

# **Muslims and Minorities in the Military: Changing Demographics in the OSCE Region and Implications for Europe's Security Sector**



**JULY 26, 2017**

**Briefing of the  
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

**Washington: 2017**

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## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]. The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 56 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <[www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)>.

## ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <[www.csce.gov](http://www.csce.gov)>.

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**July 26, 2017**

**Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe  
Washington, DC**

The briefing was held at 11:01 a.m. in room 562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, Dr. Mischa E. Thompson, Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, moderating.

*Commissioner present:* Hon. Gwen Moore, Commissioner, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

*Panelists present:* Dr. Mischa E. Thompson, Policy Advisor, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Rozemina Abbasi (United Kingdom), Assistant Head, Armed Forces Targets, Ministry of Defense; Dr. Elyamine Settoul (France), Professor, Institute for Strategic Research at the Military College, French Ministry of Defense; Dominik Wullers (Germany), Economist, Spokesman, Federal Ministry of Defense Equipment, and Vice President of Deutscher.Soldat; and Samira Rafaela (Netherlands), Organizational Strategy Advisor, Dutch National Police.

Dr. THOMPSON. Good morning. My name is Dr. Mischa Thompson, and welcome to “Muslims and Minorities in the Military,” a briefing on “Changing Demographics in the OSCE Region and Implications for Europe’s Security Sector” hosted by the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission. We are broadcasting this briefing via Facebook.com/Helsinki, and I hope that you will also participate via social media.

For those of you who do not know, the Helsinki Commission is an independent U.S. Government agency focused on human rights, economics, and security in the 57 North American and European countries that make up the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or the OSCE. The Commission is chaired by Senator Roger Wicker, bicameral and bipartisan, and comprised of 21 members of Congress and the executive branch, including the U.S. State Department, and is housed in the U.S. Congress.

The OSCE has had a focus on diverse populations, from Roma and Jewish populations to national minorities and migrants in Europe and the United States, since its inception. This focus has increased in recent years with the demographic shift that is taking place on both sides of the Atlantic.

The U.S. Census Bureau predicts that racial and ethnic groups will comprise close to 60 percent of the U.S. population by 2060, and that by 2031 the majority of the U.S. workforce will be people of color—so, for example, Asian, Latino, and migrant populations—which will also account for much of the U.S. population growth in years to come.

In Europe, demographers predict that aging and waning birthrates will lead to a decline in workers that will result in increased immigration, but also an increased focus on historically underutilized talent from Roma, Afro descent, Asian, and other existing diverse populations of citizens, as well as migrants that in many countries in the European Union are make 5 [percent] to 8 percent of the population.

Today, we will discuss what these demographic shifts mean for security forces on both sides of the Atlantic and the long-term stability of the transatlantic partnership.

I am pleased to be joined today by four members of a European delegation in Washington, D.C. to attend a German Marshall Fund conference being convened by senior fellow Lora Berg entitled “Mission Critical: Inclusive Leadership for the Security Sector.” You can find the bios of today’s panelists in the blue folders and online. And given that we will only have an hour, I will begin by asking the panelists a few questions, after which we will have time for questions and discussion with the audience.

I would like to welcome Rozemina Abbasi of the Ministry of Defence from the United Kingdom; Dr. Elyamine Settoul from the French Ministry of Defense; Mr. Dominik Wullers of the German Ministry of Defense; and Ms. Samira Rafaela of the Netherlands Dutch National Police, also a member of the Caribbean Network of the Dutch police.

And so, with that, I will actually turn to Ms. Rozemina Abbasi and ask if you can just start by telling us a little bit about what the demographic makeup looks like in the United Kingdom, and specifically how this relates to your role in the Ministry of Defence.

Ms. ABBASI. Thank you.

The U.K. population is diverse. At the moment, 80 percent of the U.K. population is white and 20 percent is of BAME background. We’re predicting that, in the next 30 years, that 25 percent of the working-age population will come from a BAME background. Currently, 31 percent of the U.K. primary-school pupils are of a BAME background. When I say “BAME,” I mean people of color, so “BAME” stands for Black, Asian, and minority ethnic. I appreciate there’s some different acronyms between Britain and America.

With that in mind and the changing demographics, the U.K. Government has been pretty forward looking, and we’ve started to look at what this will mean and what we need to start doing now to ensure that we are attracting the right people going forward. I work for the Ministry of Defence. And with the Ministry of Defence, with the armed forces, currently they are not representative of the society that we aim to serve. The current sort of numbers are that we only have around 7 percent of the armed forces recruits from a BAME background. And female, as well, is around about 11 percent. So the numbers are quite low.

What we have done is place targets upon ourselves to increase the number of recruits that are coming in to be from a BAME background, and also to increase the female representation, by 2020. And to do that, we’ve designed a program of activity to engage both

externally and internally. And the sort of motivation behind this is that we want to be attracting the best from our society to be joining us, and we also want the armed forces going forward to be relevant to the society that we aim to serve. With the demographics changing, we want to be able to be relevant to the future generations, and also we want to be able to have the best. The white population that we currently recruit from is diminishing, and going forward the numbers will be even lower.

I'm not sure how much more time I have or what more information I should be going into, or—I can talk continuously about all the activities we are doing, but—

Dr. THOMPSON. Yes, I was going to say if you actually can talk a little bit about some of the activities that you're working on.

Ms. ABBASI. So what we've done is designed a program of activities, and in the first year we conducted extensive research looking into the U.K. population that was made up of Asian, Black, Chinese. And what we wanted to understand was what the different communities thought about the armed forces, and whether they wanted to become members of the armed forces, and what the barriers were. And we're still sort of working through a lot of that research. It was quite extensive. And in it there were some sort of humble truths that we had to face. You know, certain factions of society didn't find us as an attractive proposition as an employer.

And then, there's also been other things that we've been looking at. Also looking internally, understanding where there may be bias or prejudice in our recruitment process. What are we doing with the current sort of population that is from a BAME background? You know, is retention and progression fair? Do we have positive role models at a senior level?

So it's been a bit of a raw experience looking at where we are at at the moment and where we wish to get to going forward.

One of the most important things about this program of activity is that, firstly, we've got the Prime Minister behind us. She herself is supportive of the targets. Secondly, we've got our head Secretary of State who is, again, hands on in regards to this program activity. He actually has quarterly meetings with the army, all three of the chiefs—the army chief, the Royal Air Force Chief [RAF], and the navy chief—on a regular basis, to understand what work they are doing, and then also what progress we're making, you know, on a quarterly basis. Our senior leaders are behind the change program, and that in itself speaks volumes when you're trying to put through a program of change that will probably be uncomfortable for some within the armed forces.

We have a 190,000-strong workforce, and it is predominantly male and it's also predominantly white. And all of a sudden, when you're asking a community which is very strong, which has strong values, and sees themselves as a family, to start to introduce new people in—whether female or people from a BAME background—there will be resistance at certain levels. And for our program to be effective, we really need that buy-in at every level and for people to be supportive.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

And, Dr. Settoul, I'm hoping that we can actually briefly turn to France, in part because you wrote in your 2014 paper—"You're in the French Army Now"—that the French military structure has included a large number of Muslims ever since the period of colonial conquest of North Africa in the 19th century. And so what that suggests is that there's been a longer history of Muslim and minority participation that I'm hoping that

you can tell us a little bit about, and then we can come up to the future and talk about what's happening currently now in France.

Dr. SETTOUL. Yes, as you said, the Muslim presence in the French armies has roots in the French colonial history. And I think it's a big difference with many other countries, many European countries. The first French Muslim regiment was created in Algeria in 1840, so it's very ancient. Those regiments have fought with France throughout the 19th century and the 20th century, sometimes in decisive battles like Monte Cassino during the Second World War. So we have a strong tradition with the Muslim fighters.

They brought a youth contribution for the liberation of France during the Second World War. Even today, if you look at some regiments, like the 1st Regiment de Tirailleurs d'Epinal, you can see on their berets an Islamic crescent. So it's original, and it shows the importance of this Muslim legacy in the French Army. And I would add that it plays a positive role to attract the young French Muslims today for recruitment.

Dr. THOMPSON. And can you talk a little bit about what the current population of Muslims and other diverse populations in France is, and what types of measures are currently taking place to recruit?

Dr. SETTOUL. Yes. France is characterized by a high level of diversity. It has the largest Muslim, Buddhist, and Jewish community in Europe. But at the same time, ethnic statistics are forbidden in the French context. But the military institution has some information about the religious backgrounds of the soldiers, especially because we have to manage some things. For example, during the war operations, if a soldier dies, we have to know how to manage the body and to respect their faith.

We know, for example, that around 10 percent of the French soldiers are Muslims. So it's an opportune number if we compare it to what that represents in the society as a whole. Between 5 [percent] and 8 percent of the French are Muslims, and they represent 10 percent of the military institutions. So we can say that there is an over-representation of Muslims in the military institution. And I think it is linked to the fact that the military institution is very attractive, because it is perceived as a meritocratic field. And we could draw a parallel between the experience of the Black minorities in the U.S. armies and what the French Muslims experience today. They find in these institutions the meritocratic fields. They recruit you whatever your origin, your color skin or your address. And this is what I have seen during my Ph.D. about the soldiers who share an immigrant background.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Now, Mr. Wullers, you actually founded in Germany an organization called Deutscher.Soldat, and I was hoping you could tell us a little bit about why it is that you founded that organization.

Mr. WULLERS. Yes. Good morning, good morning. So thank you very much for inviting me here today.

And, first, I have to send my regards to Ibiza, where my president is.

Actually, me personally, I'm an economist. I was an officer for 13 years in the German armed forces. So this is more or less something that I do in my spare time. And it came to me in 2010, when I returned from studies abroad here in the United States. My branch head at the time invited me to his office and said that there was a discussion raging at the time in Germany about diversity and integration, and whether integration as a whole, diversity as a whole, and especially migration from Turkey and Arab countries

was a failure, and an entire failure and a problem for our society. So we founded this initiative, *Deutscher.Soldat*, to use the German soldier of different ethnic or cultural descent as a symbol in this discussion to show that integration, from our point of view, was indeed a success—that there were problems that had to be talked about, but in general integration and migration is a success and a chance for Germany.

So that's the one thing. And over time, being German soldiers of color, obviously we were talked to about the subject of racism in the German armed forces or the subject of diversity, and that's how we got to this subject.

Dr. THOMPSON. OK. And can you talk just a little bit about the image that we see on the Facebook page when you pull up *Deutscher.Soldat*?

Mr. WULLERS. Yes. So, Germany's probably not the first country to come to mind when you think about diversity. Given our history, when you talk to countrymen in Germany and you give them the image of *Deutscher.Soldat*, which is a German soldier, most will think of a blond, blue-eyed, Nazi probably still, a very pacifist country still, and strong resentments against the army and personnel of the armed forces. So when we use that, we actively used this connotation that is still active with many, many Germans. So when you type in *Deutscher.Soldat*, many would expect a very far right-wing organization, and what you see then is, well—soldiers of color and our slogan, “Typically German,” or “Typisch Deutsch.” Then we just wanted to highlight that today with about 20 percent of our population having some kind of migration background, as we say, and among the children every third. We are indeed a diverse society today, and it's our job and our generation's job to, well, implement that politically.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Now, Ms. Rafaela, you are joining us here from the Netherlands, a country that has traditionally been known for being, I would say, both diverse and tolerant. And I was hoping that you might be able to share with us what diversity looks like in the Netherlands. And you mentioned earlier that you were part of a Caribbean Network that's within the Dutch police, and if you could also tell us a little bit about what that network is and why that was actually started.

Ms. RAFAELA. Well, thank you very much for having me here. It's my first time in Washington, so I'm really excited.

Diversity in the Netherlands—well, I think it's definitely comparable to how diversity looks like also in the U.K. We have definitely a large population with especially a multicultural background, and that makes government as a whole in the Netherlands, but especially also in the security sector and in the education sector, makes them think, OK, how do we actually need to change within our organization.

Because that means—take, for example, our capital city, Amsterdam. At least 50 percent of the citizens have a multicultural background. So that means that if you look, for example, at government or at safety, that we also need to think of strategies, of methods to actually diversify our own organization.

And one of the things to do so is, for example, diversity networks within organizations like, for example, the Caribbean Network of the police. That is mainly responsible for actually bonding and bridging between communities with citizens with an African-Caribbean background, to bring in the expertise of the communities, to make sure that the organization knows their issues, knows their needs, participates in public events, makes sure that you are visible and that you can actually affect also the communities.

But also to create a safe climate inside the organization for multicultural colleagues, so that they can feel safe in the first place, and the second place to facilitate them in bringing their expertise on what they know on their community. That's what, for example, the Caribbean Network does for the organization.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

And before we go to the audience, I did want to talk a little bit about the political climate that we've been seeing across Europe, as well as in the United States, and what that has meant for some of the work that has focused on diverse populations in Europe.

Ms. RAFAELA, since we've already been speaking with you and I know from your bio that you've had a strong background in politics—in part actually having a portfolio where you focused on diversity—I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about what the conversation has politically been around diversity in the Netherlands, and if at all how this has impacted your work in the security sector.

Ms. RAFAELA. Yes, well, especially it focuses on the emancipation and the participation of citizens with multicultural backgrounds, but especially also discrimination, exclusion in the workforce, but also LGBT-related issues, too—so LGBTs with a multicultural background, for example, women's participation. And I think what I try to do myself, at least in my own political party, is—what I've seen is that it is extremely important that people are being heard—that's a fundamental right—and to make sure that politics, but also more than politics, understand these specific issues.

It is extremely important to organize the events and the meetings on these specific issues, where you get the storytellers together, where you get the influencers together, but also sometimes the—[inaudible]—together so that they just feel and understand what the issues are of specific target groups in our society. That's basically a success formula which I use myself to inform my political party, political colleagues on specific issues.

Dr. THOMPSON. And, Dr. Settoul, I was hoping that you could talk a little bit about what the political climate has been like in France, and what type of impact that that's had on the security sector as well.

Dr. SETTOUL. As you mentioned, the topic of Islam is very sensitive in France—it's of course linked to the terrorist attacks, the recent terrorist attacks, but it's deeper than those last attacks. During the last decade, we have also had a lot of debate about Islam, about the minarets, about the halal—so Islam is a topic, a very sensitive topic.

I think that the organization of Islam within the army is much more peaceful than in the rest of the society. And we could make a link between these good situations and the creation of a Muslim chaplaincy, because France has created its first Muslim military chaplaincy in 2006, and it has improved a lot the management of the diversity, the management of Muslims within the military bases. Today, the Muslim soldiers can respect all their needs. You can be a French Muslim in the military easily, that's what I want to say.

We have about almost 40 Muslim chaplaincies. I think we have the greatest Muslim chaplaincy in the Western countries, U.S. included. In the U.K., you have just one, I think. In the U.K., you just have one Muslim chaplaincy.

Ms. ABBASI. We have one, yes.

Dr. SETTOUL. Yes. And the Germans are thinking about to launch.

Mr. WULLERS. [Off mic.]

Dr. SETTOUL. Yes. But you are thinking about it, and—I know; I have some contacts in Germany. So, yes, France seems to be well ahead in comparison to other countries. But we have also many issues regarding discrimination, the lack of diversity in the high ranks of military institutions, so we have to be careful, to pay attention to those questions.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

With that, we are at the halfway mark, and I did want to take some time to open up the panel to questions from the audience. Yes, we have a question in the front, and we have a microphone that will be brought to you.

QUESTIONER. Thank you. My name is Alex Tiersky. I also work for the Helsinki Commission. I'm the political/military affairs advisor there.

Thank you very much for your presentations. I have questions for Ms. Abbasi and Dr. Settoul.

Ms. Abbasi, it's wonderful to hear that the Ministry of Defense in particular has instituted targets, and that those targets have the support of senior leadership. I think that's absolutely crucial. I'm curious to know what incentives there are to meet those targets, as well as any kinds of penalties for not meeting them in a certain time frame. I'm curious whether there are programs to reach potential candidates for service in the security sector before that moment of their choice of whether or not to join, or whether they apply and are accepted or not. And since you mentioned the extensive demographic research that you conducted, I'd be very curious to hear what alternatives these target populations you're looking for are choosing instead of service in the security sector.

Dr. Settoul, if I could ask you as well, I was fascinated to hear your presentation on the huge and very important contribution of Muslims throughout recent French history or longer French history, including the liberation of France in the Second World War. Could you speak to how well that contribution is understood by French society at large, whether there are any efforts to explain that contribution to society at large, including by having, whether it's Muslims or minorities, in key public-facing roles in the armed forces?

Thank you.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Ms. Abbasi?

Ms. ABBASI. Thank you for your questions. In regard to the recruitment targets, the recruitment targets were actually placed upon the department by the Prime Minister. So, in a sense, the boss has told you to do something, and I guess you will have to do it. And if you don't I'm not quite sure what the penalty will be, but I don't think the Prime Minister will take kindly to us not achieving the targets.

But in all fairness, the recruitment targets are very tough on us. It's to do with, generally, the recruiting environment and society's general desire to join the armed forces. And they are challenging, but we are working very hard to do it.

In regards to the incentive to meet them, we at every senior level, we appreciate that the targets are important for us. We want to recruit the best, regardless of what their ethnic makeup would be. And we recognize that, going forward, we need to be able to recruit from a greater pool if we want to keep the inflow of the right type of people we need to make ourselves more attractive to a wider section of society.

What are we doing to ensure that people join at various stages? We're doing outreach activities. In the U.K., our armed forces are split between the RAF, the Navy, and the

Army, and each of the services have their own recruitment processes and outreach. And also, each of the services also have different public perceptions. So, interestingly, the RAF is viewed very positively by the general population, especially the BAME, whereas the army tends to be viewed more negatively—just because when you’re associating which of the service reflects more of the military, it’s the army, where the RAF always is seen as more of—I think it’s just viewed more positively because they’re not viewed as close combat.

And what we’re doing is—depending on the service—we’re doing outreach activities with schoolchildren so that they start thinking about it early. Our research has shown that if you are looking for future recruits, someone has to start thinking about joining at the age of 13. That’s the age that we need to start letting our future recruits know that the armed forces is a potential option.

And where are our competitors? Actually, everyone is our competitor at the moment in the U.K. All the top four big consultancy firms have placed upon themselves recruitment targets from BAME backgrounds. You know, the National Health Service, law firms, everyone is aware of what the demographic changes are, and everybody is also aware of the benefits that diversity brings, especially diversity of thought, and competition is pretty fierce. And we also, within the military, appreciate that as well, and that’s why we’re investing heavily in a program to ensure that we can recruit the best going forward.

Dr. SETTOUL. OK. Thank you for your question.

To be honest, most of the French ignore this rate I gave you about this number of 10 percent of French Muslim soldiers, I think firstly because it’s not in our culture to mention the religious characteristics of the individuals, religious and ethnic. As I told you, we don’t have any kind of ethnic statistic in France. It’s deeply—[inaudible]—in our culture. And secondly, because unfortunately Muslims have a negative image in the media, and for many French it reminds them of the problem of the *banlieue*, what you call the suburbs [inner city]. But in France, in French, the French word has a negative connotation. “*Banlieue*,” it’s mainly the problems and discrimination and so on and so on.

But through my research and my studies, I try to highlight this phenomenon of overrepresentation of Muslims. And it’s a way for me to deconstruct the idea of the clash of civilizations, which has become very important in the minds of the French population and I would say the European one.

Dr. THOMPSON. OK, thank you.

Do we have any other questions from the audience at this time? OK. Then Dr. Settoul, can you talk a little bit about how your research was actually received?

Dr. SETTOUL. It was not easy because in France, you know, we don’t have any kind of ethnic statistics. And when I did my Ph.D. during 2005 and 2010, I carried out 50 interviews. I made six internships in the French suburbs, in the centers of military recruitment in Lyon, Marseille and Saint-Denis, in the suburb of Paris. And it was not easy because some of the officials I’ve met, they told me, why do you want to focus on the ethnicity of our soldiers? Here in France we don’t recognize any kind of ethnic statistics and any—so I try to explain to them that it’s important to understand the social trajectories, to understand the experiences within the regiments, because, of course, theoretically we don’t recognize the ethnicity, but the soldiers in their daily life can feel discrimination because of their color skin and so on and so on. So I try to be very pedagogic and to

explain the interest of such a study to improve the management of the diversity within the military institution.

Dr. THOMPSON. OK, thank you.

We've actually just been joined by Congresswoman Gwen Moore. Just please let me know if you'd be interested in making any remarks at this time or later.

Are there any additional questions from the audience at this point? Yes.

QUESTIONER. So, if I may, I have a question about, so President Trump's tweet this morning, if you have any reaction or comments to make about it. He just announced that transgender people won't be allowed in the military anymore—what are your comments about that?

Thank you.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much for your question. Is there anyone on the panel that would like to take this question at this time?

Mr. WULLERS. Thank you, I heard about that this morning, too. And just to make clear, I am the chief spokesman for the German Arms Procurement Office, but I'm here in a private capacity, so whatever I say is my personal opinion.

I personally think that being able to serve your country in a military or other capacity is one of the greatest goods a society has to offer. It's also a sign and a revelation, actually, to my mind to see who a society invites to serve them. And so I think that the limitations on who I would invite and who I would give the chance to serve my country should be as low as possible, and to make them as necessary as possible. For example, if you are in a combat squad, there are certain limitations that working in a combat squad have. But I would really want to make this case that you should really limit yourself to these essential requirements. So, in the case of transgender people or the transgender community in general, I personally think I do not feel that it's the right thing to do to exclude them from the honor to serve.

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so much, and I am so sorry to be late for this very important hearing.

I do know that last week the House of Representatives had an amendment to the defense authorization bill that would have prevented service of transgender folk and medical care for transgender folk in the military, and that amendment was defeated in the House of Representatives. So, very clearly, it was a bipartisan rejection of this notion. And so I am not clear as to why this tweet came out this morning, except to say that it was a day that ended in the letter Y. But I do think that it just speaks volumes to the continued struggles that we're having to have an integrated society, and a military is often the most important place to reflect consensus and solidarity in a society. So I do find it very disturbing.

Ms. ABBASI. The U.K. military fully supports people from all backgrounds, and we have a positive contribution from the LGBT community, and we have people serving who are from a transgender background. They are soldiers and they do a wonderful job, so I don't understand personally why we would put in place anything that discriminates against anybody who wishes to serve for their country.

Ms. RAFAELA. Yes, and I'd like to add to that. Take, for example, the Dutch police. One of the most successful diversity networks of the Dutch police, for example, is the LGBT network, and because we think that we need to know what their needs are and what their issues are. They bring in the expertise that we otherwise won't have. So, also

for the Dutch security sector, the LGBT community is an extremely important community, and exclusion of the LGBT community is just not done.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Do we have other questions from the audience at this point?

QUESTIONER. All of you have talked about how you think that transgenders should be allowed in the military. But what do you think when a country like the United States, with a large percentage of the population that doesn't agree with that? What do you think the United States should do to either change their opinion or sort of push the agenda of transgenders in the military?

Ms. RAFAELA. Well, one of the most important things is that there is commitment in the top, that there are senior and top leaders that are actually saying—that are not like only saying that diversity is important, but also practice diversity. So it would be really helpful if—also for the recruitment and the selection methods, that they look specifically for people with a LGBT background and get them into leadership positions within the security sector.

And for example, my own organization is actually making space right now for people in management with a diverse background, and also with an LGBT background, to counter the issue that you are addressing here.

Mr. WULLERS. Thank you very much for the question. That is something that I myself have thought about a lot, because what is behind the question is what I like to call the “enough” movement—that is, essentially, I think all over Europe right now, as well as we can see with all the election results, which is that there is a fundamental backlash against topics such as diversity, LGBT. And many people, especially conservative people, that feel like it's enough now, hence we should stop creating more and more diversity-centered topics and issues and policy.

And I personally don't have a perfect answer to that. But I think what I've experienced in the army is that as soon as you get to know people, all the political ideological struggles, they disappear, basically. So if you are deployed to Afghanistan, you are in a unit, and you are under fire, you do not care whether the man or the woman next to you had a different sexuality prior, or is Muslim, or whatever. You just care that his or her rifle is pointed in the same direction as yours.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Are there other questions from the audience?

I wanted to talk a little bit more with Ms. Rafaela. If you could just talk to us a little bit more about the police, because a lot of the conversation has really focused more on the military. If you could talk a little bit about some of the actual concrete policies that you all have implemented within the police within Dutch society.

Ms. RAFAELA. Well, my personal opinion is that I think a great method of the Dutch police is the use of community policing. And that is not only like knowing your community, but also engaging in the community, getting to know your citizens, investing in knowledge concerning their backgrounds, their needs. And what I see, for example, Dutch police officers doing is that they literally step into houses, into cultural centers to meet with people. They participate in public events. They make sure that they are visible. They are trying to attract different groups, talk to them about their issues, talk about working for the police, for example. So I think that is a great best practice of what I see Dutch police officers doing.

And then the second thing is, again, the commitment at the top. We have the top actually saying/stating that diversity is really important. They really want to accelerate the motion, make the motion happen. And that's a second thing that is, I believe, really successful.

But still, there remains a challenge. And that remains a challenge when it comes, for example, the legitimacy and trust in the police organization within, for example, multicultural communities. That is something that my organization is really investing in by saying that we need to attract more diverse employers. And that also means that they need to be in the top, so we need to make space. We need to think of leadership programs. The diversity networks themselves that are already participating in communities and trying to attract multicultural people, but also people with, for example, LGBT backgrounds, you name it, to come work for the police.

I'd say these are the three concrete examples now.

Ms. MOORE. I want to revisit the question that you asked about the majority of Americans not wanting transgender people to serve in the military. The reason I didn't respond immediately, because I just didn't accept that premise as being true. And so I've been up here googling a little bit, and I have data that's probably dated, but I don't think the majority of Americans do not want transgender people—I don't—I'm sorry—

QUESTIONER. Why does it seem that way?

Dr. THOMPSON. He said why does it seem that way, then?

Ms. MOORE. It may seem that way, but polling data don't support the conclusion that they don't want them to serve. I know there's a little different mix on whether or not people want you to use the same bathroom.

But I do think that when I think about Chuck Hagel, former United States Senator, a Republican, had reached the conclusion that at some point it's inevitable that transgender people are going to serve in the military, the same as was the case with people with LGBT designation. And I think that, as our—one of our guests here—and I'm sorry, I can't see your name—that this is where leadership comes in. I think that that's probably the most unfortunate thing about the President's tweets this morning, is that it's not demonstrating the kind of leadership that we need.

And, as Martin Luther King Jr. said, injustice anywhere is injustice for us all. So the minute we start coming up with the people that we would agree to exclude, next it'll be you—[laughs]—you know, because somebody will disagree with handsome young men like you being in the military.

But on the serious side, I think that when you started talking about people who have the character and the willingness to serve their country, to lay their lives on the line, I think it is very egregious for us to put these kinds of false litmus tests in front of them. And most Americans agree that it—most Americans, quite frankly, avoid military service and go way out of their way not to do it. So we shouldn't stand in the way of someone who's brave enough to do that.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

And Dr. Settoul wanted to address the question on police versus military in terms of diversity efforts.

Dr. SETTOUL. Yes. Just to draw a parallel between the police and the military institutions, during my Ph.D. research I have met many young people who were attracted by

a military career but not by a police one, because this institution is offensive as a racist institution. And to be honest, it's not totally wrong because, according to the last surveys, we know that 60 percent of the members of the French police have voted for Marine Le Pen, the extreme right candidate. So this makes the military institution much more attractive among these ethnic minorities.

Dr. THOMPSON. We have a question that came in from Facebook that pretty much talks about the U.S. military being in the forefront of advancing rights and equality in the United States. And the question was asking for the panelists whether or not the military has actually been the forbearer of advancing rights and equalities in Europe as well. And I should say the Facebook question was in the context of this tweet coming out this morning, referring specifically to transgender individuals and the U.S. history of the military with African American and other diverse populations being seen as somewhat of an equalizer. So, with that, I think the question is whether or not the military has been seen as a place where rights have been actually advanced in Europe.

Thank you.

Ms. ABBASI. The U.K. military has a very clear policy on LGBT, and we don't discriminate. I'm not quite sure if I can say, in fact, the military are sort of at the leading front. I think in some areas the military is slightly constitutional, and they have their own set of rigid policies in place which take some time to overcome. But at the moment we are very supportive of LGBT persons, and we have a number of people who have gone through the process of gender change and are serving. We've opened up our ground combat roles to females only recently, and one of the first females to join was someone who has gone through the transgender change process. So we're quite proud of the diversity we have.

Are we at a stage where we can comfortably say we don't have to do anything else? That's not true. We don't have senior role models from various backgrounds. And I think there's a lot that we can do, and we need to start thinking about retention and progression. Many times a lot of our policies concentrate on people, bringing them in and keeping them, I would say, at low ranks. That then doesn't really inspire/motivate them to stay, and also doesn't create the positive environment that we want to attract future candidates. So now I think a lot more thought needs to go into what are we doing internally to ensure that we have leaders right at the top that come from all types of backgrounds. And it's not just LGBT. It's not just female. It's disabled people; they can't serve in the military, but in other civilian posts. But also, you know, social mobility is also very important. People need to come from all sorts of various backgrounds.

Thank you.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you. And do we have any other closing remarks from panelists as we—oh, sorry—

Ms. MOORE. Well, I suppose just to be responsive to the Facebook questioner, I hate to seem redundant, but again, the desegregation of the United States military occurred almost—I mean to date in July of 1948. It was by executive order, so it was President Truman signing an executive order because he didn't believe that legislation would make it through Congress to desegregate the United States military. And that initiative was taken before the country was really ready for it. After the Holocaust and the horrific events surrounding the massacre and murder of Jews, I think the American leadership started to examine its own racism. And certainly just another reason why I think that

this morning's tweets were retrograde with where Americans want to present and the leadership that we want to provide in the world.

Mr. WULLERS. Yes, and just maybe from the German perspective regarding that, since Germany is, I think, in contrast to the other three European countries here, blessed with a very short colonization period. So we were last and first to leave the table. And so Germany did not have much migration from other countries until we invited guest workers from Turkey and Greece and other countries. And I have to say, yes, generally it has been a possibility for social mobility.

So, for example, if you look at the two campuses of the two federal armed forces universities in Hamburg and Munich, you'd see about, I'd say—not statistically proven but from my empirical observations—30 [percent] to maybe even 40 percent of cadets with some sort of diversity background. But if you look at retention rates and like career changes on who moves up, that's actually—those are actually quite low numbers. So, yes, generally speaking, there's some possibility for social mobility, and in that way the armed forces in Germany do integrate in a large way. But there are still things that leadership has to acknowledge and then to change, and that's, I think, the strategic aspect.

Dr. THOMPSON. Thank you. Samira?

Ms. RAFAELA. Yes, and also for the Netherlands I see definitely possibilities and opportunities. But retention, that's an extremely important one, and I think that also asks from our leaders that they look differently at diversity, they look differently at talent. So, employees—people with, for example, a diverse background—they bring in specific expertise. And it's just not something they bring in, it's an expertise, it's a competence. It's also needed that leaders look differently in their organization at people with specific expertise and specialism. And when it comes to retention, also, cultural changes are really needed in your organization, and not only changes but really cultural shifts.

So then I'm talking about mindset, attitude, the kind of conversations we have coming from different perspectives in conversation. There's no one size fits all. And that will make and hopefully allow that people will stay in your organization and can actually bring in their expertise, and that leaders can actually look at it in terms of this as a competence; this is not just an employee being diverse, but this is an employee with expertise and a specialty, and we need him or her or whoever.

Ms. ABBASI. I just wanted to add one thing. I think what is really important for any Diversity and Inclusion [D&I] program is to have the support of the majority. One of the sort of obstacles or blockers is that we can invest as much money as we want and we can put programs in place, but if the majority are not behind the program and are not acting in good faith, then it's really hard to embark upon these change programs. So we can try to increase the number of females or BAME personnel, but if the people within will give them a tough time or will not give them the space to work and progress, that will make it very difficult for them. And I think when we're looking at policies and also looking at how to implement, we have to also think about the majority and what we need to do to put them or have their buy in into the process.

Dr. THOMPSON. I want to thank you all for sharing your experiences from Europe on this very important issue. It is an issue that our Helsinki commissioners have been working on for some years now. Close to a decade ago, one of our commissioners actually helped to introduce the Military Diversity in Leadership Commission to really look at, for

example, where the United States was particularly on this issue. It continues to be something that we are working on.

To that point, our Commissioner Senator Ben Cardin recently introduced in April the National Security Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Act, which he a few days ago worked with his Republican counterpart, Chairman Senator Corker, to have diversity provisions included in the Senate authorization bill. And that was this year, and last year. So I would say it's an issue that we continue to be seized with in the United States as well.

The reasoning, of course, is I think what you heard from most of the panelists here. As we are experiencing demographic change on both sides of the Atlantic, it's something that we are seeing as being crucial for future workforces—these workforces that will also be the underpinning of our security forces on both sides of the Atlantic, and part and parcel to the long-term stability of the transatlantic relationship.

And so, with that, I would like to thank you all for being here today. And, as we said, we were on social media, so if there are follow-up questions we will also take time to review those as well.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 12:01 p.m., the briefing ended.]





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