

# Europe's Muslim population growing but won't be a majority soon

December 4, 2017

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Even if migration to Europe ceased—no immigrants, no refugees—the percentage of Muslims in those countries would still rise over the next three decades, according to new projections from the [Pew Research Center](#).



Pew Research Center

Although it hasn't been long since Pew made its last projections on population growth of world religions, based on 2010 numbers, a record number of asylum seekers from Syria and other predominantly Muslim countries has changed the picture considerably.

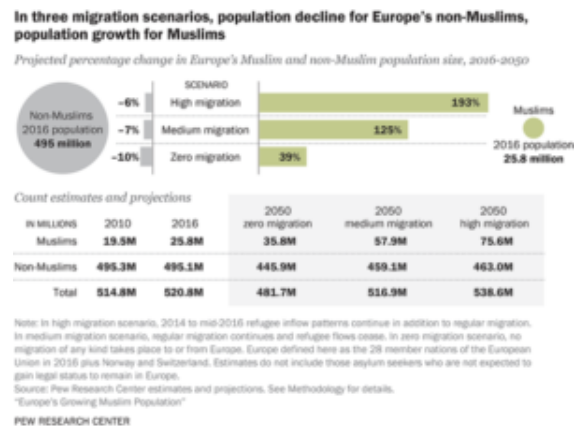
As of mid-2016, Muslims make up nearly 5 percent of the population in the 28 countries of the European Union, plus Norway and Switzerland,

according to the new Pew report. That's an estimated 25.8 million people.

By comparison, Muslims make up about 1 percent of the population in the United States and could reach 2 percent by 2050, according to Pew estimates released earlier this year.

The new European numbers are based on Pew analysis and projections of census and survey data from each country, as well as data on immigration from Eurostat and other sources.

With the recent wave of Muslim immigrants and refugees to Europe, anti-Muslim movements have sprung up in several countries, including PEGIDA—Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West, which has protested the arrival of Muslim migrants, claiming Germany will be “overrun” by Muslims.



Pew Research Center

How much Europe's Muslim population actually will grow over the next three decades depends on future migration and birthrates.

## Projected scenarios

Pew created projections for three possible scenarios.

- If all migration to Europe stopped, the Muslim population could grow to 7.4 percent by the year 2050. One reason for that growth is that European Muslims are younger than other Europeans by 13 years, on average. They also have more children—an average one more child per woman.
- If no more refugees were admitted into European countries as of mid-2016, but immigration continued at its current pace, the Muslim population could more than double to 11.2 percent.
- If refugees and immigrants continued to move to Europe in similar numbers with a similar religious makeup from now until 2050, the Muslim population could nearly triple to 14 percent.

Meantime, Europe's total population would drop from about 521 million to an estimated 482 million without any future migration, according to the report. It would remain roughly stable if only non-refugee immigrants were admitted and grow modestly if all were admitted.

The non-Muslim population is projected to decline in each scenario—at most, by about 10 percent in the scenario with no migration.

## **Muslims will remain a minority**

But even the scenario with the largest growth leaves the Muslim population considerably smaller than the populations of both Christians and people with no religion in Europe, according to the report.

“There will be no country where Muslims make up more than a third of the population,” said Conrad Hackett, Pew's associate director of research and senior demographer.

“There have been sort of sensationalistic claims that due to different fertility or migration patterns, France or other countries might perhaps have a Muslim majority by midcentury. Even in our highest scenario, we

just don't find that to be an outcome that would materialize."