

U.S. Helsinki Commission Briefing
"Europeans of African Descent "Black Europeans" - Race, Rights, & Politics
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The European network against racism (ENAR) is Europe's biggest anti-racist umbrella organisation covering over 30 countries and will expand in the coming year to the Council of Europe countries. ENAR is being re-profiled as an organisation that has a political understanding of the challenges at stake. The challenging political and economic European context, which is increasingly restrictive on equality and fundamental rights issues, forced ENAR to reconsider 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 that approximately 7-15 million individuals of African Descent currently live in and have long been present in Europe. The UN International Year for People of African Descent in 2011 was the biggest global campaign designed to acknowledge the history of colonialism, slavery and trans-Atlantic trade. This campaign was merely made visible in Europe. The Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) survey indicates that PAD and BE experience the highest victimisation level in the EU. November 2012 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 (18%)". ENAR 2010/2011 shadow reports on racism in Europe shows that specific groups are particularly vulnerable: Sub-Saharan Africans in Malta, Black Caribbeans in the UK, and Somalis in Sweden. Reports from Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria highlight that while People of African Descent are few in number, they are nonetheless specifically targeted.

- An Italian man opened fire in two markets in central Florence, killing two Senegalese traders and injuring three others.
- Undercover Austrian police officer beat up black U.S. teacher he mistook for an African drug dealer.
- Senegalese woman was shot dead by the German cops during a scuffle with her ex- husband over the right of her baby in Bayern
- A man tied down and left to burn to death in a 900 degrees flame

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 by law enforcement agencies without impunity, an increasing normalisation of racist and afrophobic discourse at the institutional level and it was less than a month ago a young man of african descent was attacked and brutally assaulted by more than ten assailants in front of his 18 month old son and then an attempt was made to throw him down a bridge four meters high. No one has been arrested for this crime yet. A country where the latest reports on hate crimes clearly indicates that hate crimes motivated by afrophobia have increased 24% and are the highest in Sweden, 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 PAD and BE in Sweden (afros-swedes). Those of us from the Pan African Movement for Justice (PMJ) who make attempts to articulate the harsh realities of afro-swedes are constantly threatened and ridiculed without impunity.

Paradoxically, there has been relatively little attention paid to the pervasiveness of Afrophobia in the Swedish context and its massive impact on the PAD and BE socio-economic and political conditions - . I normally call this LOUD SILENCE because it is a concious attempt to make our realities invisible.

While a number of legal measures already exist in Europe, which tackle racism and anti-discrimination, 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 PMJ consider that the specific problems faced by PAD in Europe mean that existing legal instruments cannot adequately address this problem and must be reinforced by a comprehensive effort on the part of policy makers and civil society to tackle Afrophobia and promote full inclusion.

What are the specific areas and forms of assistance we need from the US government agents and institutions?

- **Be engaged and vocal on the specific issue of Afrophobia and social inclusion of PAD/BE in the EU, both in American, European and international forums.**
- **Advocate publically for the political recognition of Afrophobia and the need for evidence-based policies in Europe.**
- **Finance European initiatives related to the fight against afrophobia.**
- **Mention the European issue of PAD/BE in policy documents.**
- **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, in accordance with 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 PMJ 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 fulfilment of fundamental rights, and encouraging full inclusion of all. These objectives, even though long term, are meant to set the stage for progressive dialog 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 PAD and BE” by maximising our potential, towards developing confident and strong communities, integrated and cohesive societies, as well as a stable and prosperous Europe

Our work plan and strategic plan of action with specific objectives and activities are available to you both in digital and paper format for those of you who are interested.

Relevant EU institution stakeholders: Directorate General for Justice, European Parliament, Fundamental Rights Agency, OHCHR Brussels



STRATEGY FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT AND BLACK EUROPEANS IN THE EU: **DRAFT PROVISIONS**

1. **Raise Awareness of People of African Descent** in Europe and their continuing contributions to European history, culture, and daily life given the diverse heritage and history of European people and the region.
2. **Combat Racism towards People of African Descent** and others rooted in European colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade, and other historical injustices based upon race and ethnicity.
3. **Collect and Publish EU-wide Racial Discrimination and Inclusion Data** to empirically document discrimination and exclusion impacting People of African Descent and remedy efforts.
4. **Promote Equal Justice for and Stop Discriminatory Policing of People of African Descent** to address disparities in police and border stop rates, sentencing, incarceration, and other inequities in justice.
5. **Ensure People of African Descent Equal Access to Quality, Desegregated, Discrimination Free Education** to address racism and discrimination towards Black students and biased and historically inaccurate school curricula.
6. **Adopt an Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Empowerment Initiative for People of African descent** to address African descent employment rates above 50% in many EU Members States.
7. **Reduce Health Disparities in the African descent community** to address findings that African descent populations may be more vulnerable to diseases due to poor socio-economic status, limited access to healthcare, and absence of knowledge of access to health services, as well as stigma and discrimination.
8. **Promote positive and accurate media portrayals of people of African descent** to assist in combating prejudice and discrimination.
9. **Provide equal access to quality housing for people of African descent** to address affordability, segregation, and discrimination in the housing market.
10. **Promote Citizenship and Equality, Inclusion, Participation, and Empowerment in Public Life** to address the inequitable and underrepresentation of people of African descent and others in decision-making roles.