

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 389

Recognizing persons of African descent in Europe during the International Year for People of African Descent.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 5, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing persons of African descent in Europe during the International Year for People of African Descent.

Whereas the 109th Congress passed H. Con. Res. 60 and S. Con. Res. 90, recognizing African descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean, raising awareness of the racism and discrimination faced by those communities, and leading to numerous public and private sector initiatives between the United States and Latin American and Caribbean countries to improve the situation of African descendants;

Whereas the persistence of racism and discrimination in Europe similarly necessitates congressional action to raise awareness and promote public and private sector initiatives to stem this trend;

Whereas the terms “Afro-European”, “African European”, or “Black European” refer to people of African ancestry or descent born in, citizens of, or living in Europe;

Whereas more than an estimated 7,000,000 individuals of African descent currently live in and have long had a presence in Europe, forming an influential part of the African diaspora;

Whereas this year the United Nations designated 2011 as the International Year for People of African Descent whereby Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton remarked, “In the 21st century, diversity, openness, and tolerance, are vital national assets”;

Whereas the recognition of this year seeks to strengthen national actions to ensure that people of African descent enjoy economic, cultural, social, civil, and political rights, as well as promote a greater knowledge of and respect for their diverse heritage and culture;

Whereas the story of Black Europeans remains untold, rendering many of their past and present contributions to the political and social life of Europe invisible or forgotten;

Whereas unlike more contemporary figures, largely unknown Blacks have made significant contributions to European history and culture, including Spanish poet Juan Latino, Italian Duke Alessandro Medici, French novelist Alexandre Dumas, German scholar Anthony William Amo, French Composer Le Chevalier de St. George, British abolitionist Oladuah Equiano, and Russian General and Governor Abram Hannibal, great-grandfather of Russian poet Aleksandr Pushkin;

Whereas the largest estimated populations of Black Europeans can be found in France (approximately 2,500,000), the United Kingdom (approximately 1,500,000), and the Netherlands (approximately 500,000), in addition to sizeable populations in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Russia, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, and Austria;

Whereas the presence of Blacks in Europe can be traced to voluntary and forced migration resulting from the geographical proximity of Europe to Africa and the Middle East, including the transatlantic slave trade, the colonization of Africa and the Caribbean, African and African-American military deployments, the movement of refugees and asylum seekers, and educational and other professional exchanges;

Whereas, although Black Europeans have made significant achievements in and contributions to European society, large numbers have and continue to be more likely than the general population to experience discrimination and be underrepresented in leadership roles in the public and private sector as a result of the color of their skin and ancestry;

Whereas, on April 29, 2008, before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, at a hearing entitled “The State of (In)visible Black Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics”, Dr. Philomena Essed stated, “Probably the only common European experience among many, if not all, Afro-descendants is their exposure to [. . .] racism and systemic discrimination, regardless of country, socioeconomic conditions, gender, age, or level of education”;

Whereas racism has long been, and continues to be, a problem in Europe;

Whereas the 1997 European Commission opinion poll entitled “Racism and Xenophobia in Europe” reported a “worrying level of racism and xenophobia in [European Union] Member States, with nearly 33% of those interviewed openly describing themselves as ‘quite racist’ or ‘very racist’”;

Whereas the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (EUFRA), formerly the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia, has found in its annual report that racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately experiencing discrimination in housing, education, health care, employment, the criminal justice system, and access to political participation;

Whereas the 2009 European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU–MIDIS), the first European Union-wide survey of ethnic minority and immigrant groups’ experiences of discrimination and victimization in everyday life in the 27 member states of the European Union found that persons of African descent experienced higher incidents than most other minority groups of discriminatory treatment, racist crime, and victimization, and lacked an awareness of their rights;

Whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Annual Hate Crimes report has found that persons of African descent are often targets of racist violence, especially in eastern Europe, yet in many countries legal assistance and financial support for victims while recovering from violent attacks does not exist;

Whereas EU–MIDIS reports experiences of discrimination, criminal victimization, and discriminatory policing are

grossly underreported due to a lack of rights awareness and incidents may be higher;

Whereas prejudice and discrimination towards Black Europeans has also been linked to changes in immigration and asylum laws as a result of antiterrorism initiatives and the growth and mainstreaming of nationalist and anti-immigrant political parties and groups, including neo-Nazis and skinheads, who believe Europe should be a monoracial society or that other races are inferior;

Whereas the Open Society Justice Initiative 2009 report, entitled “Ethnic Profiling in the European Union”, found that police officers in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands routinely used racial profiling, including targeting Blacks, when deciding whom to target for stops, searches, raids, and surveillance;

Whereas Black Europeans encounter everyday racism, including denials that racism exists despite the blatant use of stereotypes and derogatory terms to refer to Blacks in everyday language, the media, and textbooks;

Whereas there have been numerous efforts by the public and private sector to address racial discrimination and inequality in Europe, including the introduction of anti-discrimination and equality laws that include the legal support for special measures or positive (affirmative) action, creation of equality bodies, media campaigns, and efforts to increase minority political participation;

Whereas these efforts also include the September 9, 2008, official launching of the Black European Women’s Council at the European Union headquarters and the September 27, 2007, to September 29, 2007, Vienna Declaration of

the Black European Women’s Congress, which calls for Members of the European Union to enforce and implement laws to eradicate all forms of discrimination, provide anti-racist education and training for personnel working in educational institutions and the civil service, increase political representation, participation, and employment opportunities for Blacks, and address racial health disparities, including by providing cultural competency training to health professionals;

Whereas these efforts also include transatlantic meetings of Black and minority legislators held at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, including the March 24, 2011, and June 1, 2010, through June 2, 2010, Transatlantic Minority Political Leadership Conferences and April 15, 2009, through April 16, 2009, “Black European Summit: Transatlantic Dialogue on Political Participation” and the adoption of the Brussels Declaration calling for increased minority political inclusion;

Whereas, as part of the March 24, 2011, Transatlantic Minority Political Leadership Conference legislators and minority leaders from North America and Europe held a Parliamentary Forum at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss a “Joint Action Plan on Racial and Ethnic Equality and Inclusion” between the European Union and United States;

Whereas these efforts also include the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) adoption of a Resolution on “Strengthening Efforts to Combat Racism and Xenophobia and Foster Inclusion” at the 2011 Annual Session recognizing the international year for people of African descent and calling for the OSCE to implement several strategic

initiatives to address racial and ethnic discrimination in the OSCE region;

Whereas these efforts also include the creation of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) Foundation, the first antiracist foundation in Europe;

Whereas these efforts also include the August 18, 2011, to August 21, 2011, World Summit of African Descendants which will include a focus on Europe;

Whereas despite these efforts, international entities, such as the OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, EUFRA, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Independent Expert on minority issues, and Experts Working Group on People of African Descent, have documented ongoing racism and xenophobia, and racial and ethnic discrimination, and called for an increase in initiatives to combat racism and inequality; and

Whereas throughout the history of the United States, members of both the public and private sectors have exchanged information on best practices for antidiscrimination measures and racial equality with committed parties in other countries, including initiatives such as the 2008 “Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality”, also known as the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination and the more recent United States-

Columbia Action Plan on Racial and Ethnic Equality:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the goals and ideals of the Inter-
3 national Year for People of African Descent;

4 (2) encourages the recognition and celebration
5 of the collective history and achievements made by
6 people of African descent;

7 (3) reaffirms the importance of inclusion and
8 the full and equal participation of people of African
9 descent around the world in all aspects of political,
10 economic, social, and cultural life;

11 (4) recognizes that, as a result of their skin
12 color and ancestry, many Black Europeans have
13 wrongfully experienced injustices in the public and
14 private sector;

15 (5) welcomes parliamentary activities, including
16 those of the Organization for Security and Coopera-
17 tion in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly, to
18 engage in efforts to promote racial equality and
19 combat racial discrimination through efforts such as
20 introducing legislation, speaking out against racism,
21 increasing the political participation of racial minori-
22 ties, and working with Black European and other
23 minority communities to develop relevant policies;

1 (6) urges European governments and members
2 of civil society and the private sector, in consultation
3 with Black European communities, to develop and
4 implement initiatives to combat racial discrimination
5 and promote racial equality in Europe, by—

6 (A) drafting and implementing anti-
7 discrimination, special measures, hate crimes,
8 migration and integration, and other laws and
9 policies to address discrimination and dispari-
10 ties and promote equality, noting the rec-
11 ommendations of the United Nations Com-
12 mittee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimina-
13 tion, the Experts Working Group on People of
14 African Descent (WGPAD), the European
15 Commission against Racism and Intolerance,
16 the European Union Fundamental Rights
17 Agency (EUFRA), the United Nations Special
18 Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism
19 and Independent Expert on minority issues,
20 and the OSCE Personal Representative on
21 Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimi-
22 nation;

23 (B) promoting and funding research, in-
24 cluding the collection of national census data on

1 Black Europeans and its inclusion in the an-
2 nual reports of the EUFRA;

3 (C) providing technical support, training,
4 and funding to Black European civil society
5 groups working to combat racism, discrimina-
6 tion, and inequality, and uphold basic human
7 rights in Europe;

8 (D) introducing national measures to
9 counter stereotypical images of persons of Afri-
10 can descent, by revising textbooks, increasing
11 efforts to include Black Europeans in history
12 and heritage institutions, and remembering vic-
13 tims of colonialism, slavery, and other atroc-
14 ities;

15 (E) developing or increasing financial sup-
16 port for funds to assist victims of hate crimes
17 with legal assistance and compensation when
18 incapacitated due to physical or emotional inju-
19 ries;

20 (F) developing specific initiatives that ad-
21 dress the special concerns of Black European
22 women and youth;

23 (G) actively promoting racial and ethnic
24 minority participation at all levels of national,
25 regional, and local government through the edu-

1 cation of civil and political rights, including the
2 legislative process and advocacy of legislative
3 issues relevant to racial and ethnic minority
4 communities, development of targeted profes-
5 sional development and hiring strategies, in-
6 creased youth and community outreach, and
7 self-organization and other empowerment initia-
8 tives; and

9 (H) recruiting, training, and hiring Black
10 Europeans for professional positions in support
11 of these initiatives;

12 (7) urges the Secretary of State to—

13 (A) provide technical assistance and other
14 support for European governments and mem-
15 bers of the civil society and private sector to
16 fulfill the initiatives outlined above; and

17 (B) increase support for the WGPAD; and

18 (8) supports the adoption of a “Joint Action
19 Plan on Racial and Ethnic Equality and Inclusion”
20 between the European Union and United States and
21 implementation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assem-
22 bly 2011 Resolution on Strengthening Efforts to
23 Combat Racism and Xenophobia and Foster Inclu-
24 sion to assist in fulfilling the initiatives above.

○