

EURO  *mad*



Cour de Justice de l'Union Européenne
European Court of Justice :



“EU 2030 zero violence objective: how to eradicate gender based, homophobic, xenophobic, racist and antisemitic violence on a European scale?”

Judges: PURDYE Dana, ARRANZ CARO Eloisa, LERNER TORRES Daniel

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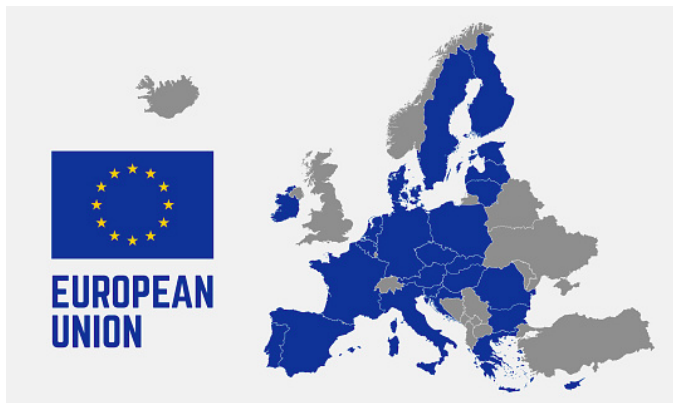
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I- Introduction

Promoting equality and citizens' rights has long been one of the European Union's main challenges and objectives. However, with the constant change in the geopolitical and social situation of the continent, the issues are growing, and the need for new measures becomes more urgent.

Gender-based violence (GBV) or sexist violence is a set of acts that harm a person or a group of individuals because of their gender identity. It is most often based on gender disparity. Indeed, this term is mainly used to emphasize the fact that social and structural inequalities based on gender increase the vulnerability of women and girls, putting them at risk of being victims of several forms of violence (verbal, psychological, physical,

sexual...). Although women in particular suffer from this violence, men and boys can also be targets. For instance, GBV is sometimes used to refer to violence against LGBTQ+ populations, linked in particular to masculinity/femininity and/or gender norms, although the motives in this case usually stem from cultural, religious or political biases. Furthermore, xenophobic and antisemitic violence, being racist acts carried against minorities, arising from the irrational fear and hate of foreigners in the first case and of Jewish people in the second case, has been increasing in the EU. This is due to the growth of immigration, the weakening feeling of security due to terrorist attacks and the ongoing Israeli-palestinian conflict but mainly due to the polarization and radicalization of politics in the EU.



As it is the EU's responsibility to protect its citizens and make the Union as safe as possible, the Court of justice has been summoned to re-examine the pre-existing laws and procedures and to discuss new ones to be adopted. For all the aforementioned reasons, in order to improve security and laws in the EU, each representing judge of the EU member countries will have to suggest changes to their governments or their national assemblies to write and approve such laws. Only then can measures be put in place in their respective countries allowing said countries to commit themselves to guaranteeing these measures are respected.

II - History of anti-violence measures

The European Union (EU) has implemented a range of anti-violence measures to address prejudice and discrimination. These measures encompass various aspects, including legislation, policies, and initiatives aimed at promoting equality and combating discrimination. Some key actions include but are not limited to:

- **Anti-discrimination Laws:** The EU has enacted comprehensive anti-discrimination laws that prohibit discrimination based on various grounds, including race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation and more.

In the EU charter of fundamental rights, Article 21 (Non-discrimination) gives a very clear position that the EU holds on this topic stating that:

“Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.”

- **Equality Directives:** The EU has issued directives promoting equality and equal treatment in areas such as employment and social affairs. These directives aim to eliminate discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals.

Legislation - Directive 2000/78/EC precisely highlights the general minimum rules in the employment sector and states that “The Directive includes a series of mechanisms to ensure effective remedies in the event of discrimination[...].”

- **Hate Crime Legislation:** Efforts have been made to combat hate crimes by implementing legislation that addresses offenses motivated by prejudice, such as racism, xenophobia, and homophobia.

The European Union is founded on values such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. All forms of hatred and intolerance are incompatible with these fundamental rights and values.



- **Awareness Campaigns:** The EU engages in awareness campaigns to educate the public about the consequences of prejudice and discrimination, aiming to change attitudes and promote a more inclusive society.

There are various ways the EU is informing people about their rights to fight discrimination. The EU:

- Supports NGOs, social partners and equality bodies to combat discrimination.
- Supports equality policies at a national level between EU countries
- Establishes anti-discrimination training activities
- Pushes for diversity management in companies



The European Union's commitment to the enforcement of fundamental rights and the values upon which it was founded back in 1993 in Maastricht which underscore a resolute stance against prejudice and discrimination. The EU has implemented a multifaceted approach, encompassing legislative measures, directives, and initiatives aimed at fostering equality, protecting against discrimination, and promoting inclusivity. The refusal to tolerate prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation aligns with the core principles that define the EU.

III- Current context

The biggest issue when it comes to anti-violence measures and their current context, is the fine line that divides hate speech from freedom of speech. Indeed, since 2020, the European Union has been discussing this topic to try and come to an agreement on how to apply laws in a way that respects the preexisting human rights charter.

1- Gender Based Violence (GBV)



Although many types of Gender Based violence exists, we can divide these acts in five main categories follows:

➤ physical violence: it results in injuries, distress and health problems, and may even lead to death in certain cases. Typical forms of physical violence are beating, strangling, pushing, and the use of weapons. In the EU, 31 % of women have experienced one or more acts of physical violence since the age of 15.

➤ verbal violence: it can include issues that are specific to an individual, such as put downs (in private or in front of others), ridiculing, the use of swear-words that are especially uncomfortable for the other, saying bad things about the other's loved ones, threatening with other forms of violence, either against the victim or against somebody dear to them

➤ psychological violence: includes psychologically abusive behaviours, such as controlling, coercion, economic violence and blackmail. 43% of women in the EU have experienced some form of psychological violence by an intimate partner.

➤ sexual violence : this includes unconsented sexual acts, attempts to obtain a sexual act, acts to traffic, or acts otherwise directed against a person's sexuality without the person's consent. It's estimated that one in 20 women (5 %) has been raped in EU countries since the age of 15.

➤ socio-economic violence: it includes making women generally more economically vulnerable than men and taking away the earnings of the victim, not allowing them to have a separate income (giving them *housewife* status, or making them work in a family business without a salary), or making the victim unfit for work through targeted physical abuse.



In these categories we find the following crimes defined by the EU at the Istanbul convention:

- psychological violence (Art. 33)
- stalking (Art. 34)
- physical violence (Art. 35)
- forced marriages (Art. 37)
- sexual violence, including rape (Art. 36)
- female genital mutilation (Art. 38)

- forced abortion and forced sterilization (Art. 39)
- sexual harassment (Art. 40)
- aiding or abetting and attempting to do so (Art. 41)
- unacceptable justifications for crimes, including crimes committed in the name of so-called honor (Art. 42).

All forms of GBV can occur both in the private sphere (in families and intimate relationships) and in the public sphere, committed by (unknown) individuals in public space, or by organizations, institutions and states.

2- Homophobia

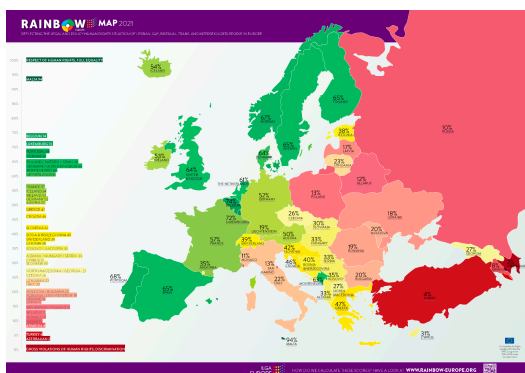


Although the EU has declared itself a “LGBTQIA freedom zone”, Homophobia and LGBTQIA phobia are sensitive subjects, as the opinion on the LGBTQIA+ community varies drastically from one country to the other. Some countries have fully recognised the LGBTQIA+ as normal and have granted them the same rights of parenthood and marriage as the rest of the citizens. However this isn’t the case everywhere as some EU countries oppose same sex marriage fervently and still refuse transition operations to Transgender individuals. This polemic subject makes it hard for countries to agree on laws that protect this community especially in Eastern Europe.

The 2019 EU LGBTI Survey shows a bleak picture in the EU as regards discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people, with little progress in the years since the first LGBTI Survey in 2012. In 2019 there has already been a decrease since 2012 in the number of people reporting the most frequent hate-motivated incident of physical or sexual attacks to the police.

The European Union has recognised that:

- The European Court of Human Rights has delivered a number of recent judgements in cases related to hate crime against LGBTIQ+ people: the *Stoyanova v. Bulgaria* case, pertaining to the gruesome murder of a 26 year old gay man in a public park, requiring Bulgaria to reform its Criminal Code to acknowledge such violent crimes (motivated by perceived or actual sexual orientation) as being 'aggravated' ; in the case of *Sabalic v. Croatia* concerning a hate crime against a lesbian woman, recognising that, unless the authorities take a firm line, prejudice-motivated incidents would be met with indifference ; and in the *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania*, recognising a positive obligation on behalf of the state to investigate homophobic comments online which constituted incitement to hatred and violence
- In 2022, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on combating hate speech and is currently preparing a recommendation on combating hate crime for 2023; whereas the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted in 2010 a landmark recommendation to Member States on measures to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
- In 2021 the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe warned of the scapegoating of LGBTIQ + minorities as a tactic applied by ultra-conservative and nationalist politicians posing as defenders of so-called 'traditional values' to strengthen their base and gain or stay in power; whereas this raises strong concerns over politicians' legitimisation of hatred in exchange for potential political gain; according to the Commissioner for Human Rights, the scapegoating of LGBTIQ+ people is a symptom of widespread opposition to, and an assault on, human rights and the rule of law, both of which are core EU values;
- In December 2021, the European Commission published a Council decision proposal to add hate speech and crime to the list of EU crimes as codified in Article 83 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which requires unanimity in the Council; whereas Hungary, Poland and Czechia are still withholding their support for this decision.



The European Union declared in a statement that the EU:“ is deeply concerned by the impunity with which anti-LGBTIQ+ groups, in particular far-right extremist groups, operate in some Member States and stresses that this sense of impunity is among the reasons underlying the alarming rise in violent actions by certain far-right organizations, and the increase in threats against minorities, including the LGBTIQ+ community; [The EU] is deeply worried that the younger generations in Europe and elsewhere feel less and less concerned about the history of fascism, including the embedded hate and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ people, ethnic minorities and the Jewish population; emphasizes that an awareness of history is one of the preconditions for preventing such crimes from occurring in the future and needs to be an important feature of the education of younger generations; stresses the need to set aside more space on history curricula for objective and factual learning about different ideologies, their forms and their origins, including fascism, as well as their consequences and remnants in present times”

3- Xenophobia



Definition of xenophobia:

Xenophobia refers to the attitude of rejection and exclusion of all cultural identities apart from one's own. It differs from racism by accepting foreigners and immigrants only through cultural assimilation.

Organizations and agencies fighting for the abolition of xenophobic acts:

The data control process began when the European Court of Human Rights stated the obligation of States to fully investigate all incidents that may be motivated by xenophobia or other discriminatory reasons. One of the main objectives of Security Forces, as guarantors of public safety, is to protect people's fundamental rights. In this respect, the OSCE Permanent Council and Ministerial Council meeting in Maastricht engages all states to collect and keep records of statistics on hate crimes and violent expressions of xenophobia committed in their territory. Once the information is collected, they must transfer it to the ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) which will report the information and statistics received from Member States and make it available to the public.

Within the Council of Europe, there is the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. The main objectives of both organizations are to analyze the racism and intolerance situation in each of the Member States and make proposals on how to address the problems identified by the implementation of the EU legislation. An important aspect of the functioning of the two institutions is the process of confidential dialogue with national authorities.

In addition, two EU directives, the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Framework Directive, also address xenophobic acts. The first prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in areas such as employment and occupation, healthcare, access to goods and services, and access to education. The second prohibits discrimination in the workplace on the grounds of religion or belief, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

A major obstacle in dealing with xenophobia: migration issues:



Xenophobia is growing and the inability of Member states to reach an agreement is making it even more difficult to eradicate xenophobia. Rising rates of xenophobia appear to be related to a change in a country's anti-immigration sentiment and its racial diversity. Measuring this is difficult since countries collect information about ethnicity in different ways, for example, France prohibits the collection of data on race, so that it is not used for discriminatory purposes. To sort things out, the European Commission made the proposition of a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, but negotiations have been difficult and progress has been slow. One of the main aspects of this reform is the creation of a 'distribution mechanism' for asylum seekers across the Union, in an attempt to relieve pressure on the southern border countries. However, the Višegrad Group (Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland) has refused such redistribution and is aligned against Europe's Mediterranean states (Italy, Greece, Malta, Spain and Cyprus). Orbán called the deal "unacceptable" and accused the EU of wanting to turn Hungary into a "migrant country". European solidarity, affected by growing xenophobia and anti-migration feelings, appears more fragile than ever. These divisions will only make it more difficult for Europe to provide a united and long-term response.

4- Racism



Definition of racism:

Racism is defined as the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, leading to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another. Different groups, communities and individuals are subject to racism. It involves rules, norms, routines, patterns of attitudes and behavior that represent obstacles in achieving the same rights and opportunities. There are different forms of racism, each specific form has distinctive features, some being more fundamental in one Member State than in others.

- *main groups affected:*

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) identifies five main groups particularly affected: (i) People from the Roma community (a group that originated in Northwest India, but have lived for centuries mainly in eastern and central Europe.) (ii) People of African descent and black Europeans, (iii) Muslims, (iv) Jews, (v) Migrants. In addition to these groups, racism against Asians and indigenous people is also present. Racism can occur either between individuals (individual racism) or in organizations and institutions (institutional racism).

- *individual racism:*

While individual racism is easily recognisable (for example, through racial slurs, individual discrimination or acts of violence), it does not just arise out of nowhere.

- *institutional racism:*

Institutional racism is observed in attitudes and behavior that leads to discrimination through non conscious prejudice and racist stereotyping. A key element of institutional racism that occurs in all Member States is the discrimination by law enforcement authorities. We should be more aware of this form of racism since it allows for a more comprehensive approach to the way in which people who are subject to racism are affected.

Racism within the EU:



Within the EU, there is an identifiable and irrefutable problem with racism and its Member States. The European Union Fundamental Rights Agency states that racism remains a persistent issue in the EU and that over half of Europeans believe that racism is widespread in their country. The legal structure of the EU seeks to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crime.

- *Proposition of an action plan*

That is why the EU Anti-racism Action Plan has been proposed. That plan marks a shift in the understanding of racism at the EU level by recognising the structural dimension of racism, the specific forms of racism and the concept of intersectionality. The dimensional structure of racism represents a system in which public institutions reinforce each other and end up perpetuating racial injustices. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist. Besides, the concept of intersectionality is a tool to analyze the connections between different social factors. It serves to guide legislators in creating laws that accept the intersection of discriminations found in these factors in order to balance them. The anti-racism Action plan introduced an understanding of the root causes of racism which previous policy documents have avoided. The action plan was welcomed by civil society organizations as a step forward in anti-racism. Its focus is on encouraging and supporting Member States to develop and adopt national action plans against racism (NAPARs). The EU Anti-racism Action Plan further encouraged Member States to develop NAPARs by the end of 2022 and offered support in developing guiding principles for these. According to France, 21 Member States had some form of action plan in 2020 such as Belgium and Austria or Spain and Hungary that have plans that were developed many years ago and still cover many years from now.

- *Limits of good law enforcement*

There is also great diversity in the issues addressed by the Action Plans which leads to the fact that these laws are not well enforced. The Incorrect implementation of EU laws by some Member States reduces the effectiveness of the legislative work. Several member States had to be reprimanded by the EU equality directives on numerous occasions since they failed to do their duty. By October 2020 letters had been sent to Estonia and Romania and by December 2021, the European Commission had sent letters of formal notice to eight Member States: Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden. Their

national legislation didn't fully or accurately incorporate EU rules on combating racism through criminal law. This has caused some Member States to have gone beyond the legal obligations set by the EU, in particular by increasing the number of grounds for protection. Moreover, the lack of participation of racialized people or their representative organizations in the policy-making process limits the effort on removing barriers and promoting equality. Additionally, the action plan is not the only measure taken by the EU to fight racism, the European Commission has also created a number of organizations as well as positions to address specific forms of racism such as the EU High Level group or the position of Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred.

5- Antisemitism

Antisemitism is a concept/ideology that has existed for centuries, even if the word by which it is now commonly defined is a newer invention.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has a non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism, defined as: "a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities".

However the word is more commonly employed to refer to the prejudice against the Jewish people. Common manifestations of antisemitism include the targeting or hatred towards the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. Nonetheless, it is essential to distinguish the state of Israel from the Jewish people in any argument concerning this topic as the Jewish people are not all Israel and the Israeli people are not all Jewish, Israel was established as a state for the Jewish people in the aftermath of World War 2 but does not represent the Jewish people worldwide.

The IHRA states that "Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, [...] include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion;
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions;
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews;
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust);
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust;
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations;

- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor;
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis;
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis;
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.”



Relatively recent historic examples of antisemitism can be found in, but are not exclusive to: the Pogroms of Eastern Europe (XIX and XX centuries), the ideologies of European countries in the XXth century (such as Nazi Germany) or the refusal to recognize Israel as a legitimate state because of its predominant religion (seen in map bellow).



Current examples of antisemitism are harder to attribute due to the connotation the word carries ever since the Holocaust: nobody wants to associate themselves with that word even if their actions are anti semitic. In today’s world, antisemitism has ressurged in popularity, due in part to the Israel-Hamas conflict which has caused a high number of deaths and injuries in the region. In sight of the palestinian victims, the world has seen protests against this conflict and a general sense of blame placed on the state of Israel for conducting such bombings in response to Hamas. These protests place the blame for these atrocities on “the

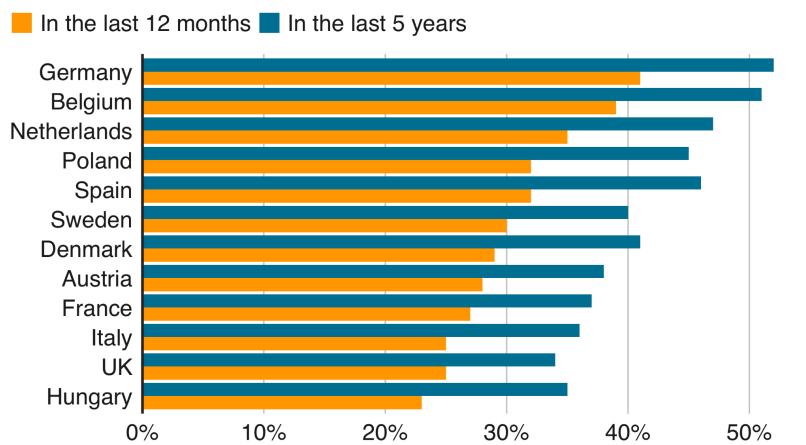
Jews” and enunciate violent insults and threats towards the ethnic group, instead of blaming the state of Israel (the entity responsible). This association of all Jews to Israel has resulted in a rise in antisemitism in Europe.

Reports of antisemitic incidents are soaring in countries across Europe, following Israel’s bombardment of Gaza in response to the Hamas terrorist attacks on October 7:

- In the United Kingdom, these reports of antisemitic incidents more than quadrupled in the days immediately following the initial attacks.
- In Germany, an organization that tracks antisemitism reported 70 incidents in the 11 days following the Hamas attacks, triple the number in the same period the year before.
- In France, home to Europe’s largest Jewish community, interior minister Gérald Darmanin said there had been more than 1,000 incidents in the last month. “The number of antisemitic acts has exploded,” said Darmanin.

Experience of anti-Semitic harassment

% of respondents who have been offended or threatened



Source: Survey of 16,395 people for EU FRA



However Antisemitism in Europe was still very present in the years before the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict (indicated in this 2018 BBC report):

To understand the etymology and history of antisemitism in more depth, refer to this definition.

The efforts being made to tackle this discrimination and its consequences:

Whether these discriminations are based on gender, based on race or ethnicity, or based on sexual orientation, all of these prejudices are not accepted in the EU and there are laws in place that protect individuals from hate crimes (seen above in History of anti-violence measures).

The problem is not as much about whether or not these laws exist and are established sufficiently, the problem Europe faces is whether or not these laws are employed and respected.

Without all the observed problems, we can identify several overarching categories where racism and racial discrimination manifest: everyday experiences in

major areas like employment, education, housing, and access to social services; human rights abuses against Roma community members; unfriendly attitudes and stigmatization directed at migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers; a growing number of anti-Semitic incidents; heightened expressions of Islamophobia; the utilization of racist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic rhetoric in political discussions; and a negative atmosphere in public opinion, which plays a pivotal role in the rise of racism and intolerance in society. While these trends may vary in magnitude from one country to another, they are significant enough to raise concerns.

According to the EU's official website EU citizens enjoy many freedoms and protections, including personal, civil, political, economic and social rights, personal data protection, anti-discrimination laws, and borderless travel through most EU countries.

Every EU citizen enjoys the same fundamental rights based on the values of equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, human dignity, freedom and democracy. These values are fortified and protected by the rule of law, spelled out in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. EU citizens have the right to live, work, study and get married in other EU countries.

Current efforts to enforce and promote equality in all its forms and fight against prejudice in the EU's member states are far too numerous to cite and in addition to general plans of the EU, some countries have individual plans to eliminate these prejudices.

One of the main efforts towards ending racism in the EU would be the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025 that has included several Summits to date:

- EU Anti-Racism Summit – 21 March 2022
- EU Anti-Racism Summit – 19 March 2021

It is the hope of the EU that this will ultimately conclude in the achievement of a fully inclusive zone that is free of discrimination in every sense.

IV- Need for concrete measures

The urgent need for concrete measures to combat the insidious and pervasive forms of hate crimes such as xenophobia, racism, homophobia, gender-based violence, and antisemitism cannot be overstated. Across Europe and beyond, these discriminatory attitudes and actions continue to inflict harm and sow division within our communities. It is incumbent upon governments, international organizations, and civil society to take decisive action to address these pressing issues at their roots.

In recent years, a troubling rise in hate speech has been particularly facilitated by online platforms. This digital realm has become a breeding ground for bigotry, amplifying harmful stereotypes and fueling hostility towards marginalized groups. The European Union, along with its member states, must prioritize the development and enforcement of robust legislation to combat hate speech, while safeguarding the principles of free expression.

Moreover, it is essential to recognize that discriminatory attitudes are often perpetuated and exacerbated by systemic inequalities within societies. Economic disparities, unequal access

to education and healthcare, and institutionalized discrimination all contribute to the marginalization of certain groups, rendering them more vulnerable to prejudice and violence. Addressing these structural inequities requires comprehensive policy reforms aimed at promoting social inclusion and economic justice for all.

At the heart of these efforts must be a commitment to upholding the fundamental principles upon which the European Union was founded: democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and equality. This entails not only condemning acts of hate and discrimination but also actively promoting a culture of tolerance, diversity, and inclusivity in all aspects of public life. Intercultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, and community outreach efforts are invaluable tools for challenging stereotypes, fostering empathy, and promoting mutual understanding among diverse populations. By promoting dialogue and cooperation across different communities, we can build bridges of solidarity and resilience against the forces of division and hatred.

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