

How can we better combat discrimination based on "race" or ethnic origin?

Exploring and addressing the root causes

Concept note

Colloquium organised by the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI)

Many Europeans continue to face racism. They suffer from discrimination, hate speech and hate crime on the grounds of "race"¹ ethnic/national origin, colour, citizenship, religion, language. Such attacks violate their dignity and human rights. They also endanger democracy, as they often force their direct and indirect victims out of the public debate.

Although racism is incompatible with the fundamental principles of international and national law, and much has been done in recent decades to prevent and combat it, racism is still there. It is therefore important to look more deeply into the root causes of racism, and to reflect on how to address them effectively.

These reflections are intended to help the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) to focus on the right issues, and to assess how it can achieve maximum impact. They could also serve as inspiration for the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and other Council of Europe bodies that have done important work to prevent and combat racism.

This colloquium is also of high importance for strengthening the resilience of our democracies, which are based on the equal participation of all, including those who are exposed to racism.

Racism occurs in many forms, including antisemitism, antigypsyism, anti-muslim hatred, xenophobia and anti-black racism. Its manifestations range from everyday stigmatisation and discrimination, microaggressions and verbal abuse, to violence, terrorism, racist war crimes and genocide. It has profound effects on individuals and communities, including psychological and health impacts. Racism

¹ Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Committee of Ministers rejects, as does ECRI, theories based on the existence of different "races". However, in this document, the term "race" is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as "belonging to another race" are not excluded from the protection provided for by legislation and the implementation of policies to prevent and combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crime.

and the resulting discrimination and hate are often further exacerbated by interaction with other grounds of discrimination.

This colloquium provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of racism from the perspectives of social psychology, sociology and history. It also offers a chance to reflect on the conclusions to be drawn at the level of the Council of Europe and the member States when taking measures to prevent and combat racism.

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17 June 2026, 9h00-12h30

Palais de l'Europe, Room 8 [and online]

Draft PROGRAMME

9:00	Welcoming coffee
9:30	Moderator: Käthlin SANDER, CDADI Chair Social Psychology perspective Cícero Roberto PEREIRA, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon Anna MIRGA-KRUSZELNICKA, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) Sociology perspective Nasar MEER, University of Glasgow History perspective Sandrine LEMAIRE, Historian Ambassador Pap NDIAYE, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe
11:00	Break
11:30	Public policy learnings Jens VEDSTED-HANSEN, ECRI Bureau member Michaela MOUA, European Commission Coordinator for Anti-Racism Viktor KUNDRÁK, CDADI Vice-Chair and member from Czechia, former Director of the Department of Human Rights and Protection of Minorities, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic Sandra ALLOUSH, European Network Against Racism (ENAR)
12:15	Final remarks