

Concept Note for Panel “Where do we stand? The anti-racism action plan and national action plans against racism”

Discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin is prohibited in the EU. Yet such discrimination persists in our society and more than half of the respondents to a Eurobarometer poll in April and May 2023 believed that discrimination on the basis of being Roma, of skin colour, of ethnic origin, and of gender identity or sexual orientation were widespread in their country and had increased since 2019. Racism, xenophobia, anti-gypsyism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and related forms of discrimination and hatred are on the rise again across Europe. FRA research in 2023 identified a worsening trend of racism against people of African descent, while anti-gypsyism continued to be pervasive. FRA also noted the persistence of discrimination, harassment and violence against migrants with Sub-Saharan or North-African backgrounds.

In her State of the Union Address 2020, President von der Leyen announced the adoption of an EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 that sets out a series of measures over the course of five years. Among others, the Commission announced to ensure that Member States fully implement relevant EU law and further strengthen the legal framework, if needed. This could happen in particular in the areas not yet covered by the non-discrimination legislation, such as law enforcement. The Commission also called on Member States to adopt national action plans against racism until the end of 2023 and maximise the use of all the tools at their disposal, in particular the funding available under the next long-term EU budget and the Next Generation EU.

To support Member States in their efforts in the combat against racism, the Commission established a subgroup on the national implementation of the EU anti-racism action plan, consisting of designated Member States experts. By the end of 2021, the Subgroup, working with national experts, FRA, ECRI and OHCHR, put together the main principles to produce effective national anti-racism action plans. In 2022 the Subgroup developed complementary tools, including a checklist and reporting tool.

With two years until the end of the EU anti-racism action plan, the panel aims to look at the implementation of the action plan so far and take stock of national efforts to combat racism. Panellists are invited to assess their experiences, draw conclusions that will benefit further implementation and shape ideas for joint anti-racism work beyond 2025. The panel will be opened by European Commission anti-racism coordinator Michaela Moua with a short review on her work, especially regarding the implementation of the action plan.

Ireland and Spain will introduce their experiences with developing and implementing national action plans against racism, illustrate some successful steps and some challenges. The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and the PRESERVE -project will add the perspective of civil society and reflect on the impact of national action plans on European and national level of selected countries.

The panel is envisaged to be inclusive and encourages the audience to intervene and add to the discussion. Several Member States and civil society organisations working against racism will be part of the audience. Overall, this panel should address the following questions:

- 1.) What has changed/improved/deteriorated in the anti-racism field since 2020?
- 2.) Which experiences can serve as best practices but also as warnings?



- 3.) What impact has the EU anti-racism action plan and national action plan against racism had on racialised people?
- 4.) What steps need to be taken beyond 2025 and which gaps need to be addressed?

Participants:

- Isabela Mihalache, Senior Advocacy Officer, ERGO - European Rome Grassroots Organisations Network
- Allayne Cassidy, Administrative Officer, International Protection Accommodation Policy and Anti-Racism Policy Unit, Ireland
- Javier Pascual, Policy Officer, Ministry of Equality, Spain
- Michaela Moua, Anti-racism coordinator of the European Commission
- Nourhene Mahmoudi, Policy and Advocacy Advisor, ENAR - European Network against racism
- Patricia Caro Maya, Member of the European Parliament, GUE/NGL
- Valentina Iacono Quarantino, Legal Officer, PRESEVERE – Preventing Racism and Discrimination – Enabling the effective implementation of the EU anti-racist legal framework