



PRESS RELEASE

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Immigration Pact: has the EU forgotten its commitment to fundamental rights?

EU leaders are due to adopt the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum proposed by the French Presidency at the EU summit today. At a time when the European Union has called for a renewed commitment to a common immigration policy, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) calls on all the European Institutions to ensure that the commitment to fundamental rights becomes a foundation stone of a Common European Policy on Immigration and Asylum.

ENAR is seriously concerned about the Pact's primary focus on control of illegal immigration through a security and penal approach which places the EU in danger of undermining the fight against racism. ENAR is also concerned that integration is not presented as a two-way process, but focuses only on the obligations of migrants. Even member states' responsibilities and efforts are framed as those that are about seeing migrants take action (e.g. providing language classes). These are important, but are not the only responsibilities incumbent on member states; they are also about intercultural dialogue, non-discrimination, protecting and respecting human rights.

We welcome that the final text of the Pact recognises the importance of international human rights standards and the need to combat discrimination. However, ENAR and social NGOs had called for this to be a commitment to these fundamental principles. The EU's upcoming work on a future common immigration policy must remedy this and put fundamental rights and anti-racism at its core.

ENAR's President Mohammed Aziz said:

"The EU still has the opportunity to revisit its approach to immigration and asylum, framing it within a positive approach that combats racism and xenophobia and promotes the rights of all. We are disappointed that the Pact does just the opposite, and now urge the EU to ensure that the fundamental right to equal treatment of third country nationals is clearly respected as a principle that underpins the entire development of the Common European policy on immigration and asylum. European policy on immigration and asylum must not undermine the vision of a Europe without racism."

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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