

FRA Press Release
Vienna/Stockholm, 9 December 2009

First ever EU-wide survey of minorities: Mapping Discrimination across Europe

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) releases the results of its survey of over 23,000 individuals from ethnic minority and immigrant groups about their experiences of discrimination, racist crime, and policing in the EU. The results reveal shocking evidence about the discrimination faced by minorities in everyday life; in the classroom, when looking for work, at the doctor's, or in shops. On the eve of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, the FRA calls for targeted policies to combat the marginalisation of these groups.

FRA Director Morten Kjaerum: "The results of the EU-MIDIS survey reveal the serious difficulties faced by significant numbers of those from ethnic minority and immigrant groups in accessing the most basic of services. Discrimination in education is particularly damaging as it can have a negative impact on young people's opportunities in the labour market. Actors at all levels, from governments to service providers, must use this evidence, collected on the ground through in-depth interviews, to develop targeted policies to prevent the exclusion of these groups from European societies."

Everyday Life

11% of North African respondents had experienced discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity when in, or simply trying to enter, a shop. 17% of Roma indicated that they had been discriminated against by healthcare personnel. Almost a quarter (22%) of Sub-Saharan Africans were discriminated against because of their ethnicity at least once when looking for work.¹

Victims of crime

1 in 4 (24%) of all respondents was a victim of crime at least once in the last 12 months. Members of minority groups, often stereotyped as criminals themselves, can clearly also be victims of crime in need of assistance, protection, and support.

Police stops

Among all North Africans who were surveyed, 1 in 5 (19%) considered that they were stopped by the police specifically because of their ethnic minority background. This leads to a perception of discriminatory police treatment amongst some respondents.

Awareness of Rights

The survey exposes the serious lack of awareness of anti discrimination legislation amongst ethnic minority and immigrant groups. Almost half (46%) of respondents were unaware that legislation exists forbidding discrimination against people on the basis of their ethnicity in relation to shops, restaurants, bars or clubs.

"Nothing would happen"

¹ All figures refer to experiences in the past 12 months.



82% of those who were discriminated against in the past 12 months did not report their most recent experience of discrimination either at the place where it occurred or to a competent authority. The most common reason for non-reporting was the belief that 'nothing would happen'. This lack of reporting indicates that official figures on racist discrimination constitute just the 'tip of the iceberg' when it comes to the true extent of the problem. It also shows that those who discriminate can act with impunity as their actions are not brought to justice.

See at <http://fra.europa.eu/eu-midis/>:

“EU-MIDIS: Main Results Report”

“EU-MIDIS at a glance”

“Data in Focus Report 1 – the Roma”

“Data in FocusReport 2 – Muslims”

FRA reports from EU-MIDIS are available from: <http://fra.europa.eu>

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