



Ms Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Re: Denial of racism and police brutality in the EU by the European Commission leaders

Brussels,
June 4, 2020

To: President von der Leyen

CC: VP Josep Borrell, VP Margaritis Schinas, Commissioner Helena Dalli, Commissioner Didier Reynders

Honourable President,

We, Co-Presidents of the European Parliament's Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup, are writing to you to express our concern about denial of racism in the EU by the leaders of the European Commission.

Authorities have responsibility to respond to reality.

We are deeply concerned that denial of structural or institutional racism in Europe will encourage even more hostile acts of racism in these difficult times. Our concern is triggered by public denial of racism in Europe featured in an article from 3 June, 2020. According to the source, Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, in charge of promoting our European Way of Life, said that he does not "think that we have issues now in Europe that blatantly pertain to police brutality or issues of race transcending into our systems" and that "we do have an issue in Europe, which is the issue of inequalities and income distribution". You can read the article [here](#).

In Europe, Black people, Muslims, Romani people, Jews, undocumented people and asylum seekers especially experience scapegoating and hate speech including by public figures and politicians. Lately Asians and those perceived as Asians have become a target of racism more intensively, triggered by the Covid-19. Romani people, Muslims and refugees are now unsurprisingly blamed for spreading the virus as well. Jews experience more conspiracy

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theories. Black people are getting more and more racially profiled. There is a disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on racialized communities and they are disproportionately dying of it as well. There are also many reports of hate-crimes based on race and ethnicity in Europe. Discrimination in school, by children, parents, and teachers, discrimination on the labour and housing market, denial of sexual and reproductive health and rights to racialized women, forced sterilization. Individuals, groups, far-right parties are using the Covid-19 crisis to further stigmatize already stigmatized communities and to fuel hatred.

Police became even more violent. Police brutality is happening in Europe too.

This list of manifestations of racism in Europe is not exhaustive.

We call on you, Ms President, to break the silence and publicly acknowledge and condemn racism in the European Union, including police brutality; call on the EU leaders to follow your lead and do the same; publicly condemn any denial of racism in the European Union; recommend VP Schinas to issue an apology or an explanatory statement where he would recognise severity of systemic and structural racism in the EU; and express your support towards all people who experience racism and xenophobia.

We would also gladly meet you to discuss these important issues at your earliest convenience.

The EU must take a strong and decisive stand against racism, violence and injustice and foster implementation of all relevant policies and legislation, such as EP resolutions, Racial Equality Directive, Employment Equality Directive and Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. It is high time now to call also for collecting equality data disaggregated by racial and/or ethnic origin (as defined by the EU race directive) so the European Union does not allow denial of racism anymore and confront it with facts and figures. This demand should include acts of structural racism, police brutality, police violence and racial profiling too.

Our world has been unjust for too long. Racism is still a taboo for the public and ever a bigger taboo for institutions, including our EU institutions. This must stop now. Everybody must act to stop police brutality, racial profiling and any other form of institutionalized violence and racial injustice. The European Commission must speak up for all victims of police brutality, in the USA, Europe and everywhere.

We look forward to your response.

With kind regards,

Co-Presidents of the Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI):

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