largest city, is Muslim, and one of the district Mayors of Amsterdam is a Muslim woman.<sup>59</sup>

In June 2011, however, the Minister of Internal Affairs sent to parliament a Letter on Immigration that would appear to signal a greater emphasis on the obligations of immigrants to fit into Dutch society through, for example, learning the Dutch language and social customs. The letter reportedly states that “integration is not the responsibility of the public authorities but rather of those who decide to settle in the Netherlands.” New laws are being proposed, including those to:

- create a more “rigorous” Civic Integration Act,
- terminate grants for the integration of specific groups,
- ban forced marriages,
- prohibit the public wearing of veils, and
- develop “a common agenda for modern citizenship.”<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Open Society Institute, *Muslims in Europe: A Report on 11 EU Cities*, 2010, p. 183.

<sup>57</sup> For additional information, see FAQ at the Dutch Ministry of Justice, Immigration, and Naturalization website, [http://www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/overdeind/veelgestelde vragen/Wet\\_inburgering\\_naturalisatie.asp](http://www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/overdeind/veelgestelde vragen/Wet_inburgering_naturalisatie.asp).

<sup>58</sup> EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, *FRA Annual Report on Fundamental Rights in 2009*, June 10, 2010, available at [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/news\\_and\\_events/infocus10\\_10-06\\_en.htm](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/news_and_events/infocus10_10-06_en.htm).

<sup>59</sup> “Dutch Muslims Striving to Integrate,” BBC News, April 28, 2010.

<sup>60</sup> “Integration Policy Based on Dutch Values,” States News Service, June 17, 2011.

## **Dutch Measures to Combat Extremism and Counter Terrorism**

In an October 2009 address, Dutch Ambassador to the United States Renée Jones-Bos explained that, to combat radicalism, Holland uses a two-pronged approach involving “repressive measures,” and prevention.<sup>61</sup> To prevent radicalization, the government attempts to foster better integration, to enable vulnerable people to resist radicalization, and to intervene in a manner that will “identify, isolate and contain radicalization processes.” This has entailed a multi-agency effort led by the Interior Ministry, and has included the National Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism, and the Ministries of Education, Youth and Family. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies also are involved. The ambassador stressed that local authorities play a key role. The Dutch government has partnered with local authorities by providing partial funding for some programs, and by creating a national information and advice database called *Nuansa*. She also noted that, to prevent radicalization, the Dutch have stepped up efforts to integrate Muslim immigrants into society (see above).

Ambassador Jones-Bos stated that the Dutch government has been promoting inter-faith dialogue and inter-ethnic contact. The government also is encouraging Muslim communities to develop their own religious training programs so that imams will no longer need to be “imported” from countries in which Dutch culture and values are unknown. According to the Netherlands’ 2007 Civic Integration Act,

all foreign nationals with permanent residence rights have an obligation to integrate into Dutch society. This obligation is also specifically imposed on spiritual counselors, including imams, even though they cannot apply for a permanent residence permit. Spiritual counselors play a major role in their community and as such have an impact on the integration process of their followers.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, the government has been monitoring the Internet for extremist web sites, and has introduced sites that provide counterarguments to extreme interpretations of Islam.<sup>63</sup> The Interior Ministry has been seeking to prevent radicalization of imprisoned Muslim youths, and schools have set up call centers where students can report expressions of radicalism or violence. A study by the Open Society Institute notes that “[i]n the Netherlands, there are neighborhood directors and ‘street coaches.’ The latter are often kick-boxers or martial arts experts who patrol the area on bikes and are concerned with antisocial behavior. They report problems to social work home teams who visit individuals at home and in the case of young people talk to the family and parents about their behavior.”<sup>64</sup>

As for what Ambassador Bos-Jones called “repression” of extremism, she explained that the government had stiffened penalties for actions related to terrorism, and introduced measures aimed at stopping money laundering and recruitment by extremist organizations. Law

---

<sup>61</sup> Address by Renée Jones-Bos, Dutch Ambassador to the United States, “Countering Radicalization in the Netherlands,” Washington, DC, October 23, 2009; available at <http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/events/netherlandsARTresource.cfm>.

<sup>62</sup> Forum Institute for Multicultural Affairs, *op. cit.*; “Netherlands: Integration Policies Show Limited Results,” *Oxford Analytica*, December 22, 2009, p. 40. The report also notes that “The Dutch government has stipulated ... that foreign nationals who want to work in the Netherlands as religious teachers or leaders must have a work permit.”

<sup>63</sup> See for example, National Coordinator for Counterterrorism in the Netherlands, *Countering Violent Extremist Narratives*, January 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Open Society Institute, *op. cit.*

enforcement authorities have been given expanded investigative powers, and more staff and resources have been provided to intelligence and security services.

Although Ambassador Jones-Bos stated that it is difficult to assess the Netherlands' policies so far, she also made several positive points about Dutch efforts to counter violent extremism and combat terrorism. First of all, she said, surveys show that public concerns over terrorism have fallen drastically in the last three years. Secondly, the government has gained experience in prosecuting individuals under the 2004 Crimes of Terrorism Act. Thirdly, the government has learned more about radicalization, and has coordinated the efforts of several government agencies to counteract expressions of extremism. She noted the relatively restrained reaction of Dutch Muslims to the airing of *Fitna* in 2008. Jones-Bos also stated that the Salafist community in Holland had toned down its rhetoric considerably. However, the ambassador expressed concern over the recruitment of young Dutch Muslims to join jihadist combatants in Somalia. She also noted the growing social polarization in the Netherlands, a phenomenon that has been driven in part by ultra-nationalist Dutch populists and other extremists. Some observers contend that radicalization of non-Muslims in the Netherlands has actually been increasing, as the recent electoral success of the Freedom Party demonstrates.

However, other assessments of Dutch efforts to counter extremism and Islamist terrorism are less encouraging. In a December 2009 article, *Oxford Analytica* maintained there is uncertainty whether radicalism in the Netherlands has declined; the author argues that it does not appear that the number of potentially radical Muslims in Holland has fallen in the past five years. Geert Wilders' continuing popularity is regarded as an affront to the entire Muslim community. Moreover, *Oxford Analytica* asserts that groups such as the Islamist Hizb ut-Tahrir have stepped up their activities in Dutch universities.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, according to the U.S. Department of State, in June 2011, the Dutch National Counterterrorism Coordinator's Office (NCTb) judged the threat of a terrorist attack being launched in the Netherlands to be "limited"—the second level on the four-point scale that proceeds from minimum, to limited, to substantial, to critical. Authorities believe that, rather than the Dutch homeland, the more likely focus of terrorist acts would be Dutch assets or individuals abroad. The State Department's 2010 *Country Reports on Terrorism* noted that the NCTb had found that "resistance against politically or ideologically motivated violence among the Dutch population remained high."<sup>66</sup>

## Spain<sup>67</sup>

### The Muslim Population in Spain

Sizeable immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon for modern Spain. Spain's economic boom of the 2000s—and the associated effects on the agriculture, housing, and construction industries—led to an increasing demand for labor, which fueled a particularly sharp increase in

---

<sup>65</sup> "Netherlands: Integration Policies Show Limited Results," *op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: The Netherlands*, August 2011; U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010*, August 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Prepared by Derek E. Mix, Analyst in European Affairs.

immigration. Some estimates indicate that the number of immigrants in Spain leapt from about 500,000 in the mid-1990s to approximately 5 million by 2009. Overall, most immigrants to Spain come from Latin America (Central and South America, and Mexico), and immigrants from this region appear to outnumber immigrants from Muslim countries by at least 3:1.<sup>68</sup>

Several studies estimate that there are about 1 million Muslims living in Spain, although other sources put the figure as high as 1.4 million.<sup>69</sup> The majority of Muslims in Spain—approximately 70% of the total—have their origins in Morocco, largely due to combination of geographic, demographic, and economics factors: Morocco has a large, young, and growing population (of about 35 million), and a per capita gross domestic product of \$4,500, compared to Spain’s \$30,000.<sup>70</sup> Immigrants can reach Spain with a short crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, and there are two Spanish enclaves—Ceuta and Melilla—on Morocco’s coast.<sup>71</sup>

Other notable countries of origin include Senegal, Algeria, Pakistan, and Nigeria. It is reported that around 90% of Muslims living in Spain are foreign nationals. Muslim populations are concentrated in Catalonia, especially in Barcelona, as well as in Madrid and regions such as Almeria, Murcia, Valencia, and Andalusia, which border the Mediterranean Sea. In large cities, Muslim populations tend to be concentrated in deprived residential areas.<sup>72</sup>

## **Violent Extremism in Spain**

Violent extremists and their active supporters represent only a tiny fraction of the Muslim population in Spain. In the past, authorities have estimated the number of Islamist radicals in Spain as between 300 to 1,000 people. The issue of extremist elements within Spain’s Muslim community captured global attention on March 11, 2004, however, when Muslim extremists bombed four trains on a Madrid commuter rail line, killing 192 people and wounding 1,800. Some members of the terrorist cell that committed the attacks had links to the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group, a terrorist organization affiliated with Al Qaeda. Overall, the cell was apparently inspired by Al Qaeda, but not a formal part of the organization. Members of the group said they had acted in the name of Tarik Ben Ziyad, the 8<sup>th</sup> century Muslim conqueror of Spain, and called themselves the “brigade situated in Al-Andalus,” as Muslim-ruled Spain was called in the Middle Ages. More contemporary motivation for the group was found in Spain’s deployment of 1,300 soldiers in Iraq as part of the U.S.-led “Coalition of the Willing.”

Most of those involved in the Madrid attacks were first-generation immigrants, and many, but not all, had belonged to jihadist groups well before coming to Spain. A few were well-educated, but most were not, and were employed in construction, small business, and other occupations typical

---

<sup>68</sup> Patricia Bezunarte, Jose Manuel Lopez, and Laura Tedesco, *Muslims in Spain and Islamic Religious Radicalism*, MICROCON, Policy Working Paper 8, May 2009.

<sup>69</sup> See The Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe*, September 2010, [http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious\\_Affiliation/Muslim/Muslim-networks-full-report.pdf](http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Muslim/Muslim-networks-full-report.pdf); and Fernando Bravo, *Islam in Spain*, <http://www.euro-islam.info/2010/03/08/islam-in-spain/>. The CIA *World Factbook* estimates the population of Spain as 46.8 million as of July 2011.

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Morocco*, April 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Ceuta and Melilla are the European Union’s (EU) only land border with Africa, and represent the southern limit of the EU’s passport- and visa-free Schengen zone. The cities are effectively fenced off, however, and entry is strictly controlled by immigration authorities.

<sup>72</sup> Bravo, *op. cit.*

of immigrants in Spain. Some had no jobs, and obtained money through petty theft and other criminal activities. Many were over 30 years old and were married.<sup>73</sup>

Most of those involved in the Madrid attacks were either killed in a subsequent confrontation with police or arrested and put on trial. Spanish authorities, however, remain concerned that unidentified “ sleeper cells ” may continue to operate in the country. In 2008, police arrested a group of 14 people believed to be connected to a Pakistan-based terrorist group. Other than the Madrid bombings, extremist networks in Spain are thought to have typically acted as “ support ” cells assisting with fundraising and logistics for “ active ” or “ combat ” cells elsewhere. Spain was used as a key base in the planning and support for the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

## **Spanish Integration Policies: Past and Present**

Until recently, Spain undertook few efforts to integrate Muslims in its society. However, the Madrid bombings threw the issue of Muslims in Spain into much sharper relief for the Spanish public. Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, who has led Spain’s government since 2004, has since stressed the need for better social integration of the country’s Muslim population. Analysts assert that there is not a distinct “ Spanish model ” for integration, but that Spain has adopted pieces of both UK and Dutch-style multiculturalism and French-style assimilation.<sup>74</sup>

Some analysts assert that Muslims in Spain typically experience prejudice based as much on their poverty as on their religious or national identity. Cases of violence against immigrants, however, are relatively rare (although significant anti-immigrant riots aimed at Moroccans occurred in 2000 and 2002). Contrary to the predictions of many observers, the Madrid attacks did not lead to a major backlash against Muslims in Spain, and there have been no reports of widespread police abuse of Muslims.

Prior to the Madrid attacks, Spain tended to view its Muslim community mainly as an “ immigration ” issue, similar to that experienced by other European countries. Domestic political debates in Spain still tend not to separate integration policies from immigration policies. Prime Minister Zapatero has taken steps leading to the legalization of many illegal immigrants working in Spain, and has liberalized eligibility requirements for temporary residence and work permits. Zapatero asserts that these policies enhance Spain’s security by bringing these workers out into the open. The opposition Popular Party supports a more restrictive immigration policy and has criticized Zapatero’s approach as encouraging more people to try to reach Spanish territory. With the drastic downturn in the Spanish economy since 2009, including an unemployment rate of 20 percent, immigration policy is likely to remain a contentious issue.

In addition, many Spaniards are reluctant to frame the debate in terms of the “ Muslim community. ” Given that most immigrants to Spain are from Latin America, some assert that the issue is across-the-board “ immigration and integration ” rather than “ Muslim immigration ” or “ Muslim integration. ” Similarly, given that many Spaniards continue to regard the violent regional separatist group Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) as the country’s most serious terrorist threat, some argue that the issue is “ terrorism, ” not “ Islamist terrorism. ”

---

<sup>73</sup> Javier Jordan and Nicola Horsburgh, “ Mapping Jihadist Terrorism in Spain, ” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, vol. 28, May 2005, pp 169-191.

<sup>74</sup> “ Muslim migrants ‘ feel at home ’ in Spain, ” *Deutsche Welle*, October 15, 2010.



## Spanish Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration and Combat Extremism

As noted above, the 2004 Madrid terrorist attacks have focused greater attention on managing and integrating Spain's Muslim population. In recent years, the Spanish government has sought to expand its institutional infrastructure related to integration policy. Within the Spanish Ministry of Labor and Immigration, a Directorate General for the Integration of Immigrants has a leading role in implementing policies and programs.<sup>75</sup> Over the period 2007-2010, the Ministry's Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration was allocated about €2 billion (approximately \$2.64 billion) for programs related to immigrant education, employment, housing, social services, health, women, and youth.<sup>76</sup>

Additional government institutions of relevance include a Permanent Immigration Observatory (*Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración*) to collect data and conduct analysis about immigrant communities;<sup>77</sup> a Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants (*Foro para la Integración Social de los Inmigrantes*) that was launched in 2006,<sup>78</sup> and an Interministerial Commission for Alien Affairs (*Comisión Interministerial de Extranjería*) that guides and coordinates government policies affecting foreign nationals, including integration, immigration, and asylum policies. The Spanish government has also launched a Foundation for Pluralism and Co-Existence (*Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia*) to promote societal dialogue and recognition of minority religious groups in Spain (Muslims, Jews, and Protestants), and to fund selected integration projects.<sup>79</sup>

Based on a formal Cooperation Agreement that was signed in 1992, the Spanish Islamic Commission (CIE) officially represents Spain's Muslims in dialogue with the state. The CIE coordinated Spain's two major Muslim associations, the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Groups (FEERI) and the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE), in order to have a single community voice for communicating with the government on issues such as Muslim holidays and Islam in the education system. Due to disagreements between the two associations, however, UCIDE led a grouping of smaller Islamic federations that broke away from the CIE and formed the Spanish Islamic Council in April 2011.<sup>80</sup>

There are approximately 700 mosques in Spain and about 800 registered Muslim congregations in the country. Registration with the state is not compulsory, however, and analysts believe there may be some 150 Muslim religious communities that are not registered. Many Muslims in Spain worship in informal, often unmarked, prayer rooms. Experts estimate that there are hundreds of such "garage mosques," headed by imams whose professional qualifications and political ideologies are unknown. In these types of arrangements, it is more difficult for Spanish authorities to identify and monitor potential extremist groups, and to subsequently direct integration resources that could help counter radicalizing influences. A key figure in the Madrid

---

<sup>75</sup> See the website of the Spanish Ministry of Labor and Integration, available at [http://www.mtin.es/es/sec\\_emi/IntegralInmigrantes/](http://www.mtin.es/es/sec_emi/IntegralInmigrantes/).

<sup>76</sup> Bezunartea, Lopez, and Tedesco, *op. cit.*

<sup>77</sup> See <http://extranjeros.mtin.es/es/ObservatorioPermanenteInmigracion/>.

<sup>78</sup> See <http://extranjeros.mtin.es/es/ForoIntegracion/>.

<sup>79</sup> See <http://www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es/>.

<sup>80</sup> See <http://www.consejoislamico.es/>.

attacks, Sarhane Ben Abdelmajid Farkhet (known as “the Tunisian”), led prayers at one of these informal prayer rooms. Many in Spain’s Muslim community have supported the government idea of developing more “homegrown” Spanish imams. On the other hand, there has been considerable resistance to proposals for stricter monitoring of religious sermons and licensing of imams.

Spain has been faced with the challenge of integrating large numbers of Muslim and other immigrants into its education system. Spanish law requires Autonomous Communities (units in Spain’s federal system, similar in some ways to U.S. states) to take into account the needs of the children of immigrants in their education systems and to promote their social integration. Problems facing Muslim and other students of immigrant background include a lack of knowledge of Spanish and a poor education received in their former homelands. Autonomous Communities deal with these problems in various ways, including putting children in “bridge” classes, in which they learn Spanish before being placed in mainstream classes; enrolling children in classes that are a year below their age level in order to help them “catch up” academically; and supplemental tutoring and counseling by designated teachers.

Since the 1992 agreement with the CIE, Islamic education has at least in principle been available in Spanish public schools. However, the government has been reluctant to pay for imams to teach such classes. In the 2009-10 school year, there were 46 public school teachers for Islamic religious education, compared to about 15,000 for Catholic religious education. UCIDE estimates that more than 166,000 Muslim students would take Islamic religious education classes if offered, but this would require the government to employ well over 300 instructors.<sup>81</sup> Moderate Spanish Muslims have in the past expressed concern that shortcomings in this area could result in a higher percentage of Muslim children receiving most of their religious instruction from unregulated sources that might promote intolerant forms of Islam.

As in France and other European countries, Spain has been having a debate about whether to ban the wearing of *burqas* in public places. A proposed ban on the garments was put forward by the opposition Popular Party in the name of women’s rights and passed Spain’s Senate in June 2010. The governing Socialist Party, however, despite its strongly secular orientation, opposes such a ban, and the measure was voted down in the Congress of Deputies (Spain’s lower house of parliament) in July 2010. Nevertheless, some local governments in Spain have moved to ban the wearing of *burqas* in public buildings.

## **Spanish Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Measures**

Although the threat of terrorism from radical Islamists is a relatively recent development in Spain, the country has extensive experience confronting domestic terrorism. For four decades, the Spanish government has faced the threat of ETA, which has killed more than 800 people during that time. As a result, Spain has a well-developed body of counterterrorism legislation and entrenched procedures within its existing legal codes. Although some in the United States have been critical of perceived leniency in some terrorism cases, many analysts conclude that Spain’s recent counterterrorism activities have been relatively effective.

---

<sup>81</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010*, November 2010.

Similar to France, Spain uses a civil law system based on codified laws, and under the Spanish Penal Code, terrorist offenses are treated as an aggravated form of crime. The Penal Code broadly defines terrorist offenses as acts that seek to damage constitutional or public order, and includes offenses such as conspiring to commit a terrorist act; financing terrorism; recruitment, indoctrination or terrorist training activities; and publically glorifying or encouraging terrorism. Specific terrorism-related penalties include 6 to 12 years in prison for membership in a terrorist group; 8 to 14 years for directing a terrorist group; and 20 to 30 years for terrorist murder.<sup>82</sup>

Some human rights advocates have criticized a provision in Spanish law under which terrorism suspects may be held incommunicado by police for up to five days before they are brought before a judge to be charged.<sup>83</sup> Given the country's history under the Franco dictatorship, many in Spain have been reluctant to adopt proposals that might diminish civil liberties, such as loosening restrictions on wiretapping or allowing intelligence agencies access to private databases.

Following the Madrid attacks, the government sharply increased resources for national anti-terrorist agencies, boosting the number of Interior Ministry officials devoted to counterterrorism issues and launching a National Center for Antiterrorist Coordination within the ministry. Key law enforcement and intelligence institutions—the National Police, the paramilitary Civil Guard (*Guardia Civil*) and the National Intelligence Center (CNI), the country's main intelligence agency—have sought to better integrate their work through the creation of new institutional coordination mechanisms. Spain has also taken steps to strengthen monitoring of extremist activity in prisons.

Spain has emphasized international cooperation in combating the threat of radical Islamist terrorism: the Spanish government has been a strong supporter of coordinated counterterrorism measures at the EU level and at the bilateral level with key partners such as France, Morocco, and the United States. Prime Minister Zapatero has been adamant in asserting that there is no military solution to the problem of terrorism, preferring to focus on law enforcement cooperation. Zapatero continues to promote enhanced cross-cultural dialogue and understanding through the development of an “Alliance of Civilizations” with the Muslim world.<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> For more information on the legal aspects of counterterrorism in Spain, see UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Counter-Terrorism Legislation and Practice: A Survey of Selected Countries*, October 2005; Alejandra Gómez-Céspedes, *NCTB Counterterrorism Strategies in Spain*, Instituto Andaluz Interuniversitario de Criminología, Universidad de Málaga, January 30, 2006; Council of Europe, Committee of Experts on Terrorism, *Profiles on Counter-Terrorist Capacity: Spain*, November 2006; Ari D. MacKinnon, “Counterterrorism and Checks and Balances: The Spanish and American Examples,” *New York University Law Review*, April 18, 2007; and U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2010*, August 2011.

<sup>83</sup> Martin Scheinin, *Mission to Spain - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism*, United Nations Human Rights Council, December 16, 2008.

<sup>84</sup> For background on Spain's “Alliance of Civilizations” initiative, see <http://www.pnac.es/default.htm>.

## The United Kingdom<sup>85</sup>

### The Muslim Population in the UK

Studies estimate that there are approximately 2.9 million Muslims living in the United Kingdom.<sup>86</sup> Over the past decade, the UK's Muslim population has had a high growth rate—the 2001 census counted about 1.6 million Muslims, and the UK's Labour Force Survey tallied about 2 million in 2005.<sup>87</sup> The UK's Muslim population is young, with an estimated 50% under age 25.

Due to historical and colonial ties, as well as post-war labor and migration trends, about two-thirds of British Muslims have a South Asian background: nearly half are Pakistani; about 20% Bangladeshi; and approximately 10% Indian. Other British Muslims have their origins in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iran, Turkey, Cyprus, Malaysia, and Africa. Almost half of all Muslims in the UK were born in the UK.<sup>88</sup>

Research indicates that British Muslims tend to be more economically disadvantaged than the national average, with much higher rates of unemployment. Many Muslim communities in the UK are concentrated in deprived residential areas. Muslims also make up a disproportionately high percentage of the UK's prison population.

### Extremist Elements

Although the majority of Muslims in the UK are not involved in extremist activities, a fringe community exists that advocates radical Islamism and, in some cases, supports violent extremism. In many cases, extremists cite British foreign policy—including the UK's role in Iraq and Afghanistan and a perceived bias in support of Israel—as justification for violent acts. In recent years, several high profile cases have brought attention to the extremist elements among the UK's Muslim community. Most notably, on July 7, 2005, four British Muslims opposed to the UK's involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan killed 52 people in a series of suicide bomb attacks in London. British officials expressed particular alarm that three of the four perpetrators were “homegrown” second-generation British Muslims of Pakistani descent (the fourth was a convert to Islam who was born in Jamaica). Most of those convicted of a 2006 plot to bomb transatlantic flights were also British Muslims of Pakistani descent.

Long before these incidents, some analysts asserted that the UK had become a haven for extremists and a breeding ground for terrorists—the UK's traditionally liberal asylum and immigration laws, as well as its strong free speech and privacy protections, attracted numerous

---

<sup>85</sup> Prepared by Derek E. Mix, Analyst in European Affairs.

<sup>86</sup> The Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Muslim Networks and Movements in Western Europe*, September 2010, [http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious\\_Affiliation/Muslim/Muslim-networks-full-report.pdf](http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Muslim/Muslim-networks-full-report.pdf). The CIA World Factbook estimates the population of the UK as 62.7 million as of July 2011. The country's estimated Muslim population is about 4.6% of the total.

<sup>87</sup> Richard Kerbaj, “Muslim Population ‘Rising 10 Times Faster Than Rest of Society,’” *The Sunday Times*, January 30, 2009.

<sup>88</sup> Ceri Peach, “Muslim Population of Europe: A Brief Overview of Demographic Trends and Socioeconomic Integration with Particular Focus on Britain,” *Muslim Integration: Challenging Conventional Wisdom in Europe and the United States*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 2007.

radical clerics claiming persecution at home. “Shoe bomber” Richard Reid and the “20<sup>th</sup>” 9/11 hijacker Zacarias Moussaoui both attended Finsbury Park mosque in North London, which was led until 2003 by the extremist cleric Abu Hamza. Some observers came to sarcastically label this open culture of extremist Islamism as “Londonistan.”

However, radicalization of young Muslims has taken place not just in mosques, but also in prisons and at universities, according to Muslim leaders and UK officials. The “underwear bomber,” a young Nigerian who attempted to blow up an airliner en route from Amsterdam to Detroit in December 2009, had earlier lived and studied at a university in London. Some experts also point out that many Muslims who turn to violent extremism are well-educated professionals; for example, the attempted car bombings in London and Glasgow in June 2007 were carried out by a British-born doctor and a PhD student in engineering. The disparate socio-economic backgrounds of British Muslims who have engaged in terrorism have challenged attempts to formulate strategies for preventing radicalization.

## **The Debate Over Multiculturalism in the UK**

The UK’s approach to integration has long emphasized multiculturalism, rather than assimilation. This approach seeks to encourage tolerance and instill equality while allowing immigrants and ethnic groups to maintain their own cultural identities and customs. Since 2005, there has been an ongoing debate in the UK about whether “multiculturalism” (as a government policy versus the use of the term to simply describe Britain’s growing cultural diversity) has placed too much emphasis on promoting tolerance, discouraging discrimination, and maintaining individual or community identity at the expense of building a common British identity and set of values. Critics charge that multiculturalism, as practiced by successive British governments, has helped entrench insular Muslim communities in the UK, functioning in some cases as “parallel societies.”

Some observers also assert that the multicultural policy approach fails to address the deep social divisions that affect many aspects of life in the UK. Many young British Muslims drawn to extremism reportedly feel a sense of cultural alienation, disenfranchisement, and discrimination. Some appear to turn to Islam as a way to counteract feelings of exclusion and then become susceptible to radical thought promulgated by extremist Muslim clerics.

Prime Minister David Cameron aligned himself with the critics of multiculturalism (as a policy choice) in a major speech on radicalization and Islamist extremism, delivered in Germany at the Munich Security Conference on February 5, 2011. According to Cameron,

Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We’ve failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We’ve even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values...I believe it is time to turn the page on the failed policies of the past...instead of encouraging people to live apart, we need a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> PM’s speech at the Munich Security Conference, February 5, 2011, available at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/>.

Some analysts assert that this speech appears to signal a significant shift in the official UK approach to the issue of integration, but acknowledge that the policy implications of this shift largely remain to be seen. Others contend that many of the measures proposed by Cameron, such as introducing tighter controls on Muslim groups receiving public funds, banning “preachers of hate” from visiting Britain to speak in public forums, taking a tougher line on forced marriages, and establishing the expectation that all British citizens support common values, are very similar to those espoused by the former Labour government of Tony Blair in the aftermath of the 2005 London attacks. A number of commentators suggest that Cameron’s speech was largely intended to weigh in on an internal disagreement within his coalition government on whether non-violent extremism is a gateway to or a stopgap against terrorism, and whether UK officials should continue to engage in counter-radicalization efforts in cooperation with non-violent Islamists whose political goals and values may differ from those held by mainstream Britons.<sup>90</sup>

## **UK Efforts to Promote Muslim Integration and Combat Extremism**

The *Prevent* program is a key domestic component of the UK’s official Strategy for Countering International Terrorism (CONTEST).<sup>91</sup> *Prevent* was launched in 2007 with five central objectives: “challenge the ideology behind violent extremism and support mainstream voices; disrupt those who promoted violent extremism and support the places where they operated; support people vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists; increase the resilience of communities; and address grievances exploited in the radicalisation process.”<sup>92</sup> The strategy has sought to emphasize the importance of community-led approaches and to develop partnerships between police, local authorities, and local communities in order to identify potential radicalization risks and intervene in such cases. From 2007 to 2010, *Prevent* spent some £53 million (about \$84 million) on over 1,000 projects.<sup>93</sup>

*Prevent* has come under widespread criticism, however. A March 2010 report of the House of Commons’ Communities and Local Government Committee, for example, was extremely critical of the program, asserting that it had lumped together efforts at integration and community cohesion, on the one hand, with counterterrorism, crime prevention, and intelligence gathering, on the other, in ways that are “ineffective and counterproductive.”<sup>94</sup> The report and other critics also asserted that the involvement of *Prevent* tainted many local projects due to perceptions among the Muslim community that government-led programs lack credibility and invite suspicion, or that individuals and institutions who work with the government have been co-opted. Some Muslim groups have refused to cooperate or accept funding from *Prevent*, and some Members of Parliament have suggested that the program has actually tended to increase alienation because it singles out the Muslim community. At the same time, other critics have asserted that some programs funded by *Prevent* have actually ended up supporting groups tied to extremist ideology.

---

<sup>90</sup> “Muscle v Multiculturalism,” *The Economist*, February 12, 2011.

<sup>91</sup> The most recent (July 2011) version of CONTEST is available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy/strategy-contest?view=Binary>.

<sup>92</sup> CONTEST document, p. 60.

<sup>93</sup> Dominic Casciani, “Preventing Extremism Strategy ‘Stigmatizing,’ Warn MPs,” BBC News, March 30, 2010.

<sup>94</sup> House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, *Preventing Violent Extremism*, Sixth Report, March 16, 2010; available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmcomloc/65/6502.htm>.

In November 2010, the Home Secretary announced a review of the *Prevent* strategy, and a revised version was published in June 2011.<sup>95</sup> One of the main changes resulting from the review is a more distinct separation between counterterrorism and integration efforts. The Home Office will continue to manage the strategy, and programs related to security and terrorist-related activity will remain a part of *Prevent*.<sup>96</sup> Programs dealing with wider issues of integration and non-violent extremism, however, will be separated from *Prevent* and handled by the Department for Communities and Local Government. According to the revised *Prevent* document,

*Prevent* must not assume control of or allocate funding to integration projects which have a value far wider than security and counter-terrorism: the Government will not securitise its integration strategy. This has been a mistake in the past.<sup>97</sup>

The new framework for *Prevent* calls for the strategy to:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support; and
- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address ... Priority areas include education, faith, health, criminal justice and charities. The Internet is also included here as a sector in its own right.<sup>98</sup>

*Prevent* funding will focus on three main areas: local community projects, policing, and work overseas to challenge ideologies that fuel domestic extremism. In addition, new oversight procedures are expected to provide stricter monitoring and evaluation of *Prevent* activities.

Additional UK efforts, past and on-going, include improving dialogue with Muslim communities and promoting moderate Islam; tackling socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination; and introducing new citizenship and English language requirements.

### **Improving Dialogue and Promoting Moderate Islam**

UK officials have long believed that improving official dialogue with the Muslim community is essential for better integration, and that Muslim communities have a vital leading role to play in curbing Islamist extremism. Government efforts to build relations with moderate Muslim groups over the last several years have included outreach to Muslim leaders, community organizations, and youth and student groups to discuss issues of concern, such as UK foreign policy and new domestic counterterrorism measures.

---

<sup>95</sup> See <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/>. The revised *Prevent* strategy (June 2011) can be downloaded at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-strategy-review?view=Binary>.

<sup>96</sup> The Home Office is the lead UK government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, counter-terrorism and police; see <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>.

<sup>97</sup> *Prevent* strategy, June 2011, p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> *Prevent* strategy, June 2011, pp. 7-8.

The *Prevent* program launched initiatives such as a “roadshow” of moderate Muslim scholars; anti-extremism initiatives on university campuses; promotion of the UK as a “center of excellence for Islamic studies outside the Muslim world;” cooperation with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board to develop standards and systems of self-regulation; and support for local institutions and civic leaders who promote moderate Islam by providing program funding.

British officials have also been looking at ways to foster “homegrown” imams, rather than relying on foreign imams who some claim are often unfamiliar with British secular society. Some observers argue that Muslims must be more vocal against extremism, and actively counter rather than tolerate radical preachers. Muslim groups have cautioned, however, that any effort by the government to regulate imams through a licensing scheme would likely be considered discriminatory and face considerable resistance.

Some analysts have been skeptical that the government’s efforts to encourage dialogue with Muslim leaders and the Muslim community will have much effect on extremism because the various Muslim communities in the UK are divided over who speaks for Muslims in the UK. Other critics of the British government’s past initiatives have charged that some of the individuals and organizations involved are not as moderate as they appear and have extremist connections or beliefs. Some experts assert that greater emphasis should be placed on integration or assimilation, and “modernizing” Islamic beliefs and behaviors; many of this view welcomed Prime Minister Cameron’s remarks in February 2011 that the UK would end public funding of British Muslim groups and institutions that the government views as not respecting gender equality, political freedom, and human rights. Many Muslim organizations, however, were outraged, claiming that Cameron’s proposal placed an unfair onus on Muslims and other minorities to integrate without addressing the social and economic disadvantages that many of them face.<sup>99</sup>

### **Addressing Socio-Economic Disadvantage and Discrimination**

Experts assert that addressing the socio-economic disadvantages experienced by Muslims in the UK is key to promoting better integration and decreasing the disaffection that makes some susceptible to extremism. Muslims are, on average, one of the most disadvantaged groups in the UK labor market, suffering comparatively high levels of unemployment. While Muslims in the UK have a higher percentage of self-employment than the national average, many also tend to be concentrated in low-paying sectors such as the hotel and restaurant industries.

In the past, British officials have stressed that many of the government’s broad economic and social policies—such as welfare to work programs, the introduction of a minimum wage, and family tax credits—have benefitted Muslim communities. More specific measures that sought to target Muslims or other minorities have included support for vocational centers and entrepreneurship programs in areas of high minority unemployment, and race equality grants for minority community projects, such as centers that offer English lessons and job advice. The UK government has also sought to improve Muslim housing access by removing tax disadvantages for mortgages that comply with Islamic law.

In recent years, the UK government has established new grants for local school districts to address the needs of underachieving groups and has set up programs to work with young people

---

<sup>99</sup> Oliver Wright and Jerome Taylor, “Cameron: My War on Multiculturalism,” *The Independent*, February 5, 2011.



in deprived areas to ensure better minority access to top universities. The UK does not use quotas or affirmative action-style programs to promote diversity in employment or higher education. Rather, it has traditionally relied on strong laws against discrimination, such as the Race Relations Act (although the act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnicity, but not religion) and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. The UK also adopted the Racial and Religious Hatred Act in 2006 to strengthen laws against hate crimes.

Some commentators have voiced concerns about the impact that the austerity measures introduced by the Cameron government could have on a broad array of social programs and their constituents. Most UK government departments, including the Department for Communities and Local Government, which provides funding grants to local councils, face cuts of around 25% over the next four years.

### **New Citizenship and English Language Requirements**

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 introduced reforms intended to deepen the bonds between new British citizens and their new home country. Taking effect in 2004, the law requires aspiring citizens to demonstrate knowledge of the English language, as well as British history, culture, and customs, either by passing a short test or by completing a government-approved citizenship and language class. The act also introduced mandatory new citizenship ceremonies, during which those acquiring British nationality swear allegiance to the Queen and pledge to respect the UK's rights and freedoms. Also in 2004, the UK announced that all foreign "ministers of religion," including imams, wishing to work in the UK must demonstrate a basic command of English.

### **UK Law Enforcement and Security Measures**

In recent years, British authorities have concluded numerous successful terrorism-related prosecutions and convictions, and British police have reportedly disrupted a number of significant terrorist plots.<sup>100</sup> Observers assert that the UK has compiled some of the toughest and most comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation in Europe.<sup>101</sup> The Terrorism Act 2006, for example, created a series of new terrorism-related criminal offenses, such as the encouragement of terrorism and the dissemination of terrorist propaganda, including via the Internet. It also gave the government the right to ban groups that glorify terrorism, and extended the allowable period of detention without charge from 14 to 28 days. (The period lapsed back to 14 days in early 2011. The Home Secretary has prepared a draft bill that could re-extend the pre-charge detention period to 28 days in a urgent situation with parliamentary approval.) The Counterterrorism Act 2008 further enhanced the powers of law enforcement authorities in terrorism-related cases, changing rules related to searches, interrogations, asset seizures, and the collection and use of evidence. The 2008 Act also increased sentences for some terrorism-related offenses. In addition, the UK has adopted new legislation in recent years, such as the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, that makes it easier to deport or exclude foreign individuals from the UK who advocate violence and incite hatred.

---

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, the CONTEST document, p. 28.

<sup>101</sup> UK counterterrorism legislation includes the Public Order Act 1986; the Terrorism Act 2000; the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005; the Terrorism Act 2006; and the Counterterrorism Act 2008.

At the same time, the UK has been struggling to balance law enforcement efforts against the preservation of civil liberties and democratic ideals. After September 11, 2001, the UK government introduced a policy of indefinite detention of some foreign terrorist suspects residing in the country. In December 2004, the Law Lords—the UK’s highest court of appeal at the time—ruled that such detentions without charge or trial were incompatible with human rights and anti-discrimination laws. In response, the government ended indefinite detentions, but enacted a range of “control orders,” including house arrest, for both foreigners and UK citizens suspected of engaging in terrorist support or activity. Civil liberty advocates have sharply criticized the Terrorism Act 2006 and the Counterterrorism Act 2008.

In January 2011, the Home Secretary released the findings and recommendations from her Review of Counter-terrorism and Security Powers.<sup>102</sup> The document recommends: returning to 14 days as the standard pre-charge maximum for the detention of terrorism suspects; curtailing stop and search powers provided for police under the Terrorism Act 2000; curtailing the use of intrusive practices by local authorities, as governed by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000; maintaining the current definition of terrorist activity when considering whether to proscribe groups which incite hatred or violence; pursuing deportation arrangements that include human rights assurances with additional countries; and replacing the current system of control orders with a new and more clearly defined system.

Some analysts maintain that these proposed changes may help appease some civil liberty concerns, but that many of the adjustments would be marginal, or that they would essentially amount to re-branding of current practices. In other words, the recommendations would loosen some aspects of the current UK framework, but the core elements would be retained.<sup>103</sup>

## **The European Union (EU)<sup>104</sup>**

### **The EU’s Role**

The EU is an economic and political partnership that represents a unique form of cooperation among its 27 member states.<sup>105</sup> The EU has been involved in a process of integration begun in the 1950s to promote peace and economic prosperity in Europe. The EU has been developed through a series of binding treaties and member states have agreed to harmonize laws and adopt common policies on a range of economic, social, and foreign policy issues.

Over the last decade, the EU has placed increasing emphasis on fostering common internal security measures, improving police and judicial cooperation, and strengthening its capacity to counter terrorism and other cross-border crimes. Since the 2001 attacks on the United States, the

---

<sup>102</sup> See <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/review-of-ct-security-powers/>.

<sup>103</sup> See Margaret Gilmore, *UK Counter-Terrorism Review*, Royal United Services Institute, available at <http://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C4D4144CBED9DD/>.

<sup>104</sup> Prepared by Kristin Archick, Specialist in European Affairs.

<sup>105</sup> The 27 members of the EU include the 5 countries discussed in detail in this report, as well as: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden. For more information on how the EU works, see CRS Report RS21372, *The European Union: Questions and Answers*, by Kristin Archick and Derek E. Mix

EU has established a common definition of terrorism, a common list of terrorist groups subject to financial sanctions, an EU arrest warrant, enhanced tools to stem terrorist financing, and new measures to strengthen external EU border controls and improve aviation and transport security. The EU has also been working to bolster Europol, its joint criminal intelligence body, and Eurojust, a unit charged with improving prosecutorial cooperation in cross-border crimes in the EU. The 2004 terrorist bombings in Madrid and the 2005 attacks on London's metro system injected an even greater sense of urgency into EU counterterrorism efforts and gave added impetus to EU initiatives aimed at both better integrating Muslims into European society and tackling the root causes of radicalization and Islamist extremism. Although integration policy and measures to prevent radicalization are largely the responsibility of each member state, the EU offers a useful forum for members to discuss common challenges and pursue cooperative strategies.

The EU is eager to keep its integration policies largely separate from those developed to combat terrorist recruitment and radicalization, maintaining that integrating immigrants into European society is a wider concern with economic, social, and cultural ramifications for the EU that go beyond the need to prevent radicalization and terrorist recruitment. Furthermore, EU officials note that while the lack of integration may be a contributing factor in explaining why some individuals turn to extremism, it is not the only one. As a result, EU policies aimed at countering radicalization and violent extremism are not generally considered as part of EU efforts to foster integration, but rather as part of EU counterterrorism initiatives.<sup>106</sup>

## **EU Integration Efforts**

In light of different national histories, legal frameworks, and preferences for managing immigration, integration policy is, as noted above, primarily the responsibility of individual EU member states rather than that of the EU as a whole. Until recently, there was no legal basis in the EU treaties for the Union to act on or direct integration policy. However, over the last few years, member states have come to believe that the EU can and should play a role in encouraging good integration practices, harmonizing standards, and monitoring national policies.

Given the EU's largely open internal borders, EU leaders are keenly aware that the failure of one member to adequately address integration challenges and prevent social exclusion that could lead to extremism or criminal activity could have severe negative implications for other EU members.<sup>107</sup> Concerns among EU member states about integration are also being driven by the belief that halting or severely restricting immigration to the EU may not be a viable option in light of Europe's aging population and declining birth rates. Some analysts note that the increasing need for and value of EU-level action on integration policy was confirmed when EU leaders, for the first time, established a solid legal basis for an EU role in integration policy in the Union's new institutional reform treaty (the Lisbon Treaty), which took effect in 2009. The Lisbon Treaty states that the EU may establish measures to provide "incentives and support" for

---

<sup>106</sup> Discussions with EU and European officials and experts; also see, Elizabeth Collett, "What Does the EU Do on Integration?," European Policy Centre, April 2008. For more information on broader EU efforts against terrorism, including law enforcement measures and border control initiatives, and U.S.-EU cooperation, see CRS Report RS22030, *U.S.-EU Cooperation Against Terrorism*, by Kristin Archick.

<sup>107</sup> Most EU member states participate in the Schengen Agreement, which allows EU citizens and those entering EU territory to travel freely once inside its borders.

member states in the field of integration, as long as doing so does not involve harmonizing national laws or policies related to integration.

EU policymakers stress that EU efforts in the area of integration are intended to apply to all legal immigrants from countries outside of EU member states—known as “third countries” in EU terminology—and are not aimed specifically at Muslims. EU officials assert that Europe attracts a wide range of immigrants and asylum-seekers from various countries and cultures around the world and that Muslims are not the only religious or ethnic minority in Europe. Critics contend, however, that in focusing so broadly on integration of all legal third-country nationals, the EU is not sufficiently tackling the difficulties that some Muslims in Europe experience as a direct result of their religious affiliation, nor is the EU addressing the identity and social exclusion problems faced by some second- or third-generation Muslims with European citizenship.

The EU has been working to develop an integration framework that balances respect for societal diversity with the definition of clear expectations for immigrants to EU countries. In 2003, the EU established national contact points on integration to facilitate information exchange on challenges and best practices among member states. In 2004, the EU published a *Handbook on Integration* for policymakers and practitioners that sets out best practices; this first edition focused on learning a second language and participation in European civic life. Subsequent editions of the *Handbook*, released in 2007 and 2010, examined issues such as economic integration and the labor market, urban housing, immigrant youth, education, and the role of the media in integration. Examples of best practices cited include a French volunteer mentoring system in which retirees acted as mentors to young migrants, and a program in an Italian municipality that sought to broaden housing choices by providing subsidies for repairs to landlords who make properties available to immigrants at lower rents.<sup>108</sup>

Also in 2004, EU leaders adopted 11 common basic principles for immigrant integration policy. These principles emphasize that integration is a two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of member states, and implies respect for the basic values of the EU. Among other conditions, the common principles identify the following as necessary for successful integration: access to employment, education, and public services; protection against discrimination; basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions; and immigrant participation in member states’ democratic processes and political decision-making. The EU already has the ability to address some of these factors through existing EU laws on racial and religious discrimination, and general EU strategies to boost economic growth, employment, and education.

In September 2005, the European Commission—the EU’s executive—put forward a “Common Agenda for Integration” that contains suggested actions for putting the common basic principles into practice at both the national and EU level. Among other measures, it called for setting up an EU fund to finance both member state and EU-wide projects. The resulting European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals was launched in 2007 and allocated €825 million (approximately \$1.1 billion) for the EU’s 2007-2013 budget period. Examples of projects funded to date include an initiative aimed at familiarizing religious leaders with core European values and establishing socio-cultural mediators to serve as links between immigrants and their new

---

<sup>108</sup> “EU Interior Ministers Look To Improve Integration of Immigrants,” *European Report*, May 10, 2007; European Union Press Release, “Migrant Integration: Commission Announces a New EU Strategy and Presents the Third Handbook at the Zaragoza Ministerial Conference,” April 15, 2010. The 2010 edition of the EU’s *Handbook on Integration* is available at [http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl\\_12892\\_168517401.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_12892_168517401.pdf).

environments. In 2009, the EU also established a European Integration Forum, which brings together representatives of civil society organizations with EU policymakers twice a year to discuss integration issues, and a European Web Site on Integration, which serves as a virtual platform to facilitate the exchange of information about integration policies and practices between policymakers, civil society groups, community organizations, and the general public.<sup>109</sup>

In July 2011, the European Commission issued a new “European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals” that essentially updates the 2005 Common Agenda and proposes next steps. It reaffirms the EU view that immigrants must be given the opportunity to participate fully in their new communities, but also that successful integration requires immigrants to possess the will and commitment to become part of the society that has received them. The new Agenda highlights four areas as crucial for integration: the acquisition of language skills; participation in the labor market; access to education; and decent living conditions. The Agenda emphasizes the key role of local authorities in promoting integration, and suggests that future EU funding should be targeted more toward supporting local and regional integration projects.<sup>110</sup>

## **Preventing Radicalization and Terrorist Recruitment**

Although the EU has sought since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to strengthen its law enforcement and security capabilities against terrorism, addressing the broader issue of Islamist radicalization did not rise to the forefront of the EU’s counterterrorism agenda until 2004-2005. Since then, EU-level efforts to combat Islamist extremism and stem terrorist recruitment have also gathered momentum. In December 2005, EU leaders approved a broad counterterrorism strategy that categorizes the wide range of EU efforts against international terrorism into four main strands of action: *Prevent, Protect, Pursue, and Respond*. The main goal of the *Prevent* strand is to “prevent people from turning to terrorism by tackling the factors or root causes which can lead to radicalization and recruitment, in Europe and internationally.”<sup>111</sup> The *Prevent* strand essentially incorporates the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalization and Recruitment to Terrorism, also approved in December 2005, and revised in November 2008.<sup>112</sup>

Both the 2005 and 2008 versions of the EU counter-radicalization strategy resolve to disrupt the activities of networks and individuals who draw people into terrorism, ensure that voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism, and promote even more vigorously security, justice, democracy, and opportunity for all (both within and outside the Union).<sup>113</sup> Among other measures, the EU’s counter-radicalization strategy emphasizes the need to: examine ways to impede terrorist recruitment, including over the Internet; limit the activities of those possibly inciting terrorism in prisons and places of education and worship; and empower moderate voices by stepping up dialogue with political and religious groups that reject violence.

---

<sup>109</sup> For more information, see the European Web Site on Integration, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/about-us.cfm>.

<sup>110</sup> European Commission, *European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals*, July 20, 2011.

<sup>111</sup> The European Union Counter-terrorism Strategy (14469/4/05), November 30, 2005.

<sup>112</sup> The European Union Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism (14781/1/05), November 24, 2005; Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism (15175/08), November 14, 2008.

<sup>113</sup> The EU’s counter-radicalization strategy also notes that outside of Europe, EU efforts include promoting good governance, human rights, democracy, and economic prosperity through political dialogue and EU and member state assistance programs.

Observers point out that the main difference between the 2005 and 2008 versions of the EU's strategy concerns the use of words such as "Muslim" and "Islamist extremists." They note that the 2005 version explicitly states that the Union's efforts to counter radicalization are focused primarily on the threat emanating from Al Qaeda and those it inspires. The 2008 iteration, however, asserts that "while radical Islamists are currently the main focus for clandestine networks using religion for criminal ends, radicalization and recruitment is a common factor of all ideologies that predicate terrorist action" and that the strategy "must reflect Europe's desire to combat all forms of terrorism, whoever the perpetrators may be." EU officials stress that such changes are an attempt to broaden the strategy to encompass all forms of violent extremism, including the brands promoted by some far-right European groups and domestic terrorist organizations. Moreover, they argue that the EU must avoid demonizing Muslims and playing into the hands of those who claim that the fight against terrorism is really one aimed squarely at Islam. Critics assert, however, that the EU is essentially skirting the issue of Islamist extremism out of concern for political correctness. As a result, they assert that some factors that may make certain Muslims in Europe more vulnerable to radicalization—such as the influence of foreign imams—are not being sufficiently addressed.

Others contend that the specific wording or language of the EU's counter-radicalization strategy is largely irrelevant. The EU has been working to implement a range of measures aimed at preventing radicalization and countering violent extremism and that, in practice, such policies are largely crafted first and foremost with an eye toward combating the ideology of and threat posed by violent Islamist extremists. For example, the "workstreams" led by some member states on various aspects of EU-level efforts to prevent radicalization include a Spanish project to improve the training of imams and other religious leaders. The UK is leading EU work on improving government communication strategies and countering the "narrative" used by those promoting terrorism (especially Al Qaeda). Other "workstreams" have included a Belgium-led initiative on community policing, a Dutch project on examining the ways in which local authorities can help counter radicalization, and a Danish effort focused on disengagement and de-radicalization (especially among young people).

Over the last few years, the EU has also sought to strengthen law enforcement tools against incitement to terrorism and recruitment. In 2008, for example, the EU expanded its common definition of terrorism to make incitement, recruitment, and training for terrorism—including when committed via the Internet—criminal offenses throughout the Union.<sup>114</sup> EU leaders hope that this measure, which entered into force in December 2010, will enable member states to prosecute people who try to involve others in terrorist activity; they also hope it will counter the dissemination of terrorist propaganda and training tactics (such as bomb-making instructions), in part by making it easier for law enforcement authorities to demand cooperation from Internet providers and for EU governments to ensure that offending material is taken off-line.<sup>115</sup> In addition, the EU's "Check the Web" initiative seeks to strengthen cooperation among member states with regard to monitoring and evaluating Internet sites that may be used for terrorist

---

<sup>114</sup> The EU's common definition of terrorism was first agreed in 2002 to help harmonize anti-terrorism legislation throughout the Union. It defined as terrorist offenses various types of crimes—such as murder and hijacking—committed with the intent to intimidate a population or destabilize a country's political system. See the Council Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism (2002/475/JHA), June 13, 2002.

<sup>115</sup> The European Commission is also promoting a public/private partnership approach between law enforcement authorities and service providers in order to help reduce the dissemination of illegal terrorism-related content on the Internet. See European Commission, *The EU Counter-Terrorism Policy: Main Achievements and Future Challenges*, July 20, 2010.

purposes. Launched in 2007, “Check the Web” allows member states’ law enforcement authorities, on a voluntary basis, to submit and retrieve information on websites used by terrorist and extremist groups from a central database managed by Europol.

Nevertheless, EU officials acknowledge that while “important work has been set in motion” with respect to combating radicalization and terrorist recruitment, “much more remains to be done.”<sup>116</sup> Some observers note that efforts to forge coordinated EU-level policies aimed at combating violent extremism are often complicated by the fact that different member states have traditionally had different policies and levels of tolerance for certain security measures—such as law enforcement surveillance—that may infringe on privacy rights or other civil liberties. Similarly, although some EU member states have been increasingly clamping down on radical preachers and Muslim groups who espouse violence in the name of Islam, other EU members remain wary of doing so (especially some of the newer Central and Eastern European members of the EU for whom memories of state repression remain fresh). Counter-radicalization initiatives involving the Internet have also been controversial because of fears that they could curtail free speech. And implementing any common EU-level policy (such as the 2008 decision to make incitement, recruiting, and training for terrorism an EU-wide crime) is still up to policymakers and law enforcement authorities in the member states; often, considerable lag times exist between when a decision is reached in Brussels and when it is implemented at the national level.

## **Conclusions and Challenges Ahead<sup>117</sup>**

Over the last several years, European governments have come to recognize the necessity of better integrating their Muslim populations, both to reduce societal tensions and inequalities, and as part of their efforts to help prevent radicalization and counter violent extremism. As noted previously, the vast majority of Muslims in Europe are not involved in extremist activities. However, the frequent disruption of terrorist plots and recruitment efforts in Europe, and incidents such as the December 2010 suicide bombing in Sweden and the March 2011 shootings of U.S. service personnel in Germany, continue to concern European policymakers, as well as their U.S. counterparts, given the role of many European countries as key U.S. allies in the fight against global terrorism.

Despite the strong political commitment by many European leaders to tackle the parallel challenges of improving Muslim integration, curbing radicalization, and combating violent extremism, European governments continue to grapple with a number of policy issues. Regarding integration, for example, analysts observe that a central question for many European countries is whether the burden lies primarily with European governments and societies to essentially make room for a more diverse array of cultures and customs, or with Muslims and other ethnic minorities to adapt their ways of life to European political and cultural traditions. Some commentators assert that until recently, most European countries largely adopted the former approach, but that European governments and publics are increasingly turning toward the latter and requiring more assimilation by Muslims and other non-European ethnic groups. At the same time, most European countries—with the exception of France—seem reluctant to fully embrace assimilation. Rather, they appear to be searching for a policy that upholds the values placed on

---

<sup>116</sup> EU Counterterrorism Coordinator, *Report on the EU Action Plan on Combating Terrorism*, November 26, 2009.

<sup>117</sup> Prepared by Kristin Archick, Specialist in European Affairs.

diversity and tolerance but which falls somewhere in between the “failed” multicultural policies of the past and complete assimilation.

Most European governments appear to recognize the value of distinguishing between policies aimed at promoting integration and those that seek to counter radicalization, but in practice, the line between them can often be blurry and some policies may be working at cross-purposes. While some experts view Islamic dress bans as a means to encourage secularism and the integration of Muslims, others see them largely as an attempt to stem radicalization and as doing more harm than good because of the feelings of discrimination they may engender. Many European governments also continue to struggle with determining which Muslim groups and community organizations they should engage with as they attempt to encourage greater dialogue and Muslim political participation. Some Muslim leaders considered moderate by many in the Muslim community have not been invited to cooperate with certain European governments because of positions they have taken in support of groups such as Hamas or Hezbollah. On the other hand, a number of Muslim leaders involved in various government discussions may be viewed by some Muslims, especially younger ones, as co-opted opportunists or sell-outs.

Furthermore, European policymakers are encountering difficulties in crafting strategies to counter violent extremism and prevent radicalization given that studies indicate that the radicalization process is a highly individualized one. Some observers continue to stress past failures by European governments to adequately integrate their Muslim communities and the feelings of marginalization this may produce as key factors in making some European Muslims more vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Others point out that European Muslims who have engaged in terrorism have disparate socio-economic backgrounds, with some being seemingly well-integrated and well-educated. A number of experts contend that while encouraging better integration of Muslims is an important societal need for many European countries, other factors are equally if not more important in preventing radicalization, such as countering the narrative that some violent extremists use to justify their actions. Devising public policies to target the wide range of potential causes of and avenues toward violent extremism is no easy task, and assessing their implementation is also proving difficult.

Finally, balancing measures to combat violent Islamist extremism and terrorist recruitment with European democratic ideals, civil liberty protections, and human rights concerns remains challenging. For example, the extent to which liberal societies should tolerate, in the name of free speech, those who preach intolerance is a key question for many European governments, particularly those with histories of authoritarianism and state repression. Countries such as Germany and Spain remain cautious about limiting the rights of freedom of speech and assembly, and wary of stronger surveillance and security policies that could intrude on the right to privacy or on religious freedoms.

For most European countries, efforts in the integration field and those aimed at countering violent extremism remain in their early stages. Successful implementation will require continued political will by European governments and the determination, in some countries, to tackle long-ingrained societal attitudes that largely continue to perceive Muslims (whether European citizens or not) as outsiders. Doing so, however, will also require European publics to confront the questions of who is European and what it means to be European. Some analysts note that European leaders would be well advised to encourage greater public discussion about Europe’s future identity, especially in light of the July 2011 killings in Norway by a right-wing extremist disturbed by what he viewed as the “Islamification” of Europe. Others point out that in addition to improving measures



to counter Islamist extremists, European security services must pay more attention to the threats posed by domestic radicals on both the extreme right and left.

## **Implications for the United States<sup>118</sup>**

As noted previously, U.S. officials have expressed concerns since the 2001 terrorist attacks that Europe might be a launching point for future attacks on the United States and U.S. interests abroad. Successive U.S. administrations and Members of Congress have welcomed European initiatives to promote better integration of Muslims, curtail Islamist extremism, and improve U.S.-EU counterterrorism cooperation in the hopes that such efforts will ultimately help prevent future terrorist incidents and root out terrorist cells in Europe and beyond. U.S. interests in how European countries are managing their growing Muslim populations and European strategies to prevent radicalization have also been motivated by concerns about the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, especially given that terrorists with European citizenship have entered U.S. territory on the VWP.<sup>119</sup> Over the last few years, U.S. and European policymakers have sought to deepen cooperation on measures aimed at countering violent extremism, and to share “best practices” on ways to stem radicalization and disrupt terrorist recruitment efforts.

At times, some U.S. policymakers and analysts have worried that a main goal of terrorist attacks in Europe by Islamist extremists has been to alter European foreign policies, especially those of European countries that have been closely aligned with the United States in the fight against terrorism and on other issues in the greater Middle East, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, in general, most experts assess that European countries have not significantly changed their counterterrorism approaches or broader foreign policies in direct response to a terrorist attack; any shifts in European policies usually correspond more closely with European elections and changes in government. Nevertheless, some commentators opine that in the longer term, Europe’s growing Muslim populations may make some European allies more cautious about supporting U.S. policies that could risk inflaming their own “Muslim streets.”

Analysts also note that Europe’s struggle with its own identity as it grapples with integrating Muslims into European society has called into question a long-standing U.S. foreign policy goal: promoting EU membership for Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country. For many years, the United States has advocated EU membership for Turkey, a strategic ally at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, as a way to anchor Turkey firmly in the West and debunk the notion of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. Although some EU member states support eventual Turkish membership, as noted previously, other EU countries and many EU citizens are hesitant given Turkey’s size, the relatively large portion of its population considered poor in economic terms, and its Muslim culture and heritage. As a result, some commentators are increasingly doubtful about Turkey’s long-term EU prospects. The EU maintains that the “shared

---

<sup>118</sup> Prepared by Kristin Archick, Specialist in European Affairs.

<sup>119</sup> In July 2007, Congress passed the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-53), which included changes to the VWP aimed at both strengthening the program’s security components and allowing more European countries (and other interested states) to qualify. Among other measures, P.L. 110-53 called on countries that participate in the VWP to meet certain security and passport standards and to sign on to a number of information-sharing agreements; at the same time, it eased other admission requirements to make it easier for some countries, especially the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe, to join the VWP. For more information on the VWP, see CRS Report RL32221, *Visa Waiver Program*, by Alison Siskin.

objective” of the ongoing accession negotiations with Turkey is membership, but also stresses that it will be an “open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed.”

## Appendix. Terminology<sup>120</sup>

The United States and other countries have long sought to prevent the radicalization of individuals to limit security threats posed by secular and religious terrorism. Terrorism carried out in the name of Islam or of Muslims has been of increasing interest to citizens and governments in the United States and Europe as a result of attacks by Al Qaeda, its sympathizers, and other Islamist groups with discrete agendas.

**Islam, Muslims, and Islamists.** Islam is a monotheistic religion with an estimated 1.6 billion observers, who refer to themselves as Muslims. Muslims believe that in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, a prophet named Mohammed in Mecca, in what is now western Saudi Arabia, recited guidance directly from Allah (the Arabic word for God) that completed the divine instructions first given to other prophets recognized in Judaism and Christianity. The Islamic holy book, known as the Quran, contains the revelations recited by Mohammed, as compiled in the early decades of the Islamic faith. Today, the global community of Muslims includes a variety of distinct sects and spans ethnic, linguistic, and geographic boundaries. While some Muslims hold permissive or syncretic views to which various fundamentalists may object, other Muslims support strict social and religious practices that some Muslims and non-Muslims may regard as extreme. The term Islamist refers to groups and individuals who support a formal political role for Islam through the implementation of Islamic religious law by the state, political action through a religious party, or the creation of a religious system of governance. Islamists differ in their theological programs and political priorities. Islamists may use nonviolent or violent tactics in pursuit of local, national, or transnational agendas.

**Violent Extremism.** The Obama Administration uses the term “violent extremism” to refer to ideologies, secular or religious, that support or encourage ideologically motivated-violence to further political goals. According to the Administration, supporters of “[violent extremist] groups and their associated ideologies come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic and religious communities, and areas of the country, making it difficult to predict where violent extremist narratives will resonate.”<sup>121</sup> This approach places violent Islamist extremism within a larger context of violent extremism and related policy responses. In the United States and Europe, some government programs to combat violent extremism in Islamic communities work directly with theologically conservative Islamic groups and Islamists who reject violence: these groups’ religious beliefs are thought to lend credibility to de-radicalization efforts among radicalized individuals. Some critics question the wisdom of this conceptual approach. One critical argument suggests that violent Islamist extremism is distinct from other forms of extremist ideology and requires a specific and tailored response. Another critical argument contends that conservative Muslims and Islamists should not be embraced as allies in countering violent extremism because they may share the political beliefs and long-term goals of violent Islamist extremists and differ only in terms of their preferred tactics. Other critics find certain Islamic beliefs and practices generally objectionable on religious or secular grounds and argue that what they regard as “religious extremism” should be the focus of government scrutiny and concern regardless of evidence of groups’ or individuals’ direct support for or involvement in political violence.

---

<sup>120</sup> Prepared by Christopher M. Blanchard, Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs.

<sup>121</sup> The White House, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, August 2011.

**Radicalization and Recruitment.** Ongoing academic and public sector research efforts seek to understand the reasons that individuals embrace or reject violent extremism. Studies of Al Qaeda sympathizers involved in recent terrorism cases suggest that the specific radicalization processes for individuals often differ, but some shared characteristics can be discerned.<sup>122</sup> Foremost among these characteristics are an individual's parallel feelings of personal marginalization, political dissent, and moral outrage that are given structure through a worldview that sees the West as conspiring against Muslims or Islam. A large body of ideological material perpetuates this worldview, and some of this material encourages individuals to support violent groups or commit violence individually. Increasingly, officials observe that individual supporters of Al Qaeda self-mobilize through small networks of like-minded individuals whether in-person or via the Internet, rather than as a response to direct recruiting efforts by a centralized terrorist apparatus. Such small networks may consist of friends, relatives, neighbors, students, or fellow worshippers, but some analysts suggest that in many cases linkages among members of violent extremist groups are rooted in other shared experiences or pre-existing relationships. Other studies further suggest that "thrill seeking" impulses and anti-establishment sentiment among young people—perhaps more universal factors than the appeal of a specific religious or political ideology—are key factors driving the embrace of violent extremist ideologies among Muslims and non-Muslims.<sup>123</sup> The variety of paths toward radicalization and the diversity of communities that are the focus of counter-extremism efforts in different countries suggest that tailored, flexible responses are necessary.

## Author Contact Information

Kristin Archick, Coordinator  
Specialist in European Affairs  
karchick@crs.loc.gov, 7-2668

Paul Belkin  
Analyst in European Affairs  
pbelkin@crs.loc.gov, 7-0220

Christopher M. Blanchard  
Analyst in Middle Eastern Affairs  
cblanchard@crs.loc.gov, 7-0428

Carl Ek  
Specialist in International Relations  
cek@crs.loc.gov, 7-7286

Derek E. Mix  
Analyst in European Affairs  
dmix@crs.loc.gov, 7-9116

---

<sup>122</sup> See for example, Marc Sageman, "The Next Generation of Terror," *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2008, pp. 37-42; and, Guilain Denoex and Lynn Carter, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), February 2009.

<sup>123</sup> Statement of Scott Atran, Research Associate, Visiting Professor, Psychology and Public Policy, University of Michigan, before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, March 10, 2010.

## **Acknowledgments**

The section on France in this report was originally written by Paul Gallis, retired CRS Specialist in European Affairs; the section on Germany was originally written by Francis Miko, retired CRS Specialist in International Relations; and the section on Spain was originally written by Steven Woehrel, Specialist in European Affairs.