



## Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice responds to the 2022 State of the European Union address

15 September 2022, Brussels

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, delivered her annual State of the European Union address yesterday in Strasbourg. We welcome the President's focus on mitigating the effects of the energy and cost of living crisis, and the continued solidarity shown with Ukraine.

However, the President **failed to acknowledge** the disproportionate impact of the energy crisis on racialised and marginalised communities, as well as the unequal treatment of migrants from Ukraine at the EU's external borders, and fell short of any meaningful condemnation of discriminatory remarks and practices by the EU's own heads of state.

There was also **no mention** of the underlying structures that contribute to racial and ethnic discrimination in any EU policy area.

For the second year in a row, there was **no follow-up** to any of the anti-racism initiatives proposed in 2020.

### Energy

All policy responses to the record high energy prices must prioritise those people who are disproportionately impacted by the energy crisis. The identification of 'vulnerable households' must take into account social differences that increase said vulnerability, including ethnicity, race, and citizenship status.

### Migration

The crisis in Ukraine, and the response to the needs of those fleeing Russian aggression, have proven that it is possible to gain political support for people on the move, and we welcome the President's acknowledgement that this standard of care can be universally applied. We have been raising the issue of the unfair treatment of racialised and non-Ukrainian nationals leaving Ukraine and other people who have fled similar crises who haven't been allowed to settle in the EU.

For this, however, there must be an honest and transparent examination of racial and ethnic bias in the EU's migration policies.

### **Eradicating corruption at home**

There can be no brandishing of 'EU values' as a stick to beat others with when the EU's own members flout basic principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Aside from vague allusions to the 'vices that corrode' our democracies from within, the President must strongly and explicitly condemn President Orbán's discriminatory and inflammatory comments on race-mixing and ethnic minorities. The President must also set how her Commission plans to work with far-right parties in Government.