PRESS RELEASE

Nelson Mandela 1918-2013: His legacy will live on

Brussels, 6 December 2013: ENAR is deeply saddened by the news of Nelson Mandela’s death on 5 December, and extend our condolences to his family, friends, and the people of South Africa. We remember Mandela as a profoundly courageous activist and leader, who transformed the lives of millions through his lifelong struggle for justice and equality for all people.

Mandela was born in 1918. As a law student, he joined the African National Congress and the fight against Apartheid. In 1964, he was sentenced to life in prison for sabotage, and remained incarcerated for 26 years. He played a decisive role in the successful transition from Apartheid to a democratic South Africa and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993. He served as South Africa’s president from 1994 to 1999.

Today, as we continue to grapple with hatred, racism and xenophobia, we should remember Mandela’s tireless efforts to unite people and his refusal to surrender to hopelessness and despair. One of his most important lessons is that we must never lose faith in humanity and the power of compassion and solidarity. As he once said:

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

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Notes to the editor:
1. 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 act as an interface between our member organisations and the European institutions. We voice the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities in European and national policy debates.