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FRIDAY

The Gülen Movement as a Mechanism for Integration of the Muslim Community in Europe

by *Fatih Tedik*

Panel:
Euro-Islam, Identity and
Integration

Venue:
B202,
Brunei Gallery, SOAS

26.10.07 Panels	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2
9:30-11:30		Presentation 03
13:00-15:00		
15:10-17:00		

This paper discusses the potential of the Gülen movement to serve as a mechanism for, in the medium term, the integration of the Turkish community in Europe and, in the long term, the Muslim community as a whole, taking into consideration the obstacles to this process, given the composition of different communities.

Although many of Gülen's ideas are far from conventional theologically, the real novelty of his work is that it motivates people who are at least sympathetic to his ideas to put them into practice: the ideas do not remain theory and aspiration but become a charter or action-plan implemented by members of the movement. The movement's influence on Muslim community is examined from both a theoretical perspective (i.e. the position of Gülen's ideas within Islamic understanding of *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*) and a practical perspective (i.e. the activities of the movement in western Europe that have actual and potential effectiveness in bringing about integration).

In order to assess the movement's capabilities, the current situation of Muslims in Europe and their problems in general and the Turkish experience in particular is presented. The movement's potential for enabling integration is then analysed from four complementary perspectives: (1) does the movement propose an alternative view to stimulate the integration process of the Muslim community; (2) has the movement actually operated as a mechanism for integration in western Europe so that its capability is demonstrable; (3) is the European context suitable for the movement to operate effectively; and (4) what does the Gülen movement offer to European member-states by way of a means to sustain a healthy integration process – Turkish community in the medium-run, and the whole Muslim community in the long-run.

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