



European Network Against Racism
Réseau européen contre le racisme

PRESS STATEMENT

Strong European response against anti-Roma racism needed

Brussels, 8 April 2013 – Roma across Europe continue to be the target of racist attacks, widespread discrimination and hate speech, even at the highest levels of government. On International Roma Day, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) calls for a real commitment by the EU and its Member States to take the fight against anti-Gypsyism seriously.

According to an EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey published in 2009, one in five Roma were at least once in the previous 12 months victims of racially motivated crime – including assaults, threats and serious harassment. According to the European Roma Rights Centre, more than 120 attacks against Roma people and their property took place between 2008 and 2012 in Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, and included shootings, stabbings and Molotov cocktails.

Just as worrying, ENAR's latest Shadow Report on Racism in Europe shows that politicians themselves are regular perpetrators of hate speech. One recent example is the co-founder of the Hungarian governing party Fidesz, Zsolt Bayer, issuing an editorial in a newspaper comparing Roma people to animals. In Slovakia, even mainstream political parties embraced anti-Roma sentiment during the most recent election campaign in 2012.

"We are witnessing alarming incidents of anti-Roma rhetoric at the highest political level in many European countries. How can the National Roma Integration Strategies put forward by EU Member States be properly implemented if public figures representing the government make openly racist statements? What we need is a concrete commitment by Member States and the European Commission to publicly condemn statements inciting violence and racism and preventing Roma from participating fully in European society. If the European Union wants to ensure 'inclusive growth', it cannot remain silent to such hateful statements", said Chibo Onyeji, Chair of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR).

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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.
2. More information about events organised by Amnesty International and the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) around Roma Day [here](#)
3. ENAR video: ['Are Roma doomed to end up begging in the streets?'](#)
4. See also ENAR and ERIO's publication: ['Debunking myths and revealing truths about the Roma'](#)