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Fighting fascism, preserving democracy

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This report focuses on seventeen EU countries (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, UK) and Norway and Switzerland.

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Fighting fascism

How can governments combat the activities of racist and far-Right parties that undermine democracy while, at the same time, preserving civil rights and democratic values such as freedom of speech and freedom of assembly?

Country notes

Over the last eighteen months, politicians across Europe have been forced to ask themselves how best to counter the increasingly violent and racist activities of the far Right. A debate on the resurgence of fascist ideas has ensued, taking different forms depending on the circumstances in the country in which it is discussed. The perceived far-Right threat can be seen to emanate from nationalism and nostalgia for fascism, or from the electoral threat posed by neo-Nazi parties, and from the activities of racists in football or on the internet. How to deal with international gatherings of neo-Nazis is also a pressing concern.

Austria

Anti-immigration parties, such as the Freedom party (ÖVP) and the newly-formed Alliance for Austria's Future (BNÖ) have been and still are represented in the Conservative-led coalition government of Austria. This can be severely embarrassing for the Conservative government, when parliamentarians it is allied to attempt to sanitise the Nazi period of Austrian history.

In June, the government was forced to amend the constitution to avoid the embarrassment of having the Senate presided over by an apologist for fascism. Siegfried Kampl (BNÖ senator representing Carinthia) had made several controversial statements deploring the brutal persecution of Austrian Nazis after World War Two and referring to Austrian deserters of Nazi Germany armed forces as 'assassins of battle comrades'.¹ There was angry parliamentary debate and Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel was forced to take action to stop Kampl taking up the post of president of the Bundesrat which rotates between representatives of Austria's provinces. (Kampl had resigned from the BNÖ, saying that he did not want to be a burden on the party, but had insisted that as mayor of the southern town of Gurk, he was entitled to take up the Bundesrat post.)

Other extreme-Right parliamentarians who have made controversial statements include John Gudenus (formerly with the Freedom party but now

with a free mandate) who contends that the existence of the Nazi gas chambers 'remains to be proven'.² And MEP Andreas Mölzer (of the Freedom party) walked out of the European parliament during the passage of a resolution against anti-Semitism on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. He argued that the Austria of today bears no responsibility for the crimes committed at Auschwitz and demanded the commemoration of the 250,000 (sic) killed in the Allied raids in Dresden. Mölzer, along with Gudenus, edits the journal *Zur Zeit* which is regularly accused of historical revisionism and sympathising with Nazism.³

Belgium

Political parties are concerned that electoral support for the Vlaams Belang (VB), which recently launched its own radio station, is growing. The Flemish Liberal Democrats (the party of prime minister Guy Verhofstadt) have been divided on the most effective approach to the VB, with some arguing that the policy of ostracising the party (commonly known as the 'cordon sanitaire') is not working. In January 2005, new legislation was approved to allow for the reduction or complete withdrawal of state funding from political parties (represented in parliament) which failed to comply with the obligations of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Cyprus

The failure to clamp down on the activities of the fascist organisation Golden Dawn (see Greece section below) became the subject of parliamentary debate in August during the trial of Christodoulos Nicolaides. Nicolaides, a former policeman is believed to be the leader of an unofficial Cypriot branch of Golden Dawn. He was sent for trial for attacking two Greek Cypriots and a Turkish Cypriot in a coffee bar because he could not bear to witness a friendship across ethnic lines. The opposition DISY party accused the government of an 'unacceptable tolerance' of Golden Dawn which is cultivating a climate of chauvinism, xenophobia and racism in Cyprus.

Czech Republic

Stung by criticisms of its failure to prevent a neo-Nazi international gathering organised by Blood & Honour in May in Saxony-Bohemia, the government has launched its own investigation. Prime minister Stanislav Gross has said that the Czech Republic must not become a centre for right-wing radicals.⁴ The police, in the past criticised for their failure to act, have promised to take tough action against neo-Nazi concerts and those promoting hate.

Racism in football resurfaced as a hot issue in September 2005 when football fans of Sparta Praha engaged in racist chanting during a UEFA Champions' League fixture with AFC Ajax in Prague, and taunted black footballers with monkey chants.

Denmark

There has recently been a heated debate about the limits of free speech. First, the National Radio and TV Commission revoked for three months the broadcasting licence of the Copenhagen radio station, Radio Holger (named after a mythological defender of Denmark) for promoting racism and ethnic hatred. Then, in October 2005, Louise Frevert, the Danish People's Party (DFP) candidate for the Copenhagen mayor was investigated by the police after publishing derogatory comments about Muslims on her website. She compared Muslims with a cancerous tumour that needed to be removed from Danish society, and said that Muslim men seemed to consider it their right to rape Danish women.⁵ Many cafes and restaurants which had agreed to host election debate meetings featuring the DFP candidate cancelled the bookings and some of her political opponents said that they refused to share a platform with her.

France

In February 2005, the interior minister announced that he proposed to dissolve all neo-Nazi groups under a 1936 law which authorises the government to disband by decree 'private militias and combat groups' which threaten public order and democracy. The government has also pledged to crack down on neo-Nazi ideas on the internet and has instructed mayors and regional officials to help prevent public meetings of neo-Nazi groups.

But the government has also come in for scathing criticism from prominent public figures who have launched a petition against the new Education Act on the grounds that it is trying to

gild an inglorious colonial past with an official history and institutionalises 'lies about the crimes, the massacres which sometimes went as far as genocide, the slavery and the racism that has been inherited from the past'.⁶ Under the Act, it will be mandatory to enshrine in textbooks France's positive role in its overseas territories, especially in North Africa, and give an eminent place to the sacrifices of fighters for the French army raised in those territories. In connection with this, the League of Human Rights has pointed out that more and more monuments, plaques and street names in the south of France are bearing the names of the Secret Armed Organisation (OAS) – a French terrorist organisation involved in killings and executions during the war of Algerian Independence, and that this reflects a disturbing nostalgia for colonialism.⁷

Germany

Sixty years after the Third Reich's defeat, and with official commemorations planned at Auschwitz and Dresden, international attention was once again focused on Germany after the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) attempted to hijack the commemoration events utilising the slogan '1945 – we're not celebrating'.

In December 2004, NPD members in the eastern Saxony state parliament walked out of a tribute to the victims of the Third Reich and refused to observe a minute's silence. They then issued a statement equating Auschwitz with abortion. Then, on 13 February, the NPD organised the largest neo-Nazi demonstration (described as a 'funeral march') in Germany's post-war history in Dresden, calling for the dead of Dresden to be given an equal commemoration to the dead of the Nazi death camps. On 8 May, the anniversary of the Third Reich's defeat, the NPD planned to march past the Holocaust memorial in Berlin, utilising the slogan 'Sixty years of Liberation Lies – End the Cult of Guilt'. In response, Chancellor Schröder warned that he would not tolerate far-Right attempts to rewrite history and interior minister Otto Schily rushed through parliament new legislation limiting the right of assembly, and changing the country's criminal code to include a passage calling for up to three years in jail or a fine for glorification of the Nazis, or justifying or downplaying the atrocities of the Third Reich.

Greece

At last, the activities of Golden Dawn (a racist and fascist organisation which takes as its symbol the swastika) has become the subject of public and parliamentary debate in Greece. When Golden Dawn announced that it would hold a Eurofest on the theme of 'Our Europe, not theirs. Turkey out of Europe', aimed at attracting thousands of neo-Nazis from across Europe, the government equivocated as to what to do. International protests coordinated by Greek anti-fascists, accompanied by the refusal of local authorities across the Peloponnese to host the festival, forced the government's hand. The Golden Dawn festival was banned on the grounds that it was 'unconstitutional'.

Hungary

The Constitutional Court may lift the ban on Blood & Honour following an appeal against the dissolution of the organisation in December 2004. András Szabó, a retired member of the Constitutional Court, believes that if the challenge is successful, parliament may have to bring in new tighter legislation outlawing racial hatred.

Italy

During an international football match between Italy and Norway, Italian fans repeatedly gave the Nazi salute and shouted 'Sieg Heil'. Subsequently, interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu announced measures to curb hooliganism at football stadiums based on an agreement with clubs that stadiums would be shut down if police reported violence inside or outside, or if offensive banners were displayed.

There was controversy when leading footballers Francesco Totti, captain of AS Roma and team-mate Antonio Cassano, attended the funeral of Paolo Zappavigna, the leader of black-shirted skinhead football fan ultras known as 'The Boys', who died in a motorbike accident. Thousands of fans broke down police barriers to crowd round the coffin, chanting 'Honour to our comrade' as they made the stiff-armed Nazi salute.⁸

Malta

There is concern that a new anti-immigration party, the Alleanza Nazzjonali Repubblikana (ANR) is growing in support. On 3 October, the ANR held a demonstration in Valletta to protest the 'silent

invasion' of Malta by illegal immigrants and the threat posed by multiculturalism.

Netherlands

Following alarm about the spread of far-Right ideas amongst Dutch youth, justice minister Piet Hein Donner ordered an investigation and asked municipal authorities to crackdown on far-Right groups to prevent an escalation of violence. Utrecht police intelligence units claim that the radicalisation of a hardcore of Dutch teens is potentially a greater threat to the Netherlands than Islamic terrorism. Researchers at Leiden University and the Anne Frank Foundation found that the far-Right was increasing its membership and attracting more young people.⁹ Two new parties, the National Alliance (NA) and the New Right (NR) have established themselves alongside the existing Dutch People's Union (NVU) and the New National Party (NNP).

Norway

In the run-up to the September 2005 Norwegian general election, the activities of the Democrat Party (formed by defectors from the Progress Party, several of whom are linked to hardcore racist groups) caused concern. Amund Garfors, the Democrats' leader in the county of Nordland, called on all members of the Home Guard to have functioning weapons at home ready to be used against the Muslim minority. The Anti-Racist Centre in Oslo said that this placed the Democrats in the historical tradition of the wartime Nazi puppet leader Vidkun Quisling in promoting the use of military power against a Norwegian religious minority.¹⁰

Poland

The League of Polish Families and the newly formed Patriotic Movement have been accused of fomenting racism, anti-Semitism and prejudice against homosexuals. Far-Right influence in football resurfaced in September when Wisla Kraków football fans unfurled banners with racist symbols, including those associated with the Klu Klux Klan.

Spain

A parliamentary commission has been formed to help eradicate racism from Spanish sports. Incidents at the Spain-England fixture, during

which black English footballers were jeered by Spanish supporters, plus the controversy surrounding racist comments made by national team coach Luis Aragonés, had highlighted the problem. The government is pressing the Professional Football League and the Players' Association to take action and the Spanish National Commission Against Violence has been instructed to investigate the racist incidents at the Spain-England fixture. Meanwhile, a leading Spanish referee has attacked the failure of football authorities to deal with racist abuse and pledged to support any black player who decided to walk off the pitch in protest. In February, for the first time ever, a Spanish official stopped a fixture because of racist abuse.

In the run-up to the 30th anniversary of the death of the Spanish dictator, General Francisco Franco, whose regime liquidated tens of thousands of opponents over nearly 40 years, there has also been attempts to deal with Spain's fascist past (symbols from the fascist era, including statues of Franco, have been removed). However, a revisionist history book written by Pío Moa, praising Franco, has become a bestseller and the centre-Right People's Party are increasingly defending Franco's legacy.

Sweden

There has been a debate about the influence of far-Right ideas on young people following the murder of a 13-year-old boy at a Stockholm children's home by another 13-year-old. The National Agency for School Improvement, responding to an incident when neo-Nazis beat up the principal of a school in southern Sweden, has warned of the dangers of neo-Nazi extremists trespassing on school property. In June, the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) expressed concern about the active presence of racist organisations in Sweden and their activities, including widespread dissemination of racist propaganda through the internet.

Switzerland

The disruption of the Swiss president's National Day speech in August 2004 by an estimated one hundred right-wing skinheads who heckled Samuel Schmidt (a member of the Swiss People's Party), leading him to be escorted from the stage under guard, horrified many, and led to public debate

about how best to curb the activities of neo-fascists. (There have also been calls for the Party of Nationally Orientated Swiss (PNOS), which had mobilised heavily for the event, to be banned.)

Then, in September 400 neo-Nazis participated in an unauthorised concert in Valais and the police were criticised for not intervening. An outcry ensued a few weeks later when young extremists were discovered handing out music CDs with far-Right lyrics in school playgrounds.

United Kingdom

In the UK, there is increasing concern within the mainstream political parties about the electoral support currently enjoyed by the extreme-Right British National Party (BNP). To date, however, Labour party cabinet members have responded to evidence that the BNP is eating into its base amongst the white working class by attacking multiculturalism as the cause of white working-class alienation.

In the 2004 London mayoral and European elections, the BNP and the UK Independence Party (UKIP) doubled their votes (between 2000 and 2004) and in 2004 the BNP narrowly missed gaining a seat in the London Assembly. The BNP, which currently has twenty-one councillors in England, is planning to stand 600 candidates in local elections in May 2006. The centrepiece of its campaign is set to be the London bombings with the party claiming it would not have happened if its warnings on immigration had been heeded.

Narrow debate, top-down solutions

Sixty years after the Holocaust, a whole generation of young people has grown up with no awareness of what life was like under a fascist dictatorship, and little or no contact with the generation which did know. The fact that young people do not necessarily have an inbuilt understanding of why anti-democratic movements are so dangerous is something that more savvy and older organised fascists exploit. Which is why the European debate, as it is evolving, is so disappointing. It's not as if the far-Right has appeared overnight. Skinhead organisations, extreme-Right violence, anti-democratic activities, nostalgia for fascism, historical revisionism – these have all been visible for at least two decades. Even so, the debate is constrained within the narrowest of parameters. Instead of seriously examining the entrenched

problem of the far Right, politicians engage in gesture politics. Instead of working out long-term strategies, they offer placebos and instant solutions, such as the banning of fascist emblems. (This became a hotly disputed subject in the EU after the UK's Prince Harry turned up to a fancy dress party dressed as a Nazi.) Governments are constantly reacting to specific threats posed by the far Right by extending the law and creating new political offences. What is not considered is the potential these measures have to weaken rather than strengthen democratic systems, in that they involve a suspension of civil liberties such as freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. And this in turn, could actually boost small far-Right parties. They are no longer perceived to be the perpetrators of criminal acts but the victims of state repression. And this, in turn, plays well with economically marginalised young people who are on the peripheries of these organisations and may themselves have a deeply-entrenched sense of victimhood.

It appears that new laws and offences are being introduced with no inbuilt mechanisms to check their long term effects. This reflects the lack of any long-term-strategy to deal with the far Right. As governments blunder on, picking and choosing policies in an ad hoc way, the far Right moves in to exploit space that governments are unwittingly providing.

Does proscription work?

Given its desire to make amends for its past, and to protect the state from anti-democratic forces, it is no surprise that Germany is the European country that has most resorted to proscribing far-Right organisations.* Following the defeat of fascism, specific clauses forbidding denial of the Holocaust or attempts to reinstate the Third Reich were built into the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany (known as the Basic Law). Under Article 21 (2), political parties that seek to undermine or abolish the free democratic fundamental order may be declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court. And Article 9 (2) provides for the proscription of associations which oppose the constitutional order 'or the idea of international understanding'.

But what should the criterion be for assessing whether proscription has worked? (What is being referred to is a measure by a state to proscribe a far-Right organisation as a whole; targeted measures to ban a specific far-Right event on the grounds of public disorder are an entirely different matter.) Should one see the visible dissolution of a banned organisation as the sole instrument of measuring success, for example, or should one consider whether the banning order has served to strengthen or weaken the far-Right as a whole? If one takes the second criterion, one can say with certainty that banning orders in Germany have been a dismal failure.

The German far-Right as a whole is solidifying not weakening. The latest security report suggests that right-wing extremism has reached its highest level since 2000.¹¹ Banning orders mean that the proscribed organisation either disbands (only to regroup under a different name) or resorts to more violent tactics as its activities are pushed underground. This then leads to a significant shift in the resources of intelligence and police services which are focused on building up intelligence on the membership of banned organisations via long-term surveillance operations, leading to high-profile police raids, arrests for membership of banned organisations and charges for other propaganda offences (ie possession of fascist material). As long-term operations depend on intelligence provided by informers and infiltrators, it can lead the police to ignore far-Right crimes such as racist attacks or violence at demonstrations for fear of endangering its sources.

The same phenomenon is true in France where the state has, on numerous occasions, dissolved far-Right organisations. In 2002, the state banned *Unité Radicale*, after one of its alleged members attempted to assassinate president Chirac during the Bastille Day parade. Since then, *Unité Radicale* has reformed under the monikers 'Les Jeunesses Identitaires' and 'Le Bloc Identitaire'. The recently-banned *Alsaace Corps* (see below) had itself previously been known as a musical group under a different name 'Vent du Nord'.

The situation is somewhat different in Belgium, as the dissolution of the *Vlaams Blok* (which has reformed as the *Vlaams Belang*) came not as a result of a proscription order issued by the state

* The possibility for proscription of National Socialist organisations is also written into Austrian Constitutional law. The wearing of neo-Nazi symbols is prohibited under the Insignia Act.

but due to pre-emptive action taken by the VB itself. It had been fined €36,000 by the Supreme Court for 'permanent incitement of segregation and racism'. Parliament had also introduced legislation aimed at strengthening the 1981 Law on the Suppression of Racist Acts and had legislated to withhold state funding from political parties found guilty of racism. It was these legislative moves that forced the VB's hand, compelling it to relaunch under a different name to ensure its future survival as an electoral far-Right party.

Problems associated with proscription

(i) Proscription can increase the popularity of the far Right as a whole among its targeted constituencies, particularly the youth.

The far Right plays the victim, which appeals to young marginalised people who already see themselves as victims of economic decline and lack of state intervention. Underground neo-Nazi organisations offer such people a fraternity of excitement, action and violence. The result is more racist crimes, anti-foreigner and homophobic violence and attacks on anyone deemed to be different.

Germany (Saxony)

Saxony – an alpine region close to the Czech border – has its new state parliament in Dresden. It is often referred to as Saxon Switzerland, and it is here that the far-Right National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) has flourished electorally since the banning of the Saxon Switzerland Skinheads in 2001. The NPD has representatives in twenty two of twenty seven local councils and in the Erzgebirge mountains.

Nor has Saxon Switzerland Skinheads gone away; on the contrary, it has been associated with the high level of racial violence in the region. But since it was outlawed, racial violence has increased not diminished to the extent that Saxony recorded the largest number of cases of extreme-Right violence in 2004. Attacks on foreigners seem particularly prevalent in Pirna, and much of the violence here and elsewhere is attributed to the outlawed Saxon Switzerland Skinheads. The TV magazine programme Kontraste exposed the level of racial violence, and the fact that police officers present on the scene of crimes stood by and watched as attacks took place.¹²

Examples of extreme-Right violence in Saxony include an attack using explosives on the premises

of the Network for Democratic Culture in Wurzen, on 6 November 2004.¹³ The Sorbs, a Slavonic people, are being increasingly subject to hostility, according to Hans Kosel, Sorb PDS deputy in Saxony's Landtag. In one case, two youths were given suspended sentences after beating up a Sorb and threatening to take the Sorbs to Auschwitz and 'store them' there.¹⁴ This year, a dozen masked neo-Nazis attacked a residence housing immigrants of German descent from the former Soviet Union on 12 August. They unsuccessfully attempted to force their way in, by breaking windows and throwing stones and beer bottles. Three of the residents suffered injuries.¹⁵

(ii) Banning orders may lead to constitutional battles which takes years to settle and allow the far Right to present itself as a martyr, as happened with the NPD.

Germany and the NPD

The government first banned the NPD in 2000. But the banning order was revoked by the Supreme Court on the grounds that too many NPD members had been recruited by the government as informants and that these informants were 'steering' NPD policy. Now the president and the vice president of the federal Constitutional Court, have indicated that there may be a renewed attempt to outlaw the NPD.

Attempts to ban the NPD have seen it grow in strength to the extent that it won 9.2 per cent of the vote and twelve seats in the September 2004 Saxony elections. In the federal elections of September 2005, it did better than in 2002, scoring 743,903 votes and breaking the 5 per cent barrier in the voting districts of Brandenburg, Saxony, Thuringia and even Berlin.

Hungary and Blood and Honour

It took years for Blood & Honour to be dissolved in Hungary, but the ban is now being challenged in the Constitutional Court. Blood & Honour leader Endre János Domokos says that if the ban is upheld he will establish a new organisation within the next three months. This would lead to another protracted struggle to ban that organisation.

(iii) Bans displace the problem of far-Right activity onto neighbouring countries. Areas of the Czech Republic (Saxony-Bohemia) and France (Alsace),

which border German states, are now having to deal with increased neo-Nazi activity. France has, in turn, resorted to proscribing neo-Nazi groups.

Czech Republic

According to Prague TV stations, the majority of the 400 Nazis who attended the Blood & Honour international event in Jablonne v Podjestedi, Saxony-Bohemia (which borders Germany) were from Germany, which banned Blood & Honour in 2000.¹⁶

France

A report by the Central Board of the security branch of the French police force of the Ministry of the Interior ('Direction Centrale des Renseignements Généraux') suggests that the region of Alsace, which borders the German state of Baden Württemberg, is the primary region for neo-Nazi activity in France. There is ample evidence that Alsace has become a centre of far-Right violence due, in part, to the activities of German neo-Nazis who have crossed over into France to carry out attacks or to attend meetings organised jointly by French and German neo-Nazis. In 2004, a two-day neo-Nazi international event took place at Hipsheim (Bas-Rhin), attracting hundreds of skinheads, many from the northern and eastern regions of Germany, as well as a German rock group who played before a flag with the imperial eagle and the slogan 'Alsace for the Empire'.

In May, the French government, utilising the 1936 law that allows the president to dissolve 'private militias and combat groups' by decree, disbanded the Alsace Corps, which described itself as 'a group of friends of the white race'. Armand Jung, a Socialist MP from Alsace pointed out that the neo-Nazis didn't organise their events under the name of far-Right groups but on other pretexts – a concert, a football match and even, on one occasion, a wedding. In his view the proscription of the Alsace Corps was a case of government 'wishful thinking'.¹⁷ And the dissolution of the group seems to have had little effect on those behind it: as one member of Alsace Corps, Grégory, is quoted as saying, 'I don't see what there is to dissolve, since we are not an association. We don't have a president, a general secretary or a treasurer. We're a group of mates.'¹⁸

Are prosecutions effective?

The state does have an alternative to proscription.

It could systematically prosecute the far Right utilising existing public order and incitement laws and ensure that ordinary criminal law was used to prosecute racist crimes. Laws against incitement to racial hatred, criminal offences such as conspiracy to commit violence and membership of criminal organisations are already on statute books. And the criminal law in various member states punishes a range of actions and activities which can be related to racism, or attaches greater penalties to criminal offences if racism is proved to be an aggravating factor to a crime.

Political leadership is needed if the police and criminal justice system are to be encouraged to utilise and monitor all these laws to maximum effect. But to go down this road, long-term surveillance operations based on intelligence gathering and surveillance of the far-Right would have to be more carefully balanced against the immediate need to protect the public from hate crimes.

Unfortunately, all existing research shows that even where EU countries have specific laws to deal with racism, prosecutions are seldom brought. Law enforcement officers are insufficiently aware of laws that can be utilised against racists and even where they have sufficient knowledge of the law, prosecuting those who incite violent hate crimes may not be considered by police forces as a policing priority. But this could be changed through root-and-branch reform of the criminal justice system. This, though, demands that governments adopt long-term, well-thought-out and closely monitored strategies that can percolate down through the criminal justice system right to the local magistrate and the police officer on the beat.

In the meantime, however, where initiatives exist within policing, the emphasis is on specialist units to deal with the far Right. Their priority is not to deal with the immediate detrimental effects of the violent activities of the far Right on local communities, but to engage in long-term surveillance operations and intelligence-gathering exercises. This militates against protecting the public from far-Right crimes as prosecutions are abandoned for fear of undermining wider goals.

Germany

After the murder of the Mozambican Alberto Adriano in Dessau (Sachsen-Anhalt) in 2001, the government set up a programme to combat right-

wing extremism. In doing so, it assured the public that quick and efficient criminal prosecutions would be combined with long-term prevention strategies. But it soon emerged that the state's policy of paying informers on the neo-Nazi scene was seriously compromising its ability to mount effective prosecutions.

During the attempt to ban the NPD, it emerged that the state had paid around thirty of the NPD's top officials to act as informers.¹⁹ As most of the informers gave useless information and as much of the funds actually flowed back into the NPD's coffers (with the approval of its leadership), the state had inadvertently provided a supplementary source of funding for the far-Right. Clearly, when the perpetrators of violence are actually government informers this undermines the ability of the state to mount effective prosecutions. For instance, among NPD officials paid as government informers were two leaders of a group of thugs who attacked an anti-fascist rally in the summer of 2000. Prosecutions against right-wing extremists who attacked an asylum hostel in Boizenburg in 1992 were abandoned by the public prosecutor at the request of the Office for the Defence of the Constitution, which said such prosecutions would interfere with its recruitment efforts.

Spain

In other countries, for example, Spain, the problem seems to be that of poor intelligence and lack of coordination between specialist units and police forces on the ground and insufficient coordination between the national police force and regional police. A May 2005 police report claimed that the extreme Right was characterised by a small membership and limited demonstrational ability, citing the Falange Española de las Jons and the Democracia Nacional (DN) as the most active parties.²⁰ But the view from the municipalities suggested that the far Right was more diffuse than the national police study suggested, and had the potential to cause serious disturbances and violence.

From March to September 2005, high profile police raids led to claims that the state was dismantling far-Right networks. In March, Catalan police based in Girona announced that due to operation 'Code of Honour' they had dismantled a huge distribution company trading in books, music and Nazi and skinhead material throughout Spain, Germany and Chile.²¹ In April, interior minister José

Antonio Alonso said that police raids and arrests in Madrid, Seville, Jaén, Burgos and León had led to the dismantling of the Spanish branch of Blood & Honour.²² And in August 2005, a police investigation codenamed Operation Panzer led to raids in Valencia and ten other municipalities in the province and claims that the police had broken up the activities of the neo-Nazi gang 'Frente AntiSistema'.²³

Despite this coordinated offensive and despite intelligence claims that the far Right was small and had little ability to mount demonstrations, serious disturbances seemed to be occurring in the municipalities with greater frequency. (Already in September 2004 there had been a serious outbreak of anti-foreigner violence in Elche, Alicante, directed at Chinese footwear businesses.) Recently, mayors and police in Sabadell (near Barcelona), Jumilla (Murcia region) and Madrid have called for the allocation of more resources to deal with the far-Right.

One of the most serious disturbances occurred in May 2005 in the Madrid suburb of Villaverde when neo-Nazis infiltrated the street protests that followed the killing of a Spanish youth by a Dominican in a street brawl. There were serious disturbances over a week, leading to vandalising of shops owned by Latin Americans and xenophobic attacks which led to the hospitalisation of at least four Latin Americans and an attack on a 12-year-old child. The racist climate spread into football. During a fixture between Real Madrid and Racing, the far-Right Ultra Sur group unveiled an anti-immigrant banner stating 'They're invading. They're killing us. Justice for Manu'.²⁴

According to Esteban Ibarra, president of the Movement Against Intolerance, the attacks amounted to immigrant witch-hunts in which 'neo-Nazi, far-Right, xenophobic and racist groups' played a leading part.²⁵ Disturbances at the funeral of the Spanish youth were inspired by neo-Nazi groups who came to Villaverde from other parts of Madrid. Ibarra asked how it could be that violence erupted against immigrants twice in a week and yet no arrests were made?

In Madrid, in particular, the far-Right are showing an increased ability to mount demonstrations and organise disturbances. In October 2005, approximately 1,500 fascists draped in Spanish flags marched through Madrid demanding the government put an end to immigration which was converting Spaniards into

foreigners in their own country. And in November, far-Right demonstrators rallying to mark the 30th anniversary of the death of Franco shouted anti-Muslim and anti-gay insults, saying 'Spain is dying,' 'Spain is being murdered'. Already in 2005, fifty neo-Nazis had attacked a Madrid bookshop in the Salamanca district (which has a reputation as a right-wing stronghold), leading to the injury of several people as they attempted to protect the 90-year-old former Communist leader Santiago Carrillo, who was due to speak. More injuries occurred when the neo-Nazis stormed the meeting, unfurling Spanish flags and using poles to beat author Santos Juliá and assaulting four others, including two journalists. According to local police, this was 'a perfectly organised' act of mob violence most probably planned by far-Right extremists. The investigation has also revealed that one of the neo-Nazis arrested is a sergeant on active service in the army.²⁶

Meanwhile, the Government Delegate, Angel González, says that he fears far-Right groups are attempting to spread the fire of xenophobia in towns across Murcia after incidents in Jumilla in which the Civil Guard were forced to mount special patrols and identity checks after the far-Right staged demonstrations outside the town hall using 'local youths as puppets'.²⁷

The mayor of Sabadell, Manuel Bustos, has written to the government after three incidents involving skinheads, in which death threats were made in the city centre. He asked for the ringleaders to be arrested and for 'urgent mediation' to stop the violence of aggressive skinhead youth.²⁸ While in Zaragoza, the National Police are investigating the fact that local neo-Nazis are now organising using the front of a cultural association called 'Nibelungen' (the name of a German epic poem and in 1945 the name of the German SS). There has been dismay that the neo-Nazis, posing as a legitimate youth association, managed to obtain a building from the local authority.²⁹

Failure to use incitement laws

In dealing with the far Right, governments also have at their disposal laws against incitement, particularly against incitement to racial hatred. The fact that these laws are seldom used is a serious indictment of the failure of governments to adopt effective strategies to undermine the far Right.

Prosecution for incitement criminalises speech which incites violence, which is a totally different approach from criminalising a far-Right organisation on the basis of its political orientation, or beliefs. If incitement laws are correctly used and monitored, prosecutions could serve a wider educative purpose. Such prosecutions would inform the public of the limits of free speech in a democratic society. While the freedom of speech of individuals whose views were offensive or politically obnoxious would be upheld, speech which incited violence and therefore undermined the most basic freedom – the right to life – would not. How can the far Right present itself as a victim of state power and martyr to freedom of speech when its members are exposed in court as violent, criminal thugs, or vicious pedlars of hate?

Greece

Greek anti-racist organisations believe that the government's failure to use incitement laws against Golden Dawn has contributed to this small, far-Right organisation gaining influence.

Golden Dawn's newspaper regularly carries anti-Semitic and anti-foreigner articles and yet there have been no prosecutions despite the fact that legislation exists to punish the preparation, possession, publication and dissemination of written and other material that is likely to bring about hatred against persons on the grounds of race, colour, etc. This means that Golden Dawn, which only has a few hundred followers, can disrupt football matches and organise attacks on Albanian fans. (In the most serious incident, an Albanian football fan was beaten to death a year ago.)

The government's prohibition of Golden Dawn's international 'Eurofest' (cited above) was the first time in twenty years that a far-Right event has been banned in Greece. But the credit for this goes not to the government, but to grassroots anti-fascist organisations and local authorities across the Peloponnese (an area steeped in the history of the Greek civil war between Communists and Nationalists) which stated outright that they would not tolerate the hosting of a European neo-Nazi festival in their locality.

Germany

In Germany, incitement laws are used in a way that seems to be more about protecting the state than protecting the victims of violence. This reflects an

approach to far-Right crimes that, as previously noted, is grounded in the constitution. For example, Udo Voight, chair of the NPD, was prosecuted for incitement to hatred against established politicians. In a 1998 campaign speech he had said that young people should have recourse to weapons when in danger from the heads of established political parties. And Gerhard Ittner, a neo-Nazi, was successfully prosecuted for inciting hostility to the state for statements he made at rallies and on the internet. This prosecution also involved an accusation of insulting a Jewish community leader. Section 130 of the Penal Code makes it an offence to incite hatred against certain sections of the population and to incite violence against such groups. In another prosecution, Claus Cremer, deputy leader of the NPD in North-Rhine Westphalia was given a suspended one-year sentence for incitement after he accused Jews of approving of child abuse.

Recently, Germany amended its criminal code to include a new offence of glorifying National Socialism, downplaying the atrocities of the Third Reich and thereby endangering public order. Recently, there has been an opening up in German books and films to an examination of German suffering during the war, including the firebombing of cities, the mass rape by Soviet soldiers and the expulsion of 15 million ethnic Germans from eastern Europe in 1945. The far Right is capitalising on this exploratory climate (as seen by the central importance it gave to the Dresden bombing). In this climate, a new catch-all offence of glorifying National Socialism is potentially explosive. It could allow the far Right to portray itself as the victim of censorship – and even those who in no way support fascism may feel that free speech could be held hostage to the law. According to Bukart Lutz, a sociology professor at the Centre for Social Research at the Martin Luther University in Halle, the NPD has successfully capitalised on two current narratives of victimhood: one related to the bombing of Dresden, the other related to the poverty of eastern Germany and the alienation of young people who can't find jobs.³⁰

In some countries, failure to prosecute incitement to racial hatred, or to use other anti-racist provisions contained within the criminal code, may be directly related to the presence in government of anti-immigration parties which are committed to dismantling anti-racist laws. Ironically, they may do so in the name of civil liberties.

Switzerland

In Switzerland, specific measures to deal with the far Right are being blocked by the anti-immigration Swiss People's Party (a junior partner in the coalition government represented in the Cabinet by justice minister Christoph Blocher). The Swiss People's Party often uses civil liberties and free speech arguments to block what it describes as anti-racist initiatives.

On the very day that the President's National Day speech was disrupted by jeering neo-Nazis, the chair of the Swiss People's Party, Ueli Maurer, called for the abolition of anti-racist laws. As justice minister, it was to be expected that Blocher would at least make a statement condemning the neo-Nazis' actions on Swiss National Day (the President is, after all, a member of the Swiss People's Party). But he remained uncharacteristically silent. But Blocher did intervene months later, when he publicly criticised the police chief of canton Valais who had called for more powers to combat international neo-Nazi events.

Blocher has also attacked the judiciary for what he described as an assault on the right of free assembly after an August 2004 Federal Court's decision that incitement laws should also be applied to neo-Nazi meetings, thus narrowing the legal definition of what constituted a private meeting. According to Blocher, the ruling virtually eliminated the private sphere and took the fight against racism well beyond the boundaries set by the 1994 anti-racism law.³¹ The ruling concerned a neo-Nazi gathering in September 1999, which was closed to the public and was by invitation only. The court ruled that a discussion would only be considered not public (and therefore outside the law) if listeners and participants knew one another through family, friendship, work or the community.

Blocher also utilised civil liberties arguments when parliament debated a motion to combat racism and hooliganism through outlawing all symbols and emblems which advocate racial discrimination and violence (including the swastika). The Swiss People's Party (alongside the Swiss Democrats) opposed the law on the grounds that excessive restrictions on freedom of expression should not be countenanced. Blocher said that if any law should be brought in, it should be aimed at all extremist groups which called for violence and disregarded democratic rules.³²

Denmark

In Denmark, a Muslim member of the Socialist party has accused the public prosecutor of allowing politicians a wider margin of free speech than enjoyed by other members of society. And the EUMC has also pointed out that Denmark narrowly interprets its law prohibiting certain forms of racially derogatory speech because of the need to respect freedom of expression as set out in the Constitution. It avoids detailed provisions against racism that might impact on the fundamental rights of freedom of expression and freedom of association.

Kamal Qureshi, a member of the Socialist People's Party (SF) has accused the Public Prosecutor's Office of failing to prosecute for incitement in sensitive cases involving members of the Danish People's Party (DFP). The UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination was prepared to investigate a complaint against Pia Kjaersgaard, for alleged racism against Somalis, but not the public prosecutor in Denmark. (In 2003, Kjaersgaard accused all Somalis of mutilating their children through the act of circumcision and compared the Somali community in Denmark to paedophiles and rapists). Qureshi had asked the public prosecutor to act in the case of DFP Copenhagen mayoral candidate Louise Frevert for overtly racist comments that appeared on the home page of her website (including remarks comparing Muslims with a cancerous tumour and an article that claimed that Muslim men consider that it was their right to rape Danish women). Qureshi's complaint against Ms Frevert was dismissed by the public prosecutor who has announced that he would take a prosecution against Frevert's webmaster, whom Frevert blamed for posting anti-Muslim articles on her website without permission. Qureshi contends that even if this is the case, the racist comments on Frevert's homepage 'is just the latest in a number of cases where a member of the DFP has been allowed to make racist and xenophobic statements without being charged or even investigated. Her webmaster is now being charged under anti racism laws, but it is her personal website and she has also repeated the (same) comments in her book.³³

The Danish National Radio and TV Commission revoked the licence of Kaj Wilhelmsen, the owner of Radio Holger, for three months on the grounds that he had promoted racism and ethnic hatred during

a transmission after the London bombings of 7 July. Wilhelmsen had said: 'There are only two ways to react if we want to prevent terrorist bombings. We either need to expel all foreign Muslims from western Europe, so that they can't plant their bombs, or exterminate all fanatic Muslims, which would mean killing a considerable number of them.'³⁴

Following Wilhelmsen's comments, the Copenhagen police have also charged Wilhelmsen with incitement to violence, presumably under the Criminal Code which allows for the prosecution of a person who publicly (or with the intention of dissemination to a wide circle of people) makes statements or imports other information by which a group is threatened, insulted or degraded on account of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, beliefs or sexual orientation. It is crucial that this prosecution is followed through as Wilhelmsen is now attempting to portray himself as a martyr, vowing that he will challenge the revocation of his licence and will continue to campaign for the repatriation of foreign residents in any other media made available to him.

In the absence of effective prosecutions for incitement to racial hatred, NGOs are either seeking the assistance of international bodies or bringing prosecutions of their own, using civil law.

Norway

The UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination decided that the Norwegian Supreme Court was wrong to deem inadmissible an appeal from Jewish organisations and the Anti-Racist Centre in Oslo that Terje Sjolie, leader of the neo-Nazi Bootboys, should be prosecuted for making inflammatory statements during a Rudolf Hess memorial march in 2000. Sjolie stated that: 'Every day immigrants rob, rape and kill Norwegians, every day our people and country are being plundered and destroyed by the Jews, who suck our country empty of wealth and replace it with immoral and un-Norwegian thoughts.'³⁵

Switzerland

Even though a federal authority 2004 report on extremism found that the programme, newspaper and publications of the Party of Nationally Orientated Swiss (PNOS) were characterised by 'xenophobic, antidemocratic and right-wing extremist rhetoric', the only time a successful

prosecution was brought was when it was instigated by the Swiss World Association's anti-racism and violence project. Four executive committee members of PNOS (including party president Jonas Gysin) were convicted in July 2005 of 'collective denigration of foreigners and infringement of the penal code on anti-racism'. The proceedings took two years to come to fruition, and related to an election poster used by the party in the district of Aarau during the national council elections of 2003, and which was only slightly modified from a 1933 poster, of the Swiss National Socialists. On the poster 'bigwigs, communists and Jews' are being swept away by a Swiss cross beneath the motto 'Wer cleanse'.³⁶

Belgium

The youth organisation Kif Kaf and the anti-racist organisation the Movement Against Racism, Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia (MRAX) have lodged a complaint with the public prosecutor, calling on it to take action against Vlaams Belang leader Filip Dewinter for comments made to the US daily newspaper *Jewish Week* in which he described the VB as an 'Islamophobic' party.³⁷

Denmark

Following the decision by Copenhagen police not to prosecute DFP MP Louise Frevert (see above) for making anti-Muslim statements in violation of anti-racist laws, the Racial Discrimination Council has lodged an appeal with the public prosecutor.³⁸

France

There has long since been criticism of the state's failure to initiate prosecutions under the Penal Code for public incitement to racial discrimination, race hatred and violence against members of other groups. In the absence of governmental consistency, it has been left to local authorities and community associations to bring their own prosecutions. For instance:

The League of Human Rights (LDH) successfully sued the far-Right leader Jean Marie Le Pen for incitement to racial hatred in April 2004. (Le Pen lost his appeal in February 2005.) In this case, the Court of Appeal ruled that remarks made by Le Pen in an interview with *Le Monde* on 19 April 2003 could provoke 'a feeling of hostility and rejection towards Muslims'. Le Pen said that 'the day when we shall have in France not five million but 25

million Muslims, they will be the ones to give the orders. And the French people will hug the walls and take to the pavements with their eyes looking down. And you will better dash off or else you will get a hiding.'

Regional councils and associations instigated a prosecution against Germaine Burgaz, Front National regional councillor for the Rhône-Alpes region. In May 2005, she was fined €1,500 for 'non-public incitement to discrimination on racial hatred' after making the following comments in 2004. 'What coexistence? When some towns and cities are already made up of more than 62 different nationalities or races? Besides, if there were only two races – the Arab and Jewish ones – our streets would already be a war zone!'³⁹

Patrick Binder, the leader of the FN in Alsace, was fined €7,500 for 'incitement to racial hatred' and 'racial defamation' in an article published in *Le Petit Mulhousien* in 2003. In this case, the action was brought by Licra and MRAP. Another prosecution brought by LICRA and the association of Strasbourg Grand Mosque against Binder, and his colleague FN councillor Xavier Codderens, has also led to a conviction for incitement to discrimination and racial or religious hatred. In early 2005, Binder and Codderens distributed pamphlets entitled 'No cathedral in Mecca, no mosque in Strasbourg' in which they said 'no to the Islamicisation of Alsace' and criticised the UMP and PS for participating in the implementation of an 'Islamist Republic'.⁴⁰

Seven member associations of the RomEurope-Droits de l'Homme collective made complaints to the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA) with regard to a programme broadcast in February 2005 by public television channel France 5 entitled 'Delinquency: the path of the Roma'. The CSA concluded that the programme was 'likely to reinforce racist prejudices' as 'a particular community had been equated with a form of organised crime which was evident in the title and in the introduction to the programme'.⁴¹

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Protecting ethnic minorities

One would have thought that governments concerned about the impact on social cohesion of a resurgent far-Right would want to reassure members of minority communities that the police service and criminal justice system were there to protect them and were sensitive to their needs. Unfortunately, many police services in Europe have not even come to first base when it comes to collecting data on racist crimes. And many politicians, far from supporting minority rights, are fanning the flames of prejudice by accusing ethnic minorities of aiding the far-Right by failing to integrate.

Absence of data collection on racist crimes

The European Commission has for some time been pressing for a European-wide drive against racist violence. But the adoption of a Council Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia, which would establish a framework for punishing racist/xenophobic violence as a criminal offence, and recognise racist/xenophobic motivation as an aggravating circumstance for determining enhanced sentencing, has been delayed due to wrangling at the member-state level. This is all the more disturbing as the European Monitoring Centre on Racism & Xenophobia (EUMC) has pointed out that official data collection on racist violence in fifteen of the EU's old member states is either non-existent or ineffectual and needs further development (Greece, Italy and Portugal have no recording system whatsoever), and that most member states have no idea of the degree to which ethnic minorities are being targeted.¹ There is a lack of a homogeneous legal definition of 'racist violence', 'racist crime' or 'racism' in Europe, or common working practices about how a crime can be determined to be 'racist', states the EUMC, which argues for the adoption of a victim's perspective on racist crimes to be incorporated into criminal justice systems. In this respect, the 2000 Macpherson Inquiry into the Death of Stephen Lawrence in the UK, which developed a broad-based victim-centred definition of a racist attack, was ground-breaking. This 'open' definition, together with the UK's history of protective criminal justice initiatives aimed at enhancing community (race) relations and encouraging victims of racist crime to report to the police, is reflected in the fact that the UK's figures for racist incidents far exceed those in other member states where broad-based victim-centred definitions are not in use, concludes the EUMC.

Country summaries

Police statistics, then, are an inaccurate gauge of the extent of racial violence across Europe. But NGOs have for some time been attempting to document the true extent of racial violence, expose patterns of racial harassment and highlight issues of pressing concern. These are some of the issues that NGOs (including the Institute of Race Relations) have highlighted over the past eighteen months

(i) Racial violence and neo-Nazi inspired hate crimes are increasing, attacks are becoming more brutal and hotspots of violence are developing.

(ii) The Muslim community, in particular Muslim places of worship, are being targeted by the far-Right for vandalism, death threats and arson in much the same way as asylum seekers and their centres were attacked in the past (these attacks on asylum seekers continue).

(iii) The far-Right is orchestrating street protests and disturbances and engaging in systematic street violence. Other anti-immigrant or anti-Gypsy demonstrations are not directly organised by the far-Right but have the same impact.

(iv) The victim's perspective is lacking in police strategies to fight racist crimes and governments fail to fund counselling services or victim support organisations that speak to the needs of ethnic minorities.

(v) It is young people, often the victims of racist crimes, who are also one of the main instigators of racist crimes. Insufficient attention has been given to educational strategies for children and young people to combat racism.

(vi) Politicians are increasing the climate of hate through their anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim or anti-Roma rhetoric in parliaments. Governments are failing to speak out against racist crimes and a culture of 'blaming the victim' is emerging.

Increase in racial violence and neo-Nazi hate crimes

There have been reports of an increase in racial violence, particularly of serious attacks and other neo-Nazi hate crimes (on homosexuals and left-wingers, for instance) in several European countries. Some of the most brutal attacks that have taken place over the past year or so (or have come to court during that period) are documented below. (See also *European Race Bulletin* 50 for other cases during this period.) Even though some attacks did not result in death or serious injury, we list them below because the intention was clearly to seriously maim.

Evidence that racial violence is increasing is provided in some European countries via police statistics, but most often independent anti-racist monitoring groups are providing the information. (The NGOs also document brutal attacks on left-wingers and homosexuals and, indeed, anyone deemed different, and details of these cases are included, where relevant.)

Austria

The EUMC states that while Austria does give importance to monitoring the activities of extreme right-wing organisations, which can include acts of racist violence, this approach does not capture the full range of racist violence.² Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit (ZARA), an organisation providing counselling to the victims of racial violence without any financial support from the government, provides one of the few sources of information on Austrian racism. In its 2004 'Report on Racism', it documented nearly 1,000 cases of racism (including acts of racial discrimination as well as racial violence).

Many of the attacks documented by ZARA took place in Vienna (where the extreme-Right Freedom party is strong) and involved attacks on Africans. On April 13 2005, Di-Tutu Bukasa, a member of the European Network Against Racism, was attacked and beaten by four right-wing extremists chanting racist and Nazi slogans in a parking lot in downtown Vienna.³

France

Official statistics on racial violence reflect an absence of effective data collection mechanisms and broad-based legal definitions of 'racist incidents' (only 1,565 racist, xenophobic and anti-

Semitic attacks were recorded in 2004), according to the EUMC 2004 annual report. The number of racist and anti-Semitic acts rose by almost 88 per cent in 2004, with figures relating to physical attacks never higher, according to the National Consultative Committee of Human Rights. (Anti-Semitic threats doubled in 2004.) According to the intelligence services, Alsace is the primary region for the far-Right, although the Paris metropolitan area and the Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur region are also mentioned.

A huge proportion of all racist attacks on immigrants and people of immigrant origin take place in Corsica, where the Bishop of Ajaccio has declared 'the limit of what is bearable has been reached'.⁴

The annual report of the National Consultative Committee on Human Rights states that some 81 per cent of attacks against non-Jews were aimed at North Africans. The cases below reveal something of the hostile climate in which North Africans, particularly young people, are forced to live.

27 December 2004: A bottle full of acid wrapped in aluminium foil was thrown into a housing estate which is home to many people of North African origin in the south of Ajaccio, Corsica, resulting in an explosion. On Christmas Eve, a 5 kilo bomb was discovered in the same housing estate and experts had to be called to defuse it. 'Clandestini Corsi' had already claimed responsibility for seven attacks against members of the North African community.⁵

February 2005 (court case): A 50-year-old French truck driver was convicted of murdering a youth of North African origin on 4 October 2002. Joël Damman, who was an experienced hunter, had roamed the streets of Dunkirk dressed in hunting gear. He was looking for Arabs – whom he considered sub-human – to attack when he shot dead 17-year-old Mohamed Maghara and wounded three other North African youths who had been standing in front of two cafes. Damman was found guilty of murder and attempted murder of sixteen other youths of North African origin and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment.⁶

The way in which the local community in Bessan in Hérault (Languedoc Roussillon, where the Front National won 36.6 per cent of the vote in the last presidential elections) took up the case of Gaston Malafosse, who committed suicide in prison after having been arrested for opening fire for several minutes on a group of North Africans, seriously injuring two of them, as well as a passer-

by, is revealing. Following Malafosse's death, he was treated as a local martyr with 1,500 people gathering in the town for a memorial event.⁷

Finland

Police statistics suggest that most racist crimes take place in southern Finland but the eastern city of Kajaani experienced the greater number of recorded incidents in relation to its number of foreign residents.

30 July 2005: Fifteen men, armed with billiard cues, stormed a pizza restaurant run by people of Middle Eastern origin, seriously injuring five people, three staff and two customers. The gang beat up everyone in the restaurant who looked like an immigrant and smashed furniture. Foreign restaurants in Kajaani have long been the targets of violence and the owner of the pizza restaurant had been repeatedly threatened. In one incident a dead hamster was left strung by its neck outside his door as a warning of the fate that he could expect.⁸

Germany

Like Austria, German systems of compiling data on racial violence have been criticised by the EUMC for largely focusing on neo-Nazi political crimes. Likewise, anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations have long since criticised official statistics for obscuring the full extent of the problem. The east German states of Brandenburg, Saxony (with Pirna often singled out) and Thuringia are most often cited as the worst area of neo-Nazi violence. Violence in Cottbus (the scene of extreme racist violence in the past) is said to remain serious. Southern Germany is currently experiencing a resurgence of neo-Nazi crimes, especially in Munich where Adolf Hitler laid the foundations of the Nazi party and mounted a failed putsch.

The *Antifaschiistisches Infoblatt* says that, since the beginning of 2005, grassroots victim support organisations have noted a substantial increase in extremely brutal neo-Nazi and racially motivated attacks.⁹ The victims are immigrants and ethnic minorities as well as young people from the left-wing scene. One case which came to trial in May 2005, that we cite below, was described in court as tantamount to torture.

October/November 2004: An African student and a human rights worker of Kurdish origin were attacked in Erfurt, Thuringia, in separate incidents. In the case of Yussuf Aberle, who was called a 'shitty

foreigner' during the attack, strong criticisms have also been levelled at the police for their handling of the attack. Although Aberle was seriously injured, the police, on arrival at the crime scene, accused him of being the perpetrator and demanded to see his residence and work permit.¹⁰

February 2005 (court case): Twelve members of the extreme-Right Freikorps (Volunteer Corps) were convicted on ten accounts of attacking immigrant-owned businesses between August 2003 and May 2004 in the small town of Havelland, outside Berlin, causing an estimated €800,000 worth of damage.¹¹

19 March: An arson attack was attempted on a Turkish snack bar in Zepernick bei Bernau, but the incendiary device failed to go off. The stall, by the Zepernick suburban line railway station, has long been a target for neo-Nazi violence and during the attack the snack bar was daubed with right-wing slogans and over twenty swastikas.¹² It is also reported that foreigners have been repeatedly attacked at this railway station. This is just one of several arson attacks on Turkish businesses reported around this period.

28 March: A 31-year-old punk rocker was stabbed to death in an underground station in Dortmund after an argument with a 17-year-old fascist.¹³

5 April: A 17-year-old schoolboy, named as Marcel S, who defended his girlfriend at a Munich underground station when she was insulted by a group of Germans (described as Goths) because of her Asian appearance, has died as a result of his injuries. There was criticism of the police's assessment of the attack as 'not particularly severe or brutal' and for ignoring the racial motivation, on the basis that the insults levelled at the girl were a matter of chance. 'If her nose had been too big, she might have been mocked for that.'¹⁴

15 April: A man, who has only been named as Artur K (for legal reasons), was stabbed to death in Schwerte, near Dortmund (North Rhine-Westphalia) after he objected to a man shouting 'Heil Hitler' and other fascist slogans in the meadows by the banks of the Ruhr river.¹⁵

May: (court case). Three neo-Nazis, aged between 20 and 24, abducted a 23-year-old man on the street and tortured him in his flat, raping him with kitchen implements, burning him with a hot iron and lighted cigarettes, and forcing him to swallow vomit, washing up liquid and pigeon droppings. The victim only survived due to an emergency operation and has had to be equipped with an artificial anus. One side of his stomach is paralysed and he is so

traumatised that he has had to live apart from his three-year-old son that the Nazis threatened to kill if he reported the attack to the police. The victim was told that he was 'non-Aryan' and his life was 'worth less than a dogs'.¹⁶

12 August: A dozen masked neo-Nazis attacked a residence of immigrants of German descent from the former Soviet Union in Freital (Saxony).¹⁷

September: Ticket collectors in Halle attacked an African man on a tram, with one of them shouting we want to kill 'the nigger'. Bystanders had to come to the man's aid.¹⁸

23 September: Three right-wing extremists attacked and injured an African man in the Hellersdorf area of Berlin, forcing him to flee on a bus, the driver of which alerted the police.¹⁹

Ireland

The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, responding to gaps in the collection of data by the garda on racial violence, has established a system for recording incidents related to racism in Ireland which are analysed and compiled in six-monthly reports. (Last report published October 2004).

Travellers' groups say that because Irish Travellers are not recognised as a distinct minority (as they are in the UK and Northern Ireland) the hatred they face on a daily basis is not properly recognised as racism

There has been some controversy over whether racial motivation played a role in the deaths of a Chinese man and a Traveller – the killers of whom came to court in 2005. Racial motivation was not recognised as a factor in the 2002 killing of Ly Minh Luong (although there was some evidence of racial abuse prior to the assault in Dublin, which left Luong with severe brain damage). And Travellers believe that the manner in which the prosecution was conducted into the killing of a Traveller by a farmer in Mayo reflects 'institutionalised racism'. Pádraig Nally apprehended Ward at his farmhouse and, suspecting the Traveller of attempting to break in, assaulted him repeatedly with a piece of wood. As Ward hobbled away, Nally went to reload his gun, followed him and shot him dead at close range. The fact that Nally was convicted of the lesser offence of manslaughter, and treated by some sections of the community as a hero, has angered Travellers' organisations. They believe that the message sent by the Nally case is that it is 'OK' to kill a Traveller.

Mr Ward's widow has received hate mail saying 'one down, 30,000 to go'.²⁰

April 2005: A pipe bomb attack on the home of migrant eastern European workers in Fivemiletown, a rural area in County Tyrone took place. The device failed to explode but Inspector Alwyn Barton said it was 'purely and simply racism at its worst' and the police and community would not tolerate it.²¹

July 2005 (court case): Four Galway construction workers have been convicted for an attack on a black medical student working as a nightclub bouncer in Athenry, who they called a 'black bastard' and a 'nigger' before kicking and beating him.²²

July 2005: A 23-year-old Sikh man suffered serious wounds to his hands and arms after being attacked by two men shouting racist abuse outside his home in Athlone, County Westmeath. He said that his attackers thought he was a Muslim and were trying to kill him.²³

Italy

As noted by the EUMC, there is no system whatsoever for the compilation of data on racial incidents in Italy. The Centre for Studies of Immigration (CESTIM) in Verona attempts to provide summaries of the most serious incidents of discrimination. The IRR has in the past drawn attention to the high level of attacks on Roma encampments.

January 2005: A group of ten youths, aged between 17 and 28, attempted to burn down the Via Aveta de la Ercolano Romani camp outside Naples. The camp was attacked with flame-throwers and a makeshift bomb partially destroyed one shack. No one was injured and ten people were arrested.²⁴

Malta

According to the EUMC, police do not record racial motivation as a factor in crime generation. And although police record specific crimes of racism, they have not been provided with guidance on how to determine whether a crime is racially motivated. The hostile climate against migrants arriving in Malta by boat to claim asylum is the context for a series of attacks and threats against asylum seekers at the Hal-Far detention centre. On 5 July 2005, a car pulled up outside the centre and dumped 200 copies of a KKK flyer stating 'Illegal immigrant bummers we do not want you in Malta get out or we will start killing you'.²⁵

Netherlands

Apart from the attacks on mosques (see next section), there continue to be serious incidents directed against asylum seekers.

A secondary school in Dokkum banned students from wearing Lonsdale clothing (associated with the far-Right) after a group of youths stoned asylum seekers at an asylum centre in Friesland city. The centre was also daubed with swastikas.²⁶

On several occasions, the riot police had to be called out to the northern town of Ulrum in Groningen where an anti-asylum campaign has been launched. A 17-year-old girl claimed to have been assaulted on seven occasions by asylum seekers, and anger was directed at the police for their alleged failure to provide the community with protection from criminal asylum seekers. It finally transpired that the girl had fabricated all the claims.²⁷

Norway

There has been concern about neo-Nazi activity in the small east Norwegian town of Halden, near the Swedish border. A local solidarity campaign has been launched after two refugee families were the victims of horrific violence. A Kurdish family's house was razed to the ground just days after someone had daubed it with swastikas. The home of another family, also of Kurdish origin, was painted with swastikas and racist slogans.²⁸

Slovakia

In its annual report, the EUMC states that Roma minorities are the group most vulnerable to racism in the European Union since the bloc expanded into central Europe. Extreme racism against the Roma, including racially motivated murders, has long since been a concern of NGOs in Slovakia.

January 2005 (court case): For the first time in Slovak judicial history, compensation for moral suffering to the next-of-kin of a victim of racially motivated crime has been awarded to the family of Mario Goral. Goral, a 17-year-old Romani youth, was killed in the town of Jar nad Hronom in 1995. He had been chased through the streets of the town by a group of skinheads, stabbed with knives, beaten to a state of unconsciousness, doused in a flammable substance, and then set on fire.²⁹

Spain

Neither the government nor the National Council of Judicial Power (the body responsible for Spanish

courts) keep statistics on racial violence. But the Movement Against Intolerance, which attempts to document the extent of hate crime on the basis of published sources and police reports, is concerned that racism is increasing, with ten per cent of serious attacks taking place in the agricultural region of Andalucia. El Ejido, Almeria has been compared to the American Deep South of the 1950s. The fieldworkers' union, Sindicato del Obreros del Campo (SOC) and the NGO Programme for Equal Rights have said that violent attacks here are becoming 'more virulent' each time and take place in a climate of 'impunity'.³⁰ In some instances, local communities have organised xenophobic protests (see also section on anti-Muslim violence).

January 2005: Mimoun Karmaoui, who is Moroccan, has been left incapacitated and unable to work after being set upon by a gang of young people in El Ejido, Almeria. The attack was so severe that he required neurosurgery for a skull fracture.³¹

January 2005: Terrified Gypsy families have spoken of their fear that they would not get out of their houses alive, after locals in the town of Cortagana, in the Sierra de Huelva, organised a demonstration and attacked them in the El Eritas area – blaming them for crime. There had been an escalation of anti-Gypsy sentiment in the area after two Gypsies, with a past record of violence, were arrested for the killing of a mentally-challenged man in January 2005. During the demonstration, protestors, who climbed onto roofs, shouted 'murder' and 'we're going to kill you', damaged cars and kicked down front doors. A leaflet entitled 'What everyone thinks but nobody dares say' stated 'We are fed up with criminal and murderous gypsies'.

The anti-Roma demonstration was supported by the town's mayor. The deputy mayor blamed the violence on small extreme-Right groups, but Roma organisations are seeking a prosecution against the Mayor for incitement.³²

June 2005: Four Moroccans were pursued from a disco in Naval Moral, Caceres, by a gang, which included young people and adults armed with knives, chains and planks of wood. The gang was then joined by a larger group of people, including some on motorbikes and others who had dogs. Five minors were arrested.

August 2005: In Zaragoza, a coach which takes African migrants to work on a farm was set on fire.

Attacks on Gypsies and a general climate hostile to immigrants have also been reported.³³

9 September: In the Buenavista zone of Oviedo, a 24-year-old left-wing activist had a swastika carved into her face after being attacked by neo-Nazis in the doorway of her home. Police said this was the first extreme-Right incident to have occurred in the region of Asturia.³⁴

11 October 2005: The fieldworkers' union 'Sindicato de Obreros del Campo' (SOC) and the NGO Programme for Equal Rights has called on the judiciary to investigate two attacks carried out within a half hour on Moroccans during which they were shot at (with pellet guns, it is presumed) in El Ejido (Almeria). Larbi Chaibita was on his farm in the heart of San Agustín when a car pulled up. He was shot at, and the pellet penetrated his left lung. Half an hour later, downtown in Santa María del Aguila, Masad Essaudi was hit by a pellet in the left leg.³⁵

Several cases of deaths due to violence involving migrant workers have been documented in which the police version of events (ruling out racism as motivation for an attack) has been contested by the families of the deceased and/or NGOs and trade unionists.

January 2005: Hamit Oulhadi, a 26-year-old Moroccan was found dead in a field in Granyanella, with a wound to his throat and his head crushed with a stone. Three Spanish men were arrested, including one who is alleged to have played a leading role in confrontations with immigrants. The family are unhappy with the police claim that the killing may have been a settling of accounts and point out that Oulhadi had never been involved in criminal activity.³⁶

February: Azzouz Hosni, a 40-year-old agricultural worker of Moroccan origin was stabbed to death in El Ejido by a gang of Spanish youths. The agricultural worker was a member of the APHDA union which has criticised the police for denying that the attack was racially motivated and attempting to portray it as drugs-related. It has called on the government to 'take steps once and for all to curb the rise of violence on the part of fascist groups in the town of El Ejido'. The organisation Platform for Equal Rights said that Hosni was murdered 'without any other motive except that of the contempt and harassment which immigrants have to endure from an unscrupulous few' and pointed out that a string of attacks on immigrants by violent gangs have gone unpunished by the police.³⁷

30 August: Sellam Essabbab, a 36-year-old construction worker of Moroccan origin, was shot dead in Tortosa, Tarragona, by a car driver following an argument about who had right of way. (Essabbab was attempting to cross the road at a pedestrian crossing.)

The authorities attempted to downplay any racial motive for the killing, describing it as a one-off incident. Several witnesses said the driver, who sped off after shooting the victim five times, had the appearance of a young Spanish skinhead and that he had racially abused Essabbab, before shooting him.³⁸

Sweden

There have been claims that the true level of hate crime (directed mostly at ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians) has been covered up by the police. According to the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, the National Police Board commissioned research into hate crime which found not only that such crime was on the increase but also that the police did not have sufficient information to combat it. Despite these findings, the National Police Board's annual report to government described good progress in combating hate crime. Christer Nyberg, who carried out the research, and found that police districts had insufficient knowledge of national guidelines for combating hate crime, said he was puzzled as to why the National Police Board had distanced itself from the research it commissioned.³⁹

One neo-Nazi-inspired crime – with children as both perpetrator and victim – has been widely publicised in the press.

January 2005: A 13-year-old boy, for legal reasons named only as Rikard, killed a boy, named Bobby, at a children's centre in Stockholm. The young killer had been influenced by neo-Nazi ideas and the attack was so brutal that Bobby's skull was shattered and one arm broken. Another boy was also arrested.

The incident began with Rikard (a day pupil at the children's home) spreading rumours on the internet that Bobby was a homosexual. On Rikard's home computer police found huge quantities of propaganda and images from the Third Reich together with receipts from the National Democrats, which he joined in 2004. Rikard's girlfriend said that she had warned staff at the children's centre that Rikard intended to kill the boy, but they failed to act.⁴⁰

Switzerland

The Service of Analysis and Prevention (SAP) of the Federal Ministry of Justice says that the largest number of racial incidents occur in the German-speaking cantons, with Bern and Zurich heading the list.⁴¹

August 2005 (court case): Six skinheads received prison sentences ranging from five to six years for the attempted murder of two teenagers in Fraunfeld, Thurgovia in April 2003. The skinheads attacked the two youngsters, aged 15 and 17, for no apparent reason in an isolated area of the train station. The youngest was so seriously injured that he suffered severe brain damage and is now a hemiplegic.⁴²

UK

Police statistics from London, Edinburgh, Wales, Lancashire, Thames Valley and Yorkshire show that racially and religiously motivated crimes have almost doubled since the London bombings of 7 July 2005 (see also section on anti-Muslim violence).

One case that is currently before the courts has drawn attention to racism in Merseyside (see also section on anti-Muslim violence).

30 July: Anthony Walker, an 18-year-old sixth form college student, was attacked with an axe and killed in a park near his home in Huyton, Liverpool. He had been walking in the park with his girlfriend, who is white, and his cousin, when they were subjected to a torrent of racial abuse by a man in a hooded cap. He was killed by a single blow delivered with such force that the axe was left embedded in his forehead. A youth aged 17 and a man aged 20 have been arrested for the attacks.

Following the murder, it emerged that there had been many racist incidents in Huyton mainly carried out by school children. In a council election in May 2004 the Liberal Democrat Muslim candidate had received hate mail which stated 'Listen Paki, you and the other Paki women are taking the piss now trying to get elected. You are lucky to still have a shop and home around this area so [we are] giving you a chance for once'.⁴³

Even prior to the London bombings, Belfast had been described by the Community Relations Council in Northern Ireland as the 'hate crime capital of Europe'.⁴⁴ The criminal justice system in Northern Ireland has historically lagged behind the UK, with only thirteen people prosecuted for hate crimes since 1987 and police clearance rates for racist crimes extremely low. According to statistics

from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), racial incidents have leapt by almost 80 per cent between 2003/04 and 2004/05 (total 813 incidents). Homophobic incidents have risen by 175 per cent (total 196 incidents). The Northern Ireland Commission for Human Rights believes that hostility towards difference cannot be divorced from the culture of violence bred by the Troubles. Tabloid campaigns against illegal immigrants also explain some of the hostility.⁴⁵

Anti-Muslim violence

ERA has regularly highlighted the orchestration of attacks on vulnerable groups. But what has become obvious over the last year or so, is that such orchestrated racist violence is now being extended to Muslims. They are being stoned on their way to prayers, graves desecrated, mosques vandalised and Muslim places of worship and schools set on fire. Popular campaigns have been developed calling for the closure of mosques, sometimes, but not always, orchestrated by extreme-Right parties – and, in one case, a vigilante group was formed in Italy to hunt down Muslims. Muslims, increasingly demonised in the press as terrorists, and berated by politicians for their failure to integrate, are being left vulnerable to the extremes of racist violence. Politicians have not done enough to condemn these attacks and the generalised climate of hate; in some cases they even encourage them.

As well as documenting physical attacks against Muslims, we provide below case studies of issues that have contributed to the general climate of anti-Muslim racism.

Austria

There was concern that the Freedom Party's xenophobic campaign in Vienna during the October regional elections might lead to an increase in anti-Muslim racism (see next section). The Islamic Religious Authority in Austria called on politicians and the media to stand up to incidents of attacks on Muslims. In September 2005, attackers hurled stones at Muslims as they performed dawn prayer at a Linz mosque.⁴⁶

In Telfs (Tyrol) after 2,400 people signed a petition against the height of a proposed minaret, the local Islamic community has agreed to a 15-metre-high tower (as opposed to the original 20 metres). 'Everyone involved can live with that', said mayor Stephan Opperer.⁴⁷

Belgium

As noted in *Bulletin* no. 52, the employer of a Muslim woman who wore the headscarf to work received bullets in the post and death threats (the husband of a woman who worked for the firm in Ledegem was later arrested). In this case, Ms. Naima Amzil and her employer received widespread support from, amongst others, the Flemish Union of Small Businesses.

After graves were vandalised at the Tereken cemetery, the Flemish Interest accused Muslim immigrant youth of the crime and politicians and press of trying to cover up the fact that the Muslim community did not respect Flemish culture, values and beliefs. In fact the crime was carried out by white Belgian youth. Freddy Willockx, mayor of Sint-Niklass who stood up to the Flemish Interest and their lies at a council meeting, later received death threats and white powder was sent to him in the post.⁴⁸

France

The DCRG report 'Far-Right under the microscope' states that Muslims have replaced Jews, Communists and Americans as the prime target of the far-Right, and a report by the European Commission Against Racism & Intolerance (ECRI) found that the main victims of increased racial violence in France were Muslims.

As previously mentioned, the FN in Alsace have distributed pamphlets entitled 'No cathedral in Mecca, no mosque in Strasbourg!', arguing against the 'Islamicisation of Alsace'. This was in protest at the regional council's decision to subsidise the building of a mosque in Strasbourg. There was also a picture showing two peasants prostrating themselves in the middle of a field, with a minaret on the horizon.⁴⁹

SOS Racisme has lodged a complaint against the UMP mayor of Nice, Jacques Peyrat after he gave an interview with *Le Monde* in November 2005 where he declared that 'this is not the moment, in view of urban violence and the rise of radical Islam, to set up an Islamic plot of land in the heart of Nice'. (He was referring to a plan to build an 800-square-metre mosque in Nice).⁵⁰

Italy

A vigilante group called the Department of Strategic Anti-Terrorism Studies founded in 2004 allegedly by the far-Right MSI National Right is under

investigation by the Genoa prosecutors for hunting down 'Islamists'. It falsified law enforcement badges and, allegedly, conducted police-style operations following people around several cities, running background checks by illegally accessing the interior ministry's database. The group used religious language on its website such as 'God-fearing men, pure and tough men that are illuminated by God's will, will have descended into the valley of death to defend the Christian-Judaic faith and the west'. Some twenty-five members of the Carabinieri, the frontier police and the prison police have been placed under investigation, and among those arrested, and said to be the organisation's ringleaders, are two neo-fascists.⁵¹

The Northern League (NL) has deployed anti-Muslim language in campaigns in Milan and the province of Siena.

Milan: The closure of a mosque school in September 2005 over poor sanitary conditions, building violations and the teaching of unauthorised curricula, has led the NL to campaign in Milan around issues related to the Muslim communities alleged failure to integrate. Tensions escalated at the school after a young boy was run over and killed as he crossed the road outside the school and the NL blocked plans to hold a prayer meeting in his memory. When interior minister Giuseppe Pisanu pledged that Muslim protestors and NL protestors outside the school would be treated equally, the NL referred to him as 'Ali Abu Pisanu'.⁵²

Siena: Members of the NL have worked with the local community to collect 4,000 signatures against the building of a mosque on a green-field site in the La Badia district of Val d'Elsa, Siena province.⁵³

The case of Oriana Fallaci, who is to be prosecuted for blasphemy for her book *The Strength of Reason*, has been taken up by the NL which describes Fallaci as a martyr for free speech and ad hoc groups supporting Fallaci have been founded in several parts of Italy, including her native Florence.

The Strength of Reason has now run into its eighteenth edition. Fallaci argues that a clash of civilisations is inevitable, although 'It annoys me even to talk about two cultures, to put them on the same plane'. Muslims, she argues, are engaged in a plot to conquer Italy by immigration, transforming it into Eurabia, with Europe becoming a colony of Islam.

Netherlands

In its report 'Extreme Right Monitor', researchers from the University of Leiden and the Anne Frank Foundation recorded thirty-six arson attacks on Muslim targets between 2 and 30 November 2004 (see *Bulletin* 50). Arson and other attacks on mosques continue, but there are signs of a concerted government approach to stop the violence.

April 2005 (court case): The perpetrator of an arson attempt on the Rahmann mosque in Breda, a day after the killing of Theo van Gogh, received a 12-months prison sentence, nine of which were suspended.⁵⁴

March 2005: The local authority in Uden, Brabant, announced tougher measures to deal with 'problem youth' after two arson attacks on the Bedir Islamic primary school in five months. The director of a cultural centre, Loek Borrèl, has highlighted increased racism amongst secondary school students, citing an incident in which a teenager, who made racist remarks rode his bike into a group of students and two teachers at Bedir school.⁵⁵

Police announced that they had abandoned their investigation into the bombing of an Islamic school in Eindhoven, days after the killing of Van Gogh, due to lack of evidence.⁵⁶

Participants at a music party in Venray hurled beer bottles at Muslims visiting a Turkish mosque, attracting a rapid response by Turkish youngsters and the subsequent disturbance had to be broken up by the police.⁵⁷

May 2005 (court case): Five teenage boys, who had attempted to set fire to an Islamic school and mosque in Uden, were ordered to take a 40-hour education course in social skills. The teenagers had spent several weeks in jail on remand and the public prosecutor said it was not necessary to detain them again.⁵⁸

June 2005: A neo-Nazi activist linked to the Nationale Alliantie (NA) was arrested for an arson attack which destroyed the Shaan-e-Islam mosque in Rotterdam.⁵⁹ Also in June, a 25-year-old man was convicted on an arson attack on the Mevlana mosque in Rotterdam in November 2004. Although he received a 12-month prison sentence, he walked free on account of the time he had already spent in custody.⁶⁰

It is in the Netherlands that politicians (most notably interior and integration minister Rita Verdonk) have been most culpable in their failure

to speak out in support of the vulnerable Muslim minority. While the media has drawn attention to the increase in racism and violence (particularly in rural areas) amongst Dutch white communities, Verdonk has categorically refused to examine extreme racist violence, thus throwing into question her suitability to remain in office. Speaking in parliament, Verdonk described the incidents of white youth violence as 'vandalism' and criticised youth of immigrant origin as having a 'short fuse'. Her predecessor as integration minister Hilbrand Nawijn (formerly List Pim Fortuyn) went even further in justifying racism by claiming in parliament that if 'gangs of migrant youngsters roam the streets of our big cities, it is only to be expected, although we disapprove, that in small villages with closed communities people will defend themselves'. He added that 'We are dealing with left-wing extremism and with Muslim extremism'.⁶¹

Norway

A newly-formed far-Right party, the Democrats, has come to the attention of the authorities for their overtly anti-Muslim campaigns (see next section). The Harum chapter of the Democrats has a note on its website stating that it is a 'Muslim-free zone'.

Spain

By June 2004, the Movement Against Intolerance, was drawing attention to the fact that neo-Nazis were using the internet to call for attacks on mosques and Maghrebis. There have been neo-Nazi-inspired attacks, including arsons, on mosques as well as populist anti-mosque campaigns in certain localities. An association for the victims of terrorism has been accused by another victim support group of fomenting prejudice against Muslims.

June 2004: A skinhead gang armed with sticks and iron bars attacked an Algerian man near the M-30 mosque in Madrid, following calls by neo-Nazis on the internet to attack mosques and Maghrebis.⁶²

October 2005: Nine neo-Nazis, aged between 15 and 22, were charged with attempted arson on a mosque in Reus, in the south-east of Catalonia. The mosque had been daubed with racist graffiti the day before the attempted arson. This meant that mosque-goers immediately alerted the local police when suspicious youths were seen in two cars near the mosque. On arrest, the youths were

found to be in possession of weapons, including truncheons and chains, as well as aerosols and Nazi propaganda. One of the detainees had previous convictions for race crimes.⁶³

This is not the first time that the mosque at Reus has been targeted for attack. The vice president of the Cultural Association of Muslims of Reus and Comarca had already expressed concerns about the activities of a group operating under the acronym PCI (Partido Contra los Inmigrantes).

An association for the victims of terrorism has been accused of fuelling anti-Muslim prejudice for referring in its literature to 'countries of Muslim religion and enemies of the Christian World' and to 'Moroccan elements always deemed in every respect enemies of our nation'.⁶⁴ It had also demanded the closure of the M-30 mosque in Madrid and for the police to be given powers to enter and search 'all premises described as mosques or Islamic cultural centres'. It wants the criminal justice system to be provided with a 'list of all individuals of the Arab race' who have entered Spain legally, as well as those identified as illegal immigrants when they reach Spanish shores from 'an enemy country' such as Morocco, as well as 'checks on every Moroccan citizen entering or leaving Spain'. Pilan Manjón, who represents an alternative association for victims of terrorism, several members of which are Muslim, has refused to become party to any private action launched by the AVT, partly because of its anti-Muslim bias.

Local residents' associations have campaigned against mosques in Seville, Santa Coloma, Badalona and Alicante.

Seville: The Bermejales 2000 Residents' Association launched a campaign to oppose the building of a mosque in the south of the city on the grounds that it would fuel Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. The Federation of Neighbourhood Associations criticised the xenophobic tone of the campaign and a local authority councillor warned that the 'excesses of the residents' made it impossible to negotiate with them over the construction of the mosque which would go ahead, in a modified form, so that it was closer in size to the local Catholic church.⁶⁵

Santa Coloma: Following a local campaign against the construction of a mosque in the Singuerlin district and the arrest of a popular local imam, who was later released without charge, anti-Muslim feeling escalated. Imam Taufik Chedadi, who campaigned for peaceful coexistence between all

communities, was accused by the police of renting bookshop premises to immigrants in an armed gang. On his release he pointed out 'The mosque as much as the shop are public places where many people come and go and I do not ask them whether they are good or bad'.⁶⁶

Badalona: The Federation of Neighbourhood Associations of Badalona in Catalonia have criticised the Gord Residents Association for its 'xenophobic attitude' in opposing a mosque plan.⁶⁷

Gerencia, Alicante: Regional authorities in Gerencia have lodged an appeal against a ruling that the only mosque in the city should be closed down. The bid to close the mosque came from local residents in the same building as the mosque.⁶⁸

Sweden

The Integration Board's study 'Racism and Xenophobia in Sweden' found that approximately 40 per cent of Swedes surveyed had heard racist comments uttered against Muslims, while 14 per cent had witnessed Muslims being treated in an offensive way.

UK

Police statistics reveal a huge increase in racist incidents in the months following the 7 July London bombings, many against the Muslim community.⁶⁹ Figures show that racist attacks in Edinburgh doubled in the two months after the London bombings (169 incidents were reported to police in July and August, compared to 85 in May and June). On Merseyside, police statistics demonstrated an 87 per cent increase in incidents reported, compared to the same period last year. In July/August, the Metropolitan police announced that religious hate crimes had risen six-fold since the London bombings; Thames Valley police reported a 40 per cent increase in racially-aggravated crimes (comparing July 2004 with 2005); Yorkshire police reported a steep rise in racist attacks; Welsh police reported a significant rise in racial incidents, with the increase being most steep in North Wales; racially-motivated offences reported to Lancashire police have almost doubled.

Reports to victim support groups also confirm the trend. The Merseyside Racial Monitoring Unit received 200 calls in the six weeks after the London bombings, compared to 48 in the six weeks prior to the bombings. Victim Support Southwark

(south London) reported that racially-motivated crimes has almost doubled.

IRR News has been documenting anti-Muslim incidents following the London bombings of 7 July, which range from threats, letters and graffiti on mosques, to physical attacks and arson. For instance:

7 July: Two bottles containing an acellerant were thrown through the windows of a Sikh temple in Belvedere, Kent.

8 July: Al Madina Jamia mosque in Leeds was petrol-bombed.

9 July: An arson attack on Wirral Islamic Cultural Centre, Shajalal mosque in Birkenhead, caused damage and one man had to be rescued from the flames after white men poured petrol through the letter-box.

21 August: A 51-year-old imam at a Maidstone mosque was attacked and injured, his crutches were thrown away and a couple that came to his aid were abused.

6 September: Arsonists set fire to a mosque in St Leonards, near Hastings on the south coast – the latest in a series of attacks on the mosque which included the daubing of graffiti and smashing of windows.

Far-Right involvement in civil disturbances and gang attacks

Racial attacks are clearly being carried out by 'freelance' racists, but there is also cause for concern in the ability of the far-Right to organise confrontations at a street level.

Germany

Behind many of the attacks documented in the section above dealing with increased racism and the brutality of attacks, is the neo-Nazi strategy of taking over streets or even whole areas within the inner-city and transforming them into fascist-only zones.

Cottbus: Attacks in Pushkin Park have driven certain groups – foreign students, left-wingers and indeed anyone deemed different – from this public space. In one of the worst attacks recently documented, in Cottbus, neo-Nazis stormed an event organised by left-wing youngsters, hitting and kicking young people indiscriminately and smashing musical instruments and equipment.⁷⁰

Bernau, near Berlin: On 22 January, a few hours after forty neo-Nazis had demonstrated against an

alternative youth club, the premises were attacked with an explosive device. A party was being held on the premises at the time, but, luckily, the young people were not in the part of the building that suffered the most damage.⁷¹

Thuringia: Anti-fascists are anticipating that the neo-Nazi ability to foment street disorder in Thuringia (which was a heartland for the extreme-Right in the late 1920s and early 1930s) will increase due to the fact that the NPD and the DVU have bought several large properties there, probably for training purposes.⁷²

Neo-Nazis have also purchased properties in Böverden (Lower Saxony) and Rosenberg (Swabia), where the German People's Community Movement has purchased property.⁷³

Italy

In June 2005, following the killing of an Italian bartender in the northern town of Besano, and the arrest of two Albanians (see *Bulletin* 52), there were demonstrations in which members of neo-Nazi organisations, such as Blood & Honour, Viking Inter 1984 and the Ragazzi della Skinhouse, sang the national anthem with raised salutes, chanted anti-immigrant slogans and roamed the streets of the nearby city of Varese looking for immigrants to attack (at least one Albanian and one policeman were injured). It later transpired that the man who had been killed by the Albanians was himself a member of Blood & Honour and a known football hooligan.

Poland

Strategies similar to those in Germany of purging public places of foreigners seem to be at play in Poland. In Warsaw, a gang of fifteen skinheads attacked three children of Russian diplomats in a park. The Russian foreign ministry has accused Polish politicians of stirring up anti-Russian feeling, but Poland's ambassador to Moscow played down the attack, saying it was an attack by 'skinheads' against children, not Poles against Russians.⁷⁴

Sweden

The ability of neo-Nazis to foment street disorders has long been a concern to the authorities in Sweden and has been well-documented by the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*. Two major trials took place in 2005.

Eleven neo-Nazis, some of whom were members of National Youth and a network called Gothenburg Free Nationalists, have been sent to prison following a rampage through Gothenburg on 2 April 2005. During the rampage, which was aimed at left-wingers and led to an attack on a punk music event, neo-Nazis battered a man with dreadlocks on a tram and attacked his girlfriend. A couple who tried to phone the police to report this attack were pursued to their home, which was then vandalised.⁷⁵

Twenty-two neo-Nazis were arraigned under Sweden's new anti-terrorist laws. Four were accused of founding a neo-Nazi cell and going on a rampage through Västerås during which they smashed the windows of local schools and other public buildings. Prosecutors have accused them of engaging in a conspiracy to attack the Swedish parliament and chancellery buildings and planning to paralyse the electricity supply to parts of the country.⁷⁶

There is also concern that neo-Nazis are organising disturbances in schools, as noted by the National Agency for School Improvement which warned that security may have to be increased in schools if neo-Nazis continue their practise of trespassing on school property.

In September, an employee at a Stockholm school was attacked when he tried to stop half a dozen members of the National Democratic party from handing out leaflets. The same day, four young men described by the police as Nazi sympathisers beat up the principal of a school in southern Sweden. The school has actively worked against anti-immigrant extremism after a racist conflict several years ago.⁷⁷

Spain

As noted in previous sections, the far-Right has played a role in street disturbances in Jumilla (Murcia), Sabadell (Catalonia), and in the deprived Madrid suburb of Villaverde where they infiltrated street protests following the killing of a Spanish youth. Police at a local level seem to lack basic intelligence on the far-Right and were, particularly in the case of the Villaverde disturbances, totally unprepared to deal with the violence.

UK

The National Front (NF) and British National Party (BNP) are attempting to capitalise on the London

bombings and stir up racial tensions. On 24 July, the NF held a 300-strong demonstration outside Regents Park mosque as Muslims gathered for a conference.

A council by-election in Beacontree, east London, saw the BNP using images of the bombed London bus in its election material, with the caption 'maybe it's time to start listening to the BNP'.

Similar leaflets with the headline 'Islamic terror' have also been delivered to homes near a mosque in south London.

Absence of victim's perspective

In the report 'Policing racist crime and violence: a comparative analysis', the EUMC found that in twenty of the twenty-five EU member states police were not able to offer support to the victims of racist crime and violence. In another report 'Responses to Racist Violence by Member States', the EUMC stated that a major stumbling block to effective criminal justice responses to racial violence was the issue of non-reporting and non-recording. The simple fact is that if police services do not do not proactively pursue a 'victim-friendly' service which is geared to the needs of particular groups such as victims of racist violence, victims will not feel encouraged to report their victimisation.

In Germany, victim protection and support are generally seen as important duties of the police in all federal states, but in only a few police authorities are there official programmes for the victims of crimes motivated by xenophobia. The organisation Zivilcourage und Anti-rassismus gives counselling to the victims of racial violence, and yet the government has consistently failed to give it financial support. Following the general election, and the formation of a CDU-led coalition government, victim support organisations, currently funded through the model programme against racism and fascism administered by the Federal Ministry for Family and Social Affairs, are concerned that funding for counselling services will completely dry up.

Failure of education

Another primary concern of NGOs (and also of the police) is the fact that the perpetrators of racist violence are becoming younger. The second highest category of incidents of racist violence collated by

the Spanish Movement Against Intolerance involves adolescents and youth gangs. In Switzerland, the Service of Analysis and Prevention (SAP) of the Federal Ministry of Justice of Police says that more and more attacks are committed by young people, such as the arson attack against a reception centre for asylum seekers in Couvet (NE) in August 2004, where the oldest of the attackers was 15-years-old. In Glasgow, Scotland, it is reported that three racist attacks every week are committed by young people. In Sweden, as previously mentioned, the government is concerned that neo-Nazis are attempting to recruit schoolchildren and create disturbances in schools. And in Valencia, Spain, the neo-Nazi organisation Acción has targeted secondary school teachers who have a multiculturalist approach to education.

But even though evidence is growing of youth racism, governments seem short of solutions, particularly in the Netherlands where a culture of 'blaming the victim' has set in. The authorities in Uden have had to introduce special measures to deal with problem youth, following attacks on mosques in Brabant and evidence of increased racism amongst secondary school students. The government has also been provided with ample evidence that racist incidents involving so-called 'Lonsdale youth' (ie young people who express and associate themselves with extreme-Right ideas by wearing Lonsdale clothing) is multiplying and that new far-Right parties, the National Alliance and the New Right are attempting to exploit this home-grown racism by recruiting the 'Lonsdale youth'. Research carried out by Leiden University and the Anne Frank Foundation suggests that Lonsdale youth were involved in 25 per cent of the 105 anti-Muslim incidents that they recorded after the killing of Theo van Gogh in November 2004. The views of academics and NGOs are confirmed by a police intelligence unit in Utrecht (which claimed that the radicalisation of a hardcore of Dutch teens posed a threat which was potentially more dangerous than Islamic terrorism) and a police chief in Venlo who described Lonsdale youth as representing a 'powder keg'.⁷⁸ Police have also had to deal with youth street unrest in Venray (migrant and Dutch youth fought after an attack on a mosque); Dokkum (attack on an asylum centre, see above) and in Uden (Lonsdale youth were accused of setting fire to the local Islamic primary school). But despite concern about the increase in racism among Dutch youth, politicians and the Dutch

intelligence services have been short on solutions. A report by the Dutch intelligence service AIVD into the phenomenon of Lonsdale youth, published in July, was deeply contradictory in that it stated that racism amongst young people was growing, warned of dire consequences for social cohesion if clashes between white racist youth and migrant Dutch youth continued, but concluded that Lonsdale youth were often not extreme, as only 5 per cent of people who identified themselves with Lonsdale were really of the far-Right.⁷⁹

In Germany, the fact that young people are involved in repeat victimisation of ethnic minorities, or come to school dressed in full neo-Nazi combat gear, suggests that there is an urgent need to prioritise education, both to identify youth at risk of becoming perpetrators of racist violence and to establish where there are gaps in the syllabus vis-à-vis fostering an awareness of racism. But initiatives aimed at combating racial violence under the heading of 'hate crimes' may militate against anti-racist educational strategies, suggests the EUMC. It found recent moves in some member states to punish racist crimes and violence under the generic heading of 'hate crime', in focusing on equality of protection for all, can serve to homogenise experiences of hate that, in reality, impact differently on different groups. Reference to racist crime as 'hate crime' might be appropriate with respect to the activities of right-wing extremist groups, but is less helpful when addressing the racist activities of many young people/children who are not affiliated to right-wing extremist groups. Legislation against 'hate

In the southern German state of Baden Württemberg, some schools are attempting to impose a ban on children coming to school dressed in full neo-Nazi combat gear. Antje Fröhlich of the Reinhold-Nägele High School told the *Deutsche Welle* that 'Every tenth student regularly wears the right-wing extremist symbols'. The fact that a student turned up to school with a jacket stating 'European Master Race' pushed staff too far, and the teacher refused to allow the child into the classroom.⁸⁰

The prosecution of the Freikorps (see above) had also drawn attention to the involvement of young people in violence. One of the suspects had told fellow pupils that he intended to attack immigrant businesses and a teacher admitted in court that it was generally known who had been carrying out the arson attacks, but no teacher informed the police.

crime' might appear, at least on paper, to provide justice for victims and protection against offenders, but, in practice, it is not the most effective legal tool with which to address specific discriminatory and racist activities involving 'ordinary' young offenders.

Research has also shown that there is an increase in anti-Semitic incidents in Europe, and that anti-Semitism is growing in the school environment. Henrik Lunde, information officer at the Anti-Racist Centre in Oslo, says that the centre is being contacted by a growing number of desperate parents and teachers who find that children and adolescents deny the Holocaust after having read Nazi propaganda on the internet. Tore W. Twedt, chair of Vigdis, says that his group has stepped up its activities among schoolchildren and students 'to supply them with the answers they won't get in school'.⁸¹ The Intercommunity Centre for Coordination against Anti-Semitism and Defamation is concerned about increased anti-Semitic incidents in western Switzerland and has pointed out that in Geneva the far-Right is trying to recruit in schools. In France, Belgium and the Netherlands, there is also concern that Holocaust denial is not confined to young white people on the fringes of far-Right organisations, but is growing amongst second generation North African youth. There is evidence that minority youth from a Muslim background are blaming Jews collectively for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and instigating anti-Semitic incidents as a result. Often the incidents of anti-Semitic violence carried out by North African youth are treated in the press as evidence of a widespread anti-Jewish bias within Islam. But this is too simplistic (the youths' culture is less Islam than a sub-culture or 'street culture' similar to that experienced by US blacks). It also militates against those attempting to forge practical strategies to deal with this phenomenon through inter-communal dialogue and education. The Jewish-Arabic and Citizens' Group for Peace in Strasbourg, France, which has brought together hundreds of people to mobilise for a just peace in the Middle East and to work against related inter-communal tensions, is providing important insights in this respect. Through research with immigrant youth, it concluded that the exposure of these youth to racism (particularly from the police) since early childhood strongly influenced their identity, and has led to their identification with the Palestinians who, like them, were deprived of a

future, but were fighting back by resisting the Israeli occupation. From this, they forge anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about French Jews whom they associate with Israel. The more that networks are developed for these youth, for example through better integration into the labour market or in community associations, the less they revert to stereotyping Jews as an outlet for their fears and social frustrations, the researchers concluded.⁸²

Another important indicator of inter-communal tensions, in part arising from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has arisen in the Dutch city of Antwerp, where Jews, attracted by its anti-Muslim message, are joining the far-Right Vlaams Belang (VB). There is an urgent need here, too, for educational strategies targeted at Jewish youth as well as those of North African origin. Filip Dewinter, the leader of the VB and mayoral candidate for Antwerp, has claimed in an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* that his far-Right party is an objective ally of the Jewish community. And in an interview in the US *Jewish Week* he claimed that the VB was not xenophobic but 'Islamophobic' and implied that Jews searching for safety against anti-Semitism would be well represented in a party which fought the 'Islamicisation of Europe' which threatens Jews as its first victims and recognises that 'Europe is becoming just as dangerous for Jews as Egypt or Algeria'.⁸³

In all respects, anti-racist educational strategies need to be adopted that do not start from a separatist, cultural compensatory approach but are geared towards dealing with inter-communal tensions in poor areas where different groups are often competing for limited resources. Clashes in Birmingham (UK) between Asians and African-Caribbeans and in Perpignan (France) between youths from a North African background and Gypsies, suggest that educational strategies aimed at community cohesion and fomenting an atmosphere of mutual tolerance are required. Too often in these cases it is young people who are the tragic victims of the inter-ethnic tension. In Lozells, Birmingham, a 23-year-old black youth, Isiah Young-Sam was killed on the streets during a weekend of violence between Asian and African-Caribbean youth on October 22/3 2005.⁸⁴

The most far-sighted politicians are working to end segregation and unite communities so as to bring about dialogue between different ethnic

groups at a local level. Ken Livingstone, mayor of London and Job Cohen, mayor of Amsterdam, have both made it a priority to unite communities after the tragedies of the London bombings and the murder of Theo van Gogh, respectively. And Cohen refused to over-dramatise a situation that arose after the media claimed that some pupils at a primary school in the city celebrated the murder of Theo van Gogh and approved the Holocaust. He did, however, order an investigation, saying that research would be carried out in several schools in the city.⁸⁵

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Eliminating electoral racism

The failure of states to protect minority communities from racial violence is compounded by the opportunistic way in which race, religion and immigration are discussed in local, regional and federal elections.

Over the past year, the following trends have been observed:

- Xenophobic slogans and propaganda deployed in campaigning shows electoral parties are using language which itself borders on incitement to racism.
- To old xeno-racist 'arguments' have been added new themes: Turkish entry into the EU, the need to legislate against the wearing of the hijab (see Appendix), the failure of multiculturalism, and the formation of 'immigrant ghettos'.
- Mainstream political parties are attempting to neutralise the far Right by speaking to the fears and prejudices of its electoral base. Whether this strategy is successful is debatable. But the long-term effects are the collusion of mainstream parties in demonising vulnerable groups and the shifting of the centre of gravity to the right on matters of race. (An excellent analysis of the failures inherent in such a strategy, which he describes as 'triangulation', was made by the British Labour MP Jon Cruddas)¹
- Politicians from non-European backgrounds are being treated by their colleagues in a ways which can be either offensive or overtly racist. Political opponents of extreme-Right parties have been the victims of death threats.

Country summaries

Austria

The Freedom party's (FPÖ) candidate Heinz-Christian Strache gained 15 per cent of the vote in Vienna in the October 2005 regional elections by concentrating on two issues – immigration and the question of Turkish entry into the EU – in a campaign widely perceived as xenophobic. Although the FPÖ got 5.3 per cent less than it did in the last Vienna elections (and that, in turn, was 7 per cent less than the time before), the result of 14.9 per cent was seen as a victory because it was well ahead of the pre-election polls prediction of 10 per cent.

Turkey was a central issue. On the internet, Strache presented himself in a blue-and-gold Superman costume as the saviour of Vienna from

the Turks. A poster carried the slogans 'Duel about Vienna' and 'Vienna must not become Istanbul' against a two-part picture, one half showing Social Democratic Party of Austria candidate Michael Häupl with a mosque behind him and the other half showing Strache with the spire of Vienna's St Stephen's cathedral behind him – conveying the message that that was the voters' choice. The poster was withdrawn in response to a court order after the Ecumenical Council and other church associations complained about the misuse of religious symbols.

Other slogans utilised by Strache included: 'Remaining master in one's own House'; 'Pummerin instead of Muezzin' ('Pummerin' is the bell in Vienna's St Stephen's which was forged, in 1683, from canons left by the Ottoman army that had laid siege to Vienna); 'Work instead of immigration'; 'The real Viennese must not go under' (This slogan refers to a popular TV series from the 1970s); 'German instead of "I no understand"'; and 'Free women instead of obligatory headscarf'.²

Haider's newly-formed Alliance for Austria's Future (BNÖ) scored poorly, obtaining only 1.7 per cent of the popular vote in Haider's Carinthia stronghold and a mere 1.1 percent in Vienna.

Belgium

As previously noted, Felip Dewinter, Vlaams Belang (VB) mayoral candidate for Antwerp in the October 2006 elections, is attempting to court the Jewish vote by presenting the VB as an Islamophobic party. There is concern that the *cordon sanitaire* around the VB which prevents them governing Antwerp will end after Flemish Senator Hugo Coveliers broke from the Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (VLD) to form a new, yet unnamed, movement which is expected to align itself with the VB.³

The mayor of Sint-Niklaas, Freddy Willockx, received death threats in the mail and was sent a suspicious white powder (which turned out to be sugar) shortly after he criticised the VB for falsely claiming that Muslims were behind cemetery desecrations.

Denmark

As previously noted, the mayoral elections in Copenhagen were dominated by issues of immigration, with DFP mayoral candidate Louise Frevert accused of inciting racism by allowing anti-Muslim remarks to be posted on her website.

Frevert has also been criticised for the debate forum on her web-homepage. Within 24 hours of its launch on 3 October it was full of neo-Nazi propaganda. Comments included pleas to fight for a 'green and pleasant land for White Danes only' and to support the Danish Nazi Party. The comments were such that the DFP leader distanced herself from Frevert who then announced that she would take leave from her duties as a member of parliament until after the local elections of 15 November 2005.⁴

In October, the debate was reignited after a newsletter posted on the DFP website cited the belief of leader Pia Kjaersgaard that large areas of Denmark's inner cities are populated by immigrants who exist on a lower level of civilisation than Danes. Kjaersgaard stated that 'thousands and thousands of people who culturally, spiritually and in terms of the civilisation process, still act as though its 1005 now find themselves in 2005 and in a country that put the dark ages behind it hundreds of years ago.'⁵

Soren Pind, the *Liberal* party's mayoral candidate, in focusing on the spread of immigrant ghettos, called on the government to suspend access to publicly-funded housing in municipalities until the ratio of ethnic Danes and immigrants living there reflects the balance of society. 'Where does it say that immigrants have the same right to an apartment as Danish citizens?' Pind asked.⁶

France

The FN and the Mouvement pour la France (MPF) are jockeying for first position on the extreme-Right in the run-up to the 2007 presidential elections and the result is an intensification of anti-immigration, anti-Muslim rhetoric. Following the riots in October and November, there is concern about the 'LePenisation of political debate'.

'Islamicisation'

MPF leader Philippe De Villiers (dubbed 'The Duplicator' by Le Pen who accuses him of imitation) has spoken of the need to 'stop the gradual Islamicisation of French society' by defending 'popular patriotism'; he wants to end the

'eldorado of social advantages for clandestines' and ban 'marriages of convenience and polygamy'. He has vowed to create a national guard to 'control our borders and sermons preached in some mosques' and to set up a 'national civic service for one year to awaken each young French man to French values.'⁷ The Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les Peuples (MRAP) has filed a complaint with the High Authority to Combat Discrimination and for Equality against De Villiers after he declared on TV station TF1 on 16 July that the 'Third World War has been declared... We cannot continue to watch, powerlessly, the progressive Islamicisation of French society'.⁸

Turkey

De Villiers has also promised to make the presidential elections the 'second round' of the referendum on the European constitution, stating that 'It's either France in Europe or Turkey, but not both'. In this he is supported by a wider anti-Turkish constituency which includes groups such as The Voice of the French Rebirth 95' (vdF) led by Count Henry de Lesquen, which argues that 'Turkey is an historical enemy of Europe and a demographic and religious danger', Bruno Mégret's Mouvement National Republican (MNR) and Jeunesses Identitaires.⁹

Immigration

Le Pen has also upped the rhetoric on immigration by warning of a 'migration tsunami'. 'From Ceuta to Melilla is Europe's new first line of defence and Europe has just given in to forceful immigration' he told 3,000 people at the annual FN Blue White and Red event. 'This wave is even submerging our overseas départements' he continued, claiming that it was necessary to attack the reform of the 'suicidal French social model' in order to curb 'massive immigration from the Third World and its consequences: impoverishment, unemployment, insecurity and fear'.¹⁰ In terms of Turkish accession to the EU, Le Pen has focused on the issue of Cyprus. Anti-fascists in Cyprus condemned a visit to the country which they declared was aimed at strengthening racist and chauvinistic groups in Cyprus which promote the idea that coexistence and cooperation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots was unachievable.

Response to 'riots'

The inflammatory language of interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who referred to 'scum' on the housing estates who should be flushed-out, has

been seen by many as a deliberate attempt to copy the populism of Le Pen. In response to the 'riots' in France in October and November 2005, Le Pen (in an interview with the BBC) called for the revocation of the rioters' nationality. (Sarkozy had already promised to deport 'foreign rioters' regardless of their residence rights.) Le Pen also said that 'if their parents and grandparents came to France thinking it was an Eldorado and if their grandchildren believe there aren't any opportunities, they can always return to their country of origin'. Addressing an FN rally, Le Pen stated that 'we let in 10 million foreigners over 30 years – it's wild insanity. No country can handle that invasion'.¹¹ De Villiers, for his part, was keen to locate the causes of the riots in polygamy, stating that 80,000 polygamous families had entered France since 1981 and blaming the government for not taking 'definitive measures to outlaw polygamy'.¹²

Germany

While the far-Right electoral parties deployed explicitly anti-foreigner slogans in campaign literature and called for the expulsion of immigrants, issues of immigration linked to national security and patriotism have dominated the September 2005 federal election campaign as a whole. Former SPD Chancellor Helmut Schmidt shocked many people by allying himself with the CDU's opposition to Turkish EU membership on the grounds that 'The Turks belong to a completely different cultural domain from us'. (Schmidt also called for an end to 'immigration from alien cultures'.)¹³

Exploiting patriotism

CSU Bavarian interior minister Günther Beckstein stated that either the country should accept 'massive immigration', the policy of the present government, or the nation should produce more children following a CDU/CSU victory, thanks to a Conservative family policy. CDU Bundestag deputy (Saxony) Harry Nitzsche courted controversy by using the words 'Work, family, fatherland' as his electoral slogan¹⁴ (the same slogan used by the NPD at its annual congress the previous year and the motto of the French Vichy regime during the second world war). There was also criticism of the patriotic language deployed by New Left Party leader Oskar Lafontaine. During an election speech, he referred to foreign workers as 'Fremdarbeiter' (a

term used by the nazis to describe slave labourers) and said that it was the state's business to protect society from 'foreign workers' taking jobs from Germans.¹⁵

A Republican party poster used the slogan 'Work for Wojciech – Hartz IV for Germans' (Wojciech is a typical Polish name, while Hartz IV refers to controversial government reforms to the benefits system limiting social support to the long-term unemployed.)¹⁶ The fact that far-Right activists joined trades union demonstrations against the reforms, and on occasion even co-organised protest actions, has been noted with concern by the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*.

Stigmatising Muslims as terrorists

Both the centre-Right and centre-Left parties made national security a central issue, with the CDU's Beckstein particularly singling out the Muslim community. After the London bombings Beckstein called for increased surveillance of the Muslim community, telling the *Berliner Zeitung* that 'We have to know what's going on in every mosque'.¹⁷ The interior minister of Lower Saxony, Uwe Schünemann called for random controls at mosques to be increased.¹⁸ Following the murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, Annette Schaven, deputy chair of the CDU, had proposed that it should be made obligatory for imams to preach only in German.¹⁹

An NPD poster featured the image of two women with headscarves and the words 'Bye, bye. Go home'. Another showed a picture of departing Muslim women and the turret of a mosque under the slogan 'Have a good trip home!'.²⁰

Death threats and insults to Muslim parliamentarian

The leader of the Greens in Hesse, Tarek Al-Wazir, was subjected to insults from a CDU deputy who has been linked to numerous far-Right publications. Tarek Al-Wazir was born in Germany (his mother is German and his father from the Yemen) and yet when Hans-Jürgen Irmer writes about Al-Wazir in *Junge Freiheit* he always adds the additional name of 'Mohamed'. Al-Wazir says that this crude attempt to stigmatise him for his racial origins is inexcusable 'in a country where at one time in the past citizens were given the second names Israel and Sarah because of whom they were descended from'.

Mr. Al-Wazir has received hate mail and death threats, many of which have Irmer's articles in

Wetzlar-Kurier and the *Nationalzeitung* attached. Frank Gotthardt, secretary of the CDU faction reproaches Al-Wazir for speaking out against the threatening letters, suggesting that they were not unjustified. 'People write you letters because they notice that here and there in our society, something is amiss' he said.²¹

Italy

Politicians' use of xenophobic language came to the fore when the Northern League justice minister implied that foreign residents were 'chimps' and the Forza Italia speaker of the senate deployed discredited arguments about race. Speaker of the senate, Marcello Pera (a member of Forza Italia and second to the presidency in Italy's institutional hierarchy) has been accused of inciting racial hatred after he stated at a meeting of young Catholics in northern Italy that 'In Europe, the population is decreasing, the doors are open to uncontrolled immigration and we will all become members of a mixed race.'²² Pera is a professor of philosophy at the University of Pisa and a leading proponent of the idea that Europe should reaffirm its Christian roots.

Another Forza Italia MP has been accused of anti-Semitism. Guido Crosseto claimed that the Bank of Italy Governor Antonio Fazio, involved in a controversial banking takeover probe, was the victim of a 'Jewish, masonic plot'. 'The liquidity of Italian banks is inviting for a lot of people, especially the Jewish and American freemasons who are already at our doors', he said. Prime Minister Berlusconi apologised to those who were offended by the remarks.²³

The Northern League (NL) is challenging a proposal by centre-Left politicians to grant foreign residents the right to vote. NL minister of justice, Roberto Calderoli, describes the centre-Left proposal to grant foreign residents the right to vote as a bid 'to go against the Constitution and Italian law' in order 'just to be more popular, among chimps'.²⁴

As previously noted, the NL has been at the forefront of several campaigns against mosques. A new NL publication entitled *Islam and Terrorism* details sixty-four ways of launching a war against Islam. The book includes the statement 'There is no such thing as a moderate Islam. It's simply a smokescreen to cover fundamentalist Islam.' Carolina Lussana, a spokesperson for the NL says 'We are under attack and must defend ourselves. This is a culture war'.²⁵

In *Bulletin 52* we drew attention to claims by the European Roma Information Office that anti-Gypsy racism was providing an 'electoral bonanza' for politicians, with NL campaigners, in particular, fanning the flames of hatred.

Malta

Although not directly related to electoral politics, a speech by the leader of Malta's largest trades unions attacking immigrant workers has generated much political and public debate. As have the views of Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici, a former leader of the Labour party, who now heads the Campaign for National Independence (CNI) and believes that Malta has lost its independence over the issue of illegal immigration.

Salvu Sammut, leader of the General Workers' Union, told its annual congress that illegal immigrants were 'taking jobs from Maltese workers' and that Malta may be forced to take measures which were not necessarily 'just and humane' to solve the crisis. Foreign prostitutes earned double the minimum wage and exposed the Maltese to undetected diseases, he said, and the Maltese felt understandable frustration when illegal immigrants were given preference at hospitals. 'The first illegal immigrant who landed in Malta was St Paul. At least he gave us a Christian culture and left after three months. But what good are modern illegal immigrants doing us? They need food, clothing, education and social services and they want to give birth to their races amongst us.'²⁶ The speech became big news as Alternattiva Demokratika chair Dr Harry Vassallo walked out of the congress in protest. Dr Vassallo said that the speech inflamed racial hatred. It was the business of trade unions to address the exploitation and near slavery to which many migrant workers were exposed and that no 'self-respecting trades unionist could possibly inflame workers against other workers who are evidently at a greater disadvantage than themselves and who are facing the same illegal exploitation'.²⁷

Chair of the CNI, Karmenu Mifsud Bonnici, speaking on the 41st anniversary of Malta's independence, said that those arriving illegally in Malta should be expelled and if this was not possible immediately, then they should be held in detention. He called on the government to take all necessary health precautions against the risk of disease.²⁸

Norway

In the September general election, the extreme-Right Progress party (Fr.P) took 22.1 per cent of the vote, leaving it with 37 seats in parliament (its best vote ever). Its pre-election campaign brochure featured on its cover an image of a man wearing a balaclava and brandishing a shotgun alongside the quote 'The perpetrator is of foreign origin.' The brochure then states that 'For the Fr.P a stricter immigration policy and a stricter crime policy is about safety... Safety for people to walk the streets without fear of being raped or robbed'. The Anti-Racist Centre described the brochure as 'not worthy of a Norwegian political party' and the leader of the Liberal party commented that 'The Progress party plays on the fear of foreigners. I expected that this would happen during the election but I think it is sad.'²⁹

Switzerland

The Swiss People's Party's campaign targets vulnerable minority communities and foreign residents seeking naturalisation.

During the run up to the referendum on whether the Swiss labour market should be opened up to new EU members, a flyer distributed by the Swiss People's Party stated 'We must unfortunately make you redundant by 25 September 2005 because you are too expensive. Thanks to the free movement of people, we can hire foreigners that cost us much less than you.'³⁰

The Swiss People's Party is organising a petition to test a Federal Court ruling. It had stated that failed candidates for Swiss citizenship should be given a reason for their rejection, in a bid to avoid arbitrary decisions (voters in the town of Emmen, near Lucerne, turned down nearly 100 applications from foreigners, mostly from the Balkans, allegedly for racist reasons). The People's Party says that the court verdict should be overruled, and that cantons and local authorities should be given full autonomy. It also wants to make it impossible for rejected candidates to appeal.³¹

In cantonal elections in Geneva, the new populist right-wing Geneva Citizen's Movement (GCM) scored 7.7 per cent of the vote, cutting into support for far-left parties. The GCM was part of a coalition of groups which organised opposition to the extension of a labour accord with the European Union to the ten new member states. The right-wing Swiss People's Party earned an extra seat, taking its total to eleven.³²

UK

A report from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust suggests that the main issue driving support for the British National Party (BNP) in outer east London is immigration. In the same report Jon Cruddas MP warns of the dangers of the government's strategy of triangulation (attempting to neutralise negative political issues regarding race, immigration and asylum). Such a strategy is carried out without consideration of its impact on vulnerable communities which are being increasingly stigmatised as the centre of gravity moves to the right on matters of race. According to Cruddas, the government 'triangulates around immigration and colludes in the demonisation of the migrant whilst relying on the self same people to rebuild our public and private services and make our labour markets flexible.'³³

In response to the London bombings of July 7, several prominent Conservative politicians have called multiculturalism 'outdated' and a multicultural society an 'impossibility'. David Davis, a candidate for the leadership of the Conservative Party, criticised the emphasis on a multicultural society which allowed for expressions of diversity and rejection of assimilation. Lord Tebbit, a former Conservative Party chairman, went further saying a 'multicultural society is an impossibility' and that the Muslim religion was 'so unreformed since it was created that nowhere in the Muslim world has there been any real advance in science or art or literature, or technology in the last 500 years'. However, the Conservative Party distanced itself from the views of the spokesperson for defence Gerald Howarth who called on British-born Muslims, who did not feel an allegiance to the UK, to leave voluntarily. In an interview with *The Scotsman*, Howarth accepted that the majority of Muslims adhered to British values, but said that those Muslims who 'don't like our way of life' should 'go to another country, get out'. When the interviewer put it to him that some Muslims who criticise the UK were born there, he replied 'Tough. If you don't give allegiance to this country, then leave'.³⁴

In *Bulletin 52* we also drew attention to claims that the Conservative Party were fostering anti-Gypsy sentiment for electoral gain.

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Appendix

Measures targeting religious clothing

Asma Jahangir, special Rapporteur on religious freedom of the UN Human Rights Committee, has warned that laws banning religious symbols can cut both ways. On the one hand, they can protect young girls for example if their parents demand they wear the headscarf. But the laws can also stigmatise Muslim women, can lead to abuse in educational institutions, which result in feelings of humiliation. And they also risk radicalising religious beliefs.¹ Some regional authorities in Europe have banned the wearing of the niqab and the burkha in public places – citing concerns about safety and identification after the Madrid and London bombings. But, with the number of Muslim women wearing such facial coverings in Europe being small, it appears that extreme-Right politicians and some sections of the media have overblown the issue to suggest it is a big problem.

Belgium: There is no ban against the wearing of the hijab in Belgium, but some local authorities are outlawing the wearing of the burka and the niqab in public places. In the town of Maaseik, the mayor introduced a municipal bylaw outlawing the niqab in the streets and public places. Six Muslim women (out of a total estimated Muslim population of 700) wore the niqab, and five were persuaded by the mayor to give it up. One woman (the wife of a man facing terrorism charges related to the Madrid bombings) continues to wear the niqab and has been repeatedly fined.²

Denmark: Minister for refugees, immigration and integration Rikke Hvilshoj has indicated that Denmark may well follow the Dutch lead in banning the wearing of the burkha in public.³

France: The Ministry of National Education has reported that the problem of wearing religious symbols in schools has practically disappeared thanks to the ban, and that many young girls and parents now feel 'liberated'. However, critics of the ban point out that this positive evaluation does not take into account those pupils who have chosen to be educated abroad, in private schools or through the National Centre for Education at a Distance (CNED). Nor does it take into account the effect of the ban on Sikh pupils who have been under an obligation to remove turbans or face disciplinary measures or expulsion.

A test case could be brought by the Association

against Islamophobia in France against an article in the civil code which apparently prohibits the wearing of religious symbols at a marriage ceremony. It may be brought in support of Naouel Chiliah, who, in September 2005 was prevented from being a witness at her brother's marriage in the town hall of Morez, Jura, because she was wearing a headscarf.⁴

Chetouani El Khamsa, a Moroccan living in France legally for eight years, has had her application for long-term residency denied, because she wears the hijab.⁵

Italy: The government has ruled against any ban of the hijab in state schools and institutions. This followed pronouncements by Northern League (NL) politicians in June that Muslim women covering their faces in public should be fined. The (then) NL mayor of Treviso, Venice, Giancalo Gentilini (popularly known as 'the sheriff') issued a directive in Autumn 2004 prohibiting women from covering their faces (he argued that this was in line with anti-terrorist measures introduced after the London bombings of 7 July). But in August 2005, a court upheld the appeal of a young Muslim woman of Bengali origin who was apprehended in September 2004 as she was accompanying her son to school for wearing a burka on the grounds that the burka violated anti-terrorist laws. According to Gentilini, 'Muslims must go around in jacket and trousers so as to avoid there being any covered body parts, otherwise there could be a terrorist under every robe'.⁶

Several small towns in Italy, including Como, have invoked legislation introduced by Mussolini that bans hiding one's face in public to impose fines on women who wear the burka.⁷

Netherlands: Minister for education, Maria van der Hoeven, has called for a ban on the wearing of the burka at schools at the same time as acknowledging that she was not aware of there being a single case of a pupil or teacher wearing a burka to school. Some Dutch municipalities, such as Antwerp and Ghent, have passed bylaws similar to those adopted in Belgium. Muslim organisations estimate that the number of women wearing the burka in the Netherlands is no more than a few dozen.

Interior minister Rita Verdonk had already indicated that she was studying an opinion by the

Equal Treatment Committee that says that garments covering the face can be banned 'if it hinders communication and identification, or affects security in schools.' The ban is likely to be enforced in shops, public buildings, cinemas and on public transport.

In 2004, two Muslim women lost a court case against their college that had banned them from wearing burkas during their social work and childcare course. The judge backed the college in its claim that children had to be able to see who was caring for them.⁸

The city of Utrecht has demanded that women on welfare benefits stop wearing a facial veil if it prevents them from finding a job and states that if they refuse to comply, the municipality will cut back on their social benefits. The decision came following the case of two Muslim women who said that they would refuse to take off the burqa for a job interview; they said that wearing a headscarf instead for the interview was not acceptable.⁹

A Muslim woman of Tunisian origin, Samira Haddad, has taken a successful action to the Equality Commission against the Islamic College of Amsterdam, which rejected her for a job because she did not wear the hijab.¹⁰

Switzerland: The cantons of Geneva and Fribourg have banned the wearing of religious symbols of any kind in schools. In Fribourg, the local authority has banned school employees from wearing the headscarf. Two young women, temporarily employed in August to look after children after school hours, have been dismissed for refusing to take off their headscarves at work. A local Muslim association has taken up their case of unfair dismissal.¹¹

UK: The Court of Appeal has ruled that Denbigh High School in Luton denied Shabina Begum the 'right to education and to manifest her religious beliefs' when they excluded her from school for wearing the jilbab.¹²

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