



STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY AND RESILIENCE
AT-RISK RELIGIOUS SITES AND COMMUNITIES

Strengthening the security and resilience of at-risk religious sites and communities (SOAR)

BASELINE RESEARCH

on the security challenges faced by
religious sites and policies advancing
security and safety of places of worship
in seven EU member states

Marko Juntunen & Joonas Maristo



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Summary

This baseline research report update provides the basic information of seven countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria) regarding the security of places of worship, religious demographics, legislation concerning church-state relations, threat picture and adopted national policies to mitigate hate crime. The data is based on interviews, media reports, the latest academic research and reports of EU-funded and state-funded research institution.

The report's research design and questions derive from the ISFP-2020-AG-Project application of the EU-funded project Strengthening the security and resilience of at-risk religious sites and communities (SOAR) and internal discussions within the SOAR consortium. According to the application, the three main objectives of the report include

- 1) provide baseline data to identify key issues and possible gaps affecting protection and security of the religious sites,
- 2) to provide evidence base to support advocacy tools for working with policymakers, and
- 3) report security challenges faced by religious communities in the focus countries.

The preparation of the report started with an idea of a participatory study. Accordingly, the research team drafted a survey that was circulated and commented by consortium partners. The collected comments and ideas were integrated to the survey. Altogether 175 religious umbrella organizations and 137 individual places of worship representing Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh and Jehovah's Witnesses communities were contacted and requested to fill the survey. In addition, an extensive social media campaign for over 2,000 recipients targeting religious leaders, youth and women was launched. Despite these extensive efforts, the response rate remained very low. For this reason, we abandoned the idea of obtaining data using the survey method but instead decided to conduct a participatory study by collecting interview material directly from religious communities.

During January – April 2022, we conducted a total of 15 interviews with individuals who represent Muslim, Chaldean Christian, Roman Catholic, Hindu, Sikh and Yazidi faiths. The key research findings of this research are placed in the final, seventh chapter of this report.

1. Introduction

The right to practice faith and to maintain and communicate religious beliefs are fundamental human rights. However, recent incidents of hate crime and violent extremist attacks such as mass shootings and bombings in public spaces and vandalism and violence targeting houses of worship across the European Union (EU) countries indicate that the religious freedom is far from entirely protected¹. In Europe, as elsewhere, increasing numbers of houses of worship must address security challenges while simultaneously trying to preserve their open and receptive atmosphere and ensure the safety and security of the worshippers. In order to prevent a security threat, it is essential to ensure that leadership, staff and congregants of Europe's religious communities, now more diverse than ever, are sufficiently educated on different social and technical aspects of security and prevention of harm. Even though authorities have the key role and responsibility to secure public safety, the communities have an important role to play in advancing security in collaboration with them.

This report focuses on seven EU member states, namely, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary and Austria. In each of these national contexts, the houses of worship are surrounded by a distinctive local, regional, and national security environment, which is shaped by a variety of factors such as state legislation, official administrative practices and varying levels of trust between authorities and different religious communities.

In most of the focus countries, the most serious threat is faced by the minority religions and derives from the members of anti-pluralist movements such as extreme right, white supremacist, anti-immigration, and anti-multicultural movements. Especially in France and Belgium, the anti-Christian movements and individuals as well as those upholding radical interpretation of Islam, frequently target the places of worship of the Roman Catholic Church, the prominent religion, and its personnel. Recent research has shown that a polarised political atmosphere enhances radicalization² and may trigger a cycle of revenge attacks on houses of worship between the actors of the opposing camps (Ebner 2020). Furthermore, it is evident that different religious communities have very different resources and capabilities to meet security challenges; while some communities have invested considerably in safety and security of the congregants, whereas in other communities this work is just beginning.

This research report will outline current policies and practices, identify gaps and provide practical policy recommendations in advancing protection of at-risk religious sites in the seven focus countries. The report will serve to inform both internally (i.e., SOAR team) and externally (i.e., project consortium, EU-decision makers) of the existing security issues as regards religious sites. The information gleaned can be used as an advocacy tool to work with policy makers and practitioners to follow up recommendations.

- 1 Some of the deadliest attacks in recent years include Manchester Arena Bombing (May 22, 2017), Paris attacks (November 15, 2015) Nice Truck Attack (July 14, 2016) and Brussels Bombings (March 22, 2016).
- 2 By collecting data on thousands of Twitter users affiliated with or following radical Islamist accounts and mapping Twitter users to geographic locations in France, Germany, Belgium, and the United Kingdom Mitts (2019) showed that those located in areas that voted for far-right, anti-Muslim parties were more likely to show signs of radicalization than others in less hostile areas.

Our report is in line with the United Nation's Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites' principles of respect, responsibility, diversity, dialogue, solidarity, standing together and staying together (UN, 2019:7–8) and its recommendations to:

- Carry out assessments of respective roles and responsibilities of different entities at all levels of government in safeguarding religious sites.
- Determine what constitutes “soft” targets and specify particularly vulnerable religious sites and conduct risk assessments on threats against religious sites.
- Develop relevant products and tools, such as general guidelines on specific protective measures for religious sites.
- Develop and sustain relationships between government and religious leaders to build trust and help ensure information sharing.
- Connect religious leaders with local law enforcement authorities to build trust and cooperation, and regularly discuss with religious leaders the threat environment (UN, 2019:19).
- Build partnership with religious leaders and government officials to raise awareness about how to prepare and respond to attacks against religious sites.
- Organize community-level initiatives and help disseminate information about preparedness and response to attack to religious sites (UN, 2019:20).
- Invest in gender-sensitive research and data collection on women's roles in preventing violent extremism (hereafter: PVE) as and when conducive to terrorism.
- In addition, the report is in line with the European Commission's Communication 605 with regards to protecting public spaces and places of worship suggesting general guidelines and recommendations (Communication 605:9–10), and tackling discrimination, polarisation, radicalisation, and terrorism (Communication 605:15–16).

Furthermore, we adhere to the goals of supporting and encouraging local communities to integrate strategies of prevention of violent extremism into broader policies of social inclusion, providing information and highlight positive examples of peaceful co-existence.

Attacking a religious site indirectly attacks the whole community. Ideological and political impact is multiplied as the attacks often get significant media attention and may inspire others to commit similar crimes. By building multi-agency networks of cooperation and exchanging information, it is possible to reduce the risk of incidents, prepare for unexpected security threats, and to have a range of emergency measures in place.

2. Methodology and Scope of the Study

The methodology and research questions are derived from the SOAR-project application³. The report consists of six main elements: **1)** discussion of the methodology and the scope of the research, including the key concepts with regards to hate crime **2)** analysis of the security challenges in view of the places of worship, **3)** presenting the country specific contexts, including religious demographics, threat assessment and existing policies and **4)** results of the qualitative participatory study focusing on security and safety of faith groups and houses of worship **5)** general conclusions of the main findings and **6)** policy recommendations.

According to our initial plan an integral element of the report was to be a survey consisting of 43 questions covering Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh and Jehovah's Witnesses communities. The objective was to get approximately 50 answers by country distributed equally across creeds and denominations. Due to a very low response rate we were not able to use the survey data in this report, instead the participatory component of this study consists of 15 thematic interviews with members of different faith groups and civic organizations that follow the developments within the field of hate crime.

In the following pages, we highlight the challenges we faced with the survey, the reasons why we shifted to data collection via interviews, how they were conducted and the methods by which the data was analysed.

First, the scope and the objects of the report must be clarified. This report does not intend to present a comprehensive study of the focus countries and the religious sites within. There are several reasons for this. The exact number of religious sites depends on the definition and

legislation of a given country being, to some extent, flexible and changeable. UNAOC has initiated a plan to register all the religious sites in the world and produce an online interactive tool (UN 2019:8). However, the process is ongoing and reliable information of the EU member states is not yet available. The countries also have divergent registering systems; thus, a systematic mapping is made even more difficult. It is extremely demanding to find out the exact number of, let us say Muslim houses of worship, in a single target country. As we will show below, some Muslim groups prefer to register as cultural rather than religious organizations, yet they offer religious services. Furthermore, the contact information of religious sites is often hard to find, partial or inexistant.

With the given time frame January–April 2022, it was impossible to achieve a data sample that would bring out the voices of all the major religious communities in each target country in a balanced way. It should be noted that the purpose of the report is to bring together current knowledge on the subject and to shed light on the views of community representatives on the basis of the interview material. The data presented here can in no way be considered as a comprehensive sample of the current situation.

The total population of the countries is about 242 million and the number of places of worships must be well over 200,000. Even if comprehensive contacting was possible, arranging, processing, and analysing the information of such a large quantity of sites would have been challenging if not impossible with the human resources available and within the time frame.

With these caveats in mind, this report should be considered as a baseline study that draws on existing literature and interview data on the

³ ISFP-2020-AG-PROTECT, Strengthening the security and resilience of at-risk religious sites and communities, proposal ID: 101034222. The relevant passages on the methodology and research questions are found on pages 8–9 and 15.

security concerns and challenges faced by religious sites. In addition, it makes a number of suggestions on how to advance security and safety of places of worship in the target countries.

2.1. Research Questions

The research questions we sought to answer include: What are the main security challenges the religious sites face? What is the role of local governments and municipalities in enhancing the security of religious sites? What are the differences between countries? The main objective of the participatory research was to seek answers to two questions: What are the security gaps the religious institutions perceive that need to be filled? How are the religious communities and places of worship (POW) responding to the security threats?

2.2. The collection of data

Over the summer months of 2021 the SOAR-team created a 43-question survey designed to obtain the information needed to address the key questions. Initially the objective was to get approximately 50 answers by country distributed equally across creeds and denominations. As stated above, the goal of the survey was not to aim for comprehensive representativeness of the religious sites but rather to collect valuable baseline data, ideas, and suggestions.

The questions were related to threat picture, risk assessment, threat response, level of preparedness, reporting, relationship with local authorities such as law enforcement, and expectations and suggestions for the future. The data was processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The questions were fed into an online survey platform provided by SurveyMonkey.

2.2.1. Distribution Strategy

Altogether 175 religious umbrella organizations and 137 individual places of worship were contacted at least twice by e-mail and followed by phone calls. The addressees represented Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh and Jehovah's Witnesses communities.

The approaching email encouraged the recipient to complete the survey by noting why the survey was important and how their responses would help to enhance the safety of their religious community. The approaching letter was available in seven languages (English, Arabic, German, Danish, Dutch, French and Hungarian). The approaching email informed the potential participants about the general objectives of the survey and provided links to the questionnaire and to the SOAR-project's webpage.⁴ We asked the contacted organizations to distribute the questionnaire to their member organizations, mosques, churches, parishes, and synagogues.

Finn Church Aid and the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers also initiated a social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter targeting religious actors, youth, and women. The campaign reached over 2,000 recipients targeting religious leaders, youth, and women separately. The goal was that users either filled the survey, re-shared the post, or drew someone else's attention to it. Despite these efforts the results were disappointing. We received merely 21 answers of which only eight were complete according to SurveyMonkey-platform. Most of the "completed" surveys were in fact incomplete meaning that some questions were skipped or left unanswered, thus the responses did not allow a proper analysis or conclusions. Even anecdotal data derived from individual questions proved to be extremely scarce.

2.2.2. Methodological change of direction: from surveying to acquisition of interview data

In December 2021, a decision was made by the SOAR project research team to collect qualita-

⁴ The online survey can be found here: <https://soarproject.eu/questionnaire/>. The SOAR-project's webpage containing the essential information about the project: <https://soarproject.eu>.

tive interview data to support the updated baseline report, and to highlight the perceptions and concerns related to the security and resilience of religious sites and communities in the target countries of the project. The starting point was to conduct thematic one-hour interviews via the video platform ZOOM. Both the Advisory Board and Internal Steering Committee of the SOAR project gave their endorsement to this plan.

The consortium members (FCA, EFI and ACE) were asked to list stakeholders from each target country whom they considered the most suitable interviewees in view of the research objectives of the SOAR project. FCA redesigned the data collection methodology in February 2022. This work included the design of the research plan and outlining the open-ended research questions. Background information concerning the interviews and consent forms were prepared to inform potential interviewees about the goals of the study. The internal legal review of these documents was conducted to ensure that relevant data protection and informed consent measures are in place. Between March 2nd and April 12th, 2022, 15 interviews were carried out in Arabic, English and French. The data was transcribed, codified and analysed by April 15th. The final writing of the research was carried out in the latter half of April 2022.

The interviewees represent Muslim, Chaldean⁵ Christian, Roman Catholic, Hindu, Sikh and Yazidi faiths. They have an active role in religious and civic organizations in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Ireland, Albania and Switzerland. Four interviewees reside outside of the target countries of SOAR project, in USA, Ireland, Switzerland and Albania. We however, decided to interview them as they firmly follow hate crime in one or more of the target countries and also within the broader European context. To guarantee ethical dependability, each respondent was ensured that they would remain anonymous via pseudonyms throughout the research to protect their identity. Descriptive demographics of the interviewees is attached at the end of the report.

The interviewees represent a wide sector of religious and faith-based organizations and civic associations, and the data provides valuable insights into the perceptions of security upheld by different religious communities and points to areas where further research would be needed. At the same time, it should be noted that there are also limitations to the data: fourteen out of fifteen interviewees are male and twelve are 44 years of age or over. Out of the seven target countries of the SOAR project, five are represented in the interview data. The data is furthermore focused on the experience of diaspora communities. Of those interviewed, eight come from Chaldean Christian, Yazidi, Muslim, and Sikh diaspora communities in Western Europe. The full list of the interviewees is attached at the end of this document.

Finding the interviewees required a considerable effort. Reaching a potential interviewee, whether religious leader or officer in religious or civic organization, demanded often from five to seven contact attempts. On many occasions, the potential interviewees initially expressed their willingness to participate in the research but disconnected before the final date for the interview could be agreed. The ultimate reason for the reservations of potential interviewees remains obscure, but one possible reason may be related with the hierarchy of religious associations. In fact, some potential interviewees expressed not having the “liberty” to disclose security related issues for research purposes.

⁵ The Chaldean Catholic community was formed in Upper Mesopotamia, in present day Iraq, in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The interview data sought answers to the two main questions of the participatory section of the study:

- What are the security gaps the religious institutions perceive that need to be filled?
- How are the religious communities and places of worship (POW) responding to the security threats?

In order to answer these key questions, the open interviews were designed to follow a four-part structure. The interviewees were asked to share their personal perceptions on the following themes:

- How is the general security climate perceived by the interviewee?
- Who or what threatens the security and safety of their faith community?
- How are they responding to the changing security climate?
- What should be done to improve the security of places of worship and mitigate hate crime?

In the analysis of the data, an exploratory factor research approach was used to gain maximum understanding of respondents' generalisations – allowing for a deeper exploration of key social phenomena within the context of security of faith communities. This method fits into the broader grounded theory framework, that aims at the formation of abstract theories based upon qualitative data involving personal experiences (Birks & Mills 2011; Glaser 1992). Grounded theory is frequently applied in qualitative interview-based research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The method works towards building concepts and theory so that they are “grounded” in the data (Bryant, 2017; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In the research process, data collection and analysis proceed in tandem. Emergent concepts in the data are generated and then used to guide the researcher to directions where to go for more data, and from whom additional data should be

collected (Bagnasco et al., 2014). From the interview data, where personal perceptions, opinions and experiences are given, a set of codes are derived. The aim of this research format is to gain understanding about respondents' ways to generalize and frame complex social phenomena. Thematic analysis methodology was applied to the interview data. Through close examination of the data the researcher identifies common themes, which may be topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly (Caulfield 2022). At the initial stage of the analysis, each subject based similarity was attached with a descriptive code. The full body of interview data (66 pages) was then divided under four broader thematic sections that follow the key research questions (general perception of security, immediate threat picture, responses to security challenges, proposed solutions to security related challenges) and subdivided into 32 indicators. The full code book of the research is attached at the end of this research report.

2.3. Why were these countries chosen?

The focus countries represent a cross section of the EU member states with regards to religious demography, status, and number of minority religions, adopted PVE-policies, threat profile and history of attacks. State legislation regarding registration of religious sites as an officially recognised institution, tax rights and rights to receive state subventions vary from country to country. These matters are addressed in the country sections respectively.

The idea of the report is to present a heterogeneous set of countries where the social, economic, and political conditions are considerably different. A reverse approach would have been, say, to choose only Nordic or Baltic countries where the conditions may vary to some extent, but where the social realities are similar. The idea is to gather a balanced picture of different challenges and perspectives the EU-decision makers must consider when reviewing existing policies and implementing new ones.

2.4. What are the gaps in hate crime prevention we aim to fill?

Efforts that seek to successfully prevent hate crime and violent extremism start from building trust between local level actors, non-governmental organizations and the responsible authorities. Building trust can only be set in motion by careful data collection on religious communities' own views on their security situation and threats. Furthermore, it is essential to identify the key parameters, which make religious sites particularly vulnerable to hate crimes.

According to information and data provided by National Points of Contact on Combating Hate Crimes (NPCs), collated by the Organization for The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), hate crimes against houses of worship are severely unreported (OSCEi). The consequence is that vast number of crimes cannot be investigated or prosecuted. Recent EU report repeats the same view anti-Semitic hate crime reporting being the case in point (FRA 2019a). Across Europe the hate crimes reported by police are in sharp contrast with the survey evidence gathered by faith-based and other NGOs (FRA 2021: 19-37).

The result is that many offenders repeatedly commit crimes convinced that the risk of being caught is low and may feel ever more emboldened to do so.⁶ This in turn increases the risk of polarization between communities opening new opportunities for actors seeking to recruit or radicalize new people into violent extremist organizations.

2.5. Key concepts

2.5.1. Hate crime

The term "hate crime" is used across various fields from jurisdiction to administrative contexts and scientific disciplines, yet the understanding of the term is far from uniform. Both the European Union and the Council of Europe operate without a shared definition of the term. The various understandings of hate crime naturally bear on the construction of hate crime laws in the member states, which vary between the nation states. According to some countries the concept refers to a wide range of criminal acts, that target minority communities, such as physical violence, discrimination, hate speech, and micro aggressions. For others, the understanding is considerably narrower with regard to protected groups and enumerated offences.

As Schweppe (2021:7) has pointed out, scholars of hate crime face a grave problem as they have to use this umbrella term while exploring and comparing phenomena that are fundamentally different. Our understanding of hate crime is based on a synthesis of the ways in which the term has been dealt with in recent EU reports on the subject (FRA 2017, FRA 2018a, FRA 2021). First, the term can be defined by its underlying motivations which involve racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, a person's disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression sex characteristics. Secondly, the purpose of a hate crime is to abuse and attack dignity, that is inherent to all human beings. Thirdly, human dignity can naturally be violated in a multiple of ways involving a wide range of physical and symbolic forms of violence that can target individuals, groups, property, items, and sites of specific communal importance among other things (OSCE 2021). Large scale hate crimes that claim many victims, such as mass shootings and bomb attacks, have a potential to turn into "focusing events" i.e., extreme occurrences that can indelibly alter public opinion and change

⁶ Scientific research on the subject is very limited, although documentary films, media articles, and biographies of those who have left extremism point in this direction. See for example: *White Right: Meeting the Enemy*, documentary film by Deeyah Khan (2017), Ingo Hasselbach & Tom Reiss (1996) *Führer-ex: Memoirs of a Former Neo-Nazi*. Chatto & Windus. "German police arrest man suspected of neo-Nazi hate mail campaign". Euronews April 5. 2021. <https://www.euronews.com/2021/05/04/german-police-arrest-man-suspected-of-neo-nazi-hate-mail-campaign>

the entire political agenda within national contexts (Atkeson&Maestas, 2012; Birkland, 1998; Newman&Hartman, 2019).

From the point of view of research and prevention of hate crimes in EU countries, it would be ideal to reach a situation where member states would share common methodologies to produce comparable data. However, one may ask is it possible to achieve such a situation? In light of several factors, the goal seems utopian. First of all, each national system of registration reflects particular policy choices. What, for example, in one country is classified as a hate crime may end up being labeled as terrorism in another country. Secondly, it is often impossible to draw clear boundaries between different bias motivations that may interplay in a particular hate crime situation. Whether a verbal assault against, let's say, a woman of African descent, who wears a veil, ends up being labeled a racist, sexist or anti-Muslim offence is often a matter of choice that involves standards (and routines of the law enforcement) that differ from country to country. In this context, it should also be noted that in some national settings, ethnicity and a particular religion are closely related, while in others, the connection between them is looser or non-existent, and this fact is naturally reflected in registration practices. Thirdly, the way in which key concepts related to crime are implemented on national level is dependent on national legal system, general recording of crimes, structure of the police force and other institutions responsible of recording and reporting data and the ways in which the public sector collaborates with civil society. Instead of trying to produce comparable data at EU level, it would be more realistic to try to reach for common understanding concerning shared parameters of recording and shared understanding of the key concepts.

2.5.2. Hate incident

Not all acts motivated by hate and intolerance meet the characteristics of a crime, thus a broader term is needed. Hate incidents can be understood as acts (including speech/ symbolic acts) of hostility motivated by prejudice or bias that do not necessarily reach the threshold of a

criminal offence, or their criminal nature may be determined only subsequently. Anyone can be the victim of a hate crime as everyone has several protected characteristics (USDOJ). In other words, in hate crimes, the object of the perpetrator's hatred is not the individual or group per se, but the collectively produced image of them as 'outsiders', 'threatening', 'dangerous', 'polluted', 'morally dubious', 'culturally alien', and-so-forth. Discourses that construct threat images are both historically and contextually variable. Anti-religion hate crimes and incidents are thus closely linked with the idea of visibility. The target of hate crime is very often physical location, a house of worship, community center or for example, its educational premise, simply because the building is the most visible of the faith community. In the cases where individuals are targeted, the victims are those men or women of the faith group who are most distinguishable representatives of the faith group due to gendered dress practices (cf. Perry 2014; Smith et.al 2019: 15). Hate incidents, even when not reaching the threshold of crime, may cause profound ruptures on local social cohesion and bring about severe social tensions (EFUS 2021). In fact, this is what most perpetrators want – to create and enhance hostilities between people.

Entire religious communities may feel that they have become collectively a target of hate either directly, i.e., because of their religious identity, or because their religion is associated by the larger community or its members with a particular ethnicity or other characteristics (Ahuja 2012). Most hate crime perpetrators are linked to like-minded people sharing a similar radical belief system. They perceive themselves as an "in-group" that needs to be protected from the threatening "out-group". "Foreign" religious organizations are in particular interpreted easily as threats to the wellbeing or entire existence of the in-group.⁷

While it is clear that many of the most violent hate crimes are committed by radicalized individuals motivated by violent extremist ideologies or hate-fuelled individuals who uphold highly bigoted views, it should be noted that very often, the offenders are perfectly ordinary

7 Marc Sageman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3e7YRpqU-> FYThe emergence of terrorism, Georgetown University 28.11. 2017]

citizens driven by a variety of bias motivations towards certain population groups (Iganski 2008: 1).

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that ordinary crime may easily turn into hate crime; for example in a situation where a parking attendant of immigrant background is assaulted when writing a parking fine to a person pertaining to majority population. It is easy to imagine similar situations in almost every aspect of public life. If such broader definition is accepted, then naturally, the perception of crime offenders is radically changed (cf. Chakraborti & Garland 2009: 124-129). Such less dramatic everyday hate may, however, severely disrupt social relations and contribute to the feeling of insecurity in the community.

As noted, hate can be expressed in very different ways, from microaggressions to mass killings. Ultimately it is impossible to set a boundary marking when expressions of hatred reach alarming levels. In the media language, the term “boiling point” is often used in connection with hate crime, racial tensions, and social polarisation. At boiling point the slowly “bubbling” anger reaches a threshold where tensions escalate, and social stability is in danger. The boiling water metaphor is, in fact, very useful: it is conceivable that in contexts where vandalism against a particular religious group begins to recur and approving comments are widely expressed on social media platforms, and public political actors openly incite hatred, the boiling point may be reached. The situation keeps heating and it develops without anyone’s notice until the first bubble pops up in a violent form. By that moment the “water” is already hot and it is extremely difficult to cool it down.

In security trainings, awareness raising, and multi-actor cooperation the primary focus should not be only on areas where places of worship have experienced violence, but also on contexts where purely symbolic vandalism, hate speech and microaggressions are becoming prevalent.

2.5.3. Hate speech

Unlike the concept of hate crime, the European Commission has created a shared definition of hate speech. In this report, we will utilize that definition. Hate speech, according to the Commission, is “advocacy, promotion or incitement, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons and the justification of all the preceding types of expression, on the ground of ‘race’, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, language, religion or belief, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and other personal characteristics or status” (Council of Europe, 2018).

2.5.4. Soft target

Religious sites of worship and other premises (cemeteries, shrines, monasteries, religious schools) can be understood as “soft targets”, i.e., institutions particularly vulnerable to attack due to their open and welcoming atmosphere, lack of sufficient security measures and a high concentration of people (Stein 2019).

The “softness” of religious sites results from a number of reasons. As mentioned earlier, hate crimes may have a high symbolic value and potential to create wedges between entire populations. Attackers targeting worshippers and houses of worship are unified by a common goal; they seek to maximize the symbolic significance of the attack and send a message that the entire faith community is targeted.⁸

⁸ For example, the recent armed attacks in Pittsburgh (2018), Halle (2019), and Christchurch (2019) strongly point in this direction. see: CTC Sentinel 12:11 <https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CTC-SENTINEL-112019.pdf>

- Faith-based organizations have generally a structure and ethos to be open and inviting to all (worshippers, local workers, passers-by, tourists etc.) which makes them more susceptible to attack.⁹
- Worshippers are not in the same psychological state; some are for example focused on their spiritual experience, and during worship they might react slower to dangers than in other circumstances.
- Phones are prohibited (or must be turned off) in most places of worship. Alarming at the time of emergency may be thus delayed.
- Many houses of worship attract large crowds, and most are not constructed with modern understanding of safety and security in mind.
- Places of worship have often multiple entrances and exits. Their vulnerability is often further enhanced due to easy vehicle access.
- Most houses of worship are used for diverse purposes (prayer, education, social services, recreational activities, kindergartens, religious festivals etc.).
- Different user groups require different levels of security arrangements.
- Often sites include other buildings or places that require special security measures (i.e., cemeteries and stores etc).
- Cultural practices such as separation of genders in different areas or serving free food to anyone may create additional security challenges.
- Faith based organizations often suffer from shortage of resources (technical equipment, personnel, funding) for threat mitigation. The existing resources are pulled in multiple directions and managing risk is a construct that faith-based organizations struggle to control (EFUS 2021; SAR initiative 2017; Stein 2019).
- It should also be noted that religious communities can be “soft targets” in other sense as well. While religious faith and faith community are for millions of people the cornerstone for worldview and identity, source of hope and comfort, religious ideas and forms of religious authority can be intentionally or unintentionally misused. Abuse may take many forms from manipulation and humiliation to sexual abuse. There are and have been cases where religious leaders use manipulative teachings and practices and take advantage of their position to control thoughts and behaviour of the members of the community or engage in other forms of sexually abusive behaviour. Raising awareness of and protection against these forms of exploitation should, in our view, be part of the debate on the security of religious communities. Everyone must be able to practice their faith safely, from both external and internal threats.

⁹ There are counterexamples too. Some religious organizations such as Muslim Salafi communities or Church of Scientology can be very exclusive.

2.5.5. Enhancing security

Enhancing the security of religious spaces, in its simplest sense, means that “soft targets” are transformed into “hard targets” by planning and implementing various preventative measures and safety protocols (Stein 2019: 20–25). When designing safety measures and protocols, the specific character of houses of worship poses a number of challenges. All arrangements should be in harmony with worshippers’ spiritual and cultural practices and sentiments. Each site of worship has its specific characteristics and is situated in a unique social and political context, making it impossible to create universal ubiquitous security solutions. Consideration is needed with each preventive arrangement. Placing metal detectors at doorways or presence of armed guards or uniformed police may for example receive severe critique from the worshippers (ASIS Cultural Properties Council 2017). Preventive measures must find a balance between maximizing safety and general acceptance of the various users of the site. Well-considered choices must be made concerning detection and other technological solutions, the architecture of the facilities as well as the workforce. The technologized security building design may, however, easily collide with the cultural traditions and the expectations of the worshippers concerning houses of worship (EFUS 2021). Safety protocols covering emergency situations must always be carefully planned and information and guidance concerning emergency situations, alerting mechanisms, fire safety, first aid etc. must be accessible to all congregants. The awareness raising and addressing potential threats is preferable to place under the responsibility of religious leaders. Issues such as how to address and handle potential threats and how to act while detecting unusual behaviour should be among the addressed issues. It is also worth

noting that not everyone experiences security threats in the same way. There are dimensions of security that relate to gender, age, social status, group hierarchies, and simply the individual role in the community. Taking this into account means that members of the community are also sufficiently vigilant to understand that threats to security and individual integrity can also arise from within the community. Awareness-raising programs for community members should also include content that addresses (in the culturally sensitive manner) the misuse of religious authority to legitimate manipulative and abusive behaviour including sexual violence.

In the case of immigrant communities, it is common that members of religious organizations feel that their security concerns are overlooked or entirely ignored by local and/or national authorities (EFUS 2021). For this reason, the examination of the root causes of the absence or inadequacy of the communication between the faith community and the local or national contexts/authorities must be carefully examined. Feelings of being excluded, discriminated and marginalised further hinder such communication (ibid.). If, for example, local police display little empathy and willingness to work for justice for the victims of hate incidents the result is ever deepening lack of trust and increasing feelings of vulnerability.

The goal for the authorities is to develop clearly defined short, medium, and long term non-hierarchical, bottom-top strategies and programmes that involve multiple actors linking state and local level authorities and law enforcement, religious communities, local civil society, and other community members. It should be kept in mind that each city/town has its particular situation, and every programme should be adapted to the local context (ibid).

3. Security Threats in Europe

EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), which Europol has produced each year since 2007, provides an accurate overview of extremist violence within EU countries. Of the 12 trends identified in the most recent reports, the biggest security concern is Islamist motivated extremism. While the statistics indicate that within EU member states there are many violent incidents connected with other forms of extremism than Islamism, the most serious acts of violence in terms of casualties were the result of attacks perpetrated by Islamist extremists. The threat of right-wing terrorism is on the rise in several member states and according to the report politicians, public figures, political parties, civic action groups and media that take a critical view of right-wing extremism, or advocate pro-migration policies, are most likely targets of right-wing extremist agitation.

The narrative of Islamist extremism mainly builds on a setup where Islam and the Ummah (i.e., the Muslim global community) are viewed as targets of aggression. The central idea is that the world is dominated by the immoral forces of evil, which deny the sovereignty of God, and which can only be responded to with violence. Muslims who have engaged in this resistance are the heroes of the narrative (Kepel,2002:1–23). Norwegian analyst Petter Nesser identifies three stages in the evolution of Islamist extremism in Europe. In the mid 1990s Europe functioned as an “arena for local jihad” witnessing activity of especially Algerian extremist movements especially the United Kingdom and France. At the second stage, from 1998 to 2004, people based in Europe engaged in the arenas for global jihad, especially those of Al Qaeda. The attacks were mainly aimed against the United States, Israel and, to a lesser extent, France, as well as against these countries’ military, political and economic interests around the world. Finally, in the third period as of 2004, Europe became completely intertwined in the global operational environment where European extremists are equally engaged in international conflicts as they are aiming violence against European societies (Nesser,2015).

By extreme right-wing we refer here to globally interlinked movements and individuals who support a narrative that is firmly rooted to the concept of nativism (Mudde,2019:19). The nativist narrative emphasizes culturally and linguistically homogeneous nation and perceives outsiders, such as immigrants and refugees threatening its purity. The various movements may view any of the following as a threat: the EU that is pushing for a pluralist Europe, politicians promoting tolerance, authorities, and non-governmental organisations, as well as activists, Muslims, non-Europeans, and refugees. Among extremists there are also those who oppose “decadent” liberals, “cosmopolitan” and leftist “traitors of the nation” (Abushi&Nordbruch,2020:11) as well as those allowing for the “replacement” of European population by Muslim immigrants (IDCS,2017; Fielitz et al.,2018:40–2). Violence perpetrated by the extreme right-wing has had tangible and devastating direct and indirect consequences, for example after the terror attacks in Oslo (2011), Christchurch Mosque attack in New Zealand (2019) and Halle synagogue attack in Germany (2019). Extreme right-wing attitudes have become more visible and vocal in recent years and are increasingly expressed in political parties and social movements especially in social media (Abushi&Nordbruch,2020:10).

In the 1970s and 1980s, several countries in Western Europe faced terrorist attacks perpetrated by left-wing terrorist groups such as Red Army Faction (RAF) in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy and Action Directe in France. However, authorities disbanded these movements in the late 1980s and the 1990s, following the demise of communist regimes in Europe. The extreme left-wing movements never ceased to exist completely and at the heart of the present day movements is still a violent struggle to replace democratic systems of governance and capitalist economic system with either a communist or socialist system or a form of anarchist self-government (Council of Europe, 2021a) Both the November 2020 and April 2021 EU threat assessment and policy recommendations in the field of counter-terrorism, based on Eu-

ropol and the European Union Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) reporting, state that the threat “stemming from violent left-wing and anarchist extremism (VLWAE) is still considered low but increasing” (Council of Europe, 2021b).

The OSCE databases concerning reported assaults and other forms of hate incidents targeting both worshippers and houses of worship of different religions point in the same direction as TE-SAT reports. However, in many of the hate crimes perpetrated within the EU member states, the ultimate ideological background and motive of the attack remains obscure.

Many signs suggest that we are currently witnessing a change in the extremist operation environment in the Western Europe. The national strategies of preventing and countering violent extremism have traditionally been associated with tackling specific extremist ideologies. Since 2018, increasing numbers of individuals referred to the UK’s national prevention program of violent extremism PREVENT were categorized as having “mixed, unclear or unstable” ideology. ‘Mixed’ cases often demonstrate a joint interest in several ideologies including elements from extreme right-winged content and misogynic subcultures. In such cases, ideological influences are less coherent, yet characterized by fixation with mass violence. Moreover, “mixed” individuals may appear to ascribe to one ideology but then, rapidly switch to another. A number of individuals referred to PREVENT for right-wing extremism, have been observed to switch to violent Islamist-inspired ideologies – and vice versa within a period of few months (Arbuthnot 2021). The outcome of this development is that it is increasingly difficult of predict where and when hate incidents take place, and who the likely perpetrators are. Often, the only common denominator for the hate crime offenders is the shared perception that a hate incident or a more serious offence will progress their manifesto or degrade the community spirit or quality of life of the targeted faith group (cf. Koehler 2018).

Only in rare cases any extremist group or individual claims being responsibility for the action for example, in the case of arson or attempted arson, bomb attack or attempted bomb attack. Religious spaces are also subjected to various

forms of destructive vandalism, which are not necessarily directly linked to extremism. The perpetrators are a very diverse people, from teenagers to elderly people Jolliffe & Farrington (2019:8). Among them, there are both highly determined and ideologically driven radicalised actors, but also those who act in a sporadic manner as a result of a triggering event occurring elsewhere (cf. OSCEa-d). The perpetrators of hate crimes obviously motivate other actors to launch attacks. The situation has been repeated time and time again, especially in the periods following serious acts of terrorism. For example, in France dozens of mosques were assaulted, some with firebombs, grenades or gunfire following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015 (France 24, 2019).

According to the data provided by OSCE reports the most common perpetrators include the previously mentioned “mixed” cases, extreme right-wing actors, anti-Christian and anti-Semitic actors, sympathizers of Islamist extremists, or to those who simply uphold negative attitudes towards immigrants and multiculturalism. In the case of Germany in particular, some hate incidents reflect political and sectarian tensions in the Middle East. As an example, number of attacks against synagogues were perpetrated by men motivated by the violence in Israel and Gaza (DW, 2021). Along similar vein, a firebomb attack against Shia Mosque in Brussels March 12 in 2012 that resulted in a death of its imam was motivated by the sectarian tensions in Iraq (France 24, 2012). Supporters of the Turkish Kurdish Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) movement in Germany were responsible for several attacks in 2018 that took place in Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Aachen against the mosques pertaining to the Diyanet movement, which is under the administration of the Turkish government (Al Jazeera, 2018). In addition to attacks on Christian churches, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization was responsible for attacks against the Yazidi diaspora on European soil while simultaneously engaging in large scale violence against historically rooted Yazidi communities in the Middle East.

In 2016–2017 alone, Europe reported a total number of 188 terrorist attacks that were carried out, failed, or prevented. In 2019, the corresponding figure in the area of the EU Member

States was 119. A total of 1,004 people were arrested for crimes involving terrorism in the EU, most of them in Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The estimated number of people living in France and the United Kingdom, who are considered terrorist security threats, is about 20,000 per country. The German security authorities have estimated that of the permanent residents in Germany, about 11,000 are proponents of an exclusionary interpretation of Islam, who have shifted or are shifting toward violent radicalisation. Furthermore, support for far-right extremism is growing in almost all the EU countries (European Commission 2021: 4–6). Undoubtedly, these radicalised individuals pose the most serious threat to religious premises and individual worshippers in the near future.

Most common incidents against mosques include burning and damaging copies of the Quran, damaging property, painting facades with swastikas, insults, and xenophobic graffiti, leaving pig's heads and bones at the site, smearing front doors with blood and excrement, sending insult or threat letters and electronic messages, arson and attempted arson, and bomb attack and attempted bomb attacks (Islam IQ).

According to The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe OSCE hate crimes against Christians in Europe in 2019 included attacks against Catholic priests, arson attacks, the destruction of images of the Virgin Mary and various kinds of vandalism and theft.

According to OSCE reports across the countries included in this report the most common attacks against synagogues include painting slogans denying holocaust and anti-Semitic graffiti together with swastikas and other Nazi symbols together with verbal aggression and threats.

Sikh Gurdwaras, Hindu temples and houses of worship of minority religions are occasionally targets of hate incidents that include especially racist and anti-immigration slogans, theft and vandalism (Quint, 2019; Local, 2012).

3.1. What is known about the perpetrators of serious hate crime?

Although there are no comprehensive European scale studies on the subject, the existing research suggests that the vast majority of perpetrators of hate crimes are male. As an example, statistics concerning completed hate crime prosecutions in England and Wales point to that direction. Similarly, the great majority (79%) of known perpetrators of racist incidents in Scotland in September 2008 were male. The male-dominated nature of the phenomenon is particularly evident in serious hate crimes such as mass shootings. In the US between the years 1982 and 2021 there were 122 mass shootings out of which merely three were perpetrated by women.

Correspondingly, men were responsible of all recent mass shootings and terrorist acts committed in the EU countries: Paris (January 2015), Copenhagen (February 2015), Paris (November 2015), Brussels (March 2016), Nice (July 2016), Munich (July 2016), Berlin (December 2016), London (March 2017), St. Petersburg (April 2017), Stockholm (April 2017), Manchester (May 2017), London (June 2017) and Barcelona (August 2017) (CTIF, 2019). There is thus a great need for deeper discussion and exploration of gender identity construction and masculinity in the context of hate crimes.

The studies conducted by Leander et al. (2020) and Koehler (2018) point out that there are no common sets of risk indicators that could enable the identification potential perpetrators of serious hate crime offenders, such as mass shooters. Only common unifying thread between mass shooters, or those attempting such incident, is that they all communicate with a subculture constructed by individuals sharing similar emotional scale permeated by anger, disgust and hate towards certain population groups. As these subcultures are today located nowhere in particular and constructed largely in online landscapes, it is nearly impossible to predict with any accuracy where, when and against whom the next incident of serious hate crime will be perpetrated.

The recent acts of violence against houses of worship in Christchurch (2019) and Halle

(2019) aptly illustrate the dynamic relation between the perpetrator and the online subcultural hate community. In the first case, the perpetrator acted alone, demonstrated his weapons in Twitter and the Meguca site and published a video recording of the mass shooting in website 8chan (Koehler 2019). He also uploaded his 74-page manifesto *The Great Replacement*, a reference white supremacist conspiracy theories, on the Internet and shared the associated link on Twitter and 8chan. In the case of Halle, a 27-year-old man sought to strike a Jewish centre located in the city. He live streamed the progress of events for 35 minutes on Internet site Twitch with a camera mounted on a helmet. Ultimately he failed to carry out the attack, but instead shot a passer-by near the synagogue and later opened fire through the front window of a nearby Kebab shop, killing a customer. The streaming was seen by some 2,200 people. Like in the Christchurch case, the perpetrator referred to numerous video games and online subcultures in his online discussions and spoke openly about his attack plan (ibid.)

The subcultural hate communities circulate highly stereotyped views concerning several population groups; they may be ethnic and racial groups, Muslims, Jews, but also sexual minorities, proponents cultural and religious diversity, plural society and so forth. Recognition of this fact is extremely central in order to understand the mass shooters' motives. In short this means that the focus needs to be shifted from targets to the ideas that they aspire to communicate to the associated subcultural milieu. With this in mind it becomes understandable that a mass shooting targeting synagogue or mosque is not solely about Anti-Semitism or Islamophobia.

In addition to Halle and Christchurch incidents in many other cases the perpetrator aspired to cause maximum harm to anyone considered as "other". All constructed the enemy lines by referring to the aforementioned mixed ideologies influenced by white supremacy, white ethnonationalism, victimization of the whites, and ideas referring to the relative deprivation of "our"

(white) group because of others (immigrants') impact. The perpetrators routinely take part in online ecosystems which are overwhelmingly composed of white males who feel that their hegemony is threatened in one way or another. Structural factors that are behind these feelings are so complex (economic restructuring, global investment capitalism, increasing migration caused by complex conflicts, economic inequalities and environmental factors, among other things) that people may feel that the threat is coming from everywhere at the same time.

What about less serious hate crime? What can be said about the relation between mass shooters and those who engage in vandalism? According to Leander et al. (2020) both perpetrator groups have similar psychological drivers and roughly similar subcultural online environment backing and motivating them. Both perpetrator groups share largely similar psychological drivers; they are grasping at anything that provides them with a narrative that gives a psychological sense that they are in control, in hegemonic position and that they are significant. In order to do that some post hateful content on the Internet, some vandalize a house of worship and some, a very small minority, perpetrate a violent act. In short, the perpetrators may share similar normative values, as well as fears and frustrations but they differ in their readiness to commit severe crime. Extremely few people are ready to take hate into the extreme. Fortunately, mass shooting is an extremely rare crime.

The narrative reality of hate crime offenders operates centrally through blame (Erenzen et. al 2021). As long as a person can blame outsiders or outside forces, reflection and the look inward is not needed.

Causing physical harm to another person requires taking a step that most people are not willing to do. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to predict which individuals are ready to move from verbal or symbolic hate acts to severe violence (cf. Krouse & Richardson 2015; Smart 2018).

4. Adopted PVE-Policies in the EU Countries

The objectives of SOAR-project are situated in the broad context of the general crime prevention and Strategies for prevention of violent radicalization and extremism (PVE-strategies). In principle, all the EU member states independently pursue their own internal crime prevention policies. In chapters 5.2.–5.8. below, we deal with the adopted policies in the seven countries. It is not within the scope of this report to analyse all the local policies in detail; however, they all belong to the general framework of crime prevention.

There are various approaches and theories of crime prevention. In what follows, we have opted for Bjørgo's explanation: in the field of crime prevention, a common distinction is made between primary, secondary and tertiary crime prevention approaches. The primary approach consists of very broad approach targeting whole population groups. The secondary approach consists of selective process where defined risk groups that are prone to commit criminal acts are targeted, and finally the third approach targets potential victims (Bjørgo,2020:2). In this tripartite model, the SOAR-project concentrates particularly on the tertiary prevention

approach as the aim is to identify vulnerable at-risk religious sites and provide information on the ideas, concerns and perspectives of the leaders and users of the sites.

Furthermore, there are three main schools of crime prevention: justice-based prevention, social crime prevention and situational crime prevention. According to Bjørgo, elements from these three schools result in nine generic preventive mechanisms: **1)** establishing and maintaining normative barriers, **2)** reducing recruitment, **3)** deterrence, **4)** disruption, **5)** incapacitation, **6)** protecting vulnerable targets, **7)** reducing harm, **8)** reducing rewards and **9)** desistance and rehabilitation (Bjørgo,2020:3–7). Within these general preventive mechanisms, the SOAR- project is situated in the mechanisms of protecting vulnerable targets (6) and reducing harm (7) which both belong to the situational crime prevention. As the SOAR- project engages in the dialogue with the sites with the purpose of mutual education, exchanging information and building trust, our approach has a strong component of social crime prevention too.

5. Focus Countries

5.1. Introduction

The country sections below provide general information on the religious demographics, threat picture, incident reporting, adopted policies and legislation. In general, the information available is dispersed and often unbalanced as the countries have different institutional structures, administrative cultures, and procedures to gather information. In our policy recommendation chapter (8) we encourage to collect and maintain reliable information both on the number of registered religious sites and attacks against them.

For many reasons, exact number of religious sites is difficult to establish. First, religious sites and temples vary in size and the smallest prayer rooms (e.g., Muslim prayer rooms, Hindu and Buddhist gathering places) may not be registered, officially recognized and the relevant information (address, size, affiliation) is not easily available. Second, for historical reasons, some religious institutions have had an established status for centuries in the region and some others are not recognized and devoid of formal ties to the governmental institutions. For instance, the fact that Christianity has long been the dominant religion in Europe has produced the situation where churches have a recognized and prominent status in the region and their institutional information is easily available to access. However, even in the case of the Catholic Church, it is impossible to establish exact numbers of houses of worship in some of the target countries. France, for example, provides data under category “buildings dedicated to Catholic faith” that includes not only churches but chapels that may or may not serve as an active worship site, including ruins and remains (De Sagazan, 2019). The situation is even more opaque regarding “newer” and less established religions in the region such as Islam, Hinduism,

and Buddhism. Third, as we will see in the following pages, the official recognition of some smaller religious groups is difficult and sometimes impossible in some target countries of this report. Each country regulates the recognition of religious groups differently and imposes certain conditions that vary from country to country. Fourth, as mentioned above, the United Nations (UN) has initiated a plan to register all the religious sites in the world to (UN 2019:8), but the process is ongoing and reliable overall information about the EU member states is not yet available. If the figures are available, the number of religious sites by creed are given.

The religious institutions and legislation section covers the basic information about the rules and regulations of religious institutions, their registration procedures, state provided benefits, responsibilities, and limitations by the law. Most of the information is based on U.S. Department of State’s International Religious Freedom Reports (IRFR). Threat picture section deals with the major incidents in the past few years focusing on the years 2019 and 2020. Major attacks prior to these years are mentioned as well. Crime and incident reporting suffers from massive under-reporting and smaller incidents are less likely to be reported to the police (FRA 2021: 19–37). The information and statistics presented here are probably just a small fraction of the whole picture.

In adopted policies section we cover the main administrative, governmental, and legislative developments in recent years designed to cope with security threats, PVE, social inclusion and protection. The main organisations (civil society and government affiliated institutions), initiatives and programmes are discussed.

5.1.1. Segments of religious communities

Religious communities are not monoliths but rather composed of many smaller groups and factions. As regards to Muslim population, it is important to note that the community is divided in different ethnic and denominational groups. Shia and Sunni mosques form but one division among Muslim communities. For instance, in Denmark the Sunni mosques are further divided into Turkish, Arabic, Somali, Pakistani, Bosnian, Afghan and other communities based on the ethnic background. In addition, Denmark has also Shia and Ahmadiyya mosques (Kühle&Larsen, 2017:79). The situation is somewhat similar in the remaining six countries of focus. There are rarely, if ever, mosques – apart from the mosques at airports perhaps – where Muslims of all denominations congregate on a regular basis.

Christian communities are divided into different denominations as well. Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and Evangelical Lutheran go to their own parishes and churches. Other religions, such as Buddhism, are formed around different sects who visit different places of worship. In similar vein Hinduism can be subdivided according to predominant philosophies, darsanas, primary deities or dominant modern trends (Clarke, 2011:28; Flood, 1996:155–161, 167–168). Christian communities are divided into different denominations as well. Roman Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox and Evangelical Lutheran go to their own parishes and churches. Other religions, such as Buddhism, are formed around different sects who visit different places of worship. In similar vein Hinduism can be subdivided according to predominant philosophies, darsanas, primary deities or dominant modern trends (Clarke, 2011:28; Flood, 1996:155–161, 167–168).

Similar divisions are prevalent for all religious communities. Obviously, this is an important point to consider when interacting with religious communities. This is true for all religions and should be taken into account when designing trainings modules and communication.

5.1.2. Data collection and underreporting

For many reasons, data collection is challenging. As noted earlier, there are no uniform data collection procedure in the EU countries as each country follows its own administrative culture and categories of data collection. For instance, data on hate crimes, provided by OSCE Hate Crime reporting, is uneven and unbalanced in many ways. In every country of the report, underreporting of hate crimes is a massive issue. The smaller the crime or hate crime incident is, the less likely it is not reported. These matters are further dealt with in the country sections and especially in chapter Hate crime reporting challenges and underreporting levels (6.4).

5.2. Belgium

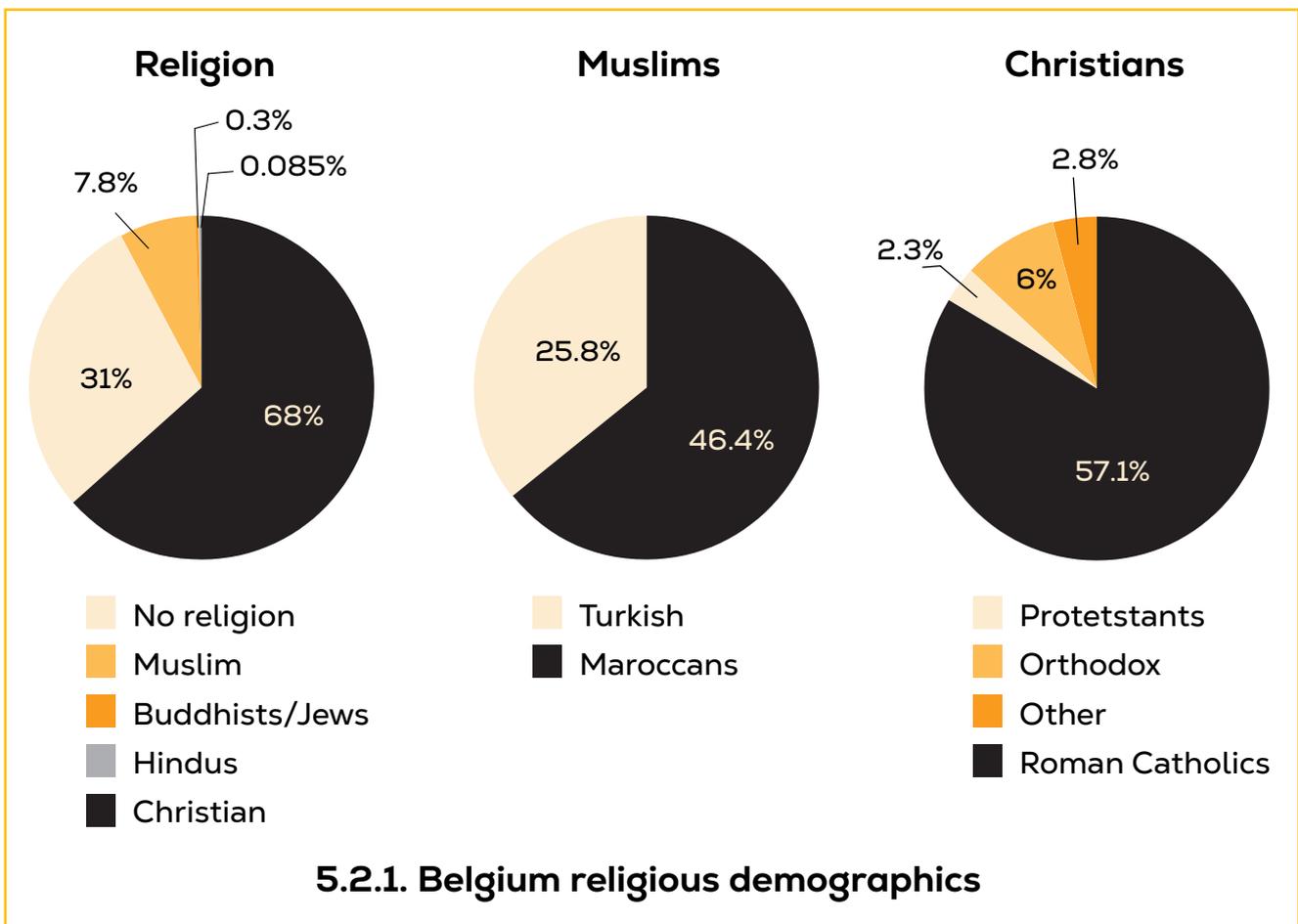
5.2.1. Religious demographics

Belgium has a total population of 11.7 million in 2020.

Christians altogether form 62.8% of the population. Approximately 31% of the Belgians have no religion. Majority of the Christians are Roman Catholics, 57.1% of the total population, whereas Protestants represent 2.3%, Orthodox Christians 0.6% and other Christian denominations 2.8% of the population. There are approximately 4300 Catholic churches in the country (Statista, 2019). The largest protestant denomination the United Protestant Church in Belgium, has some 110 affiliated churches (World Methodist Council, 2018). The estimation of the Muslim population varies between 6.8% and 7.6% (IRFR 2020a:2; Račius&Müssig,2020:108–9).

In Belgium, as in other countries covered in the report, the Muslim community is mostly Sunni. Muslim Moroccans represent almost half or 46.4% of the total Muslim population (91% have Belgian citizenship). Another large group are Turkish Muslims who form 25.8% of the Muslim population (93% have citizenship). In addition to converts who are between 30,000 and 100,000 individuals, other ethnic groups represent 27.8% of the Muslims (Račius&Müssig, 2020:108–9). Brussels hosts 34% of the country’s Muslims population other major centers being Antwerp, Ghent, Liège and Charleloi. There are roughly 300 mosques in the country (Račius&Müssig, 2020:110; IRFR 2020a:6).

The Jewish population was 29,000 in 2020, comprising only 0.3% of the population. People who identify themselves Buddhist represent similarly 0.3% of the total population (IRFR 2020a:2). There are currently approximately 10,000 Hindus as well as Sikhs in Belgium (PEW, 2015; Sikhwiki 2021).



5.2.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

Belgium has a complex institutional organization comprising three linguistic communities (French, Dutch, German) and three territorial regions (Wallonia, Flanders, Brussels-Capital region) each having different governance procedures and policies. Until today, the Roman Catholic Church has kept its strong historical central position. The National Ecumenical Commission convenes annually to discuss various religious themes at a national level. The Catholic Church has a leading role in national and local-level religious affairs and maintains inter-faith dialogue. The church and the state are formerly separated, but in reality, the state is supporting the church and other recognized religions in many ways.

In addition to the Catholic Church, the federal state recognizes Judaism, Protestantism, Anglicanism, Islam, Orthodoxy Christianity, non-confessional free-thinkers, and Buddhism as officially recognized religions. Currently (2020), the request of recognition of the Syrian Orthodox Church and a union of Hindu associations are in the process (GREASEa:2). The recognized religious groups are afforded particular benefits from the federal state and the state interferes in their activities to some extent.

To be formally recognized, a religious group is required to have a nationally representative institution, a minimum number of adherents, presence in Belgium for a fairly long period and evidence that the religion is of social benefit and does not instigate illegal public activities. Organization according to the inherited model based on the Catholic Church is also required. More recent religious groups have often faced difficulties in gaining official recognition (GREASEa:3).

5.2.3. Threat picture

An independent government agency UNIA reported that in 2019, there were altogether 415 incidents (mainly discrimination and harass-

ment) against religious groups (IRFR 2020a:1). According to the report, there were 79 anti-Semitic incidents and 336 incidents against other than Jewish groups of which 86 percent (289 incidents) targeted Muslims (IRFR 2020a:1). Of the anti-Semitic incidents 46 were online incidents, 1 was assault, 5 were threats and 6 were graffiti incidents. According to the site Antisemitisme.be, in 2019, 1 assault, 1 threat, 11 acts of vandalism and 33 online incidents of antisemitic nature were reported (USCIRF:10). However, ECRI points out that UNIA registers only the reports submitted to it and that the collected data represents in no way a full overview of the hate speech phenomenon in Belgium (ECRIa:17). With all likelihood, the data of Antisemitisme.be is biased in a similar way.

According to OSCE Hate Crime reporting, the number of reported hate crimes has been increasing since 2015 (first year of data collection). In 2015, 881 cases were reported of which 69 were prosecuted, whereas in 2019, the same figures were 1568 and 1371¹⁰. For the years 2016–2018 the figures are the following: 2016 (845 hate crimes recorded, 70 prosecuted), 2017 (875, 60) and 2018 (1446, 1006) (OSCEa).

According to the information provided by the Global Terrorism Database, Belgium experienced 13 terrorist attacks 2015–2019 of which six caused fatalities. None of them was targeting places of worship (GTDa).

5.2.4. Adopted policies

In the 1990s, Belgium had to address different forms of violent religious radicalisation and different forms of policies were implemented. Since March 2016 when Brussels airport and Maelbeek metro station were targets of ISIS claimed terror attacks, Belgium has witnessed several smaller scale terror-linked attacks.

The first government-initiated action to address violent radicalisation was in 2005 and revised in 2015. Evolving challenges presented by violent radicalisation has led to many legislative and in-

¹⁰ In 2019, 1143 cases were motivated by racism and xenophobia whereas 243 cases were motivated by gender, anti-LGBTI biases and disabilities and 182 cases had unspecific motives (OSCEa). Similar information is given for other years too.

stitutional changes with an overall security-led focus. In recent years, the government has invested greatly to security measures and security related technology (GREASEa:4).

In addition, the government has created some more inclusive and grassroots-level organisations to support in addressing hate crimes. For instance, Centre de Ressources et d'Appui (CREA), created in Wallonia-Brussels Federation, provides resources and training for regional service providers, combats polarisation and any action that creates hostility among different groups of people (CREA). The Centre for Help and Support for Anyone Concerned by Extremism and Violent Radicalism (CAPREV) supports disengagement and reintegration of radicalized young people and adults (GEASEa:4).

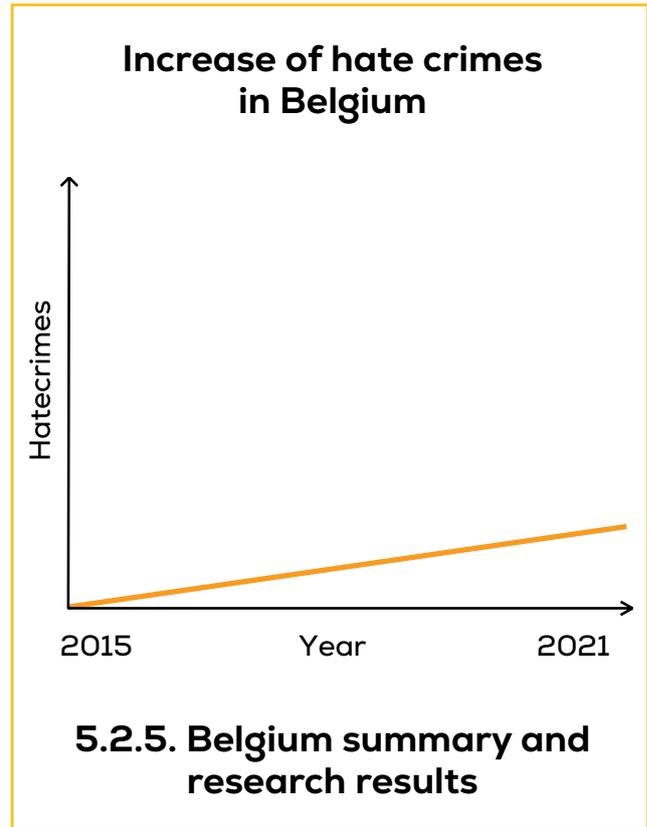
According to ECRI's report on Belgium, the current system for collecting the hate speech incidents by the police fails to give a precise picture of the exact problems. For example, within the category of "racism" it is impossible to draw any distinction between antisemitic, Islamophobic and anti-Roma acts (ECRIa:17).

5.2.5. Summary and research results

The complex administrative culture of Belgium that is to a great degree divided along linguistic (French, Dutch, German) and territorial lines (Wallonia, Flanders, Brussels- Capital region) bears on Belgium's religious field too. In this respect, the country can be viewed as a society with multiple administrative cultures and policies.

Despite the fact that dominant faith the Roman Catholic Church is formally separated from the state there exist a rather symbiotic relation between the two. Religions can be formally recognized, yet it has proved to be difficult for newer religious groups, to gain official recognition.

The following features characterize hate crime related climate in Belgium: the country has a large-scale Islamist extremist environment with a history dating back more than three decades. Over the past decade Islamist extremists from Belgium or those who have used Belgium as a base have been responsible for numerous serious terrorist attacks both inside and outside the



country's borders. However, none of the terrorist incidents claiming lives occurred in religious premises.

The data provided by International Religious Freedom Report on Belgium (IRFR 2020a), Antisemitism in Europe (USCRIF) and ECRI Report on Belgium (ECRIa) reports indicates that the number of reported hate crimes has steadily increased since 2015. Hate incidents and hate crime are grossly underreported, the reported cases involve mainly discrimination and harassment, and they target overwhelmingly Muslim and Jewish groups in the major urban centres. At the same time, it should be mentioned that more detailed categorization of hate incidents should be implemented by the police. Many hate crimes that target religious groups may end up being recorded under racist crimes.

5.3. Denmark

5.3.1. Religious demographics

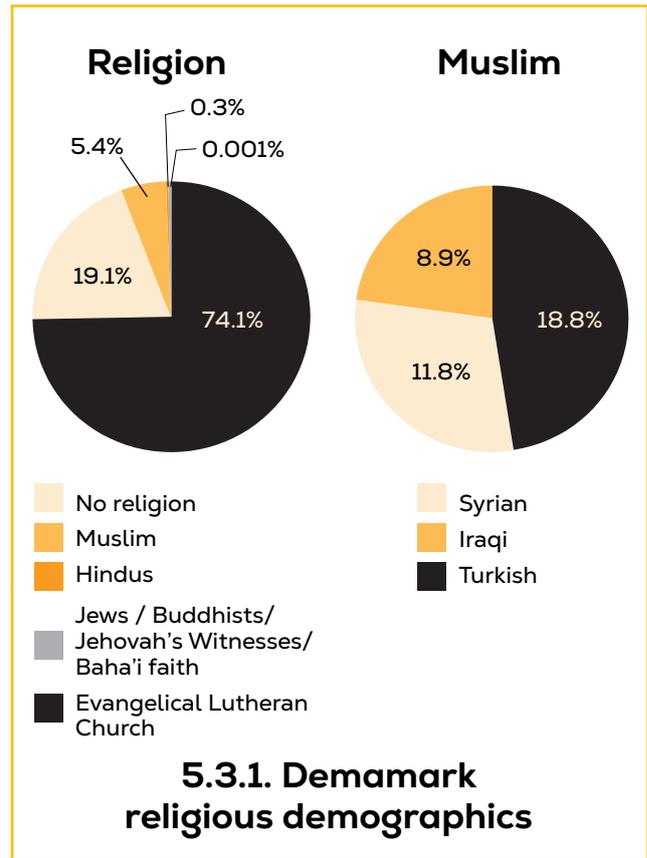
In 2020, Denmark has a total population of 5.9 million of which a vast majority belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church (74.1%). Approximately 19.1 % of the Danish have no religion. Other Christian denominations include Roman Catholics, Serbian Orthodox Christians, Baptists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Pentecostals, and nondenominational Christians that each represent less than one percent of the population. There are 2494 Christian parishes in the country (Statistics Denmark 2021).

The estimates of the Muslim population vary between 4.4% and 5.4% (IRFR 2020b:2; Račius&Müssig,2020:207–8). In December 2019, the number of Muslims was estimated to be 256,000. Roughly 70% of Muslims are Danish citizens. The largest groups among Muslim population are Turkish 18.8%, Syrian 11.8%, and Iraqi 8.9%. The Muslim population is concentrated in the bigger cities such as Copenhagen, Århus and Odense. There are about 170 mosques in the country (Račius&Müssig,2020:207–8). The number has risen from around 115 in 2006 to about 170 today. The increase of 48% stems with roughly similar increase of Muslim population (Kühle&Larsen,2017:8).

According to the site Jewish Virtual Library (JVL), there are approximately 6400 Jews in the country, which is less than one percent of the population. Similarly, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baha’i faith, and Buddhists each represent less than one percent (IRFR 2020b:2). Hindus have been estimated to constitute about 0.3 percent of the total population (Oneindia, 2010). Sikhs form a very small minority of 800 to 1500 individuals (Sikhinet, 2015).

5.3.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

In Denmark, individuals are free to worship according to their beliefs and form congregations of worship providing that nothing shall be done or taught at variance with good morals or public order (IRFR 2020b:1–2). The constitution es-



tablishes that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the national church to which considerable state support is allocated. According to the constitution, the reigning monarchy must belong to the ELC. In Denmark, only ELC receives funding, in addition to state grants, via voluntary and tax-deductible contributions paid through payroll deduction by its members (estimated 86 percent groups or congregations (IRFR 2020b:3).

There are however some restrictions for religious community or congregation to be eligible for official recognition. A religious community must have at least 150 adult members, while the threshold for a congregation is 50 adult members. A religious group seeking official status must submit a description of the group’s central traditions, most important rituals and a copy of its rules, regulations, and organizational structure (IRFR 2020b:4).

Recognized religious groups have the right to perform legal marriage ceremonies, name and baptize children with legal effect, issue death certificates, obtain residence permits for foreign clergy, establish cemeteries, and receive various value added tax exemptions (IRFR 2020b:3–4).

5.3.3. Threat picture

According to OSCE Hate Crime reporting, the number of reported hate crimes has been increasing since 2015. In 2015, 198 cases were reported, whereas in 2019, the same figure was 469.¹¹ For the years 2016–2018 the figures are the following: 2016 (274 hate crimes recorded), 2017 (446) and 2018 (449) (OSCEb).¹²

In the period of 2015–2019 there were nine terror attacks in Denmark resulting in three fatalities and ten injuries. There were two attacks against religious figures or institutions in the period. On 16th of August 2015 an assailant threw a Molotov Cocktail at a Mosque in Copenhagen damaging of its budget). Members of other recognized religious communities cannot contribute similarly via payroll deduction, but tax-deductible voluntary donations are possible (IRFR 2020b:3).

The Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs decides whether a religious group is granted official status. According to the Ministry, there are 448 officially recognized religious groups or congregations. These include 338 Christian groups, 66 Muslim groups (including Alevi community), 16 Buddhist groups, seven Hindu groups and 18 other the building. There were no casualties or injuries. In another attack on 14th of February in the same year, an assailant opened fire on a Jewish Synagogue hosting Bat Mitzvah in Copenhagen. One civilian security guard was killed, and two police officers were wounded (GTDb). According to another source, two civilians were killed and six injured (Hemmingsen,2015:11).

More recently in 2019 (statistics of 2020 are not yet available), there were 180 religiously motivated crimes in Denmark. In comparison, 112 religiously motivated crimes were reported in 2018 (61 percent increase). Of the 180 religiously motivated crimes reported in 2019, 109 were against Muslims, 51 against Jews, eight against Christians and 12 against other religions (IRFR 2020b:11).

Religiously motivated hate crimes against Muslims included hate speech, vandalism, threats, and discrimination. One of the incidents occurred when an unknown perpetrator vandalized Rovsinggade Mosque in northwest Copenhagen in January 2019 and anti-Islamic epithets were spray-painted on the walls (IRFR 2020b:13). In 2019, Copenhagen's Jewish Society received 37 reports of anti-Semitic incidents, an 8 percent decrease over the 45 crimes reported in 2018 (IRFR 2020b:12). The incidents included anti-Semitic speech, vandalism, threats, and discrimination. Vandalism against Jewish cemeteries was reported (IRFR 2020b:12). On October 16, two men were convicted for desecrating a Jewish graveyard on the anniversary of Kristallnacht (IRFR 2020b:13).

The government considers Jewish sites to be at high risk of terrorist attack and provides armed security for Copenhagen's synagogue, Jewish community center, Jewish schools, Israeli embassy, and ambassador's residence (IRFR 2020b:11).

5.3.4. Adopted policies

Denmark has initiated many projects and programmes to deal with internal security concerns and to tackle extremism. Since mid-00's preventing and countering measures have increasingly gained momentum as a supplement to more traditional counterterrorism activities (Hemmingsen,2015:7).

In 2009, the government drafted a national action plan to prevent extremism and radicalisation followed by an updated version in 2014. This comprehensive national approach is often referred as "Danish approach". The approach is based on extensive multi-agency collaboration between various social-service providers such as the educational system, the health-care system, the police and the intelligence and security services (Hemmingsen,2015:5). The strength of the Danish model relies on its flexibility and coordination between different societal actors.

11 In 2019, 312 cases were motivated by racism and xenophobia, 51 cases by anti-Semitism, 109 cases by anti-Muslim biases, 8 cases by anti-Christian biases, 76 by anti-LGBTI biases, 12 cases had another motive based on religion or belief whereas one case had unspecific motive (OSCEb). Similar information is given for other years too.

12 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance & Council of Europe's report on Denmark (ECRIb:18–19) and International Religious Freedom Report, Denmark 2020 by U.S. Department of State (IRFR 2020b:11) provide detailed information of some of the recent incidents.

It works both top-down and bottom-up having an inbuilt possibility to assess and learn from individual cases. Another important aspect is the idea of learning-by-doing. The procedures and the role of different actors are constantly being re-evaluated (Hemmingsen,2015:8). The Danish approach is therefore not based on a specific theory but rather it constantly evolves according to the needs and circumstances of the country.

However, the model has been subject to criticism too. The main challenge arises from the lack of definition of the key concepts such as extremism and radicalisation, and more importantly, from the uncertainty of what the problem actually is. Does the main cause of extremism relate to ideology, religion, failed integration policies or vague social identities? Is the effective cure in religion, less religion, social change, crime prevention, individual treatment, harsher punishments, or combination of these? (Hemmingsen,2015:13).

In October 2019, the Danish National Police launched an awareness-raising campaign called “Stop the Hate”. The campaign consisted of informative postcards distributed to Denmark’s 12 police districts and disseminated by police officers during police exhibitions. The postcards were also distributed free-of-charge in restaurants, cafes, theatres, and cinemas across the country over a two-week period. The purpose was to encourage hate crime victims to report the incidents to the police (OSCEb). In general, national police is working more closely with local civil society organizations. The national hate crime guidance is provided for the police officers (ECRIb:17).

In October 2019, the ruling Social Democratic Party announced plans to introduce a bill, in 2021 that would require the translation of all religious sermons into Danish. Evangelical Lutheran Church’s bishops and minority religious leaders from the Muslim, Jewish and Catholic faiths opposed the proposal. ELC argued that the legislation would affect its services given in the Greenlandic or Faroese languages. Minority religious leaders pointed out that immigrant communities often preferred to worship in their native languages (IRFR, 2020b:9).

According to ECRI’s report on Denmark, under-reporting of hate speech is a problem that

requires urgent action (ECRIb:9). In addition, the Danish authorities lack a comprehensive data collection system for racist hate speech incidents. Currently, the data is not disaggregated by category, type of hate motivation and target group (ECRIb:14).

5.3.5. Summary and research results

The Evangelical Lutheran Church has a prominent position in Denmark 74.1% of the population belonging to this church. The law establishes that ELC only has right to receive funding via voluntary and tax-deductible contributions paid through payroll deduction (estimated 86 percent of its budget). Other religious groups have no such right and even though tax-deductible voluntary donations are possible for other groups, ELC has financially superior status that other groups cannot compete with. In addition to ELC, there are 448 officially recognized religious groups in Denmark.

When planning the training one should consider whether the POW in question or its members belong to the officially recognized religious groups. The lack of officially recognized legal and financial status may severely delimit the capacity of the POW to invest in security measures and to dedicate personnel to trainings, thus they may need additional support compared to officially recognized POWs.

As every country in this report, the underreporting is a massive problem (see 6.4). The smaller the crime or hate crime incident is, the more likely it is not to be reported. However, the existing hate crime data indicates that Muslims, Jews, and Christians suffer the most affected by all sorts of hate crimes. OSCE Hate Crime reporting (OSCEb), Global Terrorism Database (GTDb) and International Religious Freedom Report by U.S. Department of State (IRFRb) indicate all that these three communities are most likely to be targeted. The data on Denmark does not mention other religious groups as victims at all.

Previous campaigns such as “Stop the Hate” and “Danish approach” indicate that the authorities are receptive to “soft” measures and willing to cooperate with NGOs.

5.4. France

5.4.1. Religious demographics

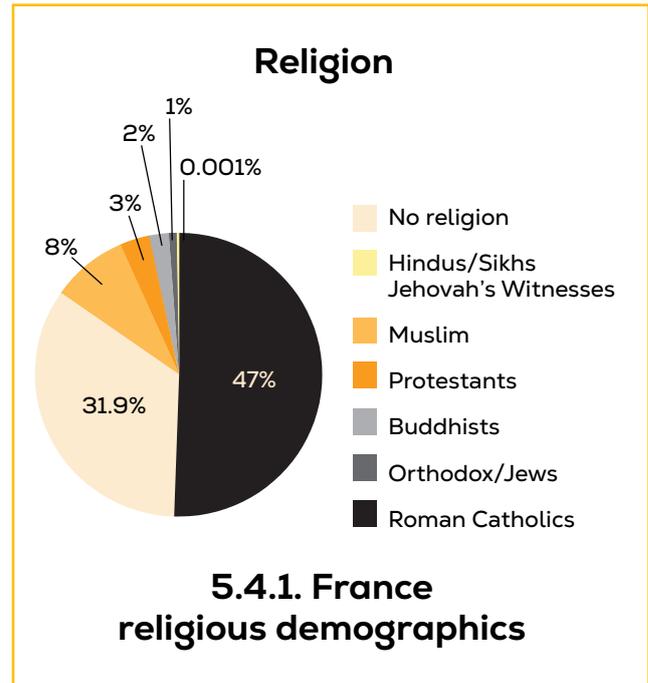
In 2020, France has a total population of 67.8 million of which 47% are Roman Catholics. Other Christian denominations include Protestantism (3%) and Orthodox Christians (1%). Approximately 31.9 % of the French have no religion. The number of buildings dedicated to Catholic faith is 50,999 including churches and chapels (enjoying active worship or not) of all states including ruins and remains. In addition, there are 2,113 Protestant places of worship and 165 Orthodox churches and chapels (de Sagazan, 2019).

The Muslim population is about 5.4 million, comprising about 8% of the total population. Of the Muslim population, 54% immigrated and 40% were born in France. The largest population of Muslims are from Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) forming 81% of the population. Other large groups are Turks and Sub-Saharan Africans. The Muslim population is concentrated in the capital region, Mediterranean coast, and major former industrial and mining towns. According to the Ministry of Interior, there are 2500 mosques in the country and 2131 of them are in major metropolitan areas. There are about 90 purpose-built mosques – most are funded by local communities – and 70 large mosques. 6% of the mosques can accommodate between 500–1000 people (Račius&Müssig,2020:258–260).

In 2020, France's Jewish population was about 448,000, that is 1% of the population (IRFR 2020c:2–3; USCIRF:13). The number of synagogues is 448 (de Sagazan, 2019).

Other minority religions include Hindus, Sikhs and Jehovah's Witnesses; each form less than one percent of the population. Sri Lankan Tamils, majority of whom arrived as asylum seekers since late 1970s, are the main representatives of Hinduism in France (Trouillet&Voix,2020)

Today the Hindu population is approximately 40,000 (Pew, 2015). The number of Sikhs is slightly smaller, about 30,000 (Dore,2017), concentrated in Bobigny with five Sikh Gurudwaras (WGa). According to different sources,



1–2% of the population is affiliated to Buddhism (IRFR 2020c:2–3).

5.4.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

The principle of *laïcité* is at the center of France's state religion relations. The term connotes a particular anti-clerical attitude and policies that are often rendered in English as "secular" or "secularism". The current religion–state model is based on the constitution of 1958, which is formulated on the law of separation of 1905 forming the constitutional benchmark of the *laïcité* argument (GREASEb:2).

Bureau of religious affairs is responsible for official affairs between the state and the religious institutions. Among other things the bureau decides which religious institutions are recognized as religions in France, a status that allows to receive benefits and allocations from the state. Legal institutional status is granted to Catholicism represented by the Council of Bishops, Protestantism represented by the Protestant Federation and Judaism represented by the Central Consistory. Other religious institutions are labelled as associations (GREASEb:3).

5.4.3. Threat picture

According to OSCE Hate Crime reporting, the trend of reported hate crimes has increased between 2015 and 2019. In 2015, 1790 cases were reported, whereas for the following years the respective numbers are: 2016 (1835 reported cases), 2017 (1505), 2018 (1838) and 2019 (2640)¹³. Figures of prosecuted cases are not available, and the number of sentenced cases (583) is available for the year 2016 only.

According to the information provided by the Global Terrorism Database, France experienced 138 terrorist attacks between 2015 and 2019 of which 28 caused fatalities. Of the total number of attacks, 27 were targeting places of worship: 17 targeted Mosques, 9 churches and one Synagogues (GTDC). Ministry of Interior notes that Satanism and anarchism motivates some of the incidents targeting Christian places of worship and Jewish and Muslim sites (Fautré, 2021:66).¹⁴ In 2020, there were numerous serious attacks against Christians and Christian places of worship.¹⁵

There is complementary information too. In 2020, the French Council of Muslim Faith (CFCM) reported 235 incidents targeting Muslims (154 in 2019) (IRFR 2020c:2).¹⁶ In 2020, The Jewish Community Protection divided into categories of threats (845 cases), physical assaults (301), desecration of graves (18), homicides (7) and unspecified cases (165). Anti-Semitic hate crimes (690) are divided into threats (536), damage to property (104) and physical assaults (50). Anti-Christian hate crimes (1052) are divided into damages to property (966),

threats (56) and physical assaults (30). For hate crimes motivated by anti-Muslim bias or bias against other religions and beliefs, sub-categories are not available (OSCEc). Similar information is provided for the previous years too.

Service (SPCJ) reported total 339 anti-Semitic incidents of which 295 were threats and 44 violent acts (IRFR 2020c:17). In comparison, in 2019, SPCJ and Ministry of Interior noted 687 antisemitic incidents: 45 assaults, 5 acts of arson, 101 acts of vandalism, 196 threats of public hate speech, 276 graffiti incidents and 64 cases of hate mail or antisemitic flyers (SPCJ:14). French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP) released a poll on French Jews. Among other things, the poll found out that 64% had experienced anti-Semitic verbal abuse at least once, 23% had suffered physical abuse at least once and 10% had been attacked several times (IRFR 2020c:20).

In 2020, officials reported six incidents against Jehovah's Witnesses (IRFR 2020c:20). For instance, on January 10, Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall in Paris was vandalized with a graffiti (IRFR 2020c:25).

- 13 In 2019, 1336 cases were motivated by racism and xenophobia, 690 cases by anti-Semitism, 155 cases by bias against Muslims, 1052 cases by bias against Christians, 1221 cases by gender bias and 11 cases by bias against other religions and beliefs. In 2019, there were 11 attacks against places of worship (OSCEc). Furthermore, OSCE Hate Crime reporting provides the following detailed information: Hate crimes motivated by racism and xenophobia (1336) in 2019 are further.
- 14 *International Religious Freedom Report, France 2020* by U.S. Department of State (IRFR 2020c:17–19) provide detailed information of some of the recent incidents. Willy Fautré describes some of the attacks against Christian places of worship in his article *France in Places of Worship and Holy Sites in Europe and the Middle East* (2021: 66–69).
- 15 In 2020, the anti-Christian incidents included: defacing with graffiti eight churches and two Catholic schools by unknown individuals (January 19); a Tunisian man killing three Christian worshippers in a church in Nice. The attacker was religiously motivated as he shouted "God is great" in Arabic (October 29) (IRFR 2020c:1,24).
- 16 These included: far-right group *Génération Identitaire* projecting a text on the minaret of the Lyon denouncing calls to prayer (April 22); swastika and obscene message written on a wall of a mosque in Agen (July 26); walls of a mosque in Tarbes was vandalized by anti-Islam graffiti (September 2); setting on fire Omar Mosque by an unknown person (August 7); setting on fire the Essalam Mosque (August 12); vandalizing the Nour El Mohamadi Mosque in central Bordeaux (October 14 and 20) (IRFR 2020c:23–25).

5.4.4. Adopted policies

Since late 1950s, France has experienced violent and often religiously motivated radicalisation linked to its former colonies, notably Algeria (GREASEb:4). France has invested both in “soft” and “hard” responses to terrorism. Since 1993, anti-terrorism measures and legislation have been successively strengthened and expanded. Law of Everyday Security in 2001 and an immigration law in 2003 authorise the police to search vehicles and premises, deport individuals convicted of criminal offences, and deport or ban individuals or groups that threaten public order (GREASEb:4).

Only as late as 2014 has the French government introduced “soft” measures such as intervention and rehabilitation initiatives to address radicalisation. A new focus on the process of radicalisation led to the formation of Centre National d’Assistance et de Prévention de la Radicalisation (CNAPR) that provides a hotline for individuals, families and community members that can call to seek advice or notify authorities (GREASEb:4). State’s laïcité principle has partly hindered engagement to “soft” measures because formal partnerships between religious institutions and security officials have been difficult. On the one hand, this has led to centralized and security-focused approach and on the other hand, to ignore socio-political and socio-economic conditions (GREASEc:21).

In French society for the past several decades, Muslims have faced high levels of state interference followed from the idea of instituting “French Islam” devoid of foreign influence and concerns over terrorism and the capacity of Muslims to integrate into the society (GREASEb:5)

In France prefects in each department have the authority to close a place of worship for a maximum of six months if it is concluded that the comments, writings or activities in the place provoke violence, hatred, discrimination, commission of acts of terrorism or praise such acts of terrorism (IRFR 2020c:5). Since February 2018 when the nationwide program to counter Islamism and communitarianism was launched, the Ministry of Interior had closed 15 places of worship, 12 cultural establishments and four schools. According to Interior Minister of

France, Gérald Darmanin, since May 2017, the government had closed 43 mosques and was in the process of investigating the closure of 76 mosques (IRFR 2020c:8).

The French government protects sensitive religious sites including Catholic, Jewish and Islamic sites and other places of worship and schools. After the terrorist attack at the Notre Dame Basilica in Nice 2020 October 29, President Emmanuel Macron increased the number of troops from 3,000 to 7,000. The troops operate under the Ministry of Defence’s Operation Sentinel (IRFR 2020c:2). According to Interior Minister, Gérald Darmanin, in 2020, the government had mobilized more than 7,000 police and soldiers to protect synagogues on Yom Kippur.

The government continues to implement its 2018–2020 national plan to combat anti-Semitism and racism with a strong focus on online hate content (IRFR 2020c:14). Moreover, according to the press, the government has invested 100 million EUR 2015–2018 to fight racism, anti-Semitism, and all forms of discrimination in recent years (Figaro,2015).

According to Ministry of Interior, in 2016, 4320 places of worship and religious community buildings were under surveillance and protection of law enforcement patrols. Figures by creed are as follows: 2400 out of 45,000 Christian sites, 1100 out of 2500 Muslim sites and all Jewish synagogues, schools, and community centres (Fautré,2021:65). In 2019 and 2020, the government allowed a budget of 12.5 million EUR to purchase security and video-protection material for the most sensitive religious sites (Fautré,2021:66).

5.4.5. Summary and research results

In France, only Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism have legal institutional status. Other religious institutions and groups are labelled as associations. In France, prefects in each department have the authority to close a place of worship up to six months in case of activities that provoke violence, hatred, discrimination, or terrorism.

France has experienced some of the deadliest terror attacks in Europe in recent history. Be-

The Muslim population is approximately 4.4–4.7 million, 5.7 % of the total population. Of the Muslim population 75% are Sunni, 13% Alevi and 7% Shia. Smaller Muslim groups include Alawites, Ahmadis, Sufis and Salafi Muslims (IRFR 2020d:2). The main ethnic groups are Turks (2.3 million), Middle East (775,000), South-East Europe (518,000), South and South-East Asia (372,000) and North-Africa (264,000). The Muslim population is concentrated in North Rhine-Westphalia (33.1 %), Baden Wuerttemberg (16.6%), Bavaria (13.3%), Hesse (10.3%) and Berlin (6.9%). There are 2342 mosques (2012 figure) in the country (Račius&Müssig,2020:311–12).

In 2020, Germany's Jewish population was 118,000, that is less than 1% of the population (IRFR 2020d:2–3; USCIRF:16). Number of synagogues and prayer rooms is approximately 130 (Jahn&Termèch, 2018) The largest communities are in Berlin (10,600 members), Munich (9,500 members), Dusseldorf (7,100) and Frankfurt am Main (6,800). Approximately 85 % are native Russian speakers (EJCd).

The following minority churches and religious groups form each less than 1% of the population: Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Yezidis (IRFR 2020d:2–3).

Some 120,000 Buddhists mainly of Vietnamese, Thai, Taiwanese, Cambodian, Korean, Japanese origins live in Germany. The estimated number of those with German origin is 130,000. The overall number of organizations is approximately 600 (EBUd). There are 130,000–150,000 Hindus in Germany (2017 estimate). Main groups are of Sri Lankan Tamil, Indian, European and Afghan origins (REMIDa). The largest Hindu temples are in major cities and particularly in Berlin and Hessen (Hindu Utsav).

The Sikhs in Germany number between 15,000 and 20,000. Many German Sikhs have roots in Punjab, India (REMIDb). According to website "World Gurudwaras", there are 42 Gurudwaras in Germany (WGb).

5.5.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

Germany's state religion relation has been described as moderate secularism where cooperation to some degree between the church and the state is tolerated. According to the Germany's constitution the church and state are formally separated, but in practice, in some areas such as education and social welfare, the two institutions cooperate. Religious freedom is sanctioned by the constitution.

Germany is a federal state with 16 regions each with their own governmental structures and various approaches to the neutrality to wear religious symbols in schools.

In Germany's tax system the so-called church tax is collected directly from the individual's income of the members of the church unless the individual formally leaves the church. The collected funds are used for religious education and welfare (GREASEd:1–2).

In order to be recognized and granted public corporation status, a religious organization must meet certain criteria. The religious organization's members must make up at least 0.1% of a given region's total population and the group must be in existence for at least 30 years. The government also examines whether the group respects the law. The requirements of size and permanence have meant that many Muslim groups have had difficulties in getting the public corporation status (GREASEd:3).

5.5.3. Threat picture

According to the German's Federal Ministry of the Interior, the number of hate crimes has been increasing every year (from 5376 in 2001 to 8113 in 2018), while it is assumed that many, if not most, cases remain unreported (Abushi&Nordbruch,2020:10; GFMI). OSCE Hate Crime reporting points to similar direction. In 2015, 3046 hate crime cases were reported, whereas the respective numbers for the following years are: 2016 (3598 reported cases), 2017 (7913), 2018 (8113) and 2019 (8585).¹⁷ As it will be indicated shortly, an overwhelming majority of the hate crimes linked to the far-right operational environment.

Germany's extremist operational environment consists of a variety of groups, networks and movements motivated by extreme right-wing, Antisemitic, Islamist and left-wing narratives and ideologies. The country's authorities estimated in 2018 that 760 people linked to the Islamist operational environment had the motivation and skill to carry out a terrorist attack. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution or Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz in Germany (BFV), there were nearly 26,000 people in Germany who support Islamist extremism in one way or another. Germany experienced several attempted terrorist attacks by radicalised Islamist groups between 2000 and 2010. Attacks by lone operators linked to ISIS became more prominent in 2015 and 2016 the most serious attack being when a truck drove into Christmas market in Berlin by a Tunisian with links to ISIS causing the death of 12 people and wounding 56 (GREASEd:4).

The far-right in Germany consists of heterogeneous groups which include in total approximately 12,000 individuals with readiness to engage in violent attacks. The networks and movements are divided on the east-west axis. Even though only 20% of the population live

in the area of former East Germany, more than 50% of the country's hate crimes are committed there (Counter Extremism Project A).

The eastern regions, that are lagging behind in economic and social terms, host a wide range of active anti-Islamic, anti-immigration and anti-multiculturalism movements. Among the most visible of these is a network called the "Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamicisation of the Occident" (PEGIDA). It was organised in conjunction with the refugee crisis of 2015 and has thereafter mobilised masses of tens of thousands of people on its marches (ibid.).

In 2019, the Ministry of interior registered 950 incidents targeting Muslims and Muslim institutions including mosques and community centers. Of these incidents, 90.1 percent was classified as right-wing extremism (IRFR 2020d:16). A half dozen of incidents targeting Turkish Mosques were claimed between 2015 and 2019 by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) (GTDD).

Several of the recent attacks were of such a nature that they could have produced a large number of casualties. However, the only case involving casualties occurred in September 2019 as an assailant made a failed attempt to attack a synagogue hosting 51 worshippers in Halle. He shot and killed a woman outside the synagogue and another person in a nearby Turkish Kebab shop (Shelton&Pladson, 2019). In April 2019 an assailant armed with a knife attempted to enter a synagogue in Berlin. Security guards apprehended and injured the assailant. In July 2014 assailants threw petrol bombs at a synagogue in Wuppertal. There were no reported casualties in the attack (GTDD).

Majority of the hate crime that target mosques can be characterized as vandalism, including incidents such as the painting of swastikas, right wing extremist slogans, racist graffiti on walls

¹⁷ Furthermore, OSCE Hate Crime reporting provides the following detailed information: Hate crimes motivated by racism and xenophobia (1651) in 2019 are further divided into physical assaults (736), damages to property (554), threats (280), theft and robbery (49), arson (12), desecration of graves (10) and homicides (10). Anti-Semitic hate crimes (273) are divided to damage to property (165), physical assaults (44), threats (40), theft (13), desecration of graves (9), arson (1) and homicide (1). Anti-Muslim hate crimes (207) are divided into damages to property (116), physical assaults (49), threats (33), thefts (7), arson (1) and homicide (1). Anti-Christian hate crime (57) is divided into damage to property (31), threats (11), physical assaults (11), arson (2), theft (1) and homicide (1). Other hate crimes based on religion and belief (14) are divided into physical assaults (7), damages to property (3), threats (2), arson (1) and theft (1) (OSCEd).

and doors and desecration by smearing walls and doors pig blood or leaving pigs body parts in the vicinity of sites of worship. Such hate crime is very common in Germany. The perpetrators very often remain unknown. Typical cases include the following: in February 2019 an unknown person vandalized a mosque in Emmendingen with swastikas and rightwing slogans (IRFR 2020d:18). The same month mosques in Essen, Unna, Bielefeld and Hagen received bomb threats signed by right-wing extremist Kampgruppe 18 (IRFR 2020d:21). In August the same year the perpetrator left in front of the Arrahman Mosque in Moenchengladbach bloody pig's head, plastic bags filled with blood and daubed walls with right-wing extremist slogans (IRFR 2020d:19).

The recent statistics indicate that the far-right environment motivates crime against both Jewish and Muslim targets with roughly parallel shares (over 90%) of the total number of reported offenses. In 2019, in the state North-Rhine Westphalia alone 310 anti-Semitic crimes were registered alone of which 291 were motivated by right-wing ideologies (IRFR 2020d:8). According to Ministry of Interior federal crime statistics in 2019, there were 2,032 anti-Semitic crimes including 72 incidents involving violence.

Correspondingly in 2018, there were 1,799 anti-Semitic crimes reported (IRFR 2020d:15) The Research and Information Center for Anti-Semitism (RIAS) reported in the first six months of 2020 in Germany 410 incidents including 6 assaults, 20 threats of violence, 25 incidents of vandalism and 301 incidents of abusive behavior (RIAS:10; USCIRF:16). Typical incidents targeting Synagogues and other premises where Jewish faith is practiced include the following: In October 2019, an individual struck a Jewish student of Hohe Weide Synagogue in Hamburg with a shovel causing a serious head injury (IRFR 2020d:15), on Yom Kippur celebration on December the same year, a gunman killed two individuals at Halle synagogue in Saxony-Anhalt. The attacker was sentenced to life imprisonment (IRFR 2020d:15).

On occasions German Christian churches are objects of aggression. In 2019, the ministry of interior reported 128 anti-Christian incidents including 16 cases involving violence. Of these

incidents, 30 percent was motivated by right-wing ideology and 21 percent by left-wing ideology (IRFR 2020d:17). The same years arson or attempted arson in churches occurred in Krefeld, Neuenkirchen and Wolgast (IRFR 2020d:18).

The changing security-policy situation has impacted the entire society. Following a series of terrorist attacks carried out by ISIS in Paris in 2015, Germany tightened its legislation aimed at Islamic extremism, for instance, by prohibiting travel out of the country for terrorist training. In the same context, Germany imposed tighter restrictions on the mobility of foreign fighters and expanded the legislation restricting the financing of terrorist activity.

In 2017, the German Bundestag passed the Network Enforcement Law under which technology companies were compelled to counter hate speech, terrorist propaganda, criminal material and the spread of false information.

5.5.4. Adopted policies

Germany has developed already in the 1980s and 1990s a significant counter-terrorism infrastructure tackling with both left- and right-wing groups. After the threats from violent Islamism the existing infrastructure was reoriented and expanded. However, Germany does not have a national strategy and every region is following its own policies and strategies more or less independently from other regions. After the 9/11 attacks, Germany expanded the scope and powers of various government agencies, developed new policies, and increased its counter-terrorism legislation (GREASEd:4).

Federal government has initiated committees and networks to combat far-right extremisms and anti-Semitism. The federal government announced it would allocate more than one billion euros for different projects between 2021 and 2024 (IRFR 2020d:7).

Since 2006 the government has hosted German Islam Conference designed to be an institutionalized dialogue platform for the representatives of the government and Muslim communities (GIC). The dialogue that aims to improve religious and social participation continues (IRFR 2020d:14).

In 2004, a Joint Counter-Terrorism Center (GTAZ) was established with the aim to increase communication and cooperation between 40 different agencies involved in German national security with the focus on international Islamist terrorism. In addition, Germany has developed projects with social- and community-oriented approaches. These projects include, for instance, EXIT-Germany, that was initially founded to cope with neo-Nazi extremism but later adapted to combat violent religious radicalisation. The project is part of a civil society-based and partly government-funded NGO called the Center for Democratic Culture (ZDK) (GREASEd:4).

In Germany, ritual slaughter and circumcision are both permitted for Jews and Muslims but building mosques has been an area of contestation. While some regions permit building large purpose-built mosques some others impose more restrictions (GREASEd:5).

Some new religious movements have attracted government's attention on the account of their management and religious freedom and during the 1990s a number of sects were seen as political threats. In this context, the Jehovah's Witnesses faced suspicion and public corporation status was denied from them for a long time. Finally, in 2009, Jehovah's Witnesses were granted the status (GREASEd:5).

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nounced it would allocate more than one billion euros for different projects between 2021 and 2024 (IRFR 2020d:7).

5.5.5. Summary and research results

Half of the German population are members to either the Roman Catholic Church or Protestant congregations, with a slightly larger membership in favour of Catholics. The Muslim community in Germany, as in most of the focus countries of this report, is witnessing a rapid growth. Currently more than 70% of the Muslim population is concentrated in Germany's four western federal states where majority of the over 2300 Mosques are located, as well. The Jewish population has grown rapidly since the dissolution of The Soviet Union and the subsequent of emigration of towards Germany in the 1990s. None of the smaller religious groups in the country represent more than 1% of the population.

A characteristic feature of the church-state relationship in Germany is formal separation but practical cooperation in many social issues. Resembling the situation in Denmark, Germany's so-called church tax is collected directly from the income of the members of the church, and it is used for the purpose of religious education and welfare.

Recognized religions are granted a public corporation status, however the strict criteria regarding the size of the community and historical continuity of its activities restrain many from gaining official status.

Many regions are severely symptomatic of a crisis regarding population relations. A growing number of people, especially members of the Jewish population, seriously consider moving outside the country's borders.¹⁸ In 2019, exclusively in Berlin metropolitan area 449 anti-Semitic hate crimes were registered (RIAS).

The data provided by German Ministry of Interior indicates a steady increase of hate crime between 2001 and 2018. In the overwhelming majority of cases targeting houses of worship,

¹⁸ See: Frontline documentary Germany's Neo-Nazis & the Far Right(2021). <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/announcement/frontline-investigates-the-rise-of-neo-nazi-ideology-and-far-right-extremism-in-modern-day-germany/>

the object of the crime is mosque or synagogue, and the perpetrator is somewhat directly linked to the country's rapidly growing far-right operational environment. The frequency of hate crime is higher in the economically and socially disprivileged eastern states, however majority of hate crime against mosques and synagogues occur in western states, simply since the majority of these houses of worship are located there (Islam IQ).

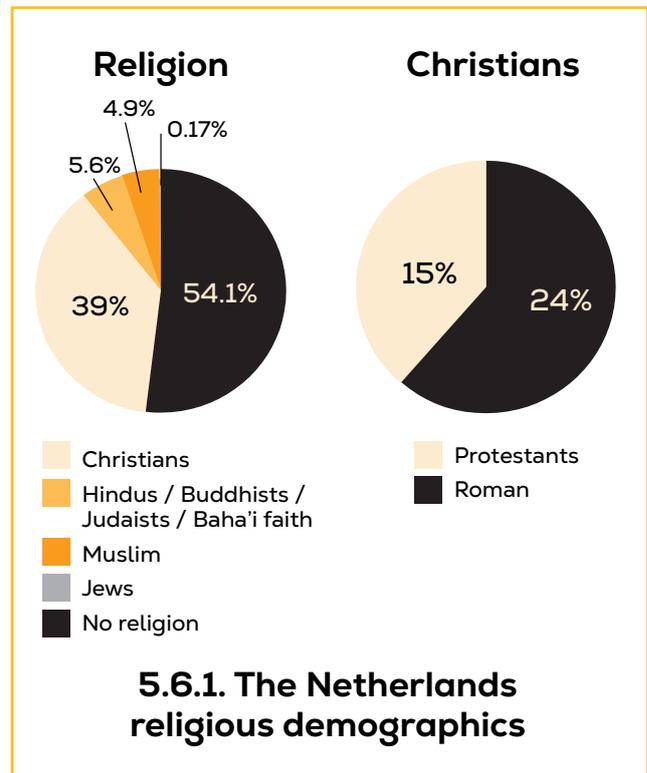
Many recent attacks against houses of worship and foiled attempts could have turned into large scale terrorist incidents. The perpetrators or those who planned strikes were both strategically and materially resourceful to carry out a mass killing. However, a large majority of the hate crime that target houses of worship are of symbolic nature and incidents of vandalism occur on a nearly daily basis.

5.6. The Netherlands

5.6.1. Religious demographics

The Netherlands with total population of 17.2 million (midyear 2019 estimate), is one of the most secular societies in Europe. A little more than half of its population (54.1 %) declare no affiliation with organized religion. Slightly less than quarter self-identify with the Roman Catholic Church and approximately 15% see themselves as Protestants, the largest denominations being Reformed Church, and Calvinists (IRFR 2020e:3). The country has some 6,900 churches of which 1,400 have been given another function. Particularly many churches have been turned into homes or cultural and community centres (van der Breggen&de Fijter 2019).

According to 2018 estimate there are 825,000 Muslims in the country (4.9 % of overall population). Majority are Sunni Muslims and largest groups in terms of immigration background are Turks, Moroccans, and Surinamese (Račius&Müssig,2020:478–9). Muslim population in the Netherlands, as elsewhere in EU countries, is largely concentrated in the major cities. Recent influx of Muslim immigrants and asylum seekers especially from Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Albania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina has diversified greatly the country's Muslim population. There are approximately 450 mosques in the country, most of which are dominated, roughly equally, by either Turkish or Moroccan followers and leadership. The remaining 77 Mosques fall under Surinamese influence (Račius&Müssig,2020:480).



The Jewish community in the country numbers roughly 30,000 half of whom live in Amsterdam and its close proximity (USCIRF:22). In addition, there are medium- size communities in Rotterdam and The Hague. There are some 150 synagogues in the Netherlands, of which some 50 are actively used for religious services (EJCe).

People identifying with other minority religions such as Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Baha'i faith represent 5.6% of the total population. In 2015 it was estimated that the number of Hindus was from 150,000 to 200,000 individuals. A vast majority, 85 percent, are migrants and their offspring originating from the former

Dutch colony of Surinam and the remaining 10 percent are of Indian descent (Sharma, 2015). In 2006 there were approximately 50 Hindu temples in the country (Donk et al. 2006: 130). Sikhs are a very small minority in the Netherlands, numbering around 12,000 people. There are 12 gurdwaras in the Netherlands (WGC).

Buddhism with roughly 250,000 followers is the third religion after Christianity and Islam (Nisnews, 2009). Buddhism has attracted over the recent years white Dutch population groups, and currently there are between eighty and one hundred Buddhist centres in the country (BUN). The umbrella organization Boeddistische Union Nederland (BUN) unites forty-eight Dutch Buddhist groups. According to BUN the member associations run seven monasteries and retreat centres and seven temples (BUN). A considerably larger number of organizations is given by World Buddhist Directory which lists 113 Buddhist organizations in the country (WBD).

5.6.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

The constitution prohibits discrimination on religious grounds and provides for the freedom of individuals to profess their religion or belief, individually or in community with others, provided it does not affect their responsibilities under the law. It is a crime to engage in public speech inciting religious hatred (IRFR 2020e:3).

The law does not require religious groups to register with the government. Under the law, if the tax authorities determine a group is “of a philosophical or religious nature,” contributes to the general welfare of society, and is non-profit and nonviolent, they grant it exemptions from all taxes, including income, value-added, and property taxes (IRFR 2020e:3–4). The government provides funding to religious schools, other religious educational institutions, and religious healthcare facilities. To qualify for funding, institutions must meet government educational standards as well as minimum class size and healthcare requirements (IRFR 2020e:4).

5.6.3. Threat picture

According to the General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen Veiligheids-

dienst (AIVD), the Islamism-motivated operational environment has seen strong growth since 2013. In the Netherlands, the extreme right operational environment, in turn, is characterised as limited with the threat estimations mainly falling upon lone individuals, albeit ones who are networked online. The AIVD holds that some of the Muslim young people of the Netherlands are at risk of being recruited into cells that carry out attacks on European soil. The extremist organisations have also shown that they seek to recruit asylum seekers and refugees who have arrived in the Netherlands in recent years (Counter Extremism Project B).

According to the AIVD, the movement of the extreme right is increasing but local groups and lone individuals still rarely make violence a part of their activities. For example, acts of violence motivated by racism are limited to a few dozen per year. In the case of the Netherlands, the operational environment builds on fragmented small groups that are at least loosely tied to movements within the international operational environment, such as Blood & Honour, Combat 18 and Pegida. Furthermore, this range of actors includes individuals communicating online who are not associated with any organisation. As a whole, the active operational environment of people committing violence is very small. According to police estimates, it comprises only about 150–250 people and their number has not changed substantially in recent years (Counter Extremism Project A).

Over the past years the Netherlands has been spared large-scale terrorist acts. Between 2016 and 2020 there have been three terrorist incidents in the Netherlands, of which only one caused casualties. They include an attack on mosque in Enschede (February 27, 2016), stabbing in public bus in Amsterdam (August 31, 2018), and shooting attack against tram passengers in Utrecht (March 18, 2019) where four people were killed and six were injured. (GTDe).

According to OSCE Hate Crime reporting, the trend of reported hate crimes has been surprisingly decreasing since 2015. In 2015, 5288 cases were reported, whereas the respective numbers for the following years are: 2016

(4376 reported cases), 2017 (3499), 2018 (3299) and 2019 (2016)¹⁹. However, on the basis of these figures, it is impossible to assess the overall situation; the number of recorded crimes is affected by a number of factors such as policy changes in recording and change in the public political climate among many other factors. Figures of prosecuted cases are available only for the years 2017 (331 cases), 2018 (312) and 2019 (343), whereas the figures of sentenced cases are available only for the years 2017 (79 cases) and 2018 (91).²⁰

The vast majority of the reported hate incidents perpetrated against religious communities and houses of worship target the Muslim and Jewish communities. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCEe), in 2019 there were 257 incidents motivated by anti-Semitism and 100 motivated by bias against members of other religions or beliefs (IRFR 2020e:15). Unlike in the neighbouring Belgium, hate incidents targeting Christians and Christian premises are rare in the Netherlands (OIDACE,2020).

CIDI Antisemitism Monitor reported in 2019 182 incidents including 10 threats of violence, 43 cases of verbal abuse, 14 incidents of vandalism and 50 "public square" incidents (antisemitic chants at soccer matches or demonstrations) (CIDI, 2019). In the report online incidents were not reported. In 2020, 135 incidents were reported including 26 'real life' incidents (e.g., threats), 15 cases of vandalism, 29 direct vicinities, 25 written abuses and 40 public sphere incident (CIDI, 2020).

Overwhelming majority of the anti-Muslim hate incidents listed in 2019 are attacks against property (OSCEe). In 2019, police registered in total 30 incidents against mosques (IRFR 2020e:18). Typical cases involve smearing doors and walls with blood, excrement, and san-

itary pads, painting racist graffiti and swastikas, shattering windows, attempted arson, burglary and damaging property (ibid.). Furthermore, the same year several cases of threatening entire Muslim communities with violence occurred (ibid.).

In addition to hate incidents, anti-Muslim organizations planned protests near mosques or construction sites of mosques but due the coronavirus restrictions most of them were denied permission (IRFR 2020e:20) As elsewhere in the target countries of this report many hate incidents take place in social media platforms. On February 19, 2019, an individual was convicted and sentenced to 90 days imprisonment for approving on Facebook the mosque attack in Christchurch New Zealand and threatening to do the same in Netherlands (IRFR 2020e:20-1).

5.6.4. Adopted policies

In the case of the Netherlands, the measures to prevent and counter terrorism are tied first and foremost to Islamism- motivated extremism. In the Dutch model, preventive work at the local level falls under the responsibility of an administrative structure called the joint procedure, formed by the mayor, the police, and the prosecutors. It oversees coordinating the measures among the authorities operating in the various sectors. Within this structure, the various authorities share information on the progress related to extremism and radicalisation and the people causing concern. Based on this information, the authorities conduct a threat assessment of these people and, if necessary, direct them to the appropriate services and/or other support. A person under a criminal investigation, too, will have the opportunity to access other forms of support and services. The joint procedure decides on further measures by consensus.²¹

19 In 2019, 654 cases were motivated by racism and xenophobia, 257 cases by anti-Semitism, 100 cases by bias against other religions and beliefs, 1 case by gender-based bias, 574 cases by anti-LGBTI bias, 11 cases by disability bias and 419 cases by unspecified motivation (OSCEe).

20 *International Religious Freedom Report, The Netherlands 2020* by U.S. Department of State provides detailed information of some of the recent attacks and hate crimes (IRFR 2020e:14-21).

21 Observations and recommendations for local collaboration on referral mechanism of persons of concern in local multi-stakeholder collaboration for preventing violent radicalisation. Perukangas, Milla; Mankkinen, Tarja. Publications of the Ministry of the Interior 2019:17 pp. 39-41.

In 2016, the government initiated a program National Action Plan Against Discrimination to take measures to counter anti-Islamic attitudes and anti-Semitism. The program offers inter-religious dialogue, discrimination awareness in education and soccer (IRFR 2020e:10). In addition, several organisations such as Dutch Muslim Council (CMO) and Council of Jews, Christians, and Muslims (OJCM) pursue similar goals and are working in dialogue with the government (IRFR 2020e:6).

The state directs considerable amount of resources in countering anti-Semitism. In 2019, the government spent one million euros for that purpose (IRFR 2020e:11). On December 2020, Justice Minister announced that the government would appoint a national coordinator for fighting anti-Semitism in early 2021 (IRFR 2020e:12) Together with security officials the government is in dialogue with Jewish community and organisations such as Dutch Jewish Council (CJO), Netherlands-Jewish Congregation, Netherlands Alliance of Progressive Judaism Council of Jews, Christians, and Muslims (OJCM) to discuss important matters (IRFR 2020e:12).

As for cooperation with Muslim communities, the government-funded think tank Knowledge Platform on Integration and Society was operating to counter anti-Muslim discrimination (IRFR 2020e:11).

An important part of the fight against hate crime is on the shoulders of the NGO sector. The Security Pact Against Discrimination is a movement established by Muslim, Jewish and Christian organisations to combat anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim sentiment and other forms of discrimination (IRFR 2020e:21). Other anti-discrimination organisations and movements include Belief in Living Together, Get to Know Your Neighbors by Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam, Mo&Moos program of Salaam-Shalom NGO and Platform for Islamic Organizations (IRFR 2020e:22).

5.6.5. Summary and research results

Four elements characterize Netherland's religious landscape; half of the population is not affiliated with any faith group, the Christian de-

nominations with longest historical roots - the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches - have still the largest number of adherents. Thirdly, the considerable and rapidly growing Muslim population is constantly diversifying, due to immigration, yet the organizational sphere continues to be dominated by the largest ethnic groups, those with Turkish and Moroccan origin. Fourthly, the liberal legal context grants a great independence for the religious groups on condition that they contribute positively to the society. The state does not require religious groups to be officially recognized.

Despite of the fact that the Netherlands has witnessed over the past years progress in many fields related to hate crime and anti-discrimination policies, from the point of view of security of the religious communities more determined responses from the authorities are needed. Critiques have claimed that the current legislation does not provide sufficiently dissuasive sanctions to perpetrators of hate crime (ECRI 2019: 9). Moreover, there are strongly xenophobic and fear fuelling currents within the political discourse, media reporting and social media and some highly visible politicians have openly adopted agendas that are influenced by racist beliefs and ideas promoting biological superiority of the white race (Ibid. p.17).

An overwhelming majority of the reported hate incidents against houses of worship, as indicated by data provided by OSCE (OSCEe) and Global Terrorism Database (GTDe) are targeting Muslim and Jewish premises. The same conclusion is made by International Religious Freedom Report by U.S. Department of State (IRFR). However, several factors indicate that the "boiling point" of social tensions is a far more distant concern than in the neighboring countries. Compared to France, Belgium, and Germany the size of both and right-wing extremist and Islamist environments is rather limited, and the country's religious premises have not witnessed any major violent incidents in the past five years.

Based on OSCE data over 90% of reported cases of anti-Muslim hate crime were in 2019 processed by the Turkish Forum Netherlands and the remaining cases by SETA, an Ankara based think tank focusing on islamophobia. This may indicate that particularly Moroccan and small-

er Muslim groups require support and training in order to enhance their cooperation with the law enforcement and eagerness to report hate crime. However, more first hand data is needed to support this argument as both Muslim and Jewish populations are strongly centralised in the largest cities Amsterdam and its proximity, Rotterdam, Hague and Utrecht, these locations are most likely targets of the hate crime in the future too. The contrast with neighbouring Bel-

gium is particularly striking when the focus is on cases of vandalism against Christian churches. The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe reports only a hand full of cases between the years 2009 and 2020 in the Netherlands (OIDACE 2020). Based on the existing hate crime data of OSCE and GTD it is not possible to estimate the threat picture regarding smaller minority religions.

5.7. Hungary

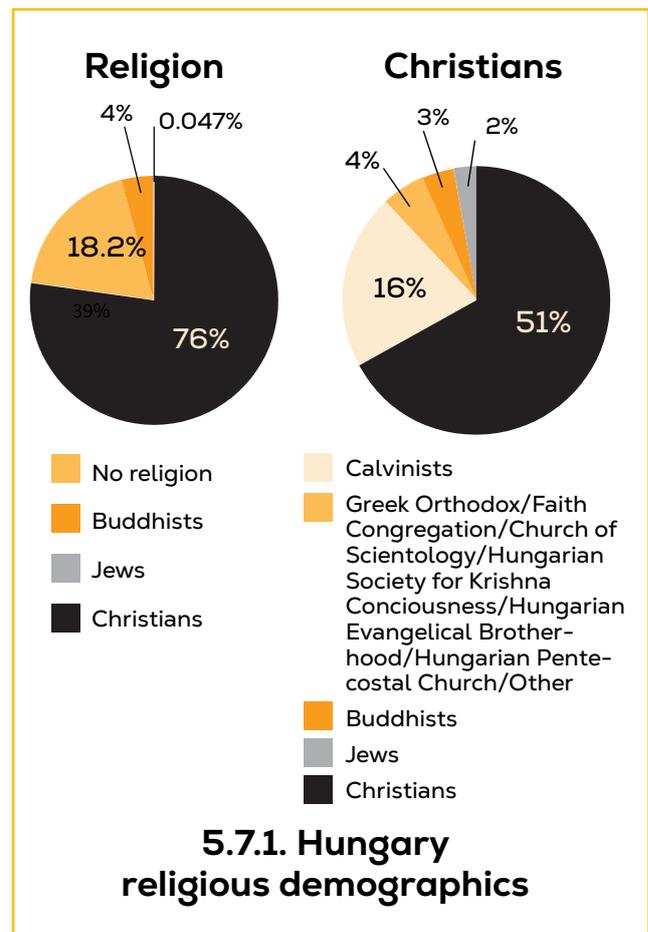
5.7.1. Religious demographics

In 2020, Hungary has a total population of 9.8 million of which 51% are Roman Catholics. Approximately 18.2% of the Hungarians have no religion. Other Christian denominations include Hungarian Reformed Church or Calvinists (16%), Christian Lutherans (3%) and Greek Catholics (2%) (IRFR 2020f).

Currently, there is no reliable data about the Muslim population. According to 2011 census, the Muslim population was 5579. The actual number is likely to be higher following the flow of asylum seekers since 2014. The main refugee groups are Afghans, Turks, Bosnians, and Arabs. The Muslim population is concentrated in major cities such as Budapest, Debrecen, Győr and Szeged. The exact number of mosques in the country is not known but there are seven mosques in Budapest and at least seven mosques elsewhere (Račius&Müssig, 2020:343–5).

In 2020, Hungary’s Jewish population was about 47,000 (USCIRF:20). Today there are 23 functioning synagogues in Budapest and some 30 more elsewhere in the country (EJCf).

The following minority churches and religious groups form together less than 5% of the population: Greek Orthodox, Faith Congregation (Pentecostal group), Church of Scientology, Russian and other Orthodox Christian groups, other Christian denominations, Buddhists, the Hungarian Society for Krishna Consciousness, Hungarian Evangelical Brotherhood, Hungarian Pentecostal Church (IRFR 2020f:2).



5.7.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

The Basic Law of Hungary, adopted in 2011, states that the state is neutral vis-à-vis religious communities. There is no state religion, and everyone is free to choose their religion. Churches are separated and independent from the state.

However, the text stipulates also that the state cooperates with Churches for certain public

goals such as social services and education.²² The preamble of the Basic Law underlines that Christianity has a special symbolic position in the country having a role to preserve the Hungarian nation. Therefore, Christianity has a privileged position in many respects (GREASEf:2; IRFR 2020f:3).

The law stipulates no control or monitoring mechanisms for religious groups, their doctrines, central traditions, internal regulations, organizational structure, or rituals (IRFR 2020f:6).

The country's legislation stipulates four different levels for the recognition of religious communities: established churches, registered churches, listen churches, and religious associations. The name "church" is used for all religious communities regardless of the name commonly used for their place of worship. According to the law, from 2020 onwards churches in all four categories eligible to collect 1 percent of the taxpayer's income taxes if the taxpayer agrees to allocate the amount to the church.²³

To qualify for established church status, a religious community must first have registered status. After this stage, a comprehensive cooperation agreement with the state is required. The government submits the comprehensive agreement to parliament which must approve it by a two-thirds majority vote. There are 32 religious communities recognized as established churches in Hungary. These include: the Roman Catholic Church, a range of Protestant denominations, a range of Orthodox Christian groups, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Seventh-day Adventists, the Salvation Army, Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities, Unified Hungarian Jewish Congregation, Hungarian Autonomous Orthodox Jewish Community, the Hungarian Society for Krishna Consciousness as well as Buddhist and Muslim umbrella organizations (IRFR 2020f:5–6).

The established churches receive many benefits from the state including supplementary subsidy for the schools' operating expenses, tax

benefits and other additional funds. Other religious groups may apply for a supplementary operational subsidy and the Ministry of Human Capacities may sign an individualized contract with them to cover these costs. In addition, only established and registered churches are eligible to receive a state subsidy supplementing the 1 percent tax allocations from the churches' members. In 2020, government had provided 625.8 million euros to established churches (IRFR 2020f:7,14).

To acquire registered church status, a religious group must have received tax allocations from an average of 4,000 person per year in the five-year period prior to the application. The group must also have operated as a religious association for at least 20 years in the country or at least 100 years internationally. Registered churches include the following communities: the Hungarian Baha'i Community, Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Association, Bet Orim Reform Jewish Community Association, Shalom Church Biblical Congregations, Church of Evangelical Friendship, the Hungarian Drukpa Kagyu Buddhist Community and Hungarian Daoist Church (IRFR 2020f:3,8).

To be qualified for listed church status, a religious group must have received tax allocations from an average of 1,000 persons per year in the three-year period prior to the application. The following seven religious groups have listed church status: the Hungarian Baha'i Community, Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Association, Bet Orim Reform Jewish Community Association, Shalom Church Biblical Congregations, Church of Evangelical Friendship, the Hungarian Drukpa Kagyu Buddhist Community and Hungarian Daoist Church (IRFR 2020f:3,8). To qualify for religious association status, a religious group must have at minimum 10 members (IRFR 2020f:4).

5.7.3. Threat picture

In recent years, the environment has been increasingly hostile towards Islam and Muslims.

²² During the 2019–2020 school year, churches and church-run higher educational institutions operated 17.1 percent of elementary and secondary schools and 10 percent of preschools (IRFR 2020f:10).

²³ According to the statistics, 114 churches and religious groups received 1 percent personal income tax allocations (IRFR 2020f:15).

There are reported cases of discrimination and hostile behavior against Muslims such as verbal abuse and physical attacks against veiled women. Most of the cases remain unreported and do not appear in criminal or hate crime statistics (GREASEf 2019:3). Increasingly negative attention to Muslims diverted the attention from the Roma and Jewish population, that constituted the “usual” target of radical groups and individuals.

Unlike many other European countries, Hungary has not experienced frequent or large-scale threats from radical Islamist extremist groups or individuals claiming to be affiliated to such groups. Only two Hungarian individuals are known to have wanted to join the so-called Islamic State. Their process of radicalization took place in 2014 in online environments and they did not participate in organized religious activities, thus it was impossible for the organized Muslim community to intervene proactively. One of the persons threatened to drive a lorry into a group of people after the Nice attacks in 2016 (truck driver killed 86 civilians). Both were arrested and tried in Hungary in 2017. Both the Organization of Muslims in Hungary (OMH) and Hungarian intelligence services confirmed that they did not have knowledge of any other radicalized individuals in this direction (GREASEf 2019: 3-4).

According to GREASE report the limited scope of the extremist environment inspired by Islamism can be explained by a number of factors SK- GREASE Report* (2022). The Muslim community in Hungary is small and tightly knit (less than 0.01 % of the total population). Many immigrants of Muslim background came to the country to study and after graduation some of them decided to stay.

As a result. many Muslims have high social standing and high education. In Hungary, Muslim under class does not exist the way it does in many Western European countries (GREASEf

2019:4). Regardless of the very small Muslim population, according to an EU-funded survey in 2019, 41 percent of Hungarians said they did not sympathize with Muslims while 15 percent did not sympathize with Jews (IRFR 2020f:17).

According to OSCE Hate Crime reporting, the figures of reported hate crimes have been fluctuating since 2016 (first year of reporting). In 2016, 33 cases were reported, whereas the respective numbers for the following years are: 2017 (233 reported cases), 2018 (94) and 2019 (132)²⁴. Figures of prosecuted cases are available only for the years 2016 (33 cases), 2018 (52) and 2019 (39), whereas the figures of sentenced cases are available only for the year 2016 (39 cases).

According to the information provided by the Global Terrorism Database, Hungary experienced three terrorist attacks between 2015 and 2019, none of which caused fatalities. One of them was targeting places of worship. In October 2019, members of neo-Nazi group Legio Hungaria set fire to Aurora NGO center in Budapest run by a Jewish youth organization (GTDf; IRFR 2020f:17-18).

According to the Action and Protection Foundation (TEV), which monitors anti-Semitism, 16 anti-Semitic incidents of which four were vandalism were reported in the first half of the year 2020 (IRFR 2020f:1; USCIRF:20).²⁵ In 2019 and 2020, various extremist right-wing and neo-Nazi activities such as demonstrations and spreading of anti-Semitic propaganda took place. Various incidents of anti-Semitic hate speech were committed by prominent public figures and politicians too (IRFR 2020f:11,13,16).

5.7.4. Adopted policies

In recent years the government has taken steps backwards as regards to minority rights and protection of ethnic and religious communities against discrimination. In 2011, the government

24 In 2019, 5 cases involved damaging property, 85 cases involved desecration of graves, 16 cases were attacks against places of worship, 20 cases were disturbance of peace and 6 cases involved other types of vandalism (OSCEf).

25 In 2020 among other things, these incidents included vandalizing a Jewish graveyard in Kecel, south of Budapest on (November 1), a swastika was drawn on a poster of a Jewish high school in Budapest (June), gravestones in the Jewish cemetery of Kiskunfelegyhaza were gravely damaged by vandals (March) (IRFR 2020f:17).

decided to abolish the role of the ombudsman responsible for minority and religious communities' rights (GREASEf:5).

Hungary's constitution takes a clear stance against hate speech and violence. The constitution prohibits speech that violates the dignity of any religious community. Threatening, inciting hatred, or calling for violence against religious community or its members, or impeding someone else from freely exercising his or her religion are both punishable with a prison sentence up to three years (IRFR 2020f:7–8). Violence against a member of the clergy is classified as violence against an "individual providing public service" punishable by one to five years of imprisonment. Preparation for the use of force against any member of a religious community is also punishable by imprisonment (IRFR 2020f:8).

However, the country's political elite propagates seemingly exclusive statements of "Christian Europe". In 2020 September 21, prime minister Victor Orbán stated in daily *Magyar Nemzet* that by 2050 the majority population in large Western European cities and 20 percent of European population would be Muslim, while Central European countries, Hungary included, were choosing migration-free future. About a month earlier, deputy prime minister Zsolt Semjén stated that none of the approximately 3,000 churches that the government had built or refurbished since 2010 "will be turned into mosques or shopping malls" (IRFR 2020f:14).

5.7.5. Summary and research results

In Hungary, the Basic Law stipulates that the state is neutral vis-à-vis religious communities. In practice, however, the state cooperates with Christian churches for certain public goals. For instance, 2019–2020 school year, churches and church-run higher educational institutions operated 17.1 percent of elementary and secondary schools and 10 percent of preschools.

In Hungary, the legislation stipulates four different levels for the recognition of religious communities: established churches, registered churches, listen churches, and religious associations. According to the law, from 2020 onwards churches in all four categories eligible to collect 1 percent of the taxpayer's income taxes if the taxpayer agrees to allocate the amount to the church. According to the statistics, 114 churches and religious groups received 1 percent personal income tax allocations. When conducting trainings and cooperating with religious institutions in Hungary, it is wise to consider their status as it effects their resources and visibility in the society.

Unlike in many other countries, the law stipulates no control or monitoring mechanisms for religious groups, their doctrines, central traditions, internal regulations, organizational structure, or rituals. The extremist environment motivated by islamism is very small and in recent years there have been no threats from radical extremist groups or individuals claiming to be affiliated to such groups.

5.8. Austria

5.8.1. Religious demographics

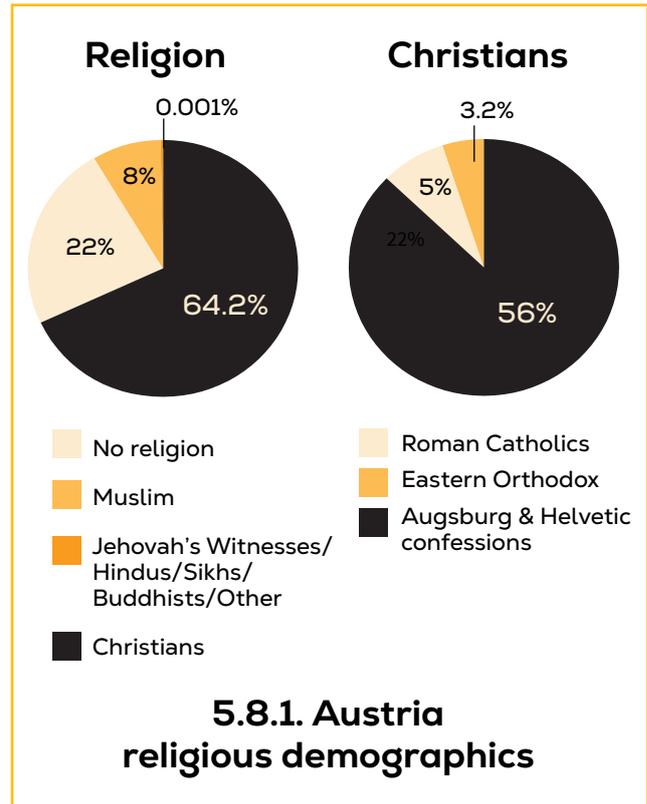
In 2020, Austria has a total population of 8.9 million of which 56% are Roman Catholics. Approximately 22% of the Austrians have no religion. Other Christian denominations include Eastern Orthodox churches (5%) and Christian Protestants meaning Augsburg and Helvetic confessions (3.2 %) (IRFR 2020h:2–3).

In 2018 estimate, the Muslim population was 707,000, that is 8% of the total population. Of the Muslim population 35% were born in Austria, 23% in Turkey and 17% in former Yugoslavia. In 2015–2016, the country, as rest of the Western Europe, witnessed a rapid increase in refugee populations from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran (Račius&Müssig,2020:54). Roughly one third of the Muslim population is concentrated in Vienna and 13% in Vorarlberg region. There are about 400 mosques in the country of which the vast majority are not purpose-built. Most of them are located in the outskirts of cities. Five mosques have minaret installed (Račius&Müssig,2020:55). In 2018, the Jewish population was approximately 9,000 (WJC). There are several synagogues in Austria including Stadttempel in Vienna. In addition, there are 13 shtiebelach (informal house of prayer) and prayer rooms (EJCh).

The following minority churches and religious groups form each less than 1% of the population: Jehovah’s Witnesses, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and other minority Christian groups (IRFR 2020h:2–3).

5.8.2. Religious institutions and state legislation

Legislation of Austria recognizes three categories of religious groups: religious societies, religious confessional communities and religious associations. There are 16 recognized societies including Roman Catholic Church, Augsburg and Helvetic confessions of the Protestant Church, Islamic Religious Authority of Austria (IGGO), Old Catholic Church, Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG), Eastern Orthodox Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,



New Apostolic Church, Syrian Orthodox Church, Coptic Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, Methodist Church of Austria, the Buddhist Community, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Alevi Community in Austria and Free Christian Churches (IRFR 2020h:3–4).

Religious groups seeking to achieve religious society status must submit an application to the Office for Religious Affairs in the Federal Chancellery. To gain the recognition a religious group must have membership equaling 0.2 percent of the country’s population (ca. 17,700 persons) and have existed for 20 years, at least 10 of which must have been as an association and five as a confessional community. Groups that do not meet these criteria may still apply for religious society status if they have been active internationally for at least 100 years and active as an association in the country for 10 years (IRFR 2020h:4). Registered religious societies receive many benefits such as tax exemptions from property tax for all buildings dedicated to the active practice of the religion and administrative purposes. Donors do not pay taxes on donation. In addition, religious societies are exempt from a surveillance charge when the state provides security protection and certain municipal administrative fees and services (IRFR 2020h:4).

In addition, the government recognizes 10 confessional communities that are the Baha'i faith, Movement for Religious Renewal-Community of Christians, Pentecostal Community of God, Seventh-day Adventists, Hindu Community, Islamic-Shiite Community, Old-Alevi Community in Austria, Unification Church, United Pentecostal Community of Austria and Sikhs. Religious associations include the Church of Scientology, Sahaja Yoga and International Society for Krishna Consciousness (IRFR 2020h:4-5).

5.8.3. Threat picture

In recent years, the public discourse in Austria has become increasingly Islamophobic and xenophobic. Divisive and antagonistic overtones targeting Muslims and refugees are often seen (ECRIh:7). There are many examples. For instance, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), a far-right party that gained 26% of the votes in the 2017 Austrian legislative election, advocates the ideas of "natural dominance by true-born Austrians" and expresses hostility towards refugees and minority groups. For example, FPÖ's Minister of Interior suggested concentrating refugees in central locations and a deputy mayor from the party published a poem that compared migrants with rats (ECRIh:18).

As in every country of this report, the level underreporting is a major issue. In Austria, according to Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, only 8% of the respondents who felt racially or ethnically discriminated reported their case to the authorities (FRA 2019b:9-10). The figure is lowest among the EU countries of the report. According to the information provided by the Global Terrorism Database, Austria experienced five terrorist attacks between 2015 and 2019. Places of worship were not targeted directly, but Red Cross' refugee center in Altenfelden and another refugee center in Vienna were attacked (GTDh).

On November 2nd, 2020, an ISIS sympathizer Kujtim Fejzullai shot and killed four persons and injured 22 in Vienna. The attacker was shot by the police. The terror attack was the deadliest Islamic extremism related attack in Austria's history.

According to OSCE Hate Crime reporting, the trend of reported hate crimes has been surprisingly decreasing since 2015. In 2015, 395 cases were reported, whereas the respective numbers for the following years are: 2016 (425 reported cases), 2017 (302), 2018 (307) and 2019 (125)²⁶. Figures of prosecuted cases and sentenced cases are available only for the years 2018 (407 prosecuted, 208 sentenced) and 2019 (421 prosecuted, 191 sentenced). This does not necessarily reflect a decrease in actual hate crime cases in total, but perhaps changes in reporting modalities and cultures.

According to the Ministry of Interior, there were six anti-Muslim and 13 anti-Jewish incidents reported to police in the first half of the year 2020. In 2019, the IGGO's Documentation Center on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim Racism reported 1,051 anti-Muslim incidents. Correspondingly, Jewish Community of Vienna (IKG) reported 550 anti-Semitic incidents in the year 2019 (IRFRh:1,14).

5.8.4. Adopted policies

In July 2020, a new office was established in the Federal Chancellery with an objective of combatting political Islam and documenting religiously motivated Islamic extremism. Integration minister Susanne Raab stated the new office was not directed against Islam as a whole, but only against extremist ideology of political Islam. IGGO president Uemit Vural criticized the government for not including the IGGO in the planning of the office and called for expanding the office's mandate to include all forms of religiously motivated extremism and racism (IRFRh:10). Following the November terrorist attack in Vienna, the government presented draft legislation that would ban religiously motivated extremism. The legislation would oblige IGGO to present registries of all its mosques and imams and impose more strict monitoring on Muslim organizations' financing. It would also rise fines for Muslim organizations failing to provide information on their accounts. (IRFRh:9-10).

In the aftermath of the November attack, the government closed the Tewhid Mosque which

²⁶ In 2019, 89 cases were motivated by racism and xenophobia, 30 cases by anti-Semitism and 6 cases by bias against Muslims (OSCEh).

Kujtim Fejzullai attended. Another unregistered facility used as a mosque was also closed. Later in the same month, authorities raided homes, businesses and associations supposedly affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas arresting 30 individuals.

In September 2020, the government announced that it was developing a national strategy to combat anti-Semitism and would establish a new office in the Federal Chancellery to coordinate measures by all ministries to implement the new strategy (IRFRh:11).

A law on hate speech took effect in January 2021 requiring online platforms to identify and delete hate speech content. The legislation received widespread support from civil society groups, including Amnesty International and the Association for Civil Courage and Anti-Racism (IRFRh:12).

5.8.5. Summary and research results

In Austria, there are three categories of religious institutions: religious societies, religious confessional communities and religious associations. When organising trainings in Austria the status of the religious group should be considered. Those without official status may lack sufficient human, economic, and material resources to participate effectively and may thus need additional support.

Hostile public discourse and attacks against refugee centers reveal the hidden tensions and hostility in the society. If we use the “boiling point” metaphor we may conclude that the slowly “bubbling” anger has reached a threshold where tensions escalate, and social stability is in danger. However, it is difficult to predict whether these incidents translate in increasing levels of attacks against places of worship in the future.

Legal framework with regards hate crimes and discrimination is fragmented and in many respects confused. The anti-discriminatory laws are divided between the Austrian Federal government and the provinces (Länder) creating a complex and fragmented legal system. The fact that each province provides varying degrees of protection for different grounds of discrimination according to its legislation often results in confusion and legal uncertainty (ECRIh:7).

6. Participatory Research

The following participatory research is divided into four sections. The first part examines the interviewees' general perceptions of the security environment and the way in which they frame the social and political background factors of hate crimes. The second section focuses on the multifaceted security threats and security-related transnational dimensions. The third section examines the ways in which different faith communities and houses of worship respond to security challenges. The final section draws attention to the interviewees' views and suggestions on how religious communities could act in a way that increases their resilience, and simultaneously prevents confrontation between population groups.

6.1. Perceptions of security

The past two decades have witnessed a profound change in the Western European public rhetoric concerning sociocultural diversity. Hateful narratives that mix a multitude of racist, ethno-nativist, white supremacist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-pluralist ideas is today deeply rooted in the public discourses from parliamentary politics to social media platforms. Social polarization between population groups has become a cause of concern throughout the EU countries (Ginsburgh et. al. 2020). While these developments are empirical facts (European Commission 2021a) it must be reminded that on the grassroots level, the ways in which people observe sociocultural and religious diversification seems far more complex.

Participatory research has shown that people in a single setting, such as a rapidly diversifying suburb, hold a wide range of contrasting attitudes towards diversification (Huttunen & Juntunen 2021; den Yul 2010).

In a similar vein, a wide range of attitudes can be traced from the interview material collected for this report. Upon hearing how many hate crimes are perpetrated against faith communities in a number Western European countries, some interviewees were highly suspicious of such data,

and considered it grossly exaggerated, while others were convinced that the situation is in reality much worse than revealed by the official statistics. However, even those interviewees who thought that social polarization and hate crimes are increasing, recognized that a large majority of the population is in harmony with the increasing diversification. At the same time, it must be emphasized that the interviewees consider that EU member states are in different stages with regard to social polarization and expressions of hate.

According to the interviewees, France, largely due to post-colonial legacies, the large-scale labour migration policy of the 1960s and structural marginalization of the immigrant population, and Germany, especially due to the dramatically increased migration from global south in 2015 – 2016, are seen to struggle with the severe problems of social polarization.

“In France, there is a collective memory of the French colonial rule in the Maghreb-region. It is a question which is still an open wound for them. When I worked as an interpreter, I got to know many Algerians, both men and women, whose fear and hatred (of the French society) I sensed very concretely. I was once interpreting an Algerian asylum seeker who came to France with his wife and five children. The social assistant explained that they had the right for an allowance of 500 Euro monthly as asylum seekers. The man had a very basic educational background. He said that it is not enough, as there is a sixth child on its way. He said that his grandfather was a soldier in the French army and that in Algeria, people are still bullying those whose families were part of the French army. So, he claimed that due to his grandfather's and his own suffering, he has the right for more allowance money. The social assistant said she is not responsible for the past and cannot permit more money. Both were furious.” (NA)

“When I went to work in the Islamic field (in 2006), I felt a deep rooted racism, which was present on both personal and institutional level. Racist attitudes started to increase even

more during the 2015 refugee crisis. A clear fear mongering by the radical right got louder. Pegida-movement and AfD-party claimed that these people (refugees) were taking your jobs and that they would Islamize Europe. The media played part in spreading the culture of fear of Islam. There were TV panel discussions with titles such as “the terror of Islam” with images of explosions, violence and veiled women. The fear was constantly disseminated by the right wing and the various opponents of Islam, and they were increasingly networked. We welcome critique, because it helps to correct issues. But these people were accusing Islamic associations, claiming that they always have a double agenda. They claimed that their true goal was either to Islamize Europe or serve foreign interests. (AB)

The interviewees residing in Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, and Ireland recognized that hate rhetoric has steadily increased since the turn of the millennium, yet the situation is far from that of Germany and France.

“I do not think that the situation in Denmark resembles Germany or other countries. Still, it doesn’t mean that there aren’t any problems. Yes, some immigrants suffer from clear integration problems which relate to unemployment and lack of education.” (ZA)

“I think the characteristic feature of Belgium, and Brussels in particular, is that there is, on one hand, a great degree of coexistence between religions. This is somewhat paradoxical, as there are, on the other hand also terrorist incidents.” (TA)

“Due to the fact that us Christians suffered a lot in Iraq, we attempt to acclimatize ourselves in any European society. I see that people learn language quickly. They try to leave behind the dark experiences within the dictatorship (of Saddam Hussein’s era) and they attempt to forget how they suffered because of extremism. Any Christian tries to show Germans that he is Christian and wants to demarcate himself from Muslims. He tries to indicate that he is not a suspect (in a security sense).” (ZA)

“There were some incidents that targeted Hindus (in Switzerland), but nothing serious has happened.” (RA)

6.1.1. Framing changes in the security climate

The interviewees used primarily three ways of framing the changing security climate: (1) referring to a series of milestone events, (2) personal historical experiences, and (3) linking the change with the longer histories of social marginalization.

When asked to comment on the prevailing hate crime situation in their countries of residence, the interviewees routinely set off by describing the transformation of the security climate in terms of critical milestones, i.e. dramatic events that gradually changed the public narratives concerning religious, cultural and ethnic diversity. First of all, these include the large-scale terror attacks, such as those occurring in New York and Washington DC (2001), Madrid (2004), London (2005), Oslo (2011), Paris (2015), Brussels (2016), and New Zealand (2019). Secondly, many interviewees mentioned a number of populist politicians such as Donald Trump in the USA, Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Pia Kjaersgaard in Denmark and Eric Zemmour in France who fished for attention by warning the general public about the threats posed by migration and multiculturalism. As one interviewee (AB) aptly expressed “first is the word” and continued:

“Whenever we find a parliamentarian (in any EU country) who says that we have to finish Islam and that Islam is the religion of violence, they directly call for people to attack Muslims.” (AB)

A central responsibility, the interviewees claimed, is as well on openly racist election campaigns, together with the publication of cultural products, such as the anti-Islamic film *Fitna* (2008), that incited fear and violent counter reactions and debates concerning limits of liberty of expression.

“There are always challenges, whether it is a time of an election campaign (in France) or not. Things became critical after the assassination of Samuel Paty²⁷, the history teacher. The event also caused a wave of hate incidents.” (NA)

According to the interviewees, by the year 2016 the public debate on immigration, multiculturalism, and increasing religious diversity had reached a point where the hate rhetoric of the populist politicians had become more and more “gentleman like” (AB). For the interviewees, the core message of these public political figures is that the only way to be accepted within the context of a nation is that the “foreign” individual renounces totally his/her cultural, religious, and ethnic background.

Similar idea is expressed in many versions in the interview data:

“You just need to insult and you have all the microphones in front of you. Eric Zemmour’s message is that you should not name your child as Khalid, but instead call him Marco. He calls for a total melting (of immigrants) into the dominant culture. He has said that instead of bombing Raqqa we should bomb Molenbeek. (TA)

“What the populists promote is division. They send out indirectly the message that you cannot be a practising Muslim, wearing a veil and at the same time considered as a part of the society. This creates hatred.” (UT)

In short, the ways in which the interviewees interpret the increasing hostility towards socio cultural diversification, follows a similar pattern. In each national context, the populist politicians play a key role in the creation and communication of hateful narratives. The populist figure or party is backed by a much larger echo chamber where the rhetoric resonates and becomes intensified. Through this process, hatred becomes more and more normalized. Gradually, the wider public sphere becomes more immune to hateful narratives, and thus the situation opens room for more and more extreme expressions of hate.

The interviewees verbalized this process in the following manner:

“Imagine the following: I’m in a context that is rapidly changing, my life sucks and I feel I did not reach the goals I wanted, and at the same time, I see rapid diversification. Resources are going outside of “my people”. My community is undeserved, and I start to become resentful. I cannot articulate the change, but suddenly I can listen to someone who looks like me and sounds like me and manages to verbalize perfectly what I feel. This is why Trump did so well in the US. All it takes is to articulate all that is wrong in my life and blame it on some other group. Demagogues are consistent, persistent and loud and they are talking all the time. Whether they gain good or bad (publicity), it does not matter to them. The key point is that you are there (in the media). These people are masters in controlling or resetting the narrative.” (LEO)

“The populists claim that migrants came to take our culture and our wealth. There are those who follow their message, and think that they need to do something to change the reality. When they walk on the street and see a Muslim girl wearing a veil, they spit on her. Another one, maybe operates in a more organized way, gets petrol and burns the door of a mosque, and so on”. (AB)

The real danger lies in the fact that hateful echo chambers are at the same time settings where the contest over personal glory takes place. The perpetrators of hate acts may compete over glory in many ways; in terms of number of casualties, the brutality of the act or the scale of public moral resentment aroused by the act, among other things. Expressing anger requires constant creativity.

One interviewee conveyed the idea in the following manner:

“If a synagogue or mosque has its tenth pig head that year, they are not going to do it the 11th time. They have to do something different.” (LEO)

27 Samuel Paty murder. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/c8grk9gm6nzt/samuel-paty-murder>

6.1.2. Personal histories

Besides referring to milestone events, a number of interviewees additionally illustrated the changing atmosphere by referring to their personal life histories. One of the interviewees (UT) left the Netherlands, the country where he was born, to continue his studies in Pakistan in the late 1990s. He returned after five years, with the feeling that the previously liberal and tolerant society had profoundly changed.

“I noticed that young Muslims would say, “I hate this country”. They did not feel any more Dutch but Turkish, Moroccan, Pakistani and so forth. I was no longer comfortable there. While in Pakistan, I always felt Dutch. When the Netherlands’ team was playing football or field hockey, I always supported them. I of course loved my parents’ country, Pakistan, but I felt more Dutch. I had childhood friends who stayed in the Netherlands and I did not see the same attitude in them. These things, and the rise of populism worried me a lot.” (UT)

Very similar narrative describing the process of growing up was shared by an interviewee (AB) who was born in Germany in a family of Moroccan migrant parents.

“I was born here in Germany, my parents lived in Germany, and my grandfather as well. Now my eldest son is 19 years old. So we have four generations of experience here. If you had asked me whether there was racism in Germany, at the time, I was a student in primary school and I would have answered, “no there is no racism”. In my home town there were many executives, but we were from the middle class. We did not feel that we were any less than them. They were friends, we visited them, and they visited us. But when I went to work in the Islamic field in the early 2000s, I suddenly felt a deeply rooted racism which was present at both personal and institutional level.” (AB)

One of the interviewees (KA), is Chaldean Christian of Iraqi origin. He pointed out that the increasing hostility towards migrants targeted refugees and asylum seekers regardless of their religious background.

“I lived in Dresden from 1996 to 2016, then I moved first to Gelsenkirchen and then to Bochum in Nord Rhein-Westphalen. When I was in Dresden, there were not that many foreigners. Around the turn of the Millennium we were only about 3% of Dresden’s 380,000 people. There were no problems with houses of worship especially in the case of Middle Eastern Christians, but other problems were present. There was general hostility towards foreigners which became more concrete always at the time of elections.” (KA)

6.1.3. Historic production of racialized inequalities

Another way of framing the changing security climate for some of the interviewees was to refer to the historic production of racialized inequalities and structural marginalization that manifest especially in the labour market and housing.

“The (European) hosts expected Muslim migrants to go home. Migrants sensed that the hosts upheld a feeling of superiority that was there from the colonial times. There was no sense among Muslim immigrants or larger society that this is our society. It was always us versus them. That is why the first generation never integrated; they felt isolated, not because they did not want to integrate, but because they were not welcomed and embraced.” (UT)

“Especially, strong these feelings of historical injustices are among Algerians whose grandparents fought the French who committed crimes against humanity. I do not see that there is any progress on that front. They do not consider themselves 100% French, because they are children of parents who suffered under the French, and they still talk all the time about the occupation. At the same time, they do not know the customs and culture of Algeria. They feel like strangers in both places. It is often said that the Muslims exaggerate (the feeling of being a victim), but it is true, based on what my friends say. Then some say that Muslims are not capable of integrating into French society and that they are locked up in their culture and customs. In addition, there is the policy of concentrating the Muslims in the ghettos of which the French administration is responsible.” (NA)

“I don’t believe in any discourse of integration, if the premise is that I am expected to integrate but at the same time I am marginalized both socially and culturally.” (TA)

“Here (in Denmark) some ghettos have 80 to 85 percent migrant population, and now there is a state program that aims to destroy certain ghettos.” (ZA)

These historic and structural injustices were then seen to generate different forms of cultural resistance, such as politicized interpretations of religion and formation of reactionary identities.

“Then there are suburban areas like Molenbeek which has a Moroccan majority, and in other areas there is a great concentration of foreigners. These areas are poor and with people who are firmly connected with religion. We know that Islam is the religion of the poor in Europe. Religion, or more accurately, religiosity, is a form of identification for them. It is about cultural self-expression. Many youngsters live in a state of continuous unemployment to the extent which we do not see even in the third world. And this all happens in the EU capital.” (TA)

“There is a great gap between the Muslims, the majority of whom come from Algeria and Morocco and the rest of the society. I have noticed that there is a problem related to identity. Religion is part of these problems. These youngsters want to identify firmly as Muslims, and they want to maintain their right to be citizens, but simultaneously they want to be recognized differently. They sometimes defend themselves with force. In this sense, religion is not only faith, belief and practices, it is also centrally about the identity of these migrants.” (NA)

“Islam is interpreted only in terms of cultural resistance.” (TA)

Paradoxically these cultural expressions of identity may further the marginalization and exclusion of certain parts of the population.

“There is a clear policy (in Belgium) to exclude veiled women from the labor market. They are legally prohibited to work in state offices and the public sector in general, except in certain municipalities.” (TA)

6.1.4. Avoiding visibility

A central consequence of the increasingly rejective atmosphere, particularly towards Muslims is that some religious communities attempt to minimize the negative public attention by avoiding registration as religious associations.

“Many prefer to register as cultural rather than Islamic organizations because they think this would be a way to mitigate problems with the local authorities. In case they organized the same activities under the banner of Islam, they would have problems. They know that as a religious association they would not be welcomed in the area. If they write on their front wall “Nur cultural centre” or “community centre” they feel they are more hidden. They can still continue their (religious) activities. Its less public and less visible for both authorities and Islamophobics.” (UM)

“Many religious premises are publicly registered as civic associations, but in fact, religious rituals are performed in them. This element is very important.” (KA)

It should be highlighted that while the framing of security related questions is highly homogenous among the interviewees, they however, position themselves in differing ways in the prevailing security climate.

In the light of this limited interview material, the following conclusions can be made:

Practicing Muslims are the most likely to express the feelings of vulnerability of hate crime. The interviewees who identify with Islam as a part of their cultural background, and do not practice religion, tend to view the general security situation in a far more positive way. The members of the smaller Middle Eastern diaspora communities (Chaldean Christians, Yazidis) do not feel personally threatened because of their religious identity in their European country of residence. However, they see that hate crime perpetrated against their community results from racial, rather than religious motives. Occasionally hate crime is also interpreted in terms of “spill-over islamophobia” i.e. that the targets are mistakenly seen as Muslims (due to their physical features, dress or language they use).

“There was one Gurudwara (Sikh temple) which was attacked by right wing people here in Germany. They threw a bomb, because they thought these were Muslims. So of course, the Sikhs were scared. Community members were shot in Arizona (USA) because people thought these were radical Muslims. Whenever there was a reference to Ossama Bin Laden or Taleban in the media, verbal harassment (targeting Sikhs) went up. When there was no news for several weeks, harassment went down. I am saying this after talks with Sikhs in the USA, Canada, UK, Germany and France.” (SI)

As expressed by the Hindu interviewee (RA), similar cases of “spill-over islamophobia” occur. The size of the diaspora community and the nature and intensity of its transnational connections differ vastly in different EU countries. For these reasons, India’s Hindu-extremist ecosystem bears very differently on the diaspora communities in different national contexts. RA for example, mentioned that in Switzerland, due to the limited size of the community, the extremist attacks perpetrated by Hindu extremists in India do not cause inter community tensions in Switzerland nor do they shape public opinion on Hindus. According to him, the situation in the UK is very different.

“In the UK, there are incidents that lead to physical violence such as knife attacks. I have heard of some incidents yet they were not reported to authorities. People do not want to go public with these experiences. In the UK the developments of India are also echoed more loudly than elsewhere. Hindu extremism is rising in India; one aspect of it is increasing hate crime against Christians (in India). I remember a case that occurred in India some years ago. Christian nuns were burned by extremist Hindu groups, and they were in fact supported by the local authorities. We have to understand these incidents (hate crimes against Hindus in the UK) in the light of international connections.” (RA)

6.1.5. Under-reporting

As noted earlier in this report, an overwhelming majority of hate crimes are not reported and often the victims prefer to remain entirely silent about their experiences. The interview data illuminates factors that contribute to under-re-

porting. It should be noted, however, that this limited data is only indicative at best, and an exhaustive analysis of the theme would require a much broader research effort and larger data set.

In noting the reasons why so many crimes are not reported, the interviewees identified two themes that refer to internal and external barriers.

The internal barriers point to the mechanism through which victims internalize the idea that hate, whether upheld by broad society or particular population groups, is so deeply normalized in the society that it cannot be modified through reporting and seeking justice. For the victim, the only option is to adapt to the prevailing situation. The internal barriers may further be enforced by perceptions of feelings of structural oppression, social marginalization, and racism that may be linked with historical traumas.

“Most hate crimes are not reported because people think “this is normal”. If I am being called Ossama Bin Laden or if I wear a hijab, or if somebody spits on me – that’s just the way it is.” (UT)

“Usually you do not report because it consumes time and energy, and you do not want to report the same thing over and over again. When you are harassed and your child is with you, do you then go to the police and go through the required steps? Somehow you try to protect your children and make sure they are strong enough to withstand this harassment. Even when they are five to seven years old, they know what happened to their father when he was harassed. If I had reported every case when I was harassed, the statistics would already look different. So now imagine all the young Sikh who were harassed. Even at school they are harassed.”(SI)

Other forms of internal barriers include the feelings of shame and disempowerment. The sporadic and sudden nature of the events may paralyse the victim and no other evidence is left but a wounding experience.

“I have heard many stories from my friends; there is a girl waiting for a bus and a crowd of youngsters go by. All of the sudden, they spit on her.

What does she do? Does she go to the police to raise a complaint? Against an unknown perpetrator? She doesn't know them. The complaint would be in the files for three months and would lead nowhere. She cannot do anything. Or what can be done when the windows of a mosque are stoned and walls littered or suddenly there's a pig's head at the main entrance door?" (AB)

Some communities may be inclined to look for solutions to mitigate hate crimes without resorting to authorities, especially as they believe that opening the wounds to outsiders would only complicate an already painful situation.

One of the interviewees (MA) of Iraqi origin approached this type of behaviour by referring to cultural tendencies of solving conflicts without resorting to the responsible authorities.

"When there is a problem in Iraqi society, the victim does not turn to the police. The victim rather takes the justice in his own hands. He attacks the other party as he was attacked, or he turns to the tribe and family. When I came to Germany and applied for asylum, it was Saddam's time (Saddam Hussein), and we Iraqis were afraid of the police because we had this vision that the police is an authority who can do whatever it wants. We did not know that the police authority is limited by laws. Of course the laws were violated at times, but if you had witnesses, you would be treated justly. We thought that the police would be against us, not with us. This is what I mean when I say that the reasons (of not reporting) are cultural." (MA)

Furthermore, the lack of understanding about the nature of hate crimes and the associated legal context, together with the unfamiliarity of the mechanisms of reporting, may also constitute important internal barriers for some individuals.

"When the incidents happen, most places of worship are not aware of their rights or what they can do in order to report a crime as a hate crime. In some EU countries, you do not have hate crime legislation, so when you report, what are you actually reporting?" (UT)

The external barriers, on the other hand, refer to the victim's perceptions as to what is likely to follow if one reports a hate crime. The fear of negative consequences, such as getting in trouble with employers, being publicly exposed in a negative manner, the fear of retaliation by the member of the opposing out group or the wider ecosystem of like-minded people are common among victims. Reporting crimes or unjust treatment can attract the interest of mainstream media, chat groups and other online environments and this may ignite unexpected "dirt campaigns" and other negative reactions towards the victims.

"I have a friend, Muhammad, whose father is a Sunni and mother a Shia. He is leftist in his world view and a non-practising Muslim. He works in a supermarket here in Denmark. One day, he logged in one of these Islamophobic chat sites and participated in the discussion with his real name. The participants in the site later informed the supermarket, claiming (falsely) that Muhammad was spreading extremist ideas and talked against the Danes. He was sacked without any inspection. The incident raised the interest of media and a tabloid reported it with sentences like "we beat Muhammad". Then a witness came out saying that Muhammad had not written anything like claimed in the chat, and that he had been, on the contrary, very respectful. Then some Danes said in a web discussions site that they would boycott the supermarket if it backed up (from laying off Muhammad)." (ZA)

Perhaps the gravest external barrier is caused by the victim's lack of trust in statutory agencies. Reporting is seen as pointless, emotionally draining and simply a waste of time and effort as the victim may perceive that it never leads to any concrete positive action. Members of minority religions, in particular, may feel easily stereotyped by the police and subject to discrimination or even victimization.

6.2. The threat picture

The interviewees point out that hate incidents tend to occur in areas that are undergoing rapid demographic, religious and cultural diversification. As these areas often host people who are highly critical of such diversification, the conditions are ripe for negative stereotyping of those considered as outsiders and resentments may easily lead to expressions of hate. On the other hand, dynamic interaction between population groups reduces the likelihood of hate crime. The interviewees largely share the idea that the hate crime situation varies considerably within each national context.

“The incidents usually take place in locations that are known for radical right activities. In other places, especially where there are large Muslim communities, this problem is not present.” (JA)

“In these areas (of West Germany), people have been in contact with Muslims they know about them and are not influenced by negative media coverage and chat rooms. In the eastern parts of Germany it is the opposite and this is the result of fear mongering. There are no studies if there are particularly vulnerable locations but nobody is today afraid of insulting Islam, even in the parliament. Incidents can occur even in the town centres but also in the suburbs.” (AB)

6.2.1. Experiencing hate

The interviewees talk relatively scarcely about actual hate incidents, but rather, they foreground their feelings of eroding sense of security. The interview data indicates that security is felt very differently across faith groups. By far the most likely to have experienced hate incidents personally or within their social networks on European soil are the Muslim interviewees who practice their faith. In their case, the expressions of hate were placed in a far more complex frame than in the case of other interviewees: attacks against Mosques anywhere around the globe may motivate copy cats, negative media representations may incite hate incidents, hate crimes (against Muslims) may be interpreted as acts of retaliation following violence perpetrated by extremist Islamist groups.

“After the mosque shooting in New Zealand, (2019) the police arrested a person in the Hague. He had weapons at home and it was later said that he was praising the perpetrator of the shooting. The man was arrested and convicted. The police then guaranteed the Muslim communities that they are protected.” (JA)

The Muslim interviewees who identified themselves as non-practicing, also mentioned that hate incidents may at times result from transnationally communicated sectarian tensions between Muslim groups.

“I remember the case involving a German citizen of Iraqi origins. The man is Shia Muslim and has a shop next to a place where the ISIS supporters were gathering at the time. They started threatening him, beat him and broke some things in the shop, and he called the police. The police just came to clarify the situation but did not put any effort in protecting the victim’s rights. The attitude of the police was that the conflict was an internal issue, and that the police had nothing to do with it. So, what does this mean? That the government stood side by side with these extremists? Or that they have enough problems of their own and they do not interfere (in sectarian tensions between Muslim groups)? In any case, it was a mistake and these kinds of situations only increase problems.” (MA)

As noted above, the threat picture differs between Muslim interviewees and members of other communities. First, the members of Middle Eastern Christian diaspora tend to interpret hate as an expression of xenophobia and racial prejudices rather than religious factors.

“There have been no problems with houses of worship among Iraqi Christians, but there are other problems. There is general hostility towards foreigners which becomes more concrete at the time of elections.” (ZA)

One Chaldean Christian and one Roman Catholic interviewee had the impression that church vandalism (in Belgium and France) is a result of hostile attitudes some Muslims uphold towards Christians.

“The (vandalism against churches) is there because some Muslim preachers talk about Chris-

tians as infidels and they sow the seeds for these kinds of incidents. In France, they (radical Islamists) killed a Catholic priest, but similar attacks did not occur here in Belgium. Some assaults have happened and when they occur, the parishes contact police immediately. There have not been any incidents in my parish, but we have heard that for example in Brussels they vandalized a Christmas crib.”(KH)

“One ingredient (feeding hate crime) is the western liberty of expression. This issue is seen very differently in Christian and Muslim cultures. Liberty of expression is taken for granted in the West, everything can be ridiculed, but this is very different in the Muslim world, you cannot ridicule the Prophet. Some take the ridicule personally and hate is expressed in terms of vandalism (towards Christian churches).” (FA)

On the other hand, the Christian, Yazidi and Hindu interviewees with immigrant background perceived that Islamophobia has a tendency to “spill over” and target all racialized immigrant groups. In other words, the members of non-Muslim migrant communities feel that that popular expressions of Islamophobia increase general hostility towards all migrants from the global south.

“The populists for example, set up posters during the election campaign (in Switzerland) where minarets of a mosque were given the shape of missiles. In one poster, a flock of white sheep kicked the single black sheep over the fence. This campaign caused lots of distress among us Hindus too.” (RA)

6.2.2. Experiencing genocide

Those interviewees who pertain to diasporic Middle Eastern religious minority groups do not generally feel threatened by hate crime offenders in their current country of residence. However, security is a grave concern for them. The interviewees who are members of diasporic religious minority communities carry with them experiences of the most severe hate crimes, namely genocide. In their own experience, they have witnessed how the cycle of hatred intensifies and reaches communal proportions and ultimately triggers large-scale violence against an entire group of people in an effort to clear

up the cultural history of the population considered as the enemy. Their acute security concerns relate to their kidnapped and disappeared relatives and family members and their primary concern is that the perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions under appropriate legal categories.

According to interviewee (KA) who has followed since his arrival to Germany, in 1996, the development of forced migration of the Iraqi Christians to Europe. The number of Christians in Iraq reduced from 1.5 million in 1987 to roughly 100,000 at present. The occupation of the territory by ISIS terrorist organization in 2014 had devastating consequences for his native community in the Nineveh Plains, Iraq.

“The Christians had two choices; either to pay the jiziya tax or to leave all possessions and the region. People even had to leave their cars and walk. Similar incidents occurred in Baghdad too since the 2003 occupation. In the area where I used to live I had an airplane engineer friend. Soon after the occupation he was killed by thirty shots from a Kalashnikov-rifle. The reason was, as local armed men claimed, that he was infidel and collaborated with the American army. This was the first case I heard of, it occurred on September 10th, 2004. This happened to many of my Christian friends; many of them were working at the airport in Baghdad. I have so many friends who are still there and only thinking about how to get out of the country. The tensions were soon present here in Germany. In our Iraqi cultural association there were Christians and Muslims, but after 2003 the atmosphere changed. It is impossible to generalize, but new boundary lines were suddenly present. You noticed it in discussions. One (Muslim) friend of ours used to sit with us Christians and shared a drink of beer or arak. After 2003 his wife started to wear a veil and he was prohibited from sitting with us and having a drink.” (KH)

Thousands of ISIS fighters moved to the Sinjar region in north-western Iraq in the beginning of August 2014 and began to attack the Yazidi communities there. Over the following four weeks, violence drove nearly 500,000 members of the community out of their homes. Roughly 10,000 Yazidis were either killed or kidnapped during the assault (Cetorelli & Asraph 2019, 7).

The UN, together with numerous national and multi-national organizations, recognized the violence as genocide (UN News 2021). Today there are well over 150,000 Yazidis in the Western Europe (Info Migrants 2019). According to one interviewee (YA), genocide leaves permanent wounds, shatters the individual and collective identity and leaves the community in a permanent security vacuum.

“People have gone through so many traumas, and many have lost self-reliance and self-value. They have fears, nightmares, self-destructive behaviors, all this is present among Yazidis in Europe. But yes, there is no direct threat of violence here. We must understand that genocide is less of a hate crime than an identity crime. The self-image of an entire community is broken. The victims are not only those who were raped, enslaved and killed but the entire community is a victim.” (YA)

For the purposes of this report, these interview quotes reflect the complexity of feelings related to hate crime in present-day Europe. For hundreds of thousands of members of the diasporic communities who have experienced religious persecution, the immediate environment in Europe may seem completely safe, yet worries about those left in the conflict zone, displaced in refugee camps, missing or abducted are ongoing sources of trauma. In summation, a seemingly safe environment can hide an extraordinarily complex experience of hate.

6.2.3. Descriptions of incidents

Hate manifests itself in many forms in the narratives of the interviewees. In this limited interview data, the most common experience of hate is verbal assault, intimidation, offensive or degrading harm or minor physical assault. The incidents are described at the same time as minor events but also extremely wounding and traumatizing.

“Who are the people who harass us (Sikhs)? These are young people, mostly people in groups, and some times older who say something or they murmur something, indicating that they are somehow unhappy to see me. They are not super radical people, they are insecure, and that is ok. But verbal assault is a transgression of

something. Why do they think they can do this? It is a kind of dehumanizing practice. Otherwise they could not do it. They indicate that you are an insect, you have no dignity. They think they can do this to us.” (SI)

The victim is wounded but also hesitant to talk about the experience, feeling that for the outsider the event may seem insignificant or exaggerated. Thus, the victim prefers to suppress the negative feelings, and remain silent since talking about the incident or reporting it would risk that the victim would not be taken seriously or that the reporting might lead to unexpected negative consequences, as noted earlier.

“A few weeks ago there was an incident involving a teenage girl of Turkish background. She was attacked by six people at a train station in Berlin. Some hit her, some spat on her, and finally she fell on ground and later went to hospital for the treatment of her injuries. Then the police wrote a report stating that prior to the incident there had been an argument concerning her lack of a face mask. But she had a mask (to prevent the spread of Corona virus) and the attack was not about the mask at all. The group simply attacked her because she looked foreign. They had said “go back to your country”. While in hospital she read the police report and was astonished. That is why she recorded a video and posted it to YouTube to convey the true nature of the incident. With the publicity of the video, the police was forced to apologize, saying that it had obtained wrong information. This example shows how racist incidents tend to turn into something else, this time it was a question about a mask. If she had not recorded her statement, we would have no facts of what happened.” (AB)

From the point of view of the victim, hate expresses, first and foremost, that the targeted individual and the collective he/she represents for the perpetrator do not belong “here”.

As a consequence, hate creates barriers for integration and further enhances social polarization.

“Hatred breeds hatred. They treat you this way so you start to think you should actually do something to hurt them.” (UT)

6.3. Responses to security challenges

In the light of the interview data, there are vast differences both within and across different faith groups in their responses to security challenges. The differences include level of security awareness, existing safe-guarding measures, channels and readiness to communicate security related issues to authorities, other religious communities, and the surrounding society. This issue is directly linked with the faith group's level of organization both nationally and internationally, and available financial resources.

The most prepared faith groups to respond to the security challenges are understandably those that are eligible for state funding. However, it should be noted that even the different representatives of the dominant religion Christianity are in a very unequal situation with this regard.

"The Chaldeans in Germany have their own churches and they receive funds from the Roman Catholic Church of Germany, and it also pays the salaries of the priests. Other Iraqi Christians, like Syriac Orthodox church, do not have the same situation. They only get donations from their own people."(KA)

Similarly, considerable differences exist between different Muslim organizations. Some receive continuous funding from foreign governments or international funds while others are entirely relying on local level membership donations.

"The Turkish community here in the Netherlands is very well organized. Their mosques are supported directly by Diyanet (Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs). Diyanet has a two billion dollar annual budget." (JA)

The most fragile are those communities that have low levels of organization and focus only on religious celebrations which, however, can bring together considerable crowds. These kinds of groups often lack their own assembly facilities and they have to make temporary rental arrangements in order to be able to celebrate their religious holidays. Some faith groups may draw considerably large crowds in warehouses and sports halls or in former industrial premises

for their religious festivities without any safe-guarding measures.

"The level of security awareness is very low in the Hindu communities (in Central Europe). Most of the collected donations go to the ritual side, such as celebrations and decorations. It doesn't necessarily go to security awareness programs or to educational purposes. Compared to other religious communities the Hindu celebrations are big. Two years ago there were more than 1,500 people gathered together (in Switzerland). But no security related problems happened at that time. The concern is growing. One of our main concerns is that when such numbers gather, security must be addressed." (RA)

Regardless of the religious background, the interviewees see that public debate on the security of religious spaces and hate crime predominantly focuses on the situation of Muslim and Jewish communities. Smaller religious groups may experience severe anxiety over the security related issues, yet lack the sufficient organizational structures, contacts, and know-how to bring out their concerns.

"We have here (in Switzerland) Alewites, Sikhs and Bahais and clearly there is a certain level of anxiety. People often feel that they are not included in discussions concerning security. They feel that the field (of security) is dominated by the Muslim and Jewish communities. In many places, these small communities do not even have proper religious sites. Therefore, we have to study the ground level clearly and ask what is the psychological nature of these religious groups, how they feel and how they see (the situation). We have to put our feet into their shoes." (RA)

Members of diasporic Middle Eastern Christian groups together with the Yazidi interviewee expressed that the security situation in Western Europe is satisfactory, cases of vandalism and hate crime are rare exceptions, however they all remind that the communities may suffer from severe security related anxieties concerning their community members elsewhere as pointed out in the previous pages.

On the other hand, members of these diasporic communities may think they have no need to

expose their experiences to the wider public, simply because their situation in their Western European country of residence is much more secure than it ever was in the country of origin.

“The situation regarding racism is far better here than it is there (Iraq). All members of religious minorities would be ready to raise a banner saying that we were targets of killing as long as we were there.” (ZA)

Serious hate crimes, such as the mass shooting that occurred in Christchurch New Zealand (2019) may serve as an eye-opening event for the religious community. Some interviewees described how serious violence, even on the other side of the globe, had produced networking and community security seminars and initiatives to improve community level resilience.

“I actually had a chance to visit the Nur-mosque in Christchurch (New Zealand) and then afterwards we organized a seminar here in Germany. We invited the Imam of the Nur-mosque there too. He talked about the incident and how they enhanced the security of the mosque afterwards.” (AB)

6.4. Solutions: how to enhance the security of places of worship

The interviewees share the idea that security of faith communities can be best guaranteed by shaping national identity and citizenship in a more inclusive way by enabling diverse religious identities to fit in the concept of “us.”

Religious associations should communicate more openly to the broader society that they want to be active participants in the social fabric of the immediate community. The reach-out is essential to two directions: faith groups must display willingness to participate in communal life and the wider society must show genuine interest to cooperate in the development of positive relations between different faith groups and the surrounding society.

“Most places of worship are, unfortunately, more or less closed communities: they do not reach out, not because they do not want to but because this has not been made comfort-

able for them. When the communities engage with local councils the question is usually about something negative; the members of the neighbourhood have complained about overcrowded parking lots on Fridays, for example. The relationship is not a healthy one (between the faith group, community and the municipality). When there are problems, the local administration and community should sit down and see what can be done to correct the situation. These small interactions can also prevent hate crimes effectively. My objective has not been just to establish merely a place of worship but to create a setting which would be free from “us and them attitude”. I want people to be able to feel proudly European and Muslim at the same time.” (UT)

Openness means, first and foremost, active participation of the faith community in communal life in the broadest possible way.

“At the end of the day, it does not help us to put two bodyguards at the front door of a religious place. It is not what we want, we want our neighbors to understand what is being preached inside.” (SI)

“All places of worship must have open days, they have to work closely with the broader society and create partnership with civic organizations, religious groups and sports clubs. This way, a local mosque is seen as an integral part of society. In that case, you have everybody looking after each other’s security.” (UT)

Openness also means that the different faith communities engage in forms of inter-confessional and interfaith dialogue and cooperation that seeks to enhance the overall security. In some contexts, the inter-confessional initiatives have resulted in well-organized institutional structures that are under public funding. The “House of Religions” (in Switzerland) is an institution that brings together different religions under the same roof and strives to find concrete solutions to a variety of social challenges together with working towards increasing empathy and compassion between different faith groups. Enhancement of positive relations of faith groups with the wider society is also a key priority.

“The House of Religions was built in 2016, and now seven religions come together under one roof. As we started, some critics said that it will be like a fruit salad; each community will lose its uniqueness. But that house is about understanding and sharing, while simultaneously preserving uniqueness. Now we are well accepted at the national level here in Switzerland. We, for example, have a Hindu cook who is also responsible for the Kosher meals. Inter-religious seminars and workshops take place there, and they also attract the second generation. Every year, the night of the religions is celebrated. All doors are open and we offer a tour for the public and present different kinds of cultural activities.” (RA)

Showing compassion and empathy to victims of serious hate crime has also taken more organized forms, as the interviewees indicate in the following. The initiatives have proven to be extremely important especially in cases where the victims have felt being overlooked by the media, unjustly represented to the wider public or entirely dismissed from public attention. One of the initiatives is a result of an unfortunate chain of events: in May of 2017 in Darmstadt Germany, there was a nightly attack targeting a mosque which also housed the Imam with his wife and baby child. After the event, the news coverage concentrated entirely on the perpetrators, and there was no attention or expressions of empathy and compassion towards the family surviving a traumatizing event.

“I felt that the victim was attacked twice, first in the event itself, and a second time with indifference. I got together with my friends, one of whom is a Christian pastor and second one, who is a Jewish rabbi. We decided that we need to make a sympathy visit to that Imam in Darmstadt. We organized a meeting and invited the local mayor together with members of the media. The Imam’s family was pleased to see that there were people standing with them. This event led us to think of setting up and organization, which was finally named *Schulter an Schulter* [Shoulder to Shoulder]. Whenever there is a hate incident perpetrated against anyone from any religion, we go and show sympathy and offer help for the victims.” (AB)

Each faith group needs, however, to plan carefully how to enhance communal participation and bridge building and simultaneously safeguard their premises in ways which do not compromise safety nor openness.

“Openness doesn’t mean that we wouldn’t have gates. Same applies to visitors - we need to be welcoming but we must protect the community. We know that there are dangers out there. No place of worship should turn the people away if they genuinely seek spirituality. Yet someone has to verify that the person is not entering with harmful intentions.” (UT)

Faith communities must reach out to local and state authorities, including law enforcement, seek political alliances with politicians and policymakers who may be influential in enhancing security related policies and decision-making processes.

“In the long run, the solution is that religious authorities sit down with policymakers and law enforcement agencies. There should be cooperation with all these actors. This way, we make sure that we have a cohesive society that flourishes, that is a pluralist society, where everyone feels at home, and there is more engagement between different actors. Otherwise, the religious leaders just find themselves time and again telling their youth that you should be patient.” (UT)

Reaching out to law enforcement, creating novel forms of cooperation, and enhancing awareness of victim support are also seen to be of great importance.

“The reactions of the police have improved considerably recently, and now we hold monthly meetings. We emphasize (in our community) that the police are there to help people. We organize sessions where the police inform us, for example, how to obtain a passport. But it is clear that many police officers still lack the training concerning hate crime. What is it, and how to provide support for the victims?” (UT)

Countering hate and enhancement of the security of houses of worship require continuous development of innovative initiatives that aim at fostering tolerance, equality, anti-racism and standing against negative prejudices.

7. Conclusions and Analysis

In the beginning of the report, it was stated that we seek answer to the following questions:

What are the main security challenges the religious sites face? What is the role of local governments and municipalities in enhancing the security of religious sites? What are the differences between countries?

7.1. General conclusions

Hate crimes often derive from the socially constructed difference which is a result of historically and contextually changing discursive practices. The driving force of hate is the image of the “other” not a person or adherent of a particular (religious) group per se (cf. Derwin 2012; Lazaridis, Campani & Benveniste 2016). Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has convincingly pointed out that language has a capacity to generate violence due to the fact that verbal acts simplify the complex reality (2007:56). In the hate incidents perpetrated against places of worship the link between language, othering discourses and violence becomes clear. None of the countries of this report has today populist politicians that depict, say, Hindus, Buddhists or Sikhs in Europe as a security threat or a challenge to fundamental European values. However, since the early European history each generation has witnessed individuals and groups that propagate strongly negative views about Jews and Muslims.

Against this background it is not difficult to grasp why the overwhelming majority of hate crimes against places of worship target these two religious communities. We must also bear in mind that over the recent decades the Catholic Church has become under enormous public pressure in the western public debates as revelations of serious sexual offenses have been revealed around its institutions on a global scale. An overwhelming majority of hate crime – in most cases vandalism – perpetrated against

Christian churches targets today Catholic premises.

The Islamist discourse, since the late 1900th century and particularly since September 11 attacks, has shifted towards active othering of the West. The western societies and cultures have been portrayed starting from Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949) to Osama Bin Laden (1957–2011) as an enemy of Islam due to its consumption oriented liberal individualism, its imperialistic aspirations, and geopolitical goals. However, the Islamist discourse has rarely targeted Christianity or Christian premises in the west directly, although some cases do exist. As regards the actual terror attacks fuelled by Islamist discourse, the aim seems to have been to achieve the greatest possible shock effect and visibility by striking targets in public urban spaces. Merely three incidents that have claimed lives have taken place in churches over the past years, all occurring in France and England.²⁸

The data gleaned from OSCE Hate Crime Reporting, Global Terrorism Database and *International Religious Freedom Reports* by U.S. Department of State all indicate unanimously that Jews, Muslims, and Christians suffer the most from hate crimes. Other than these three religions form a very small portion of the hate crimes in total. Of course, this does not mean that the situation remains stable in the future.

Role of the local governments is crucial. Not only the local governments and administrations organize the collection of hate crime data, but they are the sole instance capable of deploying police or military forces to protect places of worship if needed. At least in Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, and Austria the Jewish sites are regularly under governmental protection. Less frequently and usually after terror attacks Muslim and Christian sites have been under protection too.

²⁸ Nice (October 29, 2020), Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray (July 2016), Leigh-On-Sea (October 2021).

7.2. The participatory study

According to initial data collection plan an integral element of the report was a survey focusing on the security and safety of the faith communities in the target countries of the project. Due to a very low response rate a more focused and limited interview study was carried out with members of different faith groups and civic organizations that follow the developments within the security climate affecting faith communities. Interviewing members of faith communities and actors working with hate crime allows us to add voices that elaborate the lived experiences of security from community perspective. This participatory approach complements the desktop study findings of the report which highlight the existing policy frameworks and practices in SOAR focus countries.

The fifteen interviewees who participated in the participatory study represent Muslim, Chaldean²⁹ Christian Roman Catholic, Hindu, Sikh and Yazidi faiths. They have an active role in religious and civic organizations in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Ireland and Switzerland. The open one-hour interviews were designed to follow a four-part structure focusing on the general security climate surrounding the faith communities, the perceived threat picture, responses to threats taken by faith organizations, and proposed solutions how to improve the security of places of worship and mitigate hate crime. In the analysis of the data, exploratory factor research approach³⁰ was used to gain maximum understanding about respondents' generalizations, allowing for a deeper exploration of key social phenomena within the context of security of faith communities.

A wide range of attitudes concerning the security of faith communities can be traced from the interview material. While some interviewees were highly suspicious of official hate crime data, and considered it grossly exaggerated, others were convinced that the situation is in reality

much worse than revealed by the official statistics. However, even interviewees who thought that social polarization and hate crimes are increasing, recognized that a large majority of the population is in harmony with the increasing diversity in societies. At the same time, it must be emphasized that the interviewees consider that EU member states and different areas within nation states are in different stages with regard to the social polarization and expressions of hate. In general, hate crime is perceived as a problem in areas which are under rapid demographic and sociocultural diversification. This indicates that national level policies and strategy are needed to address the security needs of faith communities and religious sites, but measures should be locally rooted according to context and involve wider communities and actors.

Based on this limited interview material practising Muslims are the most likely to express the feelings of vulnerability of hate crime. The interviewees who identify with Islam as a part of their cultural background, and do not practice religion, tend to view the general security situation in a far more positive way. The members of the smaller Middle Eastern diaspora communities (Chaldean Christians, Yazidis) do not feel personally threatened because of their religious identity in their European country of residence. However, they see that hate crime perpetrated against their community results from racial, rather than religious motives. Occasionally hate crime is also interpreted in terms of "spill-over Islamophobia" i.e. that the targets are mistakenly seen as Muslims (due to their physical features, dress or language they use).

The interviewees used primarily three ways of framing the changing security climate. Firstly, the framing was done with a reference to a series of milestone events such as dramatic terrorist attacks, mass shootings and hate campaigns. Secondly, the interviewees framed their perception of security climate based on personal historical experiences. Thirdly, framing was done

29 The Chaldean Catholic community was formed in Upper Mesopotamia, in present day Iraq, in the 16th and 17th centuries.

30 This method fits into the broader grounded theory framework, that aims at the formation of abstract theories based upon qualitative data involving personal experiences (Birks & Mills 2011; Glaser 1992). Grounded theory is frequently applied in qualitative interview-based research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The method works towards building concepts and theory so that they are "grounded" in the data (Bryant, 2017; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

by linking the current situation and perceived change in the security climate with the long-term development and narratives of social marginalization of particular segments of population. According to all interviewees over the past two decades hateful rhetoric has become more and more normalized in the EU. A central role is placed on populist politicians who take a leading role in constructing the content of hateful narratives. Gradually, these hateful narratives become normalized in a wider public sphere and the 'echo chambers' it creates. The normalization of hate speech is seen to open room for more extreme expressions of hate. The danger lays in the fact that hateful echo chambers are at the same time settings where the contest over the personal glory of the perpetrators takes place. The perpetrators may compete in terms of number of casualties, the brutality of the act or the scale of public moral resentment aroused by the act, among other things.

In order to mitigate the consequences of the increasingly rejective and hateful atmosphere towards minorities (particularly towards Muslims) some faith communities attempt to minimize the negative public attention by avoiding the registration as religious associations. At present many religious premises are publicly registered as civic association, but in fact they serve as places of worship. This practice reveals that security climate is negatively affecting realization of the freedom of thought, conscience and religion that guarantees: "Everyone has a right to (...) alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching practice and observance."³¹

When speaking about reasons why so many hate crimes are not reported the interviewees identified two themes that refer to internal and external barriers. The internal barriers point to the mechanism through which victims internalize the idea that hate, whether upheld by broad society or particular population group, is so deeply normalized in the society that it cannot be modified through reporting and seeking justice. For the victim the only option is to adapt to the prevailing situation. The internal barriers

may further be enforced by perceptions of feelings of structural oppression, social marginalization and racism that may be linked with historical traumas.

The external barriers, on the other hand, refer to the victim's perceptions as to what is likely to follow if one reports hate crime. The fear of negative consequences, such as getting in trouble with employers, being publicly exposed in negative manner, the fear of retaliation by the member of the opposing out group or the wider ecosystem of like-minded people are common among victims. Based on interview findings one recommendation is to develop ways for faith communities and local authorities to monitor local situation collectively and plan actions together to address negative developments early on. Communities' perception of security might differ from that of authorities based on the under-reporting of hate crimes and incidents. Regular interaction and collaboration would allow authorities to better understand how security related incidents, hate crime or vandalism affect the sense of personal security of members of faith communities even if harm is done to physical property. Increased collaboration will likely increase awareness of silent signals affecting security climate.

In the light of the interview data there are vast differences both within and across different faith groups in their responses to security challenges. The differences include level of security awareness, existing safe-guarding measures, channels and readiness to communicate security related issues to authorities, other religious communities, and the surrounding society. This issue is directly linked with the faith group's level of organization both nationally and internationally, and available financial resources.

Eligibility to state funding, access to resources and level of organization seem to affect the preparedness of the communities to address safety concerns. The interviewees noted that the most prepared faith groups to respond to the security challenges were those that are eligible for state funding across different faith traditions. Interviewees noted that capacity and awareness of

31 See: Equality and Human Rights Commission. Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-9-freedom-thought-belief-and-religion>

security are low among those minority communities that have low levels of organization, lack their own premises and focus only on religious celebrations which, however, can bring together considerable crowds in temporary rental facilities.

Regardless of the religious background the interviewees see that public debate on the security of religious spaces and hate crime predominantly focuses on the situation of Muslim and Jewish communities. Smaller religious groups may experience severe anxiety over the security related issues, yet lack the sufficient organizational structures, contacts, and know-how to bring out their concerns.

Societal polarization, hate speech and hate crimes are perceived as the main threats affecting the security of faith communities and religious sites. The interviewees share the idea that addressing polarization, hate speech and hate crimes via measures that build more inclusive national identity, social cohesion and support active citizenship are key elements. Religious associations, should communicate more openly to the broader society that they want to be active participants in the social fabric of the immediate community. The reach-out is essential to two directions; faith groups must display willingness to participate in communal life and the wider society must show genuine interest to cooperate in the development of positive relations between different faith groups and the surrounding society. Openness means as well that the different faith communities engage in forms of inter-confessional and interfaith dialogue and cooperation that seeks to enhance the overall security. In some contexts the inter-confessional initiatives have resulted in well-organized institutional structures that bring several faith groups under one roof with open doors. Other initiatives include the establishment of interfaith organizations that focus on bringing justice, recognition and empathy for the victims of hate crimes.

Ultimately, the security of religious communities, whether majority or minority, is part of the wider societal climate. Polarization, and social tensions between different segments of population, is negatively reflected in all religious communities whether they represent minorities or majorities.

7.3. Hate crime reporting and underreporting levels

In every country underreporting is a massive issue. If we accept the idea that hate speech and other minor hate incidents may lead to more serious hate crimes or even violent extremist attacks, improving and restoring the hate crime reporting would be the priority number one. Before suggesting solutions or fixing the problem one should familiarize with the current hate crime statistics and reporting standards. For instance, the data provided by OSCE Hate Crime Reporting illustrates that the level of information and categorization in the focus countries is very uneven each country following by and large less their own registering practices.

The information in the charts that follow is gleaned from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' two reports Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU (FRA 2018a:21–24) and Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU (FRA 2018c:56), and from the Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU MIDIS-II) – Being Black in the EU (FRA 2019b:9–10).

Chart 1

Availability of list of bias indicators (FRA 2018a:21-24)	BE	DK	FR	DE	NL	HU	AT
Publicly available list of bias indicators		X				X	
Police internal list of bias indicators			X	X			
No list of bias indicators	X				X		X

In the chart above, only Denmark and Hungary provide publicly available lists of bias indicators. Belgium, The Netherlands, and Austria use no bias indicators at all. Ideally, all European countries should use the same publicly available bias indicators to make comparison and policy making easier. Publicly available bias indicators would open the topic to the public discussion where NGO’s and other civil society actors could express their ideas, concerns, and criticism.

Chart 2

Flagging of hate crime or bias motivation (FRA 2018a:21-24)	BE	DK	FR	DE	NL	HU	AT
Compulsory and incorporated in the general recording system							
Not compulsory, but incorporated in the general crime recording system		X			X	X	X
Not incorporated in the general crime recording	X						
Specific form for hate crime			X	X			

Chart 2 shows that in none of the countries it is compulsory to flag hate crimes or bias motivation. Obviously, an obligation to include this data would be the most beneficial in tackling with hate crimes. France and Germany have a specific form for hate crimes when reported to the police. Belgium stands out as the only country that have not incorporated flagging in the general crime recording system at all.

Chart 3

Availability of guidance on hate crime recording for officers (FRA 2018a:21–24)	BE	DK	FR	DE	NL	HU	AT
Publicly available guidance		X					
Police internal guidance			X	X	X		X
No guidance	X						

In chart 3, only Denmark has publicly available guidance for police officers. It is quite alarming that Belgium has no guidance. Of course, internal guidance is a good start, but publicly available guidance would be even better and enable open discussion and facilitate policy intervention.

Chart 4

Collection and publication of hate crime data (FRA 2018a:21-24)	BE	DK	FR	DE	NL	HU	AT
Police hate crime data are collected and published	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Police hate crime data are collected but not published							
Disaggregated hate crime data are not allowed							

The chart 4 indicates that all focus countries collect and publish their hate crime data. We think that the EU policies should require every country to collect and publish the hate crime data in a coordinated and open manner. Furthermore, open discussion would facilitate development and critical assessment of the hate crime indicators.

Chart 5

Official data pertaining to hate crimes motivated by (FRA 2018a:21–24)	BE	DK	FR	DE	NL	HU	AT
Racism and xenophobia	X	X	X	X	X		X
Anti- Roma							
Antisemitism	X	X	X	X	X		X
Islamophobia / Anti-Muslim		X	X		X		X
Religion		X		X	X		X
Sexual orientation / Gender identity	X	X		X	X		X
Disability				X	X		X
Other	X			X	X	X	X

The chart 5 indicates that all focus countries except Hungary register antisemitism and racism as motives for hate crime. Islamophobia is registered by Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Austria, and religion as a general motive by Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands. Ideally, all the countries would register hate crimes in a similar manner to help country-to- country comparison and accuracy assessment of hate crime categories.

Chart 6

Reporting / underreporting levels	BE	DK	FR	DE	NL	HU	AT
Reporting discrimination by persons of African descent (%)	n/a	12%	15%	15%	n/a	n/a	8%
Knowledge of at least on Equality Body in country by persons of African descent (FRA 2019b:9-10)	n/a	62%	34%	32%	n/a	n/a	20%
Reporting of the most serious incidents of antisemitic harrassment (%) (FRA 2018c:56)	15%	17%	18%	20%	25%	8%	28%

We regret that there are no statistics specifically about reporting hate crimes against places of worships. Therefore, the data in chart 6 should be considered indicative only as regards places of worship. Nevertheless, hate crimes, except for the most serious incidents, tend to have very low reporting rates in general. It can be inferred that roughly only 10–20% of the hate crimes are reported to the police.

By reading the above charts it becomes evident that a lot needs to be done to harmonize the discrepancies and different registering practices. Underreporting and hate crime reporting challenges are well known problems in the EU and dealt with in many previous reports. It is hoped that in the coming years measures are taken to fix the situation.

7.4. Policy recommendations

Based on the above discussion, it should be noted that in order to protect places of worship actions at the EU level as well as the national and local level are needed.

Policy Recommendations for the European Union:

1. To elaborate a best practice guide on the protection of the places of worship easily available in all EU member states.³² The role of the SOAR-project and other similar projects is to identify key issues and possible gaps affecting protection and security of the religious sites and bring them into discussion. The best practice guide will be written based on the relevant research data and grassroots level experiences. The guide will also be in line with the United Nation's Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

Policy Recommendations for relevant stakeholders in SOAR pilot countries:

2. To implement a holistic strategy to fight all forms of violence against religious sites. The strategy will involve state, regional and local actors, including religious and civil society organizations.
3. To identify a focal point in each country responsible for the safeguard of places of worship. The focal point can be an existing institution or a newly established one. The focal point will work closely with all relevant national and local authorities, including
4. To create/strengthen cooperation mechanisms between governments, law enforcement, civil society organizations and religious institutions. Hate crime and violence against places of worship is a complex problem requiring multi-actor cooperation. To develop and sustain relationships between government and religious leaders, to build trust and help ensure information sharing, connect religious leaders with

local law enforcement authorities to build trust, and regularly discuss with religious leaders the threat environment should be at the core of any action. This is also in line with UN's Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

5. To elaborate/strengthen safety protocols for religious sites which will be available to all congregants. Safety protocols will be context-driven and will be shared with all relevant stakeholders, including law enforcement. They will contribute to build trust and cooperation among different stakeholders.
6. To ensure that security trainings with particular focus on multi-actor cooperation are available to all relevant actors and that they include places of worship where symbolic vandalism and microaggressions are prevalent.
7. To collect and maintain reliable data on attacks on religious sites.

It is recommended that all relevant actors, including national authorities, religious communities and civil society organizations, collect and maintain data basis on attacks against religious sites. It is also recommended that data is shared among all relevant stakeholders to enhance awareness, preparedness and response to possible attacks against religious sites. Data sharing will also contribute to building trust among relevant stakeholders.

³² This would supplement the EU quick guide to support the protection of places of worship https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/whats-new/publications/eu-quick-guide-support-protection-places-worship_en

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Appendices

1. Descriptive demographics of the interviewees

Respondent	Age	Gender	Cultural Background/ religious background	Country of Residence
Abdererahman (AB)	44	Male	Moroccan-German/Muslim	Germany
Besnik (BE)	48	Male	Albanian/Muslim	Albania
Fabien (FA)	47	Male	Cameronian/Catholic	France
Karam (KA)	57	Male	Iraqi/Christian	Germany
Jamil (JA)	38	Male	Iraqi Muslim	Netherlands
Nabila (NA)	34	Female	Syrian Muslim	France
Maher (MA)		Male	Iraqi Muslim	Germany
Raahi (RA)	44	Male	Sri Lankan Hindu	Switzerland
Tarik (TA)	54	Male	Moroccan/Muslim	Belgium
Uthman (UT)	51	Male	Pakistani/Irish	Ireland
Zafar (ZA)	61	Male	Iraqi/Muslim	Germany
Yazid (YA)	58	Male	Iraqi/Yazidi	Netherlands
Khalil (KH)	56	Male	Iraqi/Christian, Chaldean	Belgium
Leo (LE)	44	Male	Swedish/Christian	Netherlands/USA
Simaran (SI)	43	Male	Indian/Sikhi	Germany

2. Codebook of the interview data

Code	Category	Definition	Indicators
1 a	General security climate	The ways in which interviewees understand the prevailing security situation in view of general hate crime situation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mainstreaming of hate 2. Post 2001 key events as milestones of changing security & securitization 3. The role of Populist politicians 4. Media: labelling, focusing on perpetrators, not victims 5. From hate speech to acts of hate, limits of free speech 6. Feelings unacceptance: your faith doesn't belong here 7. Social marginalization 8. Counter reactions; reactionary identities, 9. Transnational aspects of sectarian tensions 10. Social polarization 11. Communal violence (in the Middle east) and its reflections in Europe 12. Relations with law enforcement 13. Underreporting of hate crime
1 b	Threat picture	The ways in which the interviewees conceptualize the security threats their community is facing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Areas where demographic change is at hand, mixed ideologies, areas where radical groups are active 2. Hate is directed very unequally at different faiths. [Muslims/ME Christians/Hindus] may involve rivalries within one faith group (Muslim space) 3. lack of incidents yet feelings of loss of security 4. Spillover of hate [first Muslims and Jews, then other groups] 5. Hate as past trauma; Yazidis (genocide) Assyrians. 6. Crime is a result of largely shared hate 7. hate creating hate (both victims and perpetrators impact through social media) 8. description of incidents
2 a	Responses to security threats	What kinds of responses has the community devised to counter the threats?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vast differences, across and within one faith group 2. Lack of funds 3. Occasional law enforcement 4. Self-organization (guards) 5. Great need of awareness raising programs
2 b	Solutions	What should be done to improve the security and decrease hate crime levels?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating a society which open to diversity, role of decision makers, multi-level cooperation, more diverse law enforcement, & judiciary 2. Mutual recognition knowledge and cooperation between faith communities and individuals, updating dogmatic understandings 3. Faith communities as active part in all levels of social life 4. Awareness raising of hate crime, each congregation needs to have specialist, raising police awareness funds 5. Legislative reforms, reforms in registration 6. Interfaith cooperation; empathy to the victims

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