



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme

REPORT OF ENAR'S BOOK LAUNCH

«Invisible Visible Minority - Confronting Afrophobia and Advancing Equality for Black Europeans and People of African Descent in Europe»

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Main findings and recommendations

People of African descent and Black Europeans need to be recognised as a distinct group targeted by racism

- Racism and related discrimination are common experiences faced by people of African descent and Black Europeans in Europe
- Their human rights need to be promoted and protected
- Afrophobia should be recognised as a specific form of racism

There is a lack of knowledge about the situation of people of African descent and Black Europeans in the EU

- The diverse realities of people of African descent and Black Europeans need to be made visible in the public discourse
- There is a need for more awareness raising of European colonial history
- There is a need to collect equality data disaggregated by ethnicity

EU Member States have to react to issues related to Afrophobia

- Afrophobia should be monitored at national level
- Legislation against hate crime and discrimination needs to be reinforced and fully implemented
- A specific EU strategy for the inclusion and representation of people of African descent and Black Europeans at all levels of society should be implemented

Aim of the event

On the occasion of the start of the UN Decade for People of African Descent, the European Network Against Racism launched its latest book **“Invisible Visible Minority - Confronting Afrophobia and Advancing Equality for People of African Descent in Europe and Black Europeans in Europe”**. The event gathered MEPs, EU officials, civil society organisations, artists and academics to discuss evidence of Afrophobia, the specific form of racism targeting Black people in Europe. The publication, unprecedented in the style and topic, contributes to filling the gaps in literature on the situation of People of African Descent in Europe and Black Europeans. The book supports informed advocacy on the recognition of Afrophobia as a long-standing European issue and the need for a comprehensive European strategy to improve the situation of people of African descent and Black Europeans in Europe. In this book, there are also stories of those who have experienced Afrophobia in Europe.

Opening

Honourable Alcee L. Hastings, Congressman, US Congress, USA (written statement):

- In view of the UN’s International Decade for People of African Descent, the book **“Invisible Visible Minority”** provides increased information on the situation of people of African descent in Europe and Black Europeans. It highlights that the protections, rights and opportunities of European democracies still do not wholly include Black people.
- The International Decade reaffirms the **importance of inclusion and the full and equal participation** of people of African descent around the world in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life.
- **National and measurable** strategies have to be developed and implemented **to honour the vast contributions of people of African descent and to combat continuing issues of prejudice and discrimination** with the aim to improve their situation. Strategies should respond to increasing levels of afrophobic discrimination faced by people of African descent with joint equality action plans around the globe.
- These efforts will hopefully lead **nations to publicly recognise the injustices and long-term impact of slavery and colonialism**, but also **to lead our societies to reconcile these issues such that equal opportunity, access and justice** would be realised for people of African descent.

Panel Discussion: Does the EU have a role to play to combat Afrophobia and why?

Moderator: Mr Jallow Momodou, ENAR Vice-Chair, Pan-African Movement for Justice, Sweden

The realities of people of African descent in Europe must be recognised. With the proclamation of the UN Decade for People of African Descent, the United Nations emphasises that people of African descent and Black Europeans are a distinct group whose human rights need to be promoted and protected. With activities such as this book, shadow reports and hearings in the European Parliament, awareness is increasingly raised about this invisible visible minority in Europe. Afrophobia is not an irrational fear of Black people. It is about dynamics of power and privileges that result in structural racism affecting people of African descent and Black Europeans.

Discussants:

Ms. Malin Björk, Member of the European Parliament, Sweden (GUE-NGL)

The issue of Afrophobia must be recognised in the EU in relation to the history of colonialism and enslavement, in order to change power relations. Black organisations in Sweden and throughout Europe have made themselves visible by publishing studies and creating platforms for discussions such as for example, the debates about the Zwarte Piet tradition. The publication of the first report on Afrophobia in Sweden commissioned by the government marked a key step in the recognition of this phenomenon nationally.

As next steps, **policy makers need to address the issue of Afrophobia at national as well as European level and more organisations should be encouraged to work on Afrophobia**. The **European Parliament should make specific forms of racism visible and push for specific strategies**, one of the reasons being Europe's responsibility in past abuses.

Wish in 10 years: that the EU has a curriculum on slave trade and colonialism, and that more organisations work on Afrophobia.

David Friggieri, Legal and Policy Officer, Fundamental Rights and Rights of the Child Unit, DG Justice, European Commission

It is necessary to inform EU Member States on issues related to Afrophobia in the specific country. This is partly done as the European Commission is currently contacting Member States to ask them to fully implement EU hate crime legislation, with a specific demand on Afrophobic hate crime for some countries. The European Commission monitors the implementation of legislation that tackles racism and discrimination in Member States and can launch sanctions against Member States not implementing it. In 2013, they published a report analysing the transposition of the legislation and where to improve it.

Wish in 10 years: that fundamental rights stay at the heart of EU policies.

John Kellock, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Equality data needs to be collected to measure discrimination and **Afrophobic hate crime must be addressed seriously**, for example during the FRA working group on hate crime with Member States. **Legislation against the practice of racial profiling in the EU needs to be reinforced**. Due to their visibility, people of African descent and Black Europeans are more frequently stopped and searched by the police. To emphasise this reality, incidents of racial profiling need to be reported as in the FRA EU-MIDIS survey.

Once the results of the FRA's second EU-wide survey on minorities' experiences of discrimination are published in 2016, it would be useful to have a **FRA Data in focus report on people of African descent and Black Europeans**, to highlight the specific situation of this group in Europe.

Wish in 10 years: that diversity is reflected at all levels of society including in the European Parliament.

Jamie Schearer, ENAR Board member, Initiative for Black People, Germany

People of African descent and Black Europeans are not yet recognised as a distinct group that is affected by racism. It is therefore necessary to raise awareness by shedding light on the centuries-old history of people of African descent in Europe. Additionally, there should be more funding allocated **to make the diverse realities and experiences of people of African descent in Europe more visible and to promote equality.** There is also a lack of role models. People of African descent grow up in a society that see them as outsiders and don't feel included as a result.

Wish in 10 years: that the sense of equality and belonging for people of African descent and Black Europeans is improved, that they are no longer seen through the lens of colonialism.

The book 'Invisible Visible Minority' is available on ENAR's website:

<http://www.enar-eu.org/Invisible-visible-minority-our>

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is an EU-wide network of vibrant NGOs in all EU Member States, as well as Iceland. ENAR combats racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and promotes equality of treatment between European Union citizens and third country nationals. More information: <http://www.enar-eu.org>

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