



## PRESS RELEASE

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### ENAR organises EU-wide protest against France's xenophobic policies

Following recent developments in France targeting and stigmatizing migrants and especially the Roma population in the name of 'security and public order', the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is launching a coordinated response to protest against France's xenophobic policies.

ENAR and anti-racist NGOs in several EU member states are outraged by these developments and will be organising demonstrations on Saturday 4 September in front of French embassies to protest against the xenophobic policies put forward this summer by the French government and to show solidarity with French anti-racist NGOs' nation-wide demonstration on the same day. **A silent demonstration will also take place in front of the French embassy in Brussels (Boulevard du Régent 42) at 14.00 (GMT+1).**

ENAR in this way intends to voice its concerns about the systematic expulsion of Roma from Romania and Bulgaria and statements linking Roma and immigration with criminality. Members of the French government's populist and discriminatory discourse makes scandalous amalgams between Travellers, Roma immigrants, migration and violent crimes. This rhetoric and the expulsions risk reinforcing prejudice and discriminatory perceptions against this ethnic group that is already the most discriminated against in the EU, as well as immigrants as a whole.

The demonstration will also happen days before France hosts a meeting of immigration ministers from Italy, Germany, the UK, Spain, Greece, Belgium and Canada on 6 September to focus on irregular migration. It appears that the meeting could also aim to legitimise France's policy of rounding up and expelling Roma, and promote Italian ideas of automatically expelling citizens from other EU states who cannot sustain themselves financially and live off state benefits.

ENAR calls on the EU and its member states to ensure the integration of Roma in Europe in a coordinated and inclusive manner. A comprehensive EU Roma strategy should ensure that Roma are protected from discrimination, have equal access to education, employment, healthcare and housing, and are empowered through participation in the civic and economic life of their country.

For details about the demonstrations in Brussels and other European cities, see [www.enar-eu.org/Page\\_Generale.asp?DocID=25135&langue=EN](http://www.enar-eu.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=25135&langue=EN).

*The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is a network of NGOs working to combat racism in all EU member states and represents more than 700 NGOs spread around the European Union. ENAR aims to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national and European initiatives.*

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