


# 'Dangerous' pro-hijab campaign pulled after outcry in France

From the [Telegraph](#) and [Politico](#)

The pan European rights body the Council of Europe has pulled a campaign promoting diversity among women and their freedom to wear the Muslim headscarf after it sparked an outcry in fiercely secular France.

The poster was part of an anti-hate speech campaign led by the inclusion and anti-discrimination division of the Council of Europe, the 47-country human rights organization that is distinct from the European Union – although it is partly funded by the European Commission.

The wording of the campaign “reflected individual statements from people who took part in one of the project’s workshops, and doesn’t reflect the position of the Council of Europe or its secretary-general [Marija Pejcinovic Buric],” the statement reads.

 Tweeted images showed portraits of two smiling young women spliced in half and fused together to show one with hair uncovered and the other wearing the hijab. “Beauty is in diversity as freedom is in hijab,” said one of the slogans. “How boring it would be if everyone looked the same? Celebrate diversity and respect hijab,” it added.

The picture started making the rounds on French social media on Tuesday, with the country’s political class, from the center left to the far right, up in arms.

The split image “deeply shocked me,” Secretary of State for Youth Sarah El Hairy said on Tuesday evening to LCI. “It is

the opposite of the values France is standing up for ... France made its very strong disapproval of the campaign clear, which is why it was pulled today.”

“Reminding that women are free to wear the hijab is one thing,” Socialist Senator Laurence Rossignol said, “but saying freedom is in hijab is another. It’s promoting it. Is this the role of the Council of Europe?”

Presidential contenders jumped into the fray as well. “It’s when women take their veil off that they become free, not the other way around,” far-right candidate Marine Le Pen [tweeted](#). “This European campaign promoting the Islamist veil is scandalous and indecent at a time when millions of women courageously fight against this enslavement,”

Conservative primary candidate Valérie Pécresse echoed the statement, saying the headscarf is “not a symbol of freedom but of submission.”

“Islam is the enemy of freedom. This campaign is the enemy of truth,” tweeted far-right commentator Eric Zemmour, who has yet to declare his candidacy, and who some polls predict could make it into a second round runoff against Macron.

Macron’s government also weighed in, saying it had urged the Council of Europe to pull the campaign. France is one of the 47 member states of the Council which acts as the guardian of the European Convention on Human Rights. “We have taken down these tweet messages while we reflect on a better presentation of this project,” a Council of Europe spokesman told AFP.

The Council did not confirm that the pulling of the campaign was a direct result of French pressure.