

EUROPEANS OF AFRICAN DESCENT ‘BLACK EUROPEANS’: RACE, RIGHTS, AND POLITICS



NOVEMBER 19, 2013

**Briefing of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe**

Washington: 2015

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Helsinki process, formally titled the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, traces its origin to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in Finland on August 1, 1975, by the leaders of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada. As of January 1, 1995, the Helsinki process was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The membership of the OSCE has expanded to 56 participating States, reflecting the breakup of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

The OSCE Secretariat is in Vienna, Austria, where weekly meetings of the participating States' permanent representatives are held. In addition, specialized seminars and meetings are convened in various locations. Periodic consultations are held among Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State or Government.

Although the OSCE continues to engage in standard setting in the fields of military security, economic and environmental cooperation, and human rights and humanitarian concerns, the Organization is primarily focused on initiatives designed to prevent, manage and resolve conflict within and among the participating States. The Organization deploys numerous missions and field activities located in Southeastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. The website of the OSCE is: <www.osce.org>.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is a U.S. Government agency created in 1976 to monitor and encourage compliance by the participating States with their OSCE commitments, with a particular emphasis on human rights.

The Commission consists of nine members from the United States Senate, nine members from the House of Representatives, and one member each from the Departments of State, Defense and Commerce. The positions of Chair and Co-Chair rotate between the Senate and House every two years, when a new Congress convenes. A professional staff assists the Commissioners in their work.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Commission gathers and disseminates relevant information to the U.S. Congress and the public by convening hearings, issuing reports that reflect the views of Members of the Commission and/or its staff, and providing details about the activities of the Helsinki process and developments in OSCE participating States.

The Commission also contributes to the formulation and execution of U.S. policy regarding the OSCE, including through Member and staff participation on U.S. Delegations to OSCE meetings. Members of the Commission have regular contact with parliamentarians, government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and private individuals from participating States. The website of the Commission is: <www.csce.gov>.

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Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe Washington, DC

The briefing was held from 11:12 a.m. to 12:49 p.m. EST in SDG-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington D.C., Congressman Alcee Hastings, presiding.

Mr. HASTINGS. Well, good morning, ladies and gentlemen. For those of you that are with our visiting delegation, a special welcome to you. Are any of you return visitors to the United States, anybody in the delegation that's traveling? One person at least; and the rest of you have been in and out of here like I've been in and out of Europe, and that's a good thing, but welcome first-time visitors and welcome to those of you that are back.

I'm really pleased to have a delegation of black European rights leaders representing 10 European countries at today's briefing and in Washington, D.C. this entire week with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and our State Department. If I could depart for just a moment from my prepared remarks, which are brief, and be equally brief with my extemporaneous remarks to thank a few people that have helped to bring this to fruition.

I know by now that all of you know Dr. Mischa Thompson and Alex Johnson. They have worked with me assiduously in the development of this project, and not just your visit here, but in our previous undertaking as well. I'll know that one of our main contacts has been Larry Olomofofe, and I'm pleased that he is here with us this morning and also will be making a presentation.

Of course, none of this, from the standpoint of finances, could happen if we didn't have the State Department and the German Marshall Fund, and I'm particularly grateful to who helped with causing this to come together and all of the other members of the State Department. It hasn't been easy, and all of this started in a conversation with Alex Johnson and myself a few years back, and I commented to him that in my travels—some of you may, in looking at my model, may have learned that I was President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and I think anybody that can say that should be the president of that organization.

At that time, there were 56 countries, and just an hour ago, I met with the representative of Montenegro, which was the 57th country that I swore into the organization, and Mr. Krivopkavic is here now as the President of the Parliamentary Assembly. During

that period of time, there was one period where I traveled to 31 European countries in two years. I kind of felt that my life was on the Atlantic Ocean more than in my home in Florida, and yes, I did manage to get elected again. I don't know how, but I did.

In the conversation with Alex, we talked about trying to begin arrangements working with our parliamentarians and others of African descent in Europe and to try to get some empirical data not just on the inseparable triumvirate of inadequate jobs, inadequate housing, inadequate education; we knew that we would find that to be the case, having done a little bit of study with the Roma. Of course, I knew a lot about their plight and the similarities that existed.

Alex did some basic research, and during the interim, we were able to have the good fortune of bringing Dr. Thompson onboard. She worked here at the United States Senate initially for a senator from Delaware, and I recruited her away to come with us to the Helsinki Commission, and she took to this project along with Alex, and we've kept it alive now, and I'll describe in a minute some of the meetings that we had. But there was one thing that sprung from it that really, really struck me personally, and that is that we learned that 100 years previous to our first meeting in Europe that we had of American black politicians and African descent politicians and others from NGOs in Europe—100 years almost to the day, W.E.B. DuBois had done the identical thing, and I am just fascinated with the fact that we've had the good fortune since that time to have several academics—among them Dr. Allison Blakely, who now is the head of the W.E.B. DuBois organization and in addition, was a former professor at Harvard—several other people, including Dr. Thompson's professors here at Howard that have come on board and helped us gather empirical data. We are hopeful we will generate from this meeting additional data and we find successes and failures throughout.

The other person that I did not mention that's also responsible for helping to get the funding for this is Margaret Paton. I certainly want to thank her. For so long throughout our change and our name from colored to negro to Afro-American to African-American, it looks like about every 13 and a half years, we change our name; I hope you all don't have that experience that we've had.

With that said, for the very longest time, we remained 29 million negroes. I never did quite understand—all the census data and everything, we were always 29 million. Now we have several phenomena like that. The immigrants in this country now—we're supposed to have 11 million undocumented immigrants, but we've had 11 million undocumented immigrants for 11 years, and my guess is, they had some children, and we must have a few more than 11 million.

I'm sure, when I use the term seven to 10 million people of African descent currently living in Europe it is understood that these numbers are likely greater and forming an influential part of our African diaspora, the story of black Europeans remains widely untold, rendering many of their past and present contributions to political and social life of Europe invisible or forgotten, and even though they rival the numbers sometimes, or even more, for example, than those who share the Jewish faith—that number has held steady at 1.5 million in Europe.

The Roma, considerably more, but still, African descent people in the range—Roma are described as between 10 and 15 million, and then there are other minority populations of substantial import throughout Europe. A parallel that's ongoing—another person that Dr. Thompson worked with—I hope he comes to our luncheon this afternoon is Congress-

man Gregory Meeks from New York. Congressman Meeks has been working on the African diaspora in Central and South America, and he is coming up with some pretty strong empirical data as well.

Similar to the experiences of many African Americans, black Europeans have increasingly become the targets of discrimination, pernicious racial profiling and violent hate crimes impacting equal access to housing, employment, education. All of that adds up to a lack of justice.

Recent racist acts are reported here in America and throughout Europe, including towards black European cabinet-level officials, such as throwing bananas and issuing death threats and other incidents targeting Minister Taubira in France and Minister Kyenge in Italy. These incidents have highlighted these issues of racism and national extremism and the need to increase the awareness of rights and protection for black Europeans. I also saw something with Santa's sidekick in one of the Scandinavian countries in blackface—that happened recently—Mr. Olomofofe can probably help me to know a little bit more about that cultural situation as it exists.

On April 29, 2008, I had the good fortune to chair a U.S. Helsinki Commission hearing entitled “The State of Invisible Black Europe: Race, Rights and Politics,” which focused on bringing to light the daily challenges of racism and discrimination encountered by black Europeans, specifically with regard to their representation in leadership positions and political participation.

Since then, I've worked with minority and other European legislators to convene annual events in Brussels, Belgium, at the European Parliament to address these issues, including the 2009 Black European Summit Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion and the 2010 and 2011 Transatlantic Minority Political Leadership Conferences. Follow-on initiatives from these events have included the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network, in cooperation with the State Department and the German Marshall Fund, which works to advance young, diverse and inclusive leaders on both sides of the Atlantic.

This week, I plan to introduce legislation that details several concrete actions our and European governments can take to specifically address the situation of African descendants. First, following the 2011 trans-Atlantic minority political leadership conference, the United States and European parliamentarians called for a joint U.S.-E.U. action plan to work on trans-Atlantic solutions to address bias and discrimination and foster inclusion, much in the same way we work jointly on counterterrorism, trade and other issues, so we are hopeful we will be able to work on that issue in a similar way.

I urge the adoption of such an initiative to significantly increase the tools our governments have to address common issues, develop proactive policies, to meet changing demographics, leading to increased diversity in our societies and ultimately ensure the long-term stability and prosperity of our democracies. In the interim, our government can do more to partner with European public and private sectors and black and migrant communities to advance human rights and inclusion in Europe through our embassies and by appointing experts within our State Department on people of African descent and combating racism to join other ongoing initiatives on women, on youth, on LGBT, on disabled, on Jewish, on Muslim and other vulnerable communities.

I live what I preach, and I have had the good fortune to come to the age of 77, with 51 of those years being as a lawyer, and a considerable portion of my time as a lawyer involved in what has been described as the civil rights movement in the United States

of America. But to go even further, once I had the good fortune and privilege to serve here in the House of Representatives. I made it a point to have one, a diverse staff, and two, to advocate diversity and inclusion, and to utilize those opportunities to have interns work with me, and have for the 21 years that I am here.

This is bragging a little bit. I believe I've had the most diverse office in the entirety of our Congress with regularity, largely for the reason that I wind up every year with people who come as interns. If any of you know of folk of African descent, and you who are interested in interning in a congressional office, then have them know that my door is open to either including them in my office or helping them to find a location if they're interested.

This morning, I have a Croatian, a Portuguese, a Serbian and an African-American that are my interns that are in this room this morning. I wanted my Portuguese and Serbian interns to witness this, and my African-American intern especially since he's in the field of law and I'm sure much of this is of interest to him. There are others that may be here as well. Let me stop running my mouth and turn to the important work of the day. I'm hopeful, either here or at the lunch, that some of our colleagues will join us. But I would want to start by listening to the presenters, where I'm certain we will learn more information regarding the circumstances that you are confronted with at this time.

So, Larry, you kick us off and tell us what you will, and then we'll just work down the line. And each of you introduce yourselves, your organizations, and we will listen to you, OK?

Mr. OLOMOOFE. Thank you, Congressman Hastings. My name is Larry Olomoofe and I work for the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, based in Warsaw, as their advisor for combating racism and xenophobia, and training coordinator. I just would like to make a brief intervention here to first of all, express gratitude to the U.S. delegation to the OSCE for offering the kind of support and resources to assist us in putting not just this project together, but previous projects. As a way of introduction to our efforts within the OSCE, I would just like to give you a brief overview of activities and our commitment to combating racism and xenophobia.

As part of the overall approach to responding to and preventing hate crimes, the OSCE has taken specific steps to address the manifestations of racism, xenophobia, discrimination and the intolerance faced by people of African descent in the OSCE region. The OSCE Permanent Council in 2006 and 2009 have tasked ODIHR to tackle the root causes of intolerance and discrimination.

Also, since 2009 ODIHR has conducted a series of activities, including trainings, roundtables, conferences and meetings and projects and a number of focus groups with some members of the PAD, people of African descent communities, in a number of participating states. It is the information gathered from these events that helps to guide and inform ODIHR's activities in the field. I will take the opportunity now to provide a timeline of ODIHR's activities and interventions and a few outcomes below.

November 2011, in Vienna, we conducted, again with the kind assistance of the U.S. delegation to the OSCE, a roundtable on contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia affecting people of African descent in the OSCE region. Also in November 2011, the OSCE convened a Supplementary Human Dimension meeting on the Prevention of Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Crimes through education and awareness-raising initiatives in Vienna.

In January through to August 2012, ODIHR conducted a series of focus groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, as well as a number of personal testimonials from Austria, Moldova, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine and United Kingdom, which have helped inform some of the activities that we've conducted internally in ODIHR and to develop policies addressing or affecting—I guess issues affecting people of African descent.

In April 2012, the OSCE also convened a second Supplementary Human Dimension meeting, this time on combating racism, intolerance and discrimination in society through sport in Vienna. At the time it was considered an opportune moment with major sporting events in 2012 taking place, with the Olympics in London and the World Cup. At the time, give provide the platform for using sport to raise awareness, not just about racism in sport but society as well, and using sport as a vehicle to combat this form of racism and instances of intolerance that people of African descent face in Europe, in the immediate sense, and the OSCE region in its greater and wider sense.

In September 2012, the ODIHR offices conducted a meeting between the Polish immigrants of African descent, as well as the minister of interior, immigration and the police. That particular meeting was convened to address the particular tensions between African descendant people in Poland and the police, who some would say had a rather fractious relationship.

It was, in a sense, a bridging of the gap between the two communities to talk about why people of African descent refused or were reluctant to report incidents of discrimination or hate crime themselves to the police and law enforcement authorities. At that meeting there were a number of recommendations, which ODIHR have now put into place in terms of training for law enforcement officers. I can present the information related to that at a later time.

In September, also of 2012, through to October we conducted, at ODIHR, a training for people of African descent on confronting and responding to hate crime. We had some of the members around the table here and the broad group who've come on this study were also participants in a training in Warsaw. And through that training we identified five particular projects in-country that have been supported, again with kind assistance and resources from the U.S. delegation, to conduct awareness-raising initiatives at home as well as to confront and combat racism and xenophobia.

In October 2012, also for the first time actually, people of African descent participated fully and made recommendations at ODIHR's annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. It was a direct consequence of the initiative that we conducted in the previous days prior to that. Through July to December 2013, we've been implementing and overseeing fine, small-scale projects which were mentioned earlier. I hope that some of the people who are conducting these projects will present their information and narratives to you later on. This study tour also is supported and part of that process too.

So while these efforts have a number of positive outcomes and benefits for those involved, we still feel that more work has to be done. Despite being victims of hate crimes and hate incidents, many people of African descent in the region do not report these incidents to law enforcement or to the authorities, for a variety of reasons.

This is a cause for concern since many, many victims are suffering in silence and feel helpless in the face of aggressive nationalism and/or hate crime. Under-enforcing of racist hate crimes and incidents continue to be an issue and it needs to be addressed by all concerned and all parties; that is authorities, people of African descendent commu-

nities and their representatives, as well as international organizations such as the OSCE. We remain committed to tackling racism and intolerance and discrimination and prejudice in all their forms, and we'd like to take this opportunity once again to thank the U.S. delegation for their continued support in this regard. Thank you.

Ms. BVUMBURAH. My name is Hedwig Bvumburah. I am a director with Cross Culture International Foundation in Malta. My work entails working with migrants, the majority of whom are of African descent.

Malta has a very unique situation in that it is situated right in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, and as such most of the migrants end up here when they get shipwrecked at sea or encounter problems on their way to Italy. At the moment, we are concentrating our efforts on human trafficking, as we feel that some of these migrants reaching our shores could be trafficked. Our Maltese government at the moment also is concentrating on human trafficking but, you know, not dealing with people of African descent.

Malta is being used as a transit point and a destination for trafficked persons. Malta is still not reaching U.S. targets to stop human trafficking, and as a result is placed on tier 2 after being moved up a notch into tier 2 of the Trafficking Victims Protection report after being featured on the tier 2 watch list for two consecutive years.

On the ground there is very little the government is doing to identify victims of human trafficking when they process their cases. All irregular migrants living in Malta are currently held in detention for a year, though some stay up to 18 months. In the meantime, access to these migrants is very difficult for NGOs whilst they are in detention. We are also educating the public on how to identify victims of human trafficking within their communities.

The majority of immigrants living in Malta enjoy freedom of movement and a work permit, which entitles them to seek regular employment. However, many of these immigrants, adopting an attitude that a little is better than nothing, fall victim to exploitative practices at the hands of local employers, especially in the construction sector. Besides paying the workers wages that are far below the national minimum wage, these unscrupulous employers disregard occupational health and safety standards. Furthermore, as these workers are not registered officially, they are not entitled to benefits such as paid leave and sick leave. Irregular workers accepted these conditions for fear of losing the little income that they are earning and the fear of being deported.

There was an EU-wide study released by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group of the U.K. on the way EU member states treat migrants, which placed Malta 23rd in a 28-country migrants' rights scoreboard. According to this study, migrants in Malta are explicitly exposed to nationality discrimination, and the Maltese are consistently the least supportive of migrants' rights. Malta has a well-known "pushback" policy, where irregular migrants are deported.

Malta is also an intolerant place for migrants. Political participation is non-existent for all foreigners, even if they are fellow EU citizens. Malta is also very tough on nationality access. The 2000 Maltese Citizenship Act limits naturalization to children and descendants of those who are, were, or became Maltese citizens.

Without that connection, migrants can only naturalize if the government, under total discretion, decided they are eligible at best on humanitarian grounds. The month of October—I'm sure most of you might have seen it on national televisions—saw more than 500 souls perish in the Mediterranean Sea. These were migrants on their way from Africa

and Syria en route to Italy. Based on what I have just said, I would like to make some recommendations:

There should be more burden-sharing among member states and the international community. More should be done, although a few of the refugees and those with subsidiary protection are relocated. Our detention policy should be abolished altogether or reduced to a minimum of three months at most. The EU needs to finally make a common asylum system a reality. Greater solidarity with EU member states on Eastern and Southern Mediterranean coasts should be shown.

The Dublin III regulations should be abolished so that each member state should be able to process claims for asylum regardless of where the asylum seeker has entered the Union. The EU has to approve, as a matter of priority, further possibilities of creating legal access to the EU through visas issued in countries outside the EU. This would also make sure that, lives will not unnecessarily be lost at sea.

The removal of the Dublin regulations would give the possibility for migrants landing in Malta to transfer to other EU countries whilst their asylum application is being examined.

Pressure should also be exerted on Malta to improve its human trafficking record. With regards to the number of lives that have been lost at sea, maybe the EU and Congress can come up with solutions that will deal with the problems at the source rather than letting people come across for them to lose their lives at sea. As an NGO, we'd also like to partner with the U.S. embassy in Malta, if that can be done. Thank you.

Mr. ASANTE-YEBOA. I am King Asante-Yebo, President of the African Center in Ukraine. The African Center is based in Kiev, Ukraine, and is the largest African institution in Eastern Europe. Among other things, it defends the rights of Africans and promotes the positive side of Africa. The center is the platform for promoting diversity, respect, intercultural dialogue and many others things. We do this through various actions.

We are pleased to have the cooperation of the U.S. embassy in Kiev, the European Union, and the OSCE, just to mention a few. Our social and cultural actions in partnership with the Association FARE—that is Football Against Racism in Europe, which is based in the U.K—Never Again based in Poland, United for Intercultural Action based in Holland, and then The Edge also based in Holland, have been very successful.

Racial abuse, xenophobia and other related hate crimes are by far the major concern of the African diaspora in Eastern Europe, as are concerns of migrants everywhere. It is important to take the necessary steps to adequately address this so as to not repeat the horrors of 2006 to 2011, when mainly African migrants were targeted and brutally attacked, resulting in loss of lives. I, myself, was a victim of such brutal attack where the perpetrators, 15 of them armed with knives and various clubs, were bent on hacking me to death. I am lucky to have survived such an attack.

However, the timely intervention of Mr. Mark Wood, then-Human Rights Officer of the U.S. embassy in Kiev when he visited me and saw my condition at the hospital after the operation—he quickly arranged with Mr. Jeff Labovits, then-Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration to take me to another hospital for intensive care. That is why I am alive and talking today. I just would like to show a picture of what I'm talking about.

Though migrants generally face several problems, it is necessary to also mention that people of African descent bear the blunt in most cases. Here are three major points worth

mentioning: Point one is human rights. Africans in Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and other countries of the former Soviet republics have asked several times that the law enforcement organs take necessary steps to address abuses of their rights. In fact, we are asking for the basic rights accorded to every person. This includes intervention and protection in case of attack.

Point two: integration. The world has become a global village as we all see. People travel to other countries for several reasons. But it becomes another issue if the “system”—system in quote—if the “system” is such that you are not integrated. For instance, even if an African has Ukrainian nationality, it does not necessarily make him or her part of the society nor can he or she be accorded the basic rights. Africans who are married to Ukrainians have the same concern. I must add that the African-Ukrainian children also face the same problem, even though one of their parents is Ukrainian.

Point three: employment. Africans’ rights are not protected at all in this area. The result is that employers hire them to work for months, at times up to a year, then sack them without paying them.

I take this opportunity to commend the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for their work in Eastern Europe, training law enforcement officers and civil society leaders to take up the challenge, and so on and so forth. It is also necessary to mention the role of the U.S. government, the U.S. embassy and other embassies as well. My colleagues and I have had the opportunity to attend various meetings, for example, during the visits of Vice President Joe Biden, also when Mrs. Clinton, the then-Secretary of State visited. The U.S. embassy has a program they call the Ambassador’s Forum, in which they invite us to participate. I must emphasize here, in most of these programs or meetings, they speak on diversity and they impress on the Ukrainian government the need to do more to promote diversity.

Effective collaboration of the African diaspora would help better in dealing with the situations cited above and similar ones. Our active participation in seeking solutions to issues that concern us is also crucial. We look forward to continuing working with the Ukrainian government, which also happens to be the current chairperson of the OSCE. It is our hope, therefore, that a group of this study tour, which has so far been exposed to the working systems of various U.S. departments and institutions here in Washington, D.C., with more places to visit, would be strengthened and that it would receive the needed support enabling us to effectively help in promoting progress of the African diaspora and also contributing more meaningfully in our respective places of residence. I thank you for your attention and your time. We hope to meet with you again.

Ms. MBUGUA. Thank you. My name is Salome Mbugua and I’m from Ireland. As many people know, or all of you know, Ireland has been a country of immigration where most of people coming into Ireland has come in since the late 1990s.

The recent census, however, shows that immigration into Ireland continues, and numbers of non-Irish foreign nationals have increased in the last census, which was 2006. But 2011 is the very recent one. Over 500,000 people born outside Ireland now live in Ireland. Out of that, we have around 41,000—or, almost to 42,000 Africans, which is 0.91 percent of the total population.

My organization that I represent here, which is called AkiDwA, it’s Swahili for sisterhood, was established in 2001 by African migrant women to address the issues that they were experiencing at the time. Such issues were issues of isolation, racism and gender-

based violence. AkiDwA, therefore, works for a just society, where there is equal opportunity and equal access to resources in all aspects of society. That is: social, cultural, economic, civic and political.

Given the current statistics on racism and racial incidents in Ireland, it is clear that racist attitudes and deep-rooted prejudices still exist within Irish society. In order to protect people who continue to become victims of racism or hate crime, or that are vulnerable to racism and xenophobia, we would need to have political will and commitment to solve this problem. I give you examples of what has happened previously.

In a radio interview in 2011, one of the councilors—Councilor Scully, Darren, who is a public representative and former mayor of Naas—said that he would no longer represent black Africans—he regarded them as aggressive and bad mannered—and that he would refer them to another politician to deal with them.

Three in every five of the TDs, or Irish members of Parliament, responding to a survey that was carried out by professional polling company said they had encountered racist sentiment while canvassing in the 2011 general election. More than a third of the TDs, or Irish members of Parliament, said speaking out in favor of a migrant would have negative effects for their election or for them to be re-elected.

Almost 50 percent of teachers have reported racist incidents in their schools or colleges in the past month, according to survey by the Teachers' Union. In 2009 research that was done by the Economic Research Institute and Equality Authority on employment, showed very strong discrimination in Ireland of people whose name is not Irish . . . that they would not even be called for interview. Most racists incident or attitudes were also found to be directed towards black Africans.

Racism in the media had been a big problem in the way the reporting takes place, such as stereotyping and painting different levels of reporting on stories of people from ethnic minorities as negative. For example, one of the journalists, Kevin Myers, and who is a writer of the Irish Independent paper, said that: Africa has given the world nothing but AIDS. Representation of migrant, and black people in particular, is completely lacking in the mainstream media. And you do not actually see the migrant in the mainstream media in particular.

Women members of my organization continue to report to the organization of their daily experiences of racism which is both verbal and physical, in their residence where they live, while walking on the street or trying to access services. Many women also struggle, managing racism directed at their children. A majority would keep their children indoors never to get out to protect them.

Many women members have also expressed their reluctance to report racist incidents to the police, with reasons that they get a feeling of intimidation when they go at the police station. When they get there, they are asked of their immigration status rather than them being supported. Racism also while trying to access public services takes many different forms, as women report. It's the way they are spoken to, the manner, the tone, by the officials which actually show the prejudiced behavior and sometimes deny services.

There is no reflection of the migrant, and especially people of different backgrounds, in the political participation. Democratic participation, as we all know, is lacking. About 12 percent of the population are from the immigrant background. Many immigrants are involved in religion and community organizations, but still have yet to see their involvement in the politics or decision making. Immigrant participation at the local level is be-

lieved to be one of the most effective, but yet it's lacking in Ireland. These reflections of diversity do not exist anywhere, whether it's social or in the political arena.

On education, the exemption in Ireland equality legislation that allows religious schools to give preference to children of the school faith in order to preserve the ethos of the school has a negative impact on children from minority ethnic groups who are also members of minority religious communities, as the vast majority of state-run religious schools are Catholic, the predominant religion in the state.

In 2007, for example, children were left stranded without school places. Educate Together schools have been established and have now largely accommodated children from the ethnic minority. Mainstream schools need to be properly resourced to meet the diversity of the students. These also need to have the reflection of diversity within the school curriculum that should be reviewed while handling racist bullying in schools. All schools also need to have anti-racism policies that identify the steps that will be taken to address racist bullying when it occurs.

The whole issue of access to third-level education has been difficult and has an impact on children who are living, for example, in accommodation centers of parents seeking asylum. It's difficult for them to access due to high cost. They are also not allowed to access any vocational training or courses run by bodies funded by the government. Immigration and asylum laws and policies have actually also impacted the mental health and well-being of most people who have been seeking asylum in Ireland. Some people have to wait for three to eight years for their situations to be decided.

On citizenship, the majority of the people have become citizens. Since 2009, we appreciate that the Irish government has awarded citizenship to at least 59,000 immigrants who have actually naturalized. However, the citizenship referendum of 2004 left large gaps, especially with the children who are born on the island of Ireland not having access to citizenship at all.

I would like to recommend for my organization, that legal protection is very important. Acts of racism and unlawful racial discrimination, including incitement of racial hatred and racist attacks, are serious violations of human rights, and should be combated by all lawful means. Ireland needs to have a law on racist crimes, to prosecute effectively and adequately racist-type violence.

We also need to have education and awareness-raising and to encourage the introduction of human rights education, including promoting anti-racism in the school curriculum and in institutions of higher education.

Coming from a woman's organization, we would also like to recommend that women be supported more. Women's rights and necessary protections, with regard to racism and discrimination, must be ensured through gender mainstreaming of existing legal policies that we have in place. The government should commit itself to responding to the specific needs of migrant women by providing culturally appropriate services and support in relation to, for example, issues of female genital mutilation, sexual abuse, domestic violence and many others. The way the reporting is done needs to be improved. It's therefore important to have a national racist reporting and monitoring system that is independent from that of the police and that enables reporting of racist incidents other than those currently defined as crime.

Monitoring is also very crucial. We need to have independent monitoring of public bodies to assess their role when we come to issues of negative racial and ethnic profiling.

To finish, we would also actually like to recommend from my organization that we've learned quite a lot during the visit here and the way, for example, the U.S. has tried to encourage the diversity of people in the workplace. This diversity is very important for all the countries and, I would say, in Europe. For example, the diversity should reflect on the social, economic and political arena, like we've been hearing this week.

Thank you.

Mr. MOMODOU. Thank you. So my name is Jallow Momodou, and I am the Vice Chair for the European Network Against Racism, which is one of the largest international organizations working on these issues in Europe. I'm also the Chair for a national organization in Sweden called the Pan-African Movement for Justice.

The European Network Against Racism, ENAR, as it is called, is Europe's biggest anti-racist umbrella organization, covering over 30 countries in Europe, and will expand in the coming year to the Council of Europe countries. ENAR is being re-profiled as an organization that has a political understanding of the challenges at stake in Europe. The challenging political and economic European context, which is increasingly restrictive on equality and fundamental rights issues, forced ENAR to consider both our approach to anti-racism and governance and membership structure to maintain our role as the agenda setter that we have been for the past 15 years.

It is estimated, as it was named earlier on, that approximately between 7 to 10 or some, say, 15 million individuals—it's difficult to confirm this figure because one of the problems that we have in Europe is that we do not have this aggregated data collection, which means that you cannot collect data based on race or ethnicity in most European countries, and it makes it impossible to get the right figures. That is one of the problems that we need to address.

Most of these people have been long present in Europe. The United Nations International Year for People of African Descent in 2011 was the biggest global campaign designed to acknowledge the history of colonialism, slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. And this campaign was merely made visible in Europe.

The Fundamental Rights Agency's, FRA, survey indicates that people of African descent and black Europeans experience the highest victimization level in the EU. In November 2012 the EU-MIDIS survey by the FRA finds that nearly every fifth sub-Saharan African interviewed said on average that they had suffered serious harassment at least once in the last 12 months; that was over 18 percent. ENAR in 2010/11 had a shadow report on racism in Europe, which shows that specific groups are particularly vulnerable: sub-Saharan Africans in Malta, black Caribbeans in the U.K., the Somalis in Sweden. You have reports from Latvia, from Lithuania, from Romania, from Bulgaria that highlight that while people of African descent are few in number, they are nonetheless specifically targeted.

There are so many examples of hate crimes that black people have to endure. I would name a few. Some of you might have read, or maybe not, an Italian man opened fire in two marketplaces in central Florence, in Italy, killing two Senegalese traders and injuring three others. An undercover Austrian police officer beat a black U.S. teacher really bad, and the excuse was that he was mistaken for an African drug dealer. A Senegalese woman was shot dead by the German police during a scuffle with her ex-husband over the right of her baby in Bayern, in Germany. A man was tied down and left to burn to death in a 900-degree flame in a police station. These are just few cases affecting

black people. They happen, and none of the people that created these crimes were punished in any way. That is the problem that we see in Europe.

I come from a country that is known globally for its so-called liberal values but yet has high levels of racial profiling and police brutality, like most of Europe, by law enforcement agencies with impunity. Levels of racial profiling and police brutality are increasing. It's been normalized, it's been legitimized. Afrophobia, as we call it—you call it in the U.S. anti-black racism—is increasing in this country, and I'm talking about Sweden. When we talk about Sweden, quite often that's not the image that we get. But it's important that we know, behind the image, that's a reality that black people face, and that is quite different from the image that we have. So we need to revisit our understanding of what image Sweden really should have.

In the last two months, there was a guy in Sweden, a black man that was attacked by 10 men. And he was beaten up seriously. They wanted to kill. It was an attempted murder. He was beaten unconscious in front of his 18-month-old son, and the son was crying, Papa, Papa, whilst they were kicking and beating him. When he got unconscious, they lifted him up; they wanted to throw him down a bridge four meters high. And under the bridge, there were cars, there were vehicles running. Now, luckily, he's still alive, he didn't die. But his family, their lives are still at stake because the people that committed this crime are still free. Nobody has been arrested so far so this crime. And we find this a problem because impunity has been something that we've seen, especially when it comes to police brutality, and especially when it comes to crimes that are committed against black people.

A country where the latest reports on hate crimes clearly indicates that hate crimes motivated by Afrophobia have increased 24 percent and are the highest in Sweden now. But yet no attempts have been made by any political representative to neither acknowledge the increasing vulnerability nor articulate any policies geared towards protecting the civil and human rights of people of African descent and black Europeans in Sweden. Those of us from the Pan-African Movement of Justice who make attempts to articulate the harsh realities of Afro-Swedes, as we call ourselves, are constantly threatened and ridiculed with impunity. I have pictures of myself hanging in the sea, with nooses and chains around my neck, calling me the n-word, that I'm a runaway slave. I have those pictures with me in case somebody wants to see.

Paradoxically, there has been relatively little attention paid to the pervasiveness of Afrophobia in Sweden and the rest of Europe and its massive impact on people of African descent and black Europeans' socioeconomic and political conditions. I normally call this 'loud silence' because it is a conscious attempt to make our realities invisible, not only in Sweden but the entire Europe.

While a number of legal measures already exist in Europe, we tackle racism and antidiscrimination, notably the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia. It is clear that Afrophobia nonetheless remains a pressing and urgent concern. ENAR and the Pan-African Movement for Justice consider that the specific problems faced by people of African descent in Europe mean that the existing legal instruments cannot adequately address the problem and must be reinforced by comprehensive efforts on the part of the policymakers and civil society to tackle Afrophobia and promote inclusion.

Now, we're here to form coalitions but also to ask for assistance from the U.S. government. We have specific areas and forms of assistance that we need from the U.S. government agencies and institutions.

One of them is to be engaged and to be vocal on the specific issues of Afrophobia and social inclusion of people of African descent and black Europeans in Europe, both in American, European and international platforms and forums. Second, we need assistance in advocating publically for the political recognition of Afrophobia and the need for evidence-based policies in Europe.

We also need assistance to finance European initiatives related to the fight against Afrophobia, to mention the European issue of people of African descent in policy documents in the U.S., to advocate for a common EU framework for the collection and analysis of reliable comparable data disaggregated by racial or ethnic origin for the purpose of combating discrimination and racism in accordance with the data protection safeguards.

In conclusion, if the EU and its member states are to be successful in curbing Afrophobia and preparing all their citizens for a more inclusive and diverse Europe for the future, a change in approach is required at all levels. ENAR and the Pan-African Movement for Justice strongly believe that all the parties involved should rise to the challenges of promoting a progressive narrative on equality and diversity while ensuring the respect and fulfillment of fundamental rights and encouraging full inclusion of all.

These objectives, even though long-term, are meant to set the stage for progressive dialogue on policy formulations and political reforms within the EU to help in articulating and promoting a whole society vision guaranteeing security, equality and prosperity for people of African descent and black Europeans by maximizing our potential towards developing confident and strong communities, integrated and cohesive societies, as well as a stable and prosperous Europe.

Thank you.

Mr. HASTINGS. I'm going to begin by asking just a few questions, and then those with the delegation, in addition to other audience members, will be able to ask questions. And one of our interns from the Helsinki Commission will bring you the microphone.

Your remarks have been enlightening and piercing and, in many respects, uncomfortable for me, not only as a member of the United States Congress, but as a citizen of the world. I could share so many anecdotes of discrimination that I've seen and that I've faced. I travel in and out of Frankfurt an awful lot, and I think it would stun you to know that probably, without any exaggeration, I would think eight out of the last 10 visits that I went through Frankfurt, I was stopped by the authorities largely because, I guess to them, I look Arab or Ethiopian or Somalian or whatever they—but they stopped me. On two occasions, I actually missed my airplane because of their delay.

But now, I don't want to leave that at Frankfurt's door. On six of the last 10 trips that I've taken from Washington National Airport to Florida, I have been stopped by the authorities. Now, more recently I'm putting it on the fact that I had a full knee replacement, and the machine goes off. But they stop me a lot of times before I even get to the machine. So it ain't my knee, you know, that they're looking at. Now, mind you, I'm a member of the House of Representatives, a member of the Trusted Travelers program. Yet it persists. In Denmark, very liberal-sounding country until you are there a lot, I was called a n--- twice in that place. I could go on and on and on. I've seen it all over.

I guess what we need are solutions. Out of all of your comments, I did not hear, nor am I an overbearing person on, the subject of religion, but I didn't hear a single one of you mention, in your recommendations, the possibility of joining with inter-disciplinary, ecumenical and interreligious organizations as you thrust forward. I only offer that for the reason that when I began filing lawsuits as a lawyer for folk victimized by racism, I don't think I would have had a lot of success had it not been for a variety of ministers and rabbis at the time that were the backbone of what we were doing. I'd been interested in any of your views on that. Do you interface at all with the religious organizations, with no particular faith in mind, and is that of any value of you at this time? Let anybody respond that cares to. Mr. Momodou.

Mr. MOMODOU. Thank you for that question. Yes, we have not mentioned, any of us, none of us have mentioned what you meant, the religious aspect. The reason is because when it comes to racial profiling, as we mentioned earlier, when people are stopped at airports, they're black people; they're not stopped based on their religion, they're stopped based on their skin color.

We've seen in Europe that several initiatives have come to exist, but quite seldom do you see initiatives that focus on black people, on the color of our skin as the basis upon which the discrimination that we face is fundamental. For us, this invisibility of our existence and the racism that we face, just merely because of the color of our skin, we think it is extremely important we need to focus our attention in trying to raise awareness and focus it into that problem.

Now, we do work with religious organizations, like, the European Network Against Racism, we have initiatives that are geared towards Islamophobia. We have several projects that we're working on with organizations that are working to fight against Islamophobia or to fight against all of these different phobias that affect different religions.

In Malmo, where I live, you probably know there has been a lot of discussion in regards to Islamophobia but also with the Jewish population. Now, the American government sent a delegation to Malmo in regards to this issue. What we have there, we have what we call the dialogue forum in which all of the different religious groups meet but also people of African descent. We sit down, and we have a dialogue, and we work together on how we can have a coalition and to be able to fight some of the problems that we face, social exclusion and all the problems that we face together. So those kinds of initiatives are really, really good, and we are engaged in those kinds of initiatives right now from different levels.

Mr. OLOMOOFE. On this point, the OSCE ODIHR, we do have particular portfolio which deals with particular forms of discrimination and intolerance. So we do have an adviser combating anti-Semitism, an adviser combating intolerance against Muslims. Recently, what we've tried to do with ODIHR is look at the intersectionality of these particular forms. So whilst race may be the predominant feature in itself that we look at, we also look at how religion may exacerbate or one's religious affiliation may exacerbate the discrimination they face and look at how we could develop policies and initiatives that address that. One of the things we are doing right now in ODIHR is training across the spectrum. There's a couple of people who we've met recently who are part of the delegation today who were initially interested in addressing faith-based discrimination but where racial identity also was added to the discrimination they faced, and they felt that

it was important for them to be here, part of the group as well to talk about their experiences from those twin perspectives. The other thing is that we are looking at how gender or how race is—in a sense, racial experience or discrimination is actually differentiated along these lines of gender. A black woman, for instance, would suffer a particular form of discrimination that black Muslim men may not because of the fact that they may have to wear the hijab or the headscarf, and we receive information that indicates that black Muslim women suffer a more egregious form of discrimination because of the fact that people feel they could go and confront them about wearing a headscarf in public spaces, for instance. That helps to focus whatever our intervention will be at that particular time, whether it's a response to or through the government for law enforcement or the judiciary, or training about this particular thing.

Part or the primary purpose of this particular study is to establish an understanding and an appreciation that race is a dominant factor and it does affect how people interact in society. The other aspects which are not so visible through—when they do become visible, whether from wearing the headscarf or expression, exacerbates or extenuates that particular form of discrimination. At the OSCE, we're looking to see how we can develop policies or inform government to address between aspects and not just look at one of them. While no one here may have mentioned anything about working with religious or faith-based entities, it is still part of the discussion and part the discourse as well and part of the advice that we would give to anyone, which is to establish these collaborative aspects and approaches across the spectrum, because discrimination, in the end, it does affect—at least what we say about hate crime and hate incidents, affects us all.

Mr. HASTINGS. Right. If you're going to have a Europe-wide strategy—and I advocate for you that that's what is ultimately going to be needed with the numbers that you have and the difficulties that each of the communities are facing in various countries, my belief is that, when I was demonstrating in the streets and encouraging demonstrations, I did not at any point not know that I was black and I was also a member of a religious faith. But what I looked to the religious organizations for guidance and to lay business community and in the political community the foundation of tolerance that is their basic premise.

Now, I'm talking 50 years ago and for a substantial number of years following. But in the beginning, I know them as if it were happening today for you. The Minister of the largest black church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was named George Weava. One of the most dynamic theologians I've ever met in my life was a Unitarian named Robert Weston. The rabbi that worked with us was Irving Lerhman. All of these people are since deceased. The archbishop at that time was Archbishop Carroll of the Catholic Church. The bishop was Bishop Duncan of the Episcopal Church. Then there were other ministers. I found great irony. Three weeks ago, I attended a funeral of one of the more dynamic black theologians in Florida, and it was held at First Baptist Church because it was the largest venue that could be held. First Baptist Church 50 years ago would not allow us to have meetings as other churches did. But those churches and synagogues, we didn't have many mosques at that time. If I were advocating—and I do today at home—I would include that we must involve the Baha'is, the Muslims, the Buddhists in that inter-religious experience. If you get them talking, then they affect businesses and politics, and that's the point that I was trying to make.

We've been joined by the Chair of the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Helsinki Commission. A longstanding friend of mine, he happens to represent

an extremely diverse state right across from here on the river or the beltway. He represents Maryland, and has been a dear friend of mine. I served with him in the House of Representatives for a number of years, and then of course he became a Senator. We refer to over here as the other body. They do kind of operate different than we in the House of Representatives, but I'm very pleased. If you all will let me interrupt the questions, allow Senator Ben Cardin to make any comment that he might wish to make. I told you that I was in a meeting with the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe from Montenegro. Senator Cardin convened that meeting earlier and then had to leave and go to another meeting doing some important work. This is something that the United States does an awful lot of that I'm proud of. We all know what the Typhoon Haiyan did in the Philippines. Well, he held the hearing and is coming from that hearing to us as the chair of the committee that would be dealing with that subject on trying to figure out what more can we do from the United States. Had I been in the hearing with him, I would have said we could ask China to send a little more money than they did. I don't have much money, but the little that I sent almost per capita weighs what they sent, and I just use that as a dig at them for not getting past themselves. I might add the Japanese were very forthcoming, as have been other countries, including Scandinavian countries.

Senator Cardin.

Mr. CARDIN. Well, first to Congressman Hastings, thank you so much for your extraordinary leadership on this subject. There was no more important moment on the subject we're talking about today than when Congressman Hastings was elected president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. It was a powerful message that we stand up for opportunity for all people. The Helsinki process is one that recognizes for a country to be stable, it has to respect the rights of its citizens. Otherwise you can have the strongest military in the world, you're not going to have a stable country unless you respect the rights of the people in your country. We've seen more and more countries' governments fall because they did not adhere to that basic principle of human rights, and that's been the hallmark of the Helsinki Commission.

Now, I want to thank Mischa Thompson for her leadership in convening this. She has been an advocate on our commission on the issue effecting full participation in the realities of minority communities and the challenges they have in Europe, and she has been an outspoken leader for bringing us together on this subject, and it helps a great deal.

The first basic point that we need to win on is for people to understand, governments to understand, Europe to understand that there's strength in diversity and they shouldn't fear diversity. That's been tough in Europe. Europe has had countries that have been built around certain ethnic communities, and inclusion's been a very difficult path for Europe to embrace. The United States has had a rough past towards full participation. But today I think this country recognizes that in diversity we have strength. Congressman Hastings mentioned the state I represent in Maryland where we are becoming a majority minority state, where the majority of people of this country will not be Caucasian. That is happening throughout many parts of our country. We've embraced diversity, and we have gained a great deal because of diversity.

Secondly, we have to understand that you need a strategy and you need to understand it will not happen overnight. Inclusion: It just doesn't happen overnight. I wish

it did. Congressman Hastings mentioned the civil rights campaign that we're now celebrating milestones at 50 years, the March on Washington. We celebrated that milestone. We will celebrate the milestone or passage of major civil rights legislation. Yet today we still have problems in America. We have racial profiling in our state, in our country, which is unacceptable. We condemn it. It still takes place.

We're on that path, and we have developed strategies so that we can use best practices. Then lastly, I want to comment on how I think the OSCE has really adopted a tolerance agenda, recognizing that there are many aspects to that. I applaud the work of ODIHR. I applaud the work that we've done in pointing out ways that you can develop strategies that can work. Yes, we've done that for the Roma population, and we know that we're far from where we need to be for the Roma population of Europe. We've done it in regards to anti-Semitism, and we've made major progress in fighting anti-Semitism, but we see backsliding on anti-Semitism. There's no sure path to accomplish our agenda.

But we know that when you develop a strategy, when you develop leaders, when you get government officials sensitive to what you're trying to achieve, where you share best practices and put spotlights on countries that could do better, progress is made.

That's why we were so pleased that you have this conference today that allows us to share and develop a strategy. I can tell you the U.S. Helsinki Commission is very interested in participating with you to accomplish the objectives that you set out.

With that, again, I want to point out that we are gifted in our Helsinki Commission to have the leadership of Alcee Hastings, who has been there fighting these issues not just on behalf of those of African descent, but he's been there on behalf of minorities in religion, in ethnicity, in geography and has made a huge difference not only in America but in Europe and around the world. We look forward to being your partners as we achieve that goal that is so important because it carries out our core belief of equality but also recognizing the importance it is to have a stable and peaceful world.

We look forward to working with you.

Mr. HASTINGS. Thank you. I really do appreciate it all, Senator.

The senators are fewer in number but the portfolios are the same. They've bounced from meeting to meeting to meeting virtually all the time. But I'm very grateful to you, Ben, and if you get an opportunity to come by our luncheon, you're welcome as well.

I wanted to go very briefly to Ms. Bvumburah. When you mentioned Malta—I think I heard you say that people of African descent, not just the immigrants that come through there in the Mediterranean or the people that tragically die out in the ocean trying to get to freedom, but once they're there, and the few that the government allows to become citizens, for whatever reason, what are their opportunities in politics? I think I heard you say that there was no political participation.

Ms. BVUMBURAH. Thank you very much for that question.

I'm a British citizen living in Malta. I'm not even allowed to vote there. Recently this year, beginning of this year, we had our elections, the Maltese elections, but anyone who's not, you know, a native Maltese is not allowed to vote. As a result, you cannot participate in any political movement or do anything.

I as an EU citizen, I'm not even allowed to participate, in Malta, yet I have got permanent residence in that country. The migrants who come in, who don't even have papers or nothing to identify them, they've got no chance whatsoever.

Mr. HASTINGS. Hmm. Interesting.

Mr. Momodou, you brought up the subject of children born in Ukraine. Patently they don't have any rights, I gather, as citizens, just birthright by virtue of being born there.

Mr. MOMODOU. Yes, not in Ukraine, but you have the problem in a country like Germany, for example. There are children that are born in Germany that by virtue of their birth don't get automatically citizenship, and with that comes a lot of a series of problems. That excludes a lot of people of African descent that live there, that are, for example, children of American soldiers that are based in Germany that today are grown-ups but they still don't have citizenship in Germany, and they're born and raised there. They don't have possibilities to represent the people of African descent in Germany in any political institutions because they don't have the citizenship.

Mr. HASTINGS. Is that true throughout or is it different? Go right ahead. We—hold on. We'll get you a mic. Tell us again who you are and the country you're from.

QUESTIONER. My name is Jamie Schearer. I'm from the Initiative Black People in Germany. So I live in Germany. I was born in Berlin. Germany actually does have with some states agreements for dual citizenship, but unfortunately both of my parents were non-German when I was born. The law has actually changed, but you need to have at least eight years of permanent residency in Germany for your child to get the passport, the nationality—the citizenship. So there are a lot of children who are born in Germany who even if your parents don't have documents, you're born into the same situation and can be deported even if you've lived for 18 years in this country. So those are also cases, and they're very important, you know, to notice, that this is something that's still going on in Germany. While right now there are the negotiations for the new government, basically this is a topic that has been spoken about, and they're not going to have the dual citizenship. So this will go on, basically.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right.

Let me then turn to yet another question and ask any of the panelists—and then I'll open it to everyone here—has there ever been or do you foresee there ever being a Europe-wide black or all-minority movement similar to the civil rights movement in the United States? I guess—Jallow, can you talk about recent efforts toward developing an EU strategy by your European Network Against Racism? Anybody else that wishes to chime in, please do so. Yes, sir.

Mr. MOMODOU. Thank you. As far as I know, there isn't an EU-wide, you can say, pan-African organization that's working with civil rights equivalent to the ones that you have in the United States. But the European Network Against Racism, which is, as I mentioned, an umbrella organization, in which we're trying to push policies that would make the European Parliament and the EU focused on formulating policies that would fight against specific types of racism affecting different groups in Europe.

Now the people of African descent, for example, is one of these groups, and we have an ad hoc committee that is working in implementing a framework of action. We have documents here available both in paper format and digital format, for those people that are interested.

The idea is to create exactly what you're asking, to make sure that this framework of action would be some kind of a platform in which a network would be built similar to the civil rights movement in the U.S., gradually, and this network that we have here visiting is a part of that. We want to establish this will be a movement that will be

throughout Europe and would be representing people of African descent and fighting for the rights—civil rights and human rights of people of African descent.

The European Network Against Racism is somehow a facilitator throughout this process because we have a direct contact to the European Commission and the European Parliament. We do lobby for these issues, and we come with policy recommendations to the parliamentarians. We recently had in fact one of our first conferences at the EU Parliament. That was hosted by an EU parliamentarian from France. He's been fantastic in helping us to create this positive narrative and to create this movement, you would say, at a political level, EU political level. So we're working on that.

Mr. HASTINGS. All right. All right.

Yes, sir.

Mr. ASANTE-YEBOA. In Ukraine, in Russia and then also in Moldova and other countries of the former Soviet republics, it's not an institution, but it's quite understood that when we talk about people of African descent, it refers to the Ukrainian-Africans. Then when you talk about migrants or immigrants, it refers to those of us who either went there for one reason or another, that—study, or those who come there because of—maybe economic migration.

Now adding a little bit to the question you asked, Ukraine, Russia, Moldova has a lot of what we'll call African-descendants. They don't have the same rights as the children of other citizens. Those whose fathers are from Africa and their mothers are from Ukraine have even more acute situations than those of us who are completely Africans living there. I have my colleague from Moldova. If he gets the opportunity to also just give you a brief about it, you'll be very much surprised. While they have the nationality as Ukrainians or they have the nationality as Russians, they have the nationality as Moldovans. They have the same degrees as others, but they don't get the opportunity to work. That is it.

The young ones, also, are at times being discriminated, even by their own fellow peers. The government isn't doing much; it seems they don't see the need for them to take steps to address this issue.

I would next like to talk about one person who—he is African Ukrainian, and he never ever thought of ever going to Africa or—going to Africa or calling himself an African, but when some young guys of his age got him on the road, beat him for having a mobile phone that—to them, he was not supposed to have it, because he doesn't have the same color as them. That was the first day he asked his father, where are you from, and can I get information about it, please?

Thank you.

Mr. HASTINGS. Yeah, understood. We have about five more minutes, regrettably. I wish we had more. If I had shut my mouth more, maybe you would have had more. But is there anyone in the audience—yes, sir, over here.

QUESTIONER. Hi [continuing]. Hello, thanks so much. I'll make this quick. I'm Spencer Boyer; I'm a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins University and an adjunct professor at Georgetown School of Foreign Service, and thank you for putting on this great briefing. I've worked very closely with Mischa on a number of things. I used to be a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs during the first term of the Obama administration and worked very closely with our foreign service colleagues throughout Europe and Eurasia on issues of inclusion, tolerance, respect for diversity,

and so truly appreciate your comments and understand your challenges. My question is on an issue that was just touched on in terms of generational differences, and I appreciate your comments on Ukraine. I wanted to know from the panelists, if anybody else has any comments on differences, on generational perspectives, on inclusion and challenges and if second, third-generation folks of African descent are having the same issues and problems as those who are more recent newcomers, and whether they work together on these issues.

Thanks.

Mr. OLOMOOFE. Thank you. That is something that is a challenge, because parts of what we've understood with contemporary forms of racism is that—and you've mentioned something; you mentioned the word “back-sliding”—is that a lot of the stuff that we're dealing with today is stuff that previous generations dealt with. The challenge has been to convince people that it's still an issue, because it was dealt with 20 years ago.

For instance, you hear monkey chants in sporting arenas—well, that was 30, 40 years ago in the U.K.; you hear it again now in Central and Eastern Europe and actually, in Western European places. In fact, the sports people are the ones propagating this particular form of discrimination. So the challenge has been really to deal with—or to get people to understand that it's still an issue.

Also, from what we see as well, we call it unconscious forms or maybe automatic reflexes in terms of racism, where even members of discriminated groups and minorities propagate this same form of discrimination. So we mentioned Roma; a lot of Romani communities will tell you that Roma are beggars, are criminals, and will actually, in a sense, repeat these forms of discrimination and these epithets.

In fact, actually, I've noticed from my own personal experiences—I'm not going to go into them right now, because there are just far too many to deal with—crossing borders, where people who actually ask you these questions are people who you would actually assume would understand that you should not be asked these questions, because they look like you. That has also been a challenge, in a sense, to try and get the message across to say discrimination has kind of morphed into something much more subtle and therefore, requires a more sophisticated and nuanced approach.

In a sense, tying it back to one of the things that you mentioned with religion—it's not simply finding collaboration across—or with religious or faith-based institutions or organizations or entities, it's across the whole spectrum, because in a sense, another challenge—you talk about the generational gap—we, the younger or slightly younger generation, are now propagating or promoting particular forms of discrimination internally. We have sexism; we do have homophobia and we do have other forms of discrimination and intolerance that we need to be challenging internally, not just as people of African descent, but across all spectrums; those are human rights and advocates of human rights.

The experiences that we've witnessed—and Charles was with me in Kiev last week—where you have an advocate for a particular issue, justifying homophobia in a human rights setting is something that is also, I would say, generational, because there was a big difference between this particular participant and the other group, who was slightly younger and more kind of congruent with contemporary forms of discourses around human rights. So there is that particular distinction that needs to be addressed and therefore, an intervention needs to bear this in mind and it shouldn't just be, you know, some sort

of previously driven issue or program, because it would just miss a number of targets in the society.

Mr. HASTINGS. Right, regrettably, we are going to have to end there. I want to address Brother Boyer's comment a different way. Thinking about where we've come in America, it really took us a hell of a long time to even get to the point where we are. I again exercise personal prerogative—I'm fifth-generation Floridian; my great-great grandmother was a slave and was part African and part Creek Indian, so I guess she got it going and coming in her period.

But it was not until that fifth generation, me that we began the active movement to try to make the dramatic changes that my foreparents and others' foreparents had experienced in various ways during slavery and segregation. My children, particularly the youngest ones, don't know much about that history, and they live a different experience than did I. I find it fascinating that I'm always educating them about the struggle and the fact that the struggle continues. When they are faced with it, then they come to me and ask me about events over the course of time that we've read about, seen, heard and witnessed.

I saw a man yesterday, and let me say bluntly: America does not come to this experience with the cleanest of hands. We've been evolving, but we are nowhere near where we should be in terms of overall diversity. I'm a constant critic. Folks say to me, oh, well, you're in Congress—well, so what? There are still people who can't get elected because they're black in this country. That's the only reason they don't get elected, not because they're not smart, not because they don't have the wherewithal; it's just because they're black.

I've come at this a lot of different ways. Folk ask me, when I became a federal judge, did it happen that I was black that caused it to come about, that I was the first African-American appointed as a federal judge in the state of Florida? I say, yeah, it did have something to do with it, because if you look at it the other way, being white had something to do with everybody that was appointed before me.

Then the same thing happened when I got elected to Congress, the district was drawn in a fashion that allowed that African-Americans would have an opportunity to win some seats. So, about 16 of us in the south won elections in 1992. A reporter came to me and asked me, do you think it's right that districts were drawn and your district was drawn so that you could win an election? I said, yeah, well, it took us 129 years in Florida for an African American—and there were three of us, two women, one here still here, Corrine Brown from Jacksonville, Carrie Meek from Miami and myself, were the first African Americans to come to Congress in 129 years.

I said, well, you did redistricting that excluded us for 129 years and if I had had my way—and I think a lot of blacks missed this in this country—I would have just asked, OK, then redistrict it for 129 years so I can win. But guess what they're doing now? They're going back to fairness, they say. We want to have fairness, so we want it to be more open, because too many of you all got elected. Please learn this, that every time you learn the rules, the rules are going to change, and they have done this over and over and over again.

We can't stand here and tell you about immigration reform without taking into consideration that this body that we are sitting in did pass an immigration measure that didn't go nearly as far as I would have it go, and the body that I serve in over on the

other side, where you're getting ready to go, won't even put it on the floor so that we can have an up-or-down vote on immigration reform. We have so-called 11 million people here that are undocumented, a significant number of them sharing the Spanish language.

So President Obama, when he ran around the country saying, "si se puede," or yes we can, this fellow said—in Spanish—or, the struggle continues, OK?

Thank you.



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