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# Most Muslims want full integration with British way of life

**Kaya Burgess**  
Religious Affairs Correspondent

More than half of British Muslims want to “fully integrate” with society, according to the most extensive survey of its kind.

Research involving more than 3,000 Muslims shows that they broadly share the views and priorities of the wider

population, rather than being shaped by supposedly “Islamic” concerns. Ninety-three per cent feel a fairly or very strong attachment to Britain and are likely to identify the NHS, unemployment and immigration as the biggest issues facing the country.

British Muslims were more likely than the general population to condemn terrorism, the survey by ICM and

Policy Exchange, the right-of-centre think tank, found. They were also more likely to give credence to conspiracy theories that the United States government or Jewish influences were behind the September 11 attacks.

Thirty-one per cent of Muslims blamed the US for the attacks on the World Trade Center, 7 per cent blamed Jews and 4 per cent blamed al-Qaeda,

while 52 per cent said that they did not know. This compared with 71 per cent of the general population who blamed al-Qaeda, with 10 per cent blaming the US, 1 per cent blaming Jews and 16 per cent unsure.

There are 2.7 million Muslims in Britain, according to the 2011 census, accounting for 4.8 per cent of the population. The research, which involved

focus groups across the country, showed that 53 per cent wanted to “fully integrate with non-Muslims in all aspects of life”. An additional 37 per cent said that they wanted to integrate on “most things”.

Six per cent expressed support for leading “a separate Islamic life as far as possible”, and 1 per cent were in favour **Continued on page 6, col 4**

# Davis backs soft Brexit in blow to hardliners

Minister wants migrants for low-skilled jobs

**Sam Coates** Deputy Political Editor  
**Henry Zeffman, Richard Ford**

Britain is leaning towards a softer Brexit after ministers admitted that they were considering plans to allow low-skilled migration and could pay to access the single market after leaving the European Union.

The government does not want to end up with damaging labour shortages, David Davis, the Brexit secretary, said last night amid growing signs that ministers were moderating their stance.

Mr Davis told a CBI dinner in Wales that the government would be “ending free movement as it has operated before”, adding: “We won’t do so in a way that it is contrary to the national and economic interest ... Britain must win the global battle for talent. No one wants to see labour shortages in key sectors.”

Earlier in the day Mr Davis, a long-standing Leave supporter, told the Commons that Britain could keep paying into the Brussels budget in exchange for access to the single market. The government was not ruling out the move to “get the best possible access for goods and services to the European market”, he said.

He became the first government minister to admit openly that such a trade-off was on the table. His remarks were seized on by Philip Hammond, the chancellor, who supported the Remain campaign. Speaking during a visit to Edinburgh he said: “I think David Davis is absolutely right not to rule out the

possibility that we might want to contribute in some way to some form of mechanism.”

Signs of a softer Brexit came on the day that the Office for National Statistics revealed that immigration to Britain reached a new high of 650,000 for the year to June. This was driven by 284,000 EU migrants mainly looking for work, almost matching the number from elsewhere in the world. The previous year Romania was the biggest provider of immigrants to Britain for the first time.

Official figures also revealed that 37,600 EU citizens secured British residency this year, compared with 18,700 previously.

Cabinet ministers have told *The Times* that the government could revive the agricultural workers’ scheme after Brexit to allow low-skilled migrants to pick fruit in summer, although they emphasised that no decisions had been taken. Sajid Javid, the communities secretary, has said that it should not become more difficult for “construction or any other sector” to hire workers, singling out an industry that relies on EU migration to survive.

Business leaders said that Mr Davis’s speech reflected views expressed in private about his desire to ensure that a range of industries did not suffer a skill shortage.

Migration Watch, a think tank close to government, said this week that “it might be necessary to introduce a key workers’ scheme to help employers to **Continued on page 2, col 3**



**Health check** Prince Harry and Rihanna, the singer, were tested for HIV in Barbados to mark World Aids Day. **News, page 16**

# Hollande quits French presidential race

**Adam Sage** Paris

François Hollande, the deeply unpopular French president, has become the first in the country’s modern era to quit after one term.

He stunned France by announcing in a televised address that he would step down after his five-year stint ends in May. By refusing to contest the election he avoids the humiliation of a near-certain defeat in the first round.

“Today, I am aware of where my bid [for re-election], which would not unite people around it widely, could lead. So I have decided not to be a candidate in the presidential election,” a sombre Mr Hollande said. “I have served the country for four and a half years with sincerity, honesty.” Mr Hollande’s approval

rating has been languishing at an all-time low of 4 per cent. Polls suggest that if he had stood in the election he might have won no more than 7 per cent of the vote — the worst result for any incumbent president.

Fellow Socialists had raised concerns that an electoral fiasco would push the party towards oblivion and help Marine Le Pen, the National Front leader, in her campaign to be president. Mr Hollande feared the more embarrassing spectre of his party choosing another candidate in its primary.

The president, 62, came to power promising to restore the dignity of the office. His tenure was marked by a series of terrorist attacks in France.

In 2014 photographs showed him leaving the Elysée Palace to meet Julie

Gayet, 44, his secret girlfriend, on a scooter. The situation descended into farce as he announced that he was ending his relationship with Valérie Trierweiler, 51, then his first lady, who had been hospitalised suffering from shock.

Ségolène Royal, 63, his former partner and the mother of his four children, who is the environment minister, is being urged by some Socialists to replace Mr Hollande as the party’s candidate. She is reluctant, however. Manuel Valls, the prime minister, is more likely to stand as the party’s contender. Mr Valls praised the president’s “tough, mature, serious choice” last night.

Ms Le Pen, 48, remains the favourite to fight a run-off with François Fillon, 62, the Republicans’ candidate. **Palace coup, page 40**