



European Network Against Racism  
Réseau européen contre le racisme

## PRESS STATEMENT

### **It's time to end the exploitation of seasonal workers from non-EU countries**

**Brussels, 17 December – The European Parliament and the EU Council are negotiating an agreement on the Seasonal Workers Directive in a trilogue meeting today. Ahead of International Migrants' Day, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) reminds of the need to guarantee equal treatment to seasonal workers from non-EU countries with regard to working conditions, social rights and access to legal redress.**

Over 100,000 non-EU seasonal workers come to the EU each year, including irregular migrants. There is a significant demand for seasonal workers, especially in the agriculture, horticulture and tourism sectors and this demand will increase with Europe's ageing population. However, many of these workers face exploitation and appalling working conditions, threatening their health and safety.

The legislation proposed by the European Commission aims to address some of these issues by giving seasonal workers easier access to work permits and setting out basic payment, employment, and social rights to which these workers should be entitled.

However, ENAR had serious concerns that this proposal fell far short from guaranteeing adequate protection against exploitation and respect of human rights. This is why we welcomed the report adopted by the European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee in April 2012, which improves the initial proposal considerably.

We thus call on the Parliament and the EU Council to endorse the substance of this report, and to enshrine the following points in the new legislation:

- a work contract or a binding job offer specifying essential aspects, such as pay and working hours and evidence that the worker will benefit from adequate accommodation;
- minimum working conditions and social rights – including the right to join a trade union and have access to social security and pensions, and the right to seek legal redress through trade unions or NGOs;
- sanctions against employers who are in breach of their obligations; and
- regular inspections by EU Member States and more specifically, imposing annual inspections on at least 10% of employers offering seasonal work.

ENAR Chair Chibo Onyeji said: "Strong EU legislation would improve the dire conditions in which many people in seasonal employment are forced to work and live. These workers contribute to the EU's economy and there's no reason why they shouldn't have the same working conditions and social rights as EU workers."

#### **For further information, contact:**

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#### **Notes to the editor:**

1. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR aisbl) stands up against racism and discrimination and advocates for equality and solidarity for all in Europe. We connect local and national anti-racist NGOs throughout Europe and voice the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities in European and national policy debates.