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**Address to Plenary Session of the  
World Conference Against Racism**

**Durban, 2 September 2001**

**by**

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**European Commission**

**On behalf of the European Community**

Because Governments cannot fight racism on their own. Racism is a problem of society and all of society must play its part.

No corner of the world is entirely free from racist violence, ethnic hatred or discrimination. Europe has certainly had and still has its share. Many countries have developed measures and strategies to combat the phenomena, which can be a model for all of us.

Racism and the activities of racists – especially in the days of the Internet – are no longer limited to the borders of a single country. Transnational groupings such as the European Union can add value to the efforts of individual states to combat racism.

The fight against racism is now firmly rooted in European law. Specific reference to the fight against racism is contained in the Treaty establishing the European Community.

The Proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in December 2000 is the most recent reinforcement of fundamental rights and non-discrimination in the EU. Article 21 of the Charter prohibits discrimination based on any ground including race, colour, ethnic or social origin.

### **Article 13**

The European Union rejects theories which attempt to determine the existence of separate human races.

Last year, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted two pieces of binding legislation to prohibit discrimination on grounds of racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

These laws give the victims of discrimination the right to seek redress before the courts, with effective and

Mr/Madam Chair,

Migrants are not the only victims of racism and xenophobia. But they are among the most vulnerable groups. And racism directed at them needs to be dealt with through common immigration and asylum policies as well as through social policy.

A European summit in 1999 set down the principle that Europe's immigration and asylum policies must be developed hand in hand with a vigorous integration policy for legally resident migrants. The European Council declared that the objective of this policy should be to grant migrants rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens. This is crucial to promote social cohesion and to combat the rise of racism and xenophobia.

These common policies on immigration and asylum must be clear to our own citizens and must offer guarantees to people who seek protection in or access to the European Union. We want an open and secure European Union, fully committed to the obligations of the Geneva Refugee Convention and other relevant human rights instruments, and able to respond to humanitarian needs on the basis of solidarity. The European Commission is tabling a series of proposals in order to implement these commitments.

### **Practical action underway**

We know though, that there are many areas of discrimination that cannot be tackled by law.

Mr/Madam Chair,

Practical action is needed to reach out to people and to help change the underlying prejudices that fuel racist attitudes and behaviour.

## **European Union Monitoring Centre**

Finally, we have also established the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. The Centre reports on levels of racism across the EU, and highlights good practices to combat it.

Because good information and research are essential if we are to tackle racism head on.

## **Multiple discrimination/gender**

Mr/Madam Chair,

Racial discrimination can have particularly devastating effects when it is combined with discrimination on other grounds such as gender, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

In the case of gender equality, the Community's Framework Strategy takes a comprehensive approach to this issue.

One of the five areas covered is gender equality in civil life, which includes human rights and fundamental freedoms for women and men.

The Community supports awareness-raising measures to empower women facing multiple discrimination and fights for greater gender equality in economic life, in political life, in relation to social rights and access to services. Gender equality, like ethnic equality, must be pursued through all policies that have a bearing on it.

## **Conclusion**

Mr/Madam Chair,

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

## Racism

B5-0766/2000

### European Parliament resolution on the European Union's position at the World Conference Against Racism and the current situation in the Union

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 6, 7 and 29 of the EU Treaty and Article 13 of the EC Treaty,
  - having regard to the relevant international legal instruments of the UN, the ILO, UNESCO and the Council of Europe, with particular reference to the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,
  - having regard to its resolutions, in particular that of 16 March 2000<sup>1</sup>, and the report of its committee of enquiry, on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism,
  - having regard to the adoption on 29 June 2000, with the European Parliament's support, of the Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin,
  - having regard to the European Union's establishment of the European Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna,
- A. whereas the number of reported violent racist attacks on immigrants and people belonging to minority groups in the Member States has increased;
- B. having regard to the electoral successes of racist and xenophobic parties,
- C. whereas there is a close correlation between the increase in the number of reported attacks and in the activities of extreme right-wing political parties and movements, and whereas those parties and movements are using new world-wide information technologies in pursuit of their objectives,
1. Expresses its support for the European Conference to be held by the Council of Europe from 11 to 13 October 2000 in Strasbourg on the subject 'All different, all equal', the European contribution to the World Conference Against Racism to be held in 2001;
  2. Notes that racism and xenophobia are prevalent throughout the world and that such forms of racial discrimination constitute one of the most serious violations of human rights;
  3. Calls therefore on the Council, in compliance with the principles and requirements in this area laid down in the Amsterdam Treaty and the future European Charter of Fundamental Rights, to present a common European Union position at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism;
  4. Considers that this common position of the European Union should reflect the Union's commitment to work, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty, for a better understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> Texts Adopted, Item 17.

15. Calls on the Member States to establish training programmes for police and judicial officials and in particular for the services which deal with migrants at borders (including knowledge and understanding of foreign cultures, prevention of racist behaviour, education in tolerance);
16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give greater encouragement to action programmes seeking to combat right-wing extremism, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, and to give political, practical and financial support to initiatives emanating from civil society, particularly NGOs and local authorities;
17. Asks the Council furthermore to step up, in accordance with Article 29 of the EU Treaty, police and judicial cooperation between the Member States in combating racism by adopting a framework decision to replace the joint action adopted in 1996, which has not led to any real progress to date, and points out that it is essential for mutual assistance to cover action to crack down on racist behaviour on the Internet;
18. Calls on the Council and the Member States to bring their influence to bear on the political parties to sign and comply with the 'Charter of European political parties for a non-racist society', to condemn intolerance and xenophobic or racist statements or behaviour, and to refrain from electing candidates who, or cooperating with political groups which, defend racist or xenophobic objectives;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to give particular encouragement to youth work and European youth exchange programmes and to expand the EU-wide encounter programmes;
20. Calls at the same time on the Council to explore, in conjunction with the relevant Member States, how to extend the legal scope for taking action against political parties whose racist and xenophobic programmes jeopardise the principles of non-discrimination in their countries;
21. Condemns the attacks on people belonging to minority groups and immigrant communities and calls on the Member States to take appropriate measures to counter the rising tide of racist violence in the Member States and to step up European and international cooperation and exchange of information on the activities of extreme right-wing and neo-nazi groups;
22. Calls on the Council, Commission and Member States to monitor the use of new information technologies such as the Internet by extremist and neo-Nazi groups, to prosecute those who use them for purposes of incitement to racial violence, and to debate this issue at the 2001 World Conference against Racism with a view to world-wide cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations;
23. Calls at the same time on the Member States to send a visible signal of solidarity by improving protection for victims of racist attacks and to demonstrate exemplary practice in dealings between public servants and people of different race, language, ethnic origin and religion or philosophy, and calls on the Commission and Council to build on the positive experiences of the European Year against Racism and Xenophobia, and to establish new programmes to support in particular local operators in the social field;
24. Calls for an increase in the amounts allocated to budget headings for combating racism,
25. Asks the Council to recommend that all Member States and applicant countries withdraw any remaining reservations they may have about the implementation of the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, signed on 21 December 1965;
26. Calls for the candidate countries, during accession negotiations, to undertake to guarantee the