



Europe's Original Sin: New ENAR Report Confronts Colonial Legacies and Demands Reparations for the Racial Wealth Gap

For Immediate Release

Brussels, Belgium – September 25, 2024 – The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is proud to announce the launch of its latest report, *Europe's Original Sin: White Supremacy, Colonialism, and the Contemporary Racial Wealth Gap*. This pivotal report sheds light on the deep-seated legacies of European colonialism and white supremacy, exposing the economic and social violence and disparities faced by racialised communities in Europe today.

The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the colonial histories of six European countries—Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain—and the resulting structural racism that continues to affect racialised communities in terms of wealth, income, and social mobility. The findings underscore that Europe's colonial past has left an indelible mark on modern society, contributing to widespread economic inequality for racialised minorities.

Key Findings of the Report:

- **Persisting Racial Wealth Gap:** The report highlights the persistent disparity in wealth between racialised minorities and white Europeans, with individuals of African and non-European descent being disproportionately affected by poverty, wage disparities, and limited access to housing, education, and financial services.
- **Impact of Colonial Legacies:** The analysis reveals how colonial policies and practices have shaped modern economic systems, resulting in long-term economic exclusion for racialised communities.
- **Structural Racism in Climate Finance:** The report also delves into how racialised communities are largely excluded from climate financing, compounding their vulnerability to the climate crisis while limiting their participation in climate solutions.

Concrete Examples:

1. **Belgium:** According to Unia's "Socio-economic Monitoring 2022" report, a persistent wage gap exists between individuals of Belgian origin and those of foreign origins, even when accounting for similar education levels and fields of study. This highlights the enduring economic inequality experienced by racialised communities in Belgium.
2. **France:** Immigrants in France face a significantly higher poverty rate (30.7%), with individuals of African origin being particularly vulnerable, experiencing a poverty rate of 39.5%, compared to 17.6% for individuals of European origin. This underscores the continued economic challenges faced by racialised minorities in the country.

Conclusion:

In a context where the European Union's latest policy direction prioritises defense and security at the expense of equality and social rights, ENAR's report is a call to action for European policymakers, urging the adoption of measures that address the historical and systemic barriers faced by racialised minorities in Europe.

"The findings of this report demand a fundamental reassessment of Europe's economic and social policies," said Magda-Sarah Boulabiza, ENAR Policy and Advocacy Advisor. "We cannot achieve true equality without confronting the enduring legacies of colonialism and white supremacy that continue to disadvantage racialised communities. This needs to be further reflected in EU and national policies, such as in anti-racism action plans, dedicated resources for equality and mainstreamed in social policies."

The report advocates for structural changes, equitable access to economic opportunities, and reparatory justice for racialised groups by urgently investing in education, healthcare, and social services—fundamental pillars for preventing inequality and injustice—are overshadowed by Europe's obsession with security.

"The European Union must not ignore the historical injustices of colonialism and white supremacy that continue to shape the lives of racialised people today. While current EU policies increasingly prioritise defense and security, they risk deepening the inequalities these communities already face. True progress can only be achieved when Europe acknowledges its past and implements policies that repair the economic and social harms caused by centuries of exploitation and racial oppression," concluded ENAR Executive Director, Kim Smouter.

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Notes to editors:

- The European Network Against Racism (ENAR aisbl) stands against racism and discrimination and advocates 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 debate
- Europe's Original Sin: White Supremacy, Colonialism, and the Contemporary Racial Wealth Gap report available [here](#)