

BLACK EUROPEAN SUMMIT

Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion

April 17-19, 2009

Brussels, Belgium

Report



Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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The Commission convenes public hearings and briefings with expert witnesses on OSCE-related issues; issues public reports concerning implementation of OSCE commitments in participating States; and organizes official delegations to participating States and OSCE meetings to address and assess democratic, economic, security and human rights developments firsthand.

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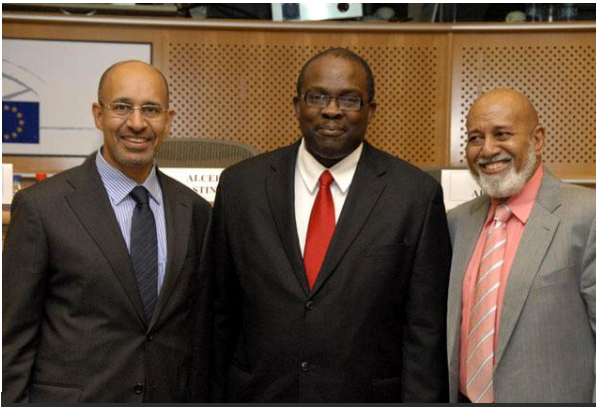
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Summit Aim

The aim of the Black European Summit was to bring together Black and ethnic minority political and intellectual leaders from Europe and the United States to discuss:

- their experiences in holding positions in public office;
- the roles of minorities in policymaking, with a focus on the development and implementation of anti-discrimination laws and initiatives;
- strategies for assisting minority communities in obtaining full access to participation in the political sphere and relevant areas of decision making;
- best practices in minority political participation;
- developing a sustained transatlantic network and dialogue on the above issues.

advocated by far-right and anti-migrant political parties and platforms have contributed to growing views by the mainstream in many countries that Europe is and should remain a mono-racial society, despite Europe's diverse citizenry and growing minority population.

European witnesses at the Helsinki Commission hearings identified the lack of minority representation in European policymaking, especially at national levels, as a major obstacle to countering these views and implementing the necessary policy prescriptions to address racial disparities. This prompted a call for a transatlantic dialogue on minority political participation that included best practices from the United States Civil Rights Movement. The resulting event was the first Black European Summit.

Further information on the U.S. Helsinki Commission hearings "The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics" and "Racism in the 21st Century: Understanding Global Challenges and Implementing Solutions" can be found at www.csce.gov. Statistics on Black and minority discrimination in Europe can be found in the "EU-MIDIS at a glance: Introduction to the FRA's EU-wide discrimination survey" <http://fra.europa.eu>.

Overview

The "Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion" took place in Brussels, Belgium at the European Parliament on April 15th and 16th. The historic 2-day Summit brought together political and intellectual minority leaders from the United States and Europe with the goal of developing a network of leaders to exchange information on the roles of Black and ethnic minorities in policymaking. Participants discussed barriers to political participation and strategies to increase opportunities for minorities in the political arena, including developing and supporting policies and initiatives to address racism, discrimination, and inequality via a sustained transatlantic dialogue.

Background

The Black European Summit was convened following two hearings of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), often referred to as the U.S. Helsinki Commission, entitled: "The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics" and "Racism in the 21st Century: Understanding Global Challenges and Implementing Solutions." Among other issues, the hearings discussed the more than seven million people who make up Europe's Black or African descendant populations, and their experiences of racism and discrimination.

A highly visible minority group in Europe, Black Europeans often serve as a barometer for levels of prejudice and equality in European societies. In recent years, Black Europeans have increasingly been the targets of hate crimes and racial profiling, in addition to being impacted by discrimination and existing inequalities in education, housing, employment, and access to public services. Immigration and anti-terrorism policies

Summit Hosts



Harlem Desir

*Member of the European Parliament;
Vice-Chairman of the Socialist Group*



Alcee L. Hastings

*Member of the U.S. House of Representatives;
Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission*



Joe Frans

*President of the United Nations Working Group of
Experts on People of African Descent;
Former Member of the Swedish Parliament*



Claude Moraes

*Member of the European Parliament;
President of the European Parliament
All Party Group on Anti-Racism and Diversity*



Glyn Ford

Member of the European Parliament



Participants

Participants were Black and ethnic minority elected officials and intellectual leaders with a demonstrated commitment to diversity. The group included European Parliamentarians, Members of the United States Congress, local and nationally elected officials, academics, and representatives from international institutions, civil society, the private sector, and media.

The Summit

The “Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion” took place in Brussels, Belgium at the European Parliament from April 15-16, 2009. Over the two days, participants discussed:

- minority political involvement in Europe and the United States;
- the role of minorities in policymaking;
- barriers to minority political participation, and;
- strategies for advancing minority political participation.

Black and ethnic minority political involvement in Europe and the United States

Informed by their own personal experiences and a historical overview of Black European political participation presented by Dr. Allison Blakely, participants discussed minority political involvement in Europe. Europe’s rich history of minority political participation, as well as similarities and differences with the United States were also discussed. Participants expressed concerns about political roles for minorities in the future, especially at national levels. Further discussion and issues raised on this topic included:

- The need for increased venues for Black and minority politicians to meet amongst themselves. This Summit provided many participants with their first opportunity to meet other minority European elected officials. Meetings of this nature assist with the sharing and development of strategies to address common issues faced by minority elected officials. Former UK parliamentarian Bernie Grant’s meeting of U.S. and UK lawmakers more than a decade ago was noted as a past effort similar to the Summit.
- The election of U.S. President Barack Obama was an inspiration to participants and a strong point of comparison, although it was a shared belief that his election in a European country would have been impossible. Even so, participants agreed that President Obama’s legacy would increase minority interest in holding public office for years to come.
- Like President Obama, many participants were the first minority in their respective country to be elected to their position.

- Irrespective of race or ethnicity, laws of the European Union give all EU citizens the right to stand and vote in local, regional and European elections. There are, however, sharp differences in electoral and citizenship laws between EU countries, with some only allowing citizens to vote. In other countries, voting in local and other elections is allowed for non-citizens. In countries where the majority of members of Black populations are not citizens, citizenship can be a barrier to political participation.



- In countries such as France and the United Kingdom, minority involvement in politics has actually been greater at national and regional levels in earlier years. Changes in European relationships with former colonies, a lack of cohesion within current minority groups, and racism and xenophobia were cited as reasons for the decline in recent years. In many cases, the history of minorities in European politics has been virtually unknown.
- Currently, political involvement at the local level is most attainable for minorities. However, increased minority participation is needed at all levels of government, particularly at national levels in order to influence policies and resources which would benefit members of minority communities. The lack of minorities in the United States Senate was cited as an example of the challenges behind winning national elections in the United States, even in the era of Barack Obama's election to the presidency.
- Political appointments were a viable means of increasing diversity in the political arena, but there was a general lack of understanding in minority populations on how selections were made for appointed positions.
- Minorities in political and civil service are also a rarity. The lack of diversity in political staffing within the European Parliament and EU-wide government buildings was presented as an example. Some participants noted they had been mistaken as part of the cleaning crew when entering the buildings, despite their business attire.
- An assessment of the number of minority elected officials and staff in political and civil service positions is needed. It was questioned whether efforts to train, hire, and retain minority staff in parliaments and other government agencies existed. While programs and data collection efforts for women were identified, none were thought to exist for minorities. Efforts such as the United Kingdom's Speaker's Conference were noted and recommended for replication in other countries.
- Movements focused on voting rights, such as in the United States, were viewed as beneficial for increasing minority political involvement. Questions of how to begin similar movements in Europe – especially in countries with small minority populations and where many minorities are not citizens – were raised.

The Role of minority policymakers

Participants discussed the multiple roles of minority policymakers, with most agreeing that they viewed their roles as 1) representing both majority and minority constituents, 2) serving as role models to other minorities interested in policymaking, and 3) leading efforts to implement policies that impact minority communities, especially anti-discrimination laws. Further discussion and issues on this topic raised by participants included:

- Like all political representatives, the role of minority elected officials is to represent the needs of all of their constituents, and not govern solely along racial or ethnic lines.
- Of concern were policymakers from majority groups who did not consistently develop and support initiatives that would benefit both majority and minority constituents. This put minority elected officials in the position of having to champion issues for minorities who were not their constituents.
- President Obama's campaign platform served as a model because it did not overtly focus on race, yet made issues that were of concern to all racial groups (e.g., education and healthcare), a centerpiece. However, participants acknowledged the difficulty of running this type of a campaign in party-based systems that focus on lists as opposed to direct elections.
- Being "solos" - the only person of one's race in their position - led to a sense of pride, but also tremendous responsibility. There is the duty to represent one's race well, but also break down barriers to ensure others could follow in their footsteps. Women participants argued that they had even more responsibilities because, in addition to championing race issues, they also felt the need to support gender mainstreaming issues. The weight of that responsibility was further felt in cases where women were one of few or the only woman in their party.
- As a minority policymaker, most participants believed it was obligatory to have some focus on combating racism and discrimination, whether it meant being asked to take the lead on these issues by their party or making a personal decision to be a voice on the issue. This included implementing anti-discrimination laws, focusing on policies that impacted other areas of minority life such as housing, employment, education, and immigration, and challenging the ways in which political parties recruited and supported minority candidates and elected officials.
- Participants felt a duty to focus on "minority issues" even when they had expertise and interests in other areas, such as environment or trade. This self-imposed duty often proved difficult and stressful to manage, especially when tackling "minority issues" that they did not have the preparation or background to address. Participants widely agreed that this responsibility was typically not shared by majority colleagues.
- Mechanisms to report and address workplace discrimination in the political arena, including for political and government staffers, are lacking. Discrimination impacts not only hiring and promotions, but also mental health and physical well-being that can deter minorities from seeking political careers.



- More opportunities to share and discuss models of how to address “minority issues” are needed. An overview of legal and other strategies employed during and following the United States Civil Rights movement, as well as best practices from Europe, would assist minority policymakers and prevent them from “recreating the wheel”.

Barriers to political participation

Discussions on past, present, and future minority involvement prompted agreement that more minorities were needed in politics at varying levels if the situation of minorities was to improve. A discussion of why more minorities were not involved in politics ensued. Reasons identified included: racism and discrimination, minorities’ lack of knowledge and apathy about the political process, and a lack of political will to diversify political parties. The discussion was informed by a presentation on the EU-MIDIS report on discrimination faced by Black Europeans from Dr. Joanna Goodey of the European Fundamental Rights Agency. Further discussion and issues on this topic raised by participants included:



- Racism and discrimination are barriers to political participation. Black Europeans reported some of the highest levels of discrimination in the EU-MIDIS study (40%), including in the workplace and by law enforcement officials (e.g., racial profiling). These findings mirrored the personal experiences of many of the participants and their minority constituents. Voting, advocacy, and other aspects of civic engagement are negatively impacted by employment and housing discrimination. Implementing anti-discrimination measures was viewed as key to improving minority political participation.
- It was noted that in some European countries, capturing statistical data on race and ethnicity was viewed negatively because of the past use of that data by some regimes for negative purposes. However, participants agreed that this lack of data made it nearly impossible to develop evidence of systemic discrimination or to develop more broad based remedies for institutionalized racism.
- Participants agreed that more minority surveys including Black Europeans would assist with the development of “evidence” or “knowledge” based policies and the support to implement them. Even so, national surveys on discrimination often included Roma and religious minorities, but excluded Black Europeans despite their facing high levels of discrimination. Their omission continued to be rationalized by the facilitators of such surveys due to: perceptions that Black populations were relatively small in comparison to other minority groups in some countries, Black populations were difficult to find to participate in surveys due to their citizenship status, and Black Europeans were sometimes categorized by their ethnic (e.g., Somali) or religious group (e.g., Muslim).



- Instances where minority communities did not work together were cited as serious barriers for some. Therefore, the necessity of building alliances across minority groups was discussed. The example within the United Kingdom of Asians and Blacks working together to increase political representation on their behalf was cited. Participants also made a pledge to work with members of the Roma community.
- Efforts to better educate minorities about the political system (e.g., voting, running for elections, and advocacy) are needed, including for non-citizens – who are able to vote and run for elections in some countries.
- Having access to citizenship was considered key to increased minority political participation. Non-citizens in many countries could not vote or stand for office, especially at the national level, where more minorities are needed. Additionally, laws were increasingly put in place to make obtaining citizenship more difficult.
- Political parties' indifference, ignorance, and/or unwillingness to engage with minority candidates were identified as major obstacles. Minorities have often been brought into parties as a result of quotas or tokenism, as opposed to representing the needs of diverse constituencies. In some cases, quota systems resulted in competition between and within minority groups fighting for one coveted spot.
- Unlike members of the majority, minorities rarely have exposure to political jobs, whether as elected or appointed officials, in advocacy positions, internships, or other areas that would lead to a career in politics. This is especially true in the case of political appointments, where knowledge was lacking of the process.



Strategies for advancing minority political participation

The lack of minorities participating in the political process as elected or appointed officials, voters, advocates, and political staff was identified as an obstacle to securing equal rights and addressing discrimination. Participants agreed that increasing minority political participation at all levels would lead to the necessary changes in their countries for minorities to be represented in their governments and participate fully in their societies. Strategies for doing so included increasing civic education and career opportunities for minorities, implementing anti-discrimination measures, and ensuring access to citizenship for migrants. Further strategies and points raised included:

- Educate European populations about their rich history of diversity and minority political involvement in order to assist with the acceptance of minorities in leadership positions.
- Educate European populations on how discrimination hampers civic participation and violates the fundamental rights of minorities.
- Maintain a focus on bread and butter issues that can impede political participation such as education, poverty, healthcare, and access to citizenship, all of which are exacerbated by discrimination.

- Implement anti-discrimination laws and continue to measure their progress. EU-MIDIS and other measures of discrimination should continue to be utilized to ascertain whether discrimination laws are working, and where future policy efforts should be directed.
- Future measures of discrimination should be certain to include Black populations given reports of high level of discrimination from the community. Additionally, the measures should continue to be taken from the victim's point of view.
- Minority communities should assist in discrimination data collection and tracking efforts. Minorities must be included in the planning, collection, and reporting of data. Minority communities must be taught to identify and report acts of discrimination and follow up with legal remedies when necessary.
- Data collection on minorities, including measures on the number of minorities in elected and appointed positions at local, regional, and national levels. Information on minority political staff should also be collected. Efforts should begin in the EU parliament.
- Civic education efforts for minorities, including non-citizens, need to increase, so that minorities understand their rights and how voting, advocacy, and other political involvement could improve their situations. In some countries, for instance, non-citizens that are residents can vote in local, but not national elections. Even so, the realities of political participation should be explained, including that change may not take place immediately.
- Ensure access to citizenship, such that minorities can vote and run for office. Laws attempting to make obtaining citizenship more difficult should be challenged.
- Work with political parties to develop meaningful and sustainable strategies for incorporating minorities in the party. Strategies that promote "tokenism" and infighting – i.e. reserving one slot for a minority – should be avoided.
- Develop minority employment and training opportunities in the political arena by ensuring that minorities are interviewed for positions, distributing minority resumes to colleagues and parties, sponsoring internships and fellowships, and developing programs and legislation that would create such opportunities. Similar to strategies in the EU Parliament to increase the number of women, strategies to count and increase racial and ethnic diversity should be instituted immediately.
- Increase outreach to, and opportunities for minority youth and community members in policymaking through marketing political employment opportunities in minority communities, including youth in conferences and other events focused on minority political participation, and developing mentorship programs.
- Increase self-organization and other initiatives that promote cohesion, including the development of minority slates, caucuses, and cross-border support networks for minority politicians and political staff. Alliances with other minority groups should be developed and utilized in these endeavors.



- Educate minorities in the political arena on systems to address discrimination in the workplace and create systems where none exist. Counseling and other measures to address mental and physical well-being harmed by discrimination should be included.
- Develop minority politician mentorship programs that pair seasoned elected officials with mid-career, and newly elected officials.
- Develop a clearinghouse of beneficial information for minority policymakers that includes best practices and resources for civic engagement, political career opportunities for minorities, and information on relevant events.
- Continue transatlantic dialogues and exchanges.

Conclusion

At the close of the Summit, participants adopted the Brussels Declaration calling for an increase in minority political participation and detailing strategies for doing so. Participants also agreed to hold future Summits, continue the transatlantic dialogue via social networking and future events, and to identify opportunities to address minority political participation in their own countries.



Brussels Declaration

We, as members of the public, private, and voluntary sectors from Europe and the United States of America convening in Brussels, Belgium from the 15 to 16 of April 2009 for the Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion, draw attention to the need for coordinated strategies to address racism and discrimination;

We recognize the democratic, multi-ethnic and multi-racial nature of our countries' diverse societies;

We reaffirm the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and recalling that all individuals are born equal in dignity and rights;

We remain concerned that the political and legal systems in some of our societies do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity within our societies, which then contributes to the continuation of racism and discrimination;

We recognize that the full access of racial and ethnic minorities to participate in the political sphere and relevant areas of decision making at the levels of national, regional, and locally elected government appropriate to each nation is critical to combating racism and inequality and ensuring our democratic societies;

We therefore note the need for concrete strategies to: increase the representation and influence of racial and ethnic minority policymakers; jointly seek solutions to racial and ethnic minorities increased participation in decision-making in the development and implementation of policy initiatives to address discrimination and inequality; and support opportunities to exchange and share perspectives in these areas through the continuance of a transatlantic dialogue to realize these goals.

We today resolve that we will endeavor to enact initiatives to eradicate racial and ethnic discrimination through:

Continuing a transatlantic dialogue that: includes cultural exchanges between American and European racial and ethnic minority groups, including youth; focuses on the development of opportunities for racial and ethnic minority political leadership and participation in the policymaking process; and fosters the exchange of information on best practices to implement and enforce antidiscrimination measures and achieve racial equality;

Joining forces over the coming months to develop common goals and objectives in each of our decision-making bodies to recognize Europe's Black and racial and ethnic minority populations for their historical and present-day contributions and acknowledge past injustices;

Promoting racial and ethnic minority participation at all levels of national, regional, and local government through the education of civil and political rights, including the legislative process and advocacy of legislative issues relevant to racial and ethnic minority communities, development of targeted professional development and hiring strategies, and increased youth and community outreach;

Reaffirming our continued cooperation and commitment to work with our governments, international institutions, civil society, private sector, and other partners to improve institutions so that they are fully participatory and reflect the democratic principles of equality, justice, and celebration of the strengths of our countries' diversity.

Legislative Initiatives

H. RES. 596

Expressing support for the Black European Summit

111th CONGRESS, 1st Session

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 26, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. RUSH, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the Black European Summit.

Whereas, on April 15-16, 2009, political leaders from the United States and Europe convened in Brussels, Belgium, at the European Parliament for the 'Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Inclusion';

Whereas the historic two-day Summit brought together political and intellectual minority leaders from the United States and Europe to exchange information on the roles of racial and ethnic minority policymakers in developing and supporting policies and initiatives to address racism, discrimination, and inequality;

Whereas Summit participants adopted the 'Brussels Declaration', which states, 'We recognize that the full access of racial and ethnic minorities to participate in the political sphere and relevant areas of decision making at the levels of national, regional, and locally elected government appropriate to each nation is critical to combating racism and inequality and ensuring our democratic societies';

Whereas the 'Brussels Declaration' also states, 'We therefore note the need for concrete strategies to: increase the representation and influence of racial and ethnic minority policymakers; jointly seek solutions to racial and ethnic minorities increased participation in decision-making in the development and implementation of policy initiatives to address discrimination and inequality; and support opportunities to exchange and share perspectives in these areas through the continuance of a transatlantic dialogue to realize these goals.';

Whereas the 'Brussels Declaration' resolves to enact initiatives to eradicate racial and ethnic discrimination through 'Reaffirming our continued cooperation and commitment to work with our governments, international institutions, civil society, private sector, and other partners to improve institutions so that they are fully participatory and reflect the democratic principles of equality, justice, and celebration of the strengths of our countries' diversity'; and

Whereas implementation of the Brussels Declaration will begin to address concerns raised at the United States Helsinki Commission Hearings, 'The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics', held on April 29, 2008, and 'Racism in the 21st Century: Understanding Global Challenges and Implementing Solutions', held on July 16, 2008, that highlighted the lack of inclusion of Black and other minority communities in policymaking, especially related to initiatives to combat discrimination and inequality and counter far-right and anti-migrant political platforms: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

- (1) expresses support for the Black European Summit as an effective forum convened in the spirit of cooperation and partnership for political and intellectual leaders from the European Union and 56 participating states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to address shared challenges and foster collaboration throughout North America and Europe in the development and implementation of policy initiatives to address racial and ethnic discrimination and inequality; and
- (2) urges the United States to continue and expand efforts to partner with the countries of the OSCE on efforts to combat racism, discrimination, inequality, and inclusion.

H. RES. 595

Recognizing persons of African descent in Europe

111th CONGRESS, 1st Session

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 26, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. RUSH, Ms. CLARKE, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing persons of African descent in Europe.

Whereas the 109th Congress passed H . Con. Res . 60 and S. Con. Res . 90, recognizing African descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean, raising awareness of the racism and discrimination faced by those communities, and leading to numerous public and private sector initiatives between the United States and Latin American and Caribbean countries to improve the situation of African descendants;

Whereas the persistence of racism and discrimination in Europe similarly necessitates congressional action to raise awareness and promote public and private sector initiatives to stem this trend;

Whereas the terms 'Afro-European', 'African European', or 'Black European' refers to people of African ancestry or descent born in, citizens of, or living in Europe;

Whereas more than an estimated 7,000,000 individuals of African descent currently live in and have long had a presence in Europe, forming an influential part of the African diaspora;

Whereas the story of Black Europeans remains untold, rendering many of their past and present contributions to the political and social life of Europe invisible or forgotten;

Whereas, unlike more contemporary figures, largely unknown Blacks have made significant contributions to European history and culture, including Spanish poet Juan Latino, Italian Duke Alessandro Medici, French novelist Alexandre Dumas, German scholar Anthony William Amo, French Composer Le Chevalier de St. George, British abolitionist Oludah Equiano, and Russian General and Governor Abram Hannibal, great-grandfather of Russian poet Aleksandr Pushkin;

Whereas the largest estimated populations of Black Europeans can be found in France (approximately 2,500,000), the United Kingdom (approximately 1,500,000), and the Netherlands (approximately 500,000), in addition to sizeable populations in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Russia, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, and Austria;

Whereas the presence of Blacks in Europe can be traced to voluntary and forced migration resulting from the geographical proximity of Europe to Africa and the Middle East, including the transatlantic slave trade, the colonization of Africa and the Caribbean, African and African-American military deployments, the movement of refugees and asylum seekers, and educational and other professional exchanges;

Whereas, although Black Europeans have made significant achievements in and contributions to European society, large numbers have and continue to be more likely than the general population to experience discrimination and be underrepresented in leadership roles in the public and private sector as a result of the color of their skin and ancestry;

Whereas, on April 29, 2008, before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, at a hearing entitled 'The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics', Dr. Philomena Essed stated, 'Probably the only common European experience among many, if not all, Afro-descendants is their exposure to [. . .] racism and systemic discrimination, regardless of country, socio-economic conditions, gender, age, or level of education';

Whereas racism has long been, and continues to be, a problem in Europe;

Whereas the 1997 European Commission opinion poll entitled 'Racism and Xenophobia in Europe' reported a 'worrying level of racism and xenophobia in [European Union] Member States, with nearly 33% of those interviewed openly describing themselves as 'quite racist' or 'very racist';

Whereas the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (EUFRA), formerly the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, found in its 2007 and 2008 annual reports that racial and ethnic minorities were disproportionately experiencing discrimination in housing, education, healthcare, employment, the criminal justice system, and access to political participation;

Whereas the 2009 European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS), the first European Union-wide survey of ethnic minority and immigrant groups' experiences of discrimination and victimization in everyday life in the 27 Member States of the European Union found that persons of African descent experienced higher incidents than most other minority groups of discriminatory treatment, racist crime, and victimization, and lacked an awareness of their rights;

Whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights reported that racist violence and crime or hate crimes are also a continuing problem, with EUFRA in 2008 reporting increases in 8 European Union countries, and Russia's SOVA Center and Human Rights First reporting over 100 racist murders and 100 violent attacks in Russia and Ukraine in 2007 and 2008 and similar trends for 2009, yet in many countries funds to assist victims with legal assistance and financial support while recovering from violent attacks do not exist;

Whereas prejudice and discrimination towards Black Europeans has also been linked to changes in immigration and asylum laws as a result of anti-terrorism initiatives and the growth and mainstreaming of nationalist and anti-immigrant political parties and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinheads, who believe Europe should be a monoracial society or that other races are inferior;

Whereas the Open Society Justice Initiative 2009 report, entitled 'Ethnic Profiling in the European Union', found that police officers in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands routinely use racial profiling, including targeting Blacks, when deciding whom to target for stops, searches, raids, and surveillance;

Whereas Black Europeans encounter everyday racism, including denials that racism exists despite the blatant use of stereotypes and derogatory terms to refer to Blacks in everyday language, the media, and textbooks;

Whereas there have been numerous efforts by the public and private sector to address racial discrimination and inequality in Europe, including the introduction of antidiscrimination and equality laws that include the legal support for special measures or positive (affirmative) action, creation of equality bodies, media campaigns, and efforts to increase minority political participation;

Whereas these efforts also include the April 15-16, 2009, 'Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Participation' held in Brussels and the adoption of the Brussels Declaration calling for increased minority political inclusion;

Whereas these efforts also include the September 9, 2008, official launching of the Black European Women's Council at the European Union headquarters and the September 27-29, 2007, Vienna Declaration of the Black European Women's Congress, which calls for Members of the European Union to enforce and implement laws to eradicate all forms of discrimination, provide anti-racist education and training for personnel working in educational institutions and the civil service, increase political representation, participation, and employment opportunities for Blacks, and address racial health disparities, including by providing cultural competency training to health professionals;

Whereas, despite these efforts, international entities, such as the OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, EUFRA, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Independent Expert on minority issues, and Experts Working Group on People of African Descent, have documented ongoing racism and xenophobia, and racial and ethnic discrimination, and called for an increase in initiatives to combat racism and inequality; and

Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, members of both the public and private sectors have exchanged information on best practices for antidiscrimination measures and racial equality with committed parties in other countries, including recent initiatives such as the 'Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality', also known as the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

(1) encourages the United States and the international community to recognize and honor the historical and present-day contributions of Black Europeans;

(2) recognizes that, as a result of their skin color and ancestry, many Black Europeans have wrongfully experienced injustices in the public and private sector;

(3) calls upon European parliamentarians, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, to engage in efforts to promote racial equality and combat racial discrimination through efforts such as introducing legislation, speaking out in their parliaments against racism, increasing the political participation of racial minorities, and working with Black European and other minority communities to develop relevant policies;

(4) urges European governments and members of civil society and the private sector, in consultation with Black European communities, to develop and implement initiatives to combat racial discrimination and promote racial equality in Europe, by--

(A) drafting and implementing antidiscrimination, special measures, hate crimes, migration and integration, and other laws and policies to address discrimination and disparities and promote equality, noting the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Experts Working Group on People of African Descent (WGPAD), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (EUFRA), the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism and Independent Expert on minority issues, the OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, and the Black European Women's Council;

(B) promoting and funding research, including the collection of national census data on Black Europeans and their inclusion in the annual reports of the EUFRA;

(C) providing technical support, training, and funding to Black European civil society groups working to combat racism, discrimination, and inequality, and uphold basic human rights in Europe;

(D) introducing national measures to counter stereotypical images of persons of African descent, by revising textbooks, increasing efforts to include Black Europeans in history and heritage institutions, and remembering victims of colonialism, slavery and other atrocities;

(E) developing or increasing financial support for funds to assist victims of hate crimes with legal assistance and compensation when incapacitated due to physical or emotional injuries;

(F) developing specific initiatives that address the special concerns of Black European women and youth;

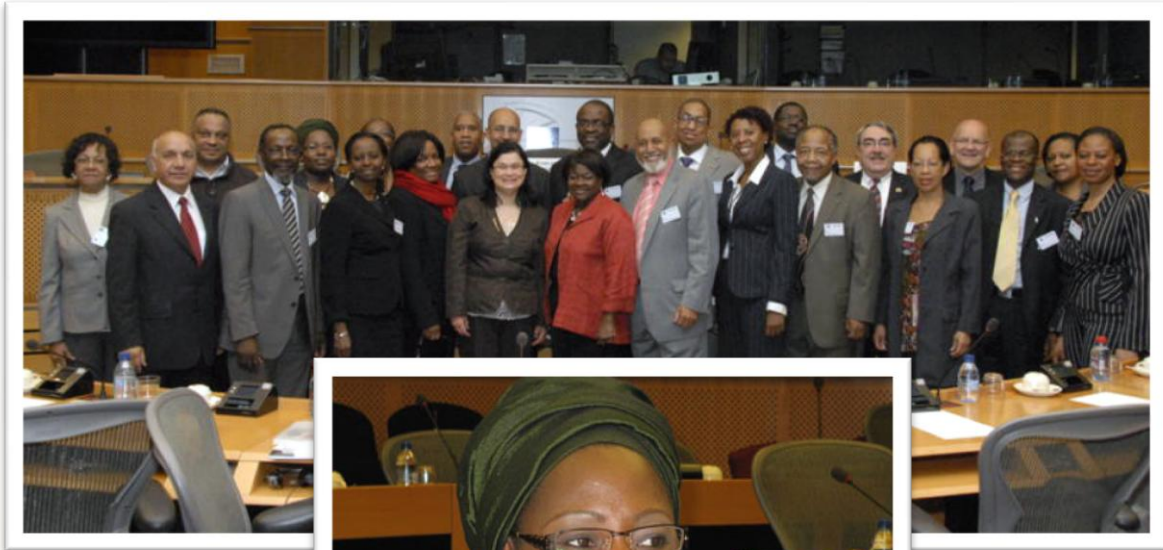
(G) actively promoting racial and ethnic minority participation at all levels of national, regional, and local government through the education of civil and political rights, including the legislative process and advocacy of legislative issues relevant to racial and ethnic minority communities, development of targeted professional development and hiring strategies, increased youth and community outreach, and self-organization and other empowerment initiatives; and

(H) recruiting, training, and hiring Black Europeans for professional positions in support of these initiatives; and

(5) urges the Secretary of State to--

(A) provide technical assistance and other support for European governments and members of the civil society and private sector to fulfill the initiatives outlined above; and

(B) increase support for the WGPAD.



Cooperating Partners



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