



PRESS RELEASE

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'Fortress Europe' even within the EU's borders?

As EU leaders prepare for the European Summit tomorrow and Friday, ENAR, the European Network Against Racism urges EU leaders to strongly oppose the temporary reintroduction of border controls in countries facing 'spikes' in migration. The proposal to relax Schengen rules would jeopardise one of the EU's fundamental values and key achievements: freedom of movement.

"The EU and its member states must realise that the overwhelming majority of people fleeing conflict in Libya and other parts of North Africa have fled to neighbouring countries and only a small number have arrived on Europe's shores", said Chibo Onyeji, ENAR Chair. "The EU thinks 30,000 immigrants is a crisis situation but countries neighbouring these conflict zones have welcomed many more without closing their borders and with far fewer resources than the EU."

Giving in to fear and populism when migration 'urgencies' crop up is definitely not the solution, nor is an increasingly negative discourse on migration. Instead, EU leaders and politicians across Europe should focus on highlighting evidence of the benefits of migration - not only economically, in an ageing Europe, but also migrants' contribution to Europe's social, cultural and political life. Indeed, a recent study shows that if rich countries were to admit enough migrants from poor countries to expand their own labour forces by a mere 3%, the world would be richer by \$356 billion a year. Completely opening borders would add \$39 trillion over 25 years to the global economy.¹

"In a society that embraces diversity the interests of the majority and minority are both met by respect for the fundamental human rights of all", said Onyeji. "It is high time to recognise the importance of equality and diversity to a vibrant society and economy."

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is a network of more than 700 NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states. ENAR aims to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals.

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¹ See "Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped Our World and Will Define Our Future", Ian Goldin, Geoffrey Cameron and Meera Balarajan, Princeton University Press.