

Resolution on fundamental rights of people of African descent in Europe

2018/2899(RSP) - 26/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 535 votes to 80 with 44 abstentions, a resolution on fundamental rights of people of African descent in Europe.

It called on Member States and the EU institutions to recognise that people of African descent, an estimated 15 million people of whom live in Europe, are subjected to racism, discrimination and xenophobia in particular, and to the unequal enjoyment of human and fundamental rights in general, amounting to structural racism. People of African descent are entitled to protection from these inequities, including positive measures for the promotion and the full and equal enjoyment of their rights.

Members recognised Afrophobia, Afri-phobia and anti-black racism as a specific form of racism, including any act of violence or discrimination, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping, and leading to the exclusion and dehumanisation of people of African descent. The Fundamental Rights Agency has documented the fact that minorities in Europe with sub-Saharan African backgrounds are particularly likely to experience racism and discrimination in all areas of life.

The Commission was called upon to develop an EU framework for national strategies for the social inclusion and integration of people of African descent and to include a focus on people of African descent in its current funding programmes and for the next multiannual period. A dedicated team should be set up within the relevant services, with a specific focus on Afrophobia issues. The European institutions were asked to adopt a workforce diversity and inclusion strategy that establishes a strategic plan for the participation of ethnic and racial minorities in their workforce that complements existing efforts to this end.

Anti-racist strategies and discrimination

Parliament called on Member States to develop national anti-racism strategies that address the comparative situation of people of African descent in areas such as education, housing, health, employment, policing, social services, the justice system and political participation and representation, and to encourage the participation of people of African descent in television programmes and other media, in order to adequately address their lack of representation, as well as the lack of role models for children of African descent.

EU institutions and Member States were called upon to:

- make efforts to systematically fight ethnic discrimination and hate crime and, along with other key stakeholders, to develop effective, evidence-based legal and policy responses to these phenomena. Parliament stated that if data on ethnic discrimination and hate crime were to be collected, it should be for the sole purpose of identifying the roots of and combating xenophobic and discriminatory discourse and acts;
- effectively respond to hate crime, including the investigation of bias motivation for crimes based on race, national or ethnic origin, and to ensure that hate crimes against people of African descent are recorded, investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned;
- ensure that adults and children of African descent have equal access to quality education and care free from discrimination and segregation;
- support employment, entrepreneurship and economic empowerment initiatives for people of African descent;
- address discrimination against people of African descent in the housing market;
- ensure taking into account existing legislation and practices safe and legal avenues for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to enter the EU.

Slavery and colonialism

The resolution referred to the need to officially acknowledge the histories of people of African descent in Europe, including slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, and those committed under European colonialism, as well as the vast achievements and positive contributions of people of African descent, through both the official recognition at EU and national level of the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade and through establishing Black History Months

Members also called on Member States to declassify their colonial archives, and to make some form of reparations such as offering public apologies and the restitution of stolen artefacts to countries of origin. They encourage Member States to make the history of people of African descent part of their curricula and to present a comprehensive perspective on colonialism and slavery which recognises their historical and contemporary adverse effects on people of African descent

Criminal justice

Member States were urged to end racial or ethnic profiling in all forms in criminal law enforcement, counter-terrorism measures and immigration controls, and to officially recognise and combat practices of unlawful discrimination and violence through anti-racism and anti-bias training for the authorities. Parliament also asked Member States to monitor racial bias in their criminal justice and education systems and in their social services, and to take proactive steps to ensure equal justice and improve relations between the law enforcement authorities and minority communities, to ensure equal education and improve relations between the education authorities and minority communities, and to ensure equal social services,

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission and the European External Action Service to effectively ensure that no EU funds are being made available, or any support or collaboration given to organisations or groups engaged in or connected to enslavement, trafficking and torture or to extortion directed at Black and African migrants.