



European Ideas Network

Integration and inclusion: What policies towards Islam?

Report

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Key points on integration and inclusion: the case of Islam in Europe

Islam and Europe are not realities of the same order: Europe is a geopolitical and historical concept; Islam describes a complex social, cultural and religious phenomenon. There is not such a thing as a face to face between Europe and Islam.

Muslims can be as secular as Christians. Secular Muslims are a majority in Europe. Among religious Muslims, only a small minority can be labelled Islamists. Islamists are of many kinds. Only very small cells within those groups are ready to use violence and can be called Jihadists. They don't share the same objectives.

Addressing the issue of Islam in Europe as an issue of religion and of accommodation of practices derived from it fails to interest the majority of Muslims.

Organized religion does not work and States should not embark on defining themselves acceptable Muslim theology or doctrine and engage in promoting them.

Issues for the Muslims are equal treatment, access to rights, and representation. Europe has been performing rather badly on those issues.

Secular Muslims are far from getting the same public support, media coverage, international finance that the religious, the Islamists and the Jihadists. Yet they are the silent majority

Secular Muslims should organize, contribute to civic rights and fight against discrimination. They should seek more public support.

Recent revolution in Tunisia was a civic revolution. People manage to keep the Islamists in the national dialogue but outside the power.

A new generation demanding freedom, technologies, modernity has emerged as a political force. That new generation is proud of its religion and considers it important. Christian democrats should seek rapprochement with them.

The EPP as a party should seek to establish dialogue with everyone, but reserve partnering to those ready to respect the rule of laws, and equality between men and women.