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Labour market main area of discrimination

The labour market and the work place are the main areas of complaints of discrimination by immigrants and members of ethnic and religious minorities living in the Member States of the European Union.

This is one of the major conclusions of the third annual report on developments in racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in 2000 in the EU Member States by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in Vienna. The report is presented today at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The main forms of discrimination experienced by migrants and minority groups at the labour market are exclusion from recruitment, lower incomes on average, declining levels of labour force participation and a greater risk of unemployment. In general the numbers of unemployed are proportionately higher among migrants and minority groups than among the majority population in all EU Member States.

“We need to ensure that migrants, black and ethnic minority people are treated equally throughout Europe, also on the labour market. We need to achieve a change in attitudes, habits and values, and work towards a culture that does not inadvertently usher in discrimination, but recognizes, reflects and values diversity,” states Bob Purkiss, Chair of the EUMC Management Board.

In all EU Member States many initiatives are taken by various actors to combat discrimination and promote cultural diversity in the workplace. The EUMC will support this work by publishing a special report on good practice in the workplace in early 2002. The adoption of the new Directives under Article 13 of the EC Treaty introduces common standards of protection from discrimination throughout the European Union. The provisions of the Directives, which all Member States must implement by 2003, create an important framework for equal treatment in access to employment, healthcare, education and other goods and services.

The EUMC's Annual Report for 2000 also highlights an extensive increase in racial violence, anti-Semitic attacks and racist threats and intimidation reported from France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The riot in El Ejido in Spain, at the beginning of 2000, where hundreds of Spanish people attacked the Moroccan immigrant population, was one of the most serious examples of racial violence this year.

"The continued attacks and discrimination faced by ethnic minorities in many Member States show that the fight against racism and xenophobia is more important than ever before, but it requires a joint effort from all sides of the society to tackle not just direct, but also indirect racial discrimination and work actively towards greater equality," says Beate Winkler, Director of the EUMC.

Note for the editor:

The Annual Report 2000 will be published in the following languages: English, French and German.

Summaries of the Annual Report will be available in all the official languages of the European Union.

The Annual Report 2000, the summaries and this media release will be published on the Internet: <http://eumc.eu.int>

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