

ENJOY DIVERSITY

Racism must not be tolerated nor ignored - Lets confront it UNITED!

When reflecting and evaluating consciously about the individual concept of 'normality' we consequentially also will have to have a look on how 'we' - as a group or individual - deal with variations of it. When doing so you will find out that 'normality' changes with space and time and also that racism is not only a brutal act of right-wing extremists. The everyday racism is much more difficult to identify and confront, since it is driven by the differences that distinguish and define cultures, ethnicities and religions.

'New Media', like twitter or facebook, created a participatory culture, and completely change the functioning of communication. Time and space limits seem to have diminished. The constantly changing world we live in can not be kept out anymore by national borders nor by the ambitions of oppressive regimes. We should be aware about our own role in this manifold world and our possibilities to shape it. Do we want to build up an enjoyable environment for everybody, or do we want to sustain an atmosphere of mistrust and isolation?

Things that don't fit in our concept of 'normality' often are considered as 'strange', but beyond that we should follow our curiosity for the unknown, leading to new encounters and experiences.

In fact there are no natural given norms or standards, only social and cultural boundaries determine our movement, behaviour and peaceful cohesion in today's world. That means its only 'us', who limit how much we want to discover and Enjoy the world around us.

Racists neither have courage nor taste Open your mind and Enjoy Diversity!

Our thinking is reflected in our actions

Discrimination and exclusion of minorities has a significant impact on society. Biased media coverage, hate speech, political utilisation of topics such as immigration/integration or religious and cultural customs incites different groups of society against each other. Acts of ignorance, mistrust and hate shape the overall atmosphere and consequentially affects everybody's environment - no matter if you belong to the discriminated minority or not. We have to break through this circle and start to take steps towards each other.

Join forces with the European anti-racism movement!

This is a European-wide call for action. Thousands of activists, from Portugal to Russia and from Iceland to Cyprus, united in the 18th annual European-wide Action Week Against Racism, mobilise to claim the streets of their neighbourhood and beyond with creative actions. It is about bringing people together and enjoying diversity, about raising awareness on local problems, about solutions from a varied community and about getting to know the unknown.



13 - 21 MARCH 2010
EUROPEAN ACTION WEEK
AGAINST RACISM

UNITED
racism
fascism
nationalism

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 murder of 69 anti-apartheid demonstrators in Sharpeville, South Africa, in 1960. Apartheid was a legal system of racial segregation enforced by the government of South Africa between 1948 and 1990.

Each 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 make a change. The actions actively engage and involve thousands of people all over Europe to take a stand against any form of racism. The activities range from poster actions in schools, public and working places, to intercultural youth festivals, street actions, lectures, living libraries, film screenings, conferences, multicultural football games or cleaning the walls from racist graffiti and many, many more.



Luxembourg March 2009 • It can be so simple to organise an effective action: a handful of creative activists, some handmade paper-boats and the smart use of a popular public place is enough.

FACES OF RACISM

Across Europe, racism manifests itself in different makeup, trying sometimes to hide its cruel face. However, open hatred and violence is still on the rise in Europe and reflected in the growing number of registered hate crimes. Sad peak of this mountain forms the monitoring result of the SOVA Center in Russia from January until October 2009: 'As a result of racist and neo-nazi motivated attacks, not less than 50 people in Russia were murdered and not less than 280 were injured'.

Ignoring the problem of racism means that hatred can grow in the middle of our society without being confronted. Racism is not an opinion, but a deadly poison responsible for segregation, death and suffering. It is a matter of civil courage and our shared responsibility to show that any expressions of racist hate in public can never be tolerated.

The way to the escalation of a conflict is mostly accompanied by several factors; here are some of them:

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

Any discrimination occurring within institutions such as public and governmental bodies, business companies, educational institutes etc. based on colour, culture, religion or ethnic origin of a person. Last years showed that especially 'visible' minorities got systematically discriminated, whenever looking for housing, inclusion in health care and education or employment.

HATE SPEECH

Hate speech is a term for discourse intended to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudice against a person or group. It covers written as well as oral and visual communication including in the mass media as well as some other forms of behaviours in a public setting, e.g. on the Internet.

Music is practically the most significant feature and means of self-identification of the lives of adolescents and youngsters. Its forming power is extraordinary strong and therefore also misused to spread hate speech and racist propaganda.

Graffiti is an international phenomenon and often a creative expression of values or political beliefs. However, graffiti is also a widespread tool to spread racist messages. Hate graffiti is one form of claiming extreme right dominance and marking own territory that eventually becomes a so-called 'fear zone', e.g. in public transportation, around youth clubs, in pedestrian's tunnels, train stations etc.

POPULISM

Populism is based on elemental fears and emotions of people and politically utilised through popular stereotypes, clichés and prejudices to establish a certain position in the political field. The basic principal is always the same: 'We against Them'. Populists try to detect basic emotions, fears, stereotypes and prejudices of the majority population and offer simple solutions for quite complicated problems with the aim to establish a popular platform to boost their political options and ideas.

THE 'SMALL' EVERYDAY-ACTS OF RACISM

Social scientists named a special form of hidden racism 'micro-aggression' and describe it like water dripping on sandstone - it is almost invisible but potential lethal. It means that subtle indignities suffered on a daily basis by minorities may not qualify as racism at first glance; their effect may not have immediate consequences, but negative interactions can be as deadly as thousand little cuts for the victim. It is about how people behave in everyday life towards a person that doesn't seem 'usual' to them (e.g. a person in public transport who starts to tightly clasp his/her purse only because a dark-skinned person takes the seat beside).

WHY COOPERATE IN CAMPAIGNS?

Racism is not a local issue and the Action Week Against Racism can help to set the agenda on all levels. We have to campaign on local, regional and European level to get our point across. By linking local and national actions, we can generate European-wide publicity. We show that there is an enormous amount of people that believe in

an intercultural open society. In this way it's also possible for local groups to make their arguments heard and put their issues on the political and social agenda. Cooperating in the Action Week gives all participants/activists new energy and inspiration to go on with their everyday struggle against racism and intolerance. Further more public actions let people reflect about the issues raised, even if they are 'only' spectators. Keep in mind that it is the variety and creativity of many different activities all over Europe that make the UNITED campaigns unique. You make the difference - not the 'size' of your actions!



Armenia & Romania March 2009 • A poster competition is an easy way to make a broad range of people reflect on the issue of racism.

BE CREATIVE & HAVE FUN!

Everybody can give a valuable contribution to the Action Week. In fact it is not important for an effective action to have lots of financial resources: it is more the creativity and originality that counts. The European campaign aims to raise awareness in all relevant sectors of society. Three main targets are the media, youth and the general public:

- > **MEDIA** are essential in the campaign action with the purpose of raising awareness in the public opinion and it may be inclined to work with you to produce special issues, TV programs and radio shows. Especially local media often start cooperation 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 into actions. In that way they take a role in decision-making processes and they have possibilities to develop more self-confidence and self-assessment.
- > **PUBLIC** debates, round tables and conferences provide space for reflection and brainstorming. By organising them during the Action Week you give both the Week and the activity more weight and more publicity. You can take up the occasion of the Week to write petitions to politicians or publish media releases. Many organisations publish their annual report during the Action Week. Removing graffiti and other visible actions can alert the public to the message of the Week, but also hanging posters and distributing campaign material (e.g. posters, stickers, postcards, info-leaflets...) helps spread our message.

On the UNITED website (www.unitedagainstracism.org) we have published several information leaflets (e.g. 'Get Active! - The how to Organise an Activity? - Guide'). You also can gain inspiration by checking former campaign reports, the List of Activity (from this and former campaigns) or the Calendar of Internationalism with an enormous list of good practices.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

ORDER FREE MATERIAL

Do you believe in the active struggle against racism? Join the campaign and order more campaign material for free. Send, fax or e-mail information about your activities (title, date, theme, place) to UNITED and the name, address and contact person of your organisation. Have a look at our website to find out about the free available campaign material (posters, stickers, postcards, infoleaflets etc.) and to get to the online order-form.

PLANNING A CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

KEEP IN MIND:

- > The aim should always include protection and empowerment of victims of racism.
- > There is no 'neutrality' in relation to racism.
- > Getting the issue of racism in your school or in your workplace out in the open is not ruining the atmosphere: if there was racism, it was already bad.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- > What does the campaign aim to achieve? What does your activity aim to achieve?
- > What change do you want (short AND long term)?
- > Do you really want this activity or would another activity serve your purpose just as well?
- > Who is the target of the action? Who needs to change, and how?
- > What do you need? Who do you need on your side? What partnerships will help you?

WHAT PUBLICITY DO YOU NEED?

- > Try to have a planning group that includes the people most targeted by racism, the people living in the area where you work, youth groups, minority groups...
- > Choose the most appropriate method: direct action (non-violent protest actions), political lobbying, public demonstration, intercultural party, educational projects in schools and youth clubs, press action, media...
- > Delegate responsibilities.
- > Make a 'campaign timetable' and check it regularly.

HOW UNITED CAN HELP YOU

- > You can order campaign material, up to 100 posters (2kg material) for free. But if you need more for special purposes, don't hesitate to contact UNITED.
- > We will produce a special List of Activities, documenting all the different activities during the campaign and the strength of the anti-racist movement throughout Europe. The list can help you make contacts and exchange ideas with other groups, as well as to support each other's activities. The List of Activities will be updated regularly.

and will be published on our website.

> Call UNITED if you cannot find a partner for your activities. We might know of other NGOs in your country who are planning activities.

> A UNITED media release will be sent out to all the important European press agencies, newspapers, etc. If you feel that we should include a specific media contact from your country in our list, let us know. Journalists who want to know about specific activities will be informed about events in their country and are referred to the organisations involved.

> UNITED will produce a European report after the Action Week, including as many of the activities that took place as possible. The report is spread throughout Europe to support NGOs in reporting to their sponsors and to inspire action for next year. You can order copies of last year's report for inspiration and motivation.

DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION?

UNITED can provide you with useful information:

- > You can order a copy of the European Address Book Against Racism to find like-minded organisations in other countries, or in your own country (also available online).
- > You can phone or e-mail the UNITED secretariat to find out who else is organising something.
- > You can order the campaign poster, or other campaign material to use in your own way.
- > A full list of anti-racism magazines can also be found in the European Address Book Against Racism.
- > If you need to find more anti-racism news, Internet is a wonderful medium.

HOW YOU CAN HELP UNITED

Help us make the media release exciting! Announce your activities to us! Send us your ideas, invitations, leaflets and posters before the activities take place. Help us make the post-campaign report complete and effective. Make sure your activity is included! Send us reports, newspaper articles, photographs, etc. after the event for the European report. The material does not have to be in English.

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 560 organisations and youth organisations from a wide variety of backgrounds, from all 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 on specific topics. The workers at the secretariat are in constant contact with the network organisations, ensuring that information and proposals for action are transmitted rapidly.

Information is received from more than 2000 organisations and mailings go out to about 2500 groups in Europe. If you want to get involved discuss the ideas and aims of the UNITED network within your organisation. Let us know that your organisation would like to join or to receive information. And add UNITED to your mailing list!



Germany March 2009 Intercultural group activities create a platform where people encounter and experience diversity. It is 'breaking the blocks' and simply fun.

UNITED IS SUPPORTED BY

more than 552 organisations from all European countries, many prominent individuals, private supporters and long-term volunteers from Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, the European Voluntary Service Programme and Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

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UNITED's publications can be freely re-used, translated and re-distributed, provided the source - www.unitedagainstracism.org - is mentioned and a copy is sent to the UNITED secretariat.

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The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of UNITED and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the sponsors.



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