



2021 PORTUGAL.EU

Protection from racial discrimination
and related intolerance

High Level Conference

April 20th, 2021



Protection from racial discrimination and related intolerance (antisemitism, xenophobia and anti-gypsyism)

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Organised in partnership with *Programa Nunca Esquecer*, in the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Background information

The Portuguese Presidency is strongly committed to equal opportunities and fight against all forms of discrimination, having defined in its Programme that *“Promoting equal opportunities and combating all forms of discrimination based on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation will be cross-cutting priorities.”*¹

This Conference builds upon the Trio Presidency Programme and its commitment to mainstreaming equality and fight against all forms of discrimination and follows the initiatives of the German Presidency in the fight against all forms of discrimination, particularly in the fight against antisemitism.

This Conference is also part of a set of initiatives of the Portuguese Presidency regarding the promotion of European values and democracy, including the high-level online Conference on Protecting Vulnerable Adults across Europe – the Way Forward, scheduled for March 30th, the Informal Dialogue on Integration Policies, scheduled for April 13, the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in April, and the high-level conference on the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights in May.

In the last months, the Commission and the Council have taken important steps in the protection from all forms of discrimination. In her State of the Union Address 2020 last September, President von der Leyen announced a new EU Anti-racism Action Plan (2020-2025) and the organisation of the Summit Against Racism, which occurred on March 19th, in the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21st). Furthermore, in October 2020, it was announced the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation aims to give all Roma the opportunity to realise their full potential. On December 2, the Council approved a declaration on mainstreaming the fight against antisemitism across policy areas. With this declaration the Council emphasises that the fight against antisemitism is a cross-cutting issue involving various levels of government and policies at local, national, and European level. As stated in a recent report from the Fundamental Rights Agency²: *“Antisemitism remains a concern that needs to be tackled through concerted efforts by*

¹ Programme: Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU: <https://www.2021portugal.eu/media/e0rjnvdi/programme-portuguese-presidency.pdf> (access 06/01/2021)

² Report “Antisemitism: overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European union 2009-2019”: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-antisemitism-overview-2009-2019_en.pdf

government and civil society at all levels. To tackle antisemitism effectively, relevant stakeholders need to be able to rely on robust data on antisemitic incidents to enable more efficient targeting of interventions.” The EU promotes activities to combat antisemitism including remembrance, education, and legislation.

At the UN level, 2021 marks the 20th anniversary of the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. It also marks the discussions of the mid-term review of the International Decade on People of African Descent 2020-2024, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”.

The Never Forget Programme, leading partner in the organisation of this Conference, was launched in June 2020 and aims to raise awareness and promote research and knowledge about the Holocaust, namely the work of the Portuguese that have provided protection and support to the victims of the Nazi regime (such as the Portuguese Consul in Bordeaux Aristides de Sousa Mendes).

The Conference

“Protection from discrimination” is an online conference organised in the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It will focus on the fight against racial discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and anti-Gypsyism. It is framed by important recent developments at the EU level, as well as other significant initiatives undertaken at the international and regional levels (e.g. UN Office High Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe, OSCE).

The conference is an opportunity to:

- Promote and mobilize support to the initiatives undertaken by different stakeholders working on these matters, including European Institutions, international organisations, national and local authorities, and civil society organisations.
- Provide an overview of existing policies and programmes and identify main trends and emerging concerns. Share good practices and enhance efforts to improve protection from racial discrimination and related intolerance.

Draft Programme

08.30 – 09.00

Opening Session

- **Mr. Augusto SANTOS SILVA** - Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal
- **Ms. Michelle BACHELET** – United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- **Mr. Margaritis SCHINAS** Vice-President of the European Commission

09.00 – 09.50

Session 1 – Countering hate speech: the role of human rights education, history teaching and the media in countering it online and offline

A panel discussion on exploring the topic of hate speech linked to the role that human rights education, media and history teaching can play in countering it online and offline.

Moderator: Ambassador Moraes Cabral

- **Ms. Katharina VON SCHNURBEIN** - European Commission Coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life
- **Mr. Ahmed SHAHEED** - UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief - UN Office High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- **Ms. Catherine DE BOLLE** – Executive Director of Europol

09.50 – 10.40

Session 2 – Perspectives on discrimination: main trends and challenges for a UE united in diversity

An opportunity to get an insight on perspectives from research and communities and to get acquainted with some key findings & facts.

Moderator: Marta Santos Pais – Commissioner Programa Nunca Esquecer – Never Forget Programme

- **Mr. Michael O’FLAHERTY** – President of the Fundamental Rights Agency
- **Ms. Teresa ANJINHO** – Deputy Ombudsperson
- **Ms. Sónia MATOS** – Gypsy Women Association

10.40 – 11.30

Session 3- Policies and good practices on protection from discrimination

A session to get acquainted with policy and programming framework, as well as to gain inspiration from good practices on protection from discrimination.

Moderator: Mr. Leon Saltiel - World Jewish Congress representative

- **Ms. Inês FERREIRA LEITE** - Council of Europe - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)
- **Ambassador Georges SANTER** – Former President of IHRA (March 2019-March 2020)
- **Ms. Sónia PEREIRA** High Commissioner for Migration and President of CICDR (Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination)

11.30 – 11.45

Closing Session

- **Ms. Francisca VAN DUNEM** – Minister of Justice of Portugal