

# Documentation

## Afrophobia

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@ TimTom

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**Renée Gadsden :** Good evening. This evening is so to speak under the patronage of ENAR, the European Network Against Racism. We are very happy to have a distinguished panel of guests who will be giving lectures. We also have a book presentation tonight. I'd like to introduce the people who are primarily responsible for organizing this evening. I'd like to ask Mr. Alexis Neuberg from Radio

Africa, Mrs. Irene Hochbauer Kpoda from the VIDC and Mariam Diakit  from the African Student Association in Austria to give their introductions.

**Alexis Nshimiyimana Neuberg:** Good evening everybody. My name is Alexis Nshimiyimana Neuberg and I'm the head of Radio Afrika TV. I wanted to wish you a very warm welcome and a very productive evening. The event is one of the activities of the Africa Club in Vienna. The Africa Club is an intellectual and informal discussion forum, which was initiated by the Radio Afrika TV, the African Student Association, Mr. Ambassador Georg Lennkh and Franz Schmidjell from the VIDC. Secondly I would like to stress to the importance of tonight's topic. Radio Afrika TV is organizing this event, because it sees itself as a representative platform against racism. Furthermore, we are the contact point in Vienna for diaspora and anti-racist networks like ENAR. Our distinguished guest speaker, I want to welcome you again and wish us an interesting debate. I'm very happy that Radio Afrika TV is represented and would like to inform you that this event will be documented and broadcasted in our program.

**Irene Hochauer Kpoda:** Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I also want to welcome you today here. My name is Irene Hochauer Kpoda, conference manager at the Vienna Institute of International Dialogue and Cooperation, VIDC. On behalf of the VIDC I would like to welcome you to the launch of this book of the European Network Against Racism. The title is very, very long, so I will cut it: Invisible Visible Minority. I would also like to thank our partners, Radio Afrika TV and the Presseclub Concordia for jointly organizing this event and the Austrian Development Agency for their financial support. The central political concern of the VIDC is promoting a critical public mind concerning racism and colonialism as well as the promotion of an international dialogue on the basis of equality and respect. We are here to respect ourselves and to respect others. Ladies and gentlemen, the concept of Afrophobia is defined as fear, dislike and hate of Black people, Black Africans, people of Black African descent. This definition shows that millions of people in the diaspora living in Europe and on other continents are facing the most humiliating discrimination. Sometimes, it is silently approved by the population and by the administration. But let's be clear: Afrophobia is a serious violation of human rights and we have to say it. Afrophobia takes place when thousands of African migrants are dying in Lampedusa. Afrophobia takes place when the mainstream media does not refer to the roots of migration which includes social and political instability, because the situation in Syria is in the centre. Afrophobia takes place when African people succeed at getting to Europe with their qualifications, but who are discriminated at all levels. Afrophobia takes place when people with African roots born and integrated on this continent are

treated as second-class people. So, let's say the fact is that we are living in a dangerous world where Afrophobia, Islamaphobia, Christianphobia, Xenophobia and other forms of racism are taking place and keep growing and growing. Ladies and gentlemen, this has to be stopped. The start of the UN Decade of African Descent is a great opportunity to think about actions and strategies to cope with this form of racism that takes away the dignity of Black people. This book and the following discussion with the expert panelists will give us some response, not all the responses, but some responses what we mean when we talk about Afrophobia.

**Mariam Diakit :** Good evening everybody. My name is Mariam Diakit  and I study political science and law. Today, I will represent my organization VAS, the Association of African Students in Austria. Because we are students, the motivation is not only to bring everyone together and discuss our challenges, but also to communicate and collaborate with institutions. Vienna is the capital of international institutions. After our studies in Austria most of us are planning to go back to our countries. How we can get in contact with those international organizations to understand the requirements of the labor market? It means we are looking for knowledge and know-how. Therefore we organize job fairs as an opportunity to get in contact with companies, for example for a scholarship or jobs. We initiated weekend trainings for students, not only African students, to develop the professional skills of students. Another activity is our cultural week. Through the so-called MAU project (Model of African Union), we try to make young people familiar with the process of decision making in our international institution in Africa. The European Youth Forum brings together young people in order to get them to talk about development and their perspectives where we also invite ministers or investors to discuss how we can actively contribute to the political strategies in our countries. We think that Afrophobia is a very interesting topic, not only in Central Europe, but also in some African countries. We think that the perception that African people or descendants of African people in Europe is a very stereotyped perception. Therefore we feel that it is important to talk about response - political response -, to talk about education and formation, but also the transmission of values of Black people or of Africans. Thank you very much

**Ren e Gadsden :** Thank you for those very inspiring words. We can see that here in Vienna there's quite an active scene, that students are very active, the non-governmental organizations are very active, and the media is very active. I have now the privilege to introduce a very wonderful, special woman here from European Network Against Racism (ENAR), who was the project leader for this book. Her name is Ojeaku Nwabuso and let us please give her a warm welcome.



**Ojeaku Nwabuso:** Thank you for that amazing introduction. I'm the Shadow Report Officer at the European Network Against Racism. We're based in Brussels and we're a national, a pan-European organization and our visions are full equality, solidarity, and well-being for all. To combat racism and discrimination our task is to influence the European political agenda. This includes monitoring EU policy, lobbying and

advocacy. We meet key EU officials in the different institutions. There are five main areas that we focus on which refer to the five main groups or communities that we work with. Roma experience discrimination when looking for a job. People of African descent and Black Europeans. In the UK Black people are at least six times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people. One in three Muslims in the EU experienced discrimination at least once in the last twelve months when they responded to a survey. In France 85% of Islamophobic acts target women. They're a visible minority; they're often wearing a headscarf. Jewish people are also a priority for us. Anti-Semitism seems to be a major, major consideration and problem for a lot of Jewish people. And we're actually just starting to do a lot more work on migration. We know that there are EU laws against racism and discrimination just to give you some of the context of the EU legislation that we're working on. The Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on Combatting Racism and Xenophobia are the two main kind of EU legislation that's already been there. It's been there for years. It's been implemented and transposed by member states across Europe, but we know that racism still exists. We know that the specific forms of racism continue to be prevalent. It's estimated that at least 15 million Black people live in Europe. That's a low estimate. People like myself, whose parents were born in Nigeria and I was born in London, were often not counted in this 15 million. Despite the size of the population, there's a real slowness, there's a real reticence to address racism and discrimination when it's targeting people of African descent. And some attribute this reticence to Europe's history, it's production and justifications for enslavement and colonialism and also it's slightly at odds with its universalist values and fundamental freedoms. The former ENAR president, Chibo Onyeji raised the problem at the European level and he was being challenged constantly by people saying, "This isn't really a consideration, this isn't really a problem." And what he felt was that the public was simply not informed about the impact of racism on Black people, and the impact on the lives of Black people. That was one reason why we wanted to produce this book. Another reason was that we wanted to highlight the positive contribution that Black people have made to Europe over centuries. There has been a huge number of Black people over decades, over centuries, but we don't have any knowledge about these people. That's kind of why the title is the "Invisible visible minority". We're trying to uncloak the effects of racism, but also the contribution that Black people have made to Europe.

I just want to briefly introduce you to the content of the book. It's basically divided into four sections. It's a collection of papers. It includes academic writing as well as more political advocacy issues as well as just accounts of personal experiences. In section one, the book offers a broad overview of people of African descent. The papers offer discussions on the self-determination process of the communities, whether we use the term Afro-European, Afrophobia, Black European, European of

African descent. There are many terms that we all use to describe Black people in Europe and it's quite interesting, all the discussions that people have, just on the use of these terms. The papers also address how historically disparate parts of Europe's Black population are increasingly coming together within and across borders to address common experiences. In Philomena Essed's words, a world renowned academic and contributor to the book, Afro descendants is their exposure to racism and systematic discrimination regardless of country, socio-economic conditions, gender, age, or level of education. She uses the alphabet as a way to discuss the important terms and issues. So, A, for example, is on Afro-Europeans, so she discusses where the term comes from and she goes through the entire alphabet and links that to the issues of people of African descent. I think that's one of the most interesting papers in that section.

Section two of the book basically talks about racism and discrimination through the lens of national, nations, member states. So there's papers from the Netherlands, papers from France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Latvia, and Belgium. And some people see the similarities of discrimination across these countries, but I also think that there's kind of an interesting way in which specific colonial history and political responses to racism means that people's experiences are very different within the different countries. For example, there's a paper on the Netherlands, which discusses the racism tradition of Black Pete; it's coming up to Christmas time and that's when really Black Pete becomes a national figure in the Netherlands. It's kind of shocking to me that that character actually exists in the Netherlands, because I was brought up in the UK and black facing is not something that I think would be readily accepted. There is another article which focuses on Germany and highlights the difficulties to address racial inequality when the existence of race as a social construct is denied. And I think that's an incredibly important concept to understand, because if you don't say that race exists and you don't collect any information along ethnic or racial lines, then it's very difficult to actually monitor whether there is discrimination in the country or not.

Section three of the book provides very in depth discussions on European-wide issues from racial profiling to hate crimes and the one paper that I want to highlight in this section is looking at health. Most of the research that is discussed in that paper comes from the U.S., but I think it's definitely applicable across Europe as well. And the last section of the book is where ENAR, the European Network Against Racism, tries to pull it all together a little bit and tries to find a call at a European level for a framework for national strategies to combat racism against Black people. And this is what we're calling for. So basically that's the next step, self-advocacy, so how do we use this information to work at a European level to create change on the ground?

**Rnée Gadsden:** Well, we're fascinated and your topic's fantastic. I was hanging on every word. It was so clearly presented and I think we are all really, really excited to get a copy of the book. I hope there are enough. Before we come to our guest speakers, would any one like to comment or ask a question? It was conceived or envisaged that we would have a discussion and audience participation. Please.



**Audience:** Thank you for the speech. At first, I have something on the content of the book. When I just read the title “Afrophobia”, one dimension, which just comes to my mind is the psychoanalytical aspect. It really is a psychoanalytical subject, because I think it is also important to see or to analyze, to understand how the racist discourse is functioning. This can also help ourselves, people confronted with discrimination, to understand it better. That is the first point. The second point is also about the corpus, the textual corpus of the book. Because when you’re writing on such a topic, I think it is also important to make reference to other people who tackled the topic before in a certain way, people like Frantz Fanon.

**Ojeaku Nwabuso:** I agree with both of your points. I think, I was just looking at the content page to see, I think when you look at the references for most of the papers in here, they are referencing all of the names that you’ve mentioned. The discussions within the book are based on all the discussions that have been hold before. It’s not that we are producing necessarily completely new knowledge. It builds, It’s coming after the forefathers that have been speaking on this issue many, many years before. But there aren’t that many publications of this kind. What I’m currently doing is looking specifically at people of African descent and the impact of racism in 2014 and 2015. And there are not many collections that just specifically look at this group.

**Audience:** Thank you very much for your thoughts. I have a question about the title. Why did you choose the term “phobia” and for example, not racism? Because I think between these two terms, there’s quite a difference. Especially when we talk about structures of discrimination of, for example, resources, material structures, health care and so on.

**Ojeaku Nwabuso:** Thank you for that very difficult question. It was not my decision. This has been a discussion that ENAR’s had with its members for many, many years.. I think what I was trying to say in my talk is that there are lots of debates about what term to use, how to call a group of people that live in Europe who are also Black. It’s not an easy decision to make and yes, they do have very different meanings. One of the last articles in section 4 really does go into detail about why ENAR as an organization made up of 120 members decided to use the term Afrophobia rather than anti-Black racism or various other terms. I think Mireille is saying something...

**Mireille Fanon Mendès-France:** It’s a very good question. It is very important to name, to qualify the kind of racism. We have that for Islamaphobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Roma, but nothing for people coming from Africa or with African descent or living in diaspora. It is very important because it is as if we do not exist. They don’t exist, as the racism they are affected with is not identified. Now, Afrophobia means exactly what it means. We have to think how it was built and from where it is coming. It is also interesting to see at the UN level. Last week, the High Commissioner used the term Afrophobia in his last message for the report on the working group on African descent in New York. I think we have won something very important, to

qualify and to identify exactly the racism targeting specifically people with African descent and Africans.

**Renée Gadsden :** I'm really glad you made that point and I'm very glad you asked that question. I would like also to ask John if you could comment, because John Kellock from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency is one of the contributors to the book, so you can read one of his essays. Would you like to say a word or two just on these points surrounding the book?



**John Kellock:** I understand the impetus to have a language that's specific to the experiences of people from Africa. I would also say, within Africa there's quite a diversity. You've got a lot of white South Africans, so would you say that they are victims of Afrophobia? I'm just saying, it's a diverse continent. So if you use that language and you mean it in the context of, you know, it's only Black, let's be honest, that's the

main focus, you have to be conscious of the broader context. That's just one point. I understand the sense of urgency. I can agree with you in many ways that you feel that after the crucial time from 1997 with the European Year to the Race Equality Directive starting in 2007, it was a big push to look at the issues of racial equality. Of course I think more could be done, I think more should be done. But I would say that when you look at the world and you look at regions, there is more legal protection provided within the European Union than there is in any other regional space in the world. How effective that is, the differences between the different member states of the European Union, that's an issue as well depending also from history and experience of diversity.

**Mireille Fanon Mendès-France:** I just want to react, because I am one of the members of the working group on African descent from European countries. For some European countries like UK, Netherlands and Sweden, we can see, there is good practice. But this practice did not affect the people of African descent. That means they are underrepresented, invisible, and this argument of good practice, the institutions are working on this issue, but there is no concrete change for the people of African descent. People are not sure with the decade if we will succeed to tackle racism and Afrophobia. I'm not sure too. There is no real will to tackle it and to make a deep change of the concept of domination and of the perception of history, our colonial history. If we do not change the elements that built the coloniality of power, we will not succeed to tackle racism. There are good projects to fight discrimination in the European countries. But regarding the racial racism, there is no real determination to change the paradigm.

**John Kellock:** I'd say that you visited a few countries which would probably be regarded as the role model of the EU, let's be frank. The UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, I think most people's perception, you'd expect to see progressive change, maybe it's not as fast as I'd like to see and I'll agree with you that a lot of the impetus is gone from say ten, fifteen years ago. I won't dispute that. I'd probably say there's a



variety of reasons for that. Some are the initial successes, then people become complacent. When you think you've got a legal framework in place, the government says, ok, we've got a legal framework in place, that's it. The implementation takes a bit of a back seat. But what I will add is that a lot of the information that is in the annual report wouldn't be there without governments actually providing information for us. If I look at racial profiling and UK data, I mean it provides enough information. It's there and people can use it and I'm sure, you know, we use it in the work that we do and we find the data extremely helpful in highlighting areas. But you're right, it's one thing identifying issues. It's another thing putting in place legal framework and actions of implementation and monitoring. Because as we know, it's never ending. It needs to be worked on continually and I think it involves everyone as well, all the communities. The other thing now that we're seeing in the European Union is a greater diversity and the freedom of movement. But I think it's bitterly obvious that a lot more can be done.



**Audience:** African history should be taught in all European schools to know today who is an African. I think when our history is taught in European schools, the children will know what happened to us and who we are. Then we shall get back our respect.

**Audience:** Do you have anything in the book such as mobbing? Because mobbing is a very strong structural component of racism and mobbing is also part of the ordinary French language. And as long as we are announcing immigration continue to rise, poverty continue to rise, is there a solution to this problem here today that we are discussing?

**Audience:** My question is to Madame Mireille. You said there is a willingness to seek equality, to pursue equality of policies. I would like to know why do you think there exists a willingness on the part of policymakers? Secondly, do you think we Africans maybe contribute to this unwillingness because when you have been discriminated so often, sometimes it's hard to just look at discrimination and for the sake of your sanity just let it ride and in some time it will stop. This happens all the time. Just let it be. It happens so often. How many of them are you going to argue with? Just let it be. Perhaps we ourselves are not quite strong enough?

**John Kellock:** I just want to respond a bit to that, because I think you're right. In our survey we find out that a lot of victims just won't take any action. Because either they think it won't make any difference, or they don't know where to go. It'd be interesting to know if people here could tell me if they were the victim of a racist incident or discrimination in Austria, where would you go? Where would you go? Do you know where to go? I don't know. From our survey we find that a lot of people don't know where to go. And places that you might think of, like the police, there's a lack of trust.

**Renée Gadsden:** So, thank you so much for your impulses. It's very important, but you are the appetizer and I would like to have the main course. So let me please introduce for your intellectual delight, Mireille Fanon Mendès-France.



**Mireille Fanon Mendès-France:** Good evening. First of all I would like to thank the organizer of this session. I am coming from Paris and you know what happened in Paris on November 13th. Without an interrogation on the reasons that drove young people to commit these horrendous attacks and without interrogation on the answer of our government and on the consequences it

could have in terms of undermining public and private liberty and in terms of foreign relations. Ultimately these events again and again interrogate the policy of domination established by the capitalist system, which was based on the ideology of the hierarchy of races. If biological racism has disappeared in its brutal form, it reappears in the tense moments of political or economical crisis. Cultural racism never gave up the plan of national, regional, and international relations. When I speak about biological racism; we were faced in France with our Minister of Justice, Mrs. Christiane Taubira, and Italy too, Cecile Kyenge Minister of Integration. If we want to see racism and racial discrimination tackled and eradicated, we have to work on the deconstruction of elements of the domination in which it grew. The term of race presented for centuries a useful concept for organizing societies. Race continues to invade every field of capitalist power and racism weighs evenly on the identity construction of individuals. It is characterized by a lack of respect for people who identify according to the line of race, and its function includes the regulation of interrelations on the individual level and institutional level through the establishment of the redistribution of material and symbolic resources along racial lines. Added on this, there is a construction of representation concerning a certain national identity to ensure the biological, religious, and culture purity. To cement this, social cohesion must endure the so called “vive ensemble”, the living together, in order to protect the nation from supposed enemies, whether they are from inside or from outside.

A supposed hierarchy of race and culture has, as many attacks, an effect on human dignity, on non-discrimination and leads to insecurity and inequality in all parts of the victims' lives. Their invisibility is structurally built. It is the case of people of African descent or African diaspora. What is particularly shocking is that in some European countries their presence is firstly minimized, which explains why hate crimes are very often underreported and there is a continuing absence of statistic on such acts. It shows that there is no hate crimes - as it is not reported - and that there is no racism targeting specifically people from African descent, because the victims don't want to go to the police. Because when they go to the police, the police or even at the justice level it is said to them: “but it is a freedom of expression”. Elements of coloniality that govern their policy prefer forgetting to protect victims and to provide them effective and sustainable remedies thus leading to widespread impunity.

In the context of the current globalization, the permanence of relations of domination drew its rules in the slave trade and enslavement, being part of the establishment of colonial Europe. This relation of domination can be found in social relations in many countries where people of African descent are victims of Afrophobia or Negrophobia. It is build on white organized enslavement and in international relations where the African continent is estimated as a continent that one can come an plunder the

richness and that one can dictate from abroad and impose the modernity, European modernity. One of the first challenges then is how to deconstruct on a global scale the elements and levels of construction of a collective and conscious accrediting the need of a superior race and causing ipso facto the conviction of a superior culture.

People of African descent, in addition to historical consequences they have to face, are subjected to discrimination based on skin color. Biological parameters that completely escape the control of the victim of this ostracism. The consequences of this ideology for me are innumerable. Who is better than the states in bringing the legitimate and just aspiration of millions of people left at the margins of the world?

One of the first steps would be to reactivate the declaration on race drafted by UNESCO in 1950, a record that said, I quote, "For all practical social purposes, race is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth." This strongly admits that, "the myth of race has created an enormous amount of human and social damage. In recent years it has taken a heavy toll in human lives and caused untold suffering. It still prevents the normal development of millions of human beings and deprives civilization of the effective cooperation of productive minds." From that, states in coordination with civil society have to base their will to elaborate a new paradigm for co-building the social and political link which would be needed to rebuild the condition from which the legacy of this terrible history could be overcome. The second challenge is to accept the need to bring this historization of the slave trade and the role played by the state in the business of enslavement, the slave trade and colonialization. This historization is necessary to achieve a true and shared history and to prevent concealment concerning this period. We could also see how some people want to ignore this history. They prefer to not speak and to start the history, our common history to colonialization, but not to go back to enslavement. This is also our role to sequence the order of construction of racism whose inaugural act was the establishment of the policy of race in the place of class and it is one way to provide justice to the millions of people who are no longer there. To question the political and social construction of race including its role at the time of the abolition of enslavement in which the free men had no other choice than to continue working on the plantation of their former master is an essential state if we overcome a traumatic past and visibly unsurpassable. To open the glass ceiling built from this false belief also allows (us) to deconstruct the institutional invisibility responsible for the situation in which people of African descent and of African origin are. It will be necessary to take by them all the history, since all history of our contemporary societies is built on this. It will then question the representation system, the conception deeply rooted in the collective unconscious pertaining to the historical truths and to the many realities interpreted in the reforming present. If that requires the deconstruction of the actual meaning of race, we must also flush out at all levels of our institutional system, all texts of our procedures contributing to inequality and structural discrimination. Racism is incompatible with the concept of democracy. The way through which our society has made this phenomenon incompatible erodes the concept and undermines the effort to effectively build democracy where there is a real applicability and effectiveness of non-discrimination which is covering equality.

It is important to understand, that the colonial period is a common legacy that continues to influence the present. For those who call to another rule, it will be only possible if racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Muslim, anti-Black racism,



Negrophobia and Afrophobia are not rules of governance anymore. The only possible alternative is if the coloniality of power and knowledge that has led to war in this humanity from century to century is finally identified, exposed, and deconstructed in order to base the world on non-discrimination between people, states, between human beings, different and equal, so that they can act politically

as citizens. It is time to find the way to tackle Afrophobia affecting victims but also actors of racist acts, because in fact racism alienates both victims and the actors of this act, or even the people who say nothing when they watch racist acts. As Frantz Fanon observed in *Toward the African Revolution*, I quote, “Racism is not the whole but the most visible element, the most daily, frankly, at times, the coarsest of a given structure.” The legacy of a terrible history can only be exceeded by the disappearance of the forms of oppression that perpetuate it.

That’s why the question, the issue of the decade, was decided after a long discussion and was adopted last year at the General Assembly – ten years and the theme of this decade is recognition, justice, and development. Two things were adopted, will be adopted. One is the “International Forum for People of African Descent” and another one is the “UN Declaration for Human Rights for People of African Descent”. What could I say as expert of this working group? Of course to get an international forum is not enough. Because international forum means after ten years it will be ended. As we have said before, racism and racial discrimination and all horrible things will not be tackled in ten years. These ten years could just give us some orientation, some input and orientation if states have the political will to tackle it definitely. The misunderstanding is, I think, that the states are waiting from the civil society or NGOs some proposal. But if there are no means or funds to help the civil society organizations to work on this, we will have a very strong declaration from the UN but nothing to put in it to really change things. We could see that every day. That’s why of course we have to support the decade, the themes recognition, justice and development. When I say recognition, I have to be frank with you: at the beginning we proposed reparation. Because the issue of reparation is; for me, it’s not only in financial terms, but it is what I presented to you, it is on the historicization and the sequencing of this history. The states were afraid of the term reparation, that’s why we went back to recognition. But there is - as we know - a very strong movement for reparation led by some Caribbean countries and its moving, the international movement for reparation. But I think if we got real recognition, the question of reparation would be on the table. Then there is the issue of justice of course. But it is like in international law, we have lots of norms, again, discrimination, racism at the European level it is very strong and very useful. When there is some violation in our country, we can go further and look at the European code, and there is almost every time we succeeded to get a better sentence than in our own country. But what we can see is not enough. It is not sufficient for attacking racism. When victims of racial discrimination report, insist and complain if the police or the justice just diminish the problem by saying it is freedom of expression. No it’s not. It could be no freedom of expression, when there is an expression of racism.

The other term is development. When we are working with Afro-descent people in Europe or in Occidental countries, we know how they are underrepresented politically, how they are also economically discriminated at work, but also at school or in justice. It is very well known and when we can get some statistics it is absolutely visible. This is what happened in Brazil. The case of Brazil is very interesting. Until 2003, before the election of Lula, the Afro-Brazilians were absolutely invisible and even when we could meet some Euro-Brazilian they had no idea what the situation of people of African descent was. Lula decided to change something and organized some positive action, including some quotas in certain ministries. He opened eyes also on the visibility of people of African descent and spoke about it. Before the Afro-descents were at the bottom of the census. After the ruler actions - the next mass census was in 2011 - the people of African descent estimated themselves as Black people. Now there is a new census, they are more than Europeans, they are 50.37%. It is just to demonstrate when there is a political will to change a thing, we could change. Of course it's not enough. Afro-Brazilians are not really represented in political institution or in administration. The well known foreign minister is very interesting, because they organized a quota system for his ministry. What happened? Some Afro-Brazilians applied to enter in the Itamaraty Palace (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) but they did not succeed to the exam, because their level of education was lower than the Euro-Brazilians. They could make the same exam three times. But they never succeeded to pass the exam. So what now? They were complaining to have the same level of education. But what is considered the same level of education when there is the question of domination. How do you want to change the cultural domination without changing all the systems of hierarchy in your own country?

They are now at this border and I will go back to the issue of development. Development; it's for people of African descent everywhere in the world. We could see how the people, for example in France, we have some Caribbean island still colonized and I am from one of them, my father was from one of them – Martinique. There it is also very interesting to see the census. For example, 61% of the youth population between 18 and 25 years old are jobless. 61% of the Caribbean, in Martinique, in Guadeloupe and also in Reunion and it's even worse in Mayotte which belongs to Comores. That's why the development is a crucial issue, but also it is an issue for Africa. The mandate of our working group allows us to see the consequences of colonialism on African development and to make some proposals.

**Renée Gadsden:** That was fascinating and very inspiring and I'd like to continue and stay on that level and give the word to John Kellock. At the end, when we've listened to these two very distinct positions, we can open the floor again to questions.

**John Kellock:** Thank you very much. I'll make it brief, because I see we've got twenty minutes. I'd just like to focus maybe on a more xenophobia agenda. My view is we're all here, we're all living in Europe. How can we ensure there's change that leads to a better outcome for all of us? I see a lot of young people around here and I'm sure you're interested in what the future holds. Will I have access to jobs and how can I participate in society? What things can change? Where do I go if I have problems? These sorts of issues are our reality. If we want change, in many ways we have to push that change ourselves. I said there's a legal framework in place in every European Union country; to what extent we use that when it is needed is an open question. Our data tells us that as a Black African community or people of descent,

we don't use these levers and without using these levers you stay invisible. That's one of the issues. I think we have to engage more. I look at three issues around like trust, mobility and participation. There's a lack of trust in certain institutions. Predominantly we talk about the criminal justice system, It always comes to the forefront. How do you build that trust? How do you use what levers are there in order to develop that trust or to show that the criminal justice system has fair outcomes? The other thing is around mobility. Mobility is very essential. When you look at the sort of jobs that minority, migrant communities have, how can you move from those low-skilled, medium-skilled jobs to highly-skilled jobs? The European Union is moving toward a knowledge economy. Highly skilled work is what's required. That means education, education, education. How do you build that education? How do you push to ensure that you've got access to that education? How do you look at existing barriers and how do you highlight those barriers and push against them? Because I think you have to push because I would not wait for a government to reduce barriers. Participation, political participation – how many people of African descent engage themselves in the political processes? It's a very small number. How many times you go to vote? How many times do you want to join a political party? How do you get engaged in community politics? How do you get engaged in local authorities? I think those are all important questions in order to get better access in society. They demonstrate the added value of you as a community and what you can bring. Looking at our globalised world, there's so much potential. You as a diaspora community bring a lot of potential to support development in Europe. I think it's important to grab these opportunities and use them in many ways, if I say to demonstrate the value added of the different communities within the society. If I look at the Jewish community in the UK, if you look at the Indian community, if you look at the Chinese community, how they've engaged within the processes - political, business, socially, culturally. You see the successes that they have. You see them as lawyers or judges. It's changed the perception about the potential and the contribution of ethnic minorities. We know ENAR wants to push for more things and we all know that it is a long process. But frameworks are in place now. Use them and build coalitions, via social media, look at different ways in which you can interact with the world in order to improve your situation or to draw attention to these issues. I'll just leave it there.

**Renée Gadsden:** I think we are extremely lucky to have three such tremendously interesting presentations and we have to really remember there's the grassroots, there's personal responsibility, there's the institutional level, and then of course there's the meta level and the philosophical level. What I think is so valuable is what your friend Angela Davis said when she was in Vienna a couple of weeks ago: re-examining history, re-imagining the future, deconstructing it and putting it back together so that it carries a new resonance into the future. I find this fantastic. I see some of you who were at Angela Davis lecture when she was here. Now you have another piece of the puzzle, how you can individually make a difference in your own lives and in the lives of future generations. Our time is slowly coming to a beautiful close, but I believe we have time for one or two questions.

**Audience:** Thank you very much for this wonderful input. You really, Mr. Kellock, read what I have in mind speaking of these strategies, this action that we can, in every day life, build to make a change, a system change. We have to struggle. The sister said we as Black people, as people of African descent, we are not pushing it like we

have to do. So I'm coming from this grassroots revolution where we know that when people go on the streets they can fight for their freedom and they will get it. Why are we not going on the streets and fight against discrimination? The second thing I want to underline and I would ask you to elaborate in this way. I have read it in a book about pan-Africanism. I think that we have to build this pan-Africanism in the diaspora. We are so separated. We have a lot of communities, Ghana, Burkina Faso, I don't know, Mali, everything. We are not working together. We have to be built pan-Africanism here and in the African countries so that we are strong again to fight for our freedom and for our interests.

**Ojeaku Nwabuso:** I just want to quickly respond and say all of the points that you made are really important. But why we don't always go on the streets and we're not always protesting, because it's tiring and we have to acknowledge, when you face racism every day it can be tiring to be always the one who holds up your hand and say there's a problem. I think a lot of people of African descent and Black Europeans do do that. We're on the streets. It's in America, it's in London, it's on the streets of Europe. It happens. I just wonder, and this is a question to all of us here, is protest and riot the only way in which we can make a political change? We need, as you were saying, this idea of pan-Africanism, which actually I think in the book is a more historical look at the pan-African movement, we need something that structurally changes the system, The protest is only some small thing that we can do when there's a crisis. In fact, it creates a small change and not enough. We need something bigger. We need to think about that.



**Mireille Fanon Mendès-France:** But did you know the operation of power, if the power is not challenged, we cannot change. Even if you see the example in the U.S., how the Afro-Americans are visible, there are some beautiful stories of success, intellectually, but did it change the life of all Afro-Americans? How many people are killed every day? Like in Brazil. I don't think riots or demonstrations in the streets right now will change everything. I don't think to be visible, individually visible, will change the daily lives of the people who are discriminated every day. For a long time people are gathered together against racism. It's not new. Even before the civil movement in the U.S., how many people have died and have lost their lives to get some visibility and get non-discrimination and equality? I do not think it is about how many NGOs and associations are involved in this struggle. It is a question of political will from those who dominate all the people.

**Renée Gadsden:** John, would you like to make a comment?

**John Kellock:** I mean if I look at the future and I look at the surveys about youth and how they interact with people of different religions and different ethnicities, that gives me hope. Those attitudes are different to the attitudes of their parents. There's more acceptance of diversity and as people come into contact with each other, I think that's another fact that's driving that. I'm not expecting change overnight. We know it never happens. As I said, I think it's a unique opportunity. Right now, you're looking at the

refugee situation in the European Union. The issues of integration and cohesion will be at the forefront of the political agenda over the next five years. Black Europeans are part of that process of change, part of that future. I prefer the positive message, I want to see it.

**Mireille Fanon Mendès-France:** Regarding the refugees, I totally agree. I would like to be very optimistic every day and say, the world will change very soon. I would like to do that, really, but it's not the reality and we are faced with real politics. Regarding refugees, how could we explain to the youth, to our children, that we have two camps. Political refugees are coming from Syria and other Middle East countries, where our Occidental countries brought war, an illegitimate war regarding international law. On the other side, there are so called economic refugees. All of them are refugees Why do we have to see our governments in Europe decide who can stay? The economic refugees have to go back to their countries, the political refugees will be accepted. Or we will accept only Christians. How we could explain that for the future generation?

**Audience:** I would like to say three things. The first one is thank you for, I like the title. Afrophobia itself I think is related very much to the idea of a lack of will. So when you put forward a title such as this it forces people to look at the phobia against whatever that Afro connotation may be. If you have a media conversation about certain specific aspects of racism and as soon as you take it back to slavery, the people are like, oh, again. Do you always have to go back there? So it's very much a thing of denial. So when you put Afrophobia in front of them it will force them to look at it. The second is to go back to the idea of why we don't demonstrate. We have to use our energy well and strategize. We choose if we engage on an individual level with everybody that says something to you on a minor scale, what we call the idea of micro aggression. Do we continually fight the continual micro aggressions or do we look on another scale? I think we do need to organize on a level up which would be to put ourselves forward in positions of power and presence. Positions of power and presence very much relate to us being present in the media, us being present in politics, etcetera. To get to that level I think it's about unification, because otherwise it would be on small scales. When we succeed in certain presence, when we have media presence, maybe a radio or a television show, we should prevent to create borders between unification of these different media factions. We actually need unification on a scale that is already presently organized. Those media presences that are already organized need to know how to unify themselves better and then we will have a slightly stronger front and create more power and presence in that. A last thing I wanted to say is related to refugees, the talk about refugees. It's very personal and immediate because people are being killed. A lot of legislations are being changed, but it has been going on for quite some time and it's nothing new. It's been happening on a massive scale, it's just that this one, the Syrian case, seems to be very present. It's immediate; people are dying. So I think there's a need for opening that door with asylum seekers and for us creating a demand that it needs to be looked at. John said there's a door opening presently. How do we create that demand to say that people from the African continent and who belong to the same categories must not be denied entry unfairly?

**John Kellock:** I think where you've got, from what I understand, where you have people from African countries fleeing a war type situation, they're treated like the



Syrians. Eritreans are the example, which have been mentioned. So I think where people in Africa face the same situation, it's recognized. I mean there's the international framework and you don't deny entry to people fleeing from persecution and looking for safety. That applies across the board. So I wouldn't say it won't apply to people from Africa.



**Renée Gadsden:** I'd just like to say something please. It's a very stimulating panel and we could all stay here till the rooster crows, but what I'd like to suggest is that we wrap it up. I see that the General Secretary of the Presseclub Concordia, Frau Zimmerman, came in and I wanted to expressly thank her and her organization for hosting this evening. We're very thankful for

that. The Presseclub Concordia and our organizers have arranged for refreshments. We can meet and greet, you can talk to the panelists, you can talk to each other. So please don't feel that if you don't ask your question that you won't have a chance to discuss. Most important is to remember that this is a book presentation; we would be very happy if you would take a book and also leave a donation of your choice when you do take the book. I would like to say for myself, thank you very much for coming. Thank you for your participation. Read the book, talk, discuss, take all the different levels of ideas that have been presented, internalize them and use them every day. Spread them like seeds so that they can begin to grow. Thank you for your attention.

## **Panelists:**

### **Mireille Fanon Mendès-France**

has been a Professor at the University Paris V - Descartes in France and a visiting professor at the University of Berkeley in international law and conflict resolution. She has also worked for UNESCO and the French National Assembly. She is an author of several articles on human rights and humanitarian law, as well as on racism and discrimination. In 2009, she received the Human Rights Award by the Council for Justice, Equality and Peace. She is currently the chairperson of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent – PAD

### **John Kellock**

is the Adviser on Fundamental Rights Issues and Policies at the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights located in Vienna. He is a former Head of Department at the Agency and was Head of Unit at the Agency's predecessor the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia which he joined in 1999. Prior to that, he worked for Amnesty International for ten years. He has over 25 years' experience on a broad range of human rights issues including work on migrants and integration; racism and anti-Semitism; equality, diversity and discrimination in the EU.

### **Ojeaku Nwabuso**

joined ENAR in June 2014 as the Shadow Report Officer. She previously worked at Runnymede, a race equality think tank in the UK, as a research and policy analyst where she led on various projects including the Race Equality Scorecard and the Riot Roundtables. Ojeaku has extensive experience of working in children and young people's charities including the National Children's Bureau where she provided advice and support to the Department for Education. Ojeaku holds a BSc in Politics from the University of Southampton and an MA in Political Communications from Goldsmiths, University of London.

### **Renée Gadsden**

(A.B. Hon., Brown University, M.F.A. and Ph.D., University of Applied Arts Vienna) is an author trained in art, art history, and cultural and intellectual history. Dr. Renée Gadsden is currently a lecturer on Gender Studies at the Department of Art Theory of the University of Applied Arts Vienna.