

CALL FOR PAPERS

Muslim minorities and the refugee crisis in Europe.

Narratives and policy responses.

8–9 November 2018, Warsaw (Poland)

An international conference organised by the Middle East and Central Asia Unit and the [Department of Political Studies](#), Warsaw School of Economics

The recent refugee crisis started by the ongoing war in Syria caught Europeans by surprise. The wave of refugees (and later migrants from other regions) who came to the EU posed a huge logistic, social and political challenge both for individual member states and the EU. While protecting those who flee war is among the core of European values, translating these values into practical political response is proving to be very hard. The situation is further exacerbated by the longevity of the conflict: hardly anyone expected Bashar al-Asad, or the self-proclaimed caliphate of ISIS to last so long.

The Visegrad Group (V4) states and some other New Member States (NMS) have made the process of finding political response to the refugee crisis even harder by showing very limited willingness (if any) to accept refugees. A variety of narratives have been employed to support this stance, including the absence of colonial past, the relatively low level of economic development, and resistance to the so-called 'EU dictate'. Strong emotions have been aroused, such as fear of Muslims (and ethnic or religious Others in general), and used in local political conflicts. Fear and hostility towards Muslims are strong in NMS, even though the number of third country nationals in most NMS has been marginal, as has been the size of local Muslim population (except for Bulgaria), and it has not significantly changed as a result of the refugee crisis.

This poses something of a paradox, as the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have hardly been touched by the refugee crisis, terrorism motivated by radical Islam, or challenges related to integration of Muslims. The opposite is the case: local Muslim communities are either autochthonous (like the Tatars or the Pomacs) or well-integrated, as many Muslims came to this part of Europe back in the socialist era to study, and so managed to learn the language, get education and in the process, settle down. The reaction of the broadly considered CEE to the refugee crisis and its rising fear of Islam deserves discussion and reflection.

The V4's reluctance to accept the so-called "refugee quotas" can also be analysed in terms of power sharing within the EU and as an attempt to shift the relations between the core (the old EU, especially Germany) and peripheries (the NMS). In other words, the refugee crisis in Europe provides not only an interesting issue to reflect upon the CEE states themselves, but also some answers to questions about the regional relations under the EU superpower umbrella (social/cultural and political integration of the EU member states).

While the background of this call focuses on CEE, papers which provide a wider picture, on how the narratives around and following the crisis have been formulated, or how political responses between

European countries differ, are also welcome. Moreover, the definition of Europe used for the purpose of this conference is broad and includes also non-EU member states. During the conference we would like to reflect upon the following issues:

- What is the approach of individual European countries to the migration and refugee crises of 2014+ and to migrants and refugees in general?
- What are the scope and tools of immigration and integration policies used by European countries towards the recent wave of refugees and migrants?
- How is the refugee crisis linked to the way Muslim communities in Europe are perceived and treated?
- What are the success and failures of the EU refugee policy and V4/CEE/NMS partial solidarity?
- What are the differences between V4/CEE/NMS and other European countries regarding the refugee crisis and the perception of Muslims in Europe?
- How is Islamophobia linked to the changes on the political scene in European countries (e.g. the rise of nationalism or right wing parties)?
- How in practical terms can Islamophobia be counteracted and counterbalanced?

An important element of the conference is the roundtable, to which we aim to invite Muslim representatives and NGOs dealing with hate crimes and refugee integration. In this way we hope to practical insights into their daily problems and challenges, as well as tools they use and strategies they apply to counteract intolerance against the Muslims.

Practical information

The conference is organised within a framework of a Jean Monnet project *ref:EU | Muslim minorities and the refugee crisis in Europe* co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Other activities that have so far been organised are listed on [project's website](#).

Deadlines:

- 30.06.2018 submission of abstracts and bios
- 15.07.2018 notification about acceptance of abstracts
- 8–9.11.2018 the conference
- 30.11.2018 submission of final papers
- ~05.2019 publication of the monograph

Venue: SGH Warsaw School of Economics, al. Niepodległości 162, 02-554 Warsaw, Poland

Financial issues:

There is no conference fee. The organisers provide snacks during coffee breaks, and conference materials. The rest of expenses (esp. accommodation and travel) are paid for by the participants. In case of outstanding young scholars we can partially reimburse some of these expenses. Shall you be needing such a reimbursement, please indicate it while submitting your abstract and bio.

What to do next?

Please submit your abstract (around 300 words) with a short bio until 30.06.2018 to the project coordinator, Katarzyna Górak-Sosnowska – associate professor at [kgorak \[at\] sgh.waw.pl](mailto:kgorak@sggw.edu.pl).

