

## Statement

The EU's approach to organising the Anti-Racism Summit demonstrates the need for a new relationship with anti-racist civil society

We, as organisations working on social and racial justice in Europe, want to express our deep concern at the actions of the European Commission political leadership President Von der Leyen, Commissioner Jourova, Commissioner Dalli and the services in relation to the organising of the inaugural EU Anti-Racism Summit. We believe that the European Commission has failed to listen and engage meaningfully with us. The agenda of the Summit, as it stands, is not a safe space for experts, speakers and participants with a racialised background.

The Summit is a key event to secure political leadership of the EU Member States on combating racism in the European Union. Given the Summit's important role in securing political support, it is a shame that the Commission has decided to downplay our concerns in relation to the panels and speakers at the Summit. As the primary experts on the structures and manifestations of racism, the Commission should have been listening to us.

**Meaningful participation** - The Commission has not meaningfully taken on board any of our concerns in relation to the agenda and speakers of the EU Anti-Racism Summit. The Commission had already sent an agenda to speakers before receiving feedback from us.

**Structural racism** - The Commission has ignored our calls for the Summit to have a broad focus on the root causes of racism in Europe which could have laid the ground for future actions. The Commission actively undermined this approach by having only one racialised group representative in the first panel whilst having other racialised groups represented in a "testimonies" section. We are against the siloing of racialised groups and a hierarchy of importance especially with the Commission's refusal to let some groups speak at the Summit. We believe that all groups affected by racism and representative organisations should have been included at an equal level.

**Hate speech** - The Commission has refused to rescind the invitation to European Jewish Congress (EJC) to speak at the EU Summit after being made aware of a video that was recently uploaded of EJC President Dr. Moshe Kantor engaging in hate speech that stigmatises and demonises Muslims and migrants. The European Commission's actions are even more alarming given Dr. Kantor's failure to resign as president and

EJC's unwillingness to apologise and retract the statement for two weeks, even after being prompted by the European Commission.

The European Commission has jeopardised the integrity of the EU Summit and the Anti-Racism Action Plan by giving a platform to an organisation whose current president perpetuates hate speech against racialised communities. Moreover, the European Commission's refusal to rescind could give the impression that the EC condones Dr. Kantor's views, and provide legitimacy and a platform to those who promote hate against vulnerable racialised groups, including migrants and Muslims.

The success of the EU's actions on racial justice is dependent on sustained political will to tackle structural racism, both in policy and also when concrete cases of racism arise. The success of future actions will depend on the extent to which EU leaders adequately and meaningfully engage with us especially given the under-representation of racial and ethnic minorities amongst EU policymakers.

The events of 2020 have brought to light the severity of structural racism and how it impacts people's lives in extreme ways, but also how crucial it is to meaningfully hear the voices of racialised people in society. Narratives of hatred and unfair procedures on specific forms of racism cannot be the starting point. As stated by Martin Luther King: "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."