



ELNET

EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP NETWORK

REPORT

1st EUROPEAN SUMMIT ON ISLAMIST RADICALIZATION and THE TERRORIST THREAT

First session

MONDAY JANUARY 11, 2021

2:30 PM - 7 PM CET

In partnership with

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POLITIQUE
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On January 11th 2021, ELNET organized the first session of its European summit on “**Islamist Radicalization and the Terrorist Threat**”, with the support of former French Prime Minister **Manuel Valls**, and in partnership with the Jean Jaurès Foundation and the Foundation for Political Innovation (Fondapol). Renowned political figures participated in this event such as **Gerald Darmanin**, French Minister of the Interior, **Marlène Schiappa**, Deputy Minister to the Minister of the Interior, **Sarah El Haïry**, Secretary of State in charge of Youth and Commitment, and **David Cameron**, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Nearly 500 people connected throughout the afternoon, including policy makers, journalists and European experts.

This afternoon of debates was divided into two parts: “Freedom of expression, French secularism and Islamist separatism” and “Islamism: a pan-European political crisis?”.

The date owed nothing to chance since it marked the sixth anniversary of the deadly terrorist attacks which cost the lives of Charlie Hebdo’s cartoonists, and the savage murder of 4 innocent people during the hostage-taking at the Hyper Cacher.

This European Summit, the first of its kind, has aspired to be an unprecedented platform for high-level informal discussions bringing together leading politicians, experts from all over the world and in particular from the Arab-Muslim world. It aims to provide a better understanding of the radical Islamist movement, its historical and geopolitical roots, its components and its nuisance power, as well as to propound an inventory of the terrorist threat that weighs on Europe.

The first session addressed the following questions: Where are we six years later? How to overcome the Islamist "leprosy"? Is it not too late today? How to provide a common response? How can we better promote our values?

OPENING REMARKS: Dr Arié Bensemhoun, CEO of ELNET France and former Prime Minister Manuel Valls (2014-2016)

Link to the replay : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OXZQQJEpOA&t=5s>

OPENING: Marlène Schiappa, Deputy Minister to the Minister of the Interior, interviewed by Isabelle Lasserre, Deputy Editor-in-chief of the Foreign Policy Service (Le Figaro)

About the concept of “French-style secularism”, the Minister stated that it guarantees equality and is quite different from the Anglo-Saxon model of communities. As regards Islamism, the press partakes in the climate of mistrust and accusations of islamophobia, through the diffusion of fake news and by propagating the idea that the fight against Islamism is a fight against Muslim people. She finally reminded that Islamism is the main cause of deaths due to terrorist attacks and thrives on ignorance.



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Link to the replay : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mz3zEjU61Dk&t=525s>

FIRST ROUNDTABLE: Freedom of speech, French secularism and Islamist separatism

INTRODUCTION: Sarah El Haïry, Secretary of State in charge of Youth and Commitment

The Secretary of State addressed the issues that public schools are facing today about separatism and pleaded for the strengthening of education and commitment to recreate “the French dream”.

Link to the replay : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zd65E0q5SfQ&t=6s>

What are the battles to be waged? What are the priority issues to fight against separatism and radicalization? These were the questions answered by the participants: **Ghaleb Bencheick**, *President of the Foundation of Islam of France*, **Djemila Benhabib**, *Political Scientist and Writer*, **Jean Birnbaum**, *Journalist and Essayist*, **Iannis Roder**, *Historian*, **Hamadi Redissi**, *Political Scientist and Historian*, **Pierre-Henri Tavoillot**, *Philosopher*, and **Laure Daussy**, *Journalist at Charlie Hebdo*.

Not only did they evoke Islamism through the prism of security and civilization, but they also explained it through historical, political and philosophical perspectives. As regards freedom of speech, they went back to the Islamic tradition and the specificities of French secularism with the legal critique of religions (among others).

Link to the replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyBhM4vhdXs&t=227s>

CONCLUSION: Joint interview of former Prime Ministers Manuel Valls and David Cameron by Apolline de Malherbe, BFM TV

By explaining their own experiences of power, both former Prime Ministers recalled the strong cooperation between France and the UK in 2015, at the time of the attacks. Both governments had to work on the very notion of Islamism and radicalism and not to apply it to Islam itself. Because of radicalism, they pointed out the difficulties for the State to consider Islam, which has not the same national organization as the Church or the Jewish community. The war in Syria in 2013 and the Abraham Agreements were also evoked.

Link to the replay : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iDc25tobI78>

SPECIAL GUEST: Patrick Klugman, lawyer for the civil parties of the Hyper Cacher terrorist attack

Patrick Klugman talked about the historical trial of January 2021 and the spirit of 11th January 2015 which needs to resume more than ever.

SECOND ROUNDTABLE: Islamism, a Pan-European Political Crisis?

INTRODUCTION: Dominique Reynié, CEO of the Foundation for Political Innovation (Fondapol)

Dominique Reynié presented the work of Fondapol which quantifies and classifies data about Islamist terrorism worldwide: the latter is the first cause of deaths among victims of terrorism in general.

Link to the replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXx5mCrQtao>

The roundtable helped to better understand the mechanisms of jihadism and Islamist terrorism. The participants sketched out proposals to better understand it and gave examples from all over Europe.

Dr. Liam Duffy, *Senior Advisor, Program for the Prevention of Radicalization and Counterterrorism (UK)*, talked about jihadism in France and the cultural and ideological gap it has created.

Pr. Bernard Haykel, *Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies and Director of the Institute for Middle East Transregional Studies at Princeton University (USA)*, explained Islamism as an ideology in itself with its own paradigm and references, mixing fascism and the Islamic tradition.

Dr. Heiko Heinisch, *Historian, Essayist (Austria)*, pointed out the European divergences when it comes to identify Islamist terrorism and legal Islamism emerging in the political landscape: only France and Austria conceive the latter as a threat to European values.

Saïda Keller-Messahli, *Journalist, Writer and Human Rights Activist (Switzerland)*, focused on radical preachers in Europe and their links with foreign Islamist networks in Qatar, Turkey or Saudi Arabia.

Pr. Johan Leman, *Emeritus Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology (Belgium)*, spoke about the Muslim Brotherhood and its social impact, both in Belgium and in other mosques in Europe.

Pr. Bernard Rougier, *Sociologist and University Professor (France)*, gave a sociological explanation of French jihadism, resting on the adequation between disadvantaged areas and the prisons.

Dr. Michael Taarnby, *Associate Researcher, Specialized in Political Islam (Denmark)*, highlighted the issue of identity and European fundamental values which are contested by the Islamists and the Jihadists, who create a parallel society.

Link to the replay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWLDI8fwY-g>

CLOSURE: Dialogue between Gérald Darmanin, Minister of Interior and Yves Thérard, Editorial Deputy Director (Le Figaro)

Gérald Darmanin addressed the challenges that Islamism represents not only for public order and French society but also for European security, since it has invested the associative, entrepreneurial and humanitarian fields.

Link to the replay: <https://youtu.be/TkxIq3qk-5c>

ANNEXES

Program :

<https://www.sommet-europeen-islamisme-terrorisme.com/programme-pdf-fr>

List of speakers :

<https://www.sommet-europeen-islamisme-terrorisme.com/team-extended>

Press :

- [Sommet européen de la lutte contre la radicalisation islamiste et le terrorisme: retrouvez l'interview de Gérald Darmanin par Yves Thérard \(Le Figaro\)](#)
- [L'école, cible de prédilection du discours islamiste \(Le Figaro\)](#)