

Press release

Result of the initiative on facial coverings – What next?

March 7, 2021

We are disappointed about the result of the vote. This is mixed with a certain frustration, as we were not expecting that the Swiss people would allow symbol politics to be pursued and carried out on the back of a few Muslim women. The symbol politics campaign has indeed harmed Muslim women and men, but it has also harmed Switzerland by undermining its own values. Accepting the initiative will not help much women. Anchoring dress codes in the constitution is not a liberation struggle for women but a step back into the past. Equality of treatment is to be addressed differently and there is still a lot to be done from that perspective.

Societal values of Switzerland

The Swiss tradition is characterized by values of neutrality, tolerance and peacemaking. These values have suffered with this debate. We must get back to strengthening an open and progressive Switzerland that goes beyond low-grade political maneuvering. Fundamental societal values must no longer be undermined.

Inclusion without further exclusion

After the Sonderbund event in 1848, religious diversity and freedom have shaped modern Switzerland. Islam as a religion is part of the diversity of Switzerland, and Muslims have long been part of Switzerland and its population. Just as each human being, Muslims also have a multifaceted identity; they belong here and will not leave the country. We are part of the society and expect to be treated as such. Anti-Muslim racism must no longer be tolerated, and more discrimination is unacceptable. Further dress code restrictions do not belong in the constitution and should not be part of the law.

Further strengthening bonds

The heated debate of the recent months has damaged the existing bridges with the Muslim community. It is therefore necessary to promote social dialogue again. We see a pressing need for concrete actions with the Muslims living here. Successful coexistence can only work when the majority society allows minorities to participate in social life, holds discussions at an equal level and protects them in cases of obvious unequal treatment. Such actions are still too seldom today. The media and social debate should no longer be about Muslims, but should be conducted with them.

Addressing the Muslims in Switzerland

The debate should not discourage anyone. The valuable voluntary work that Muslims have been doing for decades should be continued. We can only work together with united forces towards an inclusive society that allows everyone to participate equally in social life. It takes courage and a lot of energy to advance on this path. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all those who contribute to creating a peaceful life in this country.



Regensdorf, 07.03.2021

Our demand to the politicians

We are part of the society and we expect to be treated as such. As human beings, we continue to expect perspectives for the future and we do no longer tolerate being instrumentalized in such a way. As stated by the Federal Commission on Migration in its position paper on March 3rd 2021, " there is a need for an unreserved acceptance of Islam as a religion that has, in its many different expressions, already become part of the society and belongs to Switzerland ". This reinforces today the idea of examining the recognition of Muslims as a national minority. Hate and hatred must come to an end. We look forward to an inclusive, diverse and positive future together in Switzerland, in which everyone can participate.

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