



Open statement to Jan Björklund, Minister of Education and Erik Ullenhag, Minister of Integration

16 May 2011

The members of the organizations below, partners of the [RED Network \(Rights Equality & Diversity European Network\)](#), a network consisting of NGOs and research institutes from 17 EU member states, are deeply concerned about the racist incidents depicting Black people as "slaves" at Lund University and Malmö University in Sweden.

At Lund University, Hallands Student Nation organised a party on April 18th, 2011. During the evening, a number of students were led into the party with their faces painted in racist depiction of Black people referred to as "Black face". They had lynching ropes around their necks and were led by another white fellow student representing a white "slave trader". During the course of the evening, a "slave auction" where the "slaves" were sold was enacted. Hallands Student Nation later explained that this was meant to be a joke. The event was witnessed by a graduate student coming from the USA who was disgusted by the tacit acceptance of the "slave auction" many students demonstrated during the banquet. This student spoke of the event on social media and thus brought it to the public awareness.

Upon finding out about it, Mr. Momodou Jallow (Board Member of Center Against Racism - Centrum mot rasism) which is one of the partners in the RED Network), who works at Malmö University, reported the incident to the police as incitement to hatred. As a consequence, posters depicting Mr. Momodou Jallow as a slave in chains with a text saying "where is our run away nigger slave?" were spread all over the city of Lund and at Malmö University.

According to media accounts, the perpetrator, a student at Malmö University, admitted to the police that he had put up the posters to demonstrate that Black people "have no sense of humor" and that they are "over-sensitive" about the Transatlantic slave trade.

We are seriously concerned about the outrageous depiction of Black people as "slaves" acted out by students at institutions of higher education in a country such as Sweden, which is globally acknowledged for upholding the values of equality and the fight for Human Rights. The subsequent treatment to which Mr. Jallow was submitted substantially adds to the gravity of the situation. It is unacceptable to mock and joke about the brutality of the Transatlantic slave trade, during which millions of African women, men and children were kidnapped, killed and raped.

We therefore welcome the letter from the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) to Sweden's EU Minister Birgitta Ohlsson, in which ENAR condemns these unacceptable violations of Human Rights taking place in Sweden.

The incident also comes in the year 2011, which the United Nations General Assembly has declared as the Year for people of African Descent. The Year calls on member countries to do their utmost so that people of African descent are enabled to fully enjoy their economic, cultural, civil, social and political rights.

Having that in mind, we call for effective efforts to ensure that racism and racial hatred towards Black people in Sweden are whole heartedly and openly denounced as unacceptable, so that events such as the one at Lund and Malmö Universities do not ever again repeat.

Signatories RED Network partners	country
i-RED, Institute for Rights, Equality & Diversity (Coordinator)	Greece
Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights	Austria
Symfiliosi	Cyprus
Centre d'Etudes des Discriminations, du Racisme et de l'Antisémitisme (CEDRA)	France
European Forum for Migration Studies (EFMS) - Institute at the University of Bamberg	Germany
Movement for Peace and Liberty (MPDL)	Spain
Centre for Legal Resources (CLR)	Romania
NÚMENA – Research Centre on Human and Social Sciences	Portugal
Finnish League for Human Rights	Finland
Irish Council for Civil Liberties	Ireland
Peace Institute	Slovenia
Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DACoRD)	Denmark
Center Against Racism	Sweden

The [RED Network](#) aims at addressing the gap in the current socio-political state of research regarding the support of timely and effective policy responses to issues of racism, discrimination and integration of minorities. The purpose is to tackle the lack of continuous monitoring systems and alert mechanisms on racism and discrimination developments in selected EU countries as well as to raise awareness among the broader public about the negative effects of (racist) discrimination on the European societies.