Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2389 (2021)[1]

Combating Afrophobia, or anti-Black racism, in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Afrophobia, or anti-Black racism, is a form of racism that targets people of African descent and Black people and manifests itself through acts of direct, indirect and institutional discrimination, as well as violence, including hate speech. Based on socially constructed ideas of "race" and reflecting the groundless belief that certain "racial" groups are biologically or culturally inferior to others, Afrophobia seeks to dehumanise and deny the dignity of its victims.

2. In spite of national anti-discrimination legislation and policies and the international human rights obligations of Council of Europe member States, racism, including Afrophobia, is still rife in Europe.

3. An estimated 15 million people of African descent and Black Europeans are part of the population of our continent, either as migrants or as members of families established for generations. They come from all walks of life and have contributed to Europe's development and culture for centuries. Their contribution is not adequately recognised and even the numerical size of this group is not acknowledged, due to data collection regulations in some countries that do not take into consideration ethnic origin. This lack of data hinders the design, implementation and assessment of anti-discrimination measures.

4. In 2020, the tragic death of George Floyd as a result of police violence, followed by widespread protests on both sides of the Atlantic, and the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people of African descent and Black people (among other vulnerable minorities) have sparked new awareness among Europeans of the extent and severity of Afrophobia. Increased public awareness and strong support for anti-racist protests from political leaders at national and European levels have opened a window of opportunity that should be seized without hesitation.

5. The Parliamentary Assembly observes that racism is rooted in colonial history and that the injustice of colonisation and enslavement is still reflected in today's structural and institutional discrimination against people of African descent in Europe. Racism, including Afrophobia or anti-Black racism, fatally undermines the mission and core values of the Council of Europe and eradicating it must be an absolute priority for the Organisation and its member States.

6. The Assembly highlights the need to adopt an intersectional approach and to address the unique forms of discrimination faced by people of African descent in relation to intersecting grounds for discrimination including age, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity.

7. The Assembly reiterates that public figures, including politicians, have an important role to play in combating racism in all its forms, and firmly condemns the use of xenophobic and racist rhetoric and propaganda, particularly in public and political discourse. A proactive and concerted effort is required to counter racism, including Afrophobia; remaining silent in the face of its manifestations can only perpetuate inequality and discrimination.

8. The Assembly stresses that education is key to combating racism and that the cultural sector, including traditional and online media, should embrace diversity and promote a culture of inclusion that firmly rejects racism and xenophobia.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 24 June 2021 (22nd sitting) (see Doc. 15306, report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Momodou Malcolm Jallow). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 24 June 2021 (22nd sitting).

9. The Assembly recalls its Resolution 1968 (2014) “Tackling racism in the police” and, most recently, Resolution 2364 (2021) “Ethnic profiling in Europe: a matter of great concern”, in which it called on member States to take determined action against ethnic profiling through a range of measures, including by ensuring diversity in the recruitment of police officers so as to reflect the diversity of the population, as well as Resolution 2339 (2020) “Upholding human rights in times of crisis and pandemics: gender, equality and non-discrimination”, which highlighted that people of African descent, among others, have been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic due to persisting inequalities.

10. The Assembly supports the International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024 proclaimed by the United Nations and supports the activities of its relevant specialised bodies and special procedures, particularly at European level. It welcomes the adoption by the European Commission of its Anti-racism action plan 2020-2025.

11. The Assembly commends the work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), reiterates its full support to the commission and highlights the need for Council of Europe member States to effectively implement its standards.

12. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States to take determined action to eradicate Afrophobia, or anti-Black racism, and all other forms of racism and to:

12.1. recognise Afrophobia, or anti-Black racism, as a specific form of racism;

12.2. endeavour to recognise the legacy and negative impact of colonialism, enslavement and the transatlantic slave trade and consider introducing reparation schemes and establishing ad hoc truth commissions to this end;

12.3. develop national action plans to counter racism, involving people of African descent and Black Europeans in the design, implementation and evaluation of measures; action plans should address structural discrimination, including at institutional level, and multiple and intersectional discrimination, in all areas, including employment, political representation and policing, as well as access to justice, goods and services, healthcare, housing and quality education;

12.4. raise public awareness of racism, including Afrophobia or anti-Black racism, by organising or supporting relevant campaigns and activities, including events such as the African Week organised annually in Brussels or initiatives like the Black History Month currently observed in Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, as well as cultural activities in libraries, archives and museums that empower people of African descent and Black people and acknowledge their positive contribution to Europe’s culture, economy and society;

12.5. ensure that colonial history is part of school curricula, as well as teaching about the historical presence and contribution of people of African descent in Europe;

12.6. ensure that the negative and stereotypical portrayal of people of African descent is removed from educational material and from the media, including news and advertising;

12.7. adopt positive action policies to close gaps in the enjoyment by people of African descent of socio-economic rights, particularly as regards access to education, employment, housing and healthcare;

12.8. collect equality data, disaggregated by ethnic origin, based on self-identification, anonymity and informed consent;

12.9. support civil society organisations active in the area of anti-racism and ensure they have adequate access to public funding;

12.10. support human rights defenders who work to combat Afrophobia; protect them from violence, including hate speech, harassment and physical attacks; conduct prompt investigations into such incidents; and prosecute those responsible.

13. The Assembly invites national parliaments to:

13.1. encourage the creation of caucuses and “parliamentary intergroups” representing people of African descent within elected bodies at national and European levels;

13.2. ensure that rules of procedures and ethical codes prohibit the use of racist and xenophobic language, with adequate disciplinary sanctions for non-compliance;

13.3. support the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, its mandate and operation.

14. The Assembly supports the initiative to update and relaunch the Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society as a tool for combating racism and hate speech, and for promoting political representation of racialised groups, including people of African descent.