Landmark case challenging ethnic profiling in France:
ENAR and Stop le Contrôle au Faciès call on the French government to stop discriminatory police practices

Brussels, 3 July 2013 - The first public hearing in a lawsuit against the French state for carrying out discriminatory identity checks on the basis of ethnic profiling takes place today at the Tribunal de Grande Instance in Paris at 1:30 p.m. ENAR and Stop le Contrôle au Faciès condemns all forms of ethnic profiling and calls on the French government to seize the opportunity to deliver on its earlier promise to end ethnic profiling, as this violates fundamental human rights.

13 individuals from various regions in France have filed a joint lawsuit because they have suffered from targeted discriminatory “stop and search” practices. Some of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit say they are stopped and searched by the police several times a week. A 2009 study by the Open Society Justice Initiative showed that Blacks were 6 times more likely than whites to be stopped, while people of Arab origin were 8 times more likely to be stopped than whites in Paris.

Ethnic profiling has elicited strong reactions throughout Europe, with numerous cases in France. In 2005, nationwide riots erupted following the death of two teens running away from “stop and search” tactics in the Paris area. Advocacy initiatives like Stop le contrôl e au Faciès! have consistently demanded political commitment to stop discriminatory police checks, and President Hollande made a vow during his election campaign in 2012 to end ethnic profiling. The French government officially promised at the United Nations Human Rights Council United in Geneva on 6 June 2013 to end ethnic profiling in France.

ENAR Chair Sarah Isal said: “Despite these commitments, France has yet to prove its real political will to stop the abusive police checks negatively affecting thousands of citizens. This joint case is an unprecedented occasion to ask for government accountability in living up to its promises”.

For further information, contact:
The European Network Against Racism:
Claire Fernandez, ENAR Policy Officer, Tel: +32 (0)2 229 35 71, Email: Claire@enar.eu.org, Web: www.enar.eu.org

The Stop Contrôl e au Faciès Initiative:
General office Tel: +33 7 60 19 33 81, Email: stoplecaf@gmail.com
Sihame Assbague, Spokesperson, Tel: +33 6 27 32 00 32
Marwan Muhammad, Spokesperson, Tel: + 33 89 83 01 33
Elsa Ray, Spokesperson, Tel: +33 6 27 36 84 19

Notes to the editor:
The European Network Against Racism (ENAR aisbl) stands up against racism and discrimination and advocates for equality and solidarity for all in Europe. We connect local and national anti-racist NGOs throughout Europe and voice the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities in European and national policy debates.