



DisQo

anti-discrimination & health equity

EU Health Policy Platform

Annual Meeting – 19 April 2023

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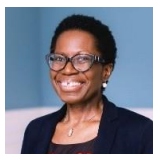
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<https://epha.org/campaigns/disqo-thematic-network/>



DisQo

anti-discrimination & health equity

Organisations across sectors call for stronger action against racism and discrimination to achieve health equity

13 April 2023

Despite the increasing evidence showing that structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism and discrimination impact both physical and mental health inequities in multiple ways¹, the issue has gained too little attention in the public health domain thus far.

We, the undersigned organisations, working across sectors, commit to taking an active stance against all forms of racism and discrimination and call for decision-makers at all levels, including the European Commission, to follow suit.

Together, we have identified **five key priorities** for addressing the issue in a constructive, respectful, and participatory way:

2. It's about people

Too often, policies are developed without involving the people affected by these policies. Moreover, social participation in decision-making processes is more than engaging people in a tick-box exercise at the end of a process and should follow a 'human rights-based framework'⁴ that involves meaningful engagement of affected people and communities through the entire process, from diagnosis of the issue(s) to the planning, implementation and evaluation of the policy or intervention. It also includes providing the means to participate, people's capacity and empowerment where needed. WHO Europe recognises social participation as a *driver of health equity*.⁵ An important and related aspect of this is the lack of diversity and representation in positions of power, such as in the board rooms of public and private organisations and in advisory bodies. The diversity and representation referred to here include, but are not limited to, ethnicity, race, culture, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age and disability. This lack of diversity is also observed in the current European Parliament where ethnic minorities in general and people of colour in particular are widely underrepresented.⁶

To strengthen social participation of racialised and discriminated communities, and foster diversity, representation, and anti-discrimination across all levels

We commit to actively promote meaningful social participation activities that are inclusive and in which those involved are given leadership by:

- Providing thought leadership, lived experience, and concrete solutions when engaged by decision makers in social participation activities for the design, development, and evaluation of hard and soft legislative initiatives;
- providing continuous feedback on how such processes can be improved; and
- advocating for diversity and representation at all levels, within both our own organisations and our work on (health) equity revolving around people from marginalised communities.

We call on the European Commission to strengthen its efforts to promote social participation and increase diversity across its organisational levels by:

- systematically incorporating and providing leadership to civil society stakeholders not only in the design, development and evaluation of hard and soft legislative initiatives, but also as a key source of expertise, following the [Better Regulation Guidelines](#); and
- fostering - in a non-tokenistic way (i.e., ensuring real influence) - diversity and representation in its advisors/advisory bodies, in its funded projects, and, importantly, across its DGs, at all levels of governance.

⁴ [Human Rights Factsheet. WHO, 2022](#)

⁵ [Participation as a driver of health equity. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2019](#)

⁶ [ENAR's election analysis: Ethnic minorities in the new European Parliament 2019-2025. European Network Against Racism, 2019](#)



1. It starts with recognition

To achieve wider recognition of racism and discrimination as fundamental determinants of health, equity and well-being

We commit to actions for the wider recognition of structural, institutional and interpersonal racism and discrimination as fundamental determinants of health, equity and well-being by:

- strengthening anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies and practices within our own organisations;
- integrating this recognition in our work/advocacy where possible;
- collaborating and partnering with organisations across sectors to create communities of practice and exchange learnings.

We call on the European Commission to explicitly recognise racism and discrimination as fundamental determinants of health, equity and well-being by:

- taking a leadership role to address this issue from the health equity perspective;
- including explicit mentions of the issue in hard and soft legislative and policy documents;
- prioritising the issue as an integral part of training curricula across different disciplines and as a key aspect of continuing vocational training; and
- prioritising the issue for research funding.



2. It's about people

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3. Language matters

To increase clarity and consistency of key definitions

We commit to promoting respectful and inclusive language, and increasing the clarity and consistency of critical definitions by:

- creating safe spaces for inclusive and respectful dialogue in our own organisations; and
- providing thought leadership and active engagement in EU actions to harmonise definitions.

We call on the European Commission to take a leading role in increasing the clarity and consistency of critical definitions by:

- developing an overarching glossary webpage with definitions; and
- carrying out – or providing funding for – a harmonisation exercise to establish definitions for terms on which there is no current consensus, involving the relevant stakeholders, including civil society.



4. If you can't measure it, you can't fix it

To collect more and higher quality equality data, disaggregated by indicators on multiple grounds of discrimination

We commit to pushing for better equality data by:

- advocating for higher quality equality data, including the appropriate resource allocation, at both EU and national level; and
- providing thought leadership and active engagement in efforts to harmonise the collection of equality data across the EU;

We call on the European Commission to push for better equality data by

- taking a leadership role in the harmonisation of equality data collection in the EU, involving the relevant stakeholders, including those working with data (Eurostat, Eurofound, FRA, OECD, JRC, WHO, etc.) and civil society;
- developing further guidance for member states on the systematic collection of equality data, including in the area of mental and physical healthcare, improving its comparability and accessibility, and on training for people who collect the data;
- promoting a focus on intersectional data, ensuring that the collection of data reflects the diversity within the groups exposed to discrimination; and
- funding - and encourage member states to fund - projects that advance the harmonisation of equality data collection in the EU.



5. Breaking down silos and taking action

To strengthen existing EU anti-discrimination legislation by breaking down silos and boosting policy mainstreaming, transparency and social participation

We commit to breaking down silos and taking action by:

- increasing cross-sectoral collaboration with organisations outside of our usual networks; and
- actively engaging and providing thought leadership in participatory activities that focus on EU policy mainstreaming

We call on the European Commission to break down silos and take action by:

- strengthening its policy mainstreaming efforts through the Task Force on Equality, to identify fragmentation, improve coordination and increase (safe spaces for) dialogue among different levels;
- adopting an intersectional focus, acknowledging the diversity within the groups exposed to structural racism and discrimination, for an effective and comprehensive response to the particular needs of such groups at the relevant intersections; and
- increasing transparency and social participation to bolster policy mainstreaming, including on the Task Force on Equality and funding toward fighting inequalities;



In summary

1. **Recognise** racism and discrimination as fundamental determinants of health, equity and well-being
2. Strengthen **social participation** of racialised and discriminated communities, and foster diversity, representation and anti-discrimination
3. Increase clarity and consistency of key **definitions** related to racism, discrimination and health equity
4. Collect more (health) **equality data**, disaggregated by indicators on multiple grounds of discrimination, and harmonise EU data collection
5. Strengthen existing EU anti-discrimination legislation by **breaking down silos** and boosting policy mainstreaming, transparency, reparative justice and social participation



Signatories

Current list on 18 April 2023

DEADLINE FOR ENDORSEMENT
17 May!





DisEQO

Thank you!!

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anti-discrim

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