

20 April 2009

## Statement by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) on the occasion of the UN Durban Review Conference

On the occasion of the UN Durban Review Conference - the follow-up conference to the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance - from 20 to 24 April 2009, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) calls on European governments and the European Union to use the opportunity of this Conference to reinforce their commitments to a world without racism, founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

The trends and patterns concerning the phenomenon of racism in EU member states have demonstrated that racism is not a fixed concept but something that changes over time, and in different contexts. While there is a commonality in the experience of racism and discrimination, it can be and is experienced in different ways by different groups and in different places depending on the context and time.

This is why ENAR believes that the follow-up conference to the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance provides a unique opportunity to renew and strengthen the commitment towards the common goal of a world without racism. The Durban Review Conference comes at an appropriate time to initiate a comprehensive review of the concrete legislative and policy measures taken by States to realise the goals proclaimed at the World Conference in 2001. ENAR undertook an assessment of the implementation of the National Action Plans against Racism, which underlines the importance of comprehensive, long-term strategies that enable governments to systematically work towards equality for all in a collaborative international effort and in close cooperation with other governments and civil society organisations. The overview has shown a scattered picture with some States having pushed ahead with ambitious programmes while others still lack a comprehensive action plan, or indeed any anti-discrimination plan at all.

There is an urgent need for a holistic approach to addressing racism that is underpinned by a strong human rights based approach, that includes strong anti-discrimination laws and policies and that ensures the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination principles into all relevant policy areas (including employment, education, housing, health, policing and justice, access to goods and services, media, political participation). While there have been some improvements over the last decade, alarming trends, such as the rise of far-right movements, an increase in the numbers of racially motivated crimes, and widespread negative public perception of migrants, call for a continued and reinforced commitment and collaboration between all stakeholders; the UN, the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, States and governments at all levels, civil society and representatives of minority groups.

The Durban Review Conference also offers a concrete opportunity to promote strategies of dialogue between civil society, States and international organisations, as the contribution of civil society has proven to be crucial in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and legal instruments. In many European States that have implemented National Action Plans Against Racism, the important role of civil society organisations has been recognised and positively exploited as a tool towards the achievement of the desired goals.

**ENAR is issuing the following recommendations and urges for them to be included in the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference:**

1. Secure firm commitment to a comprehensive and universal, human rights based approach to preventing, combating and eliminating all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance
2. See a real change result from the Durban Review Conference, in particular by ensuring that the review process is placed in a framework which recognises the universality and indivisibility of the fundamental human rights for all and by promoting the adoption and/or implementation of the National Action Plans Against Racism by all States.
3. Promote the universal ratification and implementation of key Human Rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and the members of their families and the European Convention on Human Rights
4. Establish effective international and national legal and policy mechanisms whereby international organisations, governments and civil society actors are able to effectively address and combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and identify and share good practices achieved at national, regional and international levels
5. Strengthen efforts to identify concrete measures and initiatives at all levels to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme for Action and further initiatives aimed at combating racism. In the field of anti-discrimination, this means ensuring that anti-discrimination is firmly established as a core part of the human rights framework and that existing national and EU legislation provides for the highest possible standards in protection against all forms of discrimination. In the area of justice and home affairs particular attention should be paid to the rights of third country nationals and to protection against discrimination in the areas of policing and counter-terrorism.