

Part I

“GIVING EUROPE A SOUL” SETTING UP THE EUROPEAN MONITORING CENTRE ON RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

‘Like only a few other institutions in the European Union, the [Monitoring] Centre addresses the issues relating to human rights, but also the problems and fears, the hopes and opportunities of citizens in Europe. We try "to be close to the people" by what we do. We do not look at the problems through a telescope – as the name "Monitoring Centre" might imply – but we try to find them in everyday life. Europe does not only need the Euro, Europe also needs a soul. To find this soul and to bring it to life, for the future of Europe, is one of the objectives of the European Monitoring Centre and its Management Board, whose members I would like to thank most cordially for their work.’ Jean Kahn, Chairman of the Management Board of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

1. Europe’s new Centre on racism is operational

Europe’s new Centre to monitor racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism became operational in 1998. It all began with the work of the Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia, which led to the creation of the present independent institution. After an establishment process lasting three years, from the request by the European Council to the Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia in June 1995, the first Director of the Monitoring Centre, Beate Winkler, took up her position in July 1998 and began the task of setting up the new Centre and preparing its first program of action. Prior to her appointment the Management Board, independent members of which were nominated by the Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of Europe, held its first meeting on 20-21 January 1998 in Vienna (see Appendix 1 for list of members). At this meeting the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and members of the Executive Board were elected (see Appendix 2 for list of members). The Management Board held two further meetings on 28-29 May, when they agreed the appointment of the Director and discussed the organisation of Round Table meetings, and 5-6 November when the financial regulations and internal rules of procedure, the recruitment of staff and the priorities for operational activities for 1999 were discussed.

The Monitoring Centre is based in Vienna. It has the task of providing the European Community and its Member States with objective, reliable and comparable data at the European level on the phenomena of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. This data will enable them to take measures or formulate courses of action. The Centre also studies the extent and development of the phenomena and manifestations of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, analyses their causes, consequences and effects and examines examples of good practice in dealing with them.

By the end of 1998 the Monitoring Centre produced its plan of action incorporating the priorities for the Centre’s initial work program. The priorities agreed were setting up the European Information Network on Racism and Xenophobia (RAXEN); beginning the process of organising Round Tables in member states; identifying key issues for future work; initiating research and projects to deepen and consolidate the information base on racism; starting projects to support people and organisations to cope with ethnic,

religious and cultural diversity in a positive way; publicizing an appeal for common action; and preparing an Annual Report.

2. Momentum against racism and xenophobia must not be lost.

The European Year against Racism in 1997 produced a focal point for activities and awareness-raising on the issues of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The creation of the Monitoring Centre provides an opportunity to carry forward the initiatives of 1997 into concrete programs for the new millennium. This has become even more pressing after the results of a study undertaken by the European Commission and published in the Eurobarometer series in 1997 highlighted the challenge facing the European Union. In 1997, almost one third of Europeans sampled in the survey considered themselves to be "very" racist or "quite" racist. It also revealed that almost half of the Europeans who consider themselves to be "very" or "quite" racist are dissatisfied with the policies pursued by their governments. These results compared to the previous large scale survey in 1989 revealed an increase in racism and xenophobia. While in 1997 41% of Europeans felt that members of ethnic minorities or persons of different nationality, religion or culture were "too numerous", in 1989 only 37% of the population had been of this opinion. Simultaneously, the fight against racism has gradually been attached less importance (36% in 1989 as compared to 22% in 1997).

The link revealed in the 1997 survey between racism and politics provides a timely reminder about the importance of the role of politicians in fighting racism. Even as we speak, politicians and society are still failing to recognise the fact that a growing number of people of different cultural, religious and ethnic origin are, and will be, living in Europe. Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and racism threaten the ability of diverse cultural communities to live together. More than ever before, there is an urgent need to provide information, to show the possibilities of equality and diversity, as well as to develop regulations and rules for society in order that different groups of people can live together peacefully in a community. There is also a need to understand the reasons why discrimination, marginalisation and xenophobia have sprung up in order to combat them effectively.

3. Role of politicians crucial to successful strategy against racism

With the exception of the Treaty of Amsterdam – in particular Article 13 – the topics of participation in society by ethnic minorities and the immigrant population, and anti-discriminating policies, racism and xenophobia have been largely absent from the core political debates in Europe.

Politicians have a key role to play in raising the profile of these issues and ensuring that the issues are discussed in such a way that an unambiguous signal is given about the need for tolerance and respect for diverse cultures in Europe.

Many politicians continue to regard immigration in Europe as a taboo subject or to abuse it for their own election-campaigning. Turning concepts, such as 'country of immigration', 'immigrant', immigration policy, into taboos means that there is a lack of programmes and monitoring mechanisms on the issues, that fears are kindled and that xenophobia will grow. A clearly defined policy would make it easier to discuss and understand this issue and to develop perspectives for the future.

Politicians have failed to communicate the message that the phenomena of "migration and immigration" are time-honoured facts which every society has had to face. Immigration and the question of how people of different cultural origin can live together in a community have certainly always created challenges, but

they never became an endurance test for society. The Europe we live in today is a creation of diverse cultures and ideas.

A clear political message on living together in a community is missing in almost all European Member States, which results in a political and social void that right-wing extremists and their political parties have filled and continue to fill. For example, politicians have often given up centrist positions in recent years in order to keep the right fringe of the electorate at bay. It is a challenge to all political parties in Europe, which they must take up, that they fill this void, that they find a consensus, also beyond party limits, and that they explain the issue to the electorate to improve understanding and acceptance.

As part of the need to address this issue, the Monitoring Centre began discussions about the possibility of a monitoring project with the Continuation Committee of the 'Charter of European political parties for a non-racist society'.

4. Initial Priorities established

4.1 Creating a new Information network to combat racism – Raxen's first steps

One of the key tasks of the Monitoring centre is to develop and coordinate a new European information network on racism and xenophobia (Raxen). Raxen's task will be to collect data, assess its comparability and make the results available to Member States. It will identify what is known, where and by whom, enlarge the exchange of knowledge and disseminate examples of "good practice".

At the end of November 1998 all the Member States submitted details of organisations to participate in Raxen (see Table 1 below). A total of two hundred and sixty two organisations were nominated and the Monitoring Centre had the task of working out an overview and assessing the comparability of the various organisations. In brief, of the organisations nominated ninety six were research establishments and university institutes, one hundred and twenty seven were non-governmental organisations and foundations and eighteen were governmental and quasi-governmental bodies. There were also four employers and trade union organisations nominated.

Table 1

	Belgium	Denmark	Germany	Finland	France	Greece	Ireland	Italy	Luxembourg	Netherlands	Austria	Portugal	Sweden	Spain	United Kingdom	Total
Research establishments	12	3	15	9	4	8	9	4	1	10	3	4	1	3	10	96
NGOs and foundations	19	5	21	6	3	2		3	11	17	9	14	6	4	7	127
Governmental and quasi-governmental bodies on racism	1		13							1	2				1	18
Employers organisations and trade unions etc.											2	2				4
National ministries				2							7				1	10
National commissions				2	1		1				3					7
Total	32	8	49	19	8	10	10	7	12	28	26	20	7	7	19	262

4.2 National Round Tables on Racism launched

Despite the resource and time constraints of setting up the Monitoring Centre, the first activities were launched in 1998 with a series of Round Table meetings in the United Kingdom, Austria and Ireland. There are Round Tables planned in 1999 for Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK.

To achieve this the EUMC developed a concept for the Round Tables which built on existing structures but aimed to make them more and more similar. The Round Tables aim to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experience between various key sectors of society. They will bring together the expertise from many disciplines such as NGOs, politicians, academics and specialised groups and bodies dealing with racism and xenophobia. All Round Tables should have a comparable structure and deal with comparable topics in order to reach comparable and concrete results. In addition, Round Tables will reflect the situation in each Member State which when taken together will draw a more comprehensive picture of the diversity of Europe.

The first Round Table was held in the United Kingdom on 16 October 1998 at Middlesex University. It was attended by seventy five participants from a cross-section of disciplines. The discussions were divided into five workshops: Universities and education; local authorities; NGOs and Anti-racist groups; migration and citizenship rights groups; and professional and specialised bodies. The discussion focussed on the role and remit of the Monitoring Centre, mechanisms to facilitate cooperation between the Centre and other bodies, the nature of the Centre's activities and key issues for the Centre to develop.

The second Round Table took place in Austria on 30 October 1998. It was attended by around 90 participants representing academics, government ministries, human rights organisations, political parties, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the social partners and the unit of the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) dealing with minority issues. The discussion focussed again on the role and scope of activities of the Monitoring Centre and strategies to combat racism in Austria and Europe-wide.

The final Round Table of 1998 took place in Ireland on 26 November. It was attended by 30 participants representing NGOs working on refugee, asylum, travellers' issues as well as anti-racism; state agencies and government departments. The discussions focussed on the role of the Monitoring Centre at the European level and national level strategies to combat racism with reference to travellers, Black Irish experiences, asylum seekers and refugees, migrant issues, the experience of women and anti-Semitism.

The first Round Tables were a success and demonstrated the willingness for co-operation between the Monitoring Centre and national bodies and organisations.

5. Communicating the message on racism and xenophobia

There was immense interest in the work of the Centre at its inception. The media, in particular, were very interested in the activities of the Centre. The Monitoring Centre held one press conference and issued several news releases. The news release on 6 November provided an overview of the work of the Centre during its first one hundred days. The first press conference was held on 7 December and the occasion was used to launch "Equality and diversity for Europe - an appeal for common action". The Director also held extensive and numerous interviews with the media during the second half of the year.

The Monitoring Centre began its publication programme with four documents. These were a general *Information* brochure which sets out the background and operational priorities of the Centre; a paper entitled *Xenophobia and Racism in Europe – In the light of the public opinion 1989-1997* which analysed the results of the Eurobarometer surveys in 1989 and 1997 and drew comparisons on attitudes towards racism and xenophobia; the pamphlet, “*You can do something for better understanding against racism...*”; and finally *Equality and diversity for Europe - an Appeal for Common Action*.

The Monitoring Centre participated in various events and conferences. It was present at the EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights and Racism, the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in Vienna and Paris and the Affirmative Action against Discrimination event.

6. Administrative Activities

A major part of the work of the Centre in 1998 was concentrated on setting up the administrative structure to meet the initial requirements for recruiting members of staff, developing procedures for finance and locating premises.

A limited number of members of staff were recruited which included the Head of Unit 1 (Administration) and an administrative assistant (Table 1). Four secretaries were also recruited on fixed-term contracts to help facilitate the setting up phase.

On the finances, procedures were developed with the assistance of DG V (Division of Social Services) and DG XX (Financial Control). At the beginning of December 1998, a representative of the Court of Auditors visited the Centre. The balance sheet (Table 2) and statement of revenue and expenditure (Table 3) is outlined below. On the issue of premises, the Monitoring Centre is housed temporarily in the Austrian Federal Chancellery.

Table 1 - Staff members at the end of 1998

CATEGORIES	A	B	C	D	Total
STAFF 1998	2	1	-	-	3

**Table 2 - European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
Balance sheet as at 31 December 1998**

(in ECU 1 000)

ASSETS	1998	LIABILITIES	1998
Current assets		Fixed Capital	
Amounts recoverable from the Commission	42	Balance for the financial year	-42
Salary advances	78		
Recoverable VAT	14		
Sub-total	134	Sub-total	-42
Cash accounts		Current liabilities	
Bank accounts	310	Automatic carry -overs of appropriations	292
Sub-total	310	Salary payable	118
		Social liabilities	29
		Commission account	42
		VAT	14

Suspense account	9		
		Sub-total	495
Total assets	453	Total liabilities	453

Source: prepared by the Court of Auditors on the basis of data from the Centre

**Table 3- European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
Revenue and expenditure account for the financial year 1998**

		(in ECU 1 000)
		1998
Revenue		
Subsidy received from the Commission		500
Miscellaneous revenue		4
	Total revenue	504
Expenditure		
Staff expenditure – Title I of the budget		
Payments (1)		212
Appropriations carried over		120
Administrative expenditure – Title II of the budget		
Payments		14
Appropriations carried over		61
Operating expenditure – Title III of the budget		
Payments		29
Appropriations carried over		111
	Total expenditure	547
Out-turn for the financial year		-43
Exchange rate differences		1
	Balance for the financial year	-42

Source: prepared by the Court of Auditors on the basis of data from the Centre

(1) An amount of ECU 69 000 relating to additional salary and salary deductions is to be paid during 1999.

Appendix 1 Management Board

(* denotes deputy)

Belgium:	Prof. Johan Leman / Jean Cornil*
Denmark:	Prof. Ole Espersen / Morten Kjaerum*
Germany:	Uta Würfel / Barbara John*
Finland:	Kaarina Suonio / Prof. Tom Sandlund*
France:	Dr. Jean Kahn / Martine Valdes-Boulouque*
Greece:	Prof. Petros Stangos / Perikles Pangalos*
United Kingdom:	Robert Purkiss / David Weaver*
Italy:	Prof. Francesco Margiotta Broglio / Diego Ungaro*
Ireland:	Mervyn Taylor / Mary Flaherty*
Luxembourg:	Nic Klecker / Prof. Edouard Wolter*
Netherlands:	Prof. Ed van Thijn / Prof. Paul B. Cliteur*
Austria:	Prof. Anton Pelinka / Prof. Stefan Karner*
Portugal:	Prof. Pedro Bacelar de Vasconcelos / Prof. Esmeraldo de Azevedo*
Spain:	Dr. Juan de Dios Ramirez-Heredia / Joaquin Alvarez de Toledo*
Sweden:	Stéphane Bruchfeld / Lena Berggren*
European Parliament:	Prof. William Duncan / Dr. Jürgen Micksch*
Council of Europe:	Prof. Joseph Voyame / Dr. Jenö Kaltenbach
European Commission:	Dr. Odile Quintin / Adam Tyson*

Appendix 2 Executive Board

Chairman:	Dr. Jean Kahn
Vice Chairman:	Robert Purkiss
Member elected by the Management Board:	Prof. Anton Pelinka
Member appointed by the Council of Europe:	Prof. Joseph Voyame
Representative of the European Commission:	Dr. Odile Quintin



Part II

LOOKING REALITY IN THE FACE THE SITUATION REGARDING RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

MANIFESTATIONS OF RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

If racism and xenophobia in Europe are to be effectively combated, a first essential step is to identify and understand the nature and intensity of these problems.

The first thing that can be established – simply by reading the European press coverage in recent months or discussing the subject with the numerous non-governmental organisations in each of the fifteen States of the Union – is that racism and xenophobia are universal. No country in the Union is immune. None can claim to have totally eradicated these problems, even now, over fifty years after the end of the Second World War.

At the same time, however, another fact becomes apparent: these problems are highly diverse, taking different forms in different historical, sociological and political contexts. Their nature and scale vary from place to place within Europe, even though there are similarities between the victims, or arising from the existence of transnational racist networks.

The seriousness of the problems varies, too. Although the most murderous examples are generally brought to the attention of the public, there are many others – less spectacular, but just as deplorable – that are difficult to identify because they form part of routine racism: threats or incidents which form part of everyday life and are trivialised or suppressed by the victims.

RACISM AS A MODERN PHENOMENON

No European country has been exempt from these multifaceted phenomena. To demonstrate this point, we have collected a few cases from the European press: this is an arbitrary selection, since no exhaustive study exists – it will be one of the tasks of the Monitoring Centre to produce such a study.

As far as the public authorities, and public opinion, are concerned, the best means of combating racist and xenophobic acts and attitudes is to start with a clear picture: in other words, to compile statistics based on the best possible criteria so as to obtain a close-up view of the real nature of these phenomena. The aim is not to compare such figures between different countries, but to be able to approach them on the basis of the same definitions, something that has yet to be done.

In this first report, we have been unable to collect enough statistics to determine the quantitative scale of these problems.

It is generally appreciated that police statistics or other records of complaints lodged or recorded by the non-governmental organisations tell only part of the story. In the majority of cases, the victims prefer not to come forward.

So it is important not to lose sight of the "hidden statistics" of everyday racist attacks, acts of violence and demonstrations, which can only be approached through surveys and analyses.

THE VICTIMS OF RACISM

The starting point for an awareness of racist and xenophobic acts and attitudes is the identification of the victims. Not only because they are of course the persons most closely concerned, and because they suffer from that, but also because a more accurate identification of these victims defines the actual nature of racism and, consequently, is a condition for preventive measures against it.

It should be noted that these victims are not the same in every country, although Travellers, Nomads, Romanies, Gypsies, etc., are frequently encountered under various names throughout the European Union, while in more general terms groups of foreigners and immigrants are frequently targeted.

THE PERPETRATORS OF RACIST ACTS

It is particularly important to find out more about who perpetrates racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic acts.

It is often difficult to be completely sure who is responsible, since the guilty parties generally wear masks or otherwise protect their anonymity. On rare occasions, they admit responsibility for their actions (through press releases or signed graffiti, etc.).

When victims file complaints, the police forces try to identify those responsible and bring them before the courts.

This first report cannot undertake any precise classification of perpetrators, although numerous studies have been undertaken by universities in some countries. In general terms, it can be said that when they are personally identified they are likely to be militant members or at least sympathisers of far-right organisations and parties. Sources of discrimination may be more diverse: private companies, government departments or individuals.

The state of public opinion

If, given the current evaluative instruments (police and court statistics, studies of victims and studies of the perpetrators of racist acts), it is difficult to obtain a clear picture of racism in Europe, one of the reasons put forward by sociologists is that this is a highly subjective phenomenon.

Those responsible for racism or xenophobic attitudes rely more on ideology, irrationality and fantasy than on reasoned argument. Some antiracist NGOs have devoted time to the production of counter-arguments to challenge the official manifestos of the far-right and racist parties, for example with regard to the actual number of immigrants or the relationship between the foreign population and unemployment or delinquency, without always carrying conviction.

To different extents in the various States of the Union, national public opinion is more or less permeable to racist arguments.

This form of contamination is apparent not only from ballot papers in the various forms of elections, but also permeates everyday life and relations between groups.

Immigration

Most European studies conclude that a link exists between racism or xenophobia and immigration or the presence of minorities.

It would be a serious error to say that immigrants or minority members "generate" racism. In actual fact, they are the main victims of it, though not the only ones. Nor can it be said that the number of immigrants is proportional to the number of racist acts.

The fact remains that, by definition, xenophobia is an attitude of rejection and stigmatisation of foreigners, and that it can very quickly and very easily cross the line that divides it from racism.

Conversely, though, the presence of a large number of immigrants does not necessarily provoke xenophobic or racist reactions. An opinion poll conducted in France also showed that fear of foreigners was strongest in those areas where the number of immigrants was smallest. Similarly, there is little xenophobia in districts where large numbers of foreigners are mixed with French nationals.

The media

The attitude adopted by the national media, both with regard to the growth of racism and xenophobia and with regard to the efforts to combat them, is of critical sociological importance, as constantly emphasised by the Monitoring Centre.

The attitude adopted by the media is not consistent, either within Europe or, in many cases, within a single country.

ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

The second purpose of this report is to summarise recent action taken to combat racism and xenophobia in the various States of the Union.

In recent years, many different steps have been taken to combat racism and xenophobia. The European Year against Racism provided a framework for many such activities.

These steps were taken by governments and the national or regional authorities, but also by civil society (associations, trade unions, citizens' and victims' groups, etc.).

This summary of some of the activities involved is intended to be not so much an exhaustive inventory, something that would be beyond us given the current state of our documentation, as a set of examples of correct practices.

Among the steps taken by the public authorities, a distinction can be made between punitive measures, mainly legislative in nature, and preventive measures forming the subject of public initiatives and policies.

PUNITIVE MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

This is the type of action most frequently adopted in the 15 States of the Union. We will make no attempt here to summarise the whole of the legislative arsenal, which has been the subject of national and comparative European studies that need not be repeated here.

Instead, we shall confine ourselves to discussing the most recent provisions introduced. It should be noted that no country can claim to have comprehensive and ideal legislation for punishing racism. Standards vary significantly from one country to the next. A further difficulty lies in the inherent difference between legislation deriving from the Common Law and that drawing on Germano-Latin law. This problem is further exacerbated by the changing nature of racist and xenophobic activities. And, finally, no-one claims that punishment by the courts is a panacea which, alone and unaided, can eradicate racism.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES – ACTIONS AND POLICIES OF THE PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

National policies for the prevention of racism and xenophobia, especially those relating to immigrants and minority groups, are generally more numerous and more original than the punitive measures implemented by these same governments and public authorities.

Clearly, Europe gives priority to prevention.

These measures have become more numerous in recent years. A very extensive survey of them was undertaken during the European Year against Racism.

They are often highly specific and adapted to the particular situation of a country or its traditions.

They affect all sectors of public life and involve a wide variety of participants.

MOBILISATION OF SOCIETY – CITIZEN ACTIONS – SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS

Society plays a fundamental role in the battle against racism and xenophobia, whether governments take the initiative to promote it, as will be shown below for some countries,

or whether society (NGOs, labour unions, specialised institutions) mobilise to defend and support victims or to make a public appeal.

The foremost characteristic of these groups arising out of civil partnerships is that they are independent, and therefore critical toward the government that may itself be the violator. The second characteristic is that they are grass-roots organisations; in other words, they are in touch with victims' everyday reality. The third characteristic is that their principal motivation is ethical, rather than economic or political. Across Europe, the volunteer citizens that are active in these groups share the same values of generosity, solidarity, and tolerance—generally speaking, the fundamental principles of human rights.

A society that reacts healthily and effectively against racism and xenophobia is a society in which non-governmental organisations emerge freely and numerous to battle against racism and xenophobia. These groups function as a first alert to racist phenomena, but also as a protest mechanism that mobilises public opinion. They even have a role drafting proposals, especially when they work with public authorities within joint committees and commissions.

BEST PRACTICES – NATIONAL ROUND TABLES

Each country is distinct with its own specific needs and develops adapted programs to battle racism, which leads to unique experiences that conform to the national society and respond to particular situations. Still, these experiences can inspire other countries. Once they have exhibited their originality and provided good results, they can be adapted to other societies. One of the primary objectives of the Monitoring Centre is to take stock and account for these Best Practices that might be reproduced in other countries, and to instigate like initiatives adapted to similar contexts.

The organisation of the Round Tables has consequently become the mission of the Monitoring Centre. The Monitoring Centre's Management Board induces and organises these Round Tables in its respective countries at least once a year. Three member Countries did so in 1998.

OUTLOOK AND PROJECTS

The commitment of the 15 Union States to effort to combat racism and xenophobia remains constant, but varies in intensity. Projects are not lacking, but they are not evenly distributed, either in terms of type and quantity. Some countries have put ambitious programs in place for the coming months and years. Others have held back. Some areas (education, training, repression, prevention, etc.) have received more attention than others within a given country.

This disparity gives the impression that the plan of action against racism, under the general non-discrimination provisions of Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, submitted March 25, 1998 by the European Commission, has not been satisfactorily implemented in any European country, particularly in terms of mobilisation at the governmental level.

Moreover, in view of the World Conference on Racism (2nd semester 2001) and the European Preparatory Conference, mobilisation appears to be lagging. With this in mind, Europe must act

boldly, preferably in unison, in order to speak with one voice on a subject that has torn at its very fabric and caused suffering among its citizens during the 20th century.

CONCLUSION

The fifteen countries of Europe are today threatened by a rise in racism and xenophobia. Certainly not to the extent that it experienced more than fifty years ago under a totalitarian regime, but by new, underhand forms which can prosper in a democratic society.

Quantitatively, statistics in all countries do not enable us to say that we are confronted with a phenomenon of massive violence, even though the number of dead and injured and the level of material damage remain too high. Lethal racism tends to explode over periods of varying length. A more precise statistical analysis has yet to be carried out with the States' various police departments; and not solely reliant on media reports.

But what is most worrying, over all the Union Member States, is the development of rampant racism, becoming mundane in daily life, of discrimination rendered possible either by the indifference of the general population or at the institutional level. These continual demonstrations of xenophobia are not necessarily revealed by the victims' complaints or by judicial process. They are diffused, hidden, they are often integrated into behaviour and are accepted by the majority; until a scandal breaks somewhere.

All over Europe the main victims of racism and xenophobia are foreign populations or ethnic minorities. This is as true today in countries which have experienced several generations of immigration, as in those countries recently subjected to extra-European immigration flows. The migratory pressure from eastern and southern Europe, and also from other more distant regions of the world cannot simply be dealt with in a repressive manner. Welcoming foreign populations or those of foreign origin into the European Area must involve their integration and the granting of rights. Without this, they will be marginalised and rejected by the phenomenon of xenophobia. For these reasons, an effective European immigration and asylum policy is essential to prevent racism.

Furthermore, it can be seen all over the European Area that repressive legislation, whatever its level of perfection - and there is great disparity between one country and another - is not sufficient to punish the authors of acts of racism or to dissuade them. In fact, any legislation is only effective if it is properly implemented. But it can be seen that the number of trials and sentences before the courts is quite insufficient.

For isolated acts of racism, just as for those committed by organised groups, the threat of judicial proceedings is not strong enough.

This is particularly true for extreme right wing political parties who, if they do not directly commit racist crimes, encourage them within public opinion by discriminatory ideologies which are infiltrating larger and larger segments of the population. All over Europe the "sanitary cordon" against racism is weak.

Thus it is a question of education and training, of making the public more aware. But, all too often, for social or economic reasons, public opinion lets itself be seduced by the language or the political programmes of the extremist parties. The media's role is crucial in this field, just as is the mobilisation of society as a whole, through non-governmental organisations or the unions,

for example. Similarly, the victims and the minority groups should have a voice, be heard and be taken into consideration by the public authorities.

The European States' governments have deployed considerable efforts, over the last few years, in numerous, diverse programmes which represent a considerable amount of laudable good practice.

Nevertheless, it has to be admitted that Europe has not yet succeeded in eradicating racism.

It is certainly by pooling what has been achieved, by united action, by a general mobilisation and by a clearly stated and effective will on the part of the political leaders that these phenomena can be contained and eliminated over the coming years. This is precisely the task of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia.