



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme
Europäisches Netz gegen Rassismus

PRESS STATEMENT

Brussels, 31 August 2010

Has the current anti-Roma climate in Europe triggered a “license to kill”?

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is deeply concerned by the recent shooting of 6 members of a Roma family and another woman in Bratislava, Slovakia on 30 August. A gunman shot dead six members of a Roma family and another woman in a block of flats in the Slovak capital before killing himself.

This murder reflects the emergence of a climate of negative stereotyping directed against Roma minorities across Europe. ENAR is extremely worried that recent discriminatory measures and statements targeting the Roma population and stigmatising this ethnic group in a number of countries, including France, Italy, Denmark and Sweden, have led to a climate of impunity for those who want to target this population.

ENAR strongly condemns this violent act and calls on the Slovak government to undertake a rigorous investigation and to treat this attack as a suspect hate crime. If it is found to be a hate crime, it should be prosecuted as such.

ENAR urges EU member states to refrain from making statements which collectively cast the Roma in a negative light, thus stigmatising an entire ethnic minority and inflaming public opinion against them. The EU and its member states should instead focus on developing a comprehensive EU Roma strategy, ensuring that the Roma are protected from discrimination and have equal access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.

Miroslav Lacko, ENAR’s Board member for Slovakia, said: "It is alarming to see how the anti-Roma rhetoric currently being used in Europe can result in fuelling racist sentiment and violence in such a tangible way. This latest incident is a warning with regard to the situation of the Roma not only in Slovakia but also in other EU countries."

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is a network of NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states and represents more than 700 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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