



European Network Against Racism

Réseau européen contre le racisme

Beyond 'refugees welcome': What will EU Member States do to protect refugees and migrants from violence and discrimination?

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Following the EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers' reluctance to compromise with an immediate and straightforward relocation plan, the European Network against Racism (ENAR) calls EU Member States to firmly respect fundamental rights and non-discrimination when designing their migration and asylum plans.

This year has seen an alarming increase of people crossing the Mediterranean Sea and other alternatives routes to reach European territory in need of international protection. And yet the suggested plans on migration and the attempt to harmonise previous inadequate mobility and integration measures have not yielded the expected results. ENAR welcomes political commitments, following citizens' mobilisation, to welcome refugees. However, intents to welcome refugees will not be enough if their safety, security and well-being are not guaranteed by EU Member States.

A toxic xenophobic and Islamophobic narrative has led to a worrying [increase of incidents targeting migrants, refugees and people perceived as such](#). Evidence shows that the rise of xenophobic and racist crimes has not led to efficient and immediate responses from national governments. Demeaning speeches by politicians, discriminatory practices by national authorities and disturbing violent incidents targeting migrants and ethnic and religious minorities prove that no migration agenda will be successful if further sanctions against anti-migrant sentiment and racist attacks are not mainstreamed throughout all current measures. Additionally, stop and search practices leading to ethnic profiling are still perpetuated in border controls and constitute an additional threat to migrants who are already fleeing from conflict zones, but also to people perceived as migrants, including people of African descent. "Fortress Europe" and its crime and security approach continues to have a deeper effect on the criminalisation of migrants.

ENAR and its members are concerned that the current debate does not demonstrate a great concern to protect not only refugees and migrants but also other vulnerable groups against discrimination. Proposals to pick and choose asylum seekers or refugees to be relocated or resettled in an EU country based on nationality, religion, race or ethnicity are clearly discriminatory and go against States' obligations under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Non-discrimination, protection against violence and discriminatory police practice should be added to the European Union leaders' top priorities. ENAR calls Member States to ensure access to their territory as well as access to economic and social rights without discrimination and urges the European Commission to ensure non-discriminatory application of the quota system among member States.

It is crucial that all EU countries ensure timely investigation, prosecution and sanction of violence or incitement to violence against migrants and asylum seekers, guaranteeing that they benefit from all the rights granted to victims irrespective of their residence status, in conformity with the Victim's Rights Directive. The European Commission should issue infringement proceedings against States that violate provisions of the EU Framework Decision against Racism and Xenophobia.