



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme

PRESS RELEASE

Bad times for Muslims in Europe

Brussels, 20 March 2013 – Islamophobia, or discrimination against Muslims, is widespread in many European countries. Prejudice towards Muslims is often more visible than that affecting other religious or ethnic minority groups. This is the conclusion of the first pan-European qualitative survey on Muslim communities in Europe, part of ENAR's 2011/12 Shadow Report on Racism in Europe and released ahead of International Day Against Racial Discrimination.

Manifestations of Islamophobia include discrimination and violence towards Muslims, criminal damage to Islamic buildings, and protests against the building of mosques even in countries, such as Poland, where some Muslim communities have been established and integrated for centuries. Muslim women and girls are particularly affected, facing an extreme form of double discrimination on the basis of both their religion and their gender. In France for instance, 85% of all Islamophobic acts target women.

In addition, anti-Muslim and anti-immigration discourses, promoted and exacerbated by both extremist and mainstream political parties, are fuelling discrimination and preventing ethnic and religious communities from participating fully in the European society and economy. This scapegoating is used as a deviation from the 'real issues' by many politicians to cover up a lack of vision and leadership in contributing as much as would be expected of them in steering the recovery of European societies.

Based on data collected by anti-racist civil society across Europe, the Shadow Report also highlights that discrimination continues to affect the lives of many ethnic and religious minorities throughout Europe as regards their access to education, employment, housing, goods and services as well as how they are treated by the police and criminal justice systems. For instance, Roma children form approximately one third of the 'special needs' school population in the Czech Republic. In Ireland, a study was conducted whereby fictitious CVs were sent to recruiters, half with recognisably Irish names and the other half with African, Asian and German names. It found that candidates with Irish names were twice as likely to be invited to interviews as non-Irish candidates with comparable levels of skills and qualifications.

ENAR Chair Chibo Onyeji said: *"Today is also International Day of Happiness – an occasion to highlight that decision makers have a responsibility to ensure that ethnic and religious minorities in Europe also enjoy happy and fulfilling lives. The current climate of rising xenophobia and racist violence reflected in our Shadow Report findings should not obliterate the fact that, whatever our skin colour or our beliefs, we all strive for a better life, a better future, with better chances for our offspring. No special privileges are expected, but a clear political commitment to equality and inclusion for all people living in Europe is."*

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Notes to the editor:

1. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR aisbl) stands up against racism and discrimination and advocates for equality and solidarity for all in Europe. We connect local and national anti-racist NGOs throughout Europe and voice the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities in European and national policy debates.
2. [ENAR's Shadow Report on Racism in Europe](#) draws on 26 national Shadow Reports prepared by ENAR members. It identifies communities vulnerable to racism and presents an overview of manifestations of racism in a range of areas.
3. For more information on Islamophobia, see our [fact sheet](#) of key findings.
4. On 21 March 1960, 69 Black demonstrators were killed at a peaceful protest against apartheid laws in South Africa. As a result, 21 March was declared "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" by the UN in 1966.