



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme
Europäisches Netz gegen Rassismus

European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion

Position paper of the European Network Against Racism in view
of the European Commission exchange with key stakeholders

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The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is a network of some 700 NGOs working to combat racism in all EU Member States. ENAR is determined to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national and European initiatives.

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Introduction

ENAR welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the debate on the Europe 2020 flagship initiative, a European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

The Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion present a key opportunity to ensure that the current piecemeal approach in social policies is replaced by a strong long-term social vision able to address current social realities with close cooperation of civil society. Social and sustainable development, fundamental rights and equality should be essential pillars of the Platform. Legislation, policy strategies and instruments proposed in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy will only be successful if they are coherent with these societal realities - growing inequalities, structural discrimination, erosion of fundamental social rights - and recognise the general trend across Europe which sees the need for interventions to enable those most disadvantaged to escape poverty and social exclusion. ENAR strongly believes that a new social vision of how best to advance the well-being of all in our diverse societies must take account of the needs and experiences of communities across Europe that are vulnerable to racism and discrimination.

In this paper we intend to provide concrete suggestions on how the Platform’s 4 pillars can effectively contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion of ethnic minorities and migrants in the EU.

These priorities are drawn from a wide range of debates within the ENAR network and are based upon the evidence that we have gathered over the past 12 years of working together against racism.

1. The Social OMC

⇒ ***Strengthen the Social OMC***

The Social OMC has proved very useful to ensure Member States address the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic minorities in their policy objectives. As an example the latest Romanian National Action Plan in the Area of Social Inclusion, as presented in the Strategic National Report regarding Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2008-2010)¹ included the priorities of increased access of vulnerable groups to resources, and improving the situation of the Roma population. With regard to social inclusion of Roma the report writes that 4 940 Roma were employed as a result of targeted Roma actions in 2007. No data was available regarding the number of Roma employed after three or six months in employment. An increase of school enrolment (up to 250 000 Roma children) was also reported.

ENAR members therefore strongly recommend keeping national reporting mechanisms in the Social OMC and reinforcing monitoring and evaluation instruments. Ensuring greater stakeholder participation at all levels of the process (including civil society organisations) is also very important to increase the efficiency of the OMC.

⇒ ***Prioritise the inclusion of ethnic minorities and migrants in the Social OMC***

The Commission has made significant efforts to encourage Member States to address migrants and ethnic minorities as a matter of urgency in the Social OMC. However, while some Member States take a comprehensive approach to the various dimensions of social inclusion (participation in the labour market and access to housing but also in social, cultural and political life) and focus on involving both immigrants and the host society, the non-prioritisation of the issue and absence of details in most National Action Plans on Social Inclusion comes across as a potentially serious omission.

The Europe 2020 Strategy states that the integration of migrants should be a priority of the Platform, explicitly mentions the Roma and implicitly includes ethnic minorities in the context of ‘vulnerable communities’ and the need to ‘fight discrimination’. These priorities should be reflected and made explicit in the Social OMC and the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion to ensure they really benefit those they intend to target.

¹ Romanian Government (2008), National Strategic report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, http://www.mmuncii.ro/pub/imagemanager/images/file/Domenii/Incluziune%20si%20asistenta%20sociala/Raportari%20si%20indicatori/170609Raportul%202008%20-%202010%20Final%20octombrie%202008_doc.pdf, accessed on 5 September 2010.

⇒ ***Reinforce the monitoring of the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities***

Monitoring the situation of migrants and ethnic & religious minorities² is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that the Europe 2020 strategy improves the socio-economic life of migrants and ethnic & religious minorities³. ENAR suggests the following developments to ensure better monitoring in the framework of the Social OMC⁴:

- In monitoring the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the annual Labour Force Survey and the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) should be used to examine the situation of newcomers, long-term residents, migrants who have naturalised and the children of migrants. The idea of using country of birth as a proxy for examining ethnic, racial and religious background should also be explored further.
- Member States that collect similar national data on migrants and ethnic & religious minorities (for example on the Roma, Muslims...) should be encouraged to share information in an effort to engage in mutual learning and identify best practice.
- Member States should reflect on the fact that the social integration of migrants needs to be given more attention in selecting key objectives.
- Member States should include migrants and ethnic & religious minorities in National Action Plans on Social Inclusion as a specific target group. This can include an explicit reminder of the Commission's strong views on the prioritisation of migrants and ethnic & religious minorities in National Action Plans.
- The Social OMC should give consideration to a number of data sources that have been identified in ENAR publication on "The social and employment dimensions of the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs" that can provide a better understanding of the situation of migrants and ethnic & religious minorities. These data sources provide the potential for a wider range of indicators that can be disaggregated on migration-related grounds, or which directly capture migration-related dimensions.

² The UK example suggests that it is both possible and useful to collect information on religion. However, ENAR is aware that the reaction to religious questions in other Member States is likely to be significantly more cautious and perhaps even hostile. Any decision to collect data on a specific ethnic, racial or religious minority community should be taken with caution. The relevant community would need to support such efforts and care would need to be taken to prevent information which demonstrates disadvantage (poverty, unemployment, poor health) becoming ammunition for right wing parties.

³ The social and employment dimensions of the EU's Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, What are the opportunities for monitoring and improving the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities?, ENAR, December 2009.

⁴ Ibid.

⇒ ***Introduce disaggregated target setting in the social OMC***

In the Europe 2020 communication, the prioritisation of the integration of migrants, the explicit mention of the Roma and the implicit inclusion of ethnic minorities in the context of ‘vulnerable communities’ and the need to ‘fight discrimination’ suggests there is a solid basis for which to propose **EU-level targets for migrants, and national targets for groups who are vulnerable to racism in addition to social exclusion and poverty.**

On 29 September 2010, the European Commission stated that it expected the Member States “to be explicit and ambitious about Roma when setting their national Europe 2020 targets in the fields of poverty reduction, employment and education”. ENAR supports the Commission in its call and wants it to be extended to other ethnic minorities and migrants that need sustained attention as badly as the Roma. Target setting does indeed have the potential to focus much-needed attention and resources in order to improve the situation of migrants and ethnic minorities, provided the challenges associated with it are addressed. Since the Social OMC should contribute to the attainment of the poverty target, it is highly relevant to set up disaggregated targets for disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minorities and migrants in the NAPs.

ENAR recommendations for specific target setting in the context of the OMC⁵:

- Give consideration to setting an EU-level target (and at the very least, national targets) to reduce migrant poverty using EU-level indicators, such as the ‘at-risk-of-poverty rate’ and ‘people living in jobless households’. These indicators should also be used to monitor and interpret progress against Europe 2020’s poverty target, alongside findings from the 2008 and 2014 ad hoc Labour Force Surveys to examine the situation of different types of migrants and those with different lengths of residence.
- Set national targets for migrants, as well as targets for ethnic minorities where disadvantage is well documented and meaningful data exists.
- Give consideration to the merits of using input targets for improving the situation of ethnic and religious minorities to overcome problems associated with a lack of data.
- Take the impact of migration reason (economic, family, international protection) and migration pathway stage (establishment, socio-economic adjustment, participation) into consideration when designing targets and interpreting progress against targets.
- Set an input target to ratify existing treaties that aim to protect the basic human rights of undocumented migrants.
- Use the Economic Policy Committee's Lisbon Methodology Working Group (LIME) Assessment Framework to measure progress against targets designed to improve the long-term effectiveness of migration and integration strategies.

⁵ Upcoming ENAR publication on “Target-setting for improving the socio-economic situation of migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe”, November 2010.

2. Mainstreaming social inclusion

⇒ *Mainstreaming the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities*

One of the aims of setting up a Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion is “to achieve more effective treatment of cross-cutting issues, such as inclusion of migrants, minorities, youth, disabled and other vulnerable groups” and this implies cooperation with Directorates-General for Education and Culture, for Justice, Freedom and Security, and for Health and Consumers.⁶ Hence **the Platform against Poverty should become a vehicle for mainstreaming the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities** into relevant portfolios. The Platform should adopt the necessary instruments to ensure greater policy coherence, in particular between integration and social inclusion policies and between the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Stockholm Programme. Relevant policy departments should participate in the design of the Platform and be involved in its work to avoid measures and policies whose effects would contradict each other to the detriment of migrants and ethnic minorities.

It is important to ensure that undocumented migrants, who are extremely vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion, are included as beneficiaries in interventions carried under the auspices of the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. **The impact of legal status on situations of exclusion should be addressed**, particularly in the case of migrants, refugees/asylum-seekers and Roma, Travellers and Sinti. ENAR recommends the Platform to promote the de-linking of migration control procedures from access to basic social services.

⇒ *Mainstreaming anti-discrimination and equality*

The Platform should promote a holistic policy approach to the fight against poverty and social exclusion which includes addressing the systemic link between discrimination and poverty and ensuring the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination concerns across all policy areas. ENAR has long gathered evidence that poverty and social exclusion are largely caused by structural inequalities and discrimination, particularly in the fields of employment, education and housing. If the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion is to effectively contribute to a decisive impact on eradicating poverty and social exclusion, we believe it must seriously address the link between discrimination and exclusion. The Platform should promote equal treatment in education, employment, access to basic services and social assistance for all, irrespective of legal status.

Prioritising the fight against discrimination is particularly important given the lack of understanding and implementation of the EU’s anti-discrimination legislation that continues to be observed, particularly in some Eastern European countries. In recent years much progress has been made towards implementation of a comprehensive legislative framework. The Race Equality and Employment Equality Directives have had a significant impact on the European anti-discrimination landscape. Nonetheless, the quality of transposition and implementation remains problematic in most Member States. The procedures launched by the European Commission for failure to

⁶ European Commission’s DG Employment (2010), Roadmap ‘Communication on the Platform against poverty’.

adequately transpose these Directives are an illustration of this situation. There is also a lack of understanding of anti-discrimination in the field of social inclusion. While the EU guidelines are implemented in the framework of the Social OMC, the need for equality policies is not always fully understood and much progress remains to be made to ensure the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination in all relevant policies.

ENAR welcomes the European Commission's intention to focus on **social impact assessment, as it can be an efficient tool to mainstream social inclusion and anti-discrimination concerns across all policy areas**. It is therefore crucial that the EU social impact assessment includes a strong equality component, and **is used not only in the social field but mainstreamed across all policy areas**.

At a time of growing influence of the far right, xenophobia and nationalism in Europe, racism and related discrimination and intolerance are among the most important hurdles on the road to equality and social cohesion. ENAR urges the European Commission to prioritise a Europe free from discrimination in the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

3. Working in partnership

Working in partnership should be an essential principle of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion and should be implemented at all levels. **The Platform could become a vehicle for setting up multi-stakeholder forums at local, national and EU levels, with a monitoring role of the functioning of these forums**. Cooperation with stakeholders should become systematic and more regular.

The effective participation of people experiencing poverty and discrimination, including ethnic minorities and migrants, is crucial for the success of social inclusion policies. **NGOs working on anti-discrimination and representing the needs of ethnic and religious minorities and migrants should be systematically included in relevant consultations and dialogues**, to ensure that new policies and programmes are sensitive to their specific needs. To achieve this goal, efforts need to be made towards strengthening migrants and minorities' organisations.

4. Innovation in the social sphere

Social innovation is crucial to provide solutions to Europe's current challenges. ENAR calls on the European Commission to ensure that sufficient resources are dedicated to innovative inclusion programmes targeted at migrants and ethnic and religious minorities.

ENAR recommends in particular carrying out social experimentation in the following areas:

- Increasing diversity in the staff of public authorities and social services to get closer to minorities, better integrate their needs, and fight against their exclusion, while better reflecting the diverse composition of the population that public authorities are expected to serve.

- Financing research and projects on the link between discrimination and poverty.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, e.g. by developing micro-credit facilities.
- Working toward the development of minimum standards of social assistance and guidelines.
- Raising the general public's awareness that the social inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities and migrants will be beneficial not only to the minorities in question, but for the whole society.
- Strengthening field assistance services (education, social work, health) in segregated and socially excluded communities and the promotion of these services as important for society (to put an end to secondary stigmatisation of professionals working with socially marginalised groups).
- Increasing awareness, expertise and technical capacities of municipalities to design and implement local policies aimed at minorities' inclusion and increase their access to public funds and know-how in this field.