

Half of Dutch Muslims wants to leave because of Wilders

dinsdag, 30 juni 2009

The English language website of the Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad features the following story on Geert Wilders:

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By Radio Netherlands Worldwide

More than half the people with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds in the Netherlands say they would consider leaving the country due to the growing popularity of anti-Islam politician Geert Wilders. A third say they would definitely like to emigrate, according to a survey published on Monday.

The current affairs TV-programme Netwerk commissioned the survey in response to the success of Wilders' populist Party for Freedom (PVV) in the recent European parliamentary elections. Research bureau Motivaction interviewed 319 Turkish and Moroccan people asking them about their feelings about the Netherlands in general and Wilders in particular. A large majority (70 percent) of Dutch Muslims have either Turkish or Moroccan roots.

Geert Wilders, a member of Dutch parliament, is being charged with hate speech and inciting discrimination for calling the Koran a fascist book and comparing it to Hitler's Mein Kampf, and for his inflammatory film Fitna.

Although three quarters of the Turkish and Moroccan Dutch people questioned in the survey said they felt at home in the Netherlands, 57 percent said they now felt less comfortable due to the growing popularity of the PVV. Two out of five felt they are being discriminated against more often, and almost a quarter said they regularly experienced discrimination. Nearly three quarters said they thought Wilders had intensified negative feelings towards Muslims among the Dutch public.

Nearly twenty percent said they agreed with Wilders on some points and could appreciate why people would vote for him. However, half the respondents said the growing support for Wilders made them feel angry and disappointed, and 22 percent said he aroused feelings of fear and hatred. Ninety per cent said they thought a Wilders government would be a fiasco, and only 4 percent thought he would be able to offer any solutions to the country's problems.

The survey asked respondents what they saw as the best strategy to counter Wilders. Forty percent thought the best policy was simply to ignore the PVV. Thirty-five percent favoured entering into a debate with Wilders and his supporters. Twenty five percent saw vociferous protest as the answer, and 11 percent wanted to see a Muslim political party established to represent their interests.

The survey's findings echo remarks by Turkish-born Rotterdam councillor Hamit Karakus in Monday's de Volksrant newspaper. Karakus said that although his children speak Dutch, understand Dutch culture and customs, and are well educated, they still feel they are not accepted into Dutch society. "They also wonder whether they have a future in this country," he adds. The councillor says he believes the popularity of the PVV is fuelling support for a small but growing minority of radical Muslims in the Netherlands.

Figures cited by the annual Emigration Fair, which provides information to would-be emigrants, put the findings of the Motivaction survey of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch people in perspective. According to the fair's organisation, around 30 percent of the entire Dutch population say they are considering emigrating, for a wide range of reasons. However, only a tiny proportion of them ever actually take the plunge and move to another country.

Source:

- NRC: Half of Dutch Muslims wants to leave because of Wilders

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