



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 19 March 2010

ENAR's 2010 message for International Day Against Racism: Reveal Europe's 'hidden talents'!

On 21 March the world will celebrate “International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination”¹. This year, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) takes the opportunity of this symbolic day to underline the importance of achieving more equality for and maximising the potential and skills of *all* members of European society, including ethnic and religious minorities.

In times of economic crisis, the dangers of increasing racism and xenophobia, fuelled in part by rising unemployment, insecurity about the future and a growing number of populist political discourses, are very real. In this context, ENAR believes that fighting inequalities and ensuring the protection of rights will benefit all workers, not just migrant and ethnic and religious minority workers, and will guarantee social cohesion.

In addition, a number of untapped ‘hidden talents’ among ethnic and religious minorities across the EU are not being fully utilised because public rhetoric increasingly paints a picture of the diversity of migrants and ethnic and religious minorities’ culture as a threat to the dominant identity of Europe. Likewise, restrictive legislation, particularly on migration, sends out a strong message of exclusion.

Yet the consequences of not maximising the potential and talents of ethnic and religious minorities and the immigrant population could be considerable. Society at large must therefore recognise the vital importance of equality and diversity to a vibrant and prosperous society and economy.

Mohammed Aziz, ENAR President, said: “We must start to accept that ethnic and religious minorities make a daily contribution to the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of Europe instead of seeing them as a burden or worse, as a threat. A positive narrative that values and maximises their currently unvalued skills and attributes would significantly contribute to the prosperity of European society and economy.”

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.

For further information, contact:

Georgina Siklossy, Communication and Press Officer

Phone: +32-2-229.35.70 - E-mail: georgina@enar-eu.org - Website: www.enar-eu.org

¹ On 21 March 1960, 69 Black demonstrators were killed at a peaceful protest against apartheid laws in South Africa. As a result, 21 March was declared "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination" by the UN in 1966.