

Joint statement

Strengthening the European Parliament's capacity to act against racism:

MEPs must coordinate their efforts

The European Parliament is the only directly elected European Union (EU) body and one of the largest democratic assemblies in the world. It represents the people of the EU. The European Parliament co-adopts EU laws together with representatives of the Member States.

The progression of far-right parties and parties propagating xenophobic and racist ideas in the 22-25 May 2014 Elections – with 79 MEPs from these parties elected – threatens the core European values of human rights and equality. There are real risks that the scapegoating of ethnic, racial and religious minorities, as well as migrants, could result in a weaker European Union and less accountability on States' human rights obligations.

It is vital that MEPs who are committed to equality actively and consistently drive European policies grounded in the values of solidarity, equality, diversity and well-being for all. These MEPs should enhance their capacity to react in a concerted manner to manifestations of racism and hate. Political groups in the European Parliament should strongly oppose racism and related discrimination, including multi-layered discrimination.

In view of the foregoing, the undersigned recommend that newly elected committed MEPs establish a strong intergroup on anti-racism in the European Parliament to advance a comprehensive anti-racist agenda addressing all intersectionalities with other grounds of discrimination, including nationality, migration status, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, and religion or belief. The intergroup will provide an informal platform for MEPs of different political groups and different committees to step up efforts in order to:

- (1) mainstream racial equality and anti-racism in policy and legislative work of the EU bodies and monitor EU equality and diversity initiatives;
- (2) monitor the situation of groups at greater risk of racial discrimination and propose remedies and corrective measures to be taken by Member States, and
- (3) consult and liaise with civil society organisations and representatives of ethnic, racial and religious minorities to enhance their participation in decision-making processes.

1. Mainstream and monitor equality in the EU

In the spirit of Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), MEPs who are members of the intergroup will work to screen EP reports, amendments and resolutions to include a non-discrimination and racial equality angle when relevant. The intergroup would act as a proactive forum to call political groups and MEPs to tackle all forms of xenophobia, racism and racial discrimination including anti-Gypsyism, anti-Semitism, Afrophobia and Islamophobia.

The intergroup would also liaise with the European Commission and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency to explore ways to improve EU equality policies and laws.

Members of the intergroup should also establish strong and systematic common strategies to counter racist and xenophobic elements in the political discourse, including the use of racist speech in parliamentary work.

2. Monitor racial discrimination and propose remedies

The EU has adopted a series of instruments to combat racism and racial discrimination, notably the Racial Equality Directive, the Equal Treatment in Employment Directive, the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The intergroup should support initiatives aimed at monitoring the implementation of these instruments and formulate adequate corrective measures when situations of violation occur, taking into consideration all potential intersectionalities with the above mentioned grounds. The intergroup should call for the European Commission to launch infringement proceedings against those Member States whose legislation and practices breach existing EU legislation on racist crime and/or on equality.

In order to do so, the intergroup should make use of existing evidence-based reports, including from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, the Council of Europe monitoring bodies, the UN and civil society organisations. As data may not always be available, the intergroup should also initiate debates on the need for Member States to measure equality of outcome as part of their positive duty to combat racial discrimination and promote equality.

The anti-racism intergroup should commission research on structural and institutional racial discrimination that prevents implementation of equality legislation, taking into account intersectionalities with other grounds in the analysis.

3. Consult civil society

Meaningful participation of ethnic, racial and religious minorities and migrant men, women and youth in the intergroup's decision-making processes is crucial to the success of its upcoming initiatives. Its members should regularly meet with Brussels-based civil society organisations and organise visits in different Member States if possible.

To achieve its mission and goals, the intergroup would also need to establish a small permanent secretariat, staffed by professionals representing Europe's ethnic diversity.

Systemic change towards the elimination of all forms of xenophobia and racism requires a demonstrated commitment by MEPs to exercise continuous political pressure. We believe a strong and inclusive anti-racist intergroup is best placed to support their shared pledge.

Signed:

International/European organisations:

1. European Network Against Racism
2. Social Platform
3. AGE Platform Europe
4. European Disability Forum
5. European Women's Lobby (EWL)
6. European Youth Forum
7. SOLIDAR
8. International Federation of Social Workers Europe
9. Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)
10. Open Society European Policy Institute (OSEPI)
11. Eurodiaconia

12. European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
13. Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
14. European Roma Information Office (ERIO)
15. CEJI-A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe
16. Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)
17. UNITED against Racism
18. European Roma Grassroot Organisations (ERGO)
19. International Council of Jewish Women
20. Bridging Europe
21. Citizens for Europe
22. European Alternatives

National organisations

23. JUST West Yorkshire, United Kingdom
24. Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, United Kingdom
25. Pan African Movement for Justice, Sweden
26. Centrum mot rasism, Sweden
27. Kerkwerk Multicultureel Samenleven, Belgium
28. Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council, United Kingdom
29. Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, Estonia
30. CIE Piemonte, Italy
31. Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (Scotland), United Kingdom
32. Institut für Migrations und Rassismusforschung (iMiR), Germany
33. The People for Change Foundation, Malta
34. Latvian Human Rights Committee, Latvia
35. Ethnic Debate Forum, Denmark
36. Estonian Human Rights Centre, Estonia
37. Association of Recognized Refugees in Cyprus (ARRCY), Cyprus
38. African Diaspora in Cyprus, Cyprus
39. European Coordination of Associations and Individuals for Freedom of Conscience, France
40. New Urban Collective, Netherlands
41. UK Race and Europe Network, United Kingdom
42. IDEA ROM ONLUS, Italy
43. Conseil Représentatif des Associations Noires (CRAN), France
44. République et Diversité, France
45. Plate-Forme Migrants et Citoyenneté Européenne (PMC-Europe), France
46. Il Razzismo è una brutta storia, Italy
47. Humanity in Action Network, France
48. Tallinn Centre for Human Rights Information, Estonia
49. ENAR-Ireland, the Irish Network Against Racism, Ireland
50. Mouvement contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la xénophobie (MRAX), Belgium
51. Platform Afrikaans Gemeenschappen, Belgium
52. Greek forum of Migrants, Greece
53. Collectif contre le Contrôle au Faciès (Stop le contrôle au faciès), France
54. Institute for African Studies, Slovenia
55. Africa e Mediterraneo, Italy
56. Association pour favoriser l'intégration professionnelle (AFIP), France
57. Ghanaian Community in Greece, Greece
58. CRI (Coordination contre le Racisme et l'Islamophobie), France
59. Nigerian community Greece, Greece
60. African Empowerment Center, Denmark

61. FoulExpress, France
62. Collectif contre l'islamophobie en France (CCIF), France
63. Center for Equality advancement, Lithuania
64. Tavse Stemmer - Missing Voices.dk, Denmark
65. ISD Initiative Black People in Germany, Germany
66. Discrimination Law Association, England & Wales
67. Minderhedenforum, Belgium
68. Empowering People for Excellence, United Kingdom
69. Subjective Values Foundation, Hungary
70. Justice 21, Bulgaria
71. World Artists Initiative Khetan, Netherlands
72. La voix des Roms, France
73. Fight Racism Now (FRN), Sweden
74. 8 April Movement, United Kingdom
75. Romani CRISS, Romania
76. Romano Instituto Foundation, Hungary
77. Roma National Congress, Germany
78. Consultancy Social Inclusion Roma & Sinti Issues, Netherlands
79. World Artists Initiative KHETANES, Netherlands
80. Associazione Nazionale Stampa Interculturale, Italy
81. Parsec Consortium, Italy
82. Europe Roma Network, United Kingdom
83. Prendiamo la Parola, Italy
84. Roma Community Care, United Kingdom
85. The Brentwood Gypsy Support Group, United Kingdom
86. René Cassin Foundation, United Kingdom
87. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), Belgium
88. Roma Active Tirana, Albania
89. The Romani Cultural and Arts Company, United Kingdom
90. Integro Association, Bulgaria
91. NGO for Better Tomorrow, Montenegro
92. Romedia Foundation, Hungary
93. Rroma Center "Amare Rromentza", Romania
94. Gypsy Council, United Kingdom
95. Romano Euro-Drom, Italy
96. National Roma Centrum, Macedonia
97. Anglunipe, Macedonia
98. YUROM Centa, Serbia
99. Advisory Committee for the Education of Romanies and Travellers, United Kingdom
100. European Association for the Defense of Human Rights (AEPADO), Romania
101. Comité de liaison des associations d'étrangers (CLAE), Luxembourg
102. Circolo Eugenio Curiel, Luxembourg