



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

29 January 2025

### **Mainstreaming Islamophobia: When an editor goes rogue, the publisher cannot hide behind a disclaimer**

Dear sir,

It is with shock but not surprise that we at Amnesty International read Euractiv's editor in chief, Matthew Karnitschnig's, [The Brief – Never again?](#) published on 27 January. In this "opinion" Matthew Karnitschnig makes baseless and racist accusations which stoke anti-Muslim fear and hatred.

Amnesty International cannot and does not react to every sensationalist or racist statement we come across in the media. However, as this opinion was authored by the editor, we felt an imperative to respond due to the risk his views pose to journalistic integrity at Euractiv.

On his appointment as editor in chief, Matthew Karnitschnig set out his vision for Euractiv as a "premier source of quality information and analysis on EU affairs." Yet, on his personal X account he has been a proponent of [fake news](#) on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East UN and has displayed his coded support for the [Israeli army](#).

In this latest piece, Matthew Karnitschnig, claims "there's no question that much of this ignorance [about the *Shoah*] resides in Muslim migrant communities, where hatred of Jews is as much a staple of daily life as *baklava*." This racist remark plays into a discriminatory discourse across Europe that seeks to blame antisemitism on Muslims – who themselves are facing racism and Islamophobia – stoking division on Holocaust Memorial Day.

This undue deliberate focus on Muslims as antisemitic - while antisemitism thrived in Europe - is discriminatory and racist and undoubtedly contributes to Islamophobia in Europe. It is part of a wider trend where antisemitism is conflated with the critics of Israel's actions.

The 80<sup>th</sup> memorial of the liberation of Auschwitz is a moment to reflect on where brutal prejudice can lead to, not drum up hatred against minorities. We cannot fight antisemitism with Islamophobia.

Matthew Karnitschnig refers to Ireland as "a country deemed to be so hostile to Jews that Israel shuttered its embassy there" yet fails to mention this was an Israeli government claim following Ireland's efforts to secure a ceasefire, ensure the release of hostages, and uphold international law.

More than ever, fact-checking, balanced reporting and impartiality are key to ensuring public trust and supporting informed debate. In failing to attribute the source of this above claim to the Israeli government, this piece falls short of these principles and standards.

When presented with a letter from 31 Euractiv journalists highlighting their concerns, instead of listening and recognizing that his remarks were divisive and inflammatory, the editor doubled down.

The University of Leipzig [study](#) cited by the editor on X tracks "Israel-related, anti-Semitic [sic] attitudes", deliberately conflating criticism of the state of Israel and Israeli officials with antisemitism. This controversial

definition of [antisemitism](#) has been widely criticized by Israeli, Palestinian and international organizations, as well as leading experts on antisemitism and Jewish studies, due to its misuse. It restricts criticism of Israeli government policies, stifles freedom of expression, and has a chilling effect on human rights advocacy.

Human rights backsliding, the spread of disinformation and the rise of repressive policies from governments across Europe requires we turn away from the hollow politics of “us vs them”.

Amnesty International cannot in good conscience support a publication that seemingly promotes Islamophobic tropes and fails to learn from its mistakes. We would like to formally cancel our subscription to Euractiv.

Yours faithfully,



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Amnesty International – European Institutions Office