

Racism in  
Central and Eastern Europe  
and Beyond:  
*Origins, Responses, Strategies*

Report

Budapest, Hungary  
19 July 2000

# Acknowledgements

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# Preface

On July 19, 2000, a small, diverse group of individuals met in Budapest to share perspectives on the contours of racism in Europe today and the development of strategies to combat it. Participants included Europeans, East and West, as well as Americans and Africans, officials of government and intergovernmental bodies, human rights activists, historians, lawyers, psychologists and educational experts. The fruitful discussion which ensued gave rise to a number of suggestions for tackling some of racism's most troubling contemporary manifestations.

The following were among the principal themes addressed:

- Although hard to measure with precision, Europe is experiencing simultaneously an apparent rise in racist rhetoric and violence, and more concerted efforts by institutions of government and civil society to combat racism.
- Racism takes different forms in varying contexts – from anti-immigrant hostility to violence against Roma to lingering anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, there is space for a common platform for all those who seek to challenge racist expressions and acts.
- Though important in itself, the adoption of broad anti-discriminatory legal norms at European level must be accompanied by national and local initiatives to ensure effective implementation and popular support.
- To date, the EU accession process has contributed significantly to the strengthening of anti-discrimination movements in Central and Eastern Europe. How to deepen and make self-sustaining the struggle against racism not only in candidate countries, but also throughout Europe, is a major challenge for the future.

In recent years, the continent-wide debate about racism, racial discrimination, and ethnic intolerance in Europe has grown wider, deeper and more inclusive. This report reflects, and is offered as a contribution to, this continuing evolution. Part one is a synthesis, which seeks to gather the principal strands of thought and place the meeting in a broader context. Part two consists of transcriptions of the presentations and portions of the more

informal exchanges. Part three gives the texts of two recent and significant legal developments at European level, and a list of participants is also included.

The July 19 meeting yielded a wide range of often diverging opinions. However, their inclusion in this publication does not imply endorsement of any individual speaker's viewpoint by OSI or any of the participants. Although every effort has been made to reflect accurately the substance and tenor of the discussion, any inadvertent errors are the sole responsibility of the reporting team.

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# Contents

## **PART I**

Racism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond: Origins, Responses, Strategies <i>Rapporteur's Notes</i> .....	1
---	---

## **PART II**

Presentations and Selected Discussions .....	25
--	----

## **PART III**

Legal Texts .....	91
1. Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin (European Union 'Race Directive') .....	93
2. Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights .....	105
List of Participants .....	117

