



PRESS RELEASE

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EU summit: Put anti-discrimination at the heart of the “EU 2020” Strategy!

As EU Heads of State gather today at an informal summit to discuss, among others, the future “EU2020” strategy, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) calls on EU governments to adopt a strategy that puts the well-being of people, equality, anti-discrimination and social cohesion at its heart.

The lack of focus on anti-discrimination in the strategy presents a real danger for social inclusion and equality policies in the EU. At a time of renewed surge of racism and xenophobia in Europe, the EU 2020 strategy must prioritise a Europe free from discrimination as a key to prosperity and recognise the need for interventions to enable those most disadvantaged to escape poverty and social exclusion. Indeed, ethnic and religious minority communities are amongst the groups most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion across Europe, due to the additional barriers of discrimination and racism which they face.

ENAR is also seriously concerned by the European Commission’s first assessment of the public consultation on the EU 2020 Strategy, which states that “stakeholders with a social vocation broadly support the Commission’s proposed priorities”. Heads of States must be made aware that these indicative trends do not reflect ENAR’s position on the EU 2020 and must take account of social NGOs’ main message: the social dimension is weak and solely focuses on skills and jobs, failing to present a comprehensive and sustainable strategy to reduce inequalities and social exclusion.

Mohammed Aziz, ENAR President, said: “The EU 2020 strategy will only be successful if it is coherent with societal realities: growing inequalities, structural discrimination and the erosion of fundamental social rights. EU leaders therefore need to agree on a strong commitment to social policies including finding solutions to the social exclusion of ethnic and religious minorities. It is also time that they respond concretely to the real concerns of the people living in Europe, all the more so in a context of economic crisis.”

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is a network of NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states and represents more than 600 NGOs spread around the European Union. ENAR aims to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national and European initiatives.

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