

To **Commission President Ursula von der Leyen**

Rue de la Loi 200

1049 Brussels

Putting (anti-)racism back on the agenda at the State of the Union 2026

Dear President von der Leyen,

As the Annual State of the Union approaches, we believe, as organizations working on inclusion, equality and anti-discrimination, that it is crucial for the fight against discrimination, especially against racism, to be put back on the Commission's agenda and priorities.

While under your last mandate, the first-ever Anti-Racism Action Plan (ARAP) was adopted in an urgent and necessary effort to tackle racism from its most pervasive to its deadliest forms, last year the State of the European Union **lacked any mention of anti-racism despite its emphasis on respecting the rule of law**. The application of the rule of law cannot be fulfilled without the protection of citizens' rights and freedoms, including those of minorities and recognizing non-discrimination as a guiding principle, as outlined in Art 2 of the TUE and in Art 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

The Fundamental Rights Agency revealed that since the adoption of the ARAP in 2020, racism has remained steady, even increasing for some communities¹ with the rise and mainstreaming of far-right ideas, something reinforced by the many coercive migration policies adopted at the EU level. During this summer, many racially motivated crimes^{2,3}, have been reported and seem to be on the rise in Europe - with reported incidents only representing the tip of the iceberg.

At the beginning of 2026, we welcomed the adoption of a new Anti-Racism Strategy and the subsequent formation of an Anti-Racism Civil Society Forum in June. However, the scope and mandate of both the Strategy and the Forum remain limited and vague. To turn **non-discrimination and anti-racism into reality, ambition and resources are urgently required. A strategy by itself is not enough.**

Civic participation of racialized minorities is not addressed in the new strategy, despite heavy restrictions hitting citizens' right to assemble and to demonstrate, especially hard-hitting for

¹ Fundamental Rights Agency, FRA submission to the EU Commission Call for evidence for the 2026-2030 EU anti-racism strategy (2025)

² France 24, Demonstrations break out in Bologna after Moroccan man dies while being restrained by police (2026)

³ Brussels Times, Brussels shopkeeper dies after defending woman from abuse on tram (2026)

racialized communities and NGOs working on anti-racism, youth and migration, which face severe defunding, smear campaigns and administrative hurdles. For the most vulnerable, among which racialized youth, women and girls, members of the LGBTQI+ community and people with disability this situation undermines trust in institutions while fostering exclusion, contributing to the reproduction of unequal societies.

Without the full buy-in of the Commission's leadership, the EU's anti-racism efforts undertaken decades ago risk falling stagnant and leading to growing inequalities and mistrust between EU citizens. That is why we believe your address to the European Parliament should **clearly reaffirm your commitment to fighting discrimination, among which racism**, to ensure a prosperous and inclusive European Union.

That's why we are asking you to:

- **Reaffirm the Commission's commitment to ending racism and all forms of discrimination in the EU.** Move beyond a commitment to combating racism towards an actively anti-racist European Union, with concrete, measurable and sustained action to prevent and address racism and discrimination in all their forms;
- **Task Commissioners Lahbib and McGrath to oversee and support the development and implementation of National Action Plans against Racism** in EU Member States in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Coordinator;
- **Allot and if necessary, expand resources made available to the Anti-Racism Coordinator team and to the Anti-Racism Civil Society Forum** to bolster the role of stakeholders and NGOs working directly with affected communities to fight against racism while reinforcing collaboration between various DGs;
- **Reinforce the role of the Equality Taskforce with a clear mandate including the fight against racism to mainstream racism within each DG** and through the design, development and implementation of policies;
- **Continue to support the collection of disaggregated, equality data** by facilitating an effective coordination between the Commission, equality bodies, national human rights organizations, and NGOs and expand the role and mandate of FRA in doing so;
- **Launch infringements against Member States for failing to implement the Racial Equality Directive, the Employment Equality Directive**, as well as the **Standards for Equality Bodies Directive** and publish accessible and timely information about the development of these processes;
- **Ensure the systematic inclusion of updates on racism and anti-discrimination in the annual Rule of Law report;**

- **Continue and reinforce efforts towards a more diverse workforce within the European Commission, not only sticking to traineeships but moving beyond to ensure that more individuals facing racism can access to middle-management and high-level positions;**
- **Recognize and strengthen the role of youth-, minority-led and women-led organizations**, including grassroot bodies, as **essential partners** in eradicating racism and all forms of discrimination in the EU;
- **Expand and dedicate proper, stable and sustainable funding to (youth-led) NGOs and human rights organizations** working together with victims of racism to empower and facilitate their access to justice and ensure the presence of firewalls to allow victims to come forward regardless of their status;
- **Ensure meaningful and inclusive participation of racialised communities, youth along with women and girls in the EU's democratic participation mechanisms** that works towards genuine inclusion and influence in decision-making by systematically applying a gender-sensitive, youth-friendly lens;
- **Address the structural barriers faced by racialised youth, women and girls and communities** in accessing employment, entrepreneurship and economic opportunities;
- **Ensure that EU youth policies and programmes systematically address the specific barriers faced by racialised communities, youth and women and girls** by applying an intersectionality approach.

We thank you for your continued dedication and service to making our Europe a more prosperous, inclusive, and just Union for all.

Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- #DiasporaVote!
- Amnesty International
- Asian Voices Europe
- Changemakers Lab
- COMEX-ARC
- European Alternatives
- European Civic Forum
- European Youth Forum
- Humanity Diaspo ONG
- Migration Policy Group
- Phiren Amenca
- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)
- QUEST (QUALITY EDUCATION IN EUROPE FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION)
- Victims Support Europe
- VOICIFY - European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration Experiences
- Y4IE - YOUTH FOR INCLUSIVE EUROPE

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- ADDAM - France
- ALDIC asbl
- Asociación Rumiñahui
- COSPE
- Dokustelle
- Federación SOS Racismo
- Fondation pour la mémoire de l'esclavage
- GiULiA giornaliste
- Immigrati senza frontiere
- JusticeMakers Bangladesh in France (JMBF)
- KAMM ARTISTIC EUROPE
- KISA - Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism
- korientation. Network for Asian German Perspectives e.V.
- SOS Racisme
- TAPSEUPOUH
- The shelter Students Refuge