

Brussels, May 12th 2010

Open letter to the MEP's

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

European Forum of Muslim Women (EFOMW), notes with deep concern, the obsessive debate, the media onslaught and political machinations in regard of the handling of veil issue.

Indeed, the over-coverage of full veil case, despite its marginal nature, maintains an unhealthy atmosphere.

European societies are now facing countless social and economic problems, which require rapid response. In this context, EFOMW regrets using the case of full veil to hide the most important challenges such as unemployment, social injustice, discrimination and environmental protection.

The mass hysteria that has gripped this case reinforces once again the feeling of stigmatization of the Muslim community in Europe. In addition to series of polygamy and female circumcision, the case of the veil appears timely as a new opportunity to demonstrate the alleged incompatibility of all Muslims with modernity while, far from exclusive to Islam, these issues concern only a tiny part of them.

More importantly, this analysis is erroneous justification for the enactment of special legislations. Besides ignoring fundamental freedoms, these legislations are useless and dangerous. The example of the full veil is in this connection explicit many questions: what need can there be to discuss the religious legitimacy of the "Niqab"? Why to pass mere security legislation that is targeting a specific category in the society, while the general security law is already existed? This attitude is not only unnecessary but also harmful and dangerous.

In fact, emphasizing the injustice and the stigma of European Muslims reinforces the extremist temptations everywhere, which was established by the alarming rise of Islamophobia in Europe, and grows to higher withdrawal reflex Community among Muslim populations.

EFOMW do not deny the need for internal debate among European Muslims about the religious legitimacy of the full veil, but considering this debate - which already exists - must be done without interference of politician.

Furthermore, we believe that the dignity of women has been regrettably reduced in clothing or appearance. However, we are convinced that the question of the dignity of women - not just Muslims - is a major issue and we are pleased that this issue is finally listed in politics. Indeed, the situation of women victims of domestic violence, pimping, sexual harassment or even social violence (women are single parents with little means) is simply unbearable.

EFOMW works for protecting the rights of all women and call all those concerned with women rights and political affiliation, for a dispassionate and open debate on the status of women and all for the general well-being.

It is the duty and responsibility of politicians and all members of civil society to work to preserve our society from all violations that threatens its stability and cohesion with a great respect for freedom and diversity.

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President