



# Call to Europe V: Islam in Europe Politics & Religion

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It is obviously not easy to draw definite conclusions from the rich exchange of the debates created during Call to Europe V. Let me however outline a limited number of points that, in my view, should be kept in mind.

First of all, as it is the case with other monotheist faiths, Islam is not only a religion, it is also a culture and, as such, a constitutive element of an identity. This distinction is important when we try to understand how to deal effectively and respectfully with Islam in Europe.

Secondly, separation between the Church and the State is a *sine qua non* condition of “living together”. Again, this statement applies to all religions, including Islam.

Thirdly, secularism is not against religion. A corollary implies that there should not be any limit to the freedom of expression, except those democratically set by law.

Fourthly, the problems encountered in most parts of Europe including among others antisemitism, islamophobia, communitarian isolationism, terrorism, etc. are enhanced by the inability and even in many cases by the resignation of governments in setting up and properly enforcing the rules of “living together”. An urgent reaction on governments’ behalf to change this unacceptable situation is required.

Finally I would like to make a personal call to our governments around the following three points:

- Secularism is a necessary condition to democracy. Please do not give up on that principle.
- No complacency towards intolerance is acceptable. Political *clientelism* does not help in this regard.
- Please do whatever you can to help those Muslim citizens in our countries and cities who are courageously fighting to contribute to the setting up of a genuine European (and also Belgian, French, German, etc.) Islam.

Even if they are far from being sufficient, those are clearly for me necessary conditions to resume harmony, peace and security in our cities and territories.