



PRESS RELEASE

19 July 2021 - URGENT

Young European citizens, member of the #DiasporaVote! program, call for vigilance on the discriminatory scope of the French bill against separatism.

7 young women, based in France, Belgium and the UK, engaged in the #DiasporaVote! program, are responding to the #HandsOffMyHijab campaign.

CONTENT OF THE PRESS RELEASE

For the past few weeks, seven young women involved in the #DiasporaVote! program have been taking initiatives in their respective committees. They are alerting their fellow citizens to this bill which jeopardizes European fundamental rights such as "cultural, religious and linguistic diversity" and "the freedom to manifest one's religion in public or in private", as stated in Article 10 and Article 22 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The bill, currently being debated in France's National Assembly, aims to give the State more means to enforce "*republican principles*"¹, through "*means to act against those who want to destabilize*" the Republic.

With this in mind, the young women are working with MEPs, as well as internal actors such as ARDI, the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup, to highlight the discriminatory aspect of this law and the worrying discourse it fuels.

Despite the amendments made by the special committee in charge of studying the bill, it still fuels discussions in the political and public arena, even going so far as to talk about the neutrality of assessors in polling stations. It is clear that the discourse once again targets women and religious minorities. These provisions are contrary to the principles of the Istanbul Convention, such as discrimination against women mentioned in Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention and the freedom of conscience mentioned in Article 10 of the Fundamental Charter of Human Rights.

¹ <https://www.vie-publique.fr/loi/277621-loi-separatisme-respect-des-principes-de-la-republique>

Beyond discrimination at the level of citizens, the draft law against separatism also targets freedom of association. Indeed, provisions relating to the freedom of associations, their financing and a reinforced control of their members, undermine the freedom of expression of citizens in France. This also goes against Article 10 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights mentioned above.

This bill, which will be voted on by the Senate on 21 July before its final adoption, continues the stigmatization of religious minorities.

Conclusion: While the controversial bill risks creating social fractures, the work carried out by these young Europeans has made it possible to bring together the different themes addressed within the *#DiasporaVote!* committees: *Education, Human Rights, Anti-racism, Gender Equality and Environment*, to raise awareness about legislative abuses that violate European law.

ABOUT US

#DiasporaVote! is an initiative aiming at offering more representation and inclusion to racialized diaspora communities living in Europe. We encourage youths and non-youth from racialized diaspora communities to get involved in the development of the EU policies by helping them understand how these policies shape their daily lives and by stimulating them to think of ways to improve the lives of the racialized diaspora in Europe. Because our goal is for the racialized diaspora to be more active in politics and vote, we support racialized diaspora youths and non-youth as they carry the voices of their local communities to the table of higher-level decision-makers.

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