



## European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

### NEWS REPORT

<b>Country:</b>	Bulgaria
<b>Title:</b>	Ultrnationalist party introduces bill banning all clothing wholly or partially covering the face
<b>Date:</b>	13 June 2016
<b>Expert:</b>	Margarita Ilieva
<b><u>Context</u></b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	Muslim expression repression
<b>Ground of discrimination:</b>	Religion and ethnicity
<b>Source:</b>	Legislative initiative
<b>Field:</b>	Other (Freedom of expression and of religion in public places)
<b>Applicable law:</b>	n/a

### **Content**

The "Patriotic Front", a coalition of parties termed by ECRI as "fascist/ultranationalist" has introduced on 20 April 2016 a bill called "Bill on the wearing of clothing covering or hiding the face" (654-01-58) outlawing the wearing of any clothing wholly or partially covering the face.<sup>1</sup> The ban applies to all public places. Only private homes and places of worship are excluded from the prohibition. The liability provided for consists of fines (the equivalent of EUR 100 on a first occasion; the equivalent of EUR 750 on any following occasion).

In parallel, two municipal councils have adopted such measures at the local level by ordinances to that effect – in the cities of Pazardjik and Stara Zagora. These are now existing rules.

**Key points of analysis:** These bans were adopted / introduced in order to stop Roma women from wearing the burqa. A small number of Roma women have been found to be wearing the burqa in Pazardjik. Such wear is not considered traditional for Bulgarian Muslims. It is considered to be the outcome of foreign influences conducive to radicalisation. Clearly, the measures are Islamophobic, and reflect the influence stances of Islamophobia have on popular opinion and local, as well as national politics.

### **Internet link source and additional information:**

[http://www.sac.government.bg/court22.nsf/\(\\$All\)/5D9119021B4CAB8FC2257CE70027A2F1](http://www.sac.government.bg/court22.nsf/($All)/5D9119021B4CAB8FC2257CE70027A2F1) (in BG).

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<sup>1</sup> Available at (in BG): <http://www.parliament.bg/bg/bills/ID/42106/>.