

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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JOINT DECLARATION BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION

on attitudes and organisations motivated by racism and xenophobia

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EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

In its Communication to the Council of 1 March 1985⁽¹⁾ the Commission proposed adopting at Community level a declaration on the fight against racism and xenophobia. In its Resolution of 16 July 1985⁽²⁾ on guidelines for a Community policy on migration the Council of Ministers decided on the preparation of such a declaration, while the European Parliament expressed a similar view in its Resolution of 9 May 1985.⁽³⁾

In its Communication to the Council, dated 29 March 1985⁽⁴⁾, the Commission stated in regard to the implementation of a Mediterranean policy for the enlarged Community that through a declaration by the European Council the Community should "make a formal acknowledgement of the contribution made by immigrant workers to the Community's development and condemn the racist attitudes of which they are increasingly the victims".

Economic difficulties are frequently accompanied by social tension largely caused by persistent high unemployment. This situation can provoke demonstrations of intolerance towards the foreign workers on Community territory and encourage the development and expression of various forms of racism.

Ignorance about the real situation of foreign workers and their contribution to the European economies, lack of familiarity with their lifestyle and culture can also lead to rejection of the foreigner.

It is true that differences often make for unease or arouse instinctive mistrust in many people. This latent, often unconscious, mistrust can emerge and is more easily aroused in times of crisis and in a difficult employment situation.

The ideological, social and psychological aspects of racism and xenophobia stem from the fear that any different person or group presents a threat.

(1) COM(85) 48 final of 1.3.1985.

(2) O.J. No C 186, 26.7.1985, p.3.

(3) O.J. No C 141, 10.6.1985, p. 462.

(4) COM(84) 107 final of 29.3.1985.

There is no doubt that the laws in all the Member States of the Community proclaim the equality of all citizens, the elimination of all forms of segregation and racism and the protection of fundamental rights.

It is obvious, however, that suppression alone cannot eliminate every latent form of racism. In this context, efforts to inform and educate people concerning tolerance, respect for differences and appreciation of other cultures are as important as suppression. The dangers of disseminating biased information to an unenlightened population are all too obvious.

In their Joint Declaration of 5 April 1977, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission solemnly underlined their respect for fundamental rights.

Faced with the rising dangers of racism and xenophobia, it would appear to be a responsibility of the Community, motivated by its ideals of freedom and peace, to reiterate its belief in the dignity of man, and launch an appeal to combat any action detrimental to that dignity, regardless of race, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.

The present draft Declaration is intended as a moral and political undertaking by the Community institutions in the face of racism and xenophobia and every form of discrimination and to call for a vigorous information and education campaign.

JOINT DECLARATION

by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission
on attitudes and organisations motivated by racism and xenophobia

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION,

Recognizing the existence and resurgence of xenophobic attitudes, movements and acts of violence which are often directed against immigrants;

Whereas the Community institutions attach basic importance to respect for fundamental rights, as solemnly proclaimed in the Joint Declaration of 5 April 1977;

Whereas respect of the dignity of man and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination are part of the cultural and legal heritage of all the Member States and are enshrined in their national constitutions and legislation;

1. Vigorously condemn all forms of discrimination, defamation, racist theory or insult, expression of hate or violence in physical, spoken or written form directed against persons or groups of persons on the grounds of their origin, or their belonging or not to a particular ethnic group, nationality, race or religion;
2. Solemnly call on Member States to adopt the necessary measures to protect the identity and dignity of every member of society, regardless of race, religion, nationality or ethnic origin;
3. Recall the importance of disseminating balanced and accurate information to all citizens in response to the dangers of racism and xenophobia, and the need to ensure that all forms of discrimination are prevented or eliminated.

