

Thanks to CoE ECRI for organising the conference and asking Equinox to speak.

Apologies for not being able to be in person and only having a recording. I had a last-minute emergency which has meant my agenda has changed.

It is great to speak on a panel with so many distinguished experts and the wonderful EU Coordinator on Anti-Racism.

Equinox was formed in 2021.

We launched a specific report on intersectionality last year - Towards Gender Justice - Rethinking EU gender equality policy from an intersectional perspective.

Racialised people aren't just discriminated against on the basis of race. We experience multiple discrimination on the basis of race, class, sexual orientation, disability, migration status and more. We face state violence and institutional barriers to good homes, jobs, education and health.

The EU's approach to fighting racism centres around simplistic notions. The current framework can be characterised as patchwork in a number of ways. Although the ARAP is a good step forward, it is constantly undermined by the EU's approach of

- **Focusing on individualised racism and reactive response.** The EU has responded to rising racism and racial inequality with a legal and policy framework focused on singular, individual acts of discrimination or racist violence.
- **2. Working in silos and lack of coherence.** The institutions have implemented a series of policy measures and institutional appointments addressing particular racialised communities, such as the appointment of coordinators for some communities. One result of this policy choice has been the erasure of some racialised communities. The AS coordinator sits under a different commissioner compared to the other two commissions. The new AR coordinator will be undermined by AS/AM coordinators.
- **3. Confining racial equality to non-discrimination and hate crime.** EU framework is generally ill-equipped to address institutional, structural, and the root causes of racism. This leaves

significant gaps to address structural racism that manifests in other focal points in policy areas, such as law enforcement, migration, and climate and environmental policy.

That's why we continue to see problems even with the ARAP.

- Energy crisis is disproportionately impacting racialised communities. Yet our perspective is completely ignored.
- Frontex & border force agencies committing abuse against migration or the EU's response to Ukraine.
- Example of EU gender policy. It systematically avoids race (even though intersectionality was developed by queer black women to centre race in the discourse on gender). In general it avoids class, gender identity & migration status. Under such rigid definitions of gender - primarily rooted in terms of sex - it is often white cisgender women, and more concretely, middle-class women who are centred in consequent policy efforts. This narrative ignores the nuance of gender-based violence and overlooks key intersections, for example, gendered islamophobia & the disproportionate violence faced by queer & trans people at the hands of governments & people of all genders within society.

We can create a truly intersectional approach in EU policy by centering the most marginalised in society. This will move the EU away from a "single-axis" analysis and towards genuine prioritisation of the intersections of race, class, disability, gender identity and migration.

How do we do this?

- Commitment to a more just and fair system - free of racism, economic inequality, state violence, colonialism and war.
- Political support. Unfortunately, there is a lack of political will as we have seen over the past two weeks. The President of the EU failed to mention anti-racism in her past two State of the Unions. There is no outcry when EU governments engage in racism. EU political leaders must actively condemn instances of discrimination, brutality and violence by state authorities against all people in the EU regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, nationality or migration status. We will see how the EU responds to developments in Italy.

- Invest resources in tackle societal exclusion, structural discrimination and mainstreaming of racial justice across all areas.
- Adopting legislation ensuring a comprehensive and intersectional EU legislative framework.
- Develop a new relationship within civil society. Community organisations representing racialised people intersecting experiences rarely have a place at the table in discussions. This also means offering political support to anti-racist human rights defenders when targeted by their governments.