CHECK IT HE - Countering Hate and Extremism on Campus – Knowledge Innovation and Training in Higher Education

TOOLKIT 4

Identifying and Challenging Religion Based Hatred and Extremism on Tertiary Education Campuses

University of Minho

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Identifying and Challenging Religion Based Hatred and Extremism on Tertiary Education Campuses

Also available here: https://checkithe.wixsite.com/toolkit4

CONSORTIUM

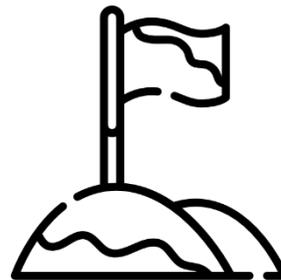|		
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I. Why this toolkit?

The Council of Europe declares that:

> *"The history of Europe is, indeed, full of examples of violence and barbarity in the name of religion".*

– Hate and extremism are issues affecting all European societies, having also a strong worldwide impact. The **CHECKIT HE** consortium aims to enhance innovation and capacity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in response to hate and extremism on campus, by building innovation and training, as well as fostering exchange of good practices.

– The toolkit on "**Identifying and Challenging Religion Based Hatred and Extremism on Tertiary Education Campuses**" is intended for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to challenge **religion based hate and extremism**, enabling a wide variety of groups and individuals inside and outside HEIs, students organizations and policy makers, to use it (this might include a wide range of NGOs, criminal justice practitioners, public authorities, schools, colleges, other non-degree level educational institutions and the broad ranging EU youth workforce).

– There is an urgent need to ensure that religion-based hate and extremism are effectively addressed in HEIs, as noted by the EU Higher Level Conference on Radicalisation (2019), and in a variety of contemporary international guidelines (UNESCO; 2019), as well as national policy documents from across Europe.

According to a recent EU funded report:

> *"Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in Europe's universities supports institutional growth and capacity building to better serve the needs of European society" (Claeys-Kulik, Ekman Jorgensen & Stober, 2019).*

Some students are more likely to be targets of religion-based hate and abuse than others. Examples of hate on campus include hate speech, physical abuse, or sexual violence, bullying, overt violence and exclusion by others. Higher education institutions should be leading on these issues and some indeed are implementing active strategies and innovating, but there is not enough sharing of this practice and ways in which HEIs can successfully counter religion-based hate and extremism.

This toolkit can be used to:

- **Identify** ways to build capacity toward greater effectiveness and strength by identifying concrete steps that would improve HEIs practices.
- **Clarify** many of the global best practices and ethical standards that should be put in place in regard to multiple dimensions of work on violence against people with different religions, religious beliefs and other community groups more vulnerable to religion-based hate and abuse;
- **Assess** key capacities and safeguards to prioritize.
- **Allow** some individual assessment that should prompt self-reflection and discussion on diverse items.

Who should use this toolkit?

This toolkit on "**Identifying and Challenging Religion Based Hatred and Extremism on Tertiary Education Campuses"** is intended for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to challenge religion-based hate and extremism, enabling a wide variety of groups and individuals inside and outside HEIs, mostly:

- Higher education institutions, and general body of policy makers.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff of universities.
- Students' unions

What is the content of the toolkit?

The toolkit includes the main following points:

- Key concepts aim at providing knowledge, information, and useful resources to better define and understand the problem of religion-based hatred and extremism at HEIs.
- Most common forms of religion-based hate crimes being reported in academe campuses.
- Most important developments on religion-based violence prevention in campuses and the best practices and challenges identified in Check It He countries.
- Training toolkit provides a framework for self-assessment to administration and policymakers; as well as tools and ideas that can be replicated during educational and training activities with HEIS target groups (students, administrative staff, teaching staff).

II. Key Concepts

Religion

There are different definitions and understandings of religion across disciplines and cultures. It is commonly accepted that religion can be defined as a set of organized beliefs, practices, and symbols that relate to the belief on a supernatural force.

According to the Council of Europe:

"Religions are belief systems that relate humanity to spirituality".

"Religion is a collection of cultural systems, belief systems, and worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values. Many religions have narratives, symbols, traditions, and sacred histories that are intended to give meaning to life or to explain the origin of life or the universe. They tend to derive morality, ethics, religious laws, or a preferred lifestyle from their ideas about the cosmos and human nature".

- Religion often determines the sense of morality, worldview, self-image, attitudes towards others, and overall personal identity to a significant extent. Therefore, religious differences are very important for societies and cultures.

Belief

Belief is another concept with conveying a wide variety of meanings. Commonly associated with religion, belief refers to the type of ideas supporting people's decision making, and evaluation.

- Religious persecution is the systematic mistreatment of an individual or a group of individuals as a response to their religious beliefs or affiliations or their lack thereof.
- Through the ages, religion and religious belief have been the source of main conflicts between countries, and people. Despite the process towards secularization taken by several countries, and international organizations, people continue to be persecuted and killed for religious motives.

Religion based extremism

The authors agree that the definition of extremism is complex. According to Sotlar et al. (2004, p. 1), extremism is essentially a political term that determines activities that are not morally, ideologically, or politically in accordance neither with the written (legal and constitutional), nor with unwritten norms of the state.

- Often, religious based extremism is associated with religious prosecution, and can led to different eugenic political strategies.
- The label of extremism is attributed to groups fighting to their political agendas against mainstream systems accepted by most people.

According to the council of Europe:

"*Discrimination and intolerance impact negatively on society as a whole, and particularly on young people who experience".*

Religious discrimination

According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, "religious discrimination is treating a person or group differently because of their religion and/or beliefs. It happens when adherents of different religions, denominations or non-religions are treated unequally due to their beliefs, either by the law or institutional settings, violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment".

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2021) states that:

"*Fundamental rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to everyone in the EU. They are the same no matter where you're from, what you believe or how you live".*

The OSCE report (2021) identifies the main following types of hate crimes based on religion and belief:

- Anti-Semitic hate crime
- Anti-Muslim hate crime
- Anti-Christian hate crime

Islamophobia

Means discrimination and hate crimes against Muslim people spread out across countries in the late years.

According to Council of Europe:

"The fact that religion and belief are often confused with culture, nationality and ethnicity makes it more complicated but also more painful on an individual level: you may be discriminated against on the grounds of religious affiliation even if you happen not to believe in the religion you are associated with".

Learn more about concepts and terms:

- *Equality and Human Rights Commission*. (s.d.). Obtido de https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en
- Moore, D. L. (2016). "Diminishing religious literacy: methodological assumptions and analytical frameworks for promoting the public understanding of religion." *Religious Literacy in Policy and Practice (27-38)*. Bristol and Chicago: Policy Press.
- OSCOE. ESTaR: Improve support for victims of hate crimes. https://www.osce.org/odihr/hate-crime-victim-support
- Dinham, Adam, and Matthew Francis (eds), Religious literacy in policy and practice (Bristol, 2015; online edn, Policy Press Scholarship Online, 17 Sept. 2015), https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447316657.001.0001

III. Most common forms of religion-based hate crimes being reported in academe campuses

Higher Education Institutions can be contexts of religious conflicts due to religion and faith stereotypes and prejudices.

According to Aune (2020, p.16) **people fearing** from hate crimes based on religion and belief may:

- Avoid walking in certain areas/going to certain places
- Avoid going out at night
- Avoid spending time with certain people
- Improve home security (e.g., alarm, locks)
- Hide religion or belief in another way
- Stop using particular forms of social media
- Carry personal security devices (e.g., alarms, whistles, etc.)
- Change the way the person looks/dresses
- Change mobile phone number
- Hide language/accent
- Move home frequently

- Aune, K., Peacock, L., Cheruvallil-Contractor, S., & Weller, P. (n.d.). Finding's part one Religion and Belief-Related Hate Incidents in Higher Education. Retrieved from: [coventry-university-research-and-evaluation-report.pdf (officeforstudents.org.uk)](coventry-university-research-and-evaluation-report.pdf)

The main forms of **hate crimes based on religion** and belief are:

- Name-calling because of someone's religion;
- Mocking someone for their religious beliefs;
- Attacks and physical violence motivated by religious differences;
- Stereotyping someone for belonging to a certain religious group;
- Making racist comments about the way one dresses or looks;
- Following a person or trying to control them based on religious stereotypes
- Verbal attacks with offensive and/or humiliating content;

- Threatening with disciplinary sanctions without any kind of plausible reason;
- Promoting social isolation by showing contempt or ignoring colleagues or workers because of religion;
- Systematically spreading rumors and/or malicious comments or repeated criticism about co-workers, subordinates, or hierarchical superiors due to their religion.

What are the most common forms of religion-based hate crimes being **reported in academe campuses**?

- Use offensive language based religious beliefs;
- Verbal abuse or threats of violence;
- Prejudice towards religion or belief;
- Use of racist jargons to refer to people from different religions with a racist association;
- Failure by some higher university administrations to protect staff members and students who suffer from intolerance and religious hatred;
- Physical attacks;

Often students from other nationalities and ethnic groups are subject to hate speech and assault due to ethnic heritage by their peers, academic and non-academic staff.

According to the Council of Europe, going through hate crimes based on religion and belief may bring about the following effects:

- Low self-esteem
- Self-segregation
- Internalised oppression
- Disengagement from school activities
- Non-fulfilment of their potential
- Attraction to violent extremist ideologies
- School drop-out
- Health problems / depression

IV. Overview on religion issues in Europe

- The Commissioner for Human Rights and the **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance** warned to "the need to address increasing inequality, racism, xenophobia, hate speech and discrimination on grounds of religion or belief or any other ground" (ECRI, 2019).

- The European Commission criminalizes "public incitement to violence or hatred based on race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin", according to the 2008 Framework Decision on combating certain forms of expressions of racism and xenophobia.

- Legal entities have been strongly committed to provide support to the victims and generate social and institutional awareness against hate crimes. One important action concerns the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online., which involved agreements between IT companies for controlling and monitoring hate speech in the social networks, amongst other.

- Is relevant to mention the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030), anti-Muslim hatred or anti-gypsyism.

- Another relevant action is the creation of the High-Level Group on combating speech and hate crime.

- Despite the legal and institutional framework, hate and extremist based on religion and belief are still major concerns within European Countries.

- Evidenced in some countries, more than others, religion-based violence is affecting people, particularly when associated with gender, ethnicity, or nationality.

Data is generally missing for characterizing the situation in HEIs, or the policies being enacted within this context. Few information is available also in what respects the type of actions developed in HEIs.

In:European Comission

Additional resources on measure and policies

- The High-Level Group page in the Register of Commission's expert groups, including agendas and minutes of the meetings

- Staff Working Document - Countering Racism and Xenophobia in the EU

- Guidance notes on the practical application of Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia

- Conclusions paper on Antigypsism: increasing its recognition to better understand and address its manifestations

- Conclusions paper on Afrophobia: acknowledging and understanding the challenges to ensure effective responses

- FRA Compendium of practices on hate crime

- Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU

- Unmasking bias motives in crimes: selected cases of the European Court of Human Rights

- Data and maps | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (europa.eu)

- Ensuring justice for hate crime victims: professional perspectives

- OSCE/ODIHR Hate Crime Data

- ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°15 on Combating Hate Speech

- ECRI revised General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination

- ECRI revised General Policy Recommendation No. 9 on preventing and combating Antisemitism

V. CHECK IT HE countries overview

Situation varies across countries, also considering the historical trajectory regarding religion and belief. The table below illustrates the situation in the Check it he countries:

	Check It He Countries					
	Cyprus	**Finland**	**Portugal**	**United Kingdom**	**Serbia**	**Turkey**
Hate and Extremism	Increased xenophobic discourse, however there´s no measures;	Religious diversity is quite small in Finland.	The Law states that every citizen has the right to choose their religious beliefs, still there are some focuses of hate and extremism.	There are some cases of faith-based discrimination, and many UK campuses deal with instances of discrimination internally.	The Law states that every citizen has the right to choose their religious beliefs, however those religious communities which are not listed as traditional are frequently subject to discrimination.	The state interferes heavily with religion, and although there is freedom of religion, religious diversity is not supported by institutions and politics
Religious freedom in law	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.	Yes.
Religious hate and extremism - Defined as crime	Yes.	Yes	Yes.	Yes	Yes.	Yes.
Higher education situation	**There is no information on cases** in universities, however, there are cases identified in schools	Small religious diversity in universities	**There are no known cases** found relating religion, faith or belief-based hate or abuse in HEI campuses in Portugal.	**There´s no official publicly available database** that records incidents related to discrimination on campuses, and many UK campuses deal with instances of discrimination internally and people usually don't report until it's a serious threat.	**No information on cases** relating to religion, faith, and belief-based hate and abuse have been recorded.	There´s multiple cases of discrimination based on religious beliefs. No recorded cases in HEI related to discrimination on religious beliefs. They are only reported to the police in criminal cases.
Laws or strategies on Higher Education	Yes, but it's not specific.	-	--	Many UK HEIs have implemented policies, and there are calls from national bodies to help protect those from marginalized faith communities.	The Law on University in Act 101 guarantees the right of students to diversity and protection against discrimination as defined in the Law against Discrimination.	Due to missing policies on campuses, some universities have adopted an internal mechanism and/or regulations, but most higher education institutions lack that kind of mechanism completely.

Source: Authors based on data from check it he partners

The Annual report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (2020) *reveals that religious persecution is a harsh reality in numerous countries worldwide, including Europe. Many individuals are being killed or imprisoned due to their religious beliefs and faith.*

VI. Major incidents in CHECK IT HE countries

Cyprus

Almost no specific cases of racist incidents, hate speech and hate crime were reported by members of religious groups and various ethnic communities. Therefore, The Council of Europe (ECRI), in its fourth report on Cyprus (2011) ECRI urged the authorities of the RoC to improve their Crime Report System to guarantee the collection and publication of accurate data and statistics on incidents related to religion, faith and believe- based hate and abuse.

The Ombudsperson proceeded also with the publication of a document whereas the framework on hate speech was presented. In addition, the paper highlighted the increasing hate speech on the internet risking the incitement of general societal hostility towards vulnerable groups such as the migrants, ethnic and religious communities and LGBTI persons.

According to the International Religious Freedom Report (United States Department of State (2019) the following are some incidents related to religion, faith and believe- based hate and abuse in the RoC. In 6th of September 2019 local press reported that a Lyceum Head teacher instructed a Muslim student wearing a headscarf to leave the school and only return after removing it based on the claims that the Ministry of Education regulations did not allow students to cover their heads.

Even though Education Minister Costas Hambiaouris condemned the incident by stating that educational policies endorse equality, respect of diversity, development of each child's personality, and safeguards human rights without race, religious, or other discrimination, the Ministry did not publicize the results of the investigation held.

Instead, it was announced on September 18 that the Ministry would handle the issues arising from the investigation in accordance with the law. The minister met with the student, her father, and the headmaster on September 7. In response to continued criticism from students at the school, the Ministry announced on September 8 that it would transfer the headmaster to the State Institutes of Further Education. In June 2019 the Cyprus Humanists Association said a school in Famagusta District presented a student with an award donated by a local business that was conditional on the student being an Orthodox Christian.

The association said public schools previously presented similar awards conditional on the students being Greek Orthodox. It called on the Ministry of Education, the ombudsperson, and Commissioner for the Rights of the Child Leda Koursoumba to prevent discrimination and maintain the secular character of public schools. The commissioner's office said as of year's end it had not received any formal complaints.

The Jewish community continued to report isolated instances of anti-Semitic verbal harassment. The nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) Caritas and Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism (KISA) reported cases in which private employers refused to hire women who wore hijabs. According to Caritas, Muslim students faced less discrimination than in previous years. Some religious minority groups continued to report societal pressure to engage in public Greek Orthodox religious ceremonies.

Greek Orthodox Christians reported they sometimes faced ostracism from that community if they converted to another religion. Muslim community leaders stated that the government continued to allow the community access for religious services to only six of 19 mosques located on cultural heritage sites.

Portugal

There are no known cases found relating religion, faith or believe based hate or abuse in HEI campuses in Portugal. However, there are some important incidents reported in 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Portugal. In January 2021, a contestant on the television reality show Big Brother, was removed from the reality show for repeatedly "jokingly" making Nazi salutes off-air in front of other contestants. In February 7 (2021) a former Portuguese colonel know by his role on democratic revolution wrote an anti-Semitic comment that lead to a statement of Portuguese government. In January 2022, a case of Islamophobia was reported in Lisbon.

The owners of a store, in Lisbon, saw their grocery store vandalized with an offensive message against Islam and two patriarchal crosses in the window. "Although this discourse is from a minority, it must be fought and denounced," they wrote on their social networks *setenta e quatro* (Vidal,

2022). In 2021 the walls of high schools, colleges, and the refugee reception center were stained with messages of hate against Roma, black, Arab, and refugee communities, as stated in *setenta e quatro* (Vidal, 2022)

In August 2022, a group of Pakistanis (essentially women and children) were asked to leave the municipal swimming pools in a Portuguese city, as they were not wearing swimsuits but their everyday clothes. The staff members and the police themselves claimed that "immigrants have to respect our culture", Jornal i (Rato, 2022)

FRA also reports the following cases:

- – *In 2017, a German citizen was sentenced in Germany to 2 years and 9 months in prison for turmoil against segments of the population, including racism, xenophobia, and insult to religious communities. The Portuguese Supreme Court of Justice decided about the execution of a European Arrest Warrant issued by a German Court which concerned a conviction relating to Holocaust denial. This conduct is defined in Article 240 (2) (b) of the Portuguese Penal Code as a denial of a crime against humanity.*
- – *In 2018, a case about hate speech on Facebook leading to incitement to hatred. On 10 September 2015, in the context of the imminent arrival of Syrian refugees to Portugal, the defendant posted a video on his personal open Facebook page, with the following title "Be careful, bin Laden's cousin Mohammed in the area… beware". The defendant was dressed in a long beige tunic, displaying an object resembling a machine gun, and stated: "Hello Portuguese people. I am the first Syrian to arrive to Portugal.*
- – *In 2019 he Regulatory Authority for the Media received a complaint arguing that a media piece published in a national newspaper linked Islamic religion to terrorism, providing incorrect information and ignoring the terrorist cases perpetrated by non-Islamic groups.*

Despite the quite few reported cases, students with other religion and belief than the catholic, often feel they stay a part, and fear from the potential exposure to other. Besides, they also lack specific places, and well as forms of keeping up with their religious rituals, during the day, week, or year.

Finland

There are no cases found relating religion, faith or believe based hate or abuse in HEI campuses in Finland. In TUAS there are one or two examples of discriminating speech (or writing) considering religion in teaching that are related to religion, but these examples have not led to any further actions. (Sundqvist 2022.)

Serbia

Since higher education institutions in Serbia are secular no incidents relating to religion, faith, and belief-based hate and abuse have been recorded. When such incidents occur, however, they are mostly politically colored and provoked by right-winged groups and they do not only stir religious feelings but also national and ethnic affiliations, etc.

Turkey

In the Turkish context, one needs to look at several incidents to understand the problem. The role of politics and especially coup d'états in the practice of religion (especially Islam) and education has always been very effective. This can, for instance, be seen in the coup of February 28. In Turkey, students must take university entrance exams and are enrolled at universities depending on their performance in these exams. After 28 Feb 1997, some alterations were made in calculating the total score, which was unfavorable for students, especially from religious schools. This and other factors like the headscarf ban and the restrictions on university placement, the number of imam hatip schools started to decrease after February 28. Even in the early 2000s, these schools came to the brink of closure due to a lack of students.

With the Justice and Development Party conservative religious ideology started to become prevalent. Bans, inequalities, and restrictions on Islamic practice were lifted, e.g., university placement exam practices, headscarf ban etc. At the same time, the number of religious institutions and schools increased during their government: number of theology faculties was 23 in 1997 (Aşlamacı, 2017, p. 196), a total of 86 theology faculties were founded in Turkey in 2013, 46 of which are continuing education. (Songur, 2014, p. 208). On October 30, 2019, 61 faculties of theology and 38 faculties of Islamic sciences (Gözler, 2019).

United Kingdom

Discrimination based on one's religion is illegal in the UK (see Equality Act, 2010). However, several students have reported experiencing faith-based discrimination (see e.g., Akel, 2021). It should be noted that there is no official publicly available database that records incidents related to discrimination on campuses.

Many UK campuses deal with instances of discrimination internally, through various disciplinary procedures (e.g., suspending studies, probationary periods, etc.). People who believe they are the victims of

discrimination do have the opportunity to report the matter with the police, but this is somewhat rare. Often people do not choose to go to the police and report until it becomes a real threat, and this makes many incidents occurring in campuses invisible. When examining the literature on faith and belief-based hate and abuse on UK campuses, many reports examine the lived experiences of individuals or deal with faith and belief-based hate in an abstract sense.

Many reports discuss what religious hate is, and provide ways of tackling such abuse, but very rarely provide concrete examples from different HEI campuses. It appears most UK Universities and reports commissioned by UK Universities do not provide case studies on such intendances (see, e.g., Office for Students, 2021).

Some reports on religious-based hate provide small qualitative quotes from students who have experienced faith and belief-based hate, though it is unknown where such instances took place (e.g., see Aune et al., 2020). In addition to the above, it should also be noted that many Universities in the UK have undergone a process of marketisation, and are still undergoing this process (see Fairclough, 1993; Czerniewicz et al., 2021). This marketisation of academia means that many Universities are less willing to share instances of religious-based hate, as this could cause reputational damage.

VII. Most relevant institutions in CHECK IT HE countries

Cyprus

The **ombudsperson** is an independent state institution responsible for protecting citizens' rights and human rights in general. The ombudsperson may investigate complaints made against any public service or official for actions that violate human rights, including freedom of religion, or contravene the laws or rules of proper administration. The ombudsman makes recommendations to correct wrongdoings but cannot enforce them (United States Department of State, 2019).

The following institutions may also endorse and collaborate with the police for the recording of hate crime incidents, although they do not have a specific recording mechanism of their own: The **Anti-Discrimination Body** is an independent authority established in 2004 that operates within the framework of the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsperson). As stated in its webpage, "*[i]ts main objective is the combating of racism and discriminations and the promotion of equa 7 treatment with respect to human dignity.*" It was established in 2004 in accordance with the Combating of Racial and Other Forms of Discrimination Law. TThe Anti-Discrimination Body examines complaints submitted by any- body regarding discrimination and it can also make interventions relating to discrimination cases ex-officio. If a discriminative treatment or practice is affirmed, the Anti-Discrimination Body has the authority to apply sanctions.

Apart from independent authorities, **NGOs may also facilitate** and cooperate with the police for the recording of hate crime incidents. These NGOs like KISA, Caritas, the Cameroonian Association, the African Diaspora, the Recognised Refugees in Cyprus and ACCEPT LGBT Cyprus, are involved with the wellbeing of minority groups and play a significant role in providing support of a more psychosocial nature with victims of hate crime.

KISA is an NGO, established in 1998. KISA's action is focused on the fields of Migration, Asylum, Racism, Discrimination and Trafficking, and it includes awareness-raising of the Cypriot society as well as lobbying in order to influence the legal and structural framework, the policies and practices in these fields. **Caritas Cyprus** is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), with the mission to end poverty, promote justice, and restore dignity for the vulnerable and marginalized. **Aequitas**, an NGO, developed in 2016 the online platform Say No to Hate Speech, in the framework of the project 'Say No to Hate Speech – Young People Empowered,' a project funded by the

European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe. The platform contains general information on hate speech and from the 12th of September 2016, it will include online chat services "offering support and in- formation for victims of hate speech through psychoeducation as well as support and information for others such as parents, guardians, and friends of victims.

Finland

Overall situation in Finland is very calm and although official institutes prepare for future changes there are no signs of major challenges at this point. Growing immigration into Finland brings also new diversity in the field of religious groups and their size and amount.

Portugal

The institutions that most actively promote religious diversity in Portugal are those most presented internationally and that work together across countries to promote religious freedom and diversity in the world.

- UNO» United Nations Organization
- UNESCO » United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- EU» European Commission
- FRA» European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- KAICIID» King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- Religions for Peace
- ECRI» European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance
- OSCE» Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

United Kingdom

There are many charities who advocate for religious diversity, inclusion, and education in the UK. Many of these charities work internationally – for example, the European Commission has worked across Europe to combat anti-Muslim hate (see European Commission, 2021).

The **European Commission** has been particularly interested in raising equality, across multiple characteristics including religious and belief-based characteristics. The European Commission has funded several reports into the current climate of hate and has explored ways in which this can be

counted. On a more national level, there are several organizations which aim to promote religious diversity across religions.

For example, The **Religion Media Centre** is an impartial and independent organization, which works to helping the media report and understand religions (see Religion Media Centre, 2022). This is particularly important given the extensive body of work which demonstrates the normalization effect media can have on the public (see, e.g., Baker et al., 2013). Part of The Religion Media Centre's mission is to ensure that there is sufficient literacy and understanding about religion before the media reports on issues related to this. In turn, this begins to address some of the more systemic issues around how marginalized religious identities are viewed.

Serbia

Human rights, and among them the right to practice the religion of one´s own choice, are guaranteed by the Constitutions of the Republic of Serbia, as well as by the above-mentioned individual laws. For the same purpose, there are also two constituted official institutes, i.e. government bodies represented by two state officials: The **Protector of Citizens** and the **Commissioner for the Protection of Equality** whose job is to make sure that the Constitution and individual laws are abode by concerning human rights, and among them the right to religious freedom and diversity.

 In addition to state officials and bodies, there are various organisations in the Republic of Serbia whose mission is to promote religious diversity (among other things). The most visible and active are as follows:

Citizens Association MONITOR from Novi Pazar (Western Serbia, the Raška District)

Citizens Association Center for Empirical Research of Religion (*Centar za empirijsko istraživanje religije)* – Novi Sad, Vojvodina.

Turkey

The **Presidency of Religious Affairs** (Diyanet), which the state uses to organize Islamic affairs, is established by the constitution. Diyanet is required by legislation to support Sunni Islam's beliefs, practices, and moral values, as well as to inform the public about religious matters and manage mosques. Its duties include facilitating the practice of Islam, offering Islamic instruction, and managing religious institutions.

Diyanet is governed by a 16-person council chosen by clergy and university theology faculties, and it falls under the purview of the Office of the President. Five major divisions, referred to as high councils, make up the institution: Religious Services, Hajj and Umrah Services, Education, Publications, and Public Relations. Although it is not required by law all council members have been Sunni Muslims. As described, Diyanet only

regulates issues related to the Sunni Muslim population and leaves out the Alevis (a Muslim minority with its own practices).

For issues on other religions there are not any institutions that regulate and/or promote religious diversity. In general, non-Muslim groups set up their own associations to support their community and religious practices.

However, religious diversity is usually not supported through politics and institutions in Türkiye; and as stated above, despite an institution to prevent discrimination was founded in 2016, it is not well-functioning both in terms of tracking problems and offering solid solutions.

VIII. Most important developments, Best Practices, and challenges

Steps made to
map hate,
extremism,
and violence.

Good practices
to tackle hate,
abuse, and
extremism based
on religion

Major
challenges

Most important
stakeholders,
organizations,
and sources

Steps Made to Map Hate, Extremism and Violence Based on Religion

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** proclaims that:

"*Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion - this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance*".

Article 18 stipulates that:

> *"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance".*

The **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** guarantees the right to human dignity; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to non-discrimination; and to an effective remedy and to a fair trial.

The **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights** states that:

> *"Countries must simplify the reporting and improve the recording, investigation and punishment of hate crimes to fully ensure the rights of victims".*

The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states:

Article 9 says that:

> 1.*Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.*

> 2.*Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.*

- The United Nations Organization Secretary-General launched in 2018 the **UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech**. The initiative was taken to respond to a surge in global hate speech, which has moved into the mainstream, and started to threaten democratic values, even in established democracies.

- The Plan identified **13 Key Commitments**, which together represent a complex social and political strategy to fight against intolerance – without mentioning legal restrictions of speech.

The strategic plan:

- Relies on searching for causes through research and data analysis, applying counter-speech in the form of spreading knowledge and strategic communication as well as advocacy.

- Aims to address hate speech through a coordinated response that tackles the root causes and drivers of hate speech, as well as its impact on victims and societies.

The **Charter for Freedom of Religion or Belief** is signed by 30 countries, and addresses multiple serious religion-related problems:

> *"Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is an inalienable human right, encompassing the right to hold or not to hold any faith or belief, to change belief, and to be free from coercion to adopt a different belief".*
>
> *"Freedom of religion or belief is a unique human right, in that to be fully enjoyed other incorporated rights must also be respected, such as the freedoms of expression, assembly, education, and movement".*

The signatories of this charter commit to:

  – *"Promote freedom of religion or belief for all persons through their work and respective institutions".*
  – *"Enhance global cooperation by endeavoring to work across geographical, political, and religious lines".*
  – *"Undertake efforts to jointly promote freedom of religion or belief, share information, and mobilize effective responses".*

- There is also a <u>Plan of Action for Religious Leaders</u> to prevent incitement to violence based religious belief. This Plan of Action integrates respect for and promotion of international human rights standards, in particular the right to freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of religion or belief and peaceful assembly.

- The recommendations contained in the Plan of Action are relevant to a range of situations and can contribute to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses, violent extremism, conflict and different forms of violence.

- **UNESCO's Member States** have adopted a historic decision to increase UNESCO's capacity to support States in developing strategies to prevent violent extremism.
- In addition, **UNESCO** is committed to implementing the **UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism** by paying particular attention to the following priorities:

  - education, skills development, and employment facilitation.
  - youth empowerment.
  - strategic communication, Internet, and social media

- During 2022, in light of the preparation of the **High Commissioner's report**, as requested by Human Rights Council resolution 47/21, OHCHR (**The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**) welcomed information from all States, including independent governmental entities, as well as United Nations entities, inter-governmental and regional organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations and all other relevant stakeholders, concerning systemic racism, violations of international human rights law.

- The RAN (**Radicalisation Awareness Network**), which is part of the **European Commission**, is of great relevance to the prevention of violent extremism focusing on alternatives for opposing extremist propaganda and/or challenging extremist ideas, via the internet on blogs, websites or social media.

Good practices to tackle hate, abuse, and extremism based on religion.

What should institutions do against religious, and belief hate crimes?

- Promoting positive values such as equality and respect,
- Supporting tolerance and freedom of expression but not tolerating expressions of religion-related hatred
- Having religious, interfaith, and harassment-related awareness events and campaigns,
- Increasing students' understanding of diverse religions and beliefs
- Creating educational opportunities, both formal (in lectures and seminars) and informal (optional workshops), for students
- Increasing religious and belief literacy in the campuses

- Map existing initiatives to prevent and counter incitement to violence so that they can be scaled up and supported, including by:
  - Academic institutions providing education and training for religious actors;
  - Social, print, television and other media companies;
  - Organizations responsible for community based initiatives;
  - Religious and secular institutions and organizations; -
  - Institutions that carry out interfaith and intra-faith dialogue, education, and training.
  - Academic and education institutions, and civil society organizations should:

- Provide training to religious leaders and actors on human rights monitoring and reporting; the prevention of atrocity crimes and their incitement; the use of non-violent methods to confront and stand up against incitement to violence; and the development of effective communication strategies to curb incitement.

Additional resources:

- Dinham, A., Francis, M. Matthew D. M. (2016) *Religious literacy in policy and practice*. Bristol and Chicago: Policy Press.
- Moore, D. L. (2016). Diminishing religious literacy: methodological assumptions and analytical frameworks for promoting the public understanding of religion. *Religious Literacy in Policy and Practice* (27-38). Bristol and Chicago: Policy Press.

According to UNESCO, there are practices we can be adopted to combat these problems:

- Implement in school's curriculum dedicated content through stand-alone subjects (focusing for example on wellbeing, school life, world religions, global citizenship, etc.).
- Enhancing mainstreaming content and topics throughout the curriculum, notably in key career subject such as history, civics and citizenship education, philosophy and social studies;
- Create school assemblies addressing the issue of violent extremism, open discussions on contentious issues;
- Developing anti-bullying policies through participatory processes involving students, teachers, school personnel and families;
- Inviting guest speakers to discuss issues with students and parents, law enforcement officers, former violent extremists, media/Internet professionals, etc;
- Engage actively academic and non – academic staff in increasing their awareness about how to deal with religion based claims;
- Adopt stereotype-neutral educational approaches at all levels of graduation;
- Foster representativeness - integrating values, traditions and customs representative of various religions, races and nationalities, both in everyday life and in celebrations;

- Foster collaboration between Higher Education institutions and other organizations especially targeted with religion based violence prevention;

In terms of **prevention**, these are some attitudes that religious leaders and actors feel are important to take:

- React to incitement as soon as it occurs to prevent tensions from escalating;
- Learn how to differentiate between speech that causes offense and speech that could constitute incitement to violence;
- Monitor the media, including social media, to ensure that hate speech that could constitute incitement to violence is constantly identified and countered;
- Disseminate positive images and stories about faiths other than one's own;
- Speak out not only when one's own community is targeted but also when a religious community different from one's own is targeted;
- Support the initiatives of other religious leaders and actors who speak out in support of human rights and justice and of oppressed communities, in particular;
- Monitor, compile and circulate religious statements and decrees issued by religious leaders and authorities that incite to hatred and violence;
- Issue and circulate reports of religious statements and decrees by religious leaders and authorities denouncing incitement and/or offering alternative messages;
- Develop and share new and traditional media strategies to reframe narratives. In doing so, consult with experts, to make sure that messages reach the right audience;
- Disseminate success stories of preventing and countering incitement;
- Ensure that counter and alternative messages are disseminated in local languages, including in local dialects;
- Engage in dialogue with all communities and audiences, including those who are hostile or whose ideologies are discriminatory or extremist;
- Listen to "victims" of incitement and integrate their perspectives;
- Encourage and foster research on incitement to violence, its origins and causes, as well as the role of the media in spreading it.

See more in: ODIHR's Hate Crime Data. (2022)

The Council of Europe provides a **Manual for Human Rights Education** with young people containing several excellent exercises that can be used at Higher Education Institutions**.**

In practice, if you feel you are being victim of or assist to a religion-based hate practice:

You need to know first what person in your institution can help you to deal with the issue:

– Central office of student's ombudsperson?
– Central office for student's inclusion and social support?
– Course director?
– Head of Department?
– Head of Pedagogical Council?

Important indications about how you should behave when coming across with situations alike:

According to the existing studies, there are some **important practices** to consider:

▪ Academic staff and non-academic staff should be aware of their own prejudices and avoid expressing them;
▪ It is important to pay attention to the differences and inequalities, towards the victims, which may establish power relations;
▪ It is advisable to get information on relevant issues in the interaction with the victims, according to their characteristics (religion, sexuality, disability)
▪ Not expressing value judgments about the victims, in order to respect dignity and preserve trust;
▪ Ensuring a non-discriminatory approach and an undifferentiated treatment, without, however, falling into insensitivity;
▪ Maintain active listening, paying attention to both content and form, tone of voice and non-verbal language;
▪ No assumptions should be made about the identity of the victims, nor stereotyped statements;
▪ The language used should be non-pathologizing and inclusive, as regards religion, belief, sexual orientation, physical or mental condition.

During the academic year institutions can:

▪ Organize events in the campuses where people from different religious share their practices and experiences concerning food or other practices associated to a main celebration.

▪ Organize storytelling events, inviting people of different religions and beliefs to talk about their academic experience, career prospects and challenges- These experiences can be recorded (under authorization), and edited to be used in a specific webpage with information on the intercultural feature of the institution.

Major challenges

- Create awareness campaigns for the eradication of racist expressions;
- Built a specific platform for the presentation of complaints related religion - discrimination
- Ensure the monitoring of victims with psychologists, within the university space;
- Implementation of a plan of clarification sessions and lectures with the presence of people informed about the legal framework and witnesses and victims of cases of racism, who are willing to share their stories;
- Ensure the presence of ethnicities and races in the various positions and spaces in higher education institutions;
- Establish and strengthen reporting mechanisms and support new infrastructure and facilities;
- Facilitate strong mechanisms and support for safeguarding, both on- and off-campus (including online), working with partner agencies such as the police and third sector hate crime reporting centers;
- Build and sustain religious literacy among students and staff, including challenging misconceptions;
- Support the development of effective role models for students of a particular religion or belief;
- Develop and sustain positive campus relations between different groups
- Build greater community cohesion on campus, including safe and respectful approaches to freedom of speech and on-campus debate;
- Develop responses to politically motivated hate crime which targets students of a particular religion or belief.

Religion-motivated displays of violence and hatred are not always showed in the most terrorizing way. Often the hatred, prejudice, and discrimination are disguised by subtler, but equally humiliating, jokes or statements that demonstrate a lack of respect and a failure to recognize the dignity of another human being. As far as religion is concerned, there are some harassing behaviors that are more frequently manifested.

Most important stakeholders

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the European Union

- – Representatives from national and local authorities;
- – Government officials;
- – Police force;
- – Civil society organizations;
- – Students and students' associations;
- – Trade unions and professional orders;
- – Religious groups associations

For the effective implementation of religion mainstreaming, the involvement of civil society such as centers for religion studies and research, academic and educational institutions, the private sector, the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – especially religious organizations – and all other actors of civil society need also be recognized and acknowledged.

There should also be strong cooperation with immigrant associations, religious leaders, and stakeholders to more effectively understand cultural differences which vary from Finnish laws and culture. Governmental actors and politicians have the most important role. They give national guidelines by laws and resources to other actors.

Local governments, employers, associations, and communities have their own role in executing these policies. It is also important that there is more commitment from the media and social communication, especially in defining actions that contribute to better informing the population about the various types of religion-based crime that affect higher education institutions.

International Organizations

There are many important sources at international and national level that should be considered when defining a strategy for religion-based violence prevention:

- – UNO» United Nations Organization
- – UNESCO » United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- – EU» European Commission
- – FRA» European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- – KAICIID» King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- – Religions for Peace
- – ECRI» European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance
- – OSCE» Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- – Amnesty International

XIX. Training Toolkit

What are the expected outputs of the training toolkit?

- The toolkit envisions mainly to facilitate self-assessment and reflection about:

  - institutional practices;
  - interpersonal and community practices (for example, at the level of interaction among students; between teachers and students; teachers-staff-students etc.).

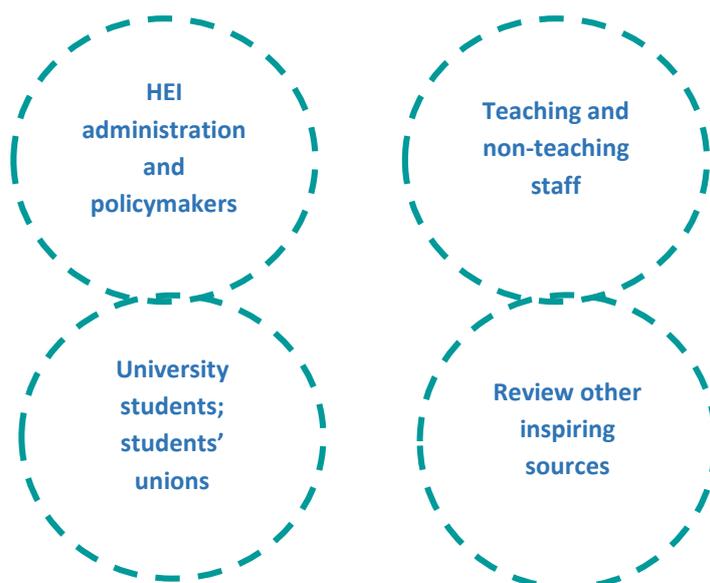- It also mains at facilitating the identification of HEI's strengths and opportunities for improvement, and priorities for capacity building.

- In short, this toolkit will help to think about what it looks like to keep innovating and prioritizing HEI's organizational learning and training goals in regard to challenge religion-based hate and extremism.
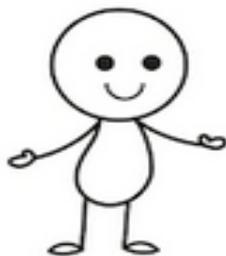
We would like to invite you to the part of the toolkit in which we have included exercises which aim to prompt self-reflection and discussion on diverse items related to religion-based hate and extremism, while, at the same time, to encourage a self-critical attitude. You can find all this information also here. TOOLKIT | Toolkit 4 (checkithe.wixsite.com)

Here you can find activities for:

HEI administration and policymakers

Teaching and non-teaching staff

University students; students' unions

Review other inspiring sources

HEI administration and policymakers (rectors, vice-rectors, deans of faculties, heads of departments, directors of research centers)

Self-assessment activity 1 "Mapping strategies"

Does your HEI/Faculty/Research Center pursue any of the following strategies?

Instructions: Indicate Yes/No plus comments. In case your answer is 'Yes' please provide comments regarding what you think are the major strengths and weaknesses of concrete actions already pursued. In case your answer is 'No' please briefly explain why your HEI didn't not follow the strategy in question.

Strategy	Overview	Yes Strengths and weaknesses'	No Motives	Comments/Ideas
Community mobilization	These activities seek to mobilize a broad range of HEIs members into a critical mass of advocates engaged to prevent religion-based hate and extremism before it happens. Typically includes community dialogues, local activism, media campaigns, distribution of learning or communication materials.			
Support services	Health and social support services such as: -Front-line services (psycho-social counseling, shelter services) -Integrated community response networks			
Legal aid	Efforts to improve access to justice. These efforts might include: -Planning and implementing policies that discourage religion-based hate and extremism; -Providing legal advice and mediation.			
Advocacy	Any action that influences a decision-maker to make a legal and/or institutional change to address religion-based hate and extremism at any level (local, national, and international).			
Media and communication	Communication efforts can involve: -basic messages and materials; -organized efforts to deploy communication messages over time.			
Capacity building	Workshops, short-oriented courses, classes aimed to strengthening the knowledge and skills needed to prevent and respond to religion-based hate and extremism.			
Partnerships	Can take multiple forms and comprise various governmental and non-governmental actors from different sectors, and at local and national levels (organizations from sectors, for example, the police, justice, health, education, religion, civil society and migration associations and organizations)			
Infraestruture	Evaluation of the existing space infrastructures at the HEI and their adequacy for promoting religion diversity can be part of an institutional strategy that works towards reducing discrimination.			

Self-assessment activity 2 "generate"

This activity should be done at the beginning of the academic year. Policy makers and course directors and other institutional representatives should be involved in building reception programs that promote intercultural exchange in the campuses.

- *Organize a speed dating session that counts with presentation of oneself –*
- *A group of tables and chares are displayed in a room or an open space (such as an entrance hall).*
- *Each table has a word on it (connected to intercultural dialogue, e.g., culture; dialogue; experience; equality).*
- *Students are invited to discuss all the topics, being about 10 minutes in each table.*
- *At the end, the person in charge for the session organizes the contribution, passing a clear message about the relevance of mutual respect at the campuses.*

Self-assessment activity 3 "In Action"

This tool includes assessment of core activities related to institutional strategies to address religion-based hate and extremism.

Instructions:

Answer to the following questionnaire clarifying exactly what is the situation in your organization. At the end, you need to make the sum of points obtained in each domain, to take conclusions. If your score is between 4 and 11 points, that means that your institution is far from being aware of the issues related to religion-based violence and crime, and there is a need to foster your knowledge on the situation, compare with other institutions, and define a strategic plan. If your score is between 12 and 18 points, that means that your institution is on the track to build a culture of non-discrimination, and religion-based violence prevention, however there are still many aspects that need to be faced, whether in relation to health, communication, privacy, or involvement of publics more vulnerable to religion-based violence.

Questionnaire

To what extent your university is an institution where people from different religious or non-religious backgrounds and beliefs get on well together?

Domain	Points
I. Involvement of groups more vulnerable to religion-based hate and extremism	
People of different religion and belief are not involved in the design of our community mobilization activities, and this is not a priority for us.	1
On occasion, people of different religion and belief offer input to shape our community mobilization activities, but we don't reach out to them ourselves.	2
We do reach out people of different religion and belief for input on our community mobilization activities, but not always.	3
It is our established organizational practice to always seek input of people of different religion and belief about their priorities and needs when designing our community mobilization activities.	4
Total score	
II. Privacy and confidentiality	
We don't have a policy that protects individuals' privacy and confidentiality as regards religion and belief in our work.	1
While we do not have a policy on privacy and confidentiality as regards religion and belief, we do our best to protect individuals' privacy and confidentiality in our work.	2
We have a policy on individuals' privacy and confidentiality as regards religion and belief ,but not everyone is familiar with it or consistently follows it in their work.	3
We have a policy for protecting individuals´ privacy and confidentiality as regards religion and belief, but we work consistently to ensure that staff observe it.	4
Total score	
III. Health and social support services (front-line services; clinical treatment; psychosocial counseling; shelter services)	
We do not identify the barriers people of different religion and belief face in accessing services.	1
People of different religion and belief sometimes tell us about the barriers they face in seeking support services, but we do not use this information in our work yet.	2
We try to identify the barriers people of different religion and belief face in seeking help, but we do not have a way to ensure this information strengthens their access to services	3
As a common organizational practice, we identify the barriers people of different religion and belief face in seeking help and we use this information to improve their access to services.	4
Total score	

IV. Communication	
Our communication materials present people of different religion and belief as victims of hate and violence in need of charitable or moral support.	**1**
Our communication materials present people of different religion and belief as victims of hate and violence who can help themselves only with the support of other people and services	**2**
Our communication materials present people of different religion and belief and other vulnerable groups as strong, but struggling in the face of hate and violence needing the support of our organization	**3**
Our communication materials present people of different religion and belief as strong and active in their decision-making concerning hate and violence; institution is conscious of our role as promoting their rights, and providing legal support, as needed.	**4**
Total score	
Total Score at all domains	

Teaching and non-teaching staff

Self-assessment activity 1 "debate"

Promote regularly work meetings with non-teaching staff including an evaluation on the incidents, or problems involving teachers and students and analyse each case, after listening the stories of each person about the same issue. This analysis should be done in an informal tone, so people can be reflexive and understand it and how their behavior is biased concerning religion, and faith, or other characteristics.

You may use short videos on hate crimes to persuade people to participate. Learn more here: https://hatecrime.osce.org/odihr-tools/enhancing-victim-protection-and-support

Self-assessment activity 2 "involve"

Non-teaching staff should be involved in learning activities that increase their religious and belief literacy and provide them tools to intervene in case of hate – related incidents.

In a wide room people sit in chairs around a stage

Some persons from the group are previously chosen and instructed to play the role of students coming to a service signaling some short of religion/belief singularity.

The chair of the session gathers information, and organizes a debate, ending up by summing up the importance of resisting to misunderstanding and stereotypes associated with religion and faith, and that are often linked with other concerning culture traits.

University students; students' unions

Activity 1 Challenging your (academic) community.

1.Put together a group of 7-10 people.

2.Organize a storytelling moment among students of different religions, so that each one can share his or her experience based on religion.

3.You might want to cover the following topics:

Are there differences across different courses in your institution in terms of religion balance?

If so, what are the differences?

What are the cultural roots of such differences?

What can we do to change it, from an individual, institutional, and social point of view?

This exercise is designed to help you identify and reflect upon factors influencing career paths and to develop reflexive thinking regarding standardized religious roles.

Activity 2 Break the taboo.

1.Form a group of about 10 people, as diverse as possible.

2.Put people in pairs to discuss their views regarding religious diversity or problems related to religion. The goal is for each participant to contribute arguments that may change the other's preconceived idea.

3.At the end, have a reflection time together to see if the people in the group have been open to other opinions and points of view, and even if they have changed their own opinion in any respect.

Activity 3 (dis)respected*

1.Put the participants together in pairs or groups, and ask them:

Given the propositions described below, imagine how respected they would or would not be within your community. Then discuss which prejudices still need to be combated in your environment and possible ways to address them.

- − Two burka-covered ladies from Afghanistan
- − An Imam from a London mosque with his son;
- − An Orthodox bishop traveling with two young priests;
- − A conservative Jewish Rabbi (with top hat and long sideburns) and his wife;
- − A party of tourists from the Humanist Association;
- − A British Christian missionary and his wife with a small child;
- − Three members of the Hare Krishna in orange robes;
- − A Hindu couple from India with a teenage daughter;

3.Organize a debate

Exercise adapted from: https://www.forb-learning.org/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-exercises.html

Activity 4 Ready to reflect? Let's do it*!

Divide the participants into groups of 5-8.

Hand out a few pictures or postcards to each group to each group and let them look at the pictures for a while, thinking about the following question:

What does freedom of religion or belief mean to you?

After a while, ask each person to mentally pick one picture that symbolizes their feelings and thoughts when they think of religious freedom. Ask them to share which picture they chose and why with their group.

Gather all groups together and ask a few volunteers to share which picture they chose and why.

Stress that there are no right or wrong answers.

Discuss together:

• What did you feel?

• Was it difficult or easy to choose a picture? Why?

• Did other people's reflections bring something new to your mind?

Exercise adapted from: https://www.forb-learning.org/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-exercises.html

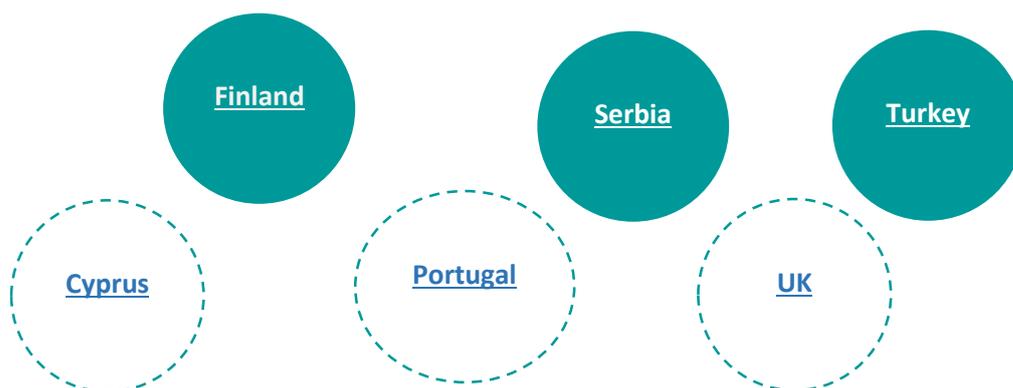# Review other inspiring sources!

Important legal and policy sources

– FAIR (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism): www.fairuk.org/introduction.htm

– OSCE/ODIHR, Council of Europe, UNESCO (2011). Guidelines for Educators on Countering Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/resources

– Istanbul Youth Declaration on Inter-Religious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work, Symposium Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work, Istanbul, Turkey, 27-31.: www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2008_Istanbul_Declaration_en.pdf

– Kazan Action Plan, International Youth Forum "Intercultural Dialogue and its Religious Dimension", Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, 30 November – 4: www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2008_Kazan_Action_Plan_en.pdf

– OSCE/ODIHR, Addressing Anti-Semitism: Why and How? A Guide for Educators, 2007 Council of Europe,

– Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2011). Recommendation 1957,"Violence against Christians in the Middle East"

– San Marino Declaration (2007):11www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Source/Pdf/Coordinators/2006_14_CDED_Religious Diversity.pdf

– Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs (2008).White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living together as equals in dignity", p. 23: www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/Pub_White_Paper/White%20Paper_final_revised_EN.pdf

You can learn more about practical strategies here:

– https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247764
– https://unisafe-gbv.eu
– https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/655135/IPOL_STU(2020)655135_EN.pdf
– https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-07/changing-the-culture.pdf

X. Additional country specific information

Cyprus

- The Orthodox Church of Cyprus is an institution that has a vast influence on society and the education system in the Republic of Cyprus. Especially during the Turkish and British rule of Cyprus, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus depicted a considerable interest on education as the latter was regarded as the means to preserve the Greek Orthodox character of the island under foreign rule (Persianis, 2006). Education in Cyprus remained closely connected with religion up until the independence of the island in 1960 (Emilianides, 2011). Compulsory religious education occupies a prominent position throughout the lower secondary (gymnasium) and the upper secondary (lyceum) levels. Specifically, religious studies are a compulsory module being taught twice a week at all levels in public schools aimed at instructing children through the dominant Greek Orthodox religious dogma. In secondary schools, it is taught by teachers who specialize in religious education, but pre-primary and primary teachers provide religious education without being specialists in theology (Krasia 2004). Atheists and parents who practice another religion are entitled to ask their children to be exempted from the mandatory Orthodox religious education.

- Taking into consideration the continuous rise of migration and refugees from Africa, East Asia, and the Middle East in the RoC, along with the xenophobic discourse in the public sphere resulting from these immigration and refugee flows and intensified by the economic crisis which generated xenophobic reactions against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Cyprus, the need for promoting tolerance and mutual understanding in the Cyprus Education, was imperative. Despite Ministry of Education's efforts to address and acknowledge the societal, cultural, political changes within the new curricula to create a democratic and student-centered education system that includes all students, irrespective of social, racial, ethnic, or religious background, and religion, the education system has been criticized for not adequately incorporating interreligious

and intercultural elements yet (Universal Periodic Review, 2019). Any remarks related to promoting tolerance and mutual understanding continued to be situated within the religious practices and beliefs of the dominant religion, leaving insufficient space for learning about other beliefs and religions. (Zembylas and Loukaidis 2018, pp. 7–9). Research findings indicate that RoC has not proceeded with the adoption and implementation of a zero-tolerance policy against nationalism, discrimination, racism, and fascism. At the same time, individuals who experience hate crimes remain supported and invisible. It is more urgent than ever to create a comprehensive and effective strategy for combating nationalism, discrimination, racism, and fascism at all levels, from the society, economy and education to legislation, institutions and politics. Representatives from vulnerable communities (migrants, refugees, women, LGBTI persons, disabled persons), need to collaborate with the authorities to prevent and combat all forms of hate crime and the focus should shift on victims' support by enabling them to effectively pursue their rights.

- Considering also that police investigators, public prosecutors and lawyers in the Office of the Attorney General are not trained on racial discrimination and hate crime, serious concerns are raised as to the effective application of any prosecutions regarding hate crimes. Therefore, training to prosecuting authorities is crucial to ensure that hate speech will be prosecuted and punished as such. Based on reports conducted by NGOs such as KISA, the available statistical evidence does not reflect the reality of hate crimes in Cyprus as the majority of hate crimes are been treated in most occasions as offences under the general penal code without acknowledging the underpinned hate motive(s) (KISA, 2019; ECRI 2016).Therefore, due to this lack of evidence and information regarding the recording of hate and extremism incidents there is no access to the demographic characteristics of the victims of such incidents or any other specific information.

- The Office for Combating Discrimination (OCD), which is under the Criminal Investigation Office (CIO) of the Cyprus Police is responsible for gathering evidence, investigating the complaints and reports submitted to the police on cases of discrimination regarding Hate Crime in Cyprus. OCD collaborates with the Police and other stakeholders such as NGOs and other governmental institutions in guaranteeing the effective implementation of relevant legislation. However, OCD is understaffed and incapable of monitoring and prosecuting hate crime due to inadequacy in resources. Meanwhile, the response of the criminal justice system is also ineffective as the Attorney General's Office and the courts do not proceed with the collection of data on hate crime incidents (Dilmaç, Kocadal & Tringides, 2021). Most hate crime incidents remain unresolved and/or not recorded as such due to reasons like (a) inadequacy and/or averseness of police officers to identify (b) police officers' lack of expertise due to lack of training, (c) personal prejudices. Therefore, since offenders are not being punished. a message of impunity is being sent as criminal law provisions against hate speech incidents are not being applied (KISA, 2019).

- It should also be noted that in many occasions victims who experience hate crime do not report the incident. The incidents remain unreported by the victims mainly because of fear of (a) arrest, (b) detention, (c) deportation, (d) victimization, lack of confidence in the impact of reporting and lack of aware-ness of rights (Dilmaç, Kocadal & Tringides, 2021). In addition, in many occasions, the Attorney General, has repeatedly undermined and attempted to give a lower profile to incidents of hate speech on the basis of public safety and public interest. Additionally, very often, Government and church officials, journalists, politicians in the RoC employ hate speech in their public statements, however they face no legal consequences (KISA, 2019). Lastly, hate crime and hate speech incidents are rarely mentioned in the news as such; the media in Cyprus tend to reproduce racist and xenophobic speech, especially when it is delivered by public figures (eMORE, 2018). The constitution of the RoC prohibits religious discrimination. Based on Article 18 "all religions are equal before the law and every person has the right to believe, worship, teach, practice or observe and change religion or belief." The law criminalizes incitement to hatred and violence based on race, color, religion,

genealogical origin, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation - Combatting Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law of 2011, Law No. 134 (I)/ 2011, which was adopted to transpose the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA.Any individual who deliberately transmits in public and publicly incites, in any way, violence or hatred against a group of people or a member of a group, which is determined on the basis of race, colour, religion, genealogical origin, national or ethnic origin, in such a way to cause public disorder, or that has a threatening, abusive, or offensive character, is liable of up to five years of imprisonment and/or a fine of up to ten thousand Euros in case of a conviction.

▪ Further, the Ratifying Law of The Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, Concerning the Criminalisation of Acts of a Racist and Xenophobic Nature Committed through Computer Systems, criminalizes the dissemination of racist and xenophobic material through computer systems (eMORE, 2018; Dilmaç, Kocadal & Tringides, 2021).Higher Education Institutions are encouraged by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education to develop policies for promoting equality to enhance understanding and respect towards diversity (e.g. University of Cyprus, 2020; University of Nicosia, 2008). HEIs in the RoC have adopted the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Policy. Acknowledging that people differ from each other because of their religion identity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, ethnicity, race, origin, nationality, age, marital status, language, physical ability, or socioeconomic background,

▪ HEIs adopt specific policies for understanding and respecting diversity, while promoting equal opportunities, using various tools and practices to manage these differences effectively. Discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion, beliefs, age, sexual orientation, or disability constitutes a disciplinary offence and shall be strictly punished. Any HEI member who feels that they are a victim of discrimination is urged to seek help and/or to submit a written complaint and/or grievance to the appropriate Competent Authorities. All complaints and/or grievances of discrimination shall be managed promptly, in a serious manner and with complete confidentiality. Formal complaints about religious faith and believe- based hate and abuse may be submitted with the following institutions and authorities in the Republic of Cyprus: Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsperson) – Equality and Anti-Discrimination Body, Labour Department Inspectors, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and Police.

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Finland

▪ From Finland's population in 2021 (5,5 million) about 66% belong to the Evangelical Lutheran church (Christianity), and around 31% does not belong to any religious group. Any other religious groups in Finland are very small and the number of members remain in 1% or under (Orthodox ca. 1%, Islam, Catholic and Jehovas Wittness all under 0,5 %). (Tilastokeskus 2022.) Availability of statistics of religious groups in higher education in Finland is limited. Religion in higher education is not a big issue at this point in Finland. In capital region of Finland some UAS have had requests from religious or political groups for using Campus facilities for gatherings, but these have been neglected based on not promoting any groups and not giving opportunity to other to target actions on campus areas. In TUAS there are no such cases reported. (Sundqvist 2022.) In Finland the bond between education and religion has historically been close. Until 1866 the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran church took care of education. Nowadays the state takes care of common education and church of baptism. (Kirkkohallitus 2022.)

- The state is neutral in religious matters and freedom of religion has been written in law since 1923. Although the Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox church have the right to collect taxes from members (Finlex 1993, 2006.) Finnish Evangelical Lutheran church had a strong impact in development together with officials. Law of freedom of religion (6.6.2003/453) in Finland was ratified in 2003. (Kirkkohallitus 2022.) From 1923 the education in religion in school was based on church membership. Pupils without membership were taught in non-confessional religious history and morality. In 1950's and 1960's it was seen important to guide how to be independent and a member of society. Therefore, religious teaching in curriculum was drawn even further away from the church. In 1970's the teaching of different faiths was seen a task for developing skills in religious, ethical, and social matters. Finnish church was a partner in educating teachers and shaping content. During 1980's a new subject elämänkatsomustieto (ethics) was added for those without religion.

Portugal

- In 1991, Catholics were 95% of the population, and in 2011 they are 93%. In 2021 they are about 80%. This data corresponds to the 2021 census, which also indicates that there are more people with no religion (6.6%). The percentage of citizens who claim to be Protestant/Evangelical increased from 1.2% to 2.1%; the Orthodox remained at 0.7% and the group of people with another religion went up from 2.6% to 2.9%. Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims total 1.1% of the Portuguese population, and 0.3% of respondents admit having other non-Christian religion. The Jehovah's Witnesses, represent 0.7% of the total. In Portugal, catholic church took care of education for centuries (Scroope, 2018). During the Salazar dictatorship, Catholic doctrine was taught in public schools right from elementary school (Pintassilgo & Hansen, 2013). Nowadays, church is formally separated from the state. Freedom of religion is declared by law (art. 41 of the Portuguese constitution, from 1976). Still, there are higher education schools, as well as Higher Education Institutions strongly attached to Catholic Church.
- Public schools still provide a course named "religious and moral education" which is not mandatory in the academic curriculum. In most of the school this course is catholic oriented. All schools, public and private, are required to accommodate the religious practices of students, including rescheduling tests if necessary. (Report on International Religious Freedom: Portugal, 2020). In governmental terms, there are some measures and actions taken by official representatives to promote religious freedom and to combat intolerance, hatred and extremism based on religion.
- According to the 2021 Report on International Religious Freedom: Portugal: The Portuguese government approved the naturalization of 20,892 descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled from the country during the Inquisition and rejected 163 applications of 34,000 new applications submitted in 2020. The greater number of applicants come from Israel, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, and Morocco. Most prisons, state and private hospitals, and military services have collaboration with catholic priests. More recently Portuguese politicians that often declare publicly to be catholic, have been promoting some events participated by members of different religious communities: president of the Islamic Cultural Center, Porto's Muslim, and Jewish communities. As other events alike, this was considered an opportunity for interfaith dialogue. Sporadically other members of the government, such as the minister of foreign affairs proclaim the interest in interreligious and faith dialogue, being particularly incisive about the integration of Muslim people.

According to FRA, In Portugal, since 2017 The Parliament introduced amendments to the national laws regulating the principle of equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination. The new Law seeks to systematize legislation on discrimination, introduces references to multiple discrimination and discrimination by association,

strengthens the composition and tasks of the Commission for Equality and against Racial Discrimination, and introduces mediation as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism (with the consent of the parties.

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Serbia

- According to the Law on Religious Communities from 2006 which is currently in power, only seven religious communities and/or churches related to as traditional are granted the status of religious communities. These are Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Slovak Evangelical Church a. v., Reformed Christian Church, and Evangelical Christian Church a. c. as well as the Islamic religious community and Jewish religious community.

- While the Law states that every citizen has the right to choose their religious beliefs and/or confession, those religious communities which are not listed as traditional often encounter negative attitudes among the citizens and are frequently subject to prejudice and discrimination. Even though the Law allows for every religious community to be registered according to Law, some registered communities nevertheless encounter ridicule, suspicion, lack of understanding, and even condemnation. Such religious communities are most frequently Christian Adventist Church, Jehovah´s Witnesses, Buddhist Community, etc.

    - Possible reasons for shunning the religious communities and their members are as follows:
    - these are not traditional religious communities as stated by the law;
    - these religious communities do not have a long history and presence in Serbia and most citizens are not familiar with their religious beliefs and/or canon laws;
    - lack of desire to gain more information and become familiar with the afore-mentioned religious communities;
    - fear of the unknown, i.e., assigning those religious communities esoteric and obscure properties because of nescience. Thus, there are registered cases of physical violence against Jehovah´s witnesses, but the last such case was recorded in 2007.

- After officially registering as a religious community in 2010 no reported cases of religious hate or abuse were found. In the same year, 2007, there were recorded cases of destruction of property of the Christian Adventist Church. Both occurrences were recorded in the city of Novi Sad, in the multicultural province of Vojvodina. Since the religious communities have officially been recognized as religious communities in Serbia, there was no record of religious-based hate or abuse. However, the citizens are still not comfortable with the religious communities. If one is a member of those communities and attending one of the universities in Serbia, one is in danger of finding oneself in an unpleasant situation of being shunned, avoided, or even verbally insulted should one decide to publicly speak about one´s religious choices.

- Among others, two dominant laws in Serbia define the freedom of religious confession and the right to freely express one´s religious choice without being abused, harassed, or discriminated against. Those are the Law on Religious Communities and the Law against Discrimination, respectively. These laws define the right of every citizen of Serbia concerning the freedom of religious beliefs and activities, and guarantee that such freedom cannot and will not be denied. According to Act 1 and Act 2 of the Law on Religious Communities, everyone is guaranteed the freedom of conscience and religion, the freedom to form religious organisations and participate in religious service,

and no one can be discriminated against, abused, harassed, or privileged due to their religious choices.

- The same Act 2 states that there is no state religion (i.e., religion embraced by the state as the official religion of the Republic of Serbia). According to Act 2, Act 3, and especially Act 18 of the Law against Discrimination every citizen is protected against all forms of discrimination, religious discrimination being one of them. Discriminating against a person based on their religious beliefs is considered a severe form of discrimination. The Law also defines the procedures and measures against discrimination and persons and/or bodies who/which are responsible for reporting the cases of discrimination and upholding the law and legally fighting against the reported forms of discrimination. Neither of the laws refers specifically to the higher education community concerning religion, hate, and belief-based abuse and harassment.

- However, the Law on University in Act 101 guarantees the right of students to diversity and protection against discrimination as defined in the Law against Discrimination. It is not customary that students or staff practice their religious beliefs on the premises of the university or individual higher education institutions. However, there are paradoxes and inconsistencies in this matter. Namely, even though public universities are secular, individual faculties and colleges within universities celebrate their Patron Saint Day on-premises and invite priests. The Institute of Patron Saint Day is a deeply rooted religious holiday in the Serbian Orthodox Church and every Orthodox house in Serbia celebrates its own Patron Saint. Private universities have some more freedom on this matter, and they decide on the nature of their religious practices.

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Turkey

- Türkiye does not officially collect data on religious groups; thus, we rely on reports and research in the field. According to the research by KONDA in 2022, 88 % of the population is Muslim, 4 % Alevi, 2 % others (mainly various Christian denominations, Jews and Bahai) and 6 % have no religious affiliation. With the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the attitude towards religion and religious minorities changed and became more restrictive on various levels.

- Since the Turkish Republic was founded on secular principles, problems related to religious groups also often included Muslims. In the early years, Islamic institutions were closed, including schools. However, the Treaty of Lausanne provided some sort of protection for other religious groups. The treaty included non-Islamic groups making Alevis and Kurds "invisible" as distinctive minorities; this only started to change with the negotiations for membership into the EU in the 2000s (Akgün, 2008). Thus, schools of minorities were typically Armenian, Greek, or Jewish and were regulated with the Treaty of Lausanne; thereby, these groups maintained the right to own and regulate these schools (Aksoy, 2014, p. 72). However, the number of these schools has decreased over time due to various developments.

- To understand the Turkish context in terms of religious education, one needs to investigate the policies applied not only to the Muslim community but also to religious minorities. However, it needs to be highlighted that policies applied in general have been effective on all religious groups. After the foundation of the Republic, religion classes were banned until the end of the 40s but were reintroduced as elective classes in the 50s and became compulsory with the constitution of 1982. The relation of the country with its religious minorities has often been controversial; the application of the "property tax" in the early 40s, confiscation of property from minority foundations and the highly (still) disputed Heybeliada Seminary are some of the examples (Sambur, 2009, p. 43). Furthermore, religious groups -including the Sunni majority- are not allowed to found religious organisations, which has led them to set up associations under different

names (Sambur, 2009, p. 44). This problem remains a problem and an obstacle in terms of freedom of religion.

- The report by Mazlumder (2010) provides a general perspective in terms of religious discrimination in Turkey. Some of the problems defined in the report related to the Sunni majority (2010, p. 299.) can easily be transferred to the other religious groups as well. In Turkey the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs) is an institution regulating religious affairs and acting as a monopoly in the matter and leaving out all other religions and denominations. A further common problem and obstacle in diversity and representation is the centralisation of education in 1924, leading to an understanding of national education and allowing a single type of education for all regions.

- The problems of Alevis in Turkey are in some ways like other religious groups, but there are certainly issues unique to them due to their belief and religious life. These can be summarised as problems related to their place of worship, religious education, and social and political pressures (MAZLUMDER, 2010, p. 315). Alevis cannot open a religious school about the Alevi faith through private individuals or organisations. Likewise, since the theology faculties in universities are related to and dominated by the Sunni understanding of the religion of Islam, Alevis cannot have their theology faculties or departments within faculties. The religious-professional education of their clergy still is a problem. Secondly, cemevis as places of worship are not defined as places for worship but cultural centres. Although mosques belong to the state and are thus financially supported, other places of worship are excluded.

- A further problem in religious discrimination is related to the attitudes of society in general and of teacher and officials in educational institutions (Erdoğan & Vatandaş, 2020). For instance, enrolment in an Armenian minority school requires a proof of Armenian descent, making the procedure more complicated and for those without the proof impossible to enrol. Textbooks go through and are accredited by a board within the Ministry for National Education, and only after 2017 they were revised in terms of discriminatory content (Yıldırım, 2021, pp. 37-38). They must meet certain requirements, that is human rights such as freedom of religion and expression.

- On the campus level, any discrimination related to religion is not recorded and reported until they become a criminal case. Students or staff who face such abuse often do not take any steps either because they do not know what to do or because the universities do not offer any support in that sense. Often, the administration is not willing to take any measures to avoid or track abuse and discrimination.

- The freedom of conscience, religious belief, conviction, expression, and worship are guaranteed under the constitution. It states that no one may be forced to attend religious services or reveal their religion and acts of worship may be freely performed so long as they do not undermine the "integrity of the state." The constitution forbids exploitation of "religion or religious feelings, or items held sacred by religion," as well as abusing "religion or religious feelings".

- The Turkish Civil Code defines further the religious education of students:

  "The right to determine the religious education of the child belongs to the parents. Any contract that restricts the rights of the mother and father in this respect is invalid." (Article 341). The National Education Law defines the right to education as follows: "Educational institutions are open to all regardless of their language, race, religion, disability, and religion. No person, family, group, or class can be privileged in education." (Art.4). "Laicite is the basis in Turkish national education. Religious culture and ethics is compulsory in primary and secondary education." (Art.12).

- Although the text includes issues on equal opportunities and rights, the word "discrimination (ayrımcılık)" is not mentioned there. The institution which is responsible for "arranging the basic legal framework and institutional structure regarding non-discrimination and equal treatment, increasing the effectiveness and operability of the

national prevention mechanisms against torture and ill-treatment" (TİHEK, par.8) is Türkiye İnsan Hakları ve Eşitlik Kurumu (TİHEK- Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye), founded in 2016 and replaced Türkiye İnsan Hakları Kurumu (TIHK - Human Rights Institution of Türkiye). Its latest annual report was released in 2020 and addresses various issues related to basic human rights and discrimination; however, it lacks substantial problems and handles the matter in a more general sense (İnsan Haklarının, 2020).

Policies on the national level still need to be developed and on the regional and campus levels they are often missing completely. Although some universities have adopted an internal mechanism and/or regulations, most higher education institutions lack that kind of mechanism completely.

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United Kingdom

- Obtaining accurate numbers of population of the UK, as well as demographic information, is a challenging task. Given the size of the UK and the various procedures associated with data collection, it is almost impossible to retrieve exact numbers. However, the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS), an official governmental office for data about the UK, estimates that in 2020, the UK population was about 67.1 million (ONS, 2021). In 2020/21 there were 2.66 million students at UK higher education institutions (Bolton, 2022). Research conducted by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in 2017/2018 showed that a little more than half of all students reported having a religion or belief (50.2%) (see Mcmaster 2020). The religion most followed by this number of students was Christianity (about 631,000 students reported being Christian (65.5% of those who disclosed a religion)). The next religion with the greatest number of student followers was Islam. It is estimated that there are over 200,000 Mulsim students (approximately 8.7% of the student population) (see UniversitiesUK, 2021).
- Although there are many other religions followed by students on UK HEI campuses, such as Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Spiritualism, and many others – the number of students following these faith systems is considerably lower than those who either have no religion, follow Christianity, or follow Islam.
- The combined number of students following Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, and/or Spiritualism was lower than the number of students following Islam (see Mcmaster, 2020). Although the number of students is considerable, it is also important to note that there are still differences and disparities in attainment when analysing outcomes by religion. For example, as Mcmaster (2020) notes, overall, 76.3% of students received a first or 2:1 degree, yet only 64.9% of Muslim students received a first or 2:1. The report by Mcmaster also notes how many mulsim students felt isolated and as though their peers did not understand their religion, which might account for some of the differences in grade attainment. Although we should also be critical as to what creates these disparities – it could be the case that the cause stems from outside the University system itself and be a more systematic problem. There are several systems and policies that Universities could implement to better improve the experiences of marginalized faiths in the UK. This might include, for example, more flexibility for students during religious festivals such as Ramadan.
- Christianity played a central role in the formation of the UK and is estimated to have been the dominant religion of the UK since the 6th Century (see Parsons & Moore, 1988). Importantly, it should be noted that there are different types of Christianity, which include, but are not limited to: Catholicism, Congregationalism (i.e., Protestants), Baptism, Quakerism, and Methodism. The UK has a very rich history of various conflicts from between different Christian teachings – for example, The Scottish Reformation in 1560 abolished Catholic ecclesiastical structures and rendered Catholic practice illegal

in Scotland. Different forms of Christianity, and different Christian-based churches, have played a major role in shaping British history. For example, King Henry VIII established the Church of England (CofE) following when Pope Clement VII did not grant him a divorce from Catherine of Aragon (the history of this is outlined by Pruitt, 2020). Since the establishment of the CofE, several faith-based sociopolitical changes have happened. One of the most notable, in relation to religion, was the establishment of CofE schools in 1811. In 2022, there were 4,632 CofE schools and 200 church schools in Wales (ChurchofEngland.org).

▪ These schools do not require pupils to identify as Christian but will teach Christianity and religion alongside the core curriculum and will encourage students to participate in CofE activities. This has implications for various students entering HE, including, for example, students with a goal of specializing in primary education (where they may become employed by a CofE school).

▪ Although Christianity has clearly influenced all levels of education in the UK, either through what morals they take or the structures around them that contribute to in/exclusion, most higher education institutions in the UK are a religious. While other Universities internationally may be dedicated to specific religious teaching – such as how Brigham Young University in Utah, USA, is sponsored by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (and students are required to follow many of their teachings), the UK does not have such Universities (see BYU.edu, 2022). Other international Universities may be required to follow honour codes denoting how students will act in line with religious' practices, but the honour codes followed by UK students tend to be around anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and following the law of the UK. Indeed, the introduction of such codes or policies may be legally challenging, given that religion is a protected characteristic in the UK – meaning that any form of discrimination based on religion is illegal (Equality Act, 2010).

▪ It is also important to note that religion, in different forms, can be studied in Higher Education. Several UK Higher Education Institutions provide degrees in Theology, Religion, or related subjects. Many of the people studying these degrees can go on to become ministers in their own faiths, and in turn may encourage others to follow similar paths. While the University system may seem somewhat distant from various explicit biases around religion, it is also important to note the various implicit biases based around religion. For example, Universities UK (2021) that in the UK more broadly, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred are widespread. The report by Universities UK highlights how different practices at Universities in the UK – such as drinking cultures in many student societies, might not be welcoming to Muslim students.

▪ Their report provides several case studies and instances where Muslim students might face challenges at universities and provides several possible ways that Universities could become more welcoming. Finally, it is important to note the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015. This legislation, often called "Prevent", was implemented under the Conservative government to prevent radicalization and recruitment to extremist ideologies. There are several concerns around prevent, particularly with regards to allowing uncertainty of religions to "other" already marginalized faith groups. For example, extensive concerns about Prevent have been raised by people concerned that it will disproportionately affect Muslim communities (see The Muslim Council of Britain, 2015; O'Toole et al., 2016). Due to the dominance of Christianity in UK society, this is likely to be seen as less of a concern for Prevent in comparison to other groups, and as such other groups may face additional checks and regulations around their own faith-based practices.

▪ One of the biggest challenges faced to preventing religion, faith, and belief-based hate incidents is a lack of public information and a lack of public reporting. As noted previously, many UK HEIs deal with issues of such hate incidents internally, which can sometimes mean that perpetrators who move institutions can continue the cycle of abuse. In addition to this, by dealing with such incidents internally, it can often be hard to understand the scale of the issue and measures of best practice. Additionally, several

of the incidents recorded in reports on faith-based hate on UK HEI campuses (e.g., those reported in Akel, 2021) appear to have taken place away from witnesses, by people whose identities are covered in some way, or in locations away from devices which could capture hard evidence (such as CCTV). This can also make legal prosecution of perpetrators difficult and might also mean that victims of such hate are less likely to report such instances.

- Finally, there are many systemic issues around xenophobia and prejudice in the UK, particularly when it comes to concepts which are new or marginalized in comparison to other identities. In social psychology, this concept is not new – we view those who do not fit our world view or expectations as "others", and this can lead to prejudice (see Tajfel et al., 1979; Brewer, 1999; Greaves et al., 2020). To tackle the broader issues on UK campuses, we also need to address the broader systemic issues in society and appreciate that Universities do not operate in a vacuum. Indeed, Universities hold the power to help normalize and educate about marginalized faiths and beliefs and can work towards dismantling prejudice.

As mentioned above, there are no specific laws that apply only to UK HEI campuses, but there are national laws which criminalize discrimination. The most relevant law to this is the Equality Act (2010), which outlines 8 "protected characteristics". These are: Age, Disability, Religion reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, Sex, and sexual orientation. Most relevant to the current toolkit is "Religion of belief", though race may also play a role in faith and belief-based hate and abuse (for example, when people assume that those with ancestral origins in India and the Middle East will follow Islam).

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