

# ENAR Fact Sheet



European Network Against Racism  
Réseau européen contre le racisme

## Black Europeans and People of African Descent in Europe

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This factsheet was prepared by The People for Change Foundation on behalf of the European Network Against Racism. It is based on the findings of the European Shadow Report on Racism in the European Union and covers the period 2010-2011. It highlights the particular challenges in regard to discriminatory practices throughout Europe that target People of African Descent or Black Europeans.

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*ENAR is a network of NGOs working to combat racism in all EU Member States. ENAR fights racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, promotes equal treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and links local/national and European initiatives.*

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## Introduction: Black Europeans and People of African Descent in Europe

People of African descent and members of the Black community are highlighted as being particularly vulnerable to racism and racial discrimination across the European Union.<sup>1</sup> Defining 'people of African descent' is no easy task and indeed various definitions and descriptions exist for the group. The UN Working Group on people of African descent proposed that: "People of African descent may be defined as descendants of the African victims of the trans-Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea slave trade. The group includes those of the sub-Saharan slave trade. Descendants of the victims of the trans-Atlantic trade live primarily in the Diaspora of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean".<sup>2</sup>

While estimates of the number of people of African descent are scant, the United States Congress suggested "an estimated 7,000,000 individuals of African descent currently live in and have long had a presence in Europe, forming an influential part of the African diaspora".<sup>3</sup> Some of the ENAR national Shadow Reports provide a tentative description of the community in their respective countries. The report from Denmark notes that people of African descent compose 11% (49,743) of the immigrant population in the country.<sup>4</sup> In Germany, statistics show that 3% (477,000) of people with a migrant background come from Africa. In Spain, data reveals that 1,084,611 people born in Africa are now living in Spain, 14% of whom have Spanish nationality.<sup>5</sup> 4,288 people of African descent are reported to live in the Czech Republic, representing 1% of the migrant population.<sup>6</sup> This description generally refers to both nationals with an African background and migrants. Class status seems to be irrelevant when compared to the more directly visible characteristics of difference associated with these communities, which make them a target to stereotyping, racism and discrimination. Legal status, however, may affect their access to certain rights as well as remedies in certain contexts. This places particular subsets of this group at a further disadvantage.

Within this broader category, specific groups are mentioned by some reports as being particularly vulnerable. These include Sub-Saharan Africans in Malta, Black Caribbeans in the UK, and Somalis

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<sup>1</sup> This is based on national reports drafted from 27 EU Member States and Accession Countries

<sup>2</sup> UN Working Group on People of African Descent, Identification and Definition of People of African Descent and How Racial Discrimination Against them is Manifested in Various Regions, E/CN.4/2003/WG.20/WP.3

<sup>3</sup> 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, H.Res; Recognizing persons of African descent in Europe during the International Year for People of African Descent, 5 August 2011, [www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=hr112-389](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=hr112-389)

<sup>4</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Denmark, p.9

<sup>5</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Germany, p.11, ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Spain, p.9

<sup>6</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Czech Republic, p.9

in Sweden. Reports from Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria<sup>7</sup> highlight that while people of African descent are few in number, they are nonetheless specifically targeted. On the other hand, reports from, for instance, Finland, Malta and Sweden identified this community to be perceived as the largest ethnic minority in the country.<sup>8</sup> The particular situation in Europe of people of African descent highlights the importance of specifically addressing their life situations. The 2011 International Year was therefore a welcome opportunity for States and the international community to achieve real change in this regard.

At the launch of a day of discussions on discrimination faced by people of African descent, Anwar Kemal, Chair of the UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination, noted that throughout history, people of African descent had borne a disproportionate impact of racial discrimination through greater joblessness, physical insecurity, inadequate housing and healthcare, lower life-expectancy, and many other disadvantages.<sup>9</sup> The reports drafted from an NGO perspective from across Europe indicate that this remains the reality in Europe. The Slave Auction Party in Sweden<sup>10</sup> underscored the severe lack of sensitivities to these issues and served as a clear reminder that certain issues still need to be addressed through educational and other initiatives. The exclusive reliance on legal channels has left an impact but has failed to achieve the desired results. The situation of persons of African origin in various spheres of life will be discussed in turn.

## Employment

Discrimination against people of African descent in the context of employment is highlighted from across the European Union. There is no European-wide research that describes the situation of groups discriminated against in the labour market over the reporting period, however, anecdotal evidence and research in individual countries or specific sub-groups strongly indicate that people of African descent are more likely to be unemployed, to face discrimination in the recruitment process, to be employed in jobs that do not reflect their qualifications, and to encounter harassment at work. In Poland, Africans complain that they are paid less for the same work carried

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<sup>7</sup> See Section IV of the relevant national Shadow Reports

<sup>8</sup> See Section IV of the relevant national Shadow Reports

<sup>9</sup> UNOG News and Media; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination holds day of discussion on Discrimination against People of African Descent; 7 March 2011, available at: [www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/\(httpNewsByYear\\_en\)/64948DE13A6D1033C125784C0068B4CB?OpenDocument](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B9C2E/(httpNewsByYear_en)/64948DE13A6D1033C125784C0068B4CB?OpenDocument)

<sup>10</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Sweden, p.8. The incident took place on 18 April at Lund University, at a student gathering that portrayed the transatlantic slave trade by blackening students' faces and tying ropes around their necks, and then leading them to a hall for 'sale' by a White 'slave trader'.

out by Polish workers.<sup>11</sup> Similarly in Malta, anecdotal evidence indicates that African migrants are often paid much less, and sometimes half of what their Maltese counterparts are paid, for the same work.<sup>12</sup> In Germany, discriminatory recruitment, coupled with the visibility of the group, restricts the opportunities for Afro-Germans to advance further in the application process.<sup>13</sup> In Latvia, while most members of the African community hold university diplomas, few were able to find a job relevant to their educational level.<sup>14</sup> In Ireland, research conducted by the Irish Centre for Human Rights revealed that 46% of the Galway population had been informed through hearsay or indirect experience to not use taxis driven by Africans. 62% of African taxi drivers stated that they had experienced discrimination while seeking employment in the taxi industry, all of whom had experienced harassment that was racially motivated.<sup>15</sup> This information also confirms the findings of the EU MIDIS research<sup>16</sup> carried out in previous years.

#### **NGO Good Practice from the UK**

**The Gender Equality and Race Inclusion project (GERI)** is a not-for-profit organisation that works to break down the barriers of prejudice and inequality in the workplace.<sup>17</sup> Its staff work with equality and diversity trainers and careers guidance consultants to promote best practice in equal opportunities and develop strategies to challenge ethnic occupational stereotyping within the labour market. They provide a range of interactive learning resources on promoting equality and diversity with an emphasis on interactive learning and accessibility by means of, for example, training DVDs and toolkits. GERI also employs Careers Guidance Consultants who support minority ethnic jobseekers and Home School Liaisons to assist school-to-work transitions with careers advice and translation of meetings in order to involve parents in supporting their child's career choices.

## **Housing**

The national Shadow Reports provide a snapshot which goes some way to illustrating the situation of people of African descent across the European Union. While particular countries have highlighted certain issues, they are by no means exclusive to those countries. The report from Germany notes that people of African descent are affected by gentrification, resulting in involuntary segregation. Rents tend to increase dramatically in inner city areas after re-

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<sup>11</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Poland, p.10

<sup>12</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Malta, p. 15

<sup>13</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Germany, p.2

<sup>14</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Latvia, p.13

<sup>15</sup> ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Ireland, p.11

<sup>16</sup> European Fundamental Rights Agency, EU-MIDIS: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/eu-midis/index\\_en.htm](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/eu-midis/index_en.htm)

<sup>17</sup> GERI, <http://www.geriproject.org/>, accessed 19 September 2011

development programmes, forcing poorer inhabitants to move to the fringes of the city, where cheaper accommodation is available. The German, Maltese and Italian reports identify people of African descent as experiencing discrimination when looking for accommodation and subsequently living in poorer conditions, impacted by overcrowding. In some cases, this is linked with difficulties accessing social housing and in other cases, to hosting family and friends.<sup>18</sup> Overt or hidden ethnic restrictions on who may and who may not rent property from homeowners and estate agents particularly affect people of African descent. Also emphasised is the link between employment and housing conditions. In Denmark, Africans were excluded from homeless shelters while in Italy, Lithuania, Germany and Malta discrimination is considered to be rooted in socio-economic issues, generating conflicts between residents, neighbours and homeowners. Moreover, the experiences of people of African descent in the housing sector continue to be negatively impacted by stereotypes and prejudices.

#### **NGO Good Practice from Austria**

**The Association Refugee Project Ute Bock** (Flüchtlingsprojekt Ute Bock) provides free housing possibilities for vulnerable groups, such as immigrants from the former Eastern bloc and Africa, and for asylum seekers. In addition, it also provides social and legal consultancy services for undocumented migrants. In 2010 it accommodated more than 350 vulnerable individuals.<sup>19</sup> More information on the activities of this association can be found at: [www.fraubock.at](http://www.fraubock.at).

## **Education**

A number of trends are noted in relation to the experiences of people of African descent in the education system. The Dutch report notes how the education system has become largely segregated with schools being referred to as Black or White. On a positive note, parent initiatives are noted in the same report as well as others that have sought to challenge this status quo. Some national reports, most notably (but not exclusively) coming from countries with relatively low numbers of people of African descent note that while there may be some initial apprehension, in most cases difficulties subside after meeting and interacting together. In other reports however, experiences of harassment, taunting, exclusion and bullying are reported, resulting in a generally negative experience for children of African descent. Another key concern, of which evidence in a number of countries is unfortunately lacking, relates to educational outcomes. One of the

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<sup>18</sup> See for instance: ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Germany, p.22, ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Malta, p. 21, ENAR Shadow Report 2010/2011: Italy, p.12

<sup>19</sup> For the association's activity report of 2010, refer to [http://fraubock.at/download/tb/Taetigkeitsbericht\\_2010.pdf](http://fraubock.at/download/tb/Taetigkeitsbericht_2010.pdf), accessed 23 August 2011.

countries that have disaggregated data by ethnicity is the UK, which reports that Black Caribbean students and other Black students are among the lowest achieving in the education system. The report notes that among larger minority ethnic communities, the lowest achieving groups are Black Caribbean, Pakistani, other Black students and pupils from a Mixed White and Black Caribbean background. These groups achieved 39.4%, 42.9%, 41.2% and 42.3% A\*–C grade GCSEs respectively.<sup>20</sup> The report also highlights that 8% of all Black university students attend Russell Group universities<sup>21</sup> compared to 24% of White students.

### NGO Good Practice from Spain

In the framework of the course '**Civic education**'<sup>22</sup> (*Educación para la ciudadanía*) **Sos Racismo Aragón** has developed and published an e-book on intercultural group dynamics which can be used by teachers. The book contains all of the necessary materials and fills a gap which official manuals did not cover.<sup>23</sup>

## Health

Based on the national Shadow Reports, it is difficult to identify manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in the field of healthcare that are particular to people of African descent. One trend that emerged, however, is that most manifestations impact this group more severely than they do other groups. This includes problems with accessing services, the quality of the services received, the linguistic and cultural appropriateness of those services, receiving rude treatment by other patients and medical personnel, as well as lower health outcomes. The report from Cyprus notes that Sub-Saharan migrants were more likely to be denied access to healthcare irrespective of legal status. In Sweden, a claim was made that an African woman was offended by hospital staff. Data in the UK highlights the lower health outcomes of this particular group. It is clear from the various national Shadow Reports that the visibility of this specific group makes them particularly vulnerable to discrimination and disadvantage.

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<sup>20</sup> See Section XI of the UK Shadow Report

<sup>21</sup> The Russell Group represents 20 leading UK universities which are committed to maintaining the best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and links with business and the public sector.

<sup>22</sup> Compulsory course in primary and secondary schools since the academic year 2007/08.

<sup>23</sup> For more information see CAREI, [www.carei.org](http://www.carei.org), accessed 12 July 2011.

### NGO Good Practice from Latvia

Between March and June 2011, the Latvian Centre for Human Rights implemented a project “Different Client in Diverse Latvia II”, which aimed to train healthcare workers, police officers and trade union representatives about intercultural communication, anti-discrimination and diversity management issues.<sup>24</sup> The three-day training "Different Client in Diverse Latvia II" targeted representatives of institutions providing services to third country nationals. In total, 78 participants, including 39 healthcare workers, 21 representatives of trade unions and 18 police officers took part in four 3-day seminars. Training participants gained both theoretical knowledge and practical advice for their work in our diverse society. Lectures, practical exercises, role plays, analyses of video materials and publications were used as the training methods in order to promote the active engagement of the participants. The updated training material, “Different Client in Diverse Latvia. Supplemented Edition”, was published and disseminated within the project framework,<sup>25</sup> which was implemented in Latvia by the Ministry of Culture under the framework of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals (75% of the EU funding and 25% of Latvian state co-funding).

### Access to goods and services

In various European countries, people of African descent are particularly vulnerable to racism and discrimination in the context of access to goods and services, which is partly due to the visibility of their skin colour, effectively reducing them to a minority status.. The impact of this behaviour - the creating of a tiered society - results in making these individuals feel as if they do not belong. For instance, people of African descent appear to be particularly vulnerable to rejection at clubs and bars, as highlighted in reports from Malta, Germany, Poland and Cyprus. The ethnic identity of a person, combined with age and gender characteristics, increases the probability of the person experiencing discrimination in the context of accessing goods and services.

### NGO Good Practice from Poland

<sup>24</sup> Latvian Centre for Human Rights, "Atšķirīgs klients daudzveidīgā Latvijā" Papildināts izdevums, Description of the project in Latvian, <http://www.humanrights.org.lv/html/lv/aktual/publ/30477.html>, accessed 10 August 2011

<sup>25</sup> Latvian Centre for Human Rights, "Atšķirīgs klients daudzveidīgā Latvijā II", available in Latvian [http://www.humanrights.org.lv/upload\\_file/001-144\\_GRAMATA\\_preview\\_encr.pdf](http://www.humanrights.org.lv/upload_file/001-144_GRAMATA_preview_encr.pdf) accessed 10 August 2011

In March 2011, for the first time, situation tests (*testy dyskryminacyjne* in Polish) took place in Poland as part of a Europe-wide initiative among various NGOs. They were carried out by a group of NGOs in cooperation with the Warsaw local authorities. White and Black testers, dressed alike and behaving the same way, visited 8 popular night clubs in Warsaw. The results showed that the Black testers were discriminated against in 3 of the night clubs,<sup>26</sup> since the bouncers or door staff had refused their entrance to the clubs. Considering that 5 minutes later, the White testers were allowed to enter, this was interpreted as discriminatory based on phenotype.<sup>27</sup> In these cases, the Black testers were informed that 'there was a closed party' or 'invitations were required' and were thus refused entrance. In contrast, the White testers entered the premises without any problems or delays.<sup>28</sup>

## Criminal justice system

In the context of ethnic profiling, one's appearance is a critical factor. This results in people of African origin being particularly vulnerable in this context. Most national reports specifically indicate that people of African descent are among the groups that suffer the most from ethnic profiling, discrimination in the implementation of counter-terrorism policies, as well as victimisation in racially motivated crimes, including attacks on their person and property. People of African descent are clearly at a disadvantage in the context of the criminal justice system. This is evident by the cases of Blacks being subjugated to violence at clubs, such as in a university town in Estonia, and to being four times more likely of their data recorded and stored in a criminal record, evident in the UK. Further evidence can be gleaned from the likelihood of Blacks being stopped, irrespective of their behaviour, at airports or on the street, as well as having their reports and complaints ignored.

### NGO Good Practice from Denmark

**The Danish Institute for Human Rights** has done a work on the issue of ethnic profiling and even issued a report in March 2011.<sup>29</sup> The report looked at the Danish law and police work and concluded that there is little institutional focus on the issue of ethnic profiling in the country. Martin Futtrup from the IHR pointed out that police officers lack legal guidelines for avoiding profiling in the cases of visitations, border control and anti-terror work.

<sup>26</sup> See press release on situation test at: <http://www.interwenciaprawna.pl/docs/press-release-noc-testow.pdf>, accessed 31 August 2011.

<sup>27</sup> 'Whites only' nightclubs in Warsaw?, *Polskie Radio*, available at: <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/23675,%E2%80%98Whites-only-nightclubs-in-Warsaw>, accessed 31 August 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Bawili się tylko Biali, *Gazeta.pl*, [http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,9207430,Bawia\\_sie\\_tylko\\_biali.html](http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,9207430,Bawia_sie_tylko_biali.html), accessed 31 August 2011.

<sup>29</sup> *Etnisk profilering i Danmark - dansk retsbeskyttelse inden for politiets arbejdsområde* <http://menneskeret.dk/news/nyheder?doc=15539>, accessed 22 August 2011.

## Media

Whether being used in sensationalistic adverts,<sup>30</sup> or the passing of degrading comments,<sup>31</sup> on TV, radio or other media, or the space given to exponents of the far right,<sup>32</sup> or the use of derogatory terms,<sup>33</sup> people of African descent are particularly negatively targeted in the media. Social media is used to instigate racism and promote discrimination, whether through comments on news items or the creation of Facebook groups. In brief, while there is no specific type of discrimination in this context that emerged from the Shadow Reports that particularly affect people of African descent, this group tends to be especially affected as far as stereotypes and prejudices are concerned.

### NGO Good Practice from Cyprus

In the north, the **Management Centre of the Mediterranean** together with several other NGOs and independent journalists established an online independent media centre in 2009, with the aim of focusing on issues that have the public's benefit at heart, rather than serving the political interests of certain groups. To that end, throughout 2010 several seminars, workshops and conferences were organised in order to promote and strengthen media independency and to put human rights issues at the core of media practice.<sup>34</sup>

## The 2011 International Year for People of African Descent

The international year provided States and the European Union, as well as organisations and individuals with an opportunity to raise the situation of this particular community to the fore of the political agenda. The year also provided an opportunity to assess the combination of factors that led to the diaspora including the slave trade, economic migration and forced migration, which have all contributed to the creation of an African minority within Europe. The Year, however, has failed to achieve its desired goal or have its proposed impact. Very little action was taken towards the betterment of the position of persons of African descent and little strategy has been put in place to support the integration and social inclusion of the diaspora within European communities. Those from within the community who have achieved this should be commended and celebrated. Political will, however, remains low, with a lack of support those who face prejudice and discrimination as well as exclusion.

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<sup>30</sup> See Section XI of the Sweden Shadow Report

<sup>31</sup> See Section XI of the Cyprus Shadow Report

<sup>32</sup> See Section XI of the Malta Shadow Report

<sup>33</sup> See Section XI of the Germany Shadow Report

<sup>34</sup> IMC Independent Media Centre Website: <http://www.medyamerkezi.org/> (Available in Turkish and English) , accessed 30 August 2011.

## Conclusion

The International Year for Persons of African Descent has allowed greater attention to be shown to this particular group. This factsheet as well as the European Shadow Report more generally indicates that the group continues to face discrimination, stereotypes and prejudice in employment, housing, healthcare, education, access to goods and services, criminal justice, and the media. The visibility of their skin colour, deemed by some negatively, heightens their vulnerability to discrimination. Moreover, in a context of rampant prejudice, visibility and perception of ethnic minority status appear to outplay other considerations including nationality and legal, social, or class status. This calls for positive measures to be taken in order to overcome the disadvantages being faced. The focus on legal instruments has gone some way to developing the anti-racism framework, however, more multi-faceted approaches must be implemented if the desired impact and objectives are to be achieved. For this reason, ENAR recommends that the following policy actions be implemented to counter and improve the ongoing challenges for people of African Descent in Europe and for Black Europeans, who deserve to be and ought to be treated equally.

## Recommendations

1. Member States should compile segregated data in order to monitor, assess and evaluate the impact of anti-discrimination policies as well as other policies on communities of persons of African descent in Europe.
2. Afrophobia should be recognised as a particular stream within the broader understanding of racism and discrimination, and be addressed.
3. A strategic, comprehensive approach should be adopted to ensure that persons of African descent in Europe and Black Europeans achieve equal opportunities within the European Union.
4. The attention afforded to persons of African descent in Europe and Black Europeans in the course of the International Year should be maintained and fostered in order to muster the needed political will to adequately address the prejudice and disadvantages at the micro, meso and macro levels faced by these individuals.
5. Ensure that adequate research is conducted in order to map out the situation of persons of African descent in Europe and Black Europeans as well as their standing in various fields, including employment, education, housing, healthcare, and the criminal justice system.