



ENAR position paper on the
Council decision establishing a Community Action Programme
to combat discrimination 2001-2006

March 2000

The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is a network of some 600 European NGOs working to combat racism in all EU Member States. Its establishment was a major outcome of the 1997 European Year against Racism. ENAR is determined to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national initiatives with European initiatives. Further information is available at: www.enar-eu.org

ENAR welcomes the idea of an Action Programme which aims to support the efforts of the Member States as they develop their legislation and policies for combating discrimination, especially by motivating the key players and promoting the sharing of information and good practice. We equally welcome the inclusion of the EEA countries, applicant countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

However, we should like to make the following **remarks**:

1. The Action Programme assumes that the experiences of people subject to discrimination will be taken into consideration during the planning, implementation and follow-up processes for the activities of the action programme. However, mention regarding the manner in which the experiences of the victims will be taken into account is quite vague.

2. The Programme aims to support transnational projects, but this means, in practice, that a whole range of local organisations will be excluded, as they do not have the human or financial resources or the infrastructure necessary to take part in such projects. Since these organisations have the advantage of an in-depth practical knowledge of the issue and are well-placed to express the point of view of victims of discrimination, the action programme should provide the most appropriate means for their inclusion.

At national level, appropriate structures should be identified to include governments, independent bodies or specialised agencies and NGOs to develop a synergetic approach to implementing the programme

3. The Programme is rather weak regarding preventive measures. If it is necessary to have activities which aim to promote a better understanding of the extent of discrimination, to develop the capacity of key players and to raise awareness, it is imperative that the root of the problem be tackled.

Steps must be taken to educate and train school pupils, students, teachers, civil servants, representatives of the forces of law and order, social workers etc. in the theory and practice of combating discrimination.

4. Considering that this program is intended to cover different grounds of discrimination and is planned for six years, the budget seems insufficient and an important increase will be necessary.