



European Network Against Racism  
Réseau européen contre le racisme  
Europäisches Netz gegen Rassismus

## PRESS RELEASE

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### ENAR calls on OSCE participating states to strengthen the mandate of national institutions against discrimination

On 29 and 30 May, participating states of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) gathered in Vienna to discuss the role of national institutions against discrimination in combating racism and xenophobia, with a special focus on migrants and national minorities<sup>1</sup>.

ENAR was present at this conference and highlighted the important role equality bodies play in promoting equal treatment of all persons and enforcing legislation. However, whilst recognising the role they have played in advancing racial equality, ENAR also underlined the deficiencies that still prevent equality bodies from realising their full potential, notably their lack of resources and independence from government in certain countries, the limitations in providing assistance to victims, and the lack of surveys conducted and recommendations produced regarding the forms of discrimination and key issues such as positive action and data collection.

ENAR called on participating states to ensure that national equality bodies broaden their mandate in order to be in full compliance with the UN Paris principles and the ECRI General Policy Recommendation on specialised bodies to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance at national level.

Focusing more particularly on the situation of migrants, ENAR highlighted the inconsistencies in the Racial Equality Directive, which applies the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of race and ethnic origin to third country nationals but allows for differential treatment based on nationality and the legal status of third country nationals. This in practice has left third country nationals unprotected from much discrimination targeted against them. In this context, ENAR director Pascale Charhon stated: "National equality bodies must engage more clearly in the debate around migration and integration and provide a safe space for third country nationals to claim their right to non-discrimination and assist them in protecting this right."

ENAR also participated in the Civil Society Roundtable preceding the conference. The importance of involving NGOs in national equality bodies' work and of partnerships between national equality bodies and civil society was a key recommendation coming from civil society, as was the crucial role these bodies can play in raising awareness about discrimination.

*The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is a network of European NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states and represents more than 600 NGOs spread around the European Union. Its establishment was a major outcome of the 1997 European Year Against Racism. ENAR aims 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.*

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.osce.org/conferences/shdm1\\_2008.html](http://www.osce.org/conferences/shdm1_2008.html)