



PRESS STATEMENT

Brussels, 25 July 2011

Oslo: The wakeup call for European political leadership!

ENAR – the European Network Against Racism – expresses its utter condemnation of the bombing and mass murder that took place in Oslo and surroundings last Friday, resulting in the violent death of around 76 innocent civilians. ENAR conveys its most sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of all the victims of those hateful acts and ensures them of its moral support in these difficult moments of pain, loss, fear and incomprehension.

As it appears that the main perpetrator of those horrible acts is linked to and influenced by the extreme-right ideology, ENAR urges the European mainstream political leadership to consider this as an urgent wakeup call! Indeed, most of the people from the European majority community have remained relatively insensitive to the numerous victims of extreme-right movements that often stemmed from minority communities: Jews, Blacks, Muslims, Roma, gays and lesbians, among others.

However, the Oslo killings dreadfully demonstrate that extreme-right ideologies are a danger for the whole society and not only for minorities. Anyone can become victim to the violence of extreme-right fanatics, intent on wiping out diversity from our societies.

Political leaders who shamelessly borrow from the extreme-right narratives with a view to winning some of the extreme-right electorate not only trivialize the heritage of democracy but also share responsibilities for extreme-right violence in Europe.

Instead of confronting contemporary challenges (ageing populations, migration, redistribution of power and wealth, financial crisis, work shortages, unemployment, and the decline of the middle class, to name a few...) with innovative ideas and political courage, many prefer embracing far right themes under the guise that “the extreme-right asks the good questions but brings the wrong answers”.

“The cheap legitimization of the extreme-right discourse that has occurred over the last 10 years is now bearing its poisonous fruits,” says Dr. Chibo Onyeji, Chairman of ENAR. Any citizen is now a potential target for furious extreme-right fanatics looking forward to making some sort of political statement by violently seeking to destroy peace, order, cohesion and mutual trust in our societies. It is high time we realized that hatred is not the solution to the daily problems of citizens who are more concerned with securing their future and the future of their children than with hating their neighbours. European societies need ambitions and the dream of a brighter future, not the frustration that leads to the terrible events of Oslo.

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is a network of NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states and represents more than 700 NGOs spread around the European Union. ENAR aims to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national and European initiatives.

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