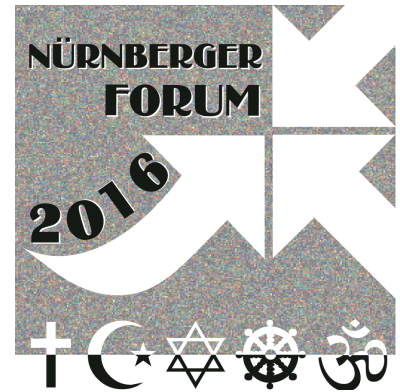


Jenny Berglund

**Islamic Education in Europe,  
an opportunity for equal rights or a way to control Islam**



**ABSTRACT**

Islamic religious education (IRE) in Europe has become a subject of intense debate. People worry their states are doing too little or too much to shape the spiritual beliefs of private citizens. State response to the concern ranges from sponsoring Islamic education in public schools to forgoing it entirely. The policies vary according to national political culture. On one hand, the emergence of publicly funded Muslim schools and IRE in Europe can be seen as to provide equal educational opportunities to Muslims and other religious minorities through partnerships with the state. On the other hand, public funding can also be conceived as a means to “domesticate” Islam by bringing it within the European framework. In other words, offering publicly funded Islamic religious education can be viewed as an attempt to control Muslims. Moreover, offering IRE under a national curriculum that includes specific values concerning human rights and so forth indirectly encourages interpretations of Islam (or, for that matter, any other religion) that are more compatible with Western modernity. In this paper I explore these questions by discussing them in relation to state-church relations in different European countries.

Dr. Jenny Berglund, Associate Professor, Södertörn university.  
Visiting Associate Professor, University of Warwick.