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Angela Ilić

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BOTH INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS: IDENTITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE DISCOURSE OF ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES IN CROATIA AND SERBIA CONCERNING EUROPEAN INTEGRATION¹

Angela Ilić

Introduction

The European Union has been hit hard by the international financial crisis, which has contributed to weakening the already precarious economies of member states such as Greece, Spain, and Portugal. Concurrently, the Union has been experiencing an identity crisis, with lack of clarity and consensus about which shared values hold the diverse states of Europe together beyond the common economic and political interests. Both processes have led to increased Euroskepticism across the continent.² Parallel to these developments an alarming upsurge in religiously and racially intolerant rhetoric and even acts of violence have occurred. One need only to think of the horrific attacks in and around Paris in January, 2015, or on the hate speech promoted by the PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West) movement in Germany. At the same time, many Europeans are unsure about how to react to the unebbing flow of refugees and asylum seekers from Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world and raise the questions once again of who is a European and who are “we” as Europeans. In such a situation the need for dialogue in order to break down distrust of otherness is more press

¹Reprinted from *Journal of Ecumenical Studies.*, vol. 50, no. 1 (Winter, 2015), with permission from the copyright holder and has been updated for OPREE by the author.

²See, e.g., Jose Ignacio Torreblanca and Mark Leonard, “The Continent-Wide Rise of Euroscepticism,” *European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Memo* 79 (May, 2013); available at http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79_EUROSCEPTICISM_BRIEF_AW.pdf.

ing than ever.

This essay presents, within the complex European religious and demographic context, specific elements from the public discourse and self-representation of Muslim communities in southeastern Europe relating to European integration. Examples from the edge of the EU, Croatia and Serbia, and particularly aspects relating to identity and to interreligious dialogue are highlighted.

Islam is one of the growing and proliferating religious traditions across the European continent today. Muslim communities are springing up in virtually every European country, in large part through new immigration. Therefore, much of the rhetoric and argumentation in the public debates of European nations presents Muslims generally as immigrants, non-Europeans, and, therefore, outsiders. While this may be true in many countries, southeastern Europe has been home to Muslims for several centuries. Most Muslim communities in this region trace their origins back to the times of Ottoman Turkish rule. In contrast to the vast majority of Muslims in most other European countries, these communities are either made up of members of ethnic groups indigenous to the region or have existed for such a long time that they are considered part of the overall local or regional cultural heritage, thus making them insiders and outsiders at the same time.

The continuing eastward and southward expansion of the European Union, which now includes an increasing number of countries in southeastern Europe, lends a special aspect and timeliness to the question of Muslims and European integration. Public discussions about to what extent Europe can be considered a Christian continent continue unabated. One of the important questions is how—and whether at all—non-Christians, and particularly Muslims, fit into widely accepted cultural and religious understandings and geopolitical definitions of what Eu-

rope is. The prevailing identity constructions and their formulations among Muslim communities examined here are undoubtedly influenced by the fact that they live in Christian-majority societies, alongside Jews and representatives of other religions, so that the discussion of the interreligious aspect of their self-definition and of their stances regarding Europe is unavoidable.

Two questions in particular have guided the research: How do the selected Muslim communities in southeastern Europe describe themselves and relate to the idea of “Europeanness”? How do they view themselves *vis-à-vis* their co-nationals of other religious traditions? These questions were addressed by applying an interdisciplinary approach. The source materials were studied through the lens of critical discourse analysis and politolinguistic analysis, and the texts were evaluated and analyzed within the broader interreligious, social, and political context in which they were created. The research focused on the Bosniak Community in Croatia and on the Bosniak Community in the Sandžak region of Serbia. The primary sources examined are select official or representative publications of the religious communities in question between 2000 and 2011: the *Journal of Preporod* (hereafter, the *Journal*), published by the Bosniak Cultural Society of Croatia; and *Glas islama* (The Voice of Islam), a Muslim monthly published in Novi Pazar in Serbia.

Islam in Southeastern Europe since 1989

Xavier Bougarel has identified three major developments that have characterized Islam in southeastern Europe

since 1989.³ First, Muslim populations have emerged as political actors on the basis of

³Xavier Bougarel, “Islam in the Post-Communist Balkans: Understanding a Decade of Changes,” in Johannes Kandel, Ernst Pulsfort, and Holm Sundhaussen, eds., *Religionen und Kulturen in Südosteuropa: Nebeneinander und Miteinander von Muslimen und Christen* [Eine Fachtagung der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung der Katholischen Akademie

ethnonational mobilization, becoming a voting and policy-influencing force to be reckoned with in many countries. Second, new relationships have been developing between Islam and national identity—for example, groups changing their names to shed official designations from the socialist times and to define themselves with words in their own language, or coming to see themselves as a national group as opposed to a scattered and loosely related minority with no uniform identity. Third, as Muslims in southeastern Europe have been (re)establishing ties with the Muslim world to a much greater degree than before since the 1990s, the free(r) circulation of people and ideas and the growing influence of foreign Muslim organizations and states have led to the increased presence of more radical movements within Islam. Among these is the growth of Wahhabism, the most prevalent one throughout the region.⁴

Bosnian Muslims (today many, though not all, of their members prefer to use the term “Bosniak” in order to distance themselves from the official designation that was used in former Yugoslavia) are present primarily in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Montenegro. They often face misrepresentation of Islam in the media⁵ and at times even in official schoolbooks.⁶

Examples from the Discourse of the Bosniak Community in Croatia

The Muslim community in Croatia is of diverse ethnic background and accounts for 1.5% of

in Berlin und der Freien Universität Berlin (Osteuropainstitut)] (Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2002), pp. 32–52.

⁴For an overview of the Wahhabi movement and a brief survey of its presence in southeastern Europe, see Oliver Potežica, “Vahabiti pridošlice na Balkanu” (The Wahhabis, Newcomers to the Balkans), *Politikologija Religije*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2007), pp. 205–228.

⁵For more on the developments and protagonists in this process, see Fikret Karčić, “Distorted Images of Islam: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1995), especially pp. 140–144.

⁶See Milan Vukomanović, “Images of the Ottomans and Islam in Serbian History Textbooks,” in Christian Moe, ed., *Images of the Religious Other: Discourse and Distance in the Western Balkans* (Novi Sad: CEIR, 2008), pp. 17–38; Ankica Marinović, “Images of the Religious Other in Religious Instruction Textbooks in Croatia,” in Moe, *Images of the Religious Other*, pp. 75–95; Dubravka Stojanović, “Construction of Historical Consciousness: The Case of Serbian History Textbooks,” in Maria Todorova, ed., *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2004), pp. 327–350.

the total population, next to the 86.3% overwhelming majority, which self-identifies with the Roman Catholic Church.⁷ The most populous Muslim group is made up of Bosnian Muslims who have moved to Croatia. It is estimated that there are about 50,000–60,000 Bosniaks living in Croatia today.⁸

The Islamic community has been actively involved in interreligious endeavors in the country. In 2005 it participated at the first event in Zagreb, at which representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church, the Alliance of Baptist Churches, and the Evangelical Church all took part, discussing current issues of importance for the churches and religious communities.⁹

In 2005 long-time Bosnian Reis-ul-ulema Mustafa Cerić released a document titled “Declaration of European Muslims,” shortly after the bombing attacks in London. The document refers to Europe as a “House of Peace and Security,” where Muslims can and should enjoy the same rights and foundational European principles as everyone else, being committed to upholding them. At the same time, Cerić proposed a list of expectations that European Muslims hold, including the institutionalization of Islam in Europe and the development of Islamic schools.¹⁰ This declaration received international attention upon its release, also in Croatia. Although not used regularly as a point of reference, the *Journal* nonetheless did come back to mentioning it from time to time, as the EU accession process in the country intensified.

With time, reporting on purely EU-related issues increased radically not only in the *Journal*

⁷Državni zavod za statistiku, “Stanovništvo prema vjeri, popisi 2001. i 2011.” (Population by Religion, 2001 and 2011 Censuses); available at <http://www.dzs.hr/>.

⁸“Državni zavod za statistiku, “Stanovništvo prema narodnosti, popisi 1971.–2011.” (Population by Ethnicity, 1971–2011); available at <http://www.dzs.hr/>.

⁹“Zajednička izjava kršćanskih Crkava i vjerskih zajednica u Hrvatskoj” (Common Statement of Christian Churches and Religious Communities in Croatia), *Veritas*, vol. 44, no. 1 (2005), p. 4.

¹⁰“Declaration of European Muslims,” June 29, 2009; available at <http://euroislam-euromuslim.blogspot.de/2009/06/declaration-of-european-muslims.html>.

but also within the Islamic community in general, as examples of articles especially between 2007 and 2010 illustrate, when they occurred in the largest numbers.¹¹ Once the joining of Croatia became a reality and accession negotiations began in earnest, they started drawing more regular media attention. A few different themes emerged as being of central importance to the Bosniak community in Croatia prior to and during the process of European integration, including increased interest in and attention to the EU, its institutions, functioning, and laws, as well as to the values it represents. At the same time, discussions about identity also multiplied in the *Journal*. The self-searching process of finding a common identity for the Bosnian Muslims living in Croatia intensified and now, in addition to its being constantly juxtaposed to the identity of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina (their external homeland), it also gained the added dimension of being considered within the context of a European identity.¹²

The discussion about promoting the label “Bosniak” also continued during this time. In spite of the growing interest in European-related topics and the slightly shifting frame of reference for self-identification, however, the *Journal* maintained extensive reporting on the current political, social, and religious situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina in most of its issues during the time period examined. Bosnia-Herzegovina, the (symbolic) homeland of the Bosniak community in Croatia, was also featured regularly in the *Journal* in the context of its own process of European integration, that is, steps toward its membership in the EU.¹³

¹¹See, e.g., A[nes Š[uvaić], “Veliki iskorak” (A Big Step Forward), *Journal of Preporod* [hereafter *Journal*], no. 94 (2007), p. 40; Edis Felić, “Slovenija uložila veto na nastavak pregovora Hrvatske s Europskom unijom: Zahađenje odnosa između Hrvatske i Slovenije” (Slovenia Has Vetoed the Continuation of Negotiations between Croatia and the European Union: A Cooling of the Relationship between Croatia and Slovenia), *Journal*, nos. 106/107 (2008/2009), pp. 45–49; Mirsada Begović, “Inauguracija novog hrvatskog predsjednika Ive Josipovića” (The Inauguration of New Croatian President Ivo Josipović), *Journal*, no. 119 (2010), p. 15.

¹²For an examination of the self-understanding of the Islamic community within the context of the Croatian state, see Dino Mujadžević, “The Islamic Community in Croatia: Between Ethnic Bosniak and Civic Croatian Identity,” *Südosteuropa*, vol. 62, no. 3 (2014), pp. 275–304.

¹³See, e.g., the following articles: Edis Felić, “Bosanski barometar: Usvojena reforma policije” (Bosnian Barometer: Police Reform Adopted), *Journal*, nos. 99/100 (2008), pp. 38–39; I[smet] I[saković], “Europska perspek-

An implicit argument that can be traced in the articles is that the values held by Bosniaks are broadly European values; therefore, they do have a legitimate place in a European democracy and in the EU. The inherent contradiction of being a European and rooted in European culture and traditions at the same time as being a Muslim is also expressed in several articles, usually through a personal story or from an individual's point of view.¹⁴ Indeed, identity was one of the central topics that kept appearing regularly in the *Journal* during the entire time period examined. These articles also included detailed investigations of what Bosniak identity really means and how it can be defined.¹⁵

In his 2008 Eid al-Fitr message, Mufti of Zagreb Ševko ef. Omerbašić addressed this contradiction by presenting some of his fears and at the same time posing the question about how Croatia will look upon Islam when it becomes an EU member state: “Will our faith be treated as it is in numerous European states—as a religion of foreigners, who are only temporary residents on this continent?”¹⁶ He then set out to present a programmatic plan for the Islamic community in Croatia, which was to include fully supporting Croatia's accession to the EU, working toward challenging the existing stereotypes about Islam within Europe, trying to secure freedoms for all ethnic and religious minorities in the country, and being involved in active dialogue not only

tiva BiH” (The European Perspective of Bosnia-Herzegovina), *Journal*, nos. 101/102 (2008), pp. 4–5; Edis Felić, “Nastavak pregovora o ustavnim promjenama u Mostaru: Dodik zbog krivične prijave prišao radikalizmu” (Continuing the Negotiations on Constitutional Changes in Mostar: Dodik Has Become a Radical Due to Criminal Charges), *Journal*, no. 108 (2009), pp. 21–22.

¹⁴See, e.g., Amina Alijagić, “‘Politički islam’—Kulenovićev *opus magnificum*: Politika u muslimanskim državama” (Political Islam—Kulenović's *Magnum Opus*: Politics in Muslim States), *Journal*, nos. 101/102 (2008), pp. 7–8. The article is a book review, also presenting autobiographical details from the author, who in his own life regularly experienced the dichotomy of being a Muslim and a European. *Journal*, nos. 113/114 (2009), was dedicated in its entirety to interviews with persons within and outside the Islamic community, most of whom addressed personal issues of identity and expressed similar struggles of defining themselves as Muslims and as Europeans at the same time.

¹⁵See, e.g., Ismet Isaković, “Bosansko-hercegovački i balkanski identitet” (Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Balkan Identity), *Journal*, nos. 111/112 (2009), pp. 6–9; and idem, “Bošnjački identitet” (Bosniak Identity), *Journal*, no. 126 (2010), p. 13.

¹⁶“Hoće li naša vjera biti tretirana kao u brojnim europskim državama, religija stranaca, privremeno nastanjenih na ovom kontinentu” ([I]smet [I]saković, “Bajramska poruka” [Eid al-Fitr Message], *Journal*, nos. 104/105 [2008], p. 9).

with governmental entities but also proclaiming that in this process interreligious dialogue has no alternative.¹⁷

In summary, generally speaking, the EU appears in a positive light in most articles and is identified with democracy—a notion that the Islamic community wishes to uphold and see take root in Croatia as well. One of the few negative representations of Europe concerns examples of Islamophobic behavior or resistance to the erection of Islamic buildings in many countries.¹⁸ Another large cluster of issues in connection with EU integration is that of identity, with all its complexities. Most often, being Muslim and being European are juxtaposed to each other, although never calling into question that the two are – or at least can be – mutually inclusive. Thus, Bosniaks in Croatia generally present themselves as European and as people who culturally and civilizationally belong to Croatia and to Europe as well.

Examples from the Discourse of the Bosniak Community in Sandžak, Serbia

The overwhelming majority of Serbia's population identifies itself as Orthodox Christian (85% in both 2001 and 2011),¹⁹ and its Muslim inhabitants are diverse. These groups differ from each other in ethnic identity, language, tradition and questions of allegiance to religious authority. According to the 2011 population census, 3.1% of the total population identified themselves as Muslims. The Muslims in Serbia are primarily ethnic Bosniaks and Albanians, although other ethnic groups are also represented among them. Demographically, the most significant Muslim communities are located in the Sandžak region²⁰ bordering Bosnia, Montene-

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸See, e.g., “Zanimljivosti” (Interesting Facts), *Journal*, nos. 92/93 (2007), pp. 66–67.

¹⁹Republički zavod za statistiku, “Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 2011” (Census of Population, Households and Housing 2011); available at http://media.popis2011.stat.rs/2012/DBR_%2032272%20-%20Population%20Dashboard%20v10.swf.

²⁰For a brief history of Sandžak, see Konrad Clewing, “Sandžak von Novi Pazar,” in Harald Roth, ed., *Studien-*

gro, and Kosovo and in the Bujanovac-Preševo-Medveja area in southern Serbia. Within the Sandžak, Muslims make up the absolute majority of the population in three municipalities. Additionally, Muslims have also immigrated—mostly as a result of the Yugoslav wars of succession in the 1990’s—to other areas of the country, including the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the north of Serbia.

The two major organized Muslim communities in Serbia—the Islamic Community in Serbia (Mešihat Islamske Zajednice u Srbiji), which pays allegiance and considers itself to stand under the spiritual and structural authority of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Islamska Zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini) and its reis-ul-ulema, and the Islamic Community of Serbia (Rijaset Islamske Zajednice Srbije) with its leader in Belgrade—are public rivals of each other. The regional leader of the community in the Sandžak, Muamer Zukorlić, holds the title of mufti.

As elsewhere in southeastern Europe, imported radical Islam has appeared in the Sandžak in recent years as well. Many of its representatives belong to isolated groups of radicals, and a large percentage of them are foreign nationals. Although they are relatively few in numbers, they have nonetheless created a bad name for themselves and for Muslims in general by provoking violence and inciting intolerance, which has been documented in press reports nationwide.²¹

handbuch Östliches Europa 1 (Wien: Böhlau, 2009), pp. 350–352. For more on Serb-Muslim relations in the area, see Milan Andrejevich, “The Sandžak: A Perspective of Serbian-Muslim Relations,” in Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki, eds., *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 170–193.

²¹In the town of Novi Pazar in southwestern Serbia, three members of the Wahhabi sect were arrested on June 7, 2007, after the police found material for making bombs in a house. See Beta News Agency, “Uhapšena još trojica vehabija” (Three More Wahabis Arrested), *Politika*, June 8, 2007, p. 12. Three days later, on the territory of the Novi Pazar, Tutin, and Sjenica municipalities, police impounded more than 10,000 bullets and 15 kilograms of explosives meant for terrorist attacks. See Tanjug News Agency, “U Sandžaku zaplenjeni municija i eksploziv” (Ammunition and Explosives Seized in Sandžak), *Politika*, June 12, 2007, pp. 1 and 12. Three months earlier, on March 17, four Wahhabi followers were arrested, and on April 20 their leader died in an armed conflict with the police. Wahhabis had apparently also been planning the assassination of Mufti of Sandžak Muamer Zukorlić and of Reis-Ulema in Sarajevo Mustafa Cerić. See “Pretnje vehabija Zukorliću” (Wahabi Threat to Zukorlić), *B92*, April 22,

The picture and perceptions of Islam in Serbia are shaped in part by generally negative representations of Islam and Muslims in school history books and at times by the dominant Serbian Orthodox Church.²² Since the struggle for Serbian national independence was in large part a struggle against Ottoman domination, some anti-Muslim feelings are evident in current Serbian historiography.

For the purposes of this research, the publication *Glas islama* of the Islamic Community in Serbia (in Sandžak) has been analyzed. The Muslim community in the Sandžak looks to Bosnia-Herzegovina and particularly to Sarajevo for leadership not only in strictly religious matters but also in other ways relating to a Muslim identity. The designation “Bosniak,” the preferred term used by most of the members of the Islamic Community in Serbia, has been a source of contention and is a rather new phenomenon. As Safeta Biševac stated, “The confusion regarding the recognition of the national status of Bosniak-Muslims was increased by their own political representatives and intelligentsia who, for years, were unable to agree as to whether their group should be called ‘Muslims’ or ‘Bosniaks.’”²³ Today most of the central religious and political organs in the Sandžak prefer to use the term “Bosniak” for self-identification purposes.

The Bosniaks of Sandžak are torn in their identity between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia—and the rest of Europe. Their perceived “otherness” is also reflected in the attitudes of the majority Serbian population: A study conducted in 2007 revealed that the greatest ethnic distance expressed by Serbs was directed at Albanians, Roma (Gypsies), and Muslims

2007; available at http://www.b92.net/info/komentari.php?nav_id=243097.

²²Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović, “The Serbian Orthodox Church’s Images of Religious Others,” in Moe, *Images of the Religious Other*, pp. 125–146; Zorica Kuburić, “Images of the Religious Other in Serbia,” in Moe, *Images of the Religious Other*, pp. 167–198; and Paul Mojzes, “Orthodoxy and Islam in the Balkans: Conflict or Cooperation?” *Religion, State & Society* 36 (December, 2008): 407–421.

²³Safeta Biševac, “Bosniaks in Sandzak and Interethnic Tolerance in Novi Pazar,” in Nenad Dimitrijević, ed., *Managing Multiethnic Local Communities in the Countries of the Former Yugoslavia* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2000), p. 389.

(Bosniaks).²⁴ Different from their counterparts in Croatia, who live scattered throughout the country, the Bosniaks of Sandžak are geographically concentrated in one region.

The issue of identity also plays a central role for the Bosniaks of Sandžak, which is reflected in the large number of articles concerning this topic in *Glas islama*. As a publication close to the regional religious leadership, it published several articles emphasizing the importance of the religious element in the formation of the Bosniak identity.²⁵ Identity is also discussed in a political setting, blaming Serbian politics and politicians of trying to challenge or call into question Bosniak identity.²⁶ The visit by Tariq Ramadan to Novi Pazar in 2011 also focused on identity issues; he held a public lecture titled “Islam and Muslims in Europe: Challenges and Perspectives.”²⁷

One of the central messages coming across from the publication is that the Bosniaks of Sandžak can be proud of their identity and should represent themselves in order to create higher visibility of Islam in their own country and throughout Europe.²⁸ At the same time, Bosniaks should resist the Serbian state’s missionizing tendencies—that is, the pressures of identifying themselves differently in ethnic or religious terms. By clearly formulating a vision for spreading their own identity, the Bosniaks of Sandžak reveal reverse missionizing tendencies. The connection to and interest in the religious and political developments within the external homeland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, is comparable to that observed within the Bosniak community in Croatia,

²⁴M. Petrić, “Najbliškiji Rusi, Crnogorci i Makedonci: Srbi imaju najveću etničku distancu prema Albancima, Romima i Muslimanima (Bošnjaci)” (Russians, Montenegrins, and Macedonians: The Closest Serbs Have Higher Ethnic Distance toward Albanians, Roma, and Muslims [Bosniaks]), *Politika*, June 2, 2007, p. 16.

²⁵See, e.g., Almir-ef. Pramenković, “Islamska zajednica, temelj identiteta Bošnjaka Sandžaka” (The Islamic Community, the Foundation of the Identity of Sandžak Bosniaks), *Glas islama*, no. 204 (December 15, 2010): 10; and idem, “Islamska zajednica, temelj identiteta Bošnjaka Sandžaka II” (The Islamic Community, the Foundation of the Identity of Sandžak Bosniaks II), *Glas islama*, no. 205 (January 1, 2011): 16–17.

²⁶Almir-ef. Pramenković, “Osporavanje identiteta Bošnjaka” (Contesting the Identity of Sandžak Bosniaks), *Glas islama*, no. 206 (January 15, 2011): 12.

²⁷“Tariq Ramadan u Sandžaku” (Tariq Ramadan in Sandžak), *Glas islama*, no. 215 (June 1, 2011): 6.

²⁸See, e.g., “Misija Bošnjačke kulturne zajednice” (The Mission of the Bosniak Cultural Community), *Glas islama*, no. 225 (December 15, 2011): 15.

appearing on a relatively regular basis.

In general, the representation of Europe and of the EU is not as overwhelmingly positive as among the Bosniaks in Croatia. Instead, it is much more critical, which is not surprising, considering the ambivalent attitudes to European integration expressed by members of the political elite in Serbia. Islamophobia is presented several times as a serious and widespread problem in many European nations;²⁹ the Europe-wide discussion on burkas³⁰ and their ban in France are featured, the latter labelled as an Islamophobic decision.³¹ A keen interest is visible in following relevant institutional developments and news within the greater European community beyond the EU, such as the adoption of the Declaration of Religious Freedom by the Council of Europe.³²

Analysis and Comparison of the Findings

In addition to the unique concerns of each Islamic community, there were common threads that appeared in the publications of both examined groups. They took the opportunity in public discussions of EU integration to express their own identity in the way that they, and not others, prefer to describe themselves. Both groups underlined their Europeanness explicitly and repeatedly. They did this most often in order to contrast themselves to the immigrant Muslim communities found in other parts of Europe. By calling attention to the fact that they are not newcomers but autochthonous inhabitants, they were emphasizing the fact that they belonged to Europe in

²⁹See, e.g., “EU: Ujedinjeni u islamofobiji” (EU: United in Islamophobia), *Glas islama*, no. 210 (March 15, 2011): 22–23.

³⁰“Rezolucija Vijeća EU: Protiv zabrane minara, burke i nikaba” (Resolution of the EU Council: Against Banning Minars, Burkas, and Niqabs), *Glas islama*, no. 193 (July 1, 2010): 28.

³¹“Francuska: Policajci ne smiju javno ‘progoniti’ žene sa burkama” (France: Police Officers Are not Allowed to Publicly ‘Persecute’ Women with Burkas), *Glas islama*, no. 212 (April 15, 2011): 15.

³²“Vijeće Evrope: Usvojena Deklaracija o vjerskim slobodama” (Council of Europe: Declaration on Religious Freedom Adopted), *Glas islama*, no. 207 (February 1, 2011): 38.

every way and should be accepted and treated accordingly. By doing this, they were also insinuating that the EU—and other pan-European institutions—should consider finding different and more effective ways of dealing with Islam on a continent-wide basis.

In both Croatia and Serbia there is ample evidence of goodwill by the Bosniaks to work together with the majority churches, but the practical examples of dialogue still most often included other religious minorities in the country. For example, the *Journal* reported on the Jewish-Muslim cooperation at the yearly Jewish cultural festival “Bejihad” in Opatija, which sought to bring reconciliation between Jews and Muslims in Europe.³³ It also featured a lecture given by a Protestant pastor at the Zagreb Islamic Centre, emphasizing the commonalities between the Reformed (Calvinist) faith and Islam.³⁴ In Serbia, also more mention was made of dialogue with the minority Roman Catholics and Jews, although until 2012 some forms of even institutional cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade existed.³⁵ *Glas islama* published several articles on the topic of interreligious dialogue and peaceful coexistence—using, for example, medieval Spain as an ideal for interreligious tolerance, or bringing examples of peaceful Muslim-Eastern Orthodox encounters from the Middle Ages—but they were always written by the same person.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the struggle of the two Bosniak communities with their identity, which now has to be negotiated within a broader European dimension, has led them to express multilayered identities and address the seeming internal contradictions and the inherent

³³I[smet] I[saković], “Suradnja Židova i muslimana—‘Bejihad 2007.’: Kulturom do zajedništva” (Cooperation between Jews and Muslims—Bejihad 2007: Reaching Communion through Culture), *Journal*, nos. 92/93 (2007), p. 26.

³⁴I[smet] I[saković], “Panislamizam i hilafet, protestantizam i islam” (Pan-Islamism and the Caliphate, Protestantism, and Islam), *Journal*, no. 95 (2007), pp. 8–10.

³⁵The main driving force behind this collaboration from the Serbian Orthodox side, Prof. Radovan Bigović, who taught ecumenism—among other subjects—at the Serbian Orthodox Theological Faculty in Belgrade, passed away unexpectedly in May, 2012, and no one has taken his place to continue the cooperation with professors and students of Islam in Novi Pazar.

ambivalence that such identities mean. The answer to the question of whether a distinctly European Islam exists has divided scholars. The term, believed to have been coined partly by Tariq Ramadan, has been used worldwide with different meanings. While some posit that European (or Balkan) Islam has distinctively European features, Christian Voss and Jordanka Telbizova-Sack have argued that this does not mean that Balkan Islam has made a significant contribution to creating a truly European Islam. On the contrary: it has been the Islam coming from outside, the rest of the world, which has been changing the face of Islam in southeastern Europe.³⁶ Although such tendencies are clearly noticeable, it is still important to underline that many of these Muslims see themselves as belonging to Europe both geographically and culturally.

Conclusion

The research results presented here remind us that Leonard Swidler's fervent call to dialogue is as relevant as ever and that the tools he has developed in particular Deep-Dialogue/Critical-Thinking/Emotional-Intelligence/Competitive-Cooperation, can and should be utilized by churches, religious communities, and other societal actors as they engage in tackling the current situation in Europe.

Muslims who already identify themselves with Europe and its cultural-civilizational heritage should be taken seriously as potential dialogue partners. Their willingness to enter into dialogue should be utilized. As countries in southeastern Europe are consolidating their place within and in relation to the EU (Croatia became an EU member state on July 1, 2013, and Serbia has been an official candidate country since 2012), their inhabitants should be drawn into discussions on

³⁶Christian Voss and Jordanka Telbizova-Sack, "Einleitung," in Christian Voss and Jordanka Telbizova-Sack, eds., *Islam und Muslime in (Südost)Europa im Kontext von Transformation und EU-Erweiterung*, Studies on Language and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe 9 (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2010), pp. 12–13.

European identity and identities in general. Southeastern European Muslims can make an important contribution to shaping discussions on European identity and on the future self-understanding of the EU. Particularly considering the relevance of already ongoing discussions on the place of Islam and of Muslims in Europe, such dialogues are crucial to securing long-lasting peace and a fruitful coexistence of living with difference within the European Union and even beyond its borders across the entire continent.