



PRESS RELEASE

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The Immigration Pact: Can the French Presidency's Immigration Pact contribute to a Europe without racism?

The French Presidency of the European Union presented its 'European Pact on Immigration and Asylum' at an informal ministerial meeting held on 7-8 July in Cannes. The Pact sets out the principles for the European Union on the European approach to immigration and asylum, and is expected to be adopted at the EU summit in October 2008.

Coming at a time when the European Union has called for a renewed commitment to a common immigration policy the French Pact has the potential to lead to a more coherent, fair and effective approach¹, that can contribute to building a Europe without racism. However, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is seriously concerned that the primary focus on control of illegal immigration through a security and penal approach will seriously undermine this potential and instead places the EU in danger of undermining the fight against racism. A coherent approach requires respect for fundamental rights of all, including third country nationals as a core principle. ENAR would like to ask:

- Can the Member States be sure that the Pact will achieve a truly coherent approach, including respect for fundamental rights?
- Is the assumption of a selective system of migration realistic, particularly with respect to the needs of the European Union's labour market which requires both skilled and unskilled migrants?
- Will the Pact enable the development of practical and reliable ways to safeguard the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees in the context of migration management and border control, as called for by the UNHCR?
- Will the current approach convince Europeans to be more welcoming as claimed, or, as evidence has demonstrated, will a negative political dialogue lead to a negative public reaction?
- Will the Pact contribute to integration in line with the common basic principles established and with a two way approach?

ENAR is aware that further refinement of the Pact is underway and calls on the French Presidency and the EU Member States to ensure that the fundamental right to equal treatment of third country nationals is clearly respected as a right and as a principle that underpins the entire Pact. The approach to an effective migration policy must be firmly grounded in a rights-based approach if the goal of a European Common Immigration Policy is to be achieved in a way that is consistent with European Values.

Mohammed Aziz, President of ENAR, said:

“The vision of Europe is that of a Europe of rights and values, freedom, solidarity and security. If the European Union wants to promote its values, and demonstrate what Europe has to offer to its partners worldwide, then we have to live up to our commitment to fundamental rights.”

Pascale Charhon, Director of ENAR, said:

“ENAR has grave concerns that the immigration pact as it stands will undermine the achievement of a Europe without racism, and urges the consultation of all stakeholders and civil society in the decision making process on both the political direction of the Pact and in future discussions on the practical implementation to ensure policy coherence and fairness.”

¹ See ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration (2006), Non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration.

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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