

Open letter to all Muslims living in Europe

Salaam aleikum, Salam Sheddi,

Since it was never your intention, as a Muslim living in Europe, to adapt to or integrate into our way of life, I greet you in a language that you not only hear but also understand. You reside here, live here, work here, and benefit from all the social and other advantages Europe has to offer. Europeans welcomed you hospitably and, naively, provided you with every facility to make you feel 'at home' among us. Diversity, tolerance, and multiculturalism were, and remain, the message...

Unfortunately, you have rarely made the effort to become a European among Europeans. You have built mosques, numbering in the thousands by now; you send your children to Quran schools; you compel your women to wear veils and headscarves; you stubbornly persist in speaking Arabic or Turkish; you eat and buy halal food in your own restaurants and shops and abstain from beer or wine; you pledge allegiance to Allah rather than to our constitution; you strive for your own religiously inspired legal code ('Sharia'); and you despise our way of life, regarding us Europeans as decadent and reprehensible.

It is therefore high time, in the spirit of that much-lauded diversity, tolerance, and multiculturalism, to turn the tables. That is why my family and I have decided to move to a Muslim country. We haven't yet settled on which one, as we are busy comparing which country offers the best package of social benefits and facilities.

Naturally, we won't be coming alone. We would love to bring our extended family, children and grandchildren, siblings, parents and grandparents, cousins, along with us. The neighbours and a few friends are interested, too. And the neighbours' neighbours. And their friends. And their friends' friends. Before you know it, half of Europe, armed with a vague sense of entitlement, will be packed and ready on the doorstep of your home country.

Long live diversity, right?

Hospitality is important. You surely understand that we have no intention of becoming Muslim or adapting to the customs and practices of your country, people, culture, and religion. After all, we consider them backward and medieval.

Mosques aren't our thing, so we would like to ask that churches be built in every neighbourhood of every city, as well as in smaller municipalities. Real churches, with bells. Nice, loud bells that can be heard from the village square. Respect for our holidays, Easter, Christmas, etc., is naturally part of the deal, including school holidays and paid time off work.

Halal isn't something we fancy either. You'll surely understand that. That is why we would like our own shops, as well as food suited to our tastes in your supermarkets and restaurants.

Every supermarket must stock fresh pork! You know: ham, bacon, hamburgers, and sausages—and, of course, a wide selection of alcoholic beverages. The French and Italians prefer wine; the Germans and English prefer beer... but with a little goodwill, that can be managed. Although we are a minority, you surely realise that *you* will have to adapt to *our* lifestyle, not the other way around.

Tolerance is the key!

We also like to bring our pets along. Dogs, especially—lots of dogs... We know you consider these animals 'unclean,' but surely a little understanding is possible? Expect plenty of happy Labradors and surly German Shepherds, as well as smaller breeds for which you will undoubtedly want to provide dog parks.

Following the example of Kreuzberg, the Schilderswijk, Brixton, Belleville, La Castellane, Molenbeek, Borgerhout, and so many other 'Little Kabul' ghetto neighborhoods—rife with drug trafficking, racketeering, crime, and money-laundering front shops in Paris, Antwerp, London, Marseille, Brussels, Hamburg, and Amsterdam; we would certainly be happy, in return for your hospitality, to provide some 'European-style' districts in your cities featuring gambling dens, strip clubs, 'houses of pleasure,' and other shady bars...

Yes, we love to party: Discos, pubs, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs are our thing. Young people especially love it. Festivals, too, with loud music and plenty of wild, uninhibited fun. Naturally, we enjoy a good glass of beer or wine now and then, but surely that can't be the problem...

Oh, and barbecues are also totally our thing! The smell of marinated spare ribs and grilled pork skewers- we love it! We party all year round, by the way, not just for some religious occasion like Eid al-Adha or Eid al-Fitr... Please keep that in mind.

Since we're on the subject anyway, your religious festivals and customs are a bit... over the top. Praying five times a day and all that. Admit it, you could dial it back a bit. Don't get grumpy now, but surely you understand that we, despite everything, have our own principles too, and we take offence at all those religious symbols and clothing: headscarves, hijabs, chadors, and even burqas- they look like parasols; that's not for us.

Allah here and Muhammad there... Look, seriously now, in Europe, we respect the separation of church and state! I'm convinced you don't mean to hurt us, so we'd appreciate it if you could keep all that to a minimum. No more headscarves in public buildings or schools. Neutrality and secularism in the name of diversity.

That sort of thing. I really appreciate any help you can provide.

We would greatly appreciate it if a few modest facilities could be provided, especially for our children. After all, our children should be able to eat the food they are used to in schools and day-care centres. Hamburgers and the occasional piece of pork should be allowed, even on school trips and the like.

We also demand education in our own language, as we have absolutely no intention of teaching our children Arabic. You must admit that is merely a modest request...

Yes, language, that is important... As far as we are concerned, a few words of Arabic or Turkish should suffice. For the rest, we want English, French, German, or another European language. Depending on the minority group settling among you, this is important to appear on shop windows and in official government communications.

Rest assured, you are free to keep speaking Arabic or Turkish, but please include our language for translation purposes. After all, communication is important.

And one more thing: we have rights, too... If any of this is denied, we must be given the chance to protest. So, tweak your legislation a bit. Naturally, you want nothing to do with racism and discrimination.

Set up institutions and courts to guarantee equal opportunities and human rights; appoint plenty of ombudsmen and ombudswomen; designate mediation teams and diversity officers to safeguard our rights; and, finally, be strict and decisive with anyone who holds a different view on the matter! Give intolerance no chance! Racism? Absolutely not!

One more thing: football is our true religion! If our children and young people burn or tear up your flag, set cars on fire, and loot shops because Italy, Germany, or Spain has won a football match, please be understanding. Sorry in advance, but they are 'youths,' and haven't we all been young once?

Finally, a thorny issue. I find it somewhat awkward to bring this up, but spontaneous integration is difficult without funds. A lack of opportunities, adjustment issues, and language or educational deficits- you know the drill! Urgent action is needed here! That is why we, or rather, *you* should be especially generous and open-handed.

After all, the economic value we create cannot be expressed in monetary terms. Before long, we will be providing nurses and elderly care workers to look after your parents.

And let us not forget our children, who will eventually graduate as doctors, architects, engineers, and teachers from your tuition-free universities and colleges... But before that happens, and it could take several generations, just one word: SOLIDARITY! So: generous benefits, free housing, and free public transport while we laboriously 'integrate while preserving our own culture' over the next six generations. Working is optional for now, but you already knew that.

Thank you in advance for your hospitality and tolerance, things that Islam certainly guarantees.

After all, diversity is our strength, Inshallah.

Shokran jazilan & kind regards,

A reasonable European

PS: If it is hot where you are, really hot, I would like to emphasise that burkinis and the like aren't for us. Too hot! That's why we prefer freedom and fun on the beach and in the few public pools - do you even have any? - with Speedos for the men and monokinis for the ladies. If need be, we could always arrange separate swimming hours and separate beaches.