



New
Direction

the Foundation for European Conservatism

NO-GO ZONES

IMMIGRATION, ISLAMISATION, AND THE RISE OF PARALLEL SOCIETIES

**Focus on urban areas of Islamist
entrenchment and state withdrawal**

The term “no-go zone” received its first serious attention in academic and public discourse in the early 2000s. Based on research from 2006, the historian Daniel Pipes published in 2015 an article entitled *Europe’s No-Go Zones: Fact or Fiction?* in the journal *Middle East Quarterly*, which marked one of

the earliest systematic treatments of the concept in a European context. Pipes observed that “the French government alone counted 751 of them,” calling them “partial no-go zones” because “representatives of the state, police especially can only enter with massive power for temporary periods of time”...



New Direction

the Foundation for European Conservatism



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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Defining no-go zones

When the term was first popularized

The term “no-go zone” received its first serious attention in academic and public discourse in the early 2000s. Based on research from 2006, the historian Daniel Pipes published in 2015 an article entitled *Europe’s No-Go Zones: Fact or Fiction?* in the journal *Middle East Quarterly*¹, which marked one of the earliest systematic treatments of the concept in a European context. Pipes observed that “the French government alone counted 751 of them,” calling them “partial no-go zones” because “representatives of the state, police especially can only enter with massive power for temporary periods of time”.

Historically, analogous phenomena emerged in other contexts. From 1969 to 1972 in Northern Ireland, the area known as Free Derry operated effectively outside state control, with the local community asserting territorial autonomy. Similarly, the Kowloon Walled City in Hong Kong (1950s - 1970s) functioned as a near-independent enclave governed by local criminal networks instead of formal municipal authority.

In January 2015, following the Charlie Hebdo terrorist attacks, Fox News broadcast segments labelling certain Parisian districts as “Islamic no-go zones” into which non-Muslims could not safely enter. These claims were widely reported internationally, then denied by French officials, yet they solidified the term in popular discourse².

Lack of academic research despite governments recognition

Scholars rarely use the term “no-go zones” within academic literature, because they consider it politically loaded and lacking analytical rigor. Instead, peer-reviewed research typically employs terms such as “parallel societies,” “ethnic

enclaves,” or “zones of urban marginality³” which provide a more precise and neutral vocabulary for discussing spatial segregation and social exclusion. Academic reluctance reflects concerns over ideological misuse of the label.

FOCUS 1 Academic and Media Treatment of “No-Go Zones”: Between Taboo and Ideological Stigma

The concept of “no-go zones” remains marginal in academic research and is viewed as ideologically charged and associated with far-right discourse. For instance, Loïc Wacquant’s work on territorial stigmatisation and advanced marginality offers a critical and politically biased analysis of how certain urban spaces are portrayed as deviant and excluded through state policies and media discourse. While his framework provides useful tools for understanding spatial segregation and state withdrawal, it explicitly rejects cultural or religious explanations, aligning with a left-leaning critique of neoliberal urban governance⁴.

Following the same trend, certain academics have noted the use of “no-go zones” as symbolic devices used in populist and nationalist discourse across Europe⁵. Researchers such as Bradford, Jauregui, Loader, and Steinberg⁶ have also examined territorial insecurity in immigrant-majority areas in the EU⁷.

Conversely, most academic and media treatments focus on discrediting the term. *Tribune Magazine* refers to it as a “myth” constructed to stigmatize immigrant communities⁸. *The Guardian* traces how the term has spread from the far-right to mainstream UK politics,

1 The Washington Times, The Danger of Partial No-go Zones to Europe, December 2015

2 Le Monde, Zones de non-droit: Fox News renouvelle ses excuses, January 2015

3 International Journal of Urban Research, The Governing of Urban marginality in Western Europe, 2014

4 Loïc Wacquant, Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality, 2008

5 T.M. Milani., No-go zones in Sweden: The infectious communicability of evil, 2020

6 The SAGE Handbook of Global Policing, Bradford, B., Jauregui, B., Loader, I., Steinberg, J., 2016

7 Jef Huysmans, The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU, 2016

8 Tribune Magazine, The Myth of the No-Go Zone, July 2021

framing it as a false narrative⁹. In France, *Le Parisien* reports that Saint-Denis (frequently labelled as a no-go zone) is attempting to reposition itself positively following the 2024 Olympics¹⁰.

This ideological climate discourages neutral, empirical study. Despite frequent mention by law enforcement, elected officials, and residents, the academic field lacks a systematic framework for defining or measuring these areas. This study responds to that gap with a methodology grounded in observable, quantifiable criteria.

Thus, in many countries, so-called “no-go zones” have an official existence. In France, the official category of *Zones Urbaines Sensibles* (ZUS, namely urban sensitive areas) existed from 1996 to 2014, date when they were reclassified as “*quartiers prioritaires de la ville*” (QPV, priority urban district). These 751 territories were designated for urban policy intervention due to concentrated poverty, social exclusion, and spatial segregation. They were defined by the law of November 14, 1996, as priority targets for urban policy, based on local considerations linked to the difficulties experienced by the inhabitants of these areas, such as violence, theft, segregation, stigmatization and drug trafficking. Since 2010, Raphaël Stainville has analyzed the political discourse surrounding no-go zones in French political commentary¹¹.

Similar official designations exist in Germany. Police reports refer to *gefährliche Orte* (dangerous places), though the designation is used for crime hotspots rather than territorially delimited areas beyond state control. Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2018 acknowledged the existence of “no-go areas” in Germany, but public officials and academics have disputed the conceptual accuracy of that term¹². The Swedish Police Authority has been using the term *utsatt område* (vulnerable area) since 2015 to point out areas with persistent low socio-economic status, impacted by high rates of criminal activity¹³.

Because no established academic framework exists, this policy note proposes its own operational definition based on a

1.2 Methodology

This study is based on a scientific, data-driven methodology combining quantitative and qualitative tools. We adopt a composite indicator approach, aggregating variables into three analytical dimensions as explained in our definition: crime and violence, parallel society, and state withdrawal. The thresholds for classification as a no-go zone will be set in the following pages.

multicriteria analysis. This approach ensures the term remains analytically neutral.

Toward an objective definition

A no-go area is commonly defined by the *Cambridge Dictionary* as an informal noun: “an area, especially in a town, where it is very dangerous to go, usually because a group of people who have weapons prevent the police, army, and other people from entering.”

To establish a more scientifically robust definition, we will employ a multi-criteria analytical framework integrating both quantitative and qualitative indicators to characterize what constitutes a no-go zone.

Throughout this note, we will develop the following definition. A “no-go zone” is a geographically bounded urban area that meets a multitude of criteria in the following dimensions:

- **Crime and violence:** homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants, sexual violence rate per 100,000 inhabitants, robbery per 100,000 inhabitants, youth gang presence (qualitative)
- **Parallel society:** unemployment rate, rate of early school leavers, reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions (qualitative)
- **State withdrawal:** evidence of law enforcement or emergency services refusing entry (qualitative), attacks on policemen or firefighters (qualitative), density of NGOs providing public services (proxy for state retreat)

Please note that immigration and Islam are not part of this definition; our goal is to test whether these factors show significant statistical correlation with the zones we identify empirically.

The research follows a multilevel comparative framework, applied across several EU member states. We combine national-level indicators (e.g. population flows, policy variables) with local-level data (e.g. crime rates, mosque density) to detect spatial patterns of divergence from the national or EU-27 mean. The methodology integrates four major data sources:

- Quantitative statistical databases, including Eurostat, OECD migration reports, national censuses, interior ministry crime data, and municipal-level socio-economic indicators.
- Qualitative data, including interviews, field reports, investigative journalism, and police union testimony. These sources provide insights into operational difficulties faced by the state and perceptions of territorial exclusion.
- Geospatial mapping of socio-demographic and infrastructural variables, such as mosque density, population origin, and crime clusters.
- Case-focused analysis of high-profile urban areas (e.g. Molenbeek, Trappes, Rosengård) for cross-national comparison and verification of statistical correlations.

1.3 Goal of the study

The primary objective of this study is to produce an empirically grounded typology of no-go zones in Europe and to identify their underlying causes.

Secondly, the study aims to understand the consequences of no-go zones by distinguishing three main dimensions:

- Security threats and terrorism, including crime rates, operational barriers faced by law enforcement, and the role of such zones in the logistics and origins of terrorist activity.
- Separatism and radicalisation, notably through the emergence of identity-based voting blocs, parallel normative systems, and religious mobilization.

The study will also calculate and assess the statistical correlation between the existence of no-go zones and two potential causes:

- Immigration, including first, second, and third-generation immigrant presence, as well as settlement patterns and demographic concentration.
- Islam, operationalised through the density of mosques, the presence of religious associations, and expressions of communal religious norms.

This correlation is frequently asserted in political discourse and by ground-level actors such as police officers and local officials, but it has rarely been examined through rigorous, cross-national quantitative analysis. The aim is to verify or falsify these claims through objective data.

- Societal transformation, in particular shifts in urban culture, reduced cohesion, the emergence of parallel economies, and changes in public space use.

Thirdly, the study will conclude with a set of evidence-based policy recommendations, aimed at local, national, and European levels, for preventing further fragmentation, re-establishing state authority, and managing integration more effectively.

Sources available upon request.

⁹ The Guardian, How the “No-Go Zone” Myth Spread from the Fringes to Mainstream Politics, March 2024

¹⁰ Le Parisien, Un an après les JO, caricaturée comme une “no-go zone”, Saint-Denis, July 2025

¹¹ Le Figaro, Insécurité: « C’était intenable, nous sommes partis », August 2010

¹² Associated Press, Merkel says Germany has ‘no-go areas’, February 2018

¹³ Utsatta områden – polisens arbete, Swedish Police site, 2024

MAPPING OF NO-GO ZONES IN THE EU

2.1 Criteria

The criteria selected aim to identify urban zones that experience multidimensional dysfunctions across three main dimensions: crime and violence, parallel society, and state withdrawal. Each indicator corresponds to a measurable phenomenon associated with territorial exclusion and institutional erosion.

We selected 11 independent indicators to assess the presence of no-go zones, combining both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Approximately half of these indicators are based on measurable data (e.g. crime rates, unemployment), while the others are qualitative assessments (e.g. presence of riots, emergency service access), allowing for a multidimensional and balanced analysis.

INDICATOR	CRITERIA	SCALE	EU-27 MEAN
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	per 100,000 inhab. per year	0,87
	Sexual violence rate	per 100,000 inhab. per year	54,2
	Robbery	per 100,000 inhab. per year	58
	Youth gang presence	Yes/No	No
Parallel Society	Riots in the past 5 years	Yes/No	No
	Unemployment rate	%	6%
	Rate of early school leavers	%	10%
State Withdrawal	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	Yes/No	No
	Attacks on police/firefighters	Yes/No	No
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	Yes/No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	Yes/No	No

Sources available upon request.

The selected data points reflect EU-27 averages and were sourced from official datasets and studies, including Eurostat, the European Union Drugs Agency, OECD, Pew Research Center, and Friedrich Schneider’s estimates on the shadow economy. Qualitative criteria (e.g. gang presence, attacks on police, antisemitic incidents) were included to capture dynamics not fully represented in aggregated

statistics but documented through police reports, field studies, and press investigations. Incidents such as riots, emergency service refusals, or attacks on police are considered exceptional events and are not characteristic of most urban areas in Europe. This baseline allows us to identify significant deviations that may signal the presence of a no-go zone.

2.2 Creating a no-go zone indicator

To operationalize the concept of a “no-go zone,” we constructed a composite indicator based on the 11 selected criteria, combining both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Each

neighborhood is evaluated by comparing its values to the EU27 average or baseline threshold, and the score is then weighted to produce a final score out of 10.



Step 1: Scoring each indicator

- For quantitative indicators (e.g. crime rate, unemployment, absenteeism): If the neighborhood value > EU27 mean × threshold (e.g. 200%), the indicator scores 1 point, otherwise 0.
- For qualitative indicators (e.g. presence of riots, attacks on emergency services): If the neighborhood situation = “Yes” and the EU27 mean = “No” (the baseline), the indicator scores 1 point, otherwise 0.

Step 2: Weighting the score to create a final “no-go zone index” out of 10

- State withdrawal indicators (3 variables) are considered the most significant, accounting for 5 out of 10 points in the total score. → Total points for this dimension are multiplied by a factor of 5/3.
- Crime & violence and parallel society indicators (8 variables) account for the remaining 5 points. → Total points for these 8 indicators are multiplied by a factor of 5/8.

No-go zone index formula

$$NGZ\ index = \left(\sum_n^3 State\ withdrawal\ score_n(0;1) \right) \times \frac{5}{3} + \left(\sum_n^5 Crime\ \&\ violence\ score_n(0;1) + \sum_n^3 Parallel\ society\ score_n(0;1) \right) \times \frac{5}{8}$$

Ranking

SCORE (0-10)	CLASSIFICATION	TYPOLGY
0 – 3	Low risk	No structural signs of a no-go zone; situation within normal EU range
3 – 5	High-risk zone	Significant deterioration; early signs of state disengagement or parallel order
5 – 7	Confirmed no-go zone	Multiple thresholds exceeded; institutional withdrawal and parallel society
7 – 9	Severe no-go zone	Deep dysfunction: state presence compromised and criminal/ideological control
9 – 10	Critical no-go zone	De facto autonomous area; full disengagement of state and emergence of enclaves

Thresholds

For each quantitative criterion, we defined the threshold at 200% of the EU-27 mean. This level was selected because it marks a significant deviation from the European average, indicating that the neighborhood performs at least twice worse than the norm, an empirically meaningful divergence.

For qualitative indicators, the threshold is set at “Yes,” since these phenomena (e.g. riots, emergency response refusals) are exceptional and generally absent across most European urban areas. This binary assessment ensures that only clearly abnormal situations contribute to identifying a no-go zone.

INDICATOR	CRITERIA	EU-27 MEAN	THRESHOLD FOR NGZ INDEX
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,74
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	108,4
	Robbery	58	116
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	12%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	19%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes

Sources available upon request.

2.3 List of studied no-go zones

According to the Migration Research Institute in Budapest, affiliated with the Matthias Corvinus College¹⁴, there are now an estimated 900 to 1,000 areas across Europe that exhibit the key characteristics of no-go zones. This includes major urban suburbs as well as districts in medium-sized or smaller cities, reflecting a broad and growing territorial trend. Given the extent of this phenomenon, this note limits its scope to

a selected number of emblematic zones, chosen for their strategic relevance and data availability. We focus on seven EU countries where no-go zones are most reported: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Sweden, and the Netherlands. Three zones were selected for the largest countries, two for the others. The selection is based on recurring mentions in official reports, media, and academic sources.

List of the neighborhoods:

COUNTRY	CITY	NEIGHBORHOOD
France	Saint-Denis/Aubervilliers	Franc Moisin
France	Grenoble	Mistral
France	Marseille	La Castellane
Italy	Rome	Termini station
Italy	Turin	Aurora
Italy	Milan	Quarto Oggiaro
Germany	Berlin	Neukölln
Germany	Duisburg	Marxloh
Germany	Cologne	Chorweiler
Spain	Barcelona	Raval
Spain	Madrid	Villaverde
Belgium	Brussels	Molenbeek
Belgium	Antwerp	Borgerhout
Sweden	Malmö	Rosengård
Sweden	Gothenburg	Angered
Netherlands	Rotterdam	Feijenoord
Netherlands	The Hague	Schilderswijk

¹⁴ Migration Research Institute, By any other name: No-go zones, rhetoric and reality, Migration Research Institute. 2018

No-go zones sample studied



#	Country	City	Neighborhood	Index
1	France	Saint-Denis/Aubervilliers	Franc Moisin	10,0
2	France	Marseille	La Castellane	9,4
3	Belgium	Brussels	Molenbeek	9,4
4	Sweden	Malmö	Rosengard	9,4
5	France	Grenoble	Mistral	8,8
6	Italy	Turin	Aurora	8,8
7	Germany	Duisburg	Marxloh	8,8
8	Germany	Berlin	NeuKölln	7,5
9	Sweden	Gothenburg	Angered	7,5
10	Spain	Barcelona	Raval	7,1
11	Belgium	Antwerp	Borgerhout	7,1
12	Italy	Milan	Quarto Oggiaro	5,8
13	Germany	Cologne	Chorweiler	5,8
14	Spain	Madrid	Villaverde	5,2
15	Netherlands	Rotterdam	Feijenoord	5,2
16	Netherlands	The Hague	Schilderswijk	5,2
17	Italy	Rome	Termini station	4,6

Focus by no-go zone:

Sources available upon request.

FRANCE - SAINT-DENIS/AUBERVILLIERS - FRANC MOISIN			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,74
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	108,4
	Robbery	58	116
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	12%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	19%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		10,0	
CLASSIFICATION		CRITICAL NO-GO ZONE	

FRANCE - GRENOBLE - MISTRAL			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,58
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	92,5
	Robbery	58	141
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	13,50%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	23%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		8,8	
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

FRANCE - MARSEILLE - LA CASTELLANE			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	7,29
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	133,33
	Robbery	58	66,67
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	24,90%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	25%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		9,4	
CLASSIFICATION		CRITICAL NO-GO ZONE	

ITALY - ROME - TERMINI STATION			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	0,6
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	10,8
	Robbery	58	71,3
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	No
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	6%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	6,10%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		4,6	
CLASSIFICATION		HIGH-RISK ZONE	

ITALY - TURIN - AURORA			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	0,4
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	34,09
	Robbery	58	214,7
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	14%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	25%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		8,8	
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

ITALY - MILAN - QUARTO OGGIARO			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	0,5
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	44
	Robbery	58	294
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	No
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	17,60%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	16,50%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		5,8	
CLASSIFICATION		CONFIRMED NO-GO ZONE	

GERMANY - BERLIN - NEUKÖLLN			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,4
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	200
	Robbery	58	84
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	9,70%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	16,40%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		7,5	
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

GERMANY - DUISBURG - MARXLOH			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	2,6
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	182
	Robbery	58	99
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	16%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	7,40%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		8,8	
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

GERMANY - COLOGNE - CHORWEILER			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,07
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	239,7
	Robbery	58	81
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	No
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	18,70%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	3,10%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		5,8	
CLASSIFICATION		CONFIRMED NO-GO ZONE	

SPAIN - BARCELONA - RAVAL			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	2
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	71,5
	Robbery	58	803
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	50%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	26%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	No
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		7,1	
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

SPAIN - MADRID - VILLAVERDE			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,1
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	172
	Robbery	58	41,106
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	No
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	14,29%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	10,50%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	No
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		5,2	
CLASSIFICATION		CONFIRMED NO-GO ZONE	

BELGIUM - BRUSSELS - MOLENBEEK			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	3
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	96
	Robbery	58	487,6
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	18%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	25%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		9,4	
CLASSIFICATION		CRITICAL NO-GO ZONE	

 BELGIUM- ANTWERP - BORGERHOUT			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	4,6
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	226
	Robbery	58	387
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	No
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	12%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	28%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
	NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		7,1
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

 SWEDEN - MALMÖ - ROSENGÅRD			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	2,5
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	198
	Robbery	58	67
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	16%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	60%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
	NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		9,4
CLASSIFICATION		CRITICAL NO-GO ZONE	

 SWEDEN - GOTHENBURG - ANGERED			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	1,1
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	181
	Robbery	58	82,2
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	12,20%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	5%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	Yes
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
	NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		7,5
CLASSIFICATION		SEVERE NO-GO ZONE	

 THE NETHERLANDS - THE HAGUE - SCHILDERSWIJK			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	0,7
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	53
	Robbery	58	N/A
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	Yes
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	19%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	2,38%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	No
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
	NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		5,2
CLASSIFICATION		CONFIRMED NO-GO ZONE	

 THE NETHERLANDS - ROTTERDAM - FEIJENOORD			
INDICATOR	CRITERIA	MEAN EU	NEIGHBORHOOD DATA
Crime & Violence	Homicide rate	0,87	2,41
	Sexual violence rate	54,2	60
	Robbery	58	48
	Youth gang presence	No	Yes
	Riots in the past 5 years	No	No
Parallel Society	Unemployment rate	6%	10%
	Rate of early school leavers	10%	3,19%
	Reports of antisemitism, homophobia, or gender-based restrictions	No	Yes
State Withdrawal	Attacks on police/firefighters	No	Yes
	Frequency of emergency response delays or refusals	No	No
	Density of NGOs or religious associations providing public services	No	Yes
	NO-GO ZONE INDICATOR / 10		5,2
CLASSIFICATION		CONFIRMED NO-GO ZONE	

3

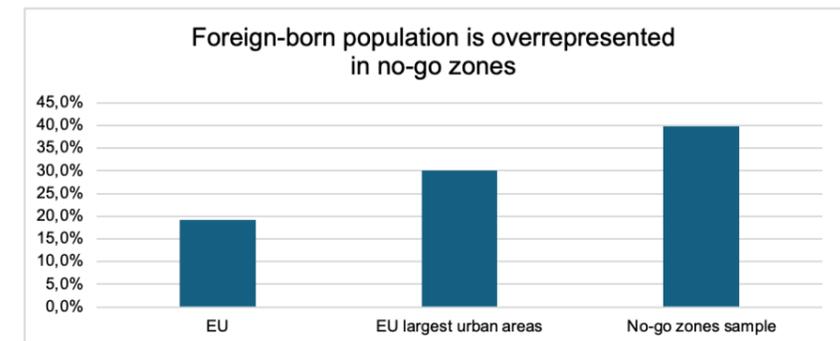
IMMIGRATION, ISLAMISATION AND NO-GO ZONES DYNAMICS

3.1 A direct correlation between mass immigration and no-go zones

No-go zones are highly correlated to mass immigration

To assess the existence of a direct correlation between mass immigration and the emergence of no-go zones, we calculated the statistical relationship between the percentage of foreign-born residents (first-generation), and the number of neighborhoods identified as no-go zones according to

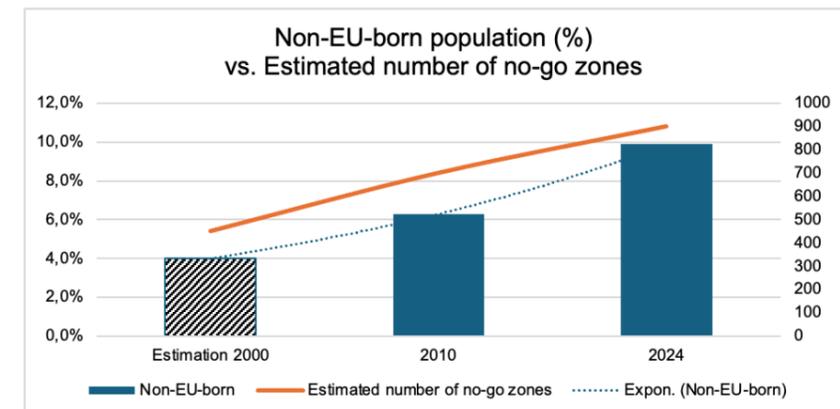
our criteria. The results reveal a strong correlation between demographic composition and spatial dysfunction: while the foreign-born population accounts for less than 20% of the total European population, and 30% in urban areas, it represents 40% of the population in the studied areas. Therefore, the share of the foreign-born population in the studied no-go zones is more than 100% higher than in the rest of the EU.



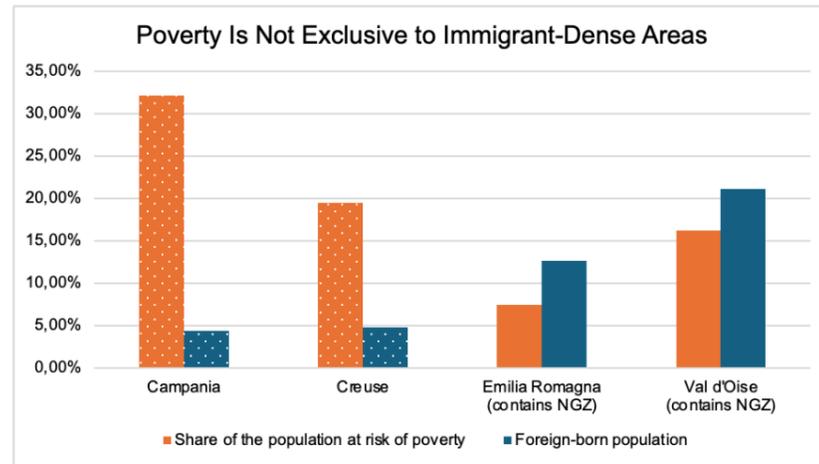
Sources: Population by citizenship and country of birth - cities and greater cities, Eurostat, 2024. Sources available upon request.

A second visualization compares the temporal evolution of immigration trends in Europe with the documented emergence of no-go zones since the 1970s. The two curves follow a

comparable trajectory, suggesting a parallel dynamic between rising immigration levels and the progressive development of high-crime, state-withdrawn urban enclaves.



Sources: Les ressortissants étrangers constituaient 6,5 % de la population de l'UE27 en 2010, 105/2011, Eurostat, 14 juillet 2011; EU population diversity by country of birth, Eurostat, January 2024; Migration Research Institute in Budapest, affiliated with the Matthias Corvinus College, 2024

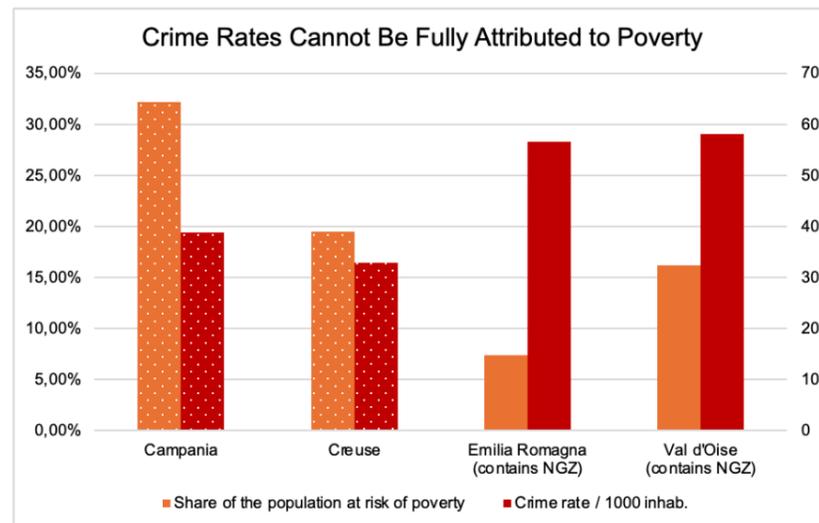


Sources: Statista 2025, INSEE, AdminStat Germania, UrbiStat, Council of Europe

Moreover, the third comparison shows that poverty alone does not explain the emergence of no-go zones or urban violence. Regions like Campania (Italy) and Creuse (France) display high poverty levels (32.2% and 19.5% respectively) but maintain low shares of foreign-born residents (4.32% and 4.80%) and are not identified as no-go zones. In contrast, areas such as Val-d'Oise and Emilia-Romagna, which contain known no-go zones, present significantly lower poverty levels (16.2% and 7.4%) but much higher shares of foreign-born populations (21.10% and 12.60%). These patterns suggest that the primary

variable correlating with no-go zone dynamics is not economic deprivation, but rather the concentration of foreign-born populations. Poverty is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for the development of such zones.

These data may, however, be nuanced by other secondary effects. The stark disparity in crime and poverty rates between no-go zones and rural areas in Europe is not solely attributable to demographic or cultural factors but also to population concentration and contrasting wealth dynamics.



Sources: Statista 2025, INSEE, AdminStat Germania, UrbiStat, Council of Europe

This general conclusion is further confirmed by a case study focused on Sweden, presented in section III.3, where the

statistical correlation between immigration and violent crime is exceptionally strong and well documented.

Mass immigration is enabled by family reunification, multiculturalism ideology, and judicial constraints

Since the 1970s, the EU has experienced successive waves of mass immigration, fundamentally transforming its urban landscapes. OECD reports show that foreign-born residents constituted under 5% of the population in major countries in 1970, rising to 13% in France, 20% in Germany, 19% in Belgium, and 20% in Sweden by 2023.

Mass migration has appeared in distinct phases: post-colonial flows into France from North and Sub-Saharan Africa; Germany's guest-worker program followed by the 2015 refugee surge; and growing refugee immigration in Sweden from the 2010s onward.

State policies facilitating this demographic shift included early adoption of family reunification programs such as France's *regroupement familial*, framed initially as humanitarian rights. These mechanisms evolved into structural migration pathways, enabling chain migration and community consolidation without sufficient integration requirements. In 2022, family migration represented a considerable proportion of residence permits: 35% in Germany, 48% in Belgium, 30% in France, 39% in Italy, according to Eurostat¹⁵. Similar family reunification programs were adopted across Europe, such as Italy's *ricongiungimento familiare*, introduced in the late 1990s, which allowed permanent settlement based on family ties rather than labor market needs. While several countries later attempted to tighten these frameworks, including through voluntary return or "regress" schemes, such efforts had limited impact due to legal constraints. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) progressively established a strong jurisprudence protecting the right to family life under *Article 8 of the European Convention*¹⁶, effectively limiting national authorities' capacity to restrict family-based immigration once initial entry was granted.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the ideological rise of identity politics and liberal multiculturalism further reinforced segmented integration. This permissive climate favored the maintenance of community norms over civic cohesion, enabling socio-religious enclaves to stabilize in urban peripheries. French demographer Michèle Tribalat has documented this effect in France, showing increasing concentration of immigrant populations in specific neighborhoods despite differing colonial experiences and integration models¹⁷.

Welfare and housing structures also influenced spatial outcomes. Comparative studies in Belgium, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark show that countries with corporatist dual-tier housing systems (where the state supports both private and public housing but keeps them separate, with social housing restricted to specific groups), like Belgium or France, tend to exhibit higher ethnic segregation because low-income immigrants are disproportionately confined to the limited social housing stock¹⁸. In Sweden, segregation intensified due to native flight from growing immigrant clusters, even as the dissimilarity index rose or stabilized.

Finally, cultural distance and multiple geopolitical crises exacerbated integration challenges. Immigrants from regions such as the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and South Asia often brought different norms regarding gender roles, education, religion, and civic life, areas that clash with European liberal-democratic standards over time (non-violent society, gender equality, homosexuality acceptance). European sociological and migration studies observe that high rates of cultural distance (measured by differences in values, norms, and social behavior between immigrants' origin countries and European host societies) correlate with poorer integration outcomes and elevated social isolation. Multilevel regression models linking data from the European Social Survey and World Values Survey show that first-generation migrants experiencing greater cultural dissonance report significantly worse social adaptation outcomes¹⁹. Meanwhile, comparative housing and segregation research in Sweden and Germany estimates that 40–50% of foreign-born residents live in ethnic enclaves (defined as areas where they comprise a higher share than their national average) which tend to limit contact with host society and reduce bridging social capital²⁰. Their isolation from host institutions and normative frameworks fostered parallel social structures, laying the groundwork for the emergence of no-go zones as defined in this study.

FOCUS 2 The Legal Entrenchment of Family Reunification, An Unreformable Framework

Family reunification has become a central but politically untouchable driver of long-term immigration in Europe. Originally introduced as a temporary humanitarian measure, it has been progressively entrenched in European legal systems through constitutional jurisprudence and international obligations. In France, for instance, the Conseil d'État established in its 1978

15 First residence permits by reasons - % of total first residence permits, Eurostat, August 2025

16 "Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence"

17 Aubry, B., Tribalat, M., Les concentrations ethniques en France : évolution 1968-2005, 2011

18 Musterd & van Kempen, Segregation and housing of minority ethnic groups in European cities, 2009,

19 Detollenaere, Jens, et al. "Association between Cultural Distance and Migrant Self-Rated Health." EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF HEALTH ECONOMICS, vol. 19, no. 2, 2018, pp. 257–66

20 Schüller, S., Chakraborty, T. Ethnic enclaves and immigrant economic integration. IZA World of Labor 2022: 287 doi: 10.15185/izawol.287.v2

*GISTI ruling*²¹ that the right to lead a “normal family life” was a fundamental principle of French law. This decision laid the legal foundation for automatic reunification rights, regardless of national integration outcomes or labor market needs.

At the supranational level, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has consistently interpreted *Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights*²² as a strong legal barrier against restrictive migration reforms. In its case law (e.g. *Boultif v. Switzerland*²³, *Moustaquim v. Belgium*), the Court has repeatedly ruled in favor of immigrants’ rights to family unity, limiting state discretion even when public order or integration objectives are cited.

As a result, attempts to reform or limit family reunification, whether through residence duration

requirements, integration tests, or income thresholds, have often been overturned or softened by national courts or the ECHR. This legal rigidity makes substantial policy change nearly impossible without confronting established judicial doctrines, constitutional principles, or international commitments.

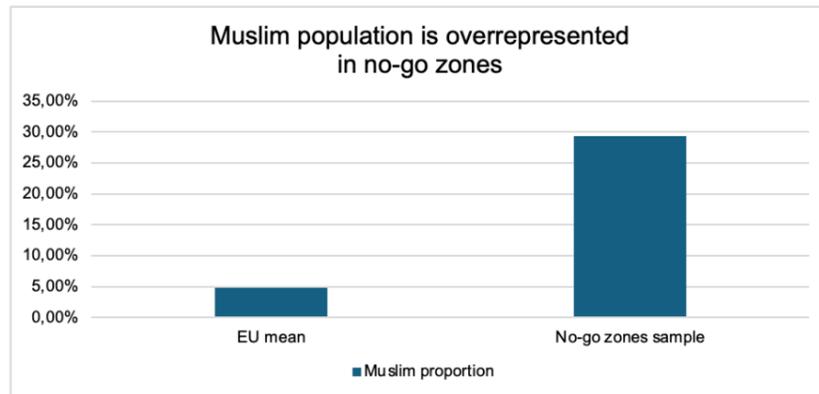
Crucially, this fundamental transformation of immigration policy has occurred with little or no direct democratic mandate. The legal enshrinement of family reunification rights has bypassed parliamentary debates and referenda in most EU member states. It reflects a broader trend whereby courts and international bodies have reshaped core dimensions of migration policy. As such, family reunification has become a structural mechanism of demographic change that remains legally shielded and politically irreversible under the current framework.

3.2 A direct correlation between Islamisation and no-go zones

No-go zones are highly correlated to Islam

The Muslim population is markedly overrepresented in designated no-go zones. In these areas, the average proportion of Muslim residents reaches 29%, significantly exceeding both the EU-wide average of 4,9% and the average in

comparable urban areas outside no-go zones. This suggests a clear demographic clustering pattern. While not all Muslim-majority neighborhoods are violent or problematic, the overrepresentation indicates a spatial concentration that aligns with other structural indicators of parallel societies and state withdrawal.

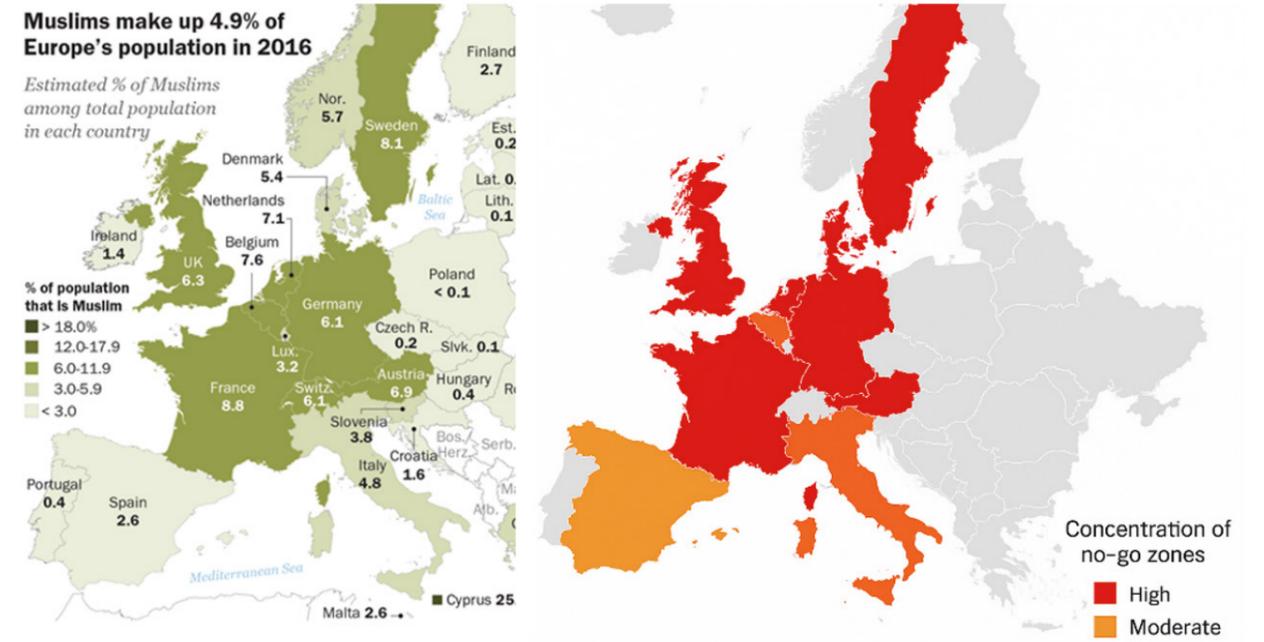


Sources: Europe’s Growing Muslim Population, Pew Research Center, 2017

Across the EU, countries with the highest national concentrations of Muslim populations also appear to be those with the highest density of no-go zones. France, Germany, Sweden, and the Netherlands display both elevated Muslim population shares, and numerous districts characterized by indicators such as high crime rates, informal economies,

and limited state presence. Conversely, countries with lower Muslim population shares, such as Hungary or the Czech Republic, exhibit few if any comparable zones. This geographic alignment underlines the need to investigate religious demographic structures alongside immigration and socio-economic variables.

Muslims proportion and no-go zones maps look similar

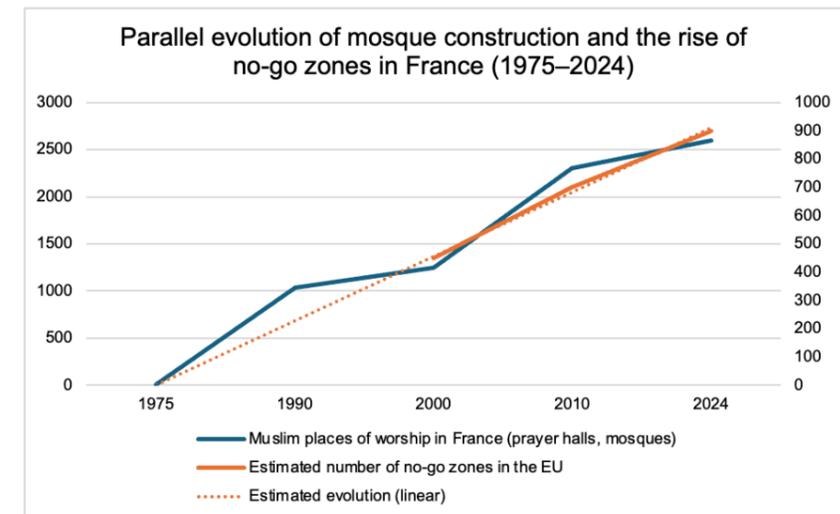


Sources: Pew research center (left), estimation of no-go zones with x<10 grey, 10<x<100 orange, x>100 red based on Migration Research Institute in Budapest, affiliated with the Matthias Corvinus College, 2024 (right)

In France, a parallel trajectory can be observed between the number of officially registered mosques and the emergence of no-go zones. From 1975 to 2024, the number of mosques has grown steadily, mirroring the progressive appearance of areas

characterized by socio-spatial isolation, informal governance, and security challenges. This trend does not imply causation per se, but it supports the hypothesis of a sociological transformation linked to cultural-religious settlement patterns.

Calculated correlation: 0,99



Sources: Datarealis, Ministère de l’Intérieur, Guillaume Pallottino, 2024; Migration Research Institute in Budapest, affiliated with the Matthias Corvinus College, 2024

21 CGT, Gisti et autres, Conseil d’État, 8 décembre 1978

22 “Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence”

23 Boultif v. Switzerland, 54273/00, European Court of Human Rights, August 2001

Mass migration originates primarily from Muslim-majority countries

Since 2000, a disproportionate share of asylum seekers and new EU citizens have come from countries where Islam is the dominant religion. Of the top 15 origin countries among asylum seekers between January 2024 and March 2025, 11 are Muslim-majority (including Syria, Afghanistan, Türkiye,

Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, Mali, Somalia, Guinea, and Iraq)²⁴. Similarly, the 3 largest nationality groups granted EU citizenship in 2023 were all from Muslim-majority nations (Syria, Morocco, and Albania)²⁵. This demographic trend has concentrated populations with shared religious norms in urban clusters, facilitating the creation of communities that are religiously cohesive and socially distinct, precisely the environments most associated with no-go zone dynamics.

Top countries of origin for asylum seekers in the EU (Jan. 2024 – Mar. 2025, Eurostat)

RANK	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	MAJORITY RELIGION
1	Syria	Islam
2	Venezuela	Roman Catholicism
3	Afghanistan	Islam
4	Colombia	Roman Catholicism
5	Türkiye	Islam
6	Bangladesh	Islam
7	Ukraine	Eastern Orthodoxy
8	Peru	Roman Catholicism
9	Egypt	Islam
10	Morocco	Islam
11	Pakistan	Islam
12	Mali	Islam
13	Somalia	Islam
14	Guinea	Islam
15	Iraq	Islam
Islam majority		11/15

Top countries of origin for acquisition of EU-citizenship (2023, Eurostat)

RANK	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	MAJORITY RELIGION
1	Syria	Islam
2	Morocco	Islam
3	Albania	Islam
Islam majority		3/3

Emergence of rigorous and violent doctrines within Muslim communities

Within European Muslim communities, certain transnational currents such as Salafism, Tablighi Jamaat, Millî Görüş, and Muslim Brotherhood networks have reinforced norms of cultural and moral separation. In Germany, research indicates a substantial increase in Salafist adherents (up to over 11,000 in 2017)²⁶ alongside the surveillance of

more than 90 mosques for extremist affiliations. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler highlights how Muslim Brotherhood-linked organizations in France and Belgium use associative and charitable structures to disseminate religious-political ideology and establish parallel normative networks²⁷. These movements frequently promote doctrines incompatible with liberal democratic norms (such as gender segregation or rejection of secular law), enabling a socially insulated communal sphere.

Rigorist preaching can translate into communal rejection of key liberal values, including feminism, LGBTQ rights, secular education, and legal pluralism. In Belgian neighborhoods, Salafist leaders have advocated openly for application of Sharia and rejection of national laws²⁸. Dutch investigations revealed that some Quranic schools, linked to Salafi networks, teach intolerance of homosexuality, rejection of civic symbols, and active separation from non-Muslim society²⁹. These norms undermine trust in state institutions and reduce civic engagement, reinforcing enclaves where public services are distrusted and social cohesion is replaced by intra-communal

control. The result is neighborhoods where civic authority retreats, informal governance emerges, and state intervention is constrained or entirely absent.

Taken together, the demographic concentration of Muslim-origin populations, the ideological influence of rigid Islam currents, and the persistent withdrawal from civic norms create fertile conditions for no-go zones as operationally defined in this study. These zones are not merely spatial anomalies but spatial-material manifestations of socio-religious disintegration in contexts of high migration from Muslim-majority regions.

3.3 Case study: Sweden

Our own calculations³⁰, based on Swedish national demographic and crime data, demonstrate an extremely strong statistical

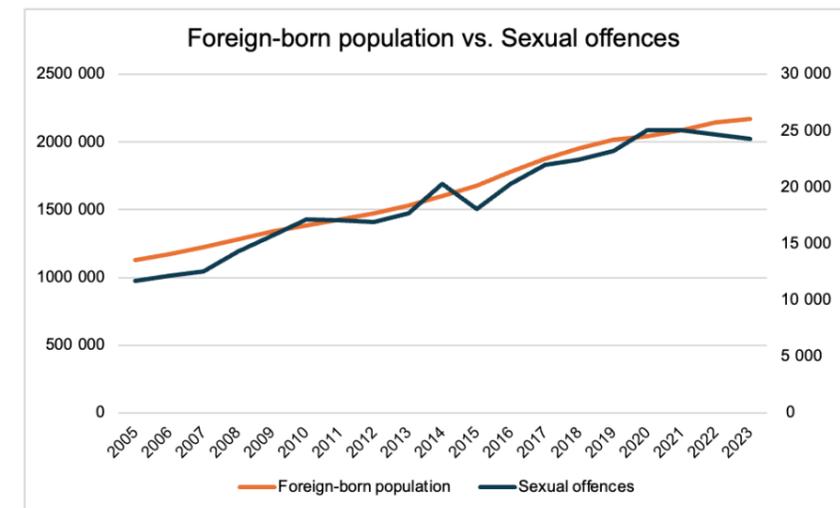
correlation³¹ between the proportion of foreign-born residents and key categories of violent crime.

DATA SAMPLE 1 VS. DATA SAMPLE 2	CORRELATION 2005 - 2023
Foreign-born population vs. Sexual offences	0,98
Foreign-born population / Total pop. vs. Murders	0,91
Foreign-born population vs. Rapes	0,96
Refugees vs. Murders	0,91

The direct correlation, but also causality, between immigration and serious crime in Sweden is proved by on a study from Lund University³². Nearly 2/3 of those convicted for rape or aggravated rape between 2000 and 2020 were first or second generation immigrants. These figures align with our findings and support the argument that mass immigration, particularly from regions

such as North Africa and the Middle East, plays a significant role in driving violent crime in specific urban areas. With the same data between 2005 and 2023 in Sweden, we have drafted four comparative graphs. The first graph, plotting foreign-born population against the number of sexual offenses, shows both rising in parallel, reflecting a consistent increase over the period.

Correlation calculated: 0,98



Sources: Statistics Sweden (SCB.se) & Reported offences 1950-2024, Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention

24 Eurostat, Origin countries of asylum seekers in EU, 2024-01 2025-03

25 Eurostat, Origin countries of asylum seekers in EU, 2023

26 Germany 2023 International Religious Freedom Report

27 Bergeaud-Blackler, F. Le Frérisme et ses réseaux: L'enquête. Paris: Odile Jacob. 2023. 9.

28 Teich, S, 'Islamic Radicalization in Belgium', International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), 2016

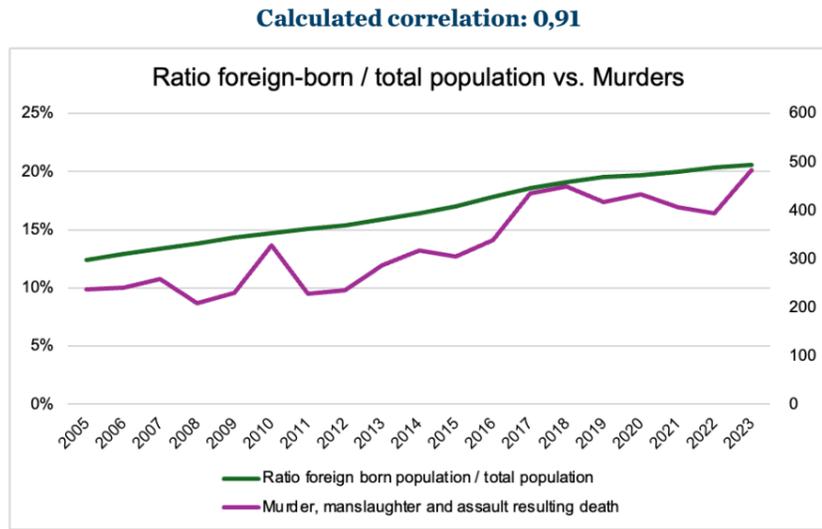
29 NRC, Nieuwsuur investigation into Salafi Quran schools in the Netherlands, 2019

30 Sources available upon request.

31 Correlation measures the strength and direction of a linear relationship between two variables, ranging from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to +1 (perfect positive correlation); values above 0.9 indicate an extremely strong direct relationship.

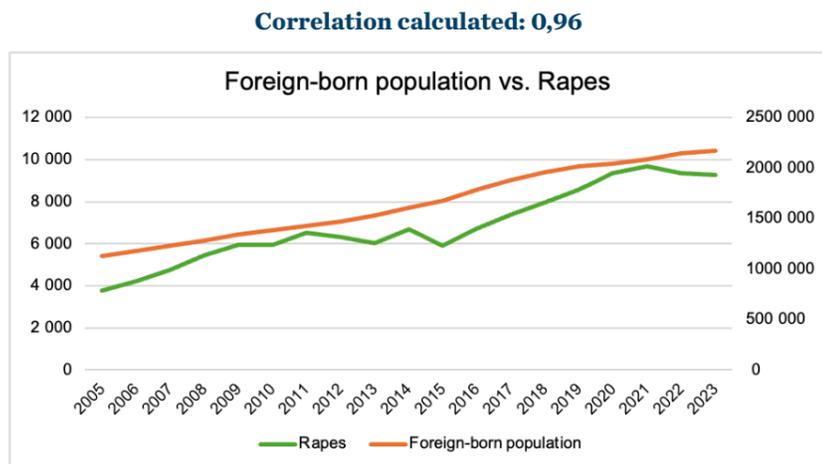
32 The Telegraph, Nearly two thirds of convicted rapists in Sweden are migrants or second generation immigrants, January 2025..

Similarly, the second graph, comparing the ratio of foreign-born population to the number of homicides, mirrors this trajectory



Sources: Statistics Sweden (SCB.se) & Reported offences 1950-2024, Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention

The third graph, tracking foreign-born population against rape cases, aligns closely with a similar upward curve.

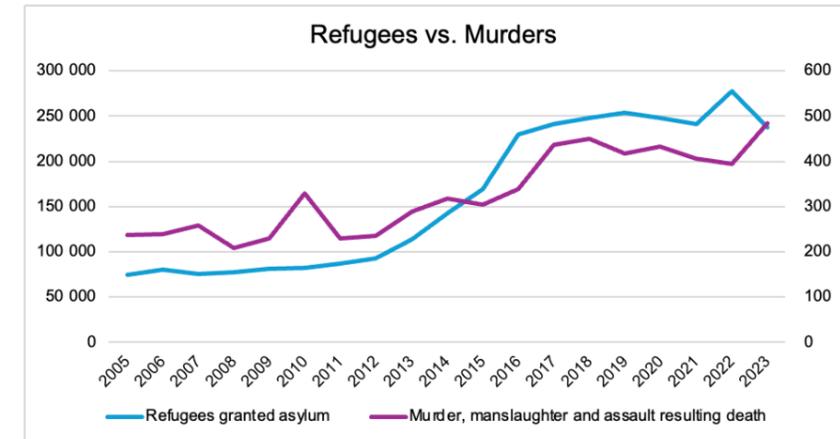


Sources: Statistics Sweden (SCB.se) & Reported offences 1950-2024, Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention

Finally, the fourth graph, linking refugees to murders, shows a parallel rise, particularly notable after the 2015 surge. While establishment explanations often attribute these trends to legislative changes or increased reporting, the consistent

parallelism across these datasets raises questions about underlying demographic or integration factors that official accounts may downplay.

Correlation calculated: 0,91



Sources: Statistics Sweden (SCB.se) & Reported offences 1950-2024, Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention

SECURITY THREATS AND TERRORISM ORIGINATION FROM NO-GO ZONES

4.1 Security threats from no-go zones

Elevated Crime Rates in Immigrant-Dense Urban Districts

Urban neighborhoods with high immigrant populations in Western Europe often experience above-average crime and violence rates compared to national or rural levels. For example, in France's *quartiers prioritaires* (high-priority urban districts, many with large immigrant communities), police data from 2023 show significantly more violent crime per capita than in surrounding areas.³³ Residents of these districts are nearly twice as likely to be implicated in violent offenses as residents of other areas. At the same time, certain property crimes are less frequent in these neighborhoods (e.g. burglary rates were lower in targeted “reconquest” zones than in the rest of the city), reflecting a complex local crime profile. In French *banlieues* specifically, drug-related crime rates are higher than the national average, contributing to a pervasive sense of insecurity for residents.³⁴

In Belgium, a similar urban concentration of crime is evident in Brussels, a cosmopolitan region with many immigrant communities. In 2022, 44% of all robberies in Belgium occurred in Brussels (which has only about 10% of the country's population)³⁵. Historically notorious districts like Molenbeek (dubbed a “no-go zone” after the 2015–2016 terror attacks) have struggled with crime. Still, Brussels police statistics underscore that the capital's violent incidents and public-order offenses remain disproportionate, requiring ongoing attention³⁶.

Germany and Italy also report higher crime rates in certain immigrant-concentrated urban areas. In Germany, districts of cities like Berlin, Bremen or Essen with large Middle Eastern or North African immigrant clans have drawn public concern. Police “no-go zone” warnings have occasionally surfaced,

though objective data show clan-related crimes remain a small fraction (≈0.2%) of overall crime³⁷. Berlin recorded about 900 clan-linked crimes in 2022 (out of over 519,000 total offenses), indicating that while crime is concentrated in specific networks and neighborhoods, these account for only a sliver of nationwide crime.

Italy's experience has been shaped by irregular migration. The 2021 report by the *Direzione Centrale della Polizia Criminale* highlights that the main nationalities involved in human trafficking in Italy are Nigerians, Romanians, and Albanians³⁸. These groups run networks exploiting victims for prostitution, illegal labor, forced begging, and street crime (theft, drug trafficking). Their operations are concentrated in cities like Rome and Milan, key hubs for migrant exploitation. According to the 2024 Annual Report, 1,432 Albanians were reported for drug dealing in 2023, plus 171 for criminal association, 16.44% of the 9,758 foreign suspects. Lombardy and Lazio had the highest concentration of such cases. Foreigners accounted for 32.3% of all drug offenses in Italy, almost 1/3.³⁹

Nigerian gangs like Black Axe and Eiye Confraternity are active in Milan, Rome, and Turin, using “African shops” as fronts for cocaine trafficking, forced prostitution, and money laundering, especially in low-income districts. In 2024, 44 of 114 criminal intimidation cases occurred in Lombardy and Lazio (38.6%), with 10 directly tied to organized crime (71% of such cases nationwide). These areas are known for high migrant density and weak territorial control. Undocumented migrants (often indebted up to €30,000–50,000 due to illegal immigration cost) are vulnerable to exploitation. Many are forced into prostitution, drug dealing, or theft in the urban outskirts of Rome and Milan, where foreign criminal networks are especially active.⁴⁰

33 | Ministère de l'Intérieur, Info Rapide n°46 - Quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville et quartiers de reconquête républicaine: davantage de violences enregistrées que sur le reste du territoire en 2023, 2024

34 | Euronews, 'A power struggle': What lies behind the anger in France's banlieues?, 2023

35 | Safe.brussels, Observatory annual report, 2022

36 | Politico, Belgian crime rate drops, Brussels violence rises police, 2016

37 | European Police Congress, Berlin situation report on clan crime, 2023

38 | Ministero dell'Interno, Focus sulla tratta degli esseri umani, 2021

39 | Ministero dell'Interno, Relazione annuale 2024, 2025

40 | Ministero dell'Interno, Atti Intimidatori contro Giornalisti, 2025

In short, official data confirms that foreign nationals, especially irregular migrants, are heavily involved in serious crime in some specific areas in Rome and Milan.

FOCUS 3

Summer 2025 pool attacks in France by young French from urban areas

During summer 2025, municipal swimming pools and aquatic parks across France are being forced to close due to repeated disturbances by groups of youths from no-go zones. In one case, just hours after opening, a new aquatic park in Le Mans was evacuated following violent confrontations involving 200–300 youths armed with iron bars and stones, who assaulted security staff and caused an eruption of public disorder⁴¹. Staff described the site as comparable to “Baghdad” given the intensity of threats and physical aggression.

Similar incidents have been documented in cities including Lyon, Toulouse, Tours, Colmar, and Strasbourg during summer heatwaves. Staff report assaults—both verbal and physical—threats of death, and organized intrusions into restricted spaces uninvited. These episodes frequently involve small groups of teenagers from the same urban background, acting collectively and often using social media coordination to mobilize. The level of violence and hostility toward authority figures (lifeguards, agents, mediators) underscores how degradation of civic behavior and group territoriality can spill from no-go zones into public recreational spaces.

In summer 2025, the municipal pool in Porrentruy (in the Swiss Jura region) implemented a temporary ban from July 4 to August 31, restricting access to non-Swiss residents, specifically people without a residence or work permit. This measure was motivated by repeated incidents of misconduct, primarily involving young French nationals from the no-go zones located in the Doubs and Territoire de Belfort, with over twenty individuals excluded shortly after the season began.⁴²

The mayor of Porrentruy, Philippe Eggertswyler, rejected any accusations of discrimination, clarifying that French nationals with valid Swiss work permits were still welcome, as well as approved foreign tourists. He emphasized that the measure was necessary due to

high visitor numbers and the need to ensure that local residents could enjoy the facility peacefully^{43 44}.

This local decision sparked a political debate across the border. Matthieu Bloch, deputy from the Montbéliard area, publicly supported the measure, linking these disruptions to groups of French youths from nearby no-go zones. Local media on both sides of the border discussed whether these behaviors reflected a broader trend of youth from French no-go zones crossing into Switzerland to access swimming facilities when French pools felt unsafe or overly crowded.⁴⁵

Community Support Networks and Parallel Economies

Family ties, ethnic solidarity, and religious networks play a dual role in these neighborhoods – providing social support but sometimes inadvertently shielding illicit activities. In many French *banlieues*, for instance, tight-knit community bonds mean residents may close ranks against outside authority. Anthropologists describe a “code of the street” in which locals rely on each other and are wary of police. Drug trafficking and other illicit “parallel economies” thrive by exploiting these personal networks⁴⁶. Neighbors, friends, or extended family members often get co-opted into roles as lookouts, couriers, or stash-house keepers in the local drug trade. For many low-income residents, the *business* (drug economy) can be a source of income or coercion – some hide narcotics under pressure or to earn extra cash when legitimate jobs are scarce. These criminal operations are sustained by relational support systems: “information travels quickly” through the community, and residents warn each other “in time of the arrival of police” as a form of solidarity.

As sociologist Luc Bronner observed in *La Loi du ghetto*, without this internal solidarity, gangs would struggle to evade law enforcement; but in the current climate, large police raids are often foiled because “the neighborhood network tips off members” before officers can catch ringleaders. This creates a de facto parallel warning system and hierarchy – local “bosses” enforce codes of silence and loyalty (sometimes through fear of reprisals or appeals to honor) to keep residents from cooperating with authorities. The result is an informal “parallel justice”: disputes are settled inside the community and outsiders (police, courts) face a wall of non-cooperation. Indeed, German police officials have noted that certain extended-family “clans” reject the authority of the state and operate their own internal dispute resolution, which has led

to clan-dominated areas turning into perceived no-go zones for law enforcement. In Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia, crime families of Lebanese or Kurdish origin (the Mhallamiye clans, Abou-Chaker, Remmo, Miri, etc.) leverage “family loyalty and clan honor” to obstruct investigations – hundreds of clan members can be mobilized to intimidate witnesses or confront police during raids⁴⁷.

Ethnic and religious solidarity can also provide “logistical cover” for illicit enterprises. For example, some organized theft or fraud rings in Europe recruit co-ethnics and use community channels to fence stolen goods or launder money, knowing that insiders are less likely to inform police. Hawala networks (informal value transfer systems often run through trust relationships in Muslim communities) have been used to quietly move profits from drug trafficking or tax fraud abroad⁴⁸. In immigrant neighborhoods with a strong *mosque community*, the mosque itself typically serves as a legitimate source of spiritual and social support – however, authorities have found that extremist cells (in cases of terrorism recruitment) exploited mosque-based friendships and family networks to operate covertly⁴⁹. Nonetheless, it’s important to note that these same support networks can be a *positive force* if engaged constructively. Extended families, neighborhood associations, and religious institutions provide social capital that authorities could partner with. As Bronner suggests, “the solidarity of the ghetto is a precious social relation” – the challenge is to channel it away from shielding criminals and towards cooperative safety efforts. Recent policing initiatives in France and Germany have started to combine tough enforcement with community liaison programs, aiming to build trust so that family and mosque networks become allies in crime prevention rather than obstacles.⁵⁰

FOCUS 4

The DZ Mafia: Illustration of the Link Between Parallel Economies and Armed Territorial Control

Born out of the volatile drug trade in Marseille’s northern districts, a new criminal group took shape in early 2023, establishing its base in the La Paternelle housing estate, an area long marked by entrenched narcotics activity. The group’s formation can be traced back to a violent clash on February 5, 2023, when gunfire erupted between the Laribi brothers’ crew (Mehdi “Tic” and Lamine “Tac”) and their rivals from the Yoda gang. This confrontation marked the start of an open war for control over key

drug-dealing points. From that moment, the DZ Mafia distinguished itself as a new-generation criminal structure, relying on heavy weaponry, neighborhood intimidation, and the systematic takeover of strategic territories. Within months, the DZ expanded its control over neighboring areas such as La Castellane and Le Castellas/Les Micocouliers. These urban zones, often described by law enforcement as no-go areas, lacked a regular institutional presence and became the group’s operational strongholds.⁵¹

The group’s identity is deeply rooted in ethno-communitarian dynamics. The DZ Mafia is predominantly composed of young men of Algerian descent, many of whom come from second- or third-generation immigrant families settled in Marseille. The name “DZ” itself is a direct reference to “*El Djazaïr*,” the Arabic name for Algeria. This shared cultural background fosters strong internal cohesion and allows the group to operate through tightly knit family and neighborhood networks. Recruitment is often based on personal relationships within schools, sports clubs, or local community circles. The DZ Mafia deviates from traditional top-down mafia models, opting instead for a horizontal structure reminiscent of decentralized international groups such as the Mocre Maffia in the Netherlands or Moroccan networks operating out of Tangier. Despite these external influences, the group remains deeply entrenched in the social and territorial reality of Marseille’s working-class housing estates.⁵²

In terms of criminal activity, the DZ Mafia has become one of the deadliest organizations in France in less than a year. 49 homicides connected to drug trafficking were recorded in Marseille in 2023, more than 80% of which were directly attributed to the DZ Mafia⁵³. The turf war with the Yoda clan accounted for 68 shootings, leading to over 30 deaths, including several civilians killed by mistake, such as a mother fatally shot in Saint-Joseph. The group actively recruits minors, often aged between 13 and 17, primarily via platforms like Snapchat and Telegram. The French Senate’s 2023 report on drug trafficking reveals that 11% of those indicted for narco-related murders were minors, while more than 50% were aged between 18 and 25. The DZ Mafia’s criminal scope goes far beyond drug trafficking: it engages in extortion, armed robbery, home invasions, commercial racketeering, and has even conducted attacks on prison staff. In 2025, a coordinated

41 Le Figaro, Agressions, menaces de mort... Quand piscines et parcs aquatiques sont contraints de fermer à cause des incivilités, July 2025

42 CNews, Suisse : la ville de Porrentruy interdit l'accès de sa piscine aux non-résidents, notamment français, July 2025

43 RTS, La polémique de la piscine de Porrentruy déborde des frontières, July 2025

44 Swissinfo, Porrentruy mayor comments on Swiss pool ban controversy, July 2025

45 Watson, «La Suisse, vous êtes un exemple pour nous»: un élu français à Porrentruy, July 2025

46 Bronner L, La loi du ghetto. Enquête dans les banlieues françaises, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 2010

47 Gatestone Institute, Germany: Crackdown on Middle Eastern Crime Families “The state must destroy the clan structures », 2018

48 MSG Compliance, Clan Crime in Germany, 2022

49 Islamist Extremism In Europe, Committee On Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 2006

50 Bronner L, La loi du ghetto. Enquête dans les banlieues françaises, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 2010.

51 Le Monde, The DZ Mafia, a French drug enterprise turned criminal brand with mafia ambitions, October 2024

52 Le Monde, The DZ Mafia, a French drug enterprise turned criminal brand with mafia ambitions, October 2024

53 The Marseilles mafia so big it's now a brand, The Times, 2024

wave of arson and violent threats against correctional officers was directly linked to DZ affiliates, according to investigative reports from Mediapart. Law enforcement now considers the DZ a criminal brand, capable of expanding beyond its Marseille base and of potentially infiltrating segments of the local nightlife and business economy.⁵⁴

The DZ Mafia exemplifies how systemic violence, and parallel economies thrive in northern Marseille’s “no-go zones.” In these areas, long marked by state neglect and socio-economic exclusion, drug trafficking is not just criminal but is the dominant economy. With no institutional authority, violence becomes a tool of regulation: it secures territory, eliminates rivals, and enforces internal control. The DZ acts as a substitute authority, imposing rules where the state has withdrawn. It sustains an alternative order built on fear, loyalty, and illicit wealth.

FOCUS 5
From Morocco to Rome: How Drug-Financed Parallel Economies - Sustain Organized Violence

Over the last decade, Italy has witnessed the emergence of transnational drug trafficking networks dominated by Moroccan nationals, particularly in urban regions like Rome, Milan, Latina, and Busto Arsizio. These groups have demonstrated an advanced ability to embed themselves in local illicit economies while maintaining logistical and financial links to Morocco, Spain, and France. Their operations offer a clear example of how parallel economies, when organized around narcotics, create ecosystems that are not only profitable but also structurally violent and resistant to law enforcement intervention.

In a major investigation concluded in June 2025, Italian authorities dismantled a Moroccan-led network responsible for importing over 1.4 tonnes of hashish and marijuana from North Africa via the Iberian Peninsula. The criminal structure was based in Rome but extended its reach to Lazio and surrounding areas, with active points of sale in districts such as Don Bosco, Pigneto, and Spinaceto. The organization operated with a centralized “*cassa comune*” (common fund) to pay foot soldiers, support families of incarcerated members, and maintain an internal welfare system, ensuring discipline and loyalty. Seized assets included 660kg of hashish, +50kg of marijuana, firearms, vehicles with hidden

compartments, cryptophones, and detailed transaction ledgers, signaling a fully professionalized trafficking operation with built-in redundancy against police disruption.⁵⁵

A separate case in Busto Arsizio (Lombardy) further illustrates the scale of these networks’ financial influence. In November 2024, the Guardia di Finanza confiscated over €1 million in assets belonging to a Moroccan family deeply involved in drug trafficking and money laundering. These assets included luxury real estate (a 500 m² villa), high-end vehicles, and substantial cash reserves.⁵⁶ Authorities noted that several properties were registered under relatives’ names in an effort to mask ownership and launder illicit profits. Some individuals within the network were also found to be fraudulently receiving social welfare, illustrating how illicit and legal structures become entwined in the context of parallel economies.⁵⁷

Both operations exemplify how drug-based parallel economies sustain themselves not only through trafficking revenues but also via institutional mimicry. These Moroccan-led groups reproduced aspects of state functioning (such as redistributive solidarity, social insurance for jailed members, and dispute mediation) within their own criminal governance models. This embeddedness enhances their social legitimacy in underserved communities and ensures continuity even under repression. Such groups often mirror the operational tactics of classic mafia systems: long-term asset investment, low-visibility leadership, and the use of selective violence as a disciplinary mechanism rather than indiscriminate terror.⁵⁸

The integration of Moroccan criminal actors into Italy’s narcotics economy reflects broader dynamics of post-migration transnational criminality, where diasporic ties enable the creation of smuggling routes and safehouses across Morocco, Spain, Italy, and France. These routes are frequently secured not only through corruption and encryption, but also through violence used to establish market control, punish betrayal, and defend territory—particularly in peripheral urban neighborhoods with limited police presence. In this sense, the link between parallel economies and organized violence is not incidental, but essential⁵⁹. Violence functions as a regulatory instrument, enabling these networks to function in the absence or defiance of formal state authority.

4.2 The particular case of terrorist attack patterns and origins

Since the early 2010s, Europe has faced a wave of jihadist-inspired terrorist attacks. While the profiles of perpetrators vary, one key finding emerges: a significant number of these terrorists originate from certain urban areas commonly referred to as “no-go zones.” These areas, often marked by socio-economic isolation and low social integration, appear to have fostered the emergence of recurring hubs of Islamist radicalization.

Overview of Jihadist Attacks in Europe (2010–2025)

The table provided in the Annex lists jihadist terrorists who perpetrated attacks on European soil between 2010 and 2025 and identifies their connection to no-go zones. Here are the types of data collected through an example of a row in the table:

Year	Attack	Country	Terrorist	Nationality	Link to NGZ (place of birth or living or mosque or radicalization)	Country of birth	Generation of immigration
2010	Stockholm	Sweden	Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly	Swedish	Yes	Iraq	1st

First, a temporal trend is evident: after sporadic attacks in 2010–2012 (e.g., Stockholm, Frankfurt, Toulouse), a surge occurred between 2015 and 2017 with a series of major incidents (Paris, Brussels, Nice, Barcelona, etc.), followed by a consistently high threat level through 2020. While 2021–2023 saw fewer completed attacks, there was a notable increase in attempted attacks involving increasingly younger individuals⁶⁰.

Second, the geographical distribution of attacks shows a concentration in France and Belgium—Europe’s most affected countries—but also in Germany and Spain. Finally, concerning the typical profile of the terrorist: data show that approximately 60% were first-generation immigrants, 34% were second-generation or later (commonly referred to as *homegrown*), and 6% were « Ethnic Europeans ».

Generation of immigration		%
1st	55	60,44%
2nd and more	31	34,07%
Ethnic European	5	5,49%

According to Europol, the average age of perpetrators tends to be young (often between 18 and 30), with a growing share of minors involved in recent terrorist plots⁶¹. This aligns with the findings of a French parliamentary commission, which as early as 2015 stated that “French jihadists are mainly youths aged 15 to 30, mostly of North African descent” and often come from marginalized urban districts. In fact, according to

our data, approximately 63% of Islamist terrorists who struck Europe between 2010 and 2025 had a verified link to a no-go zone. So-called “*sensitive neighborhoods*” in Europe remain fertile grounds where such vulnerabilities can be exploited: community withdrawal, perceived exclusion, and petty crime create a conducive context that jihadist recruiters know how to leverage.

Link with NGZ		%
Yes	60	63%
No	27	28%
Unknown	9	9%

In France, as sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar observed, “certain jihadist profiles, with chaotic life paths and a sense of dispossession, are particularly sensitive to a rhetoric of humiliation and revenge,” a rhetoric made all the more powerful when it is echoed both in their neighborhood and

online. Among these suburban youths, there is a search for meaning and belonging that the ideology of the Islamic State seems to fulfill by offering them a role (as avenger, martyr, or soldier) that they do not find in the surrounding society⁶².

54 Mediapart, Trafics : de quoi la DZ Mafia est-elle le nom ?, July 2025

55 Yabiladi, Italian police bust major Rome drug ring importing hashish from Morocco, June 2025

56 Legnano News, ‘Il pusher “nullatenente” che vive nella super villa: sequestro da un milione a Busto Arsizio’, november 2024.

57 Yabiladi, Italian police seize €1 million in assets from Moroccan in drug trafficking case, November 2024

58 Europol and UNODC, Report on Cocaine Insights, The illicit trade of cocaine from Latin America to Europe from oligopolies to free-for-all?, 2021

59 Research paper No.189, RIEAS Research Institute for European and American Studies, Illegal Smuggling and International Organized Crime from Africa to Europe: The Moroccan Perspective, 2024

60 Europol, TE-SAT European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025, 2025

61 Generation Jihad: The Profile and Modus Operandi of Minors Involved in Recent Islamist Terror Plots in Europe, Volume 18, Issue 6, CTC West-Point, 2025. 20.

62 Sueur, J., Filières djihadistes: pour une réponse globale et sans faiblesse’. Commission d’enquête sur l’organisation et les moyens de la lutte contre les réseaux djihadistes en France et en Europe, Report n°388, Sénat, 2015,

Local Hubs of Radicalization: The Example of Selected No-Go Zones

Several European neighborhoods have repeatedly played a key role in jihadist networks. This is not to stigmatize these areas as a whole, but rather to acknowledge, based on evidence, their frequent appearance in counterterrorism investigations as logistical bases, safe havens, or breeding grounds for extremists.

Molenbeek (Brussels, Belgium)

This working-class municipality of Brussels, with a large population of Moroccan descent, has been described as a “hotbed of extremism” in Europe⁶³. Indeed, a significant number of terrorists from the 2010s lived or passed through Molenbeek. Salah and Brahim Abdeslam, key figures in the November 13, 2015, Paris attacks, grew up in Molenbeek, as did Abdelhamid Abaaoud (the attack’s coordinator) and Mohamed Abrini (later involved in the Brussels bombings). These long-standing personal ties made Molenbeek a de facto rear base: investigators found that the Franco-Belgian cell of 2015–2016 partly operated thanks to a local environment where they could hide, meet, and acquire weapons. In plain terms, Molenbeek acted as a grey zone where conspirators flew under the radar⁶⁴.

In 2016, Molenbeek’s mayor Françoise Schepmans acknowledged that “Molenbeek... has always been somewhat forgotten. [...] The Paris suspects, including the Abdeslam brothers and Abaaoud, lived and grew up in Molenbeek.” The commune sent 47 foreign fighters to Syria, “ten times the national average”. This highlights the overrepresentation of Molenbeek in the Belgian jihadist phenomenon, which is, in per capita terms, the most intense in Europe. “It’s a very poor neighborhood [...]. People have long had their heads in the sand about the problems in Molenbeek,” the mayor added, calling for stronger efforts to combat local radicalization⁶⁵.

Seine-Saint-Denis (northern suburbs of Paris, France)

This department is often singled out for its combination of poverty, urban segregation, and concentrated immigration, as well as for its reputation as a lawless area. Several towns or neighborhoods within Seine-Saint-Denis appear in terrorism case files. Saint-Denis, in particular, served as a hideout for the fugitives of the November 13, 2015, attacks: in a squat there, Jawad Bendaoud hosted Abaaoud (the attack leader) and an accomplice until police stormed the building on November

18, 2015. This so-called “Daesh landlord,” a 29-year-old petty criminal, exploited the anonymity and dysfunction of a poor neighborhood to hide two terrorists among local residents⁶⁶.

Beyond this emblematic case, Seine-Saint-Denis has produced several figures of French jihadism. Samy Amimour, a member of the Bataclan terrorist commando, was born in Drancy. Other members of jihadist networks (such as the “Cannes-Torcy” cell) came from towns like Clichy-sous-Bois, Aulnay-sous-Bois, or Stains, all of which were affected by the 2005 riots and a subsequent retreat of public services. These marginalized areas, where youth unemployment often exceeds 30%, offer fertile ground for Salafist propaganda, which presents an alternative and valorizing identity. French authorities have observed that “the predominance of profiles from disadvantaged neighborhoods [...] is frequently seen in the backgrounds of those who joined Daesh,” even if not exclusively. The impact of territorial isolation and lack of social integration creates “a form of ghettoization and an exacerbation of alternative identity markers, such as a return to radical Islam”⁶⁷.

In summary, European *no-go zones* provide an environment where terrorism can more easily take root. The common factors are clear: a concentration of social fractures, insular community life often linked to large Muslim immigrant populations, the presence of criminal networks (facilitating access to weapons and forged documents), and a relative disengagement of public authorities or law enforcement (due to lack of services and mutual distrust between state representatives and residents).

FOCUS 6 Interpol Red notices profiles: a recognizable pattern

Among the 52 individuals actively sought by France through Interpol Red Notices, all hold French nationality, and nearly one-third (31%) also possess dual nationality. These notices concern individuals suspected or convicted of serious offenses, mostly related to Islamist terrorism, though not exclusively.⁶⁸

Generation of immigration		%
1st	10	19%
2nd and more	36	69%
“Ethnic European”	6	12%
Total	52	100%

These are profiles considered particularly dangerous at the international level. A sociological analysis of these individuals shows that the vast majority come from recent immigrant backgrounds. About 20% were born abroad and are therefore part of the first generation of immigrants, while nearly 70% were born in France to immigrant families—belonging to the second generation or beyond. So-called “ethnic Europeans,” with no recent migratory ancestry, represent only 12% of those wanted.

Link with NGZ		%
Yes	30	58%
No	21	40%
Unknown	1	2%
Total	52	100%

4.3 Comparison with Eastern Europe

In the midst of widespread instability, terrorist threats, and identity crises experienced by many Western European countries in recent decades, Poland and Hungary offer a striking counter-model. These nations, historically marked by emigration rather than immigration, have opted for policies of controlled borders, demographic continuity, and selective refugee intake.

The result has been a remarkably stable social and security environment, in sharp contrast to the challenges faced by countries like France, Belgium, Sweden, or Germany. This model is based on three interdependent foundations: a consistently low immigration rate, low levels of violent crime and zero Islamist terrorism, and a refugee policy based on cultural proximity and integration potential, as demonstrated by Poland’s handling of Ukrainian displacement.

Low Immigration: A Demographic and Political Choice

Unlike their Western counterparts, Central European nations have not undergone major demographic transformations through immigration. The populations of Poland and Hungary show foreign-born minorities.

According to Eurostat (2024)⁶⁹, the percentage of resident citizens of other EU countries remains extremely low:

- Poland: 0.1%
- Hungary: approximately 0.9%

These numbers stand in stark contrast with Western European countries:

Another significant factor: nearly 58% of the individuals listed have a clear connection to no-go zones. These are neighborhoods marked by a high concentration of immigrant populations, a diminished presence of public institutions, community-based pressures, and sometimes informal control by religious, criminal, or ideological networks. Such marginalized spaces do not automatically generate radicalization, but they provide an environment conducive to social and identity disconnection, in which extremist ideologies can more easily take root. It is this combination (poverty, isolation, mistrust of the state, and a search for meaning) that forms a powerful lever for recruitment into radical movements.

- France: 6.5% non-EU foreign citizens, many from North and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Germany: nearly 9.2%, including large Turkish and Middle Eastern communities
- Sweden: 4.9%, following major intake from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and Afghanistan
- Belgium: over 5.4%, with complex multi-ethnic dynamics, particularly in urban areas.

This demographic gap reflects deliberate policy choices. For instance, Hungary and Poland firmly rejected the EU’s migrant relocation quotas during the 2015 crisis. Instead of viewing immigration as inevitable or morally imperative, these governments framed it as a sovereign decision tied to national identity, security, and capacity. Their refusal to participate in mass resettlement programs earned criticism from Brussels but has yielded visible benefits in terms of social stability.⁷⁰

Moreover, while Western countries embraced a multicultural model, Central Europe maintained a cultural continuity paradigm, viewing integration not as automatic but as conditional, based on shared values, linguistic adaptability, and civic commitment.

A Secure Social Fabric: Absence of Terrorism and Low Violent Crime

The impact of limited immigration is not only demographic. It translates directly into a vastly different security landscape. One of the most compelling indicators is the total absence of Islamist terrorism in Poland and Hungary between 2010 and 2025, as documented in Europol’s TE-SAT reports⁷¹.

63 Time, Shadowing the Police in Belgium’s Hotbed of Extremism, March 2016

64 Henry Jackson Society, An Enduring Threat: Europe’s Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now, September 2016

65 The Parliament Magazine, Mayor of Molenbeek: Area needs EU support to fight radicalisation, June 2016

66 Europe 1 ‘Jawad Bendaoud, le logeur de djihadistes du 13 novembre jugé en appel fin 2018’, January 2018

67 Jean-Pierre Sueur, Filières djihadistes: pour une réponse globale et sans faiblesse’. Commission d’enquête sur l’organisation et les moyens de la lutte contre les réseaux djihadistes en France et en Europe, Report n°388, Sénat, 2015

68 Interpol, Interpol Red Notice, 2025

69 Eurostat, EU population diversity by citizenship and country of birth, 2025

70 BBC, EU to sue Poland, Hungary and Czechs for refusing refugee quotas, December 2017

71 TE-SAT European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025, Europol, 2025

This stands in stark contrast to Western Europe, where dozens of deadly attacks have occurred.

While Western intelligence agencies struggle with complex radicalization chains, online jihadist propaganda, and ghettoized suburbs where law enforcement faces resistance, Central Europe has been spared such phenomena. There are no Salafi mosques under surveillance, no jihadi recruitment networks, and no community enclaves operating under different norms in Warsaw, Budapest, or Bucharest.

The contrast is also evident in broader crime statistics. According to World Population Review, which publishes global homicide rates, the figures for 2023 are as follows⁷²:

- Poland: 0.8 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants
- Hungary: 0.77

Compare that with:

- France: 1.34
- Sweden: 1.15

The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: A Test Passed Without Social Breakdown

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 presented a massive humanitarian and logistical challenge to Central Europe, especially Poland. Over 5 million Ukrainians crossed into Poland, with around 1 million remaining permanently, according to UNHCR (2023)⁷³. This represents an immigration wave larger than anything these countries had ever faced

And yet, unlike previous refugee crises in Western Europe, this displacement did not lead to an increase in crime, radicalization, or urban unrest. In fact, Ukrainian refugees in Poland are:

- Largely female (many men stayed to fight), reducing risks of delinquency or radicalization
- Religiously, historically and culturally compatible (mostly Christian, often Catholic or Orthodox)
- Eager to work, integrate, and contribute to society
- Welcomed by a Polish society that views them not as “outsiders,” but as European neighbors in need.

In conclusion, Poland and Hungary provide compelling evidence that mass immigration is not inevitable, and that low immigration correlates with high levels of national security, social cohesion, and civic trust.

Their model is not rooted in xenophobia but in realism: immigration is approached as a strategic decision, not a moral reflex. By preserving demographic continuity, emphasizing integration over accommodation, and prioritizing refugees who can truly integrate, these countries have avoided the spirals of violence, identity crisis, and territorial loss seen elsewhere in Europe.

One of the most tangible markers of this success is the complete absence of no-go zones in these nations. Unlike France, Belgium, or Sweden, where certain urban areas are now effectively beyond the full reach of public institutions, Poland, and Hungary maintain territorial integrity and law enforcement presence in every district, without exception. Police, emergency services, and civil institutions operate nationwide without encountering parallel societies or zones of lawlessness.

FOCUS 7

The symbolic case of Sweden: the opposite scenario to Eastern Europe

Long regarded as a model of peaceful, inclusive society, Sweden has undergone a profound transformation over the past two decades. At the heart of this shift are generous immigration policies, combined with a dramatic rise in urban violence and insecurity. The link between mass immigration and criminal or extremist behavior (once considered taboo) is now central to Sweden’s public debate, driven by statistical realities and territorial patterns that are increasingly hard to ignore.

Until the 1990s, Sweden experienced relatively limited immigration, mostly from neighboring European countries (e.g. Finland, the Balkans, Italy), based on seasonal or structural labor needs. This profile changed dramatically after 2000, with a significant influx of refugees from outside Europe. Between 2000 and 2015, Sweden received over one million migrants, mainly from Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Syria, and Eritrea.

The turning point came in 2015, when 156,000 asylum applications were submitted, the highest per capita rate in Europe at the time.⁷⁴ The foreign-born population rose from 11% in 2000 to over 20% by 2022, with significant concentrations in urban areas such as Rinkeby (Stockholm) and Rosengård (Malmö)⁷⁵.

Following this demographic shift, Sweden experienced a series of alarming trends. First, there was a marked increase in violent crime, particularly sexual offenses: sex crimes rose by 25% between 2017 and 2021, according to the Swedish Crime Prevention Council⁷⁶. This was followed by a sharp rise in shootings and gang-related violence. Since 2018, Sweden has seen an escalation of armed conflicts, often in immigrant-heavy

neighborhoods. In 2023, Sweden held the highest rate of gun homicides in Western Europe⁷⁷.

In response to rising insecurity, Swedish authorities created a national map of “vulnerable areas” (*vulnerabla områden*), often referred to in international media as “no-go zones.” As of 2024, 61 neighborhoods are classified as vulnerable, including 23 designated as “particularly vulnerable”⁷⁸.

72 World Population Review, Murder Rate by Country 2023, 2025

73 UNHCR, Ukraine Refugee Situation, Operational Data Portal, 2025

74 PEW Research Center, Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 million in 2015, 2016

75 GIS Report, Sweden looks into the abyss, August 2024

76 The European conservative, Sweden: Sex Crime Increased Sharply in 2021; Up 25% From 2017, January 2022

77 Financial Times, Sweden breaks with its liberal past on migration, August 2024

78 Swedish Government Communication, Resistance and decisive action – a national strategy against organised crime, 2025

5

The political dimension: RISE OF SEPARATISM AND MUSLIM-IDENTITY PARTIES

5.1 Emergence and growth of a Muslim vote: the Left or Muslim-identity political parties

The growth of Muslim populations in Western Europe, primarily driven by mass migration, has inevitably affected the political balance in democratic countries. While citizenship laws initially limited the electoral influence of Muslim

immigrants, most countries now count a significant minority of voters from Muslim communities. According to Pew Research (2017) and local sources⁷⁹, the estimated proportions of Muslim populations and voters are as follows:

Muslim population and voters in Western EU countries

Country	Est. Muslim Population (inhabitants)	Est. Muslim Population (%)	Est. Muslim Voters (%)
Belgium	700,000	6%	5%
France	6,800,000	10%	5-6%
Germany	5,500,000	6.6%	4-4.5%
Italy	2,400,000	4%	3%
Netherlands	900,000	5%	4.2%
Spain	1,900,000	4%	3-3.5%
Sweden	800,000	8%	6%

Although Muslim voters usually represent less than 5% of the total electorate, they exhibit highly consistent voting patterns, making them a politically significant group. As detailed below, Muslim communities in Western Europe display clear majorities in favor of left-wing parties, typically ranging from 70% to 90%.⁸⁰

- **Germany:** A 2016 study showed that 65% of Turkish German Muslim voters had chosen a left-leaning⁸² party (SPD, Left Party, Greens). Similarly in 2021, Muslim voters were 30% more likely to favor Die Linke, SPD and Greens than the general population.

This consistently left leaning “Muslim vote” is observable across all studied countries. In national elections, left-wing parties have disproportionately benefited from Muslim support:

Similar trends are observed in Belgium, an estimated 70–80% of Muslim voters supported the Socialist Party in certain Brussels districts.⁸³

- **France:** An estimated 86% of Muslims supported François Hollande in 2012 in the second round, and, more strikingly, in 2022, 69%⁸¹ voted for far-left candidate Jean Luc Mélenchon (LFI) in the first round, 3 times his national score.

In contrast, data on Muslim voting patterns in Italy and Spain is more limited. In Italy, the Muslim vote appears more dispersed, with the Five Star Movement attracting a broad electorate. In recent years, however, and in the context of rising hardline right-wing parties, all three countries, Italy, Spain, and Belgium, now align with the Western European trend: Muslims

79 Statbel (2021), INSEE (2023), Deutsche Islamkonferenz (2019), BAMF, Caritas, ISMU Foundation (2023), CBS Netherlands, DENK party reports, Observatorio Andalusi (2023), INE, Statistics Sweden, Partiet Nyans data

80 Oshri, O. & Itzkovitch-Malka, R. 'Muslims' Vote Choice: Exclusion and Group Voting in Europe', Politics & Governance, 13. 2025

81 IFOP, Le vote des électeurs confessionnels au 1er tour de l'élection présidentielle, April 2022

82 Qantara. Topcu, Canan. "Calling all Muslim voters: "Won't vote" won't wash". November 2020.

83 Zibouh, F. "The Voting Behaviour of Muslim Citizens in Belgium". 2014

are approximately 30 percentage points more likely to vote for a left-leaning party than the average voter.⁸⁴

A caveat: while Muslim voters show a marked preference for the left, this pattern is not exclusive to them. Many immigrant communities in Europe exhibit similar tendencies. For example, non-Muslim African immigrants in France and Sweden, as well as Dutch voters of Surinamese origin, overwhelmingly support left-wing parties.⁸⁵ In contrast, European-origin migrants tend to vote in line with the general population.

Beyond reinforcing support for established left-wing parties, the “Muslim vote” has also led to the emergence of explicitly Muslim-oriented parties in several EU countries and the UK during the 2010s. These parties often advocate pro-Islam, pro-migration, and sometimes even pro-Sharia positions. While they rarely gain national traction, they frequently secure results at the local level, particularly in districts with high concentrations of Muslim voters.⁸⁶

Some of these parties are directly or indirectly influenced by foreign governments seeking to extend their geopolitical reach via local Muslim minorities. The Turkish government, through President Erdoğan’s AKP, is especially active in this regard. Though few of these parties openly brand themselves as “Muslim parties,” they typically present themselves as champions of “equality,” “justice,” or “multicultural integration.”⁸⁷

Most notable Muslim political parties in the EU:

- **Germany:** Several Muslim-identity parties have been founded in the past 15 years.
 - The first was *Bündnis für Innovation und Gerechtigkeit* (BIG), created in 2010. Its platform focuses on immigrant and Muslim minority issues, advocating multicultural integration policies such as improved access to language courses and faster asylum procedures. Although BIG has won a few local council seats (notably in Bonn), it polls only 0.2% nationally and has faced criticism over its ties to Turkey’s ruling AKP.⁸⁸

- A second party, *Allianz Deutscher Demokraten* (AD-D), was launched in 2016. It appeals explicitly to German Turkish voters and incorporates “Erdoganism” into its ideological framework⁸⁹. In the 2017 general election, it obtained 0.1% of the national vote but exceeded 1% in some Turkish-majority districts.⁹⁰ These parties do not constitute mass electoral options for Muslim voters but function primarily as diaspora activist groups, exerting pressure on mainstream left-wing parties over minority issues.

- **Sweden:** The *Nuance Party* (*Partiet Nyans*) was founded in 2019 by a Swedish Turkish politician reportedly linked to the Grey Wolves (a Turkish ultranationalist movement associated with the AKP). The party advocates for immigrant and Muslim minority rights with a multicultural yet socially conservative agenda, often described by Swedish media as Islamist. Core campaign proposals include criminalizing Quran burnings, recognizing Muslims as a constitutional minority, and combating Islamophobia.⁹¹

While Nuance received only 0.4% nationally in the 2022 election, it achieved 28% in Rosengård (a Muslim-majority district in Malmö) and over 20% in parts of Stockholm. The party has faced major controversy: several candidates have been exposed for antisemitic speech and for defending returnees from ISIS.⁹²

- **Netherlands:** The most influential Muslim-identity party is DENK, though other local parties exist.

- Founded in 2015 by two Turkish Dutch MPs who split from the Labour Party, DENK promotes multiculturalism, anti-discrimination, and economic justice, while holding conservative positions on issues like LGBTQ rights. Unlike other Muslim parties in Europe, DENK has achieved national representation: it secured three seats in parliament in 2017, 2021, and 2023, with around 2% of the vote. Locally, DENK is well established — it won 7% in Amsterdam in 2018 (4% in 2022) and is part of the governing coalition in Rotterdam.⁹³

- Other Muslim-leaning parties include NIDA, founded in 2013 with an openly Islamist orientation. It gained local council seats in Rotterdam and The Hague in 2018 but announced its withdrawal from elections in 2021. Additional minor parties include Party of Unity and Islam Democraten, both active in The Hague.⁹⁴ The Netherlands stands out as the EU country where Muslim parties are the most institutionalized and electorally successful. The rise of DENK is widely seen as having contributed to the collapse of the Labour Party in 2017 by siphoning off a significant share of the migrant vote.

- **Belgium:** The first explicitly Muslim party of the 2010s was ISLAM, founded in 2012 (acronym for *Integrity, Solidarity, Liberty, Authenticity, Morality*). The party advocated for Belgium to become an Islamic state — a radical platform that nonetheless enabled it to win two council seats in Brussels (Molenbeek and Anderlecht). After losing both seats in 2018, the party faded from the political landscape. Today, Muslim voters in Belgium largely remain within the traditional left-wing parties aligned with their linguistic communities (Francophone or Flemish).⁹⁵

Other countries (notably France, Italy, and Spain) do not show the same pattern of established Muslim political parties. A few initiatives have emerged, such as the *Union des Démocrates Musulmans Français* (UDMF, founded in 2012), *PRUNE* in

Spain (2010), and a recent Islamic electoral list in Monfalcone, Italy (2023). However, these movements have consistently failed to surpass 1% in national elections and have not secured local representation. In these countries, the Muslim vote and the defense of community interests remain largely absorbed by left-wing parties, often those on the more radical end of the spectrum.⁹⁶

Notable exceptions exist in Spain’s North African enclaves (Ceuta and Melilla) where Muslim-rooted parties such as *Coalición por Melilla* (CpM) and *Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Ciudadanía* (MDyC) hold substantial local influence and are closely tied to Muslim-majority constituencies.⁹⁷

This analysis highlights two major political developments associated with the integration of Muslim immigrant populations into European citizenship:

1. The emergence of a strong, consistent “Muslim vote”, overwhelmingly aligned with left-wing parties.
2. The rise of Muslim-identity parties — still weak and localized — that reflect a growing assertion of explicitly Muslim political interests.

These trends are already shaping national debates and influencing party strategies, occasionally challenging long-standing political alignments and consensus across Western Europe.

Summary of key Muslim Identity Parties in Western EU countries

Party	Country	Date of Creation	Political Line	Main Elected Seats	Date of Election
ISLAM	Belgium	2012	Religious-conservative, pro-Islamic ethics in public policy	Local council seats in Brussels (Anderlecht, Molenbeek)	2012–2018 (lost seats post-2018)
UDMF (Union des Démocrates Musulmans Français)	France	2012	Islamoprogressive, secular-left, anti-discrimination	None (ran in national & European elections)	2022 (legislative), 2024 (EU)
DAVA	Germany	2024	Minority rights, Turkish diaspora-focused, culturally conservative	None (0.37% in 2024 EU elections)	2024 (EU election)
BIG (Alliance for Innovation and Justice)	Germany	2010	Pro-family, conservative-liberal, Turkish diaspora-focused	Local seats in North Rhine-Westphalia	Various municipal elections post-2010
AD-D (Allianz Deutscher Demokraten)	Germany	2016	Turkish diaspora rights, conservative-populist, pro-Erdogan alignment	None (contested local and federal elections)	2017 (~0.2%), 2021 (~0.1%)
Italia Plurale	Italy	2023	Local civic list, minority rights, integration-focused	None (3% in Monfalcone local elections)	2023

84 Oshri, O. Muslims Vote Choice: Exclusion and Group Voting in Europe. Cogitatio Press. 2025. 1.

85 Edo, A., Giesing, Y., Öztunc, J. & Poutvaara, P. 'Immigration and Electoral Support for the Far Left and the Far Right'. CEPII Working Paper No. 2017-20.; Lubbers, M., Otjes, S.P. & Spierings, N. (2023) 'What drives the propensity to vote for ethnic-minority-interest parties?', Acta Politica. 2017.

86 The National, Local elections could undergo 'sea change' with growth of UK Muslim politics, April 2025.

87 Foreign Policy, Erdogan’s Long Arm in Europe, May 2019

88 Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bündnis für Innovation & Gerechtigkeit, 2024.

89 Zeit Online, , Sollen Deutschtürken jetzt AfD wählen? , August 2017.

90 Stadt Herne Website, Ergebnisse-BW-2017-und-2013.pdf

91 Wikipedia (2022) „Nuance Party”.

92 Nyheterna, Här försvarar Nyans partiledare IS-ättervändarna, February 2022

93 Lubbers, M., Otjes, S.P. & Spierings, N. 'What drives the propensity to vote for ethnic-minority-interest parties?', Acta Politica. 2023.

94 BESA Center. Dutch Muslim Parties: A New Development in Islamization. 2018.

95 Euronews, Islam Party stirs controversy ahead of Belgian elections , April 2018.

96 Franceinfo, Union des démocrates musulmans français : quel est ce parti derrière la 34e liste aux européennes ? 2018, Brill, "SPAIN - Jordi Moreras. Muslim Populations". In Jocelyne Cesari (ed.) Muslims in the West after 9/11: Religion, Politics and Law, 2010.

97 El Mundo, Coalición por Melilla: origen e ideología del partido sospechoso de fraude en el voto por correo, 2023

DENK	Netherlands	2015	Center-left, pro-minority, anti-discrimination, socially conservative on some issues	Dutch Parliament (Tweede Kamer)	2017, 2021
NIDA	Netherlands	2013	Islamic-inspired, progressive-left, anti-discrimination	Rotterdam and The Hague city councils	2014, 2018 (municipal)
Islam Democraten	Netherlands	2006	Islamic democratic, local civic-focused	The Hague city council	2006–2022 (multiple local elections)
Partido Andalusi	Spain	2023	Islamic humanist, multiculturalist, pan-Muslim rights	None (local attempts in Andalusia)	2023 (no seats won)
Nyans	Sweden	2019	Pro-Muslim minority rights, socially conservative, anti-Islamophobia	No parliamentary seats; 25–30% in some local districts (e.g., Rinkeby, Malmö)	2022 (not elected nationally)

5.2 The Muslim vote has shifted left-wing parties from liberal values

The influence of Muslim votes on left-leaning parties is causing weakening of core liberal values

Despite representing only 5% of the electorate, the Muslim vote has displayed remarkable influence nation-wide. The consistent left-leaning tendency of this vote has led left-wing parties across Europe to adapt their platforms and messaging to attract this segment of the electorate. This electoral strategy has driven significant changes in policies and rhetoric, especially on themes traditionally championed by center-left movements: secularism, universalist values, feminism, and LGBTQ rights. Foreign policy, particularly positions on the Israeli Palestinian conflict, has also shifted dramatically over the past two decades.

In France, two “irreconcilable lefts”

These shifts can be framed as ‘dilemmas of inclusion’: how to attract and retain Muslim voters, whose preferences on social issues often diverge from the traditional progressive consensus.⁹⁸ This phenomenon has been widely debated in France, where the concept of *‘deux gauches irréconciliables’* (‘two irreconcilable lefts’) was popularized by former Prime Minister Manuel Valls.⁹⁹ He described the growing rift between a secular, universalist, social-democratic left — historically represented by the Parti Socialiste (PS) — and a rising identity-focused left represented today by Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s La France Insoumise (LFI). This newer current often emphasizes anti-racism and minority defense, even when it conflicts with the principles of *laïcité* or gender equality.

This rift has been made visible through key political events. The 2019 ‘March against Islamophobia’ saw LFI, and anti-racism groups participate enthusiastically, while the PS refused to join. Europe Écologie Les Verts (EELV) was internally split on whether to support the march.¹⁰⁰ The ideological cleavage was further highlighted by diverging positions on the Islamic headscarf. What was once seen by feminists as a symbol of female oppression, and condemned by the French left in the 1990s, is now defended by LFI and parts of the far left as an expression of personal freedom and religious identity. Today, LFI regularly denounces ‘Islamophobia’ as a systemic problem within French institutions and society.¹⁰¹

Despite a less important secularist tradition, northern European countries have experienced similar evolution from their left-wing parties under the influence of Muslim communities.

In Germany, a difficult compromise between liberal values and Islam

Germany, though lacking a republican secular tradition like France, has undergone a similar evolution regarding religious symbols in public institutions. In 2005, Berlin enacted a ‘Neutrality Law’ (*Neutralitätsgesetz*), which banned religious symbols such as the Islamic headscarf for public employees, especially teachers. However, in 2023, this ban was effectively repealed after multiple court rulings, including decisions by the Federal Constitutional Court and the Federal Labor Court, deemed such blanket bans discriminatory against Muslim women.^{102 103}

The debate on gender-segregated public services also entered political discourse. SPD candidate Peer Steinbrück famously endorsed the idea of gender-segregated swimming hours during the 2013 federal election campaign, stating it was a reasonable accommodation for conservative Muslim communities.¹⁰⁴ Broader policy adaptations have followed: both the SPD and Greens have advocated the institutionalization of Islam through the recognition of Islamic religious instruction in public schools and continued state support for mosque associations such as DITIB and ZMD.¹⁰⁵ They also championed dual citizenship reform, passed in 2024, which removed the requirement to renounce one’s original nationality, benefiting primarily Turkish and Arab residents.¹⁰⁶ At the municipal level, left-wing governments in Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen have recognized Islamic religious holidays like Eid and have directed subsidies toward Muslim community organizations.¹⁰⁷

In the Netherlands, the battle for minority vote

In the Netherlands, tensions within the political left over immigration and religious accommodation were starkly illustrated by the rise and assassination of Pim Fortuyn in 2002. Fortuyn criticized the tolerance of illiberal practices within Islam (particularly regarding women’s rights and homosexuality) by left-wing parties. His assassination by a left-wing activist shocked the country and contributed to a rightward shift in national discourse.

In the mid-2000s, the Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) hardened its positions on integration and security. However, growing pressure from minority communities eventually led to internal dissent and the foundation of DENK in 2014 by two former PvdA MPs of Turkish origin. DENK promotes multiculturalism but adopts more conservative stances on social issues like LGBTQ rights and arranged marriage.¹⁰⁸ Despite DENK’s emergence, PvdA later revised its own platform to include policies like making Eid a public holiday and recording ethnic profiling in policing.

The Netherlands’ tradition of ‘pillarization’, the coexistence of distinct religious and cultural communities, has facilitated the political rise of Islam. However, a concrete break from secular

norms was visible in Amsterdam, where the PvdA continued funding the Islamic University of Rotterdam for years despite reports of homophobic instruction. Only after media exposure did the (liberal) Education Minister revoke its accreditation in 2020.¹⁰⁹ To date, DENK remains excluded from national coalition negotiations, seen by many mainstream parties as too community-focused or ideologically rigid.¹¹⁰

In Belgium, balancing rigid secularism and communitarian realities

In Belgium, the Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste*, PS), historically rooted in secularism and influenced by the French republican model, has been increasingly accused of developing clientelist networks within Muslim communities, particularly in urban strongholds like Brussels. A notable example is former PS mayor of Molenbeek, Philippe Moureaux, who despite passing the 1991 law affirming state secularism (*loi sur la laïcité*), was later criticized for turning a blind eye to Islamist networks in exchange for electoral support from the growing Muslim population. These criticisms intensified following the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, several of whose perpetrators had ties to Molenbeek.¹¹¹

While the PS maintains a broadly secular and feminist platform, it has struggled to reconcile these principles with demands from its Muslim electorate. One major point of tension has been the public visibility of religious symbols, especially the Islamic headscarf. Originally banned for all public employees, the PS and Ecolo parties later supported proposals to limit the ban only to high-ranking public officials, allowing lower-level employees to wear religious attire.¹¹² Additionally, the “Ligue de l’Enseignement”, close to the PS party, has supported or tolerated policies allowing halal meals in public schools and accommodations for Islamic religious holidays such as Eid.¹¹³

Foreign policy stances have also evolved. In recent years, several PS figures, backed by party resolutions, have called for Belgium to recognize the State of Palestine, a position strongly supported by many Muslim voters.¹¹⁴ While the PS’s national manifesto has not undergone major doctrinal change, its local posture has increasingly reflected the concerns of Muslim constituencies.

98 Roy, O. La Laïcité à l’épreuve de l’islam, Paris, Seuil, 2005.

99 Le Monde, Quand Manuel Valls assumait « des positions irréconciliables à gauche. December 2016.

100 Libération, Marche contre l’islamophobie : défections en série, Novembre 2019.

101 Le Monde, French left divided over the term ‘Islamophobia’ after the murder of a Muslim in a mosque, May 2025

102 CNE News, Federal Court Germany rejects headscarf ban for teacher, 2023

103 CNE News, Federal Court Germany rejects headscarf ban for teacher, June 2023

104 Deutsche Welle, Burkini backlash, September 2013

105 Deutscher Bundestag, Islamischer Religionsunterricht an Schulen. Verfassungsrechtliche Rahmenbedingungen und Umsetzung in den Bundesländern (WD 8 - 3000 - 065/21), 2021

106 Bundestag, Reform des Staatsangehörigkeitsrechts, January 2024.

107 Forum Recht Islam, No class on Islamic holidays

108 BESA Center, Dutch Muslim Parties: A New Development in Islamization, 2021

109 ad.nl, Rector universiteit: Stem niet op homo’s en Armeniërs, 2015.

110 Politics and Governance, Caretaker Conventions in Crisis Times: Dutch Government, 2024, 11.

111 Le Monde, A Molenbeek, les failles du clientélisme communautaire, November 2015.

112 RTBF, Georges-Louis Bouchez sur le voile : «Si on autorise les convictions, on doit toutes les autoriser et cela va être invivable», June 2021.

113 Bénédicte Linard, Tout le monde à la cantine, Ligue de l’Enseignement, February 2014

114 Le Soir, Reconnaissance de l’État palestinien: la gauche belge en première ligne, May 2021.

Symbolic shifts have also occurred. It is now common for PS officials to participate in Ramadan events and public Iftar dinners alongside Muslim voters. This marks a broader cultural shift in Belgium’s left-wing parties toward a more religion-accommodating posture, particularly in municipalities where Muslim voters represent a decisive share of the electorate.¹¹⁵

In Italy, a counterexample

In contrast to countries like France, Belgium, or the Netherlands, Italy has not experienced a strong emergence of Muslim political influence at national level.

Historically, Italy has had a weaker tradition of multicultural

accommodation in public policy. The Italian left, including the Partito Democratico (PD) and the now-defunct Five Star Movement (M5S), has supported general immigrant rights but has not substantially integrated Islamic demands into their political platforms. However, in major urban centers like Milan, Rome, and Bologna, left-wing mayors have supported mosque construction projects, halal food access in schools, and interfaith dialogue.^{116 117}

The Italian model so far remains more assimilationist than communitarian. Political parties on the left engage with Muslim voters through general social policy platforms, but they have yet to incorporate direct religious or cultural recognition in their national manifestos.

5.3 The Muslim vote has created local leftist strongholds

The concentration of Muslim populations, their important tendency to back left leaning parties and the specificity of their traditions and political expectations has led to the development of left-leaning Muslim strongholds in all studied countries. Most often, these strongholds are suburban neighborhoods of major cities, and foster real “parallel societies”.

- **France:** Seine-Saint-Denis department stands out as a stronghold with one of the highest Muslim populations in the country, estimated at over 30%.¹¹⁸ Cities like Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers, La Courneuve, and Montreuil consistently deliver between 60% and 80% of the vote to left-wing parties such as La France Insoumise (LFI) and the Socialist Party. In Saint-Denis, LFI won over 65% in the 2022 legislative elections, while Jean-Luc Mélenchon received more than 70% in the first round of the 2022 presidential election.¹¹⁹ In Marseille, districts like the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 15th arrondissements (where Muslim populations can exceed 40%) are similarly dominated by LFI, with the 3rd arrondissement recording over 65% for Mélenchon.¹²⁰ In Lyon, suburbs such as Vénissieux and Vaulx-en-Velin,

with dense North African communities, report over 60% support for the left. Vaulx-en-Velin’s mayor is from the Socialist Party.¹²¹ In Toulouse, the Mirail district, also Muslim-majority, gave 55–60% to LFI in 2022.¹²²

- **Germany,** Berlin’s Neukölln and Wedding neighborhoods have one third of Muslim population, mainly Turkish and Arab. In 2021, SPD and Greens collectively received over 60% of the vote in these areas.¹²³ Neukölln’s council includes multiple SPD and Die Linke representatives of Turkish descent. In Mannheim, the neighborhoods of Jungbusch and Neckarstadt-West—with Muslim populations around 25–30%—remain SPD strongholds.¹²⁴
- **Netherlands:** In 2018 local elections, in Rotterdam, DENK gained 37% in Feyenoord and 18% in Delfshaven in 2022, while Labour retains a shrinking base.¹²⁵ In The Hague’s Schilderbuurt, DENK polls over 35%, sustained by high turnout from Turkish and Moroccan voters.¹²⁶
- **Belgium:** the Brussels districts of Molenbeek, Anderlecht, and Schaerbeek (where Muslims are estimated to

represent 40% of the population) consistently vote for the Socialist Party (PS) and Ecolo-Groen.¹²⁷ In 2018, PS received over 30% in Molenbeek.¹²⁸ In Schaerbeek and Anderlecht, Ecolo and PS alternate leadership based on strong immigrant support. In Antwerp’s Borgerhout district, PVDA and Socialists dominate, supported largely by Moroccan and Turkish voters.¹²⁹

- **Sweden:** Malmö’s Rosengård gave 28% to the Nuance Party in 2022.¹³⁰ Previously, Social Democrats received 70–75% here. Stockholm’s Rinkeby-Kista district, where over 70% are foreign-born (mainly Somali and Iraqi), saw SAP win over 30%, while Nuance reached 24% in 2022.¹³¹ In Gothenburg, Angered and Bergsjön, which are over 50% foreign-born, are controlled by Social Democrats and the Left Party, receiving over 60% in some precincts.¹³²
- **Spain:** the North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are unique cases. Here, Muslims (mostly Berber origin) form the majority. Local Muslim-oriented parties like Coalición por Melilla (CpM) and Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Ciudadanía (MDyC) win 30–35% of the vote and play essential roles in city governance, often allying with national left-wing formations.¹³³
- **In Italy:** Bologna’s Bolognina neighborhood remains a leftist stronghold and is home to growing Moroccan and Pakistani communities. The left dominates here despite low turnout due to naturalization limits. In Turin’s Barriera di Milano and Milan’s Quarto Oggiaro, similar patterns occur with visible Muslim communities voting left where eligible, although citizenship restrictions reduce impact.¹³⁴

FOCUS 8 French survey on young Muslims’ opinions in 2020: radicalization of ideas does not affect only a minority

In a major Ifop-Institut Montaigne survey conducted in 2019–2020 with a representative sample of over 1,000 self-declared French Muslims, including a subsample of individuals aged 15–25, the findings revealed a strong divergence from mainstream French values. Among respondents aged 18–25, 57% stated that respect for Islamic Sharia law took precedence over the laws of the French Republic; by contrast, 42% of Muslims overall expressed that view. At the national level, the study noted a deep rift between religious conservatism among younger Muslims and the secular tradition of the French state.^{135 136}

On LGBTQ+ issues, 63% of French Muslims in 2019 viewed homosexuality as morally unacceptable, significantly higher than among French Catholics or secular respondents. Attitudes toward LGBT inclusion among Muslim youth aged 18–25 were particularly conservative, with less than half supporting legal tolerance of homosexuality, and very few backing same-sex marriage or public LGBTQ+ expression.¹³⁷ In contrast, broader French society showed overwhelming support for gay rights: between 79% and 84% of general respondents supported same-sex marriage and LGBTQ+ equality as of 2019–2023, with only 14–23% opposed.¹³⁸

These data suggest that young French Muslims are significantly more likely to place Sharia above secular republican values and to reject liberal social norms regarding sexuality. This divergence is especially pronounced among younger respondents, indicating a generational and cultural gap within the Muslim population compared to both older Muslims and the broader society.

115 DHnet.be, Ramadan : plus de 500 personnes se sont réunies pour un iftar dans l’église Saint Jean-Baptiste de Molenbeek, April 2023.

116 US Department of State, Italy 2019 International Religious Freedom Report, 2019

117 The Brookings Institution, Muslims in the West and the rise of the new populists: The case of Italy, 2019

118 IFOP, Le vote des électeurs confessionnels au 1er tour de l’élection présidentielle, April 2022.

119 Le Monde, «Résultats des élections législatives 2022 en Seine-Saint-Denis,» June 2022

120 Made in Marseille, #Marseille - Jean Luc Mélenchon en tête du 1er tour de l’élection..., 2022

121 Lyon Capitale, ‘Résultats électoraux à Vaulx-en-Velin’, 2022.

122 L’Opinion, Législatives à Toulouse : quelles sont les tendances par circonscription, May 2024

123 Council of Europe website, Intercultural Cities Programme, Berlin Neukölln, Germany - Intercultural City.

124 Official Results, bundeswahlleiterin.de, 2021

125 Gemeente Rotterdam Uitslagen, Feijenoord, 2022

126 Gemeente Den Haag, Uitslagen Gemeenteraadsverkiezing 2022 – Wijken/Schildersbuurt, March 2022:

127 Brussels Times, Local Elections: Here are the results for all 19 Brussels communes, October 2024

128 L BRU2018 Elections Website, Molenbeek-Saint-Jean - PS sp.a., 2018

129 Stichting Gerrit Kreveld, Battlefield Antwerp: How Socialists Lost City Hall, 2012

130 Anadolu Agency, Sweden’s immigrants turning their backs on country’s mainstream political parties, September 2022

131 SVT, Valresultat 2022 för Spånga 21 Rinkeby C i kommunvalet, September 2022

132 SVT, Valresultat 2022 för Östra Göteborg, Bergsjön Södra i riksdagsvalet, September 2022

133 RTVE, Melilla: Resultados Elecciones Autonómicas 2023, May 2023

134 University research paper, Il caso della costruzione della moschea di via Urbino a Torino, 2011 ; UIL (Italian Labor Union), Le elezioni e il peso del voto musulmano, February 2018

135 Institut Montaigne / Ifop, “Fractures françaises 2023 : une société désenchantée ?”, 2020.

136 Le Figaro, Sondage : les jeunes musulmans plus radicaux que leurs aînés, October 2020.

137 Ifop, Le regard des Français sur l’homosexualité et la place des LGBT dans la société, June 2019

138 Eurobarometer 2019, Discrimination in the EU, European Commission.

Current policy responses through massive public expenses: LAW ENFORCEMENT, COUNTER-RADICALIZATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

Current policy responses to NGZs, often referred to as “priority” zones in many policies are characterized by massive public expenditures, which mostly fail to deliver proportional results. These policies cover a very wide range of public services to try and fight high crime, low integration, employment and literacy. Policies aimed at NGZs focus on security doctrines including intelligence operations, deradicalization programs, specialized policing and investigation but are undermined by cultural resistance, and inefficiencies. This security approach is complemented by education, housing and cultural policies.

National integration models, whether assimilationist or restrictive, tend to ignore the cultural and ideological barriers posed by certain immigrant populations. EU-level policies suffer from social ideology and misalignment with security objectives. This section attempts to give an overview and analysis of existing policies and their impact. However, the lack of proper identification and analysis of these zones, and often lack of specific statistics, makes precise impact analysis difficult.

6.1 Law Enforcement, Counter-Radicalization, and Intelligence Policies

Over the past two to three decades, European police forces have undergone significant transformations in both doctrine and equipment to address rising violence and defiance, particularly in urban high-risk areas. Germany’s policing in areas like Berlin’s Neukölln has adopted predictive and intelligence-led strategies to counter radicalization, as outlined in the 2016 *Strategie der Bundesregierung zur Extremismusprävention*¹³⁹. Equipment has also evolved, with German police in high-risk zones like North Rhine-Westphalia trialing chain-mail vests to protect against knife attacks¹⁴⁰, reflecting a sharp increase (around 10% a year since 2022¹⁴¹) in such incidents from 2015 to 2023. These changes, driven by increasing crime and social unrest in no-go zones, highlight a broader trend toward robust policing methods across Europe.

Overview of Security Doctrines in Urban High-Risk Areas

European states use distinct doctrines to police high-risk urban areas, each with its own legal labels and toolkits.

- **Italy** coordinates counter-terror policy and urban risk management centrally via the *Comitato di Analisi Strategica Antiterrorismo (CASA)*¹⁴², a permanent round-table of police and intelligence services chaired by the head of the Central Directorate for Prevention Police. Its mandate is information-sharing, risk assessment and operational coordination during terrorist threats.

¹³⁹ Federal Government of Germany, *Strategie der Bundesregierung zur Extremismusprävention und Demokratieförderung*, 2016

¹⁴⁰ Tactical Tales, *Why Are German Police Wearing Chain Mail*, 2025, Youtube.

¹⁴¹ A2 CNN, *Germany: Number of knife attacks increases significantly*, May 2025

¹⁴² Italian Interior Ministry, *Il Comitato di Analisi Strategica Antiterrorismo*

- **Germany's** model is federal: each Länder police leads local operations while the *Bundeskriminalamt* (BKA) acts as the national central office supporting and coordinating cross-border/major crime and, for international terrorism, exercising limited preventive powers where dangers are inter-state or on request from a Land; Berlin additionally designates “*kriminalitätsbelastete Orte*” (kbO) such as the Hermannstraße/Bahnhof Neukölln area to enable enhanced stop-and-search¹⁴³.
- Sweden's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2022) stresses “prevent–avert–protect–manage,” while policing of “*utsatta områden*” (vulnerable areas) is guided by national situation reports (59 such areas in 2023). Brå (2024/2025) finds shootings 9 times higher and bombings 6 times higher in the most socially deprived neighborhoods than in the least deprived.¹⁴⁴
- **France** relies on a centralized posture: the DGSI leads domestic intelligence and counterterrorism, and the inter-ministerial *Plan Vigipirate* sets national alert levels and protection measures (e.g., “*Urgence attentat*” activation in Oct 2023, updated Dec 2024). France has launched “Place Nette operations” in 2023, that are large-scale police crackdowns in no-go zones aimed at dismantling drug trafficking networks and restoring public order, characterized by heavy media coverage and the deployment of significant police forces but also administrative obstruction measures and inspections by state services targeting suspicious businesses.
- **Belgium's** Plan R institutionalizes a multi-disciplinary approach through local security cells (CSIL-R) and “*taskforces locales*” that convene police, prosecutors and administrative services to follow individual cases and share information on radicalization at the municipal level.¹⁴⁵
- **The Netherlands** implements the NCTV's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2022–2026 (a broad mix of preventive, repressive and curative measures), complemented municipally in Rotterdam by a specific approach to Radicalisation, Extremism and Polarisation (REP) and wider social-safety programs.¹⁴⁶

Intelligence-Gathering in Immigrant-Origin and Radicalized Networks

Intelligence operations targeting immigrant-origin and radicalized networks vary across Europe but face common challenges, including community distrust and legal constraints. In France, the *DGSI* employs extensive surveillance, including wiretapping and informant networks, in areas like Marseille's northern districts. A 2023 *Ministère de l'Intérieur* report estimated that 150 urban zones are under Islamist influence, requiring constant monitoring¹⁴⁷. Germany's *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (BfV) tracks Salafist networks in cities like Duisburg, using undercover agents and digital surveillance.

Sweden's *Säpo* focuses on monitoring foreign fighters and their families in NGZs like Rinkeby, Belgium's *OCAM* (Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis) collaborates with local police in Molenbeek, but articles highlight inefficiencies due to fragmented intelligence-sharing¹⁴⁸. Italy's *AISI* (Internal Intelligence and Security Agency) targets mosques and cultural centers in Milan, with a 2019 *ISPI* report noting increased radicalization in prison settings.¹⁴⁹ These efforts, while sophisticated, are hampered by cultural barriers and the rapid evolution of radical networks.

Case Studies of Counterterrorism Successes

Counterterrorism successes in NGZs demonstrate the potential of targeted operations but also their limitations. In France, the 2016 arrest of a terrorist cell in Argenteuil, linked to the Islamic State, prevented a planned attack on Paris. The *DGSI* used informant networks and intercepted communications, as detailed in a 2017 *Le Monde* report.¹⁵⁰ In Germany, the 2018 disruption of a ricin bomb plot in Cologne, led by the *BKA*, relied on a tip from members of the community.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Belgium's 2015 Verviers raid, coordinated by *OCAM*, neutralized a jihadist cell planning attacks.¹⁵²

However, these successes are often reactive rather than preventive. A 2023 *Europol TE-SAT* report noted that while many foiled plots in 2022 involved NGZ-linked individuals, the persistent threat from lone actors remains unaddressed.¹⁵³ In Sweden, the 2017 Stockholm truck attack,

despite prior intelligence, exposed gaps in monitoring NGZ residents.¹⁵⁴ These cases underscore that while tactical victories are achievable, systemic issues in NGZs persist.

Deradicalization programs: costly models but no proved effectiveness

In order to thwart terrorism effectively, deradicalization programs aim to reintegrate radicalized individuals but face significant challenges, particularly in prison settings where radicalization is rampant.

In the Netherlands, prison/interagency work has been formalised (e.g., MAR MultiAgency Approach to Rehabilitation of Radicalised Detainees), and the Justice Ministry commissioned an evaluation of deradicalization / disengagement interventions in custody. At local level, the first national evaluation of NCTV “*Versterkingsgelden*” (2020 - 2021) by RAND/WODC concluded that while municipalities and practitioners judged projects useful, effects could not be verified with available designs and data, an explicit call for stronger evaluation practice.¹⁵⁵

In France, after the failure of the standalone center at Pontourny (closed in 2017), policy pivoted to prisonbased assessment/management via special units for radicalized inmates and community prevention, yet public reporting remains largely descriptive rather than outcomebased and academic work highlights practical limits of the prison approach.¹⁵⁶ France's *Programme de Prévention de la Radicalisation* in prisons, launched in 2018, segregates radicalized inmates but has led to increased radicalization in isolation units.¹⁵⁷

Austria built out Justice Ministry coordination unit (KED) and a national action plan. The Court of Audit (2024) noted that several planned measures (e.g., systematic staff training and inmate programs) were not yet fully implemented at the time of review, illustrating the gap between design and verified results.

FOCUS 9 When the State becomes an accomplice: The Pakistani Grooming Gang Scandal and Institutional Silence in the UK

The Pakistani grooming gang scandal in the UK, particularly in no-go zones like Rotherham, Rochdale, and Oldham, reveals a disturbing pattern of state complicity through silence and inaction, enabling the systemic sexual exploitation of vulnerable girls, predominantly white and working-class, between 1997 and 2013.

The 2014 *Jay Report* documented that at least 1,400 children in Rotherham alone were abused by predominantly British-Pakistani men, with local authorities and police aware of the issue since the early 1990s but failing to act due to fears of being labeled racist or disrupting community cohesion.¹⁵⁸ A 2025 Casey Report confirmed that authorities deliberately downplayed the ethnic dimension of these crimes, with two-thirds of perpetrator ethnicity data unrecorded, hampering effective intervention.¹⁵⁹ This institutional reluctance, driven by political correctness, allowed gangs to operate with impunity in NGZs, where cultural segregation and weak policing created fertile ground for such crimes, effectively rendering the state an accomplice through its failure to protect victims.¹⁶⁰

The role of intelligence agencies and local authorities further complicates this narrative, suggesting a form of passive collaboration through negligence or suppression of evidence. Reports from *The Times* in 2011 revealed that Rotherham Council and police ignored multiple whistleblower accounts, including those from care home managers identifying Pakistani taxi drivers as perpetrators, with some councils even attempting to silence journalists like Andrew Norfolk to protect community relations.¹⁶¹ A 2025 *Le Monde* article noted that intelligence failures extended to inadequate data collection and reluctance to pursue leads in NGZs, where community leaders exerted disproportionate influence, discouraging robust investigations.¹⁶² This systemic cover-up, compounded by the absence of a national inquiry until public pressure in 2025, underscores how state institutions, prioritizing multicultural ideals over child safety, enabled the persistence of these heinous crimes in NGZs, betraying the very communities they were meant to serve.

143 Berlin Police Website, <https://www.berlin.de/polizei/polizeimeldungen/fakten-hintergruende/artikel.1078268.php>

144 Bra.se, Var inträffar skjutningar och sprängningar?, June 2025

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151 Deutsche Welle, Ricin plot bigger than initially suspected, June 2018

152 RTBF, Cellule terroriste de Verviers: jusqu'à 16 ans de prison pour les dirigeants, July 2016

153 Europol, European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2023, 2023

154 Stockholm University, Failed Integration, Alienation and the Rise of Homegrown Violent Islamist Extremism in Sweden, August 2017

155 Rand, owards an evidence-based approach to tackling radicalisation and extremism, December 2022

156 Le Monde, Fermeture de l'unique centre de déradicalisation de France, July 2017

157 Council of Europe, Prison : Terreau de radicalisation et d'extrémisme violent ?, 2018

158 Jay, A. Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, 2014. 1.

159 Audit of Group-based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Baroness Casey, 2025. 8.

160 The Telegraph, How the Grooming Gangs Scandal Was Covered Up, January 2025

161 The Times, Revealed: Conspiracy of Silence on UK Sex Gangs, Andrew Norfolk, January 2011

162 Le Monde, Le Royaume-Uni lance de nouvelles enquêtes sur le scandale des « grooming gangs » February 2025

6.2 Development and integration Policies

Comparative Overview of National Integration Models

All European countries tend to deploy their own “NGZ policies”, similarly focused on integration and urban environment but showing notable differences in priorities. Below are 4 examples of such policies.

France & Sweden: high spending with low requirements

In France, NGZs are often designated as *quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville* (QPV), numbering 1,362 areas with about 5.3 million residents in 2024. Funding is delivered through “Programme 147”, which executed €524 million in 2024¹⁶³ for measures such as *cités éducatives* (education support networks), *adultes-relais* (community mediator) and employment schemes¹⁶⁴. The National Urban Renewal Program (NPNRU) finances physical regeneration; by December 2024, 448 projects had been validated, representing over €43 billion in total investment with €13.9 billion from ANRU, earmarked for demolitions, reconstructions, rehabilitations, and more than 1,000 public facilities¹⁶⁵.

In Sweden, police identified 59 vulnerable areas in 2023, with Rosengård (south of Amiralsgatan) in Malmö designated as a *particularly vulnerable area*¹⁶⁶. National integration and gender equality funding amounted to SEK 4 billion in 2024, mainly municipal compensation for refugee reception (SEK 2.7Bn) and targeted measures like early interventions for asylum seekers.¹⁶⁷

Austria & Denmark: more work-oriented and demanding integration frameworks

In Austria, the *Integrationsgesetz* (2017) obliges refugees and certain migrants to complete values-and-orientation courses alongside German-language requirements, structured into the Integration Agreement’s Module 1 (A2 level) and Module 2 (B1 level)¹⁶⁸. The Integration Year (IJG), managed with the labour

office (AMS), provides up to 12 months of German instruction, competence assessment, career orientation, and on-the-job training¹⁶⁹. Despite these instruments, unemployment among foreign nationals was 9.6% in 2023, compared with 5.3% among Austrian citizens¹⁷⁰.

In Denmark, the 2018 plan “*Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund – Ingen ghettos i 2030*” (one Denmark without parallel societies – no ghettos in 2030) introduced housing transformations (demolition, sale, conversion), mandatory flexible letting, stricter municipal allocation rules, compulsory daycare for children in designated areas, and tougher policing in “hard ghetto” zones¹⁷¹. The 2021 agreement added *forebyggelsesområder* (prevention areas), with funding of DKK 10 billion from the National Building Fund (2018 - 2026) and DKK 500 million for renovations¹⁷². For *omdannelsesområder*, development plans must reduce the share of family social housing to ≤40% by 2030 unless exempted.

When measured, active policies have not managed to reduce crime or poverty

Despite the lack of official data on the impact of these policies, a few studies have been conducted (especially in France), showing little to no impact of the policies detailed in this section. In addition, the current state of priority zones (akin to NGZs), as detailed in sections II and III, after almost a decade of intense programs makes a compelling argument for their failure. Below are a few examples of officially documented shortcomings.

- **France’s** national observatory (*Observatoire national de la politique de la ville*) shows that violent and sexual offences remain markedly higher in priority neighbourhoods (QPV) overall differentials in several offence categories have narrowed since 2016 but persist¹⁷³. A 2022 *Cour des Comptes* communication on employment in QPV concluded that the goal of halving the employment gap by 2020 was not reached, despite increased spending. It attributed

weak results to poor tailoring of instruments to QPV needs and inefficiencies in deployment.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, the 2020 *Cour des comptes’* thematic report on QPV “attractiveness” likewise found little progress over a decade despite substantial resources, again pointing to structural limits in achieving socioeconomic convergence. There is clear evidence of physical renewal and some narrowing of selected crime gaps, but no strong, causal evidence that the policy has closed core socioeconomic deficits or normalised victimisation risks.¹⁷⁵

- **Sweden** institutions provide limited data on the impact of their policy on vulnerable areas. However, a 2023 police update indicates a marginal reshuffling of the list (6 removed, 4 added) rather than outcome convergence with national averages.¹⁷⁶
- Although **Denmark** 2018 policy is still fairly recent and sets objectives for 2030, interim datapoints exist and are mixed: the annual list of “*parallelsamfund*” has fluctuated (up in 2023 and down in 2024), showing status changes but no impact on crime and poverty.¹⁷⁷

6.3 European Policies

When studying European policies towards no go zones, it is striking that NGZs are identified and often addressed by specific policies (urban, integration, education) backed by important EU fundings. However, the security and cultural aspect of NGZs is mostly ignored and treated separately. Considering a substantial proportion of drug trafficking and terrorist attacks are rooted in these zones, it would stand to reason to recommend a more unified policy towards those neighborhoods.

EU, Ideological, Social and Urban Policy Misalignment with Security Objectives

The European Union’s social and urban policies, influenced by a progressive ideology emphasizing inclusion and equity, allocate substantial funds to sensitive urban areas yet these policies are misaligned with the realities of these territories, where violence, crime, and misuse of public resources persist. The EU Urban Agenda and Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) directs €1.5 billion annually toward integration, prioritizing infrastructure and social programs over security.¹⁷⁸ This disconnect reflects an ideological commitment to social aid that overlooks the entrenched cultural and security challenges in these areas, resulting in inefficient resource allocation and minimal societal impact. This is even more regrettable as cultural differences, and criminal activities undermine the effectiveness of implemented policies. Several *Cour des Comptes* reports (mentioned previously) and French

Senate Report from November 2007 denounce credits being questionably managed in favor of local associations in these areas.¹⁷⁹

Europol and Transnational Counter-Radicalization Instruments

Europol plays an important role in coordinating counter-radicalization efforts through the *European Counter Terrorism Centre* (ECTC), established post-2015 Charlie Hebdo attacks. The ECTC facilitates intelligence-sharing and operational support, with a 2023 *TE-SAT* report noting 120 cross-border operations targeting NGZ-linked networks.¹⁸⁰ The *Radicalization Awareness Network* (RAN) promotes best practices, but a 2021 *RAN Conclusion Paper* criticized its lack of enforceable mandates, limiting its impact.¹⁸¹ These instruments, while robust, are constrained by national sovereignty: the fight against terrorism stays a national prerogative.

Lack of Harmonized EU Definition and Risk Classification for NGZs

The absence of a unified EU definition for NGZs hampers coordinated responses. As example, France’s *quartiers prioritaires* focus on socioeconomic metrics, while Sweden’s *utsatta områden* emphasize crime and radicalization, creating discrepancies in risk assessment. This lack of standardization undermines EU-wide strategies.

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164 Travail-emploi.gouv.fr, Les activités d’adultes-relai, 2021

165 Gouvernement français, Rapport annuel de performances - Programme 147, 2024

166 Swedish Police Website, <https://polisen.se/om-polisen/medborgarlotfen-och-lokal-samverkan/medborgarlotfen/skane-lan/malmo-rosengard/>

167 Swedish Parliament Website, https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-och-lagar/dokument/betankande/utgiftsomrade-13-integration-och-jamstalldhet_hb01au1/

168 Austrian Government Website, <https://www.migration.gv.at/de/leben-und-arbeiten-in-oesterreich/rahmenbedingungen-der-integration/integrationsvereinbarung>

169 Public Employment Service, Integration Year

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171 Government of Denmark, *Ét Danmark uden parallelsamfund*, March 2018

172 Resinformation Website, Bill on social housing, Mars 2021

173 ONPV, Evolution des infractions, victimes et mis en causes entre 2016 et 2022, 2023

174 Cour des Comptes, Les dispositifs en faveur de l’emploi des habitants des QPV de la politique de la ville, July 2022

175 Cour des Comptes, L’évaluation de l’attractivité des quartiers prioritaires, 2020

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178 European Commission, Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund - Performance

179 Sénat Français, Enquête de la Cour des Comptes relative aux crédits d’intervention de la politique de la ville

180 European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2023, Europol, 2023

181 European Commission, The Changing Landscape of Polarisation, Radicalisation and Extremism, 2021

Border Control Reconfiguration and the Limits of Schengen

Schengen's open borders facilitate terrorist mobility, as evidenced by the 2015 Paris attacks, where perpetrators crossed multiple borders, according to a 2016 *Europol* report.¹⁸²

Recent reconfigurations, including temporary border controls in Germany and Austria, have reduced illegal crossings by since 2022, but fail to address internal NGZ threats. The EU's reliance on external border security neglects the internal dynamics fueling radicalization.¹⁸³

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183 Frontex, Annual Risk Analysis 2024, 2024

7

SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATIONS

7.1 Islam and the rise of parallel normative systems

Fatwa, Sharia and rising Islamic Sharia councils

In Western Europe, especially in France and the UK, community-based Islamic structures are establishing parallel normative systems that operate independently of national laws. The most emblematic example is the United Kingdom, where Sharia Councils function as unofficial religious courts. The most well-known, the Islamic Sharia Council in London (established in 1982), handles over 1,000 cases per year, primarily concerning family law (marriage, divorce, inheritance, child custody). Although lacking formal legal authority, these councils wield significant moral power within close-knit Muslim communities: for instance, many women seeking a divorce must obtain not only a civil divorce but also a religious divorce, which only the Islamic council can grant¹⁸⁴.

Investigative reports revealed disturbing practices: women pressured to return to abusive husbands, divorces denied without the husband's consent, and blatant inequality in child custody and property division. Officially, these councils claim to operate within British law, but in practice, they prioritize patriarchal religious norms over civil rights¹⁸⁵.

Other European countries are facing similar issues. In Germany, the concept of Islamic "parallel justice" is controversial. In 2007, a case in Frankfurt became infamous: a German judge, ruling on the divorce of a Moroccan-born woman beaten by her husband, cited Quran verse 4:34 to justify the man's behavior, denying the woman a quick divorce¹⁸⁶. This decision was later overturned, but it caused outrage for referencing Sharia in a European court. Likewise, in 2014, Salafists declared themselves the "Sharia police" and patrolled the streets of Wuppertal, enforcing religious rules. Initially deemed legal by a local court¹⁸⁷, the federal judiciary had to intervene¹⁸⁸.

As part of the broader emergence of religious authorities exercising normative power parallel to that of the state, the intervention of Imam Mohammed Ateb in Dijon in June 2020 is a striking example. During four days of violent clashes between Chechen and North African communities in the Grésilles district, where around 150 to 200 Chechens from across Europe came to retaliate after an alleged assault, the state proved unable to restore order. It was at the Fraternity Mosque in Quetigny that Imam Ateb brought together around fifteen representatives from both communities around a U-shaped table, with tea and pastries, to seal an armistice explicitly "under the seal of religion". This episode illustrates how certain Muslim religious leaders can assume roles that the State institutions are increasingly unable to fulfill.¹⁸⁹

To understand the implications of this change, it is instructive to revisit a historical precedent: the coexistence of plural legal systems in early medieval France. During the Merovingian period (5th–8th centuries), laws were not based on territory but on ethnicity. The Gallo-Romans followed Roman law; the Franks, Salic law; the Burgundians, their own *Lex Burgundionum*. This system, known as personality of law, effectively meant that two people could live in the same village, but be subject to entirely different legal norms, depending on their ancestry.¹⁹⁰ It took more than three centuries for these systems to blend into a coherent national legal framework. In the meantime, they reflected a society deeply divided along cultural and legal lines, a world where law was not the expression of a shared civic identity, but a marker of belonging to a specific group¹⁹¹.

The analogy to today's context is illuminating. In neighborhoods where Islamic arbitration operates, where Islamic dress and gender norms are socially enforced, and where religious schooling and economic self-sufficiency prevail, we observe a re-emergence of legal pluralism, not by ethnicity this time, but by religious identity. It is not a return to the Merovingian past, but it does signal a regression of civic unity.

184 www.islamic-sharia.org, website of The Islamic Sharia Council United Kingdom and Eire.

185 BBC, Secrets of Britain's Sharia Councils, 2013

186 Der Spiegel, German Justice Failures Paving the Way for a Muslim Parallel Society, March 2007

187 Die Wille, 'Sharia Police' acquittal voided, November 2018

188 Die Wille, Court fines alleged 'Shariah police' members, May 2019

189 Marianne, Dijon: entre les communautés tchétchène et maghrébine, armistice surréaliste à la mosquée, June 2020

190 Gaudemet, J. Introduction historique au droit: XIIIe-XXe siècle 2000

191 Rouche, M, Clovis, Fayard, 1996

Islamic laws can pose a threat to civil liberties and human rights

Traditional Islamic norms, when positioned as replacements for civil law, pose a threat to universal freedoms and human rights. Many studies highlight fundamental contradictions between Sharia and democratic principles. In the UK, the rights group *One Law for All* documented how these Islamic tribunals undermine the rule of law and gender equality. In their report *Equal Rights, Not Religious Rights*, they show how these religious courts deny women's rights and erode legal universality¹⁹².

Western European countries have reported persistent challenges in combating culturally regressive practices within some Muslim communities. Female genital mutilation (FGM) remains a concern in France, Belgium, and the UK¹⁹³. An estimated 578,000 women and girls living in Europe have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), based on demographic extrapolations using 2011 census data¹⁹⁴.

7.2 Transformation of urban culture

Unprecedented changes that are foreign to European customs and unfavorable to women

The rise of Islamic norms comes with a transformation of urban life in immigrant-dense neighborhoods, often referred as “no-go zones.” European traditions and customs give way to conservative Muslim practices.

One visible manifestation of this shift is the informal gender segregation of public spaces. In suburbs like Sevran, located in the Seine-Saint-Denis département in France, women have reported being informally excluded from cafés and local restaurants. A widely publicized 2016 report by France 2 captured the reality on camera¹⁹⁸: two women were shamed and implicitly rejected for attempting to sit down in a café largely populated by men. At the same time the report was released, then-Minister for Women's Rights Laurence Rossignol publicly denounced the creeping enforcement of religious norms in public life¹⁹⁹.

Even within Europe, surveys show worrying trends. In France, two national polls (Ifop 2016¹⁹⁵ and 2020¹⁹⁶) reveal that a significant portion of Muslim citizens place religious law above civil law. In 2020, 57% of French Muslims aged 15–25 believed Sharia should take precedence over French law—up from 47% in 2016. This majority opinion among Muslim youth suggests that if they became politically dominant, they might push for Islamic norms to enter national legislation. Already, support for secular laws is low: only 44% of Muslims supported the 2004 ban on religious symbols in public schools, and only 47% supported the 2010 ban on full-face veils—compared to over 90% among atheists.

In summary, the growth of Islamic parallel systems represents a regression of civil liberties and universal rights, particularly affecting women and minorities. Intelligence services have raised the alarm: in France, a recent government report warned of a strategic effort by the Muslim Brotherhood to infiltrate French institutions, such as schools, mosques, and NGOs, in order to undermine secular values and gender equality¹⁹⁷.

Such forms of social pressure are not officially codified but are very real. They represent a form of non-state normative enforcement, sustained by community expectations and social surveillance. These gender norms often reflect specific Islamic teachings about modesty and separation of the sexes, but they are enforced informally, through community mechanisms rather than legal systems.

In several European contexts, pressures rooted in religious prescriptions have translated into harassment of women and restrictions in public space. In France, a Senate report on women's rights documented that religious extremists can “exclude women from public space” and limit women's freedom of movement²⁰⁰. In Sweden, the National Centre on Honour-related Violence and Oppression details such practices as including controls over clothing, social contacts and freedom of movement.²⁰¹ Schools have also been sites of gendered restriction: in the Netherlands, a puberty workbook distributed by the ISBO federation of Islamic schools instructed girls

and boys to avoid eye contact and to reject “non-believer clothing,” prompting national debate and eventual revision²⁰². These trends reflect a broader clash between European civic norms and emerging religious prescriptions, where informal community pressures increasingly challenge women's freedoms and state principles of equality.

In France, while many Muslim women freely choose to wear the hijab, it is equally true that, in some neighborhoods, not wearing the veil is read as an act of rebellion or impiety. Numerous testimonies, including those compiled by Zineb El Rhazoui in *Détruire le fascisme islamique*²⁰³ and in the Institut Montaigne's report on Islamism²⁰⁴ by Hakim El Karoui, describe women facing insults, intimidation, or exclusion for failing to conform to Islamic dress codes. In such contexts, what was once a personal religious expression becomes a communal norm, enforced not by the state but by the collective will of the neighborhood.

In Grenoble, legal and political tensions escalated after the city's ecologist mayor, Éric Piolle, proposed changes to public swimming pool regulations. These included allowing female-only swimming hours and authorizing the wearing of burkinis—a full-body swimsuit often worn by Muslim women. Grenoble, a city with a significant Muslim population, became a national focal point in the ongoing debate over religious accommodation in public life. The mayor framed the proposed changes as a matter of equality and access, arguing that they would enable all women, regardless of faith, to use public facilities without compromising their personal convictions. However, opponents, including national officials and secularist organizations, argued that such accommodations violated France's principle of laïcité (secularism) and undermined the neutrality of public services. In the end, the French supreme administrative court, the Conseil d'État, ruled against such accommodations, affirming the principle that public institutions must remain free from religious particularism.²⁰⁵

These confrontations are not isolated : they are symptomatic of a collision between two normative systems: one built on universal civic principles, the other on religious prescriptions. When religious norms seek to reshape public policy, the state is forced to redefine the boundaries of its neutrality.

FOCUS 10 How a Halal Meat Scandal Exposed France's Parallel Market Risks

Urban transformations linked to parallel community systems also manifest in declining sanitation standards and lax commercial regulation, exposing consumers to serious health risks. In June 2025, a tragedy struck the town of Saint-Quentin (Aisne), where at least 24 people, mostly children, suffered food poisoning after consuming E. coli-contaminated meat. Among them, a 12-year-old girl died from Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), a severe complication caused by this bacterium.²⁰⁶

Four butcher shops and two supermarket meat sections were urgently closed, with health authorities strongly suspecting that the contaminated products originated from halal establishments failing to meet food safety regulations²⁰⁷. In-depth genomic analyses conducted by the Pasteur Institute confirmed the identical strains of bacteria in both the meat and the patients, thereby establishing a direct causal link²⁰⁸.

These incidents paint a troubling picture: halal community shops, sometimes operating under procedures imported from countries with lower sanitary standards, can become vectors of risk for the local population. Beyond the individual tragedy, this highlights a structural problem, the emergence of a parallel food trade that escapes France's strict regulation, potentially undermining collective public safety.

Fear of going out has become more common

The evolving climate in these neighborhoods and, more generally, the rise in perceived insecurity are causing residents to retreat into the private sphere. In France, the feeling of insecurity has steadily increased in recent years, particularly in urban areas. A 2019 survey showed that 53.4% of Île-de-France residents feel unsafe in public spaces²⁰⁹. This feeling is even more prevalent among women, many of whom limit their outings for fear of harassment or assault. In “troubled” neighborhoods, many residents, especially women and the elderly, avoid going

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201 Nationellt Centrum, Vad är hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck? 2024

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209 BFM TV, Ile-de-France: selon une enquête, le sentiment d'insécurité a augmenté en 2019, 2020

out at night, give up using public transportation during certain hours, and restrict their interactions outside the home. This forced retreat weakens urban diversity and collective life: the streets and public spaces are abandoned to those who impose the law of the strongest, while others remain holed up at home, reinforcing a vicious cycle of anomie.

In Germany, a report noted a 260% rise in reported harassment incidents on public transport in Berlin, while 45% of young women in the Netherlands avoid certain routes in urban neighbourhood due to safety concerns^{210 211}. Consequently, in France and the UK, a growing number of women are registering to self-defense programs²¹².

On the one hand, public authorities and local governments are multiplying security measures: the installation of surveillance cameras has surged. More than 6,000 municipalities in France have been equipped with surveillance systems since the national plan launched in 2008, amounting to over 90,000 public surveillance cameras in 2023.²¹³ The deployment of this video protection aims to deter crime and reassure the population. In fact, a majority of French people support the presence of cameras in public spaces to combat criminality.

Furthermore, investments are being made in urban lighting, securing building lobbies, and the presence of police officers (or mediators) during critical hours, to try to restore residents' confidence and encourage them to reinvest in public space. Despite these efforts, there is still a long way to go to dispel this anxious atmosphere. The phenomenon of "territorialization" of public space by idle or hostile male groups continues to discourage a portion of the population from freely enjoying city life. The feeling of insecurity remains high and impacts quality of life, even going so far as to alter daily habits (going out only at certain times, dressing discreetly to avoid attention, avoiding certain routes, etc.).

In short, fear restricts the freedom to move and thrive in the city, especially for women, and contributes to the erosion of social cohesion in multicultural urban areas.

Violence is now daily routine of society

The rise of violence in urban public space is another defining feature of these transformations, to the point that some see it as a process of "decivilization." Sociologist Norbert Elias described the long process of civilization that, from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, consisted in pushing raw violence out of daily life, as individuals gradually internalized self-restraint and respect for laws²¹⁴. However, in recent years, intellectuals have warned of a reversal of this trend: a "process of decivilization," in which norms of civility are in retreat and violence once again becomes a common mode of expressing social conflict. The term has even been used by French political leaders²¹⁵ in response to recent riots. This is reflected in the increasing frequency of clashes, destruction, and gratuitous assaults in everyday news.

In Germany, Berlin's New Year's Eve celebrations in 2023 and 2024 saw widespread chaos, with police reporting over 400 arrests in 2024 alone for attacks involving fireworks and Molotov cocktails targeting officers and public property, prompting Interior Minister Nancy Faeser to condemn the "unacceptable violence" and deploy thousands of additional police²¹⁶. Swedish sociologist Göran Adamson has described this as a "retreat of civility," pointing to the increasing frequency of gang-related violence and public disorder in cities like Malmö, where 2024 police data recorded a surge in assaults on public transport and attacks on emergency services²¹⁷. These incidents, often tied to socio-economically marginalized communities, reflect a broader erosion of social cohesion, with authorities struggling to maintain order amidst growing cultural and economic divides.

In France, festive events or public gatherings increasingly descend into violence when they involve youth from disadvantaged neighborhoods. For instance, the Fête de la Musique (June 21), originally a family-friendly celebration, has in recent years seen scenes of chaos in several cities²¹⁸. In 2023 and 2025, assaults, mass thefts, women groped in crowded areas, and aggressive police interventions occurred in the heart of Paris. Likewise, the national holiday on July 14

(Bastille Day) is now systematically accompanied by nocturnal urban violence in many towns: hundreds of vehicles set on fire, fireworks mortars launched at police, destruction of public property, etc.²¹⁹ In 2025, despite the deployment of thousands of gendarmes and police officers that evening (in the context of the June riots), over hundreds vehicles were burned.

The celebrations of sports victories follow the same pattern, when the victorious team is popular in the housing projects: Algeria's wins in the Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) or Morocco's in the World Cup have led to festive gatherings turning into riots in several European cities (Brussels, Paris...), with smashed shop windows, clashes, and riot police deployed²²⁰. In 2025, PSG's victory for the Champions League final also led to looting and confrontations on the Champs-Élysées²²¹. This non-exhaustive list suggests that in France, "we no longer know how to celebrate without violence," as *Le Point* headlined: "Fête de la Musique, July 14, sports victory celebrations... too often these joyful events are marred by clashes"²²².

In contrast, major events that primarily attract residents of wealthier districts or rural areas, such as rugby matches in the UK, the Tour de France, typically unfold peacefully, without requiring massive police deployment. This contrast highlights a sociocultural divide: on one side, a segment of youth from disadvantaged suburbs, often of immigrant background, who express their frustration and malaise through collective violence whenever a festive opportunity arises; on the other, the rest of the population who continue to adhere to traditional norms of peaceful conduct during public gatherings.

This normalization of everyday violence is also visible in the rise of assaults on public transport, gang fights, and attacks on authority figures (police officers, firefighters). It fuels the fear mentioned earlier and leads to escalating security responses. The risk, as some thinkers have pointed out, is a vicious cycle in which generalized mistrust and community fragmentation lead to even more violence, a latent civil war scenario that intelligence services now openly fear. National cohesion is being tested by this spiral.

The recent use of the term "decivilization" serves as both a warning and a diagnosis: that of a society which, under the combined pressures of cultural separatism, socio-economic ghettoization, and the weakening of the state, is seeing the re-emergence of forms of violence it once believed were behind it.

FOCUS 11 2015–16 New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Germany in Cologne: the end of European naivety

One event deeply shocked Europe: the mass sexual assaults in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015–2016. That night, hundreds of women were attacked by organized groups of men near Cologne's central station. Similar events occurred in Hamburg and Düsseldorf.²²³

An estimated 1,200 women were assaulted across Germany, including around 650 in Cologne and over 400 in Hamburg. The assaults included groping, theft, and rape. Witnesses described coordinated groups surrounding women, assaulting them while police failed to intervene.

Investigations identified over 120 suspects, mostly young men from North Africa or Arab countries, many of them recent migrants. A German Federal Police report stated that over half of the Cologne suspects were recent asylum seekers or undocumented migrants. About two-thirds were from Morocco or Algeria, including some unaccompanied minors (35). Although thousands were involved, very few convictions occurred due to difficulties in identifying individuals.²²⁴

The Cologne case highlighted a clash of cultural norms, with police suggesting that the perpetrators came from societies where such group assaults are more common. Politically, the events intensified the immigration debate, fueling criticism of Germany's refugee policy. Authorities later imposed tighter security at public events and launched awareness campaigns about respect for women.

Cologne remains a symbol of the importation of group harassment behaviors into Europe's public spaces. It also illustrates how state authority can temporarily collapse in the face of organized migrant aggression, particularly affecting women's safety. The Cologne case serves as a warning and a call for more effective integration and law enforcement in increasingly diverse European societies.

210 Blue News, Berlin wants to introduce women's carriages on public transport - and Switzerland?, November 2024

211 NL times, Nearly half of women in Netherlands sometimes take detours for their safety, July 2025

212 BBC, Women's safety: Clubs see rising demand for self-defence classes, November 2021

213 Balise, le magasin de la BPI, 90000 caméras dans les rues françaises, 2023

214 Norbert Elias, Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation, 1939

215 Le Monde, When Macron talks about 'decivilization,' he uses a concept malleable to any liking, June 2023

216 Euronews, Five killed and hundreds arrested in Germany after New Year's Eve chaos, January 2025

217 Göran Adamson, New report on Multiculturalism in Flames: Sweden's rude awakening, MCC Brussels, 2024

218 RTL Today, Over 100 needle spiking attacks reported during France's Fête de la musique, June 2025

219 JDD, "Mortar fire, barricades, burning rubbish bins...": 176 arrests in the night of July 13-14 in the Paris region, 2025

220 France 24, Celebrations marred by violence after Algeria's Africa Cup of Nations semi-final win, July 2019

221 BBC, Two dead and hundreds arrested in France after PSG Champions League win, June 2025

222 Le Point, Incivisme, pillages, violences : pourquoi la France ne sait plus faire la fête, Juillet 2025

223 The Guardian, Cologne inquiry into 'coordinated' New Year's Eve sex attacks, January 2016

224 The Time, Germany's Migrant Assault Scandal and Europe's Refugee Challenge, January 2016

7.3 Consequences for social and national cohesion

No-go zones threaten social cohesion irrespective of a country’s colonial history, integration policies, or law enforcement strategies. Social cohesion, defined by the European Council as the “capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimizing disparities and avoiding marginalization²²⁵,” is undermined when communities disengage from shared civic norms and state institutions. We have proven in the last parts that the gap between no-go zones and other national areas is growing. This dynamic transcends national contexts: France’s assimilationist model, Sweden’s multicultural approach, and Denmark’s restrictive policies all face similar challenges, as no-go zones exhibit consistent patterns of isolation and dysfunction.

Nationals detached from their nations

According to Ernest Renan’s definition of a nation as a “daily plebiscite” rooted in a shared will to live together, shaped by common history, values, and collective aspirations²²⁶, the populations of no-go zones in Europe often exist outside this framework, despite possessing formal citizenship or being born in the host country. Renan emphasizes that a nation is not merely a legal or territorial construct, but a moral and cultural community forged through shared sacrifices and a collective desire for a unified future. It is not a matter of ethnicity, but of a common goal. In no-go zones, characterized by high crime, parallel economies, and cultural segregation, residents frequently exhibit disengagement from national institutions, as evidenced by low voter turnout and distrust in state authority²²⁷. According to the “shared civic commitment” Renan deems essential, these populations could be defined as outside of the nation (we emphasize on the fact this definition and analysis are not about race or religion).

No-go zones have accelerated the shift from relatively cultural homogeneous societies to highly communitarian ones, where cultural and religious identities often supersede national allegiance. Lifestyles in these zones, despite geographic dispersion, share striking similarities that distinguish them from surrounding national contexts. For instance, the socio-cultural dynamics in Saint-Denis (France) align more closely

with Rosengård (Sweden) or Molenbeek (Belgium) than with rural French towns or mid-sized cities like Tours.

This shift is compounded by the growing primacy of religious identity, particularly among Muslim populations, over national citizenship. In many no-go zones, the distinction between “believer” and “kafir” (non-Muslim) shapes social interactions. Paul Scheffer’s seminal essay warns that such multiculturalism, when unaccompanied by integration, fosters “spontaneous segregation” and erodes national unity²²⁸. This communitarian change threatens the civic bonds that underpin cohesive societies, replacing them with fragmented, identity-based communities.

Growing criticism of mass immigration and multiculturalism

Multiculturalism, once a cornerstone of European integration policy, faces mounting criticism as its association with no-go zones fuels public and political backlash. A 2018 Yougov survey found that 55% of Europeans oppose further non EU immigration, a sentiment strongest in countries with prominent no-go zones like France (58%), Sweden (60%) and Germany (72%).²²⁹ Moreover, a 2025 Yougov study shows that more than half of French, German and Swedes believe immigration is mostly bad for their country.²³⁰

Electoral trends further reflect this discontent. The 2024 European Parliament elections saw significant gains for parties that are critical toward mass immigration, France’s National Rally (30% vote share), Germany’s AfD (16%), Fratelli d’Italia (29%) and the Netherlands’ Party for Freedom (17%)—driven by concerns over crime and cultural erosion in no-go zones.²³¹ These parties stand against multicultural policies perceived as prioritizing minority rights over societal cohesion. Angela Merkel’s 2010 admission that multiculturalism had “utterly failed”²³² in Germany, coupled with Nicolas Sarkozy’s 2011 call for stricter integration, underscores a broader shift toward assimilationist or restrictive policies. Renowned American journalist Christopher Caldwell arguments that unchecked immigration creates “parallel communities” that undermine European values.²³³

The risk of violent confrontations is real

The escalation of cultural tensions in EU countries is further evidenced by incidents in Germany and Poland, where official responses underscore the growing risk of civil conflict. In Germany, the 2024 reinstatement of border controls across all land borders, as announced by Chancellor Friedrich Merz²³⁴, reflects heightened concerns over irregular migration and its perceived link to social unrest, with Interior Minister Nancy Faeser citing “public order threats” as justification. This followed a series of violent incidents, including a 2024 Chemnitz protest where far-right groups clashed with migrant communities, prompting police to deploy riot units to quell unrest fueled by anti-immigrant rhetoric²³⁵. Similarly, in Poland, July 2025 saw thousands join anti-immigration marches organized by the Confederation party²³⁶.

Former French Interior Minister Gérard Collomb’s 2018 statement, “*Today, we live side by side, but I fear that tomorrow we will live face to face,*” encapsulates the trajectory of social cohesion in Europe.²³⁷ Spoken amid rising urban violence and terrorist threats, it highlights the shift from uneasy coexistence to potential confrontation as cultural divides deepen. No-go zones, with their parallel normative systems and disengagement from state authority, embody this transition. A 2023 study by Jérôme Fourquet describes this as a “*cultural archipelization,*” where France’s social fabric fragments into isolated communities with divergent values.²³⁸

In Spain, July 2025 saw anti-migrant riots in Torre Pacheco after three Moroccan men allegedly assaulted a 68-year-old pensioner, sparking clashes between far-right groups and North African migrants, with youths hurling bottles and police firing rubber bullets²³⁹. In the UK, the August 2024 riots, triggered by the stabbing of three girls in Southport by the son

of immigrants from Rwanda, saw far-right groups attacking migrant communities and businesses²⁴⁰.

In his article *Civil War Comes to the West, Part II: Strategic Realities*, published in Spring 2025 in *Military Strategy Magazine*, David Betz, Professor of War in the Modern World at the Department of War Studies, King’s College London, and a recognized specialist of insurgencies and contemporary strategy, analyzes the growing risk of civil wars in Western societies²⁴¹. He identifies as central vectors of this threat the “feral cities”, urban environments where state authority gradually erodes, leaving behind a fragmented social fabric marked by systemic corruption, reliance on private security, and the inability of critical infrastructure to meet collective needs. These urban hubs of conflict are made even more unstable by the crystallization of ethnic and identity fractures, often politically instrumentalized and exacerbated by cultural polarization. The divide between urban centers and rural peripheries manifests not only in economic and political terms but also along increasingly visible communal lines, turning the city into a permanent arena of identity-based confrontation. In this context, Betz estimates that a state exhibiting these symptoms faces about an 18.5% risk of civil conflict within five years, which, when extended across a set of Western countries, makes the outbreak of internal wars in the near future almost inevitable. Averaging more than six years, such civil wars are not only long and costly but are also almost invariably accompanied by targeted destruction of cultural and symbolic capital, aimed at erasing the historical references of the opposing side and reshaping collective memory along identity-based cleavages. Civil war thus emerges as a dual threat: military and security-related on the one hand, civilizational and cultural on the other. In the face of this prospect, the strategic imperative for Western democracies is not to pursue outright victory, but rather to prepare to limit systemic damage which can be political, social, economic, and identity-based, in order to prevent the prolonged disintegration of national structures.

225 European Council, *New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion*, 2018

226 Renan, R. *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?*, 1882

227 Migration Observatory, *Immigration, Diversity and Social Cohesion*, 2019

228 *The Multicultural Tragedy*, Paul Scheffer, 2000

229 Yougov, *Eurotrack: UK, Denmark, Finland and Norway not pulling their weight on migrants*, July 2018

230 Yougov, *Eurotrack: publics across Western Europe are unhappy with immigration*, February 2025

231 *European Parliament Election Results*, European Parliament, 2024

232 *The Guardian*, *Angela Merkel: German multiculturalism has ‘utterly failed’*, October 2010

233 Caldwell, Christopher. *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, Penguin, 2009

234 *Federal Ministry of the Interior*, *Germany Reintroduces Border Controls*, September 2024

235 *NY Times*, *German Far Right and Counter protesters clash in Chemnitz*, August 2018

236 *Notes From Poland*, *Thousands join anti-immigration marches around Poland*, July 2025

237 *Valeurs Actuelles*, *Interview avec Gérard Collomb*, 2018

238 Fourquet, J., *L’Archipel français*, Gallimard, 2019

239 *Euronews*, *Disinformation fuelled Spain anti-migrant riots after pensioner attack*, July 2025

240 *BBC News*, *Community in mourning after three girls killed in knife attack*, July 2024

241 Betz, David, “*Civil War Comes to the West, Part II: Strategic Realities,*” *Military Strategy Magazine*, spring 2025

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, the European Union faces two diverging futures:

- **Scenario 1:** The EU and its countries accept the transformation of its societies into multicultural and communitarian entities, where Islam and other cultural norms become foundational elements of the European urban landscape. This scenario entails reconsidering liberal ideas, progressivism, tolerance and human rights ideals²⁴² as well as renouncing to our shared European identity.
- **Scenario 2:** The EU aims to achieve a true turnaround and seek to preserve its ideals and cultural cohesion by reinforcing integration and civic unity.

Based on the empirical evidence and statistical correlations presented throughout this report, (particularly the links between mass immigration, Islamisation, and the emergence of no-go zones) the first scenario would normalize communitarian

enclaves and cultural fragmentation. It appears both unsustainable and harmful to social cohesion, civic trust, public finance and security. As such, this report aligns with the second perspective: the preservation of a culturally coherent European model through strengthened integration and state authority. To support this objective, we propose a coordinated set of policy recommendations designed to address the root causes identified in our analysis.

Our approach is both gradual and complementary: each recommendation builds upon and reinforces the others, forming the outline of a coherent policy strategy designed to halt the aggravation of the problem, restore state authority, and reintegrate urban territories.

Each component of this strategy is conditional upon the successful implementation of the preceding one: territorial reconquest presupposes restored state authority, which itself requires first halting the aggravation of the underlying dynamics.

Step 1: Halting the Aggravating Dynamics

1. Name and Acknowledge the Problem

“To name things incorrectly is to add to the misfortunes of the world. Not to name them is to deny our humanity,” wrote Albert Camus. European leaders must urgently break from patterns of denial and openly acknowledge the direct connections linking uncontrolled immigration, heightened religious communitarianism, and surging criminal activities. Detailed studies such as those conducted demonstrate unequivocally that these parallel societies are becoming increasingly entrenched, as evidenced by Sweden’s recent identification of 59 vulnerable neighborhoods²⁴³. This recognition is essential for policymakers and administrations to finally adopt appropriate solutions.

2. Control and Stop Massive Migration Flows

We must urgently address an issue that will only worsen an already critical situation: mass immigration levels above EU capacity of integration. A critical first step is drastically reducing family reunification, which currently represents a significant driver of immigration, exacerbating communal isolation. Following Denmark’s robust approach under the *Foreigners Act* (2019),. Similarly, cities experiencing excessive strain from refugee influxes, like Malmö, must halt new relocations. Moreover, enforcing territorial quotas based on Denmark’s *Anti-Ghetto Law* (2021) would effectively prevent the formation or expansion of isolated ethnic communities.²⁴⁴ Strict conditions on family reunions (like minimum age and income requirements) could help reduce inflows and encourage self-sufficiency.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Fondapol, L’inévitable conflit entre islamisme et progressisme aux Etats-Unis, 2024

²⁴³ Bloomsbury Intelligence, Report The Rise of Organised Crime in Sweden, February 2024

²⁴⁴ The Guardian, Denmark plans to limit 'non-western' residents in disadvantaged areas, March 2021

²⁴⁵ Bloomsbury Intelligence, Report The Rise of Organised Crime in Sweden, February 2024

3. Reduce Public Investment and Introduce Conditionality

It is essential to rigorously audit and suspend public investments failing to achieve measurable integration outcomes, ensuring optimal use of resources. This serves three purposes: improving public finances by stopping unnecessary spending, restoring fairness in spending among citizens, and finally reducing indirect financing of crime and delinquency. Adopting the British model, exemplified by the comprehensive audit of the “troubled families” initiative (2015)²⁴⁶, could significantly enhance accountability. Public funding should be strictly conditional upon demonstrable integration milestones, as practiced in the Dutch urban social contracts (2020), to encourage genuine societal cohesion.²⁴⁷

4. Effectively Implement Deportations for illegal immigrants and unproductive or violent legal immigrants

Our study of a sample of nearly 20 no-go zones showed that 40% of residents were born abroad. Given the multifaceted difficulties, this figure far exceeds the reception capacities of European countries. To reinforce compliance with immigration laws, governments must prioritize identifying and removing individuals residing illegally, engaging in criminal activities or having a net financial cost. Strengthening operational capabilities for enforcing deportation orders is imperative, as illustrated by France’s current low execution rate of administrative removal decisions (below 7%)²⁴⁸. Additionally,

employing diplomatic leverage, such as restricting visa issuance, should compel cooperation from countries that resist repatriating their citizens. European coordination could strengthen the impact of such decisions. Residency permits must be strictly conditional upon adherence to local laws and proof of economic self-sufficiency, following Denmark’s example (2019).²⁴⁹

5. Regaining Control Over Naturalization Processes

European states must reform naturalization policies by eliminating automatic citizenship pathways and implementing rigorous controls on the naturalization process. Automatic naturalization, such as through birthright citizenship (*jus soli*) or long-term residency without integration requirements, often undermines national unity by granting citizenship to individuals who may not share the host country’s values or civic commitments. Instead, governments should adopt a merit-based system, requiring applicants to demonstrate proficiency in the national language, adherence to democratic principles, and economic self-sufficiency, as exemplified by Denmark’s stringent naturalization criteria. Additionally, introducing quotas to manage the annual volume of naturalizations and prioritizing applicants with proven integration outcomes can prevent the entrenchment of parallel societies. Regular audits of naturalization decisions, coupled with the possibility of revoking citizenship for serious criminal offenses, as practiced in Sweden since 2023, will further reinforce state authority and ensure alignment with national interests²⁵⁰.

Step 2: Restoring State Authority

6. End permissiveness and Reestablish Public Order in Lost Territories

No-go zones have also been abandoned, mainly due to the permissiveness of the states. Governments must decisively reinforce operations against gangs and illegal trafficking networks to concretely reclaim lost territories and visibly restore state authority. A French senatorial report²⁵¹ similarly emphasizes the need for a massive, sustained presence of law enforcement in drug-dominated zones, alongside specialized anti-narcotics units and accelerated judicial procedures to disrupt trafficking ecosystems. The report also supports systematic asset seizures, aiming to economically dismantle criminal networks. Drawing

inspiration from Denmark’s anti-ghetto law (2018), significantly tougher legal sanctions within these zones, coupled with Sweden’s 2023 policy on direct and automatic revocations of nationality for severe offenders, would further weaken criminal enterprises and reaffirm state sovereignty.

7. Fight Political Islam and Foreign Interference

Measures must be implemented urgently to halt foreign interference, particularly financial flows funding radical ideologies. Austria’s successful “*Islamgesetz*” (2015), prohibiting external funding for mosques, sets a critical

precedent.²⁵² Additionally, mandatory national training and certification for imams should ensure sermons align strictly with democratic principles, as France’s Charter of Principles for Islam (2021) advocates. Rigorous administrative measures, including dissolving associations promoting radical separatism, as outlined in France’s Separatism Law (2021), are also necessary.²⁵³ A debate on the creation of a “European Islam” compatible with the fundamental values of the EU must be opened.

8. Use the EU Cooperation as a Lever

The EU must not replace Member States, which remain sovereign in the area of security. This report does not propose extending the powers of the European Commission. However, the EU can be used as a lever to increase the impact of several policies. Enhanced cooperation at the European level is vital for effectively combating threats posed by transnational radical groups and ethnic mafias. Establishing a dedicated Europol Task Force, as proposed in a recent Europol report (2022)²⁵⁴, would significantly improve cross-border collaboration and intelligence sharing. Creating a unified, robust European database for radicalization data, integrated within an enhanced Schengen Information System, is indispensable for proactive prevention and targeted intervention.²⁵⁵ Another option is to use coordinated diplomacy and restrictions on access to the European market to force recalcitrant countries to grant visas for expulsions.

9. Introduce Advanced Technological Tools

Governments should significantly expand the use of cutting-edge technology, including artificial intelligence and predictive

analytics, to swiftly detect and mitigate radicalization risks. This proactive approach, successfully deployed by Israel in the West Bank, allows for targeted interventions before threats materialize²⁵⁶. Additionally, adopting advanced digital surveillance tools and aerial monitoring through drones, inspired by sophisticated Israeli counter-terrorism techniques, can substantially bolster public safety and operational effectiveness.²⁵⁷ Such systems could be directly used in no-go zones to identify recurrent troublemakers.

10. Automating Citizenship Revocation for Foreign-born Offenders

To bolster state authority and curb criminality in no-go zones, European governments should establish simplified and, where applicable, automatic citizenship revocation processes for foreign-born individuals who have acquired citizenship and committed serious offenses, coupled with robust enforcement of expulsion orders like the OQET (Obligation to Quit European Territory), akin to France’s OQTF (*Obligation de Quitter le Territoire Français*). This policy would target grave crimes such as terrorism, organized crime, or repeated violent offenses, ensuring that those who threaten public safety lose citizenship privileges and face swift deportation. By adopting a streamlined framework, inspired by Sweden’s 2023 policy on automatic citizenship revocation for severe offenders, and integrating it with enforceable OQET mechanisms, states can deter criminal behavior and reduce the burden on no-go zones. Clear revocation criteria expedited judicial processes, and diplomatic coordination to enforce OQET, similar to France’s OQTF system, will enhance civic cohesion and restore territorial control.²⁵⁸

Step 3: Reconquer Territories through Resettlement

Reinvesting in no-go zones without first implementing the measures outlined in Steps 1 and 2 (halting aggravating dynamics and restoring state authority) is futile, as the current populations in these areas often do not justify the cost due to persistent resistance to integration and civic norms. Instead, once control is reestablished, European states should focus on supporting these territories through a comprehensive repopulation policy. Revitalizing troubled neighborhoods necessitates incentives encouraging gentrification and the return of middle-class families and individuals in no-go zones. Offering substantial financial and administrative support

that can attract stable, economically active populations is essential.

11. Extracting Talent Through Early Intervention and Prestigious Opportunities

To disrupt the cycle of isolation in no-go zones and harness talent across generations, European states must implement aggressive programs to extract high-potential individuals, targeting children as young as possible and promising adults for integration into mainstream society. For children, boarding

246 Department for Communities and Local Government, UK Government, Troubled Families Programme Evaluation Overview Policy Report, 2017

247 Jonker-Hoffrén, P. Policy tensions in demolition: Dutch social housing and circularity, 2023

248 JDD, OQTF: what is the real execution rate in France?, September 2024

249 Fondapol, Danish Immigration Policy: A Consensual Closing of Borders, February 2023

250 BBC News, Sweden plans to remove citizenship from people seen as security threat, January 2025

251 Sénat, Un nécessaire sursaut : sortir du piège du narcotrafic, May 2024

252 BBC News, Austria passes controversial reforms to 1912 Islam law, February 2015

253 Politico, France issues charter for imams meant to fight ‘political Islam’, January 2021

254 Europol, E-SAT European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2022, 2022

255 European Commission, EU Schengen Information System saves lives, 2023

256 The Guardian, A million calls an hour’: Israel relying on Microsoft cloud for expansive surveillance of Palestinians, August 2025

257 United Nations Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT), Algorithms and terrorism: the malicious use of artificial intelligence for terrorist purposes, 2021

258 BBC News, “Sweden plans to remove citizenship from people seen as security threat”, January 2025

schools of excellence should identify and enroll gifted students from primary school, offering an elite academic training, and immersion in national culture and values, modeled on France's "internats d'excellence" for rapid talent development. For adults, states should create exclusive programs providing access to prestigious state-sponsored housing in desirable urban areas or priority placement in high-demand job sectors, such as technology or public administration. These initiatives, focused on rewarding effort and talent with tangible opportunities, will relocate the most capable individuals from no-go zones, fostering their integration into cohesive national frameworks while preventing the perpetuation of parallel societies.

12. Introduce comprehensive Resettlement Plans

This recommendation is inspired by Colombia's "Territorial Control Approach in Medellín". Before any residential resettlement, the state could implement a reoccupation plan: secure reclaimed zones with sustained police presence, reopen schools and public services, and physically rehabilitate urban

space (lighting, roads, clean-up). This ensures trust and safety for newcomers. In Medellín (Colombia), once one of the most dangerous cities in the world, authorities launched "Integral Urban Projects" (*Proyectos Urbanos Integrales*) in slums controlled by cartels²⁵⁹. These combined security operations, urban renewal, and basic service restoration before relocating families.

13. Use State Incentives to Resettle Strategic Populations

Many tools can be active to attract new citizens. Implement financial and tax incentives to attract new targets (especially young couples, working-class households, or professionals) into reclaimed districts. These could include rent subsidies, tax credits, or preferential access to public employment and housing in these areas. Israel has long used targeted incentives to resettle Jewish populations in underpopulated regions like the Galilee and Negev to ensure demographic and strategic control. Incentives included housing grants, infrastructure investment, and tax reliefs²⁶⁰.

9

CONCLUSION

No-go zones have long remained a blind spot in European public debate. Ignored by many policymakers, delegitimized by mainstream media, and underexplored in academic research, these areas are nonetheless real and growing. Despite the ideological stigma surrounding the term, our analysis demonstrates that no-go zones are not anecdotal but constitute a structural phenomenon spreading across major EU member states.

This territorial dynamic is not random. Our findings show that no-go zones are closely associated with mass immigration and Islamization. The correlations identified, particularly between the density of foreign-born and Muslim populations and the presence of violent crime, parallel economies, and weakened state control, are statistically robust and consistent across multiple contexts, including countries with different colonial histories and integration models. From France to Sweden, from Italy to Germany, the pattern holds.

The consequences of these dynamics are far-reaching: increased crime and insecurity, growing public expenditures, the emergence of separatist political movements, and the weakening of social and national cohesion. The rise of no-go zones reflects the failure of mass immigration policies to ensure integration, the persistence of high cultural distance with some migrant groups, and a development doctrine that often substitutes state authority rather than restoring it.

In addition to these social and territorial effects, no-go zones also carry significant political implications. Far from being limited to parallel societies confined to specific districts, they can influence the platforms and priorities of mainstream political parties. In several contexts, immigrant and Muslim populations—who predominantly support left-wing parties—have become a strategic electoral base. This has, at times, led

these parties to accommodate community-driven norms that stand in partial tension with liberal traditions, particularly in areas where immigrant populations are highly concentrated. Such political dynamics risk reinforcing local enclaves and further contributing to societal fragmentation.

Despite varied development policies and integration efforts in no-go zones, these initiatives consistently fail to achieve meaningful results, regardless of the host country's political system, historical context, cultural norms, or integration philosophy.

In most no-go zones, crime has a predominantly imported character. Across Europe, the pattern is consistent: despite differing institutional responses, mass immigration from culturally distant regions has produced fragmentation rather than integration. The violence and criminality in these areas are not merely side effects of poverty or social inequality, but are often driven by imported cultural norms, sustained by strong intra-community solidarity and enabled by the permissiveness of modern Western societies.

Europe now stands at a crossroads. An increasing segment of the European population is now rejecting the values, symbols, and collective identity of their country of citizenship, giving rise to a new class of nationals who feel no allegiance to the nation-state and do not recognize themselves in its cultural roots and project. If current trends continue, the most likely scenario is a progressive fragmentation of urban space, growing separatism, and the normalization of enclaves governed by alternative norms. But a different path remains possible. Through firm, coordinated, and realistic policy action, European states can restore their authority, rebuild civic cohesion, and affirm the primacy of shared democratic values across all territories.

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