



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 25 March 2010

The “Europe 2020” strategy cannot afford to overlook anti-discrimination

EU Heads of state and government will be deciding on the Europe 2020 strategy’s overall approach at a European Summit on 25 and 26 March. Ahead of this meeting, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) calls on EU leaders to prioritise a Europe free from discrimination as a key to prosperity across the whole strategy.

Despite some improvements, the European Commission’s proposal fails to ensure that the aim of achieving non-discrimination permeates all the priorities of the strategy. If Europe wants to strengthen knowledge and innovation, it will need to encourage the fulfilment of all its talents and in particular those which are currently under-valued due to discrimination. This is especially the case for the talents of ethnic and religious minorities and migrants facing discrimination in education and/or employment, and experiencing difficulties linked with the recognition of foreign diplomas. Tackling this situation is essential to promote innovation and knowledge performance in Europe.

EU leaders must ensure non-discrimination is part of the objectives relating to the fight against poverty, as proposed by the European Commission. Adopting the target of putting 20 million people out of poverty by 2020 would indeed be instrumental in promoting a more cohesive European society free from discrimination. The “Europe 2020” strategy must also address the challenges related to better participation of ethnic and religious minorities in the labour market, and recognise the need for interventions to enable those most disadvantaged to escape poverty and social exclusion.

Mohammed Aziz, ENAR President, said: “We are happy to see that the political momentum to fight poverty and social exclusion is there. We now need to make sure EU leaders act on this momentum and go further. If the objective of the Europe 2020 strategy is a more prosperous Europe, the innumerable untapped talents of ethnic and religious minorities across the EU need to be valued and used, whilst addressing the discrimination and social exclusion they face.”

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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