



**TRANSATLANTIC MINORITY POLITICAL
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

June 1-2, 2010

**European Parliament
Brussels, Belgium**

Summary Report



Following the 2009 “Black European Summit (BES): Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion,” which focused on Black and ethnic minority political participation in Europe and North America, the Transatlantic Minority Political Leadership Conference met on June 1 and 2, 2010 at the European Parliament. The Conference focused on efforts to increase minority representation in the political sphere, including government workforces. Additionally the Conference addressed the impact of the European Union’s Racial Equality Directive on the tenth anniversary of its adoption, and impact of immigration, national security, and anti-discrimination policies on minority populations.

Participants were a select group of minority political leaders and practitioners from the United States and Europe, representing various political parties and ethnic backgrounds, and included Members of Parliament and the U.S. Congress.

AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday, June 1, 2010 – Room: A1G3

11:30 – 2:00 pm	Registration
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Opening Lunch
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Panel 1: The EU Race Directive – 10 years and beyond
3:45 – 5:15 pm	Panel 2: Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Initiatives from local to parliamentary politics
5:30 – 7:00 pm	Roundtable Issues Forum Session 1: Immigration and Citizenship – Pathways to Participation
7:30 – 9:00 pm	Working Dinner

Day 2, Wednesday, June 2, 2010 – Room: A3G3

8:30 am	Registration
9:00 – 9:10 am	Welcome
9:10 – 10:45 am	Roundtable Issues Forum Session 2: Balancing National Security and Civil Liberties
11:00 – 12:30 pm	Roundtable Issues Forum Session 3: Implementing Anti-discrimination and Diversity Laws and Initiatives
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Closing Lunch
2:00 – 4:00 pm	Informal Consultations
	Empirical Research and Data Collection
	Establishing Equality and Anti-discrimination Initiatives in Parliaments
	Drafting Anti-discrimination Laws – A U.S. Perspective

Panel 1: The EU Race Directive – 10 years and beyond



In 2000, the European Union (EU) adopted a Racial Equality Directive. During the panel, experts reviewed the history behind and impact of the Directive in and beyond the EU. In particular it was noted that the Directive resulted in EU countries having discrimination laws, legal definitions of discrimination, and specialized (equality) bodies to monitor the problem. However, racial and ethnic minorities still experience high levels of discrimination but do not know their rights. Additionally, laws are not comprehensive in all countries, litigation can take years, and indirect or institutionalized discrimination remains a serious problem. Discussion focused on solutions to these ongoing challenges including: educating target communities, strengthening countries' data collection methods to better monitor the problem, and ensuring equality bodies are financed, well-equipped, and include minority staff.

Panel 2: Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Initiatives from local to parliamentary politics

During the panel, experts reviewed efforts to increase diversity and address discrimination in the political sphere, including an overview of the creation of the Office of Compliance to address workplace discrimination in the United States Congress and the work of the European Parliament's Equality and Diversity Unit to address gender equality. It was noted that similar efforts in the European Parliament were needed to address racial or ethnic equality given the lack of diversity in parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. Additionally, Belgian Senatorial candidate, Dr. Hassan Boussetta discussed the need for political parties to strengthen diversity measures. Findings from the United Nation's cited diversity in elected positions and public sector employment as ongoing problems across Europe. Discussion focused on solutions, including mobilizing minority communities to increase motivation for diversity in political parties and increasing educational and trainee opportunities for minorities in politics and policy. Participants called for a formal review of racial diversity measures and the development of a minority trainee program in the European Parliament.



The session focused on recent changes to immigration and citizenship laws amidst rising xenophobia and the related impact on minority political participation. Session Chair, MP George Pau-Langevin emphasized that as immigrants learn that their rights and status are tied to political participation and representation, they will not only change the face of Europe, but also alter the balance of party politics. Discussants, Special Advisor Yvette Jarvis and Deputy Mayor Wouter van Bellingen voiced concern about the recent gains of far-right parties and the inherent difficulties of enacting fair immigration policies and supporting immigrant rights in the current political climate. Discussion focused on the political importance of debunking myths about immigrants during times of economic instability and empowering migrant and minority communities through education and training to support legislative reform.



Roundtable Issues Forum Session 2: Balancing National Security and Civil Liberties

The Session focused on national security efforts and their reliance in many cases on the ineffective practice of ethnic or racial profiling, and related civil liberties violations. Session Co-Chair U.S. Congressman Alcee L. Hastings lamented that minority communities are disproportionately impacted by heightened national security policies, yet often not part of their development. He called for minority leaders to push for increased diversity in national security decision-making processes to prevent the adoption of discriminatory measures that violate the rights of minorities. Session Co-Chair former MEP Glyn Ford highlighted concerns of mainstream politicians adopting far-right political platforms linking minorities to security concerns and the need for more minority voices in policymaking to counter the trend. Discussion included personal testimonies from participants who were victims of profiling and the need for increased knowledge by minority communities on the development of intelligence and security policies to affect reform.

Minority policymaker's roles in supporting anti-discrimination measures, including enforcement, funding, and related capacity building measures to ensure implementation were discussed. Session Chair, MEP Emine Bozkurt raised concerns about gaps in existing laws and the failure of EU institutions to act on a law that would strengthen them. She called for the findings of equality bodies to be binding to assist in enforcement. Discussant MP Kinga Goncz focused on existing social inclusion and employment programs as an example of how anti-discrimination policies could assist Roma, noting that the economic crisis and right wing movements were obstacles for the needed expansion of such programs throughout Europe. Discussant, French Deputy Mayor Christophe Adji-Ahoudian highlighted continuing problems of racial profiling and employment discrimination for minority youth in France, despite existing policies. Discussion focused on the need for increased education for minority communities on utilizing discrimination laws (especially in employment), how to file complaints, and job opportunities for minority youth in the public and private sector, including mentorships and internships.





Closing Lunch with U.S. Ambassador to the European Union—H.E. William Kennard

U.S. Ambassador to the EU the Honorable William Kennard addressed participants, noting the importance of the gathering and U.S. President Barack Obama's commitment to diversity in the transatlantic space. MEPs Stavros Lambrinidis, Hannes Swoboda, Kader Arif, and Adrian Severin conveyed support for increased minority political participation during the event.



Informal Consultations

Following the Conference, participants and parliamentary staff took part in informal consultations with U.S. and European experts on empirical research and data collection on racial and ethnic minorities, drafting anti-discrimination laws, filing discrimination cases, and discussed plans for follow-up initiatives including commemoration of the United Nations designation of 2011 the International Year for People of African Descent.



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