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SCHUMAN
CENTRE FOR
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STUDIES



CALL FOR PAPERS

Sarajevo, 24-26 October 2013

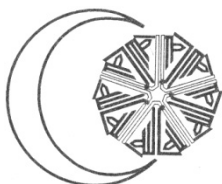
ISLAM IN EUROPE THROUGH THE BALKAN PRISM

Topic and Aims of the Conference

Muslims' increasing presence in Europe has generated a wealth of research on the twists and turns of their integration into their host countries. Predominant research, usually squared within the frame of a 'Muslim problem', capitalises on the conflict between Muslim migrants and the established civic fabric of European societies. By contrast, endogenous Muslim populations, centuries-old communities that live in South-Eastern Europe and that have long engaged with and recast themselves *vis-à-vis* Western Europe, have received only scant attention in the burgeoning literature on European Islam. Existing research is usually confined to separate case studies, which revoke the role of Islam in the creation of distinct national/ethnic identities and critical historical moments such as dissolution of Yugoslavia when radicals seemed to gain the upper hand. Such selective and temporary bound case studies, however, fail to capture the specificities of Muslims' long-term encounter with Europe, be it as a geo-political entity, institutional model or a set of ideas.

Studying Muslims' encounter with Europe is especially relevant given the growth of Islamic movements after the collapse of communism and the liberalization of state policies towards religion. The fall of communism has unleashed a myriad of new religious actors and a new wave of religious claims in the pluralist socio-political orders that are being consolidated in the region. The revival of Islam in the Balkans has taken various organizational and ideological forms that range from hierarchical, centralized official structures to alternative voluntary groups that thrive in the autonomous spaces of civil society. Despite this diversity, and local specificities, Islamic groups across the region have all confronted with, recast themselves, and if necessary negotiated their position *vis-à-vis* European models and ideas.

This conference aims to look at Islam in Europe "through the Balkan prism". What are the historical, institutional and religious traits that characterise endogenous European Muslims? How have they recast themselves *vis-à-vis* European models and ideas? What can their experiences teach us about forms and challenges of European Islam? Theoretically, we will take into account both top-down institutional factors that shape religious actors' politics and a bottom-up perspective which emphasises traits of faith communities and their practice of religiosity. *We will focus particularly on the interactive relations between Islam and other main faith communities confronted with the same challenges: religion turned into purely national or ethnic markers in a context of secularization and separation of "Church and State"*. Hence, we are interested to explore the role of Islam as "*faith*", not as cultural or ethnic markers. Empirically, we will focus on faith communities in Islamic-majority countries or countries with substantial Muslim minorities in the Balkans. When exploring Islamic groups we are interested in both official central organizations recognised by the state and more autonomous groupings that gather around independent leaders, ideas and influences.



ISLAMSKA ZAJEDNICA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI
UNIVERZITET U SARAJEVU
FAKULTET ISLAMSKIH NAUKA U SARAJEVU



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Paper Submission

By combining theoretical propositions and empirical tests, our workshop will seek answers to the above questions. While interested in wider issues of European Islam, we explicitly seek papers that address theoretical debates and/or offer analytical perspectives to questions of Islam in the Balkans. Our main focus is comparative and/or case studies from the Western Balkans and the wider Balkan region.

The call for abstracts is addressed to academics of various academic sub-disciplines –anthropology, history, political science, religious and/or Islamic studies. Yet, we also welcome submissions from practitioners and policy-makers, whose work can bring rich empirical insights and increase our understanding of Islamic movements in the region.

We invite submission of proposals for papers on any of the following themes:

1. Historical legacies
2. State policies and institutional arrangements
3. Muslim' religiosity in practice
4. Inter-religious tolerance and dialogue.

Send your abstracts (up to 300 words), one paragraph CV and your contact details to

Arolda Elbasani, email: arolda.elbasani@eui.eu

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| Deadline for sending the abstract: | June 25, 2013 |
| Notification of accepted papers: | July 2, 2013 |
| Deadline for complete papers: | October 15, 2013 |
| Date of the Conference: | October 24-26, 2013 |

The Organization and Outcomes

The workshop will convene at Sarajevo University, under the auspices of the Religio-West project (<http://www.eui.eu/Projects/ReligioWest/Home.aspx>) at RSCAS, EUI, Florence <http://www.eui.eu/DepartmentsAndCentres/RobertSchumanCentre/Index.aspx>, and the Faculty of Islamic Studies, at the University of Sarajevo <http://www.fin.ba/>. The organisers will cover all the expenses of participants.

In addition to the call for proposals we will invite scholars and religious authorities from the region or with academic interests on the topic to contribute to specific panels and participate in discussion. We intend to have around 20 papers, depending also to the number of promising papers we might receive through the call for proposals. We plan to publish the research presented in the Workshop as an edited book and/or ReligioWest Working paper series.