



PRESS STATEMENT

Brussels, 17 May 2010

International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia: ENAR calls for all victims to be considered

Today is International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia. On this occasion, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) would like to raise awareness of the compounded discrimination faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people from ethnic and religious minorities across Europe. These communities are doubly - and sometimes trebly or more - vulnerable because they are subjected to discrimination on the basis of their race and/or religious beliefs, but also of their sexual orientation, and in some cases of their gender, age or disability.

It is therefore crucial to recognise and fully take into account the particular nature of their situation, notably by giving them access to specific support to overcome the multiple discrimination they face. This could range from culturally sensitive support programmes to allow them to make their coming out, to institutional support to LGBT organisations from ethnic and religious minorities, and to specific guidelines for police officers when they are reported hate violence and abuse on those grounds. On a European policy level, adopting the proposed EU legislation to prohibit discrimination on all grounds in all areas of life would establish comprehensive protection against discrimination for many minority communities in Europe and could go some steps towards addressing multiple discrimination.

This Day is also an opportunity to stress that it is equally crucial to address the intra-community violence that LGBT persons from ethnic and religious minorities may be facing. There are indeed manifestations of homophobia and transphobia within ethnic and religious minority groups, which means that LGBT people from these communities cannot even find protection against discrimination, harassment and violence within their own communities. As a consequence, they have no safe space in which they can fully embrace their identities.

ENAR Chair Mohammed Aziz said: "This day highlights the need for representatives of various minority groups to fight together against all forms of prejudice and discrimination, externally *and* internally. The legitimate claim of any minority community to equality and non-discrimination is by no means a one-way street. Rather, it's by joining forces and not replicating discrimination patterns towards minorities within our respective minority communities that we will make the difference."

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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