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# The history and contemporary challenges of Islamic Religious Education in Hungary

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the historical background and current challenges of Islamic Religious Education in Hungary within the broader framework of Hungarian Religious Education. It shows that, although Islam has a long history in the country, contemporary Islamic Religious Education remains largely community-based rather than school-based. Although legal provisions allow Religious Education in state schools, yet Muslim communities can rarely use this opportunity because of their limited resources, scattered student populations, and a lack of trained teachers. For these reasons, mosques and weekend schools play a central role in fostering Islamic knowledge and identity. Overall, the study presents Islamic religious education in Hungary as a small but developing field shaped by historical legacy, minority status, and ongoing institutional adaptation.
**Keywords**: Religious Education, Islamic Religious Education, Hungary, history

**Zusammenfassung**: Dieser Artikel untersucht den historischen Hintergrund und die aktuellen Herausforderungen des islamischen Religionsunterrichts in Ungarn im breiteren Rahmen der ungarischen Religionspädagogik. Er zeigt, dass der Islam zwar auf eine lange Geschichte im Land zurückblicken kann, der heutige islamische Religionsunterricht jedoch nach wie vor überwiegend auf Gemeindeebene statt in Schulen stattfindet. Obwohl gesetzliche Bestimmungen den Religionsunterricht an staatlichen Schulen zulassen, können muslimische Gemeinschaften diese Möglichkeit aufgrund begrenzter Ressourcen, einer verstreuten Schülerschaft und eines Mangels an ausgebildeten Lehrkräften nur selten nutzen. Aus diesen Gründen spielen Moscheen und Wochenendschulen eine zentrale Rolle bei der Förderung islamischen Wissens und der islamischen Identität. Insgesamt stellt die Studie den islamischen Religionsunterricht in Ungarn als einen kleinen, aber sich entwickelnden Bereich dar, der durch historisches Erbe, Minderheitenstatus und fortlaufende institutionelle Anpassung geprägt ist.
**Schlagwörter**: Religionsunterricht, Islamischer Religionsunterricht, Ungarn, Geschichte

## 1. The history and contemporary challenges of Islamic Religious Education in Hungary

This study addresses the question of how Islamic Religious Education can be understood and situated within the Hungarian educational and social context. What historical developments have shaped its current forms, and what challenges does it face in a predominantly non-Muslim environment? Although Islam has a long and complex history in Hungary, its educational expressions today are relatively recent and still evolving. The paper, therefore, seeks to provide both a historical overview and an analysis of present-day structures, paying particular attention to the interaction between the legal frameworks of the educational system and community realities. In doing so, it aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how a minority religious tradition navigates its place within the country's educational system, and also to provide some hints for policy makers to have better understanding of the realities of the religious Muslim minority.

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## 2. Religious Education in Hungary

From the mid-20th century until 2011, Religious Education in Hungary existed in two distinct forms: compulsory classes in church schools – of which only ten was permitted in the country under the communist regime, – and optional, extracurricular classes held in a religious community. The Act CXC of 2011 on the National Public Education (2011. *évi CXC. törvény*) changed the situation of RE in Hungary fundamentally as of the academic year 2013/14. Since 2013, Religious Education in Hungary has been structured into three forms – optional-compulsory, compulsory, and optional – the education provided in state schools, church schools, and religious communities (Kodácsy-Simon, 2026).

### 2.1 Compulsory Religious Education in Church Schools

According to the official statistics by type of ownership, in 2024, 17.3% of elementary schools, and 27.5% of high schools were run by religious organizations (*Az Oktatási Rendszer Alapvető Statisztikai Adatai*, n.d.). Although the exact percentages are difficult to determine, since distinguishing between schools as institutions or campuses is inherently challenging, the distribution of church-run schools by owner is roughly as follows: Catholic Church 47%, Reformed Church 29%, Baptist Church 15%, Lutheran Church 7%. Additionally, Jewish communities run five schools in the country; one school belongs to Buddhism and one to Vaishnavism; and two schools have Islamic background but do not belong to the Islamic communities (see 4.2.1).

In these institutions, Religious Education (RE) is a mandatory subject with very few exceptions; consequently, students enrolled in church schools are required to participate in RE throughout all grade levels (1–12). Neither students nor their guardians are given the option to choose between Moral Education and RE, as Moral Education is not offered in church schools.

The school's pedagogical program determines the allocation of instructional time for RE; however, in most cases, it amounts to approximately two hours per week. RE in church schools is both denominational and confessional. As an integral component of the school's pedagogical framework, RE is formally assessed. While the teaching staff collectively determines the evaluation mode, RE is typically graded in church schools. Instruction is organized by the school and delivered by a qualified teacher employed either by the institution itself or by the affiliated church.

### 2.2 Optional-Compulsory Religious Education in State Schools

To equip students with competencies "that will help them to become informed, active and engaged citizens, and responsible members of their communities, both large and small" (*A Nemzeti alaptanterv*, 2020, p. 359), Moral Education was introduced as a compulsory subject in all state schools for grades 1 to 8 (ages 6–14) under the Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education. Since its introduction, Moral Education has formed part of the school's pedagogical program and is delivered as a compulsory curricular subject for one hour per week.

Hungary is a secular state where state schools are required to maintain neutrality in matters of religion and worldview. In accordance with the Act on Freedom of Conscience and Religion (*2011. évi CCVI. törvény*) the Act CXC of 2011 on education allows parents or guardians to opt for Religious and Moral Education (RE)[1] in place of Moral Education for their children. Consequently, RE in state schools operates as an optional-compulsory subject: while not mandatory for all students, those who choose RE are

[1] The subject is called „Religious and Moral Education" in state schools and „Religious Education" in church schools and religious communities. Since the two subjects with different titles are governed by the same curricula and set of rules, the study does not distinguish between them in terms of titles, but refers to both as RE.

required to attend it for the duration of the given school year. This decision may be reconsidered annually, allowing families to select either Moral Education or RE for each academic year.

Optional-compulsory RE is allocated one hour per week and is scheduled concurrently with Moral Education classes. Although RE does not constitute a formal component of the school's pedagogical program, it functions as an alternative within the compulsory curricular framework for students who select it. Assessment practices for RE are aligned with those of Moral Education; accordingly, if Moral Education is graded within a given school, RE is likewise evaluated using the same grading system.

Optional-compulsory Religious Education (RE) in state schools is denominational and confessional in nature and is therefore organized by religious communities possessing legal status.[2] All 32 officially recognized religious communities in Hungary (*Egyházügyi Nyilvántartás*) are entitled to provide RE in state schools. In practice, the primary limitation on the establishment of RE classes is the availability of personnel within the respective religious community. Parents and guardians—ideally in consultation with their children—are free to choose the RE class their child will attend. Where sufficient capacity exists, RE instruction may be organized even for a single student, provided that a qualified person is available. Consequently, it is theoretically possible for each student within a class to attend a different RE group simultaneously. In reality, however, classes typically divide into two or three RE groups in addition to the Moral Education group. At the introduction of this system in September 2013, 52% of parents opted for RE rather than Moral Education for their children (MTI, 2013).

All aspects related to the organization and delivery of RE fall under the authority of the respective religious community. This includes determining content, curriculum, requirements, assessment, authorization, supervision, quality assurance, human resource management, and other professional matters. State schools are responsible for providing the necessary infrastructural conditions and must cooperate with the relevant ecclesiastical legal entity; however, they do not exercise control over the content of RE. As stipulated by law: "The ecclesiastical legal person shall be responsible for determining the content of RE, for employing and supervising the RE teacher, for organizing applications to take part in RE classes, and for supervising such activities. Schools – with the means available within the educational institution – shall ensure the material conditions for RE, including, in particular, the orderly use of the premises, as well as the conditions required for application and operation." (*2011. évi CXC. Törvény*, §35, (4)). In state secondary education (grades 9–12, ages 15–18), neither Moral Education nor the alternative option of RE is provided.

### 2.3 Optional Religious Education in religious communities

Religious Education (RE) provided within churches and religious communities is entirely voluntary. Participation is determined by children and their guardians, who may choose to engage in this form of education outside regular school hours. This type of RE is organized and conducted by local religious communities and is led by a trained teacher, a religious leader, or another appointed member of the community. This RE is denominational and confessional in character, and its practical implementation exhibits considerable diversity. The duration of sessions typically ranges from 30 minutes to 2–3 hours per week, and they may occasionally be scheduled on weekends. This form of RE is not subject to formal assessment.

[2] The Freedom of Religion Act classifies religious communities into four levels. These are in descending order: "established churches," "registered churches", "listed churches", and "religious associations." The Parliament decides on the approval of the list of established churches. The term "church" is used in the law not only for Christian churches, but for all religious communities. All four categories of religious groups have legal personality, which gives them legal rights, such as the right to own property (*2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Hungary*, 2023).

Although expert bodies within each church and religious community develop recommended curricula and teaching materials, it is optional to follow them at the local level. Decisions regarding the syllabus, study plan, and the specific content and format of instruction are made by the responsible authority within each local community.

Although statistics on participants in optional Religious Education only exist within the churches and religious communities—and are rarely made public—each community has clearly stated in informal forums that following the enactment of Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education, participation in optional RE groups has declined significantly among those religious communities that can offer their optional-compulsory RE in state schools (Velkei, 2016; Vitális, 2025). This trend is largely attributable to the perception among children and their parents that optional or compulsory RE offered in state and church schools has replaced the form of RE previously available within religious communities.

### 2.4 Teacher training

Moral Education teachers are trained at public universities within the framework of university MA programs. An alternative for those with a teaching degree in another subject is to obtain the qualification in Moral Education through a 30- or 60-hour postgraduate specialized teacher training program.

The preparation of Religious Education teachers is the responsibility of the universities of churches and religious communities; state universities do not provide independent teacher-training programs in Religious Education. In certain cases, however, Religious Education teacher-training MA programs are offered in cooperation with teacher-training faculties at state universities, where students pursue additional teaching qualifications in other subject areas.

Similar to undergraduate education, matters related to further training, assessment criteria, supervision, and mentoring of teachers also remain within the domain of the respective religious community. The required qualifications can be obtained at both bachelor's and master's levels, and they qualify holders to teach RE at various school levels.

RE teachers are employed by their respective religious communities. Religious education is funded by the state, but religious communities supplement this to bring RE teachers' salaries in line with those of other teachers.

## 3. Islamic history in Hungary

The history of Islam in Hungary is a very long one, full of eliminations and reappearances. Four periods can be identified based on the institutional presence of Muslims such as places of prayer.

### 3.1 First period – the beginning

The Hungarian tribes, along with the 3 Kabar tribes, arrived in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century, where some more Muslims joined them, of Bolgar and Irani (Yaz) origin. From the 11th century, the Muslim population increased with Arabic immigrants from North Africa, Turks from Anatolia, and Hungarians reverting to Islam. Some of the Muslims held high positions in the state, others were soldiers, traders, and coiners of the Arpad dynasty, the first and original ruling family of Hungary. Despite their relatively low percentage, they exerted considerable economic and political influence (Ferenci, 2010, p. 70).

The ruling dynasty needed their service, but restrictions were placed on them due to pressure from the pope and the Catholic Church in the country. In 1092, a law stated that if someone kept the commandments of Islam, they should be expelled from their place of residence. As the pressure increased, the anti-Islamic measures got more and more severe. By the end of the 14th century due to these measures

and baptizing attempts of the Catholic Church the Muslims either left the country or assimilated into the Catholic majority (Ferenci, 2010, p. 93).

### 3.2 Second period – the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Turks appeared in the middle of the 14th century in the Balkan Peninsula. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Ottoman conquest reached Hungary. The new rulers brought considerable changes in the population on their territories: relocated Hungarians to Anatolia and Egypt, and North of Sudan, and resettled Muslims to the conquered Hungarian territories (Hegyi, 1983).

In 1526, the united Hungarian army was defeated in the region around Mohacs, and Islam became the dominant religion in the large middle parts of Hungary. In this period until 1686, many mosques, Islamic schools and Turkish baths were built. The places of prayer must have exceeded 200, as in every settlement of the approximate 100 Muslim ones, there was at least one mosque (Ferenci, 2010, p. 107).

After the conquest of Buda by the Austrian army, there were intentions to completely eliminate the signs of Islamic presence in Hungary. This process lasted for about 200 years, and only a few buildings remained in the country. The Muslim population stuck in the country became the subject of Christianization again. E.g. the Jesuit Order in the city of Pecs used to teach Christianity in Turkish as late as 1690 (Hegyi, 1983).

### 3.3 Third period – the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

The continuous striving for independence, whether through military uprisings or through silent boycotts on the part of the Hungarian population in the Habsburg Monarchy, undermined its military and economic power. After the Compromise of 1867 Hungary and Austria formed the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Varsányi, 2019, p. 340). The Monarchy expanded its borders in 1878 to control more resources by occupying Bosnia-Herzegovina. After this expansion, about half a million Muslims became part of the Monarchy as their military power was needed, their faith needed to be integrated into the predominantly Christian Monarchy (Ferenci, 2010, p. 133).

As Bosnian soldiers served in the army of the Monarchy and were stationed in different locations, in 1895, although limited, some freedom of religion was introduced for the first time after Ottoman rule (Varsányi, 2019, p. 339). At that time, there were more than 500 Muslims in Hungary (Ferenci, 2010, p. 133). In 1913, the Hungarian administration was extended to the Ada Kaleh Island (Török-Orsova in Hungarian), and about 500 more Muslim citizens became part of Hungary.

In the First World War, the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy was allied with Turkey, and their troops fought together in Galicia and on the Piave. In 1916 the Hungarian Parliament declared Islam a recognized religion in Hungary (Varsányi, 2019, p. 343). According to historians, this recognition was symbolic and aimed to win the support of the Bosnian population and to strengthen the alliance with Turkey, as at that time only 2000 Muslims lived in Hungary. Museum Boulevard in the capital was renamed Mehmed Boulevard, and a Mosque Building Committee was established (Ferenci, 2010, pp. 133-134).

Between the two world wars, the first European Islamic conference was held in Hungary, where a commitment was accepted to build a suitable mosque, which had not been done since then. The Second World War was followed by the Soviet type of communism, which, because of its anti-religious nature, eliminated the Islamic presence from Hungary again.

### 3.4 Fourth period – the times of transition (from 1980s)

During the years of communism, Muslim students were coming to Hungary from different countries

from the Third World. Also a limited immigration was also going on from the so-called 'friendly' Muslim states – those countries that had good relationship with countries of the communist block. These people felt the need to come together and practice Islam. In the beginning, there was no legal way to do that, as only existing faith groups were tolerated, and new groups were not given a chance (Ferenci, 2010, p. 139).

In 1987, as the Soviet-type of communist regime became weaker day by day, the first official Islamic organization, the Association of Muslim Students was registered. Following this breakthrough, about two more Islamic organizations were set up in 1988 (Udvarvölgyi, 2010, p. 134). Following the democratic transition of Hungary in 1989-1990, and the Bosnian war in the neighboring Yugoslavia, some new Islamic organizations were set up, first of all to provide help for the Bosnian refugees, and also provide services for the growing number of Muslims in Hungary, as some of the obstacles were raised in the way of immigration process. In 1990, the Act No. 4 on Freedom of Conscience and Religion was passed by Parliament, which stated that freedom of religion is safeguarded in the Constitution and also the freedom to establish religious organizations ("churches" according to the wording of the law) (*Egyházügyi Nyilvántartás*). In 2011 and 2012 there was a major amendment to the Freedom of Religion Act – as written in section I. – and the number of religious organizations recognized as "churches" was limited to 32. Among them, there are two Islamic organizations (Lederer, 2002):

- Hungarian Islamic Community (set up in 1988 by the communist regime itself), which claims to carry on the tradition of the Muslim presence in Hungary between the two world wars. Although they do not have a direct and continuous link to that period in legal or cultural senses.
- Organization of Muslims in Hungary (established in 2000), which carries on the experiences and mentality of the Association of Muslim Students (established in 1987). Many of the Muslim students of the 1980's became founding members, elected officials, and volunteers of the Organization of Muslims in Hungary from 2000.

Besides these two, there are Islamic foundations, associations and even private mosques.

## 4. Number of Muslims in present-day Hungary

The number of Muslims living in Hungary is a question of great interest. Since Hungary's economic transition in 1990, there have been studies on these questions, but none have provided a figure acceptable to all parties. These estimations range from some thousands to about 40 thousand. Their tendency can be classified as non-Muslims' results are closer to the lower edge of the range, and Muslims' estimations get closer to the upper one. This difference might derive from the classification and definition problem (e.g., who is a Muslim). Here, the most important estimations will be presented: (1) the 2001, 2011, and 2022 censuses conducted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), (2) the estimate of the Ibn Khaldun Group (young Muslim sociologists) in 2009, and (3) the estimation of the Organization of Muslims in Hungary in 2010. Since that time, no reliable estimate has been made.

In the 2011 census, the HCSO counted 5,579 Muslims, (*Maps of Hungary – Religion – Population Census*, n.d.) and in the 2022 census, their number was 7,983 (*Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*, n.d.). It needs to be mentioned that it is not compulsory to provide data on religious affiliation, and among minority groups, there is a tendency not to provide data on that question. Therefore, these figures are much lower than the actual number of Muslims living in Hungary.

The estimate by the Ibn Khaldun Group in 2009, based on a survey of practicing Muslims at places of prayer, including their families. Their result was between 10 and 15 thousand people, but they excluded those who were not attending the prayer places (e.g., because of distance, work schedules, or neglect of prayer, etc.) (Ibn Khaldun Society, 2009). Their result was also lower than the actual number of Muslims.

The estimate of the Organization of Muslims in Hungary in 2010 tried to survey Muslims in Hungary

according to their country of origin. Key persons were selected from these groups, and they were asked to make estimates, which were corrected using the proportion of Muslims in these groups, since the original estimations included non-Muslims as well. According to the results, the number of Muslims was around 32,000. The majority were of Arabic origin (about 55%). Among non-Arabic Muslims, the number of Hungarian reverts was put at 2523 (7,7 %) (Sulok, 2010).

Since 2010, there has been no estimate of the Muslim population. The number of Muslims slightly increased over the last one and a half decade: the growth was due to the immigration of blue-collar workers, mostly from post-Soviet countries and Southeast Asia. The number of Muslim students has also been increasing, mostly from the Middle East and North Africa, as well as from EU countries. At the same time, many Muslims with Hungarian citizenship or a residence permits in Hungary have migrated to wealthier EU countries in search of better opportunities. The balance shows a slight growth. The Muslim population could be around 40,000 persons, which is less than 0.5% of Hungary's population.

## 5. Islamic Religious Education in Hungary

### 5.1 Overview of Islamic education in Hungary

During the first three periods of Islamic presence in Hungary, especially in the 2nd and 3rd ones, we can assume that Islamic Religious Education followed the traditional pattern. Muslims had established an institutional system. In the 4th period, Muslims came to Hungary mostly for education and work, and also with the intention of going on to Western Europe. There was a need for places to practice Islam, most significantly to keep the prayers in general and the Friday congregational prayer – the joma, to be able to gather in Ramadan for breaking the fast and keep the night prayers – the taraweeh. The need for Islamic education rose from the following factors:

1. Non-Muslims converted to Islam.
2. Some Muslims were married or got married and they had children.
3. Some of the Muslims were lacking in Islamic knowledge, and staying in the West made their Islamic identity stronger.

The situation regarding Islamic Religious Education in the fourth period was very different from that in previous times. Those who needed this kind of education formed a very diverse group: they belonged to different age groups, had very different levels of education, had different ethnic backgrounds, different language skills, different social backgrounds, different standards of living.

On top of that, there was no established institutional background in Islamic education. It was connected to places of prayer (often flats or family houses were transformed into mosques), most of the times without a trained imam. Many imams from the 1980's and 1990's until the middle of the first decade of the new millennium were worshippers who had greater knowledge than the average level of the community, and who were enthusiastic about providing community service as students, or in full-time or part-time jobs.

As the community grew, there was a need for trained imams with full-time employment. However, finding a well-trained imam with a good understanding of the circumstances in Europe was a big challenge in itself. The communities that could afford to employ an imam were not in a position to consider the specialization of imams in the Islamic field of knowledge (Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, education, etc.) and were happy to have an imam.

In the mosques, Islamic education became the duty of the imams and those who assisted them.

### 5.2 Actors in the field of Islamic Religious Education in present-day Hungary

Islamic RE in Hungary is mainly optional RE in the local communities.

### 5.2.1 Schools in the Hungarian education system

The Maarif School (*Maarif Magyar-Angol Két Tanítási Nyelvű Általános Iskola És Gimnázium*, n.d.) is connected to Türkiye to the Ministry of Religious Endowment and integrated into the Hungarian education system. At Maarif School, the language and culture of Türkiye are taught, and there is no specific Islamic Religious Education.

The Orchidea Schools (*Orchidea Hungarian-English Bilingual School*, n.d.) is connected to the Fathullah Gülen network and is also integrated into the Hungarian education system, with its nursery school, primary, and secondary levels. These schools do not provide Islamic Religious Education, although the cultural (and mostly the dietary) needs of Muslim pupils are well respected.

### 5.2.2 Religious organization recognized by the Parliament as „churches" in the law n. 206

These organizations have the right to participate in the compulsory-optional Religious Education in state schools. There is a normative state subsidy based on the number of classes and pupils. In practice, none of these organizations can participate in compulsory-optional Religious Education due to the relatively low number of Muslim pupils in Hungary who request Islamic Religious Education and the scattered nature of those requests. The current level of resources for these two Islamic organizations prevents them from reaching out to Muslim pupils, as the normative state subsidy would not cover their expenses on the one hand, and they lack sufficient numbers of trained staff to assign teachers to primary schools attended by Muslim pupils on the other.

The Hungarian Islamic Community (HIC) (*Magyar Iszlám Közösség*, n.d.) has mosques in six cities in Hungary. This community has a trained Hungarian imam (although he is not hafiz), but without a university degree located in the main mosque in Budapest. In the other mosques the imams are people with some religious knowledge. In every mosque of the HIC teaching of the Quran is available on voluntary basis. Beside this HIC published books and booklets in Hungarian on various fields of Islamic religious studies.

The Organization of Muslims in Hungary (OMH) (*Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza*, 2026) has five mosques in the country: two in the capital and three in other cities. OMH has a trained Yemeni imam with PhD degree in Islamic jurisprudence (he is hafiz), a Yemeni imam with university degree (he is also hafiz) and a Pakistani imam (with secondary imam school degree, he is hafiz and one of the best memorizers of the Quran in Hungary), an Arabic imam with Hungarian citizenship with university level Sharia studies degree (he is not hafiz), and an Arabic imam with Hungarian citizenship (he has PhD in science and has secondary imam school degree, he is not hafiz). OMH maintains the Noor School for children. Noor School is a weekend school that operates in three mosques in the country. The school teaches the Arabic language, the Quran and knowledge of various fields of Islamic religious studies. The school currently employs 14 teachers, selected by the imam. They should be either professional teachers of the Arabic language or teachers of the Islamic religion or have relevant knowledge of the Quran (they should be a hafiz) and be able to teach the Quran to children. The school enrolls children between 6 and 16 years of age, who are divided into classes according to their age and knowledge. Currently, the number of enrolled students is 163. The books are ordered from Granada Edition, a French Islamic Bookstore. Enrollment into the Noor School is voluntary, but enrolled pupils must attend classes.

### 5.2.3 Islamic foundations, associations and other places of prayers

There are seven foundations, associations, and other places of prayer in Budapest and Miskolc, and some of them also work with children. A common characteristic of these organizations is that they have only one mosque, usually, they have a trained imam with many years of experience. These imams are

responsible for leading the prayers, making the khotba (Friday sermon), and teaching the Quran. Sometimes they select helpers from the congregation and assign them to teach Quranic recitation to beginners. One association operates a day care for Muslim children to help them with their homework and to teach them Islamic manners and the Quran.

## 6. Conclusion

The Muslim community in Hungary aspires to provide quality Islamic Religious Education for its children to enable them to live as practicing Muslims. However, the requirements for establishing an Islamic religious school integrated into the Hungarian education system are currently unmet. First, the Muslim population is financially disadvantaged; most families would be unable to afford tuition fees. Second, Muslim organizations lack both the financial resources and the necessary expertise to establish and manage such an institution. Third, the Muslim population is geographically scattered, making it difficult to enroll a sufficient number of students in a single location. While Muslim parents would prefer school-based Islamic Religious Education within the state school system, Muslim organizations lack a sufficient number of trained teachers to provide these classes.

Currently, the only viable option is to offer Islamic Religious Education within mosques run by various Islamic organizations - that is, optional Religious Education within the country's system. This framework allows individuals knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence and the Quran to serve as volunteers, thereby utilizing the community's "dormant potential." Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. Across Europe, and specifically in Hungary, public discourse is increasingly shaped by rising Islamophobia and efforts by right-wing actors to restrict or suppress Islamic Religious Education in particular. For example, in 2016, in the village of Ásotthalom, the right-wing municipality banned the practice of Islam (Herczeg, 2024). Later, this municipal decree was repealed by the Constitutional Court, citing the constitution. Such pressure could undermine established Islamic organizations and create a vacuum for "freelance" teachers. These individuals might hijack Islamic Religious Education to promote hidden agendas, potentially posing a security risk. The ultimate question for the future lies in political will: whether lawmakers will recognize that empowering recognized Islamic organizations in their educational efforts contributes to social stability and fosters dialogue among religions and cultural groups.

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