

	Proposal for Paper at 15th IAMS Assembly, Sydney
Study Group	Religious Freedom, Persecution and Mission
Topic	Vulnerabilities of Christian converts from Islam seeking asylum in Europe
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Abstract	<p>Tens of thousands of asylum seekers in Europe have professed a conversion from Islam to Christianity in recent years. Others have fled their homelands after conversion due to fear of or actual persecution. There have been various studies and surveys about the difficulties they are facing in European asylum systems.</p> <p>Converts have been identified as the most vulnerable group among persecuted Christians in their countries of origin. This paper proposes to examine in which ways their vulnerabilities are perpetuated in European countries. I envisage highlighting the following vulnerabilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. life in a very different type of society (secular, individualistic, materialistic, self-reliant, law & guilt vs. religious collectivistic, honour & shame, mutual support and social control by extended family; many new arrivals are at loss and have high expectations towards Christian fellowship to care comprehensively for all their needs) 2. possible past entanglement with lies, fraud or crimes 3. cultural barriers: not understanding cultural frameworks in which the asylum systems operate 4. misunderstandings, misinterpretation of intentions and disbelief by authorities: asylum officers and judges in administrative courts 5. lack of competence or ill will of interpreters 6. ignorance of well meaning supporters: spontaneous baptism by fringe groups, lack of differentiation between theological and sociological concepts of conversion, lack of differentiation between a theological understanding of persecution and the delimitation of serious persecution in asylum law, lack of understanding of requirements for witness statements 7. hostilities and attacks by Muslim migrants 8. surveillance by secret services of their home countries operating abroad 9. Potential serious harm and persecution if deported to countries of origin
References	Protecting Converts against Deportation to Countries where Christians are persecuted: Survey on the Situation of 6.516 Converts in Germany (Open Doors/IIRF 2019) https://www.opendoors.de/report-converts
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