

We fit together!

diversity = strength



15-23 March 2014

European Action Week Against Racism

www.weekagainstracism.eu • facebook [UNITEDActionWeek](https://www.facebook.com/UNITEDActionWeek) • 21March@unitedagainstracism.org

We DO fit together

Europe is today facing many forms of racism, hate speech, xenophobia, anti-migrant attitude and a growth of right-wing populism. These phenomena go straight against the very essence and central idea of what Europe was all about when it was being built after WW II: cooperation, solidarity, diversity, peace.

Europe is now in the midst of crisis: economically, socially and politically. Unemployment and erosion of social structures are widespread, influencing the general atmosphere in Europe and creating social unrest. A joint European effort to find sustainable solutions to these problems is missing. European leaders act in their own, national interests.

The on-going economic situation has caused a widespread lack of trust in the capacity of national and European governmental institutions to move Europe out of the recession. These institutions are seen as partly responsible for the deepening of the crisis, leaving millions of people unemployed.

Furthermore, right-wing parties, leaders and extremist groups use this crisis to their advantage to voice their populist ideas of exclusion and xenophobia. They speak a language of division and fear and argue for a singular society. In their discourse, populists blame different marginalised groups for the current economic and political situation. Their call for blaming "the other" causes our society to fall apart.

Many people are influenced by this populist discourse as well as by their own economic situation. Increasing unemployment and erosion of social structures are widespread processes, influencing the general atmosphere in Europe

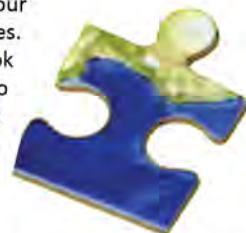
and thus unhinging society. People search for scapegoats and refrain from taking up responsibility for their own situation.

People who cannot find a way to handle their fears follow populist and right-wing extremist leaders who preach easy solutions for complicated problems.

Increasing extreme-right tendencies are not incidental problems; they are a broad phenomenon of ignorance and violent communication affecting society.

Minority groups in Europe face growing racist violence, suffer under racial profiling and policing, and are excluded from having equal access to services like housing, employment, health care and education. Stereotypes are artificially created and promoted by defamatory media coverage. Hate speech is the language of extremists and populist politicians. The impact of racism and discrimination on our societies today is significant: It affects all of us in various ways – whether we are its subjects or objects – making social cohesion impossible and paving the way for conflict.

Racism and discrimination is not only advocated by the openly racist. The tendency to divide and categorise minorities into over-generalised groups is deeply embedded at various levels in our societies and in our everyday activities. It can take the form of a negative look in the subway, or crossing the street to avoid someone from a minority. But while it might be a human condition to bear prejudices contained in our cultures, we do not have to live our lives as slaves to them.



SEE THE STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

We can counter this negative spiral. During the European Action Week Against Racism we can spread our own message of solidarity, and show Europe that diversity makes us stronger. This is the moment to make our voice heard and change the current atmosphere. To overcome the crisis we need to make use of the strengths that come from diversity.

Diversity means seeing your surroundings from different perspectives, which makes us more flexible when finding solutions to the difficulties we now face. Allow space for diversity and find there is a lot to explore, to understand, and to learn from each other. Using the strength of diversity makes us more able to cope with a rapidly changing world. Being open for diversity - within Europe, your country, your society, your neighbourhood, and yourself - strengthens the social cohesion we need to tackle the current atmosphere. **Diversity = Strength**

WE FIT TOGETHER

Action should be taken on all levels in Europe, from local neighbourhoods to European institutions. We need to show the people around us that we can all live side by side. By helping each other and standing up for the "other" we can make a difference and turn the economic, social and political tides. We believe in a future without discrimination and exclusion, and with intercultural respect, solidarity and equal rights. With this goal, we stand UNITED in our struggle to see the strength of diversity.

What we need most is the courage to speak out against exclusion, discrimination, hate and racism wherever we see it: in our streets, at our schools, on the Internet or within our institutions and governments.

Since the early 1990s, UNITED has coordinated and inspired annual pan-European activities promoting diversity to mark 21 March. Take this opportunity and be part of the European Action Week Against Racism. In this week hundreds of organisations and thousands of activists throughout Europe join forces across borders to raise awareness about the issues mentioned and celebrate diversity. We will not watch in silence as intolerance is dictating our lives. On the contrary we will raise our voices against inequality and discrimination. Our message needs to be visible to be recognised and therefore the movement depends on your support. Organise an activity and have an enormous impact on creating cohesion, establishing intercultural dialogue and spreading the antiracist agenda.

- Tell us about your activity and it will be promoted on the event map on weekagainstracism.eu.
- Tweet about your activity with #ARW14.

Combining all different pieces we show that we DO fit together, and that together we are stronger!

WHY 21 MARCH?

The General Assembly of the United Nations declared 21 March the International Day for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. This day was implemented as a reaction to the brutal murder of 69 anti-apartheid demonstrators in Sharpeville (South Africa) in 1960. Apartheid was a legal system of systematic racial segregation and inequality enforced by the government of South Africa from 1948 up to 1990. Today racist

European Action Week Against Racism

violence and murders are still frequent and discrimination continues to be found at every level of our societies.

Every year around 21 March, UNITED coordinates the European-wide Action Week Against Racism. Activists, NGOs, universities, schools, municipalities and a wide variety of different organisations carry out hundreds of activities all around Europe in order to bring an end to racism, discrimination and intolerance. The actions actively engage and involve thousands of people all over Europe to take a stand for diversity. The activities range from poster actions in schools, public transport and working places, to intercultural youth festivals, street actions, lectures, human libraries, film screenings, conferences, multicultural football games, making murals for diversity, or cleaning the walls from racist graffiti, presenting reports on racism, and many, many more.

- For more information visit www.weekagainstracism.eu.
- Stay updated on the latest activities: www.facebook.com/UnitedActionWeek.
- Tell the network about your activity on Twitter: #ARW14

WHY COOPERATE IN CAMPAIGNS?

Racism is not only a local issue and the Action Week Against Racism can help to set the agenda on all levels. We have to campaign on the local, regional and European level to get our point across. By linking local and national actions, we make our movement visible and can generate European-wide publicity. Join the campaign and add your voice to thousands of others; by speaking together for an intercultural open society we are louder, our message is stronger and it travels further.

Furthermore, public actions let people reflect about the issues raised. Racism is not just an isolated act, but part of a collective, continuing system of social relations. It is not always easy to see; sometimes we need each other to point discrimination out to us. Effective antiracism is a joint effort; we start by opening up our own minds and then encouraging those around us to see another future. Across Europe activists are preparing strong and innovative ways to engage with their communities during the Action Week Against Racism. Join the campaign! Let us work together to speak out, loud and proud, for equality, respect and diversity. UNITED we have a voice!

JOIN THE 2014 CAMPAIGN BE CREATIVE & HAVE FUN!

Everybody can give a valuable contribution to the Action Week. Being active against racism does not necessarily require large organisational capacities, big budgets or years of experience – in fact, even the smallest event can make a big difference, and all that is needed from you is creativity and the will to act.

The European campaign aims to raise awareness in all relevant sectors of society. The four main targetgroups are media, youth, political leaders, and the general public:

> **MEDIA** are essential in campaign actions with the purpose of raising awareness among the general public and may agree to work with you to produce special articles, TV programs, and radio shows. Especially local media are often interested in cooperating with local organisations to produce special programs; so inform journalists and local media about your activity!

> **YOUTH** organisations and teachers' unions frequently take up the occasion of this week to organise special lessons, campus meetings, petitions and workshops. In fact it is very important to involve youngsters in actions. In that way, they take a role in decision-making processes and they have the possibility to become more self-confident. Furthermore, they make the future public debate!

> **POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LEADERS** can show their braveness and leadership when standing up for positions that may not be popular, and which show a vision of inclusion. Several mayors, ministers, and other politicians have shown their support to diversity in previous UNITED campaigns. In cooperation with ECCAR (European Coalition of Cities Against Racism), mayors and politicians are again asked to join this campaign by stating that we DO fit together.

Send us a picture of this campaign poster with your mayor, minister, Member of Parliament and ask them for a quote: how will they promote diversity and fight populism, far-right extremism, racism and exclusion. These political statements will be published on www.facebook.com/UnitedActionWeek

> **PUBLIC** actions, like conferences, debates and demonstrations provide space for reflection and brainstorming. Removing graffiti and other visible actions can alert the public to the message of the Action Week, but also hanging posters and distributing campaign material (e.g. posters, stickers, postcards, info-leaflets...) helps spread our message. You can take up the occasion of the Action Week to write petitions to politicians or publish media releases. Organise activities during the Action Week and give both the Week and your own activity more weight and publicity.

On the UNITED Action Week website (www.weekagainstracism.eu) we have published several information leaflets (e.g. 'Get Active! - The How to Organise an Activity? - Guide'). You can also gain inspiration by checking former campaign reports on our website and you can get ideas for good practice events from the Calendar of Internationalism (www.unitedagainstracism.org). On www.facebook.com/UnitedActionWeek you can also find relevant news from the previous campaign.

As you start developing and preparing your activity there are some basic questions you should reflect upon. Depending on how you choose to frame your activity the following questions provide a good starting point:

- What is the character of your event/project?
- Who are you targeting and how?
- What are your goals and how will you achieve them?
- Who are your potential partners in action?

Answering these questions will enable you to sketch out your event and create a plan of action. Whether you seek inspiration, wish to draw on other activists' experiences, are looking for potential partners or need various sorts of campaigning materials, UNITED can help you.



HOW UNITED CAN HELP YOU

- You can order FREE campaign material, up to 100 posters (2kg material) and postcards and stickers. But if you need more material for special purposes, do not hesitate to contact UNITED.
- We will produce an interactive event map on www.WeekAgainstRacism.eu, documenting all the different activities all over Europe during the campaign and you can see the strength of the antiracist movement throughout Europe. The event map will be updated regularly and will contain announcements and reports. Make sure your activity is included by keeping UNITED informed!
- We will highlight important news on Facebook - UNITEDActionWeek - follow the page and keep UNITED updated! Tweet during your activity with #ARW14.
- A UNITED media release will be sent out to all major European press agencies, newspapers, etc. We will also send it to you so you can use it to inform your own media contacts. Or send us your specific media contact from your country, and we will include them in our list. Journalists wanting to know about specific activities will be informed about events in their country and referred to the organisations involved.
- Look through the online database on www.unitedagainstracism.org to find like-minded organisations in other countries, or in your own country. The Address Book Against Racism also includes a list of antiracism magazines.
- Call UNITED if you cannot find a partner for your activities. We can help you to find other NGOs in your country who are planning activities.
- You can order or download a wide variety of educational leaflets that provide best-practices and background information about topics relevant for every day anti-racism work.
- UNITED will produce an online campaign report after the Action Week, including reports on as many of the activities that took place as possible.

HOW YOU CAN HELP UNITED

Announce your activities to us! Mail us your ideas, flyers, invitations, posters, press releases, and links to your campaign activities before they take place. We will post them on WeekAgainstRacism.eu to show all in Europe we speak out against racism and for diversity!

Regularly new information will be posted on Facebook - UNITEDActionWeek - and Twitter - UNITED__Network. Show the world Europe is against racism and tweet about your activity with #ARW14.

Make sure your activity is included and you get the recognition you deserve: Contribute to UNITED's online campaign report! Send us reports, newspaper clippings, articles, photographs, online coverage, and feedback after the event. The material does not have to be in English.

Campaign contacts

21march@unitedagainstracism.org
www.WeekAgainstRacism.eu
Twitter @UNITED__Network #ARW14
facebook UNITEDActionWeek



WE ARE UNITED

UNITED for Intercultural Action is the European network against nationalism, racism, fascism, and in support of migrants and refugees. Racism, nationalism, fascism, discrimination, restrictive migration and asylum policies, these issues have a European dimension. It is important to fight intolerance on all levels.

Linked through UNITED, more than 550 organisations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from 48 European countries, work together on a voluntary basis. They base their cooperation on common actions, shared activities and on mutual respect.

UNITED is and will remain independent from all political parties, organisations and states, but seeks an active co-operation with other anti-racist initiatives in Europe.

Through the UNITED network, organisations meet each other, work on common actions and share information. European-wide action weeks and campaigns are planned and discussed at UNITED conferences. Like-minded organisations meet each other at such conferences and work together on specific projects and topics. The people at the secretariat are in constant contact with the network organisations, ensuring that information and proposals for action are processed rapidly.

Information is received from more than 2700 organisations and mailings go out to about 2300 groups in Europe. If you want to get involved, discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know when your organisation would like to support, join or receive information. And add UNITED to your mailing list!

UNITED is SUPPORTED by

more than 550 organisations from 48 European countries, many prominent individuals, private supporters and long-term volunteers from Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service and the EVS, Grundvig and Leonardo Programmes of the European Union.

Since 1992 financial support was received from various sponsors such as: European Commission (General Budget/Socrates/Grundvig/Youth in Action Programme/DG Employment Social Affairs/ TACIS IBPP), Council of Europe (European Youth Foundation/European Youth Centres), OSCE-ODIHR, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, World Council of Churches, Olof Palme MinesFond, Cultural Council Sweden, Ministry of Education Slovenia, Green Group-, Socialist Group-, and GUE/NGL Group in the European Parliament, European Cultural Foundation, Stiftung West-Östliche Begegnung, Aktionsbündnis Gegen Gewalt, Rechtstraining und Fremdenfeindlichkeit Brandenburg, Home Office UK, Ministry of Interior-BZK NL, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs CH, the Matra Programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Instituto Português da Juventude, National Integration Office Sweden, Service Nationale de la Jeunesse Luxembourg, LNU - Norwegian Youth Council, Europees Platform Grundvig, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Federal Social Insurance Office (Dep. for Youth Affairs) CH, Swiss Coordination Office of Youth for Europe, Federal Service for Combating Racism (Fund for Projects Against Racism) CH, Migros Kulturprozent CH, Comunidad de Madrid, Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan, The Swedish National Board of Youth Affairs, Rothschild Foundation, Local Municipality of Budapest, Youth Board of Cyprus, Jewish Humanitarian Fund, Foundation Remembrance Responsibility and Future, Minority Rights Group Europe, OSCE - Mission to Skopje, Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture Province Noord-Brabant, Open Society Foundations, Final Frontiers Internet, Dijkman Print and others.

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'Youth in Action' Programme



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

UNITED for Intercultural Action

European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees

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