



Racism and its impact on young people

call for a renewed youth
commitment



YOUTH
FORUM
JEUNESSE

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Racism, xenophobia and discrimination continue to be serious problems in all parts of Europe today. They are often manifested through the discriminatory treatment of minorities and migrants in education, employment, housing and access to health care. Racism may also be compounded by multiple forms of discrimination when members of ethnic and religious minorities become victims of discrimination on additional grounds such as their gender, disability, age or sexual orientation.

While patterns of discrimination and intolerance continue, there are also reports about violent hate crimes against minorities. Such incidents include crimes related to racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsism, Islamophobia and homophobia. Black Africans have been stabbed or beaten to death; Roma groups targeted in mob violence; Jews physically attacked; synagogues and cemeteries vandalised; Muslims have been assaulted, and their mosques and Islamic schools damaged; gay and lesbian demonstrators and persons with disabilities have also been targets of hate crimes and violent attacks.

Physical attacks on individuals from minority groups are often perpetrated in communities where extremists have spread hate propaganda. I have personally seen examples of how minor incidents under such conditions can ignite mob tendencies against, for instance, Roma communities. The long-term result is continued discrimination, inter-communal tensions and segregation.

These are situations in which politicians and other opinion leaders as well as the society at large must stand up and defend democratic values and human rights for everyone. Youth organisations can make a real difference. A vibrant civil society could provide a “vaccination” against racism.

The European Youth Forum has taken up the challenge and this report serves a multiple purpose. Not only it documents manifestations of racism affecting young people but it sets out an agenda for youth organisations to fight racism.

Through awareness raising and inclusiveness in their activities, youth organisations strive towards a democratic way of life without discrimination and violence. They can also empower young people from minority communities by informing them of

their rights and offering them a platform for participation. Peer support to young victims of violence is yet another way to act against racism.

I hope that this report reaches all the young people who need it and that its message is widely heard and responded to. National governments and international organisations bear a particular responsibility for creating an enabling environment for youth organisations to act. Alternatives to extremism must be supported.

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THE EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM'S COMMITMENT

Common occurrences of racism, discrimination, and intolerance severely limit the fundamental rights and freedoms of young people in society, including their freedom of expression, their freedom of association, their freedom of thought, religion and belief, their right to education, their right to attain the highest standard of physical and mental health, their right to decent employment, their right to social protection and their autonomy.

Therefore, the YFJ sees that fighting against and raising the awareness on these phenomena are crucial to achieving a better life for European young people. To this aim, the YFJ has been undertaking efforts in key policy areas such as anti-discrimination, employment, education and health aiming at ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental rights by all young people in Europe¹.

The YFJ is particularly concerned with discrimination based on age, which severely affects young people in areas such as employment and education and leading to high youth unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation.

Age discrimination is often founded on stereotypes, prejudices or inaccurate perceptions of young people within the European society²: these are the reasons why employers often colour the competence of a young candidate by the age or why a high percentage of Europeans still feel uncomfortable to have a young person occupying a high political position³.

Furthermore, the combination of being young along with possessing other “minority” or discrimination-targeting factors makes achieving autonomy, freedom, and general well-being difficult for youth. Indeed, multiple, intersected and compound discrimination represent a burden for many young people in Europe, especially those from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups such as young people from ethnic or religious minorities, young migrants, young lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and queers, young women and young people with disability⁴.

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1 See 0183-06 Policy Paper on Equality and Diversity (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/human_rights/0183-06.pdf), 0685-07 Policy Paper on Achieving Equality between Women and Men (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/human_rights/0685-07_GEquality_final.pdf), 0475-08 Opinion Paper on Multiple Discrimination, 0450-08 Action Plan on Equality, 0813_07 Policy Paper on Youth Employment (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/social_conditions/0813-07_Employment_FINAL.pdf), 0098-08 Policy Paper on the European Social Model (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/social_conditions/0098-08_PP_ESM-FINAL.pdf), 1069-07 Policy Paper on Youth and Migration (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/human_rights/1069-07_Migration_FINAL.pdf), 0741-08 Policy Paper on health and well-being of young people, 0007-08 Policy Paper on Global Education (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/learner-centred_education/0007-08_GE-FINAL.pdf), 0052_08 Policy Paper on Early Education Leavers , 0716-05 Policy Paper on Recognition of non-formal education (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/learner-centred_education/0716-05.pdf), 0009-08 Policy Paper on quality standards for non-formal education (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/learner-centred_education/0009-08_NFE_FINAL.pdf), 0052-05 Policy Paper on youth autonomy (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/youth_policy/0052-04FINAL.pdf).

2 See YFJ Policy Paper on Equality and Diversity (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/human_rights/0183-06.pdf), 0022-08 YFJ comments to the EC consultation to combat discrimination outside the field of employment.

3 See Eurobarometer 296 Discrimination in the European Union: perceptions, experiences and attitudes, July 2008 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_296_en.pdf

4 See 0475-08 YFJ Opinion Paper on Multiple Discrimination as it affects the lives of young people, 0685-07 YFJ Policy Paper on Equality between Women and Men (http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/human_rights/0685-07_GEquality_final.pdf).

The YFJ sees the connection between the mechanisms on which age discrimination is based and those from which other forms of discrimination stem out. The YFJ therefore acknowledges the need to adopt a comprehensive strategy in order to fight against racism, all forms of discrimination (including age discrimination), and other forms of intolerance, including both actions aiming at fighting against discrimination and actions aiming at raising the awareness and promoting equality⁵. This stems out from the principles of indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, according to which human rights and fundamental freedoms should be considered as a whole set of principles⁶ and from the conviction that legislative measures aiming at fighting against discrimination and racism are necessary but not sufficient in reaching de facto equality for all young people.

This publication is a part of the YFJ outreach for positive action, seeking to provide detailed information about the problems and barriers which young people must face in today's European society, which is still sadly far from equality. It aims at both raising awareness on discrimination and racism and their impact on the lives of young people in present-day Europe and suggesting concrete possibilities for future actions in these fields, highlighting in particular the crucial value of the work undertaken by youth organisations in fighting against racism, discrimination and inequalities.

This report aims at presenting the issues of racism and discrimination from different viewpoints and in different areas of life, in order to cover many of the thoughts and experiences of European youth today, and to avoid any kind of one-sidedness. It has been made possible thanks to the efforts of many. The YFJ warmly welcomes the contributions from diverse youth organisations, civil society organizations as well as institutions representing diverse perspectives and areas of expertise and believes that collective actions and cooperation along different actors are crucial to effectively tackle racism, discrimination and other forms of intolerance.

This report is divided into three chapters. The first one dealing with "**Key Areas of Life**," looks at the effects of racism and discrimination in specific areas such as education, health and social services. Secondly, "**Specific Forms of Racism**," goes in-depth with certain grounds on which discrimination and racism are based such as islamophobia, anti-Semitism and multiple discrimination. The last chapter, "**Future Perspectives**," contains perspectives from different European institutions, including the European Union, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the Council of Europe regarding the subject of youth and racism. Eventually, conclusions and key request from the YFJ are put forward.

⁵ See 0450-08 YFJ Action Plan on Equality.

⁶ See the Vienna Declaration adopted in the Framework of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993.

EDITORIAL

By Bettina Schwarzmayr

President of the European Youth Forum

On 10 December 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, opening with the famous lines, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights". Yet can we genuinely say that now – 60 years later – is there really respect for the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as a foundation for freedom, justice and peace?

While there has surely been social progress and better standards of living have been achieved, we are still far from the freedom from fear, which the preamble talks about. Fear is the true barrier between people and nations and sadly fuel for racism and xenophobia.

Through protests and struggles, on the streets and in the courts, civil disobedience or through innumerable campaigns, many courageous women and men have tried to narrow the gap between the promises of these ideals and the reality of their times. Yet, inhumane treatment, modern slavery, discrimination in schools and in the work place, and integration policies that permanently put pressure on the already oppressed and give the impression that migrants are just not good enough, are, despite everything, a dismal reality for many people.

Where does all this hostility come from? Europe is home to some of the richest countries in the world and still there is racial polarisation and

an almost unbroken rise of the extreme right. Politicians too often resort to stereotypes or amplify the negative to the point of distorting reality, falling short of providing solutions through which all can progress in their lives. Politicians may exploit anger and fear to divide electorates along racial lines, or to make up for their own failings. Fading welfare policies may have, for many years, worsened the situation and widened the gap between those with access to resources and opportunities, and those left excluded.

To condemn these trends without understanding their roots would only serve to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between races.

Despite the evident economic progress in Europe over recent decades, better social cohesion has not been delivered: post-World War II prosperity has not countered hostility and racism. Many middle and lower class Europeans don't feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race. As far as post-war generations are concerned, they often feel that no one has handed anything to them 'on a plate' - they've built up their wealth from scratch. Many have worked hard all their lives, many times only to see their jobs move to other continents or be replaced by modern technology; even their pensions have evaporated after a lifetime of labour. They are anxious about their futures, and feel the dreams they hold for themselves and their families are slipping away; in an era of insecure wage policies, global competition and global financial crisis, hostility towards others still occurs to many as the easiest way out of their struggles.

Young people - who are more likely to have dubious work contracts, be unemployed, or be highly indebted due to student loans - face such fears while society expects them to settle down and contribute to the prosperity of their countries. This pressure is enormous and if their efforts do not pay off, populist answers are often welcomed. "Foreigners" then serve as a simple target for all problems and fears: yet the true frontlines are not between ethnic lines, but remain between those with opportunities and resources and those who do not have access to them. The factors for these disparities relate to the distribution of wealth and power, not to skin colour. Economic policies that favour the few over the many should make this integral character of European societies obvious.

As policy makers and members of civil society, we need to take these fears seriously - when the public is told that their fears about crime in urban neighbourhoods are somehow prejudiced, resentment builds over time. Ignoring and/or manipulating fears has far too often shaped the political landscape in history. Similarly it does not help to dismiss legitimate discussions of racial injustice and inequality as mere political correctness or reverse racism: intellectual dishonesty self-evidently also blocks the path to understanding.

We need to make urgent investments in better health care, better schools and better jobs; we need to enforce civil rights laws and ensure fairness in our criminal justice systems; it is high time to provide this generation with ladders of opportunity that were unavailable to previous generations. Such investments will eventually be to the benefit of our entire societies and it might help us to rise above divisive, conflicting, and cynical politics.

Even for the people who do succeed, questions of race and racism continue to define their

worldview in fundamental ways: the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor have the anger and the bitterness. Those feelings and memories need to be treated equally serious and with respect. Glass ceilings prevail almost everywhere where power and money lies. We need to break the cycle of those in power merely reproducing their power.

The world has not only changed economically. Globalisation has brought migration streams from further away than neighbouring regions, which is a particularly new phenomenon for countries without a colonial history. This has challenged the openness of every society and many individuals. Clothing styles that were only known through books or TV documentaries now appear in local neighbourhoods; religions that we only read about, exotic food that seems alienating - all are becoming more prevalent in our everyday lives. These influences are also affecting our patterns of consumption, our behaviour and our experiences.

These social developments show the fluidity of culture as a set of values and norms. They also point to the multiplicity of our own identities. As youth organisations we can help young people to navigate these often-conflicting traditions and values. We need to enable young people to find a way between feeling comfortable with their initial cultural roots and these new influences, no matter if we are introduced to them by moving to another country or by new people joining the neighbourhood.

Often widening cultural influences are seen as a threat to tradition and customs, but inclusive and open youth organisations can offer a perspective of opportunity. We have to empower young people to be confident and daring but also capable to make positive choices, to enable them to recognise and

realise all those new options. The empowering role that youth organisations can play is also about enabling and showing young people how they can engage in society, become active citizens and to recognise the validity of their role in the community and for the society.

As long as people are scared and feel the appearance of other cultural traditions in their immediate environment as a threat to their own culture, youth organisations have the responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. We need to support a transcultural learning where the understanding of “the other” is complimented by the understanding of one’s own culture; where the development of a common learning practice and living strategy

is wanted and stipulated. Transcultural learning must aim at the development of competences that enable people with different cultural backgrounds to find solutions on the local to the global level when living with each other; that enable the preservation of one’s own cultural experiences and rituals as well as the further development of one’s own cultural identity to find new strategies for living together. Transculturalism must denounce cultural separatism and fundamentalism as well as any kind of global mono-culturalism.

We all have different stories but share common hopes – a better future for us and our families, living a life in dignity and without fears. Let’s work together to get there.

RACISM, DISCRIMINATION, INTOLERANCES: TODAY’S EFFECT ON YOUTH

*By Marco Perolini,
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Racism includes a wide range of phenomena occurring in different areas of life such as education, health, employment, access to good and services, social services etc. The modalities through which racism develops and the consequences it entails can differ according to specific geographical, social and cultural contexts.

According to the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice⁷,

“Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviour,

⁷ Article 2.2 of the Declaration, adopted by General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its twentieth session, on 27 November 1978 http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_prejud.htm

structural arrangements and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable; it is reflected in discriminatory provisions in legislation or regulations and discriminatory practices as well as in anti-social beliefs and acts; it hinders the development of its victims, perverts those who practise it, divides nations internally, impedes international co-operation and gives rise to political tensions between peoples; it is contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, consequently, seriously disturbs international peace and security”.

Racial discrimination⁸ is a particular form of discrimination and can be considered as

⁸ According to the International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1965, “Racial discrimination shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”

a direct consequence of racism or a specific way through which racism manifests itself. Protection against racial discrimination is provided by international, regional and national human rights instruments and legislation⁹, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) and the European Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (2000)¹⁰.

Discrimination, racism and other forms of intolerance, although different phenomena, are often based on the same assumptions and still represent a burden on the lives of young people in present-day Europe. As outlined throughout this report, stereotypes and prejudices are often the basis on which young people are discriminated against or experience racism, bullying, intolerance, hate speeches and hate violence.

Racism, intolerance and discrimination, which includes racial discrimination but also discrimination based on age, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or beliefs, economic status and/or the intersection of these grounds lead to the violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of young people. Freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to education, the right to attain the highest standard of physical and

mental health and the right to decent work are some of the rights and freedoms which are jeopardized by discrimination against youth.

Responses to tackle racism might vary according to governmental policies, national legislation and practices developed by civil society organisations in different countries.

Quantitative and qualitative data on racism, discrimination and other forms of intolerance are often missing or incomplete because of the lack of comprehensive legislation to fight against discrimination and racism, ineffective or inexistent measures to tackle racist crimes, lack of equality bodies at the national levels or inefficient functioning, insufficient funds for research or lack of data collection mechanisms on racist violence and crimes.

For instance, only a few European countries have implemented a comprehensive mechanism aiming at collecting data on racist violence and crimes¹¹. Similarly, only a few countries are establishing Single Equality Bodies at the National Level, which collect and report on all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, national practices in the collection of population statistics on ethnic origin or other variables, which might be useful to understand the impact of racism and discrimination on specific groups, vary tremendously. In some European Member States, gathering data on ethnic origin is even prohibited by law or is a very controversial practice¹². This often hinders the possibility to compare data available in different countries or to draw conclusions on European trends.

⁹ Other relevant instruments include : the UN Convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families (1990) <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/cmw.pdf>, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (950) <http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/D5CC24A7-DC13-4318-B457-5C9014916D7A/0/EnglishAnglais.pdf> and Protocol 12 to the aforementioned Convention (2000) <http://www.humanrights.coe.int/Prot12/Protocol%2012%20and%20Exp%20Rep.htm>

¹⁰ Directive 2000/43/EC. Under article 2, this Directive provides protection against direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment and instruction to discriminate. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/legisl/2000_43_en.pdf

¹¹ More specifically United Kingdom, Sweden and Finland, according to the 2008 Annual Report of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union. Pag.31. http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/ar08/ar08_en.pdf

¹² For further information, see the 2008 Annual Report of the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union.

AGE-BASED DISCRIMINATION: A HEAVY IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE¹³

The European Commission undertook a survey on discrimination in the European Union in the first half of 2008. Some important findings on age-based discrimination both in terms of experiences and perceptions were highlighted. *In particular, 42% of the respondents identified discrimination on the ground of age as widespread. Discrimination based on ethnic origin was considered to be widespread by 62% of the respondents*

Considering data on experiences, age-based discrimination is the most widespread form of discrimination experienced or witnessed by the respondents. Indeed, *15% of respondents claimed having witnessed or having been victims of discrimination during the past 12 months. 6% claimed having been victim of discrimination based on age, compared to 3% based on sex, 2% based on ethnic origin, 2% on religion, 2% on disability and 1% on sexual orientation.*

Figures vary considerably at the national level; age-based discrimination is as twice as widespread at the national level in Czech Republic or Austria, where 12% and 11 % of respondents affirmed having being victim of this form of discrimination, compared to 6% at the European level.

Age and ethnic origin are the grounds which more likely create discomfort when speaking in terms of a political leader. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of comfort if a person below 30 is elected at the highest political post at the national level; the average level of comfort in the EU is 6.4 out of 10. The

same average level of comfort was founded in case of a person from an ethnic minority occupying that post.

RACISM IN KEY AREAS OF LIFE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Despite today's youth being the most educated generation ever, young people face extreme difficulties in the field of **employment**. Indeed, they are more likely to be working on short-term and informal contracts, with low pay, and with little or no social protection. In the European Union, young people represent 38.5% of the total unemployed population; 4.6 million people aged between 15 and 24 do not have a job. The situation is even worse in South East Europe and Eastern Europe¹⁴.

The intersection between age and ethnic origin produces severe consequences for young people in the field of employment. For example the unemployment rate in Britain for young black people is 35% compared to 13% of young white men and compared to 5,2% of the entire population.¹⁵ Evidence of discrimination against youth of migrant or ethnic minority origin is documented in many other European countries including Sweden, France, Austria, Italy, Czech Republic and Hungary¹⁶

Discrimination and racism experienced by young people in the field of **education** are also worrying phenomena, taking place in a wide variety of forms.

¹⁴ For more information see the YFJ Policy Paper on Youth Employment adopted in May 2008 by the YFJ Council of Members http://www.youthforum.org/Downloads/policy_docs/social_conditions/0813-07_Employment_FINAL.pdf

¹⁵ Colin Hann, « Young ethnic minority men in Britain » in « Re-thinking identity. The challenge of diversity », Katherine E. Zappone, 2003. For more information see also the YFJ Opinion Paper "The impact of multiple discrimination on the lives of young people" adopted in June 2008

¹⁶ See chapter 4.1.4.2 of the 2008 Annual Report of the Fundamental Rights Agency http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/ar08/ar08_en.pdf

¹³ You can find a full version of this report on: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_263_en.pdf

Barriers to access education can include discriminatory enrolment, long distance to schools, fear of disclosing the non-legal status of residence, segregation, costs, language, etc. These barriers affect in particular Roma youth, youth of migrant or ethnic minority background and youth with fewer economic opportunities.

Young people of ethnic minority or migrant origin¹⁷ and from parents who are low-educated or have a low socio-economic status are more likely to leave school earlier and are therefore more exposed to the negative consequences associated with early school leaving such as unemployment, crime, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide etc.¹⁸

¹⁷ For example according to a research undertaken by Charles Westin in 2003, the drop-out rate for second-generation migrant youth is one third in Sweden, considerably higher rate than that for Swedish youth in general

¹⁸ For more information see the YFJ Policy Paper on Early Education Leaving adopted by the General Assembly in November 2008.

Bullying and racist incidents at school are also widespread and severely affect the lives of young people. Data on discriminatory and racist behaviour in the field of education from countries which had put in place monitoring systems, such as the Netherlands, are worrying¹⁹.

Similarly, according to a cross-national study carried out in 2001 on 10 to 14 year-old pupils, 12,2% of respondents in England, 13,9% in the Netherlands and 10% in Norway reported having been bullied more than just once or twice in the previous six months. Bullying has extremely negative consequences on the mental health of young people, including depression, mental ill-health and suicide²⁰.

¹⁹ For further information see the 2008 Annual Report of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, pag.70-71

²⁰ See 0022-08, The European Youth Forum's contribution to the EC consultation on the legislative initiative to combat discrimination outside the field of employment and occupation, Chapter on Education

THE ROLE OF YOUTH ORGANISATIONS IN FIGHTING RACISM

*By Jovana Bazerkovska
European Youth Forum Bureau Member*

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Despite the fact that racism might not today be as visible as it used to be, it is a fact that it still exists and that it has become a phenomena deeply embedded in the cultures, lifestyles and beliefs of individuals and groups. Such a situation makes the creation of strategies to end both the visible and invisible manifestations of racism a necessity, and indeed, the responsibility of youth organisations - as for any other social, economic or political actors working to bring positive change to the societies in which we live.

This report highlights the ways in which young people are affected by racism, in all its forms. The decision to put the report together was taken precisely in order to underline the need for youth organisations to actively engage in fighting racism; alongside this, the report provides concrete examples of how youth organisations are working or can work against the phenomena, in the various fields in which they engage.

In general, one can argue that there are two levels at which youth organisations can address the question of racism, both of which are interlinked and interdependent. The first level is at the internal level of the youth organisation itself, while the second is external, referring to the target groups and audiences with which the organisation works.

In this respect, working to prevent racism from occurring starts from a reflection upon whether it is present in a given society, and how it manifests itself in that society's smallest units - i.e. the workplace, the classroom, in civic organisations - all of which represent the diversity of that society. Each internal assessment by these units is thus a fundamental step with which to begin, as such reflection helps to raise awareness and improve relevant information on the situation in one's own constituency first. Such reflection can, furthermore, provide a youth organisation with greater credibility in its work on the issue, rendering it more self-critical and, most importantly, not hypocritical; while at the same time it can help an organisation to begin to better recognize racism in other organisations or structures.



There are various aspects of a youth organisation's activity and working culture that can be examined in order to ascertain its efforts to combat racism: these can range from equal opportunities policies; inclusion strategies; its accessibility to and outreach work with different ethnic groups and minorities; its internal discursive practices and use of language; to the sensitivity of its leadership, staff and volunteers to the issue of racism. The purpose of this self-examination is that

an organisation takes responsibility to ensure that there are no structural or social barriers in place that may prevent, limit or exclude young people from participation, irrespective of their ethnic or cultural background, for example. Achieving this may require extensive education and training, or the implementation of specific measures to which an organisation must be ready to commit itself. But in recognition of the fact that equal participation for every young woman and man, regardless of their background, serves as a starting point in tackling phenomena such as racism, these moves are but a small effort in a bigger picture, as it is essential for young people to have the space to work together to change society, while getting to know each other and their backgrounds better.

The second aspect mentioned refers to the external work of a youth organisation, and thus the role it has in fighting racism beyond its own structures. This involves an extensive but open list of actions, and always depends upon the way an organisation works and strives to create new methodologies to draw attention to the different issues with which it is concerned. It must be stated, however, that in general terms here, the role of youth organisations is to ensure young people are aware of the impact racism has on their own lives, or those of others - through the use, for example, of campaigns, written materials, and non-formal education. At the same time, it is the role of youth organisations to make young people aware of their rights and responsibilities, and the difference that they are able to make by defending and meeting these, in the various aspects of their daily lives. In addition, it is the role of youth organisation to raise awareness and speak out against racism, addressing clear demands to decision or law makers to ensure that the well-being of young people is

safeguarded and that their opportunities are not unduly limited by the societies in which they live.

In conclusion, one can say that youth organisations are important actors in focusing debates and progressively trying to shape the way society challenges racism. Youth organisations must keep their commitments to combating this phenomena, especially

in a context of growing nationalism and xenophobia in Europe. There are no easy battles, and this is no exception, but youth organisations have to be confident that the role they play on behalf of the young people they represent is prodigious, and that they, along with young people at large, are the authors of positive social change: change that begins with themselves.

TACKLING RACISM: A YOUTH OBLIGATION

By Tiago Soares

Portuguese Youth Council - CNJ

The recent history of Europe has proved that the common phrase used after the holocaust "never again" is far from been forgettable. The conflicts that occurred in the Balkans in the '90s, the recent results of the Austrian elections and the common attacks of skinheads in Russia obliged the European Union to re-examine its past and, above all, prepare its future.

It is part of a common understanding that in a period of a difficult economic situation, there is a constant danger of the increase of Nationalism, fascism and other totalitarian ideas. The current global economic situation and the events which lead up to this, especially the outcomes of 9/11 and the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, presented a new dimension of relations between people in our societies.

Talking about racism implies respecting European history; it is well-known that in the past, racist regimes had huge negative effects on Europe and caused the death of millions of people.

Speaking about racism in present-day society is speaking about more than a current trend,

more than the rejection of differences, more than the simplistic approach of wrong or right. Looking to the global village, if Abraham Lincoln wakes up from his long sleep he could not believe that the man he released in the end of slavery is now elected President of the United States.

Some time ago, American society watched the black population dying during the Katrina hurricane; this is the same society that supported Barak Obama's election for President. Our global village has two different measures dealing with racism: those from ethnic minorities who are rich or share most characteristics with mainstream society are accepted, yet those who are poor or members of other religions are not included in this mainstreaming and are socially excluded.

In my opinion, the youth action against racism should take into consideration that the primary basis of racism is ignorance and lack of education. Education for a global, multi-cultural understanding can reach the objectives of dealing with diversity in daily life. Increasing acceptance of diversity through the empowerment of the minorities, fighting against stereotypes and prejudices, and through the increased participation of minorities at the decision making level could change the realities of the victims of racism.

Through this process, we could change not only the life of victims, but also society's approach to humanity.

An important lesson can be learned from the rebuilding of South African society after the apartheid system. Desmond Tutu, the archbishop of Cape Town, used the principles of *ubuntu* to rebuild communities. *Ubuntu* is a old African principle that means "humanity"; those who treat others wrongly are hurting their own humanity. By this principle, exercising racism against others is committing racism against yourself; hurting others is therefore hurting yourself.

This Europe will face the difficulties without calling in question the patrimony that have

build after the Second World War. New times are arriving and we hope that Humanity will be based on a common understanding in the upcoming moments. For youth organizations, combating racism means struggling for human rights based on a common ground of humanity.

Value, opportunities, and inclusion are the principles that youth organizations can emphasize. The involvement of all actors in this struggle is crucial for the developing a future inclusive and diverse society. Youth organizations should be the main players in the evolving process. Eradicating racism from society will be the main goal and one of our big commitments.

ENSURING PROTECTION AGAINST RACISM TODAY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

By Pascal Charhon

Director of the European Network Against Racism - ENAR

Racism today is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. The expressions of racism have evolved over the last decades and have taken many different forms, including through ethnic and religious discrimination. . Due to the impact of legislation and the evolution of mainstream attitudes, "directly" racist discourse appears to be diminishing, and its present-day existence is restricted to platforms of extremist groups. However, new subtle and insidious forms of discrimination are spreading throughout society. This new prejudice has moved past the belief that 'race' is the primary factor defining human traits and abilities, but is still dangerous and destructive. Racism now

exists in less overt prejudicial behaviour. This can be more difficult to recognise, yet the effects of its pervasive and persistent nature are often more severe than previous types of racism.

It is now recognised that "race" is a social construct – the articulation of "scientific" racist discourse in the 19th century, in a context of colonialism and slavery, only further entrenched ideas of inferiority and superiority based on colour. Racism thus does not concern objective measurable physical and social characteristics, but the relationships of domination and subordination in different social and historical contexts. Over the last 20 years, racism has moved from its previous "scientific" or "biological" basis towards a culturally-based concept of racism. According to this "new racism", minorities are not biologically inferior, but they are seen as culturally different, and cultural difference thus becomes the scapegoat for others'

exclusion and poverty. The reality of cultural differences is used as the basis for legitimising the marginalization and exclusion of “others” and the community to which they belong. Individuals are discriminated against not only because of their origin or skin colour, but also due to the majority’s perception of “culture”, beliefs or identity, regardless of the individual’s nationality.²¹

Minorities within minorities are particularly vulnerable groups. Minority ethnic groups are not homogenous groups; as each individual has an age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and belief system and/or religion, and some may have a disability, discrimination may be experienced on multiple grounds. ‘Multiple discrimination’ occurs when someone experiences discrimination on more than one ground, for instance, by being treated less favourably not only because of age but also because of disability. Multiple discrimination is a reality which both exacerbates discrimination faced by vulnerable groups and leads to new and emerging forms of discrimination.

PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AT EU LEVEL

Despite the European Union’s historic concern with the prevention of discrimination based on nationality and sex, it has only recently begun to take the fight against racism seriously. In 1997, Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty gave the European Union a legal base on which to develop ‘appropriate measures to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’. Using these powers, the European Union adopted the Race Equality Directive²²

in June 2000 (and soon after the Employment Equality Directive²³).

The Race Equality Directive gives protection against discrimination in employment and access to a range of goods and services, including social protection, health, social security and education. It clarifies definitions of important terms such as direct and indirect discrimination²⁴, harassment²⁵ and victimisation²⁶. In addition, it allows for positive action measures, the sharing of the burden of proof and the establishment of equality bodies. It also obliges member states to encourage dialogue with non-governmental organisations which have a legitimate interest in contributing to the fight against racial discrimination.

The European Union has played a key role in the development of a common anti-discrimination agenda, and the EU equality directives have greatly advanced the fight against discrimination in Europe. However, racism and discrimination are persistently experienced by ethnic and religious minorities across the European Union. In many cases, anti-discrimination legislation is not properly or consistently transposed and implemented throughout the EU member states. Indeed, in July 2007, the European Commission took

²¹ ‘Tackling the roots of racism’, Reena Bhavnani, Heidi Safia Mirza and Veena Meeto; and Altay Manço, IRFAM.

²² Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000

²³ Council Directive 2000/78 EC of 27 November 2000

²⁴ Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their racial or ethnic origin. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a racial or ethnic origin at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

²⁵ Harassment shall be deemed to be discrimination when an unwanted conduct related to racial or ethnic origin takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

²⁶ Victimisation is when someone is treated badly or differently for having made a complaint about discrimination or supporting a colleague who has made a complaint.

action against 14 member states²⁷ for their failure to properly transpose the Race Equality Directive. This action by the EC confirmed ENAR's analysis regarding the significant gaps in laws of many member states which hinder protection against racism and racial discrimination.

The experiences of ENAR members have been very mixed in terms of transposition and implementation of the Directive, though there has been some level of disappointment in all contexts. There is still a lot of work to be done – assisting domestic courts to fully use the provisions on the shift in the burden of proof, enabling NGOs to undertake their key role in supporting the victim, and increasing the use of positive action to address inequalities. Significant attention is needed so that victims of discrimination can access justice, and for racism in Europe to be monitored, and for the impact of current anti-discrimination laws to be measured. Sanctions for unlawful discrimination and harassment rarely, if ever, meet the standard of “effective, proportionate and dissuasive”²⁸.

On 2 July 2008, the European Commission proposed to extend current non-discrimination legislation to all areas of life, in order to achieve full legal equality regardless of a person's age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and disability. This proposal is a real opportunity to achieve effective protection for Europe's numerous and multi-faceted victims of discrimination. Indeed, not all grounds of discrimination are equally protected under law; at the European or national level, significant gaps in protection still remain. If

you are Muslim, disabled, old, or lesbian, you can still be discriminated against in education or refused access to healthcare or housing. For people with multilayered identities such as a gay Christian wanting a good education or a disabled Black woman, the gaps are even wider.

The Commission's proposed directive is a vital step towards remedying such gaps in legal protection. This new directive is crucial because it provides for real protection where there is clear evidence of discrimination happening, including housing, access to goods and services and education. Nevertheless, some gaps remain, including the exclusion of nationality-based discrimination, or in matters related to immigration, which will need to be addressed in the future.

SOME GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The Latvian Centre for Human Rights held training seminars for judges and other judicial individuals during 2006 on the application of the EU Racial Equality and Employment Framework Directives.

In Ireland, the annual Anti-Racism in the Workplace Week is an opportunity for organisations and enterprises to take initiative to celebrate cultural diversity in the workplace and to lay foundations for a workplace that is intercultural.

In the UK, where the 2006 Racial and Religious Hatred Act makes incitement a criminal offence, three Crown Prosecution Services pilots were launched in 2006 in order to tackle racially-motivated offences and racist incidents as well as to establish better community relations.

27 Spain, Sweden, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia.

28 Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Article 15.

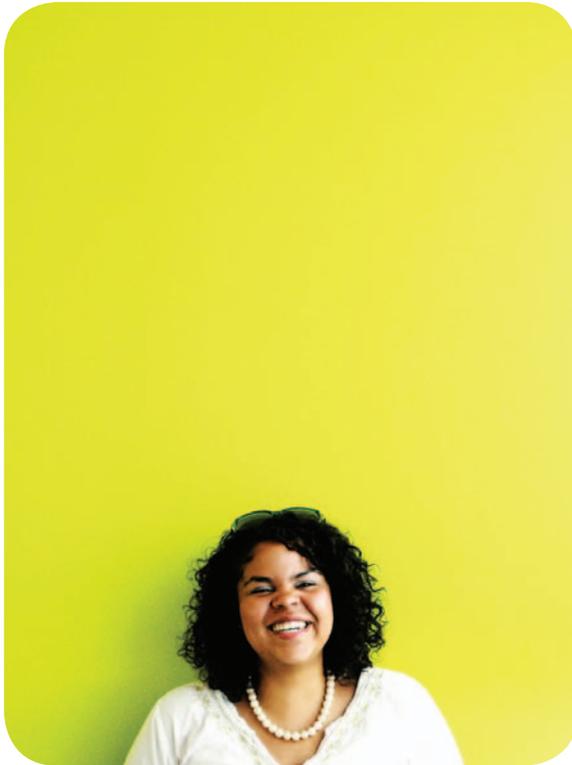
Many more examples of good practice can be found in ENAR's annual Shadow Reports on racism in Europe: www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=15294&langue=EN.

ENAR'S ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is an EU-wide network of more than 600 organisations working to combat racism in all the EU member states and acts as the voice of anti-racism in Europe. It promotes the cause of anti-racism and equal treatment for ethnic and religious minorities and third country nationals

residing in the EU. The network plays a key role in voicing the concerns of its members as well as in influencing EU decision-making based on the European legal tools available, with the aim of supporting the elimination of racial discrimination in the EU. By reflecting local and national priorities, ENAR strives to ensure that developments at the European level further the fight against racism in all member states and make a real difference to the lives of those who experience racism.

For more information: www.enar-eu.org



KEY AREAS OF LIFE

EMPLOYMENT

RACISM IN EMPLOYMENT

By Inês Alves

*Employment and Social Affairs Policy Officer
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Young people in Europe face more difficulties than ever before when trying to find decent and stable jobs. This jeopardises their own autonomy and prevents young people from being fully included in society and from fully enjoying their basic human rights.

The situation is even more dramatic when speaking of young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as for those who are victims of discrimination and racism when trying to enter into the labour market or already part of the work force.

When it comes to fighting against discrimination at work, the European Youth Forum believes the key is to tackle it from the legislative point of view. The Council Directive 2000/78 of 27 November establishes a framework for equal opportunities in employment and occupation, providing protection against discrimination on the ground of age in these fields. This Directive also provides protection against harassment in the field of employment, which very negatively affects the performance and self-esteem of young people. In Ireland for example, the first decision against age-based harassment was made in 2002 and concerned a young female manager who was ridiculed in front of other staff by an older male colleague.

The effective implementation of this piece of legislation at the national level is a crucial step to ensuring equal opportunities for young people in the employment market and providing legal certainty when differences of treatment on the ground of age are allowed. Indeed, the practice of lowering the rights of young employees, in order to ensure their inclusion in the employment market and to fight against social exclusion, is less likely to be justified after the Directive enters into force.

Other instruments are available at the European level to combat against racial discrimination in the field of employment. Indeed, since the mid-1980s, a rising tide of concern with the problem can be perceived in declarations and resolutions by Community institutions and Council of Europe. In particular, the revised European Social Charter, adopted in 1996 and entered into force in 1999, includes an article¹ ensuring the enjoyment of all the rights enshrined in the Charter without any discrimination (including discrimination on the ground of age and race). The right to work, the right to just conditions of work, the right to safe and healthy working conditions and the right to a fair remuneration are all included in the Charter².

In 1995, the Council of Ministers has adopted a resolution on the fight against racism and xenophobia in employment and social affairs,

¹ European Social Charter, Article E on non-discrimination

² Article 1, 2, 3, 4 of the Revised European Social Charter
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=163&CM=8&DF=11/5/2008&CL=ENG>

highlighting the need to promote equal opportunities for the most vulnerable groups, including young people³. The same year, the European Commission adopted a first communication on racism and xenophobia.⁴

As for the European Social Partners which represent employers and employees at the EU level, also in 1995, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (BusinessEurope) and the European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation (CEEP) signed a "Joint declaration on the prevention of racial discrimination and xenophobia and promotion of equal treatment at the workplace⁵".

³ Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 5 October 1995, on the fight against racism and xenophobia in the fields of employment and social affairs
<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c10412.htm>
⁴ COM(95) 653 final
⁵ http://resourcecentre.etuc.org/linked_files/documents/Declaration%20-%20xenophobia%20EN.pdf?PHPSESSID=2a94618a0c772c9c58eb97c9b2e486f4

On the one hand, racism and discrimination at work must be countered by legislation; on the other hand, the YFJ believes that further non-legislative measures are needed. There is still a long way to go to efficiently tackle these phenomena: indeed, according to the Eurobarometer, age, physical appearance and ethnic origin remain the factors which are most likely to constitute a disadvantage for a candidate applying for a job⁶.

Civil society and youth organisations can play an important role when it comes to preventing discrimination and changing attitudes through developing awareness actions and campaigns. Youth organisations also have a strong role to play in empowering the victims of discrimination to report cases. It is also key that youth organisations can cooperate with social partners when it comes to developing forms of legislation directed at fighting against racism in the work place.

⁶ See the Special Eurobarometer 296 on Discrimination in the European Union. July 2008

EDUCATION

A SCHOOL WITHOUT RACISM

By Ingrid Gogl

Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions - OBESSU

Europe is a multiethnic and multicultural continent with a common understanding of human rights and certain social values. The European construct is based on mutual understanding and respect. Unfortunately, as Europe grows in cultural diversity, the combination of diversity and the unawareness that exists of these "other cultures" gives rise to both xenophobia and racism.

LANGUAGE AS THE CORE?

Young people from cultural minorities still face many difficulties in our educational systems. There are many reasons for this, most of which reflect the general situation of minorities in our society. School is a mirror of today's society and unfortunately is not free of stereotypes and prejudices. The most obvious reason for discrimination is language. Many students with "emigrational background" are not fluent in the language of their "new home". Unfortunately, many European countries do not offer enough support in learning the new language as well as being fluent in one's mother tongue. The European Charter for Regional and Minority

Languages⁷ and the Framework Conventions for the Protection of National Minorities⁸ should be ratified by all European countries. Following this Charter and Convention means ensuring the right to learn one's and in one's language.

Unfortunately, other language-related issues contribute to the problem. Certain terms or words that are used (in speech as well as in official school books) can be discriminatory. For example, when speaking about Inuit people, very often the term "Eskimo" is still used in teaching material. Also, the term "primitive cultures" is used when speaking about cultures whose technology is less developed as the country one is living in. Sensitive usage of language is crucial for creating an environment that is free of negative assumptions towards a certain culture or group of people. Curricula, pedagogical methods and teaching material must foster intercultural values and encourage critical thinking.

Language is not the only problem. Bullying and harassment, more visible signs of discrimination, are things which take place due to naiveté or ignorance and which should not take place in an equal society and school. Still the reality shows us otherwise. Physical harassment and jokes, which are considered "harmless", are present in school realities. Bullying, defined as a systematic abuse of power, has an extraordinarily negative impact on young people as it can directly cause mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. Although it is difficult to assess the incidence of bullying, because of un-reported cases, some studies show that it is a widespread phenomenon, occurring

in different countries and in different socio-economic strata.

UNCOVERING "THE OTHER" UNDERSTANDING ONESELF

Intercultural learning, as a core principle of education, can ensure the examination of prejudices and stereotypes and can lead to a better understanding of the "other" as well as a better understanding of oneself as an individual. It is a way of critically reflecting on the morals, values and assumptions one has, and can lead to a wider understanding. Well-trained teachers and more sensitive methods are crucial in order to make this work. Teacher's education must cover intercultural learning and ensure well-equipped teachers that can deal with the individual diversity in their classroom.

MAJORITY VS. MINORITY

The majority way of thinking, speaking or believing should not automatically be the "norm". In order to respect the different backgrounds of young people, the whole educational system must be more flexible to meet and respect the need of young people. This starts with the language and words used, and ranges from school facilities (e.g. school trips) to subjects that are being taught and their content.

In some countries, that for example have a strong history concerning a specific religion or belief, the subject "religious education" (tackling mainly facts about the religion of the majority) is obligatory for all the students in public schools. At a certain age, they can decide whether they want to continue this subject or not. This option of "getting out" is not the right way. Young people should be rather provided with the option of "getting in" than

⁷ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

⁸ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/157.htm>

being forced to attend this subject. Having for example a subject like “ethics”, which would give a more general view of religions and beliefs, and then providing students with the possibility to decide to deepen the knowledge of a certain religion or belief would be a better way of promoting diversity in beliefs.

Legal provision aiming at fighting discrimination at school as well as non legislative initiatives such as codes of conduct, setting certain rules for the common day-to-day life in the school. But regulations are not all. Conflicts still arise, and it is important how it is dealt with it. If someone makes a racist joke, will he or she be punished? Will there be further consequences? Mediation is a way of dealing with issues like this.

The problem will be discussed with the parties involved, to uncover not only the action as such, but also the reasons behind it. Peer-to-Peer mediation is a way of involving students in this process. This way, counselling will not take place with an “outsider”, but rather with

a person that may better understands the realities of the young people.

FINAL DESTINATION

Finally it is crucial that student and youth policies are not seen as a segregated area of their own. Young people are not only the society of tomorrow, but they form a great part of today’s society. Therefore it is important that young people are included and considered important stakeholders in policy making processes that affect them—which basically means all policy areas. Youth mainstreaming in policy making is one step towards improving young people’s lives by taking their standpoints and realities into consideration and giving them a voice. As it was said before, when it comes to racism in our schools and educational institutions, this phenomenon is only a reflection of tendencies that can be found in general society as well. Therefore, a holistic approach to all problems is necessary in order to solve issues on a long term basis, as it is crucial to deal with the roots and not only the symptoms of a problem.

SOCIAL SERVICES

HOUSING EXCLUSION, DISCRIMINATION AND HOUSING RIGHTS

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INTRODUCTION

Homelessness and housing exclusion are complex realities. They usually result from a combination of interlinking factors, including

personal, relational, structural and institutional elements⁹. Homelessness is a process rather than a static phenomenon, affecting many individuals and households at different points in their lives. Although there are differences depending on the national and local circumstances, homelessness is a reality across Europe.

To better grasp this reality, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with The Homeless (FEANTSA)¹⁰ has developed,

⁹ See 2005 Review of homelessness statistics published by the European Observatory on Homelessness; Measurement of homelessness at EU level, Bill Edgar, Matt Harrison, Peter Watson and Volker Busch-Geertsema, 2007.

¹⁰ Established in 1989 as a European non-governmental organisation, FEANTSA is the only major European network that focuses exclusively on homelessness and housing exclusion at European level. It currently has more than 100 member organisations in about 30 European coun-

among other tools, ETHOS¹¹ - a conceptual classification relating to the housing situation of people faced with homelessness and housing exclusion. Homelessness is much more than lacking a roof: it includes a variety of situations, which undermine these individuals' ability to enjoy an adequate standard of living, prevent them from fully participating in society and violate their fundamental human rights.

THE CHANGING PROFILE OF PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCE HOUSING EXCLUSION

In recent years, Europe has experienced a gradual change in the profile of those faced with homelessness. This appears to be linked to macro socio-economic trends. Although single men continue to represent a large proportion of those who are homeless, there is an increasing number of immigrants, women and young people among those experiencing housing exclusion¹².

Factors such as increasing employment-related instability, family breakdown, the evolution of the housing market and shortage of affordable, quality housing have an impact on individual and households' ability to find or maintain a

dwelling. In general, low wages and increasing rent prices hinder many young peoples' ability to afford independent housing. The situation is even more difficult for those groups of the population which are already vulnerable to housing exclusion.

VULNERABILITY FACTORS AND DISCRIMINATION

Housing vulnerability is a condition of those who are denied access to adequate housing through the established channels of provision (the market and the state)¹³. There are many factors, which render young people¹⁴ at risk of housing exclusion and homelessness, including poverty and housing exclusion within their family of origin, a dysfunctional family background, dropping out of school, leaving institutions, specific individual problems or being from a migrant background. In many countries, the transition to adulthood and independent housing has become increasingly difficult due to reasons such as youth unemployment, restrictive rules concerning allowances or social housing allocation and, as mentioned, a shortage of affordable housing for rent.

Also, whereas access to decent housing is a precondition for the exercise of other fundamental rights and for full participation in society, research suggests that discrimination contributes to housing exclusion: immigrants and people belonging to ethnic minorities¹⁵ are at greater risk of exclusion from the housing market. In general, they appear to be over-represented among groups facing

tries. Most of FEANTSA's members are national or regional umbrella organisations of homeless service providers that support people who are homeless with a wide range of services. It works closely with the EU institutions, has consultative status at the United Nations and enjoys participatory status with the Council of Europe. FEANTSA has three main strands of action: trans-national exchange and networking, research, and advocacy at European and national level. In this context, FEANTSA has been active and built up expertise in a range of areas, such as employment, health, housing, the right to housing and users' participation. It works also on data collection and produces regular research through its European Observatory on Homelessness (EOH).

11 The European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion (ETHOS) is based on four categories: rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing and inadequate housing. ETHOS is a tool for better understanding homelessness and for international comparison.

12 See "Youth and Homelessness in the European Union", ed. by Dr. Dragana Avramov, FEANTSA, 1998; "Women and Homelessness in Europe - Pathways, Services and Experiences", ed. by Bill Edgar and Joe Doherty, the Policy Press, 2001; "Immigration and Homelessness in Europe", ed. by Bill Edgar, Joe Doherty and Henk Meer, the Policy Press, 2004; EOH 2003 thematic report on "The changing profiles of homeless people: macro social context and recent trends"; EOH 2006 report on "The changing profile of homeless people: conflict, rooflessness and the use of public space", FEANTSA.

13 See "Access to housing - Homelessness and vulnerability in Europe", Bill Edgar, John Doherty and Henk Meer, The Policy Press and FEANTSA, 2002.

14 See "Child homelessness in Europe - An overview of emerging trends", FEANTSA, 2007; "Youth and Homelessness in the European Union" - op. cit.

15 In this context, it should be said that migration is a varied experience and that not all migrants or people from ethnic minorities are faced with discrimination.

housing difficulties, they are more likely to live in deprived areas, in poor quality and overcrowded housing; and likely to spend a higher proportion of their income for housing purposes. Also, high numbers of migrants and members of ethnic minorities use homeless services¹⁶.

Specific causes of vulnerability may reinforce this situation. These include the legal status of the individual/household, the lack of accessible information on local housing systems and rights, the fact that housing policies and integration strategies tend to ignore access to housing, and last but not least, discrimination.

Although unacceptable and unlawful¹⁷, discrimination remains a practice across Europe. There are still too many examples of failure by public authorities to address the housing discrimination experienced by migrants and minorities, which can take different shapes, including direct and indirect discrimination, or harassment¹⁸.

AN EXAMPLE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT AVAILABLE IN THE FIELD OF HOUSING RIGHTS

The fight against housing exclusion can be successful only if an integrated approach is adopted. Besides legislation and the implementation of appropriate policies, case law can play an important role, contributing

to the setting up of standards for the effective implementation of housing rights at both national and international levels.

Housing rights are enshrined in widely ratified international instruments¹⁹ and in several EU Member States national laws, which also contain provisions against discrimination. However, they are not accorded the same level of priority as access to other forms of social protection and their concrete implementation often remains unsatisfactory.

Article 31 of the Council of Europe Revised European Social Charter (RESC) is devoted to the right to housing, while Article E refers to non-discrimination²⁰. States that have ratified this instrument have committed themselves to the effective realisation of a number of human rights²¹. The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) monitors the application of the Charter through a reporting mechanism and evaluates the conformity of national law and practice.

In order to improve the effective enforcement of the social rights guaranteed by the Charter, an Additional Protocol²² providing for a mechanism of collective complaints was ratified, which foresees the participation of

¹⁶ See "Policy measures to ensure access to decent housing for migrants and ethnic minorities", Bill Edgar, 2004; "Migrant, Minorities and Housing", EUMC, 2005.

¹⁷ Many international instruments contain provisions on discrimination, be it at UN, Council of Europe and EU level. In particular, the EU has adopted a set of measures through anti-discrimination Directives (see http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/index.htm). In terms of perception, discrimination is widespread in the European Union and progress is slow: see "Discrimination in the European Union", Special Eurobarometer 296, July 2008).

¹⁸ For instance, refusing to rent to members of certain groups can be said to be direct discrimination, refusing to accommodate the needs of disabled tenants can be considered as indirect discrimination, while landlord interference in the peaceful enjoyment of the flat can be a form of harassment.

¹⁹ These include the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the Council of Europe revised European Social Charter (1996). The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights recognises the "right to social and housing assistance" (art. 34). Additional information is available in the section of FEANTSA's web site devoted to housing rights.

²⁰ Art. 31 reads: "With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to housing, the Parties undertake to take measures designed to: 1 to promote access to housing of an adequate standard; 2 to prevent and reduce homelessness with a view to its gradual elimination; 3 to make the price of housing accessible to those without adequate resources". Article E reads: "The enjoyment of the rights set forth in this Charter shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national extraction or social origin, health, association with a national minority, birth or other status". See revised European Social Charter.

²¹ Depending on the accepted provisions. For more information, see the Council of Europe web site.

²² See Additional Protocol: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/158.htm>.

non State actors²³. Unique to this mechanism is that it allows for an entire government policy in a particular field to be questioned²⁴.

By lodging a collective complaint against France in 2006, FEANTSA felt that besides its advocacy activities, it was time to play a more active role in the development of international case law and standards. FEANTSA chose a crosscutting strategy, which covered both specific issues and more general arguments²⁵. It argued that in the last thirty years, the quality of housing for the majority of the population in France had improved, especially with the adoption of several ambitious housing laws and policies. However, despite these measures,

²³ In order to be entitled to lodge collective complaints alleging violations of the European Social Charter, International NGOs must first enjoy participatory status with the Council of Europe and be included on a specific list.

²⁴ This is provided that the State has ratified both the Charter article(s) concerned and the collective complaint mechanism (information on ratifications and accepted provisions by country available on the Council of Europe web site).

²⁵ See page devoted to the collective complaint on FEANTSA's web site; see also main documents related to collective complaint 39/2006 on the Council of Europe web site.

France had failed to effectively implement the right to housing for all, and in particular to meet the housing needs of the most vulnerable.

The ECSR decided unanimously that France is in violation of the Charter. The grounds for violation include the poor implementation of, or insufficient progress in, existing measures relating to: inadequate housing conditions; preventing evictions; reducing homelessness; providing social housing aimed at the most deprived; social housing allocation; and discrimination against Travellers²⁶.

The breakthrough ruling, made public in June 2008, considered that the full enjoyment of rights is *the* measure for evaluating public policies and defines their quality standards. This decision provides for case law which is useful in courts on a local, national and international level and is a step towards a more social Europe.

²⁶ See ECSR full decision on the merits; see also Resolution adopted by the Committee of Ministers

HEALTH

ROMA YOUNG PEOPLE AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR) THE CASE OF MACEDONIA

by Daniel Kalajdjieski

HERA-Member of IPPFEN

the European Network of the International

Planned Parenthood Federation

If someone who does not know anything about Macedonia begins to research the country by reading the Constitution, he or she would be amazed by the ideal picture of Roma people portrayed by this document.

In Amendment IV of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, Roma people are mentioned as a "constitutional ethnicity" along with Macedonians, Albanians, Serbs, Vlachs and others. However, the real situation of the Roma minority is far, far away from this ideal picture.

According to the official statistics in Macedonia, 53,879 citizens are Roma (2.66%)²⁷. However, there is a disparity between the official numbers and reality. Many Roma people do not have personal registration number and are not registered; this causes inaccuracy in the official numbers.

²⁷ Census of Population Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002, book XIII. http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/kniga_13.pdf

Generally, Roma people, including Roma young people, face many obstacles which are reinforced by discrimination in all levels of society. This includes obstacles in accessing health, especially sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information, education and services.

Unfortunately, health workers are not sensitive to Roma issues and sometimes even refuse to deliver services. Examples from the field suggest

- Early marriage and early motherhood;
- Tendency to have many children (preference to have male posterity);
- Lack of sexual and relationship education

Through their activities, the Macedonian NGO Health Education and Research Association (H.E.R.A) aims to increase accessibility to SRH services as well to educate and motivate young people to use these services. H.E.R.A. is continuously working on the promotion of SRH rights and implementing activities which help young people become aware of and fully enjoy their rights. H.E.R.A. also works with health providers to raise awareness with them concerning the needs of young Roma and to encourage more openness and tolerance towards Roma youth.



© European Network of the International Planned Parenthood Federation

reasons why health care providers refuse services, like a lack of knowledge of the Roma language, an inability to communicate in order to understand the needs of the Roma young people, and the use of a general or mainstream approach to reach Roma young people instead of tailoring services to specifically meet their needs. Most of the time, these injustices are not reported or documented, therefore no legal actions are taken.

Because of restricted access to SRHR, some of the major existing problems related to the SRHR reality for Roma young people include:²⁸

To increase access to youth-friendly health services, H.E.R.A. operates two Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) for SRH in the capital of Macedonia (Skopje). One is located in the municipality of Shuto Orizari²⁹, home to the country's largest Roma population. This initiative is unique in Macedonia because it offers the only specialized youth-friendly health services for SRH in the country.³⁰

The H.E.R.A YFHS offer confidential services free of charge for all young people, including Roma. During the week, young people can access the following SRH services:

- Gynecological check-ups;
- Dermatological check-ups;
- Free therapy and contraception services (including condoms and lubricants);
- Counseling;
- Education with health professionals;
- Peer education

²⁸ For more information, see http://www.ipfff.org/NR/rdonlyres/B144D909-D4F0-4EF9-BC54-9B2BD513B5FB/0/ProgRecommendations_RomaConferenceIPPFEN_Mar2007.pdf and http://www.ipfff.org/NR/rdonlyres/A533969B-DA68-4377-A656-679B55B3792C/0/PolicyRecommendations_RomaConferenceIPPFEN_Mar2007.pdf
There is not official statistics for this phenomena due to the weak report system overall in Macedonia and to the fact that many Roma do

not have official registration numbers, as mentioned above

²⁹ <http://www.sutoorizari.org.mk/>

³⁰ National Strategy for Health Development of Adolescents aged 10 to 19 years in the Republic of Macedonia, January 2008

H.E.R.A also provides voluntary confidential counseling and testing (VCCT) in the Shuto Orizari municipality through their mobile mini-van. This mobile unit works with vulnerable target groups, including Roma. The mobile VCCT outreach team includes young Roma members, which is important because they help form a link between the target group and the services provided. The mobile unit has made HIV testing more accessible for youth who would like to be tested. Roma young people are more motivated to use the service

of the VCCT mini van because their peers and acquaintances are part of the team.

More efforts should be made in the field of comprehensive sexuality education (inside and outside of schools) which consider the situation of Roma young people and SRHR, and to increase their access to services. In addition, more achievements must be made to address the problem of discrimination against Roma people, to facilitate the improvement of their status in society, and increase individualized attention to their SRHR needs.

SPORT

COMBATING RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE FIELD OF SPORT

By Heike Klempa

European Commission

against Racism and Intolerance - ECRI³¹

Sport can be a very powerful tool for promoting basic values such as equality, fair play, mutual respect and tolerance. At the same time it is sometimes an area where racism and xenophobia can thrive, putting these very values at risk. This is why the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) decided to dedicate a specific General Policy Recommendation to this topic, which will provide governments with clear guidelines on how best to combat racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport.



Public presentation of ECRI's Declaration on combating racism in football, May 2009 in Paris. ©ECRI

Aware of the unique role that sport plays in the education and socialisation of young people, ECRI works to keep the sport environment free from racist or discriminatory attitudes. ECRI therefore also strongly supports youth participation in sports, as this can have a very positive influence on shaping young people's perceptions of their fellow team mates, when they come from different backgrounds, and on their understanding of values such as solidarity and mutual understanding.

Facilitating equal opportunities in access to sport for all young people, including

³¹ ECRI is the Council of Europe's independent human rights monitoring body specialised in combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. ECRI's main task is to give legal and policy advice to governments on issues related to its mandate. Besides its country monitoring work, ECRI works on general themes, which are of particular importance for combating racism and intolerance in all 47 Council of Europe member States. ECRI's website can be consulted at <http://www.coe.int/ecri>.

for persons from minority and immigrant backgrounds, can considerably contribute to reducing tensions between different communities in society. Initiatives to encourage young people from different backgrounds to practice sport together should therefore also have a prominent place in all governmental strategies and programmes aiming at building an integrated society. Sustained financial commitment on the part of governments for financing such initiatives is essential here.

However, governments' responsibilities do not stop there. The legislator has to put into place a legal framework, which ensures equal opportunities in access to sport for all and punishes racist or discriminatory behaviour on the sports ground. Special attention must be paid to ensuring that this legislation is also implemented and that racist incidents taking place on the sports ground are not justified or trivialised on the pretext that the events at which they occur are highly emotional.

Furthermore, schools and other educational institutions should play their part in combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport, by actively promoting openness to diversity and an understanding of what equality, fair play and mutual respect really mean in practice. Physical education should be used both to raise young people's interest in sport and to increase their awareness of racism and racial discrimination in all its manifestations. Concrete measures to be taken in this context may include the training of coaches and sport teachers on how to manage multicultural teams and on how to encourage the participation of young people from minority backgrounds in sports. Finally, it would certainly also have a positive effect if more coaches and sport teachers from minority backgrounds were recruited.

Many young people also practice sport in their leisure time. When this goes beyond the occasional private practice of sport, young people are often members of amateur or professional sports clubs. In practice, sport clubs and federations shape to a great extent the conditions under which sport is practiced. This gives them considerable powers, which they should also use to promote diversity and equal opportunities within their own sport discipline.

First of all, they should adopt comprehensive diversity and equal opportunity policies to promote equality and fight racism and intolerance within their own ranks, including by recruiting athletes and other sporting staff from different backgrounds. They should also keep a close watch on racist behaviour on the sports ground itself and punish it.

Sport clubs and federations can indeed have considerable influence on their fans and sometimes even on society as a whole. ECRI therefore also welcomed the action taken by the European Football Association (UEFA) to combat racism in football in a special Declaration³², which it adopted on the occasion of the UEFA European Football Championship EURO 2008.

In conclusion, ECRI firmly believes that the values of fair play, mutual respect and tolerance should be at the heart of any sporting activity. Racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport can only be successfully eliminated if all relevant actors join forces. ECRI therefore urges governments to actively promote the building of coalitions against racism in sports, with a special emphasis on involving young people from all different backgrounds.

³² ECRI's Declaration on the occasion of EURO 2008 "Unite against racism"

SPECIFIC FORMS OF RACISM

DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RELIGION AND BELIEF

OVERCOMING ISLAMOPHOBIA: THE ULTIMATE TEST FOR EUROPE

By Hakan Tosuner

*Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student
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Many voices in politics and academia portray Europe's post-World War II development as a true success story – and in principal deservedly so. While for ages Europe was primarily associated with catastrophic battles, never-ending conflicts, and barbaric tyrannies, today the continent stands in the first place for peace and prosperity, democracy and human rights, multilateralism and principle-based diplomacy. However, in this crucial stage, one should not become self-complacent by purposely ignoring the current challenges Europe is facing. As paradoxical as it might sound, despite all its noteworthy achievements, Europe has not managed to eradicate racism and xenophobia from its landscape.

It is quite worrisome that right-wing populist ideas are rapidly spreading throughout Europe; in the last few years, hardly any national or local elections in Europe have been held without right-wing populist parties winning votes and hence democratically entering parliaments or local councils. The latest example is the

parliamentary elections in Austria, where two right wing parties (Alliance for the Future of Austria, BZÖ, and Free Alliance Party, FPÖ,) together won almost one third of all votes. Other examples of right-wing movements which have gained significant success and attention are the *Front National* in France, *Vlaams Belang* in Belgium, *Lega Nord* in Italy, *Dansk Folkeparti* in Denmark and the *Schweizerische Volkspartei* in Switzerland. It is obvious that this success is not due to a sophisticated political agenda but rather to a populist and simplistic rhetoric. Recently, crucial components of this rhetoric are couched in subtle racist, xenophobic and increasingly Islamophobic tones. Some examples of this mindset are:

- radical opposition towards the erection of minarets or even the very building of mosques;
- strict regulation of immigration in order to stop the “take-over” of Christian Europe by the Muslims;

Instead of the progressively extremist right-wing rhetoric being considered more and more politically radical, in the last years the opposite trend has been the case; right-wing rhetoric, including many Islamophobic statements, have become increasingly socially and politically acceptable in Europe and even taken on board by progressive parties or intellectuals. In this context, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (former European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia) report says “that the presence of Islam in Europe, in the form of its Muslim citizens and migrants, is a challenge

for Europe and European norms and values, has taken a strong hold in European political discourse and has also created a climate of fear.”¹ . Also, personalities such as Oriana Fallaci (Italy, died in 2007), Ralph Giordano, Henryk Broder or Udo Ulfkotte (Germany) have developed into the masterminds and the intellectual voices of these movements. What these individuals have in common is that they regard the religion of Islam itself as the core source for all conflicts and grievances, thus claiming that the teachings of Islam are incompatible with Western values and life-style.

It should be noted that Islamophobia – however badly coined is the term – is not a totally new phenomenon in Europe, but it has certainly reached a different dimension in the past few years. It cannot be denied that the events of 9/11 were a turning point in shaping the relationship of Europe with its Muslim population. Subsequent events such as the bombings in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), the murder of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh (2004), the Danish cartoon controversy (2005/06), and Pope Benedict XVI's controversial speech on Islam (2006) contributed to widening the gap between Europe and its Muslim citizens. It would certainly be faulty to argue that the above mentioned events are the causes of Islamophobia; however, one should not underestimate their impact on peoples' psyche. While mainstream society is increasingly feeling threatened by Muslims, most Muslims feel stigmatized and as the new scapegoat for all social and political grievances. In this context, the mass media has also played an important, and mostly negative, role. When it comes to Islam, media coverage is often sensationalist and stereotypical, which may serve to build or provide evidence

for existing Islamophobic attitudes and prejudices. An example for this is a scientific study which illustrated that coverage of Islam is unidirectional and negative at the two main German public television channels ARD and ZDF: in contrast to other world religions, news about Islam is one-sidedly connected to conflict issues such as terrorism, extremism, integration problems and international altercations.²

Although there is no clear legal definition of the term “Islamophobia,” the term generally refers to “the fear of or prejudiced viewpoint towards Islam, Muslims and matters pertaining to them. Some even use the term “racism against Muslims” which might describe somehow more accurately what is at stake. Whether it takes the shape of daily forms of racism and discrimination or more violent forms, Islamophobia is a violation of human rights and a threat to social cohesion.”³

For several years now, a variety of surveys and studies have demonstrated that in Europe, hostile attitudes and discriminatory practices against Muslims are on rise⁴.

Although Muslims and Non-Muslims have been living together rather peacefully for many centuries in Europe, an attitude of mistrust and suspicion of Muslims is becoming more and more common. Nowadays Islam-bashing is en vogue and constitutes the easy way to quick media and political notoriety. The Islamophobic climate also has a crucial impact on young European Muslims as they are feeling discriminated against and socially,

1 European Monitoring Center on Racism and Islamophobia, „Muslim in the European Union: discrimination and islamophobia“, 2006, pag. 32

2 Hafez, Kai/Richter Carola, „Das Islambild von ARD und ZDF“, in Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 26-27 2007, http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/BSF019,0,Das_Islambild_von_ARD_und_ZDF.html

3 Report on the Council of Europe's seminar "Islamophobia and its consequences on young people", Budapest, 1-6 June 2004

4 See for example the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, "Muslim in the European Union: discrimination and islamophobia", 2006, pag. 19

culturally, and economically excluded because of their religion. While for well-meaning young Muslims this is a serious and sincere issue, others which have adopted a victim mentality feel justified in their stance that the majority of European society is in principal hostile towards Muslims and hence, Islam. Other politically radical Muslim freeloaders are trying to benefit from the livid climate and hoping to increase the number of their sympathizers for their struggle against the decadent Western life style by tapping into the increasing frustration and alienation felt by a sizeable part of the European Muslim youth which suffers of not being offered the same status and opportunities than the average European youth.

At this point it must be underlined that Muslims have to be open to and accept critique of their religion, their opinions and their religious practices. Muslims must be mature and self-confident enough to let critical voices articulate their ideas and thoughts. In short, yes to criticism of Islam and Muslims, no to defamation of and agitation against it.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Every person or organisation interested in a peaceful and cohesive Europe should not only be aware of but also be deeply concerned about the above-mentioned developments. Like other current challenges such as xenophobia or Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia should be put on the top agenda in the fight against discrimination. "The central question is how to avoid stereotypical generalisations, how to reduce fear and how to strengthen cohesion in our diverse European societies while countering marginalisation and discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion or belief."⁵

Individual/personal level

In order to effectively fight Islamophobia one must first acknowledge the existence of such a problem in contemporary European societies, even though the intensity varies from society to society. Secondly, one should regard Islamophobic attitudes and mindsets as diametrically contradictory to European values and self-understanding. Thirdly, one must get information about typical Islamophobic arguments, develop a sense for spotting subtle and indirect Islamophobic rhetoric, and acquire skills and strategies in countering them.

Political and societal level

Politicians and decision makers in general should act and speak in a responsible way and not be populist / opportunistic by being part of the wide-spread trend of Islam-bashing. Islamophobia ought to be put on the top agenda and regarded as a threat to the future of a peaceful and cohesive Europe. Intercultural and inter-religious initiatives and projects ought to be launched and supported in non-material ways and financially in order to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and thoughts and to deconstruct mutual stereotypes and prejudices. Information and educational material on the issue should be produced and widely disseminated.

This would constitute the indispensable steps towards change; we need today a fundamental mentality and societal change if Europe wants to overcome the massive threat that Islamophobia constitutes towards its founding values and the future cohesion of its societies. It is our common future that is now at stake. Not more, not less.

⁵ European Monitoring Center on Racism and Islamophobia, "Mus-

lim in the European Union: discrimination and islamophobia", 2006, pag. 3

ANOTHER VIEW OF ANTI-SEMITISM

By Jonas Karpantschof,
European Union of Jewish Students - EUJS

As European Jews, we live on a continent that has multiple facets and identities. It is therefore one of the main objectives of the European Union of Jewish Students to learn how to best reconcile our differences while celebrating the heritage and rich culture each of these identities brings. The richness and diversity of our faiths and cultures should serve as a starting point for a joint journey towards a better future, rather than as a cause for division and separation.

Over many years, the European Union of Jewish Students has been a pro-active player in combating racism and other forms of discrimination. Based on our own European history, we see it not only as an obligation to speak out for others, but also as our responsibility to assist other peoples in integrating into a multicultural and inclusive Europe.

However, this does not imply that Europe is a perfect place, neither for Jews nor for other minorities living on the continent. Over the last decade and especially since the outbreak of the second intifada in the year 2000, anti-semitic sentiments and prejudices have been growing slowly – but steadily. A recent report conducted by the Pew Research Centre⁶ reveals

⁶ In Spain for example negative ratings of Jews have more than doubled since 2005, rising from 21% to 46%. Anti-Jewish sentiments are also on the rise in Poland and Russia. In 1991 34% of Poles had an unfavorable opinion of Jews. But Pew's 2005 poll found that anti-Jewish attitudes had ebbed in Poland since the beginning of the post-Communist era—by 2005 only 27% held a negative view of Jews. Yet, the trend has reversed itself within the last three years. In the 2008 survey, anti-Jewish sentiment has rebounded to 36%, just slightly higher than it was two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The percentage of Russians with a negative opinion of Jews was exactly the same in 1991 and 2005—26%—but it has increased over the last three years to 34%.

Andrew Kohut and Richard Wike, "Xenophobia on the continent", Oc-

tober 2008 <http://nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=20124>

that the level of anti-Semitic stereotype and prejudice-based incidents and the negative views of Jews have been growing dramatically in recent years.

As an organization that caters to the needs of Jewish students across the European continent, these figures do not come as a surprise. Many young Jews in Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, France, Spain and in all other of our 34 member unions are timid, and sometimes even afraid, to express their Jewish identity, even in societies that generally speak up for minorities and for an inclusive and multicultural Europe.

As European citizens it is imperative that we distinguish between being Jewish and being Israeli; however, more often than not, European Jews are held responsible for the actions of the State of Israel and are therefore intimidated with anti-Semitic stereotypes, hate speech, prejudices and even physical attacks. The direct impact of the media, NGOs and others who neglect to distinguish between being Jewish and Israeli is an essential part of why anti-Semitism has increased over the last few years.

Even though most young Jews have not been directly subjected to direct anti-Semitism or anti-Semitic actions, it is a common "trend" and even in some countries encouraged by the authorities to hide one's Jewish identity from the public eye. This is often done by hiding religious symbols that are intrinsically linked to one's Jewish identity, such as the skullcap and/or the Star of David, symbols, but also in hiding one's Jewish identity during public debates and at universities by not expressing their personal, religious beliefs and opinions, as they fear they will be labelled as "the Jew."

The main reason behind these phenomena is fear of being the subject of anti-Semitism or anti-Semitic prejudice and of being misunderstood once one's true identity is revealed. Often, the fear is that most conversations regarding the Middle East conflict and Israel in particular will arise. While this is a relation that seems quite natural and plausible, the vast majority of the European Jews are first and foremost European citizens, and thus not related to the State of Israel – nor are they representatives of the Jewish State. Whether the equation of being Jewish with being Israeli is a direct form of anti-Semitism or “just” a modern stereotype and/or form of naïveté is unimportant when it is directed against an individual.

This does not imply that young Jews are embarrassed or scared to be Jewish in Europe, despite the potential negative impacts of being Jewish. European Jews in general do not fear for their security and are of course just as diverse and individualistic, heterogeneous and diversified as the rest of the European population. Anti-Semitism can be manifested in several different ways, ranging from individual expression of hatred and discrimination against Jews or as violent attacks performed by larger collectives or even governments.

One of the most glaring examples of recent anti-Semitism occurred in 2001 during the United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR). The conference, whose aim was to “combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance” unfortunately turned into a disastrous failure, where several NGOs and UN-member nation states trampled on the fundamental values of the UN. The Jewish student caucus, led by the European Union of Jewish Students, returned from the WCAR confused and disorientated as they – for the first time in their lives – had been subject to racism and bigotry by the very people who had been giving anti-racist speeches and chanting love songs!

As Europeans and as Jews, we are proud to live on a continent that stands for diversity and multiculturalism, and which has an important framework by which Jews and other minorities alike are able to feel very secure. As Jews, we are proud of our heritage, our traditions and our role in the European society. Young Jews today are loyal to their countries and do not feel intimidated or exposed to anti-Semitic acts in their local communities, and are proud to be an integral part of the European society: as a group and as individuals.

RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA

HOPE FOR CHANGE: DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015 INITIATIVE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

By Tunde Buzetcky

Decade of Roma Inclusion Foundation

In a Europe that has recently extended its borders to include tens of millions of new citizens, one group remains on the margins – the Roma. With a population of an estimated 8 to 9 million dispersed across Central and Eastern Europe, the Roma are Europe's poorest citizens and its largest minority. Enlargement of the European Union has heightened the mainstream awareness of the situation of Roma

communities and highlighted the challenges that their marginalization poses to Europe as a whole.

Roma suffer discrimination despite current laws designed to protect them. 'Verification of ethnic discrimination seems to be a futile exercise in many cases'. Roma often live isolated from and despised by the rest of the population. Often, employment opportunities for Roma are restricted due to deeply-rooted prejudice for these individuals. Roma children are sent to special schools for people with disabilities without evidence that they have any handicap.

Naturally, there are complex economic, social and political reasons behind such wide-spread discrimination. Unfortunately, racism against the Roma is socially acceptable. Until now, governments have often shrunk from tackling this issue, aware that it is politically unpopular. Admittedly, it will take time to win popular support among majority populations. But the benefits are clear. Today half of the Roma population is under 20. If they can participate actively and fully in society, they will significantly contribute to and improve the future of the whole region. The fact that the Roma populations include such a large proportion of young people increases the urgent need to break the vicious circle of inter-generational transmission of poverty and severe social exclusion. We can see some encouraging signs like the European Parliament's resolution of 31 January 2008 representing an urgent call for a comprehensive European framework strategy on Roma.

Surveys throughout the region found deeply negative perceptions of Roma amongst citizens. A majority of the population would not want Roma as neighbors, co workers or

classmates. The roots of these sentiments stem from a combination of factors, including history, difficult economic conditions, and feeling of social insecurity. Some aspects of Roma culture and living conditions unfortunately reinforce already-existing stereotypes; misunderstanding, miscommunication and mistrust of this large minority group are typical among non-Roma. Despite its share in the European cultural heritage and its contribution to the enrichments of the European societies, Roma culture is often ignored or undervalued by the majority.

Children have the right to their own culture, identity and mother tongue. Regrettably, school systems in the region rarely promote diversity and multiculturalism; Roma children must therefore constantly confront a hostile educational environment. They must face significant obstacles caused by poverty and discrimination through humiliation, lack of attention and unmerited punishment. Due to these harsh educational conditions, the number of Roma who continue education beyond the compulsory education cycle is dramatically lower than the rest of the population.

In an unprecedented decision in 2007, the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights ruled that placement of Roma students into special schools was an act of discrimination in breach of Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

Existing prejudices and stereotypes, which have been ingrained in society, cannot be simply abolished by command. The most efficient way to break down existing barriers is through initiatives from both sides.

A decade initiative is a hope for change. One decade is not much time to overcome centuries

of marginalization, to change attitudes and behaviors, or to stop hate speech and racist actions towards Europe's largest minority. The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 is an initiative currently adopted by twelve European governments, supported by the European Commission, Open Society Institute, the World Bank, Council of Europe, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and other partners, and represents a cooperative international effort to change the lives of Roma in Europe. Providing a framework for governments in Central and Eastern Europe to work towards Romani integration, the Decade Initiative monitors progress in ending the severe discrimination and crippling poverty of the Roma communities.

Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro,



Roma Youth © Tunde Buzetzky

and Slovakia are the nine founding members of the Decade, while Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain joined the initiative in 2008. Slovenia participates at present as an Observer. The Decade is an open process; other countries as well as international organizations are welcome to join the initiative. Full Roma

participation through Romani leadership is the core value of the Decade. Young Roma delegates from each country participate in the Decade process as equal partners.

To accelerate social inclusion and improve the economic status of Roma within states, each country set a limited number of measurable national goals for improvements in common priority areas - education, employment, health, and housing - and three cross-cutting themes - income poverty, discrimination, and gender. The Decade planning is guided by an International Steering Committee, made up of representatives of governments, Roma activists, international donors, and other international organizations.

The Decade is not another new institution or bureaucracy, nor is it a new pot of money. The governments involved must reallocate resources to achieve results. They also need to align these plans with funding instruments of multinational, international, and bilateral donors.

The Decade has launched a process towards making a difference, but it has not yet had the impact that Roma in Europe need - tangible and real integration into mainstream societies. The challenge over the coming years is to design more systematic solutions and to look at positive examples across Decade countries and the EU as a whole. Good examples of systematic policy approaches exist in most countries; the Decade is being used as an effective forum for exchanging this experience, in order to maximize the effect of any governmental measure regarding Roma inclusion.

As a central pillar of the Decade initiative, to expand educational opportunities for Roma

communities in Central Europe and the Balkans, an international Roma Education Fund was established in 2005. The goal of the Roma Education Fund is to contribute to closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma, through policies and programs including desegregation of educational systems. The Roma Education Fund finances projects that meet its goals and are proposed and implemented by Governments, NGOs and private organizations. The Fund also supports greater research, studies and evaluations that contribute to effective policies for Roma inclusion in the national education systems.

Building on the principle of Roma participation in the Decade, DecadeWatch is an initiative of a group of Roma activists and researchers to assess progress under the Decade of Roma Inclusion program. Two issues of the report have already been published as an attempt to compare government action across countries and provide a snapshot of the degrees to which these actions have been implemented; governments have acted on their Decade promise.

This decade initiative is a chance for all of us to pass the most crucial test of a democratic society.

RACISM AND GENDER

LOOKING AT YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN'S DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION: A CONDITION TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY FOR ALL

By Amandine Bach

European Women's Lobby - EWL

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When analysing the situation of young women and men facing racism, it is essential to take into account that the discrimination they face is not only because of their ethnic background, their gender identity or their age. Instead, the discrimination comes from the interrelation of these axes of oppression. A 2008 Eurobarometer⁷ shows that discrimination based on a combination of a number of factors

has been experienced by a relatively high proportion of EU citizens (16%).

The intersection of gender and race discrimination has already been identified as an issue to include in policy making at the international level by different conventions or declarations, including the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979) and at the Durban governmental conference on racism (2001): CEDAW (1979) states that "the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women".

The Durban governmental conference recognized the gender-based nature of discrimination and urged Member States to incorporate a gender perspective in all programmes of action against racism, racial

7 Flash Eurobarometer 2008. Discrimination in the European Union. Perceptions and experiences of discrimination in the areas of housing, healthcare, education, when buying products or using services. The Gallup organization, February 2008.

discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to involve women - especially women victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance - in decision-making at all levels⁸.

A close look at the daily life of young women and men experiencing discrimination is essential to understand the gendered differences and inform policy-makers and civil society actors to change their approach towards discrimination.

What's happening on the ground? Young women and men's different experiences of discrimination

Isabelle Carles's analysis of the complaint files of the Belgian Centre of for Equal Opportunity and the Fight Against Racism⁹ shows that women and men experience racial discrimination in different proportions and different fields of social life. The study shows that men are confronted with problems related to the access to services in the private sectors (such as employment, private services and entertainment) and are also more exposed to verbal and physical violence from private individuals or groups in "public" spaces. In contrast, women are mainly victims of racial discrimination and disputes in the fields of education, employment and social life. The study found only a few fields where men and women were victims of racial discrimination in a similar manner; this was the case in relationships with public institutions, such as enrolments or social security.

For example, regarding employment, research has shown that "visible" communities -

especially the black, Roma and Sinti, and Muslims communities - face a higher stigmatization, being perceived as incompetent, lazy, uneducated, poor and submissive. The lack of recognition of the skills, knowledge and professionalism of these individuals, which is especially true for women, make their access to the labour market more difficult. This often causes highly-educated young women to start their career in a job below their qualification level while later facing great difficulties towards upward mobility. PRIAE research has shown that there are earning gaps as well, reflecting the combination of age, gender and ethnicity, with minority ethnic women in the UK earning lower incomes than both white young women and ethnic young minority men (age 25 or less). This impacts generally their economic independence, but also has a long term impact on pension level, with many older women from ethnic minorities in situations of extreme poverty.¹⁰

Moreover, when experiencing discrimination, women and men also react in different ways because of their different representations of the legal system, as Isabelle Carles showed in her study on Belgium. In the case of Belgium, more men register complaints, but many do not qualify under anti-discrimination laws and drop proceedings; however, women submit fewer complaints, but their complaints are twice as likely to qualify. Age plays a key role in this regard, as it seems that young men and older women make fewer complaints than young women do. This is explained by some practitioners that cite a lesser degree of trust of young men towards public institutions and the legal system and older migrant women's lack of awareness of their rights.

⁸ Durban Declaration (2001) : <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/Durban.pdf>
⁹ Carles, Isabelle (2005) L'usage des lois visant à lutter contre les discriminations raciales en Belgique : une perspective de genre. Rapport final. Marie Curie actions.

¹⁰ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2007), 'Equality and discrimination through the 'gender lens', issue 22. Equal Voices, December 2007.

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD? PROPOSALS OF THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Develop legal instruments to tackle multiple discrimination with a gender equality perspective. Despite the fact that intersectional discrimination has been recognised, international bodies and European institutions have not developed corresponding legal instruments. As a result, the experience of intersectional discrimination is not recognized and treated properly in legal and institutional frameworks, which are still built around tackling single types of discrimination. Some researchers and civil society organisations, including the EWL, have been calling for the inclusion of a special clause in anti-discrimination laws that would enable multiple discrimination to be tackled as it is in the case of Canadian and South-African legislation.

Develop statistics that make multiple discrimination visible. Despite the recognition of the existence of multiple discrimination, a lack of data that would enable to look at the combination of different grounds of discrimination remains a main obstacle for policies to be geared towards, for example, issues regarding minority ethnic. This lack of information reinforces the invisibility of specific groups that experience multiple discrimination.

It is and will remain an everyday challenge for policy-makers and NGOs advocating for equality to look at a specific policy from a multiplicity of "entry points", but it is essential to reach equal opportunities and equality in practice for all and not only for a few.

HATE CRIME

YOUTH AS KEY PARTNERS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE IN COMBATING HATE CRIME

By Jo-Anne Bishop

Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department

OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Over the last five years, the 56 participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have given increased prominence to the fight against intolerance and discrimination. Since 2003, more than ten OSCE high-level conferences and events have been organized in order to discuss ways for OSCE States to step up their efforts to tackle the rise of hate-motivated crimes. Six Ministerial Council

Decisions, devoted specifically to the topic of non-discrimination, have been adopted by OSCE States which called for OSCE States to strengthen their response to hate crime and to undertake increased measures to address the root causes of prejudice and intolerance through the development of educational programmes to promote mutual respect and understanding.

In their Decisions, OSCE participating States also acknowledged the important role that youth play in the fight against intolerance and discrimination. In the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision, OSCE participating States called upon the OSCE to "increase its efforts towards the younger generation in order to build up their understanding of the need for tolerance".¹¹

¹¹ OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/03, "Tolerance and Non-discrimination", Maastricht, 2 December 2003, <http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2006/06/19330_en.pdf>.

The OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was tasked to offer support and assistance to governments and civil society in their efforts to tackle hate crime and promote mutual respect and understanding. In 2006, the ODIHR chose to focus the session on tolerance and non-discrimination during the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on the topic of 'youth in relation to hate crimes'. The session addressed three key issues: young people as victims of hate motivated crimes, young people as perpetrators of hate motivated crimes and the role of young people and youth organisations in combating hate crimes. The discussion served to highlight good practices undertaken by youth in combating hate crime and also raised awareness within the OSCE about the key role that youth play as 'agents of change' in the promotion of mutual respect and understanding.

The 2006 Decision of the Ministerial Council in Brussels called upon OSCE participating States to acknowledge "the important contribution youth can make to the fight against intolerance and discrimination and decide[d] to encourage the continuation and further development of existing good practice activities like human rights education (...) and to organise an OSCE youth event in 2007 taking into account the experience and expertise in this field".¹²

In 2007, in order to strengthen the involvement of youth and youth organisations in the activities of the OSCE, the Spanish Chairmanship organised an OSCE youth forum which resulted in the adoption of the Madrid Youth Declaration¹³.

¹² OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 13/06, "Combating Intolerance and Discrimination and Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding", Brussels, 5 December 2006, http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2006/12/22565_en.pdf.

¹³ http://www.maec.es/SiteCollectionDocuments/Actualidad/PDF/Madrid%20Youth%20Declaration_en.pdf

As a follow-up the Youth Forum, the 2007 Madrid Ministerial Council Decision "[acknowledge[d] the important role that youth can play in fostering mutual respect and understanding between cultures and religions contributing to the promotion of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms" and "encourage[d] the promotion of educational programmes in the participating States in order to raise awareness among youth of the value of mutual respect and understanding".¹⁴

In the ODIHR's Annual Report for 2007: Hate Crime in the OSCE Region: Incidents and Responses¹⁵, several findings related to youth were noted. First, youth were in some instances perpetrators of hate crime, in particular loosely organised youth, characterized as "skinheads" and adherents of racist and extreme national ideologies. In such cases, youth perpetrators targeted foreigners who were visibly identifiable as "different" as well as Romani settlements and persons perceived to be gay or lesbian during their participation in pride and equality events.

Youth also emerged as continued victims of hate crime, especially as foreign students targeted because of their real or perceived ethnicity or religion. Many incidents also occurred in school premises. In the United States, the Anti-Defamation League reported that a total of 22 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded in middle and high schools in 2007.¹⁶ In many countries, LGBT students were assaulted or bullied because of their sexual orientation. In Europe,

¹⁴ OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/07, "Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding", Madrid, 30 November 2007, http://www.osce.org/documents/mcs/2007/12/28629_en.pdf.

¹⁵ See: http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_11_26296.html

¹⁶ "2007 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents", Anti-Defamation League website, March 2008, http://www.adl.org/main_Anti_Semitism_Domestic/Audit_2007.htm.

a study revealed that over half of LGBT youth experienced homophobic bullying in schools and other sphere of life which prompted the Intergroup on Gay and Lesbian Rights and the Trade Unions Intergroup to launch a written declaration to condemn and combat the problem.¹⁷

Young people also remain important 'agents of change' and are more likely to effectively address the problems of intolerance among their peers than 'adults' do. Many youth organisations in the OSCE area are effectively implementing formal and non-formal educational projects to combat intolerant and discrimination as a way to prevent violent incidents.

In the ODIHR's 2007 Annual Hate Crime Report, numerous youth-led awareness-raising activities aiming to promote and foster mutual respect and understanding were highlighted¹⁸:

- In **Germany**, a long-term programme called "Diversity is good. Youth for Diversity, Tolerance and Democracy" was launched as a preventive programme designed to raise awareness and tolerance among young people, parents, and educators. Municipalities and civil society groups jointly developed local action plans with a view to including young people in democratic structures. The programme also funds projects addressing historical and contemporary anti-Semitism and works with youth who may potentially be attracted to extremism.

- In **the Netherlands**, the Education Ministry awarded the National Youth Council a multi-year grant to promote the acceptance of homosexuality among different groups. The Ministry also supports the COC Netherlands' Pink Elephant Project on promotion of sexual diversity, including an information website and works closely with municipalities and education councils that promote acceptance of LGBT people.
- On 21 March 2007, a report was published by the **Canadian** Federation of Students on the needs of Muslim students. The report outlined comprehensive recommendations on how to deal with on-campus discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.
- In the **United Kingdom**, the project "No Outsiders", led by the University of Sunderland, addresses homophobic attitudes when they first emerge, at the primary-school age.



¹⁷ "Intergroups launch written declaration on combating homophobic bullying", European Parliament Intergroups on Gay and Lesbian Right and Trade Unions, 14 February 2007, <http://www.lgbtep.eu/request.php?37>.

¹⁸ See: http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_11_26296.html

- The Schools without Racism initiative, which started in **Belgium** in 1988, now includes more than 750 schools including in **the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, and Italy**. These schools commit themselves to enhancing student awareness of discrimination and racism in all its manifestations, as well as supporting students in their efforts to fight discrimination and to work for integration and equal opportunities.
- NGOs from **Italy, Spain, Poland, and Austria** launched a joint long-term project entitled "Schoolmates" that focuses on homophobic bullying in schools. It provides tools for students and school workers to combat psychological and physical violence. The project has already been carried out and published research on homophobic bullying.

It is these initiatives which serve to further inspire and mobilize future generations of youth to emerge as "agents of change" in the fight against intolerance.

In order to ensure the sustained engagement of youth in efforts to tackle hate crime and discrimination, the ODIHR will organise a roundtable meeting on 17 December 2008 on the importance of youth and education in addressing intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. The ODIHR will continue to engage and collaborate with youth representatives in the development of its educational tools to address prejudice and stereotypes. The ODIHR will also increase its efforts to showcase good practices of youth and to include youth representatives as implementation partners in its programmes to combat hate crime and promote mutual respect and understanding.

Finally, it is imperative that, following the heightened involvement of youth organisations under the 2007 Spanish Chairmanship of the OSCE, that youth continue to remain actively involved in the different OSCE events in order to make their voice heard and to remain as key partners in the OSCE's efforts to tackle hate crime.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES TO FIGHT AGAINST RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND INTOLERANCE

“ALL DIFFERENT – ALL EQUAL”: CAMPAIGNING BEYOND THE YOUTH CAMPAIGNS

By Maud de Boer-Buquicchio
Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General

A LONG STANDING ISSUE

The first “all different – all equal” youth campaign in 1995 had a clear aim of combating racism and intolerance. The new campaign in 2006 deliberately adopted a more positive approach, aiming at promoting diversity, human rights and participation. The idea was not only to protest what we are against, but also to say what we aspire to. Coming from young people, the call for respect for diversity, for human rights and for increased participation by all is an important affirmation of the Europe we want to live in.

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The “all different – all equal” youth campaign was labelled a campaign “for human liberation”, addressing the need to mobilise young people, to take action for a more inclusive, more respectful and more just Europe. The campaign involved thousands of young people and generated hundreds of projects across Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS

The most visible moments of the 2006 campaign were those related to the fight

against discrimination, addressing the attacks on people campaigning for the rights of gays and lesbians, random or systematic acts of Islamophobia or anti-gypsyism, discrimination and humiliation at borders and detention centres.

Discrimination is the denial of the very first right of a human being: equality in dignity, the right to be considered as full holders of rights. As the participants in the Diversity Youth Forum rightly put it “We want to see a lively and creative Europe, where people of different age, gender, abilities, religions, sexual orientation, ethnic, national, cultural and social background can fully participate in the shaping of their societies and live in dignity and peace.”



The strength of the campaign lay in the fact that it was both European and decentralised. It was developed and run by 42 national campaign committees with the involvement of thousands of volunteers. The results are naturally very different from one country to the next, the evaluation of the campaign suggests

however that millions of people know the motto “all different – all equal” and know what it stands for.

Diversity, human rights and participation are never fully achieved. They need to be constantly and continuously defended and nurtured. The Council of Europe will continue working in this field, encouraged by the fact that some national campaign committees decided to continue the youth campaign until 2009 and beyond.

PROJECTS OF THE YOUTH SECTOR OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

In the wake of some major events of the youth campaign, the youth sector of the Council of Europe has already initiated a series of projects and initiatives that build on the experiences, results and lessons learned.

- Underlined that in the recently adopted “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue” of the Council of Europe, young people and youth work have a role to play in interreligious dialogue. This is the idea behind the “Istanbul Youth Process” launched in March 2007. Follow-up conferences will be organised this year in Azerbaijan and in Russia. This process will support interreligious initiatives by young people and youth organisations, especially those combating Antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination. It may also link up with the youth strategy of the “Alliance of Civilizations” at UN level.
- A pilot project on the situation of young people most exposed to discrimination and risks of exclusion, namely those living in deprived suburban areas, will be developed in the course of 2009.
- We will work to adopt common standards for human rights education and for a

formal recognition of the role of non-formal education actors in citizenship and human rights education. The future versions of “Compass” and “Compassito” – the manuals on human rights education with young people and with children – will reflect many of the experiences and innovations of the “all different – all equal” campaign. Through the European Youth Foundation, the Council of Europe will continue supporting financially local youth projects that have the promotion of equality in dignity as their main aim.

- The “Living Library” methodology, one of the most visible dimensions of the campaign, will be disseminated more broadly as new partners want to adopt it and, in this way, reach ordinary citizens with the message that one should never judge a book by its cover. The “Living Library” works exactly like a normal library – with one difference: the “books” of the “Living Library” are people from groups frequently confronted with prejudice and stereotypes, often victims of discrimination or social exclusion. “Books” and readers enter into a personal dialogue. The philosophy of this approach is based on the insight that human rights cannot be defended by legal texts alone; what we also need is a generally higher awareness that the full enjoyment of human rights by everyone is a precondition for our ability to live together peacefully.
- Co-operation with the European Commission through the Youth Partnership, which in many respects was responsible for the success of the campaign, will continue.

THE WAY AHEAD

These projects are in line with the “Agenda 2020”, the roadmap for the future youth policy

in the Council of Europe, which places dignity, autonomy and citizenship of young people at the heart of youth policy. The Council of Europe works through co-management and co-decision. We view young people as a resource, not as a problem.

Beyond the youth sector, the Council of Europe is preparing a new campaign against

discrimination, involving media professionals and journalism training institutes. This campaign, which will start in autumn 2008 under the title "Speak out against discrimination", aptly continues using the "all different – all equal" motto. It is my sincere belief that through our campaign, we are not only making noise, we are making a difference.

THE 2007 YEAR OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AND BEYOND: THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S COMMITMENT TO FIGHT AGAINST RACISM

By Belinda Pyke

Director for Equality between Men and Women, Action against Discrimination, Civil Society European Commission; Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Ten years after the European Year against Racism, 2007 was declared the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, during which the 27 Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, carried out 435 Actions at national, regional or local level to make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination - irrespective of **sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation**, to promote equal opportunities for all and to launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity for European societies.

The principle - central to the Decision on the Year - to treat equally the six grounds mentioned above and covered by Article 13 of the EC Treaty resulted in about 1600 different activities (i.e. 440 national-level campaigns, 1000 events and meetings and around 120

studies and surveys) that to a large extent combined several grounds of discrimination together: an acknowledgement of the need to recognise that each of us has **multiple identities** and thus making tangible the issue of **multiple discrimination**.

Young people were key players in these activities. They were often the target audience, notably via inter-schools competitions, asking young people to address issues of diversity and equality. This was for example the case in Romania with **The Diversity around Me** contest, where more than 100 paintings, photographs, graphics and films were produced by high-school students from all over the country and presented in a travelling exhibition in high-schools of 13 Romanian cities, prompting further debate between students and their teachers on discrimination, equal opportunities and stereotypes.

Some countries established synergies between the European Year messages and the closing of their national **All different, all equal** campaigns extending the activities to all grounds of discrimination, beyond ethnicity and religion. This was the case of Luxembourg, where the National Youth Service in close co-operation with all Youth organisations created what they called a **Living Library** composed of human books to whom readers could put

questions and thus de-construct many of the stereotypes and prejudices they could have about certain groups or individuals in society. However some countries did focus some of their activities more specifically on discrimination based on ethnicity or/and religion. This was the case of 13 of the 30 Polish actions where both kind of discrimination were often jointly addressed and targeted mostly on young people. An Internet radio called **Voice of Africa** was thus set up by an African NGO in Warsaw with the aim of reaching out directly to young people, and among them football team supporters, in order to fight racism on the football pitch.

Islamophobia was also one of the concerns that several countries addressed by trying to raise awareness on Islam among their respective societies. Again young people were at the forefront of these activities: in Slovakia, the project called **Divided by Borders, Divided by Religion**, led by the local Amnesty International, allowed a total of 60 lectures and discussions about Islam held at 35 secondary schools throughout the country.

A large number of actions focussed on ethnicity addressed discrimination experienced by Roma people (in 15 of the 30 participating countries). One of Spain's 22 actions looked at ways to increase the social participation of **young Gitanos**, whereas Italy, in close co-operation with an NGO called Save the Children, worked on the development of an intervention model for the recovery and inclusion of **street children** (mostly Roma), starting with a feasibility study in Milan as a pilot area.

Beyond race/ethnicity and religion, the European Year also helped to open new avenues for young gays and lesbians in a

significant number of countries, including the new Member States. Interestingly, the transgender issue was taken on board by a few pioneering countries, including Ireland with two specific actions, one of which was the **BeLonG To Youth Project** which established a peer support group for young people who identify as transgender.

At EU level, besides competitions involving MTV, the Commission created a **Youth Panel** of 10 young people from various European countries, chosen to represent one of the six discrimination grounds. They shared with the audiences at both the opening and closing conferences of the Year a part of their life stories, reflecting their experience of negative discrimination, as well as their visions for 2007 and beyond. Their creativity and authenticity were much praised by all participants at these events, including government representatives.

The Youth Panel has now moved forwards (with an EU funded project by DG Education and Culture under the Programme "Europe for Citizens") and has renamed itself as **The Diversity Crew** (Crew stands for Creative Witnesses of Discrimination).

It is unfortunately not possible to list here all the innovative and thrilling initiatives that the Year was able to trigger. But it's sure that our efforts to fight discrimination and promote diversity, both at EU and national level, have obviously not stopped with the end of the Year.

The Commission published on 2 July 20058 a communication **Non-discrimination and equal opportunities: a renewed commitment** indicating clearly the willingness of the Commission to go on working with the Member States and in particular to build upon

the many and so varied good practices as the ones described above.

Finally, we still have our **For Diversity. Against Discrimination campaign** where young people and their organisations will continue to be one of our target publics, but also one of our most precious partners!

For further information:

Achievements of the 2007 EYEO: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?language=EN

EYEO Youth Panel: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?cat_id=YP

Diversity Crew: www.diversitycrew.eu

FDAD: <http://www.stop-discrimination.info/>

“GOOD HABITS FORMED AT YOUTH MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE”

Aristotle

HOW THE EU FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AGENCY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

By Waltraud Heller and Pia Tirronen

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IN THE EU

The EU can be proud of its achievements related to freedoms and civil rights over the past 60 years: All EU Member States have subscribed to the principles of human rights, be it with their signatures of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, or the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, or with explicit references to human rights in their national constitutions.

However, very often the words look nice on paper, but yet a reality check shows that we still have a long way to go if we want to ensure the same rights for everyone. It is a fact that millions of people in the EU have to face discrimination and inequalities on a daily basis. This is a disgrace that EU governments, together with a strong civil society, must address head-on.

THE NEW FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AGENCY

To give this fight for equal rights a new impetus, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has been set up in March 2007. With FRA, the EU has created its own mechanism to improve, monitor and assess how far our actions are matching the words of the Declarations. Whereas FRA's mandate does not reach outside the EU borders, we have a strong mandate to deal with human rights concerns in the 27 EU Member States. In a "Multi-annual Framework", the EU has asked FRA to undertake work in selected areas for the next five years, such as racism and xenophobia, multiple discrimination, asylum and immigration, or the rights of the child.¹

The Agency has three key functions: to collect information and data on fundamental rights; to provide advice to the EU and to its Member

¹ Overall, the EU has asked FRA to work in the following areas (Implementing Regulation (EC) No 168/2007):

- a) racism, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- b) discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and against persons belonging to minorities and any combination of these grounds (multiple discrimination);
- c) compensation of victims;
- d) the rights of the child, including the protection of children;
- e) asylum, immigration and integration of migrants;
- f) visa and border control;
- g) participation of the EU citizens in the Union's democratic functioning;
- h) information society and, in particular, respect for private life and protection of personal data; and
- i) access to efficient and independent justice.

States; and to promote dialogue with civil society in order to raise public awareness of fundamental rights.

ENSURING THAT PEOPLE KNOW THEIR RIGHTS

According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, only one third of our citizens say that they know their rights, should they be a victim of discrimination or harassment.² Therefore one task for FRA is to push governments to better inform people about their rights. Knowing the rights is the very step on the way to equal rights for all.

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO LEGAL AID

If you have been discriminated against, and you know your rights, the next step will be to go for legal aid. This is another concern for FRA: to ensure that there is real access to justice for everyone, and not just on paper. It is well known that many people within the EU have limited access to justice, e.g. where there are no free legal aid schemes available.

There is also a need for appropriate structures to make rights work, i.e. creating competent bodies where victims of discrimination can go.³ Governments must ensure that these equality bodies are truly independent and have strong powers, and that they are adequately resourced.

GOOD HABITS FORMED AT YOUTH...

Young people are one of the main target groups for FRA's work: Young people are the future of Europe, and the way they grow up and what they learn on human rights will

influence the entire future of equality and equal rights in the EU.

In addition to the Agency's programmes of activities for civil society organisations, national and local governments and other stakeholders, there are also specific activities aimed at youth. FRA addresses young people at different levels: on the one hand via its research studies, and on the other hand with concrete initiatives, such as the Diversity Day, workshops with Yad Vashem, a s'cool agenda, or by offering a visitor programme.

FRA YOUTH RESEARCH

As mentioned above, one of FRA's main tasks is to collect information and data on fundamental rights. Some of its research deals directly with concerns of young people, such as the study on separated asylum seeking children that FRA is about to launch. The aim of this project is to provide insight into separated asylum seeking children's views and perspectives, in order to improve the quality of asylum conditions, as well as the legal procedures and relevant support structures for asylum seeking minors. Most other FRA research projects have elements with a high relevance to the lives of young people, even if they do not have a specific focus solely on youth.⁴

"RESPECT UNLIMITED"

Every year, FRA organises a "Diversity Day", aimed at youngsters aged from 12-18. This year the event has the motto "respect unlimited" and has a focus on the European Year of

² Special Eurobarometer 296: Discrimination in the EU 2008

³ By the end of 2007, three Member States had not even installed an equality body, although they had legally obliged themselves to do so.

⁴ For example: "EU-MIDIS: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey", "Racism and social marginalisation: potential pathways to violent radicalisation", "The situation regarding racism in sport in the European Union and positive initiatives to combat it", "The housing situation of Roma and Travellers in the EU"

Intercultural Dialogue. It takes place on 10 November in Vienna with about 2000 young people from Austria and the neighbouring countries. More than 40 NGOs will have interactive stands inviting the young people to experience and discuss the importance of fundamental rights and equality. There will be a wheelchair parcours, computer simulations, and many more activities that will teach about human rights issues in an entertaining way. 20 workshops will be held on various topics - ranging from sign language courses to role plays on non-discrimination, asylum-seeking or gender stereotyping. Finally, there will be a lively intercultural stage programme with music and theatre performances.⁵ The young participants will leave Diversity Day with FRA's s'cool agenda for 2009 to remind them of some fundamental rights lessons throughout the coming school year.⁶

FRA has successfully organised workshops with Yad Vashem, where we bring pupils and Holocaust survivors together, to discuss the history and lessons to be learned with eye witnesses. FRA is also encouraging visitor

⁵ For details see the event website: www.diversityday.eu

⁶ The s'cool agenda can be ordered at info@fra.europa.eu

groups to come to our organisation, in order to get first hand information on fundamental rights in the EU, and on how FRA works.

The new Fundamental Rights Platform, which has just been set up by FRA, is the main tool for the Agency for working with civil society (NGOs working in the area of fundamental rights, social partners, religious communities, non-confessional organisations, academics, etc.). We encourage youth organisations active in the field of fundamental rights to get involved. One more possible way of cooperating with youth organisations in the future could be in the area of education and awareness-raising which is now part of FRA's mandate.

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

Although the EU is on a good way in protecting fundamental rights for all, there remains a lot to be done in this respect, and in order to put words on paper into action. FRA invites particularly young people to make themselves aware of their rights, to fully use them, and to stand up against injustice wherever it may occur. Together we can make a difference!

RAISING AWARENESS ON RACISM BY CINEMA: THE STORY OF "SKINNING"

*By Stevan Filipović
Filmmaker*

More than 10 years ago, Dušan Jovanović, a 12 year old Roma boy, was brutally murdered in a street at the very center of Belgrade, Serbia, by a group of neo-nazi Skinheads. Veteran actor Dragan Maksimović was beaten to death a few years later, just because a similar group *thought*

he was Roma. These are tragic examples of hate crimes which, unfortunately, taken place here almost daily. What have we, as a society, done to let these things happen, and, more importantly, how can we prevent them?

For one, we never discuss such tragedies. Certainly, when something like this happens it stays in the news for a few days, but then is quickly forgotten. We view the homeless Roma children, begging in the streets to survive, as a usual part of the scenery. Our senses are

dulled, and such tragedies no longer upset us. We see news titles like “Thousands died in Chinese earthquake,” “Hundred civilians killed in Iraq,” or “Bomb in a bus in Israel- two dead, seventeen injured,” yet remain unconcerned. We just continue life as usual, wondering why these “statistics” no longer affect us, unaware of how desensitised we have become.

Art has always had the power to personalise things, and films are a great tool that can be used to raise awareness. Unfortunately, however, Serbian films usually depict the Roma through colorful and exotic stereotypes, instead of who they are in reality. This is certainly a big part of the problem, as many people form lasting impressions of the world through such films.

Films communicate with a very wide range of audiences. For example, “Shaitan’s Warrior”, our previous film (and the first Serbian fantasy film) was seen by over 50,000 people in cinemas, and 1,5 million on TV. Kids in Belgrade were seen quoting the dialogue from the film and writing it as graffiti on the walls. When dealing with that kind of mass audience, filmmakers have a great responsibility – what kind of message is being sent to these young people? This is the reason we chose to focus our next film on what we think are the important issues of our generation. Our film *Skinning* deals with the problems that are also, regrettably, symptomatic among the youth across Europe.

Just how many times have we read, heard or witnessed extreme violence, racism, beatings, murders, breaking into universities, and open preaching of Nazism by the Neo-Nazi groups like Skinheads or similar extremists? Or crime and corruption in the world of professional sports? What about the silent (or not so silent) support these extremists sometimes

get from the politicians, who use their hatred, manipulate them, and in the end always find ways to profit from this evil?

I was really frustrated to see that a whole generation of young Serbian filmmakers, at least those directly affected or defined by these events, still remain silent about the problems that we should be shouting about! Or have they become so lethargic that they see denials of Holocaust or celebrations of Hitler’s birthday in the middle of Belgrade (after millions of Serbian victims were involved in fighting against the Nazism in WWII) as something trivial?

Skinning is a story about Novica, a quiet teenager from Belgrade, who gets involved in the world of football hooligans, and transforms from an aspiring math genius into the ruthless leader of the local Skinhead gang, after he brutally murders a Roma boy. The point of our story is, basically, to show just how little it takes to transform a promising kid to a disillusioned and dangerous young man. Novica isn’t just a mindless victim of circumstances, and every step he takes toward the abyss is a result of his own rational decisions. Every decision he makes seems to him as logical and well-justified. But what kind of a society is one that will give him a logical and moral justification for the violence, and even murder, Novica will commit?

We are driven by the motivation to isolate and analyse the reasons leading to wide acceptance of this or similar kinds of extremism that plague the modern European societies, in a gripping story that charts our main character’s tragic downfall.

On our journey to the depths we will encounter the world of Belgrade’s football matches,

hooligan groups and their bloody feuds, crime, selling of the young football players, Serbian fascist and neo-nazi underworld, corrupt police officers, false friendships and vile betrayals.

The goal is to make an engaging and honest film, that will brutally and loudly communicate with the generation it is made for. Inspired by films like «La Haine», «American History X» or «Fight Club», and the British films that deal with similar social and political issues, as «ID» or «This is England», we are trying to avoid the 'preaching to the converted' approach, so often used by local filmmakers.

Unfortunately, making such a film in Serbia is not an easy task. As we do not have commercial cinematography, any potential film production here depends on national funds, which are often distributed via corrupt committees, directly influenced by politics and personal favours. So far, our studios have gotten tremendous support from various local NGO's and international funds for this

project, but no support from the state at all! A vast majority of submitted projects are often dismissed without the members of the committee even reading them. Of course, this kind of corruption and non-transparent decision-making is very common in Serbia; over the years, this has had disastrous effects for many generations of talented young Serbs, who, after years of trying to get support for their projects, end up disillusioned and leave Serbia forever.

We do not want to do that. This is our country, and we want to make a difference here. After years of misery, poverty and wars, fueled by extreme nationalism, brought to us by often the very same people who now sit in these committees, deciding who and when will make films in Serbia, we want, as a generation, to be given a chance to voice our opinions and to tell our version of truth. There is another way, and we are ready to fight for this right.



Film Šišanje (*Skinning*)

CONCLUSION

*By Bettina Schwarzmayr,
President of the European Youth Forum*

This report has been highlighting the effects of racism, discrimination and other forms of intolerance in different areas of life and their negative impact on young people: from the difficulties experienced to get a decent job to the obstacles in accessing sexual and reproductive services, from bullying at school to hate violence and crime. The consequences of racism and discrimination hamper youth autonomy and active youth participation to the public life and increase the vulnerability of young people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The message stemming out here from youth organisations and other civil society organisations, working at the local, regional and European level, as well as from institutions is that **racism is still a widespread phenomenon and that further efforts should be undertaken to tackle it.**

To this aim; a comprehensive approach should be taken in order to overcome the current trends and to ensure the freedom from discrimination and racism for all young people.

Legal protection against racism and discrimination is crucial: effective anti-discrimination legislation should be implemented at all levels and should include provisions against harassment, bullying and hatecrimes. Victims of racism and discrimination should be supported when seeking legal redressing and specific provisions should be designed to overcome victimisation.

Furthermore, **non-legislative measures** need to be put in place. As highlighted all throughout the report, racism and discrimination are often based on ignorance, prejudices, stereotypes and lack of awareness on human rights. Information campaigns and raising-awareness initiatives, aiming at uprooting stereotypes and prejudices, should be supported and carried out at school as well as in other areas. Specific trainings for journalists and responsible media need to be promoted, given the potential role media can play in stimulating critical thinking and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.

The YFJ firmly believes that **empowering** young people is key to fight effectively against racism and discrimination; this implies providing young people with formal and non-formal education opportunities helping them in developing aware on their rights, making responsible and informed choices and being active citizens. To this aim, youth organisations should pursue their efforts, establishing cooperation with other civil society organisation, including those representing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Equality and non-discrimination should be **mainstreamed** in all policies, including youth policies. A constant dialogue should take place among youth organisations, other civil society organisations and institutions. The **involvement of young people** in decision making processes is vital to design policies based on current realities and able to effectively taking the major challenges. Therefore, the YFJ calls European Institutions, national and regional governments, academics, journalists and businesses to closely consult young people when policies aiming at fighting racism and discrimination and in promoting equality are designed. Transparent decision making

processes are also necessary to increase young people's confidence in institutions and the decisions they take.

Furthermore, youth organisations as well as young people in general need to contribute to implement policies and to monitor and evaluating them, bridging the gaps between the decision-making mechanisms, the bodies in charge of implement decisions and the realities on the field.

A **transversal approach** should be promoted in order to uprooting racism, discrimination and intolerance from our societies; to this aim, youth organisations need to establish networks and to closely cooperate with other

civil society organisations, media, scholars, businesses and policy makers.

Youth is playing a vital role in the fight against racism and discrimination. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed if we want to achieve a society in which everyone enjoys human rights and fundamental freedoms. Youth need to raise its voice, to ask for social changes, to put pressure on institutions and other stakeholders and at the same time to be a reliable partner, to act as a multiplier and to promote change.

Although the diversity of opinions, ideas and beliefs the youth movement embraces within itself, the youth call for a better world, free from racism, discrimination and inequalities should be unanimous and spoken out loudly.



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