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**Europe at the Threshold:
Fairness or Fortress?**

Racism, Public Policy and
Antiracist Concepts

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Europe at the Threshold: Fairness or Fortress?

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Hajo Funke

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Introduction

The Idea of a Free Modern Europe was created by Antifascists some 60 years ago—in the dark days of genocidal Nazi Germany waging its racial war of extermination and murdering the European Jews, the gipsies, Slavs and the handicapped. In the vision of survivors the new Europe was conceived as a Union that will forever end the centuries long warmongering, the expansionist nationalism¹ and particularly the barbarity of Nazi Germany by overcoming the preconditions that helped to shape it.

After 1945, Germany was given the opportunity for democratic change. 60 years later, however, Germany and Europe are facing elements of the spectre of the past. Violent racist attacks on persons of non-German and non-European descent, of gipsies and of the handicapped. Europe has seen genocidal “ethnic cleansing” of nearly 200 000 Bosnian Muslims – without reacting sufficiently.

Racism in dominating “white” Europe was part of the history of colonialism. In the present it is primarily directed against those perceived as “weak” and “alien”. Along paranoid racist lines though often in more subtle manifestations those subject to racism are categorised by their very physical and/or cultural appearances they are defamed as a being of lower intelligence, character, allegedly representing all evil of the world. The revival shall adopt the power policies of socialdarwinistic colonial Europe in the 19th century, and the radicalised forms of the paranoic race wars of Nazi Germany in the thirties and forties of the 20th century.

Under different historical and political conditions new authoritarian dynamics of racism have to be once more the concern of the European political class.

Racial discrimination shall mean “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national, or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.” (International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, adopted and opened for signature and ratification of General Assembly Resolution 2106 of 21 December 1964) (quoted in EUMC, Annual Report 1999, and p.15).

This interpretation of Racism deliberately includes a spectrum of incidents that are not necessarily racist by intention, but have “racist” exclusionary consequences. “That means not only overt racist violence is called racism, but also the subtle expression of exclusions on grounds of race,

¹ With respect to one of the issues of the UN Conference in Durban – the debate on Zionism – aside of the recent discriminatory policy of the Israelian government - is much more complex to described as racist. (See Micha Brumlik „Über Israel räsonieren“, in Frankfurter Rundschau, 22.8.2001)

With respect to the debate on guilt deriving from the atrocities and crimes against humanity by slavery the experiences of the debates on guilt and coming to terms with the past in Germany, but also in South Africa should be evaluated.

ethnicity, religion and culture. The working use of the term also includes anti-Semitism and xenophobia” (ibid). Racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism are related to authoritarianism. According to theories of authoritarianism (see Adorno and other), racist traditions, mentalities and attitudes are often instigated and activated by **Right-wing Extremists (RWE) or Right-wing Populists (RWP)**. They forcefully address people’s authoritarian-bound anger, fear or rage against so-called “scapegoats”. They are constructed, in a long tradition of prejudices, as people who are considered “alien” to the Europeans because of different colours, of different religion (especially Islam) – and Jews.

In today’s Europe, social scientists describe the rage of authoritarian aggressions against innocent people as a result of a dynamic interaction of several main factors: 1) the long tradition of xenophobic authoritarian mentalities in considerable parts of the population, 2) special public policies against minorities and migrants and a related xenophobic public discourse on asylum-seekers and foreigners as betrayers of the welfare state; 3) the propaganda and networking of right-wing extremists; 4) socio-economic and political transformations related insecurities or even despair as a background to mislead people’s fears and rage in racist terms. This authoritarian dynamic can result in growing rage and the request of extended and radicalised versions of scapegoats - a destructive spiral, that have the potential to undermine and even destroy democratic structures and societies as happened in the regions of “ethnic cleansing”.

“It has gotten worse”—Racism in today’s Central Europe

“Right-wing extremism in Germany did not change. It has gotten worse in the course of the last years. What has changed, is that there is an increase of public awareness.” (Wolfgang Thierse, Bundestagspräsident, Second highest representative of Germany, in Mai 2001, after he had toured through East German States). After nearly a year of serious public debates and political actions we still have to face a high level of right-wing extremism, racist violent acts, and public support. In 2000 official reports counted over 15 000 right-wing extremists. This short observation indicates in the case of Germany (in variation also generally in the European Union) that we still face serious public and political challenges to fight racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, although, finally, serious steps were enacted to support this struggle.

For analysing the adequacy of political activities, it is necessary, to first analyse *racist attitudes, their political supporters, and the problems of racist violence itself* (chapter 2), secondly, *to reconstruct the main causes of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism— in Germany and in selected European countries with different traditions, political cultures and political situations* (chapter 3). *Without at least an adequate comparative perspective, it does not make sense, to analyse and to evaluate the various attempts and further chances for a coherent antiracist public and civil policies, on the level of the individual states and on the European level.*

For this main task of reconstructing the main causes of racism and specific counter policies three questions/dimensions seems to be important:

- 1) The dimension of political culture, historical mentalities and social attitudes: in concrete terms, whether or not the political climate in public and politics is changing towards more tolerance or not; whether there is a culture of mutual recognition and/or of multiculturalism or rather a (sustained) culture of (rigid) assimilation, subordination and racist exclusion of foreigners;
- 2) the goals and implementation of public policy: whether or not a sufficient anti-discrimination policy is enacted or not; or if public policy even enhances racial discrimination;

- 3) the goals and implementation of economic and social policies: whether or not the impact of fears, among other aspects related to globalisation, modernisation, and social deprivation is addressed by economic and social policies on the European level and in the member states.

Dimensions of Racism and Xenophobia in Europe: Public Opinion, Racist Attitudes and Violence in social and political Context

In Europe today we are facing several features/ forms of racism: 1) (pro)racist attitudes; 2) public and political representations of an use of these attitudes by right-wing extremists and/or right-wing populist parties' policies; 3) discriminating and racist incidents, including institutional and structural forms of exclusion and racism. Although the picture is mixed, in a lot of European member states these dimensions are on a high level, and the problem has even grown in the course of the last years.

Racist Attitudes in Europe

Distance, rage and false racist projections towards minorities are described in a special analysis of a Euro barometer 2000 survey on behalf of "the European Monitoring Centre of Racism and Xenophobia" (EUMC) (see: Attitudes 2001).

- a) Half of the members of European Union believes, that the presence of people of minority groups increases unemployment in the given country (only 35 % tend to disagree; in Germany 61%, in East Germany even 65% agree; minorities are immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees and citizens of foreign origin);
- b) 52% believe, that these minorities abuse the system of social welfare (54 % in West, 60% in East Germany);
- c) analogous 52 per cent believe that in schools where there are too many children of these minority groups, the quality of education suffers (West-Germany 60 %, East-Germany 48 %);
- d) 58% believe, that immigrants are more often involved in criminality than the average inhabitant (Germany 62%);
- e) the amount of people that feel the presence of people from these minority groups as a cause of insecurity rose from 37 % in 1997 to 42 % in 2000 (see p.53). This attitude is especially widely shared in the following countries: Greece (77 %), Denmark (60 %), Belgium (56 %), France (51 %), Germany (46 %) – whereas it is especially low in following countries: in Sweden (24 %), Finland (32 %), the UK (32 %) and Spain (34 %).
- f) This slowly growing trend of (xenophobic) fears, of being feeling betrayed, or degraded and deprived – can be enforced and supported by public discourses and policies of xenophobia and racism. For this group of concern, it is decisive how the political arenas deal with latent or semi latent fears, insecurities and false projections.

2) A relevant minority of *about 20%* expresses fear, distance or even aggression, when they *opt for expelling* legally established non-European immigrants: in the view of this minority the immigrants should all be sent back to their country of origin. This number rose from 18 to 20% (see EUMC Attitudes, p.57). This expression of an aggressive distance is especially high in Belgium (27), Greece

(27), Luxembourg (27), Germany (24, and 20, who don't know) and in the UK (22 and 20, who don't know). It is especially low in Denmark (7%), Spain (10%) and Sweden (12).

3) A small but relevant minority of 15% (4%, who don't know) of Europeans feel personally *disturbed by the presence of minorities* (s.p.41). "Lurking behind these feelings is a common attitude towards outsiders. People, who feel disturbed by religious minorities tend to display the same feelings towards "racial" or national minorities." (ibid.) In Greece this attitude is especially wide spread: 38%. In Spain (4 %), Finland (8 %), Portugal and Luxembourg (9% each) only a very small proportion of respondents expresses that fear. Germany fits nearly to the average of the European Union (16 %), similarly as Austria (15 %).

4) This small but relevant minority may be of special general importance, if this minority is combined with another relevant proportion of the Europeans: those who are showing *ambivalent attitudes towards minorities*. One European out of 4 has been categorised as ambivalent – meaning persons that have both positive and negative attitudes towards minorities at the same time (see p.11). "This group should be considered to be the group that reacts most to political leadership". (s.p.11) "They gravely desire the assimilation of minority groups" and don't support antiracist policies.(s.p.24)

5) Together with the fundamentally intolerant the numbers add up to nearly 40% within the European Union. *This large minority which shares intolerant and ambivalent (potentially negative) attitudes towards minority groups feel disturbed by people from different minority groups or see minorities as having no positive effects on the society.* They support or accept repatriation of immigrants. Both groups are forming a (potential) majority in Belgium (53 %), Greece (70 %) – and 47% in Germany, 45% in France, 42% in the UK, 42% in Austria. Again the lowest proportions we have in Sweden, Finland, Spain and Italy.

6) Only 21% are actively tolerant. These are mostly people who have higher education and/or personal relationships to persons of different race, religion or nationality and persons who are without fear of being unemployed.

7) To summarise: in Contemporary Europe we have to face a high level of intolerance towards minorities that is slowly on the rise. Of particular concern is, that a small but substantial proportion of around 20% even demands repatriation of legally established immigrants. Under these conditions it very much depends on the political arena, the public discourse and the public policies, if the right-wing populist groups and parties to revitalise and politically escalate these dispositions or not. This is even more important because in some European countries the ambivalent and intolerant proportions of the population already gained a majority. Hence to some degree it is up to Europe's political leadership to determine Europe's destiny at the threshold of the new millennium: if politic avoid the xenophobic token or if they use it to gain electoral support, especially if social and economic fears and deprivation under conditions of globalization and new technology will worsen.

Policies of intolerance by Right-Wing Populists (RWP) and Right-Wing Extremists (RWE) in Europe²

² Right-Wing Extremists have a clear antidemocratic and racist, often antisemitic ideology and strategy and as parties a concept of authoritarian leadership within the party and towards society. Examples are the German „Republicans“, the DVU and the even neonazi NPD; in France „Front National“ and in the UK the neonazi „British National Party“. Right-Wing Populists use perceived or real popular xenophobic or racist sentiments by merely reproducing or even producing them, with the help of allied media; so they are destined to build dangerous bridges to racism and their political representations and networks – like the Austrian FPÖ, where we observe both elements, of RWE-activists and dominating RWP's.(See Moreau; Funke 2001)

Within the last decades Europe faces the rise of right-wing populist movements and parties and overtly right-wing extremist parties, which both rely on racism, xenophobia and authoritarianism. The concrete feature and shape is different from country to country and depends on the different political cultures, which still matter; on the stability of democratic institutions; and on the amount of social unrest. The rise of influential right-wing populist movements and parties can be the result of social economic crises and of the erosion of the legitimacy of the political system. The RWE-movements present these crises in dramatised or even apocalyptic forms, project the causes of crises to “scapegoats” and present themselves as the ultimate (authoritarian) solution. Consequently they propagate radical anti-democratic solutions and are part of a general radicalisation process, thereby functioning as “prophets of deceit” (Leo Löwenthal). Furthermore, a new right-wing populism (RWP) is active in a considerable group of European States, in Austria, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland and, to a smaller degree, in Denmark.

They present issues and themes that are perceived as neglected by (formerly) “established” parties: socioeconomic risks, social despair, economic ghettoisation, globalisation, the weaknesses of European, especially financial integration; the perceived corresponding cultural threats of losing identity and feelings of belonging; the perceived threats by “strangers”, *people, which allegedly “subvert” the established or imagined “order”* – and finally they present simple aggressive “solutions” by subordination under their leadership and by presenting scapegoats in the realm of more or less excessive nationalisms (Moreau 2000). RWP exploit real fears, experiences of erosions of structures and milieus and powerlessness, of social anomie by playing with sentiments and using or aiming the control of media. They are elected by RWE-ists, (perceived) losers of socio-economic modernisation, by workers and peasants, by elderly and younger (male) parts of the electorate, especially with lower skills and education. (ibid.)

Violent racism

Beyond these phenomena of new RWE/RWP, European states have to face violent, often racist eruptions like recently in Spain, Northern England (and especially through a racist youth movement in East-Germany, parts of West-Germany and in Sweden). The “Annual Report” of EUMC indicates a high level of violent attacks, although a fully accurate and comprehensive picture is still not available. No country is immune with respect to racism. But there are startling differences between the nation-states. According to new sources of EUMC racist violence between 1995 and 1999 has risen or is on a special high level in a considerable group of member states of EU. With respect to lethal violence act and violent assaults we have to face most serious situations in:

(the data are related mainly to official statistics, which are in a very different status of empirical preciseness; so the following data are presented with caution, they present a minimum)

Lethal violence violent racist assaults

1) Germany	15 (25)	4885
2) the UK	16	9976
3) Sweden	1	1237

These are the countries, according to available statistics with a high level of racist violence; in the case of Germany other estimations are higher (according to “Tagesspiegel” between ’95 and ’99 there were 25 murdered persons); also for Sweden; in all these countries threats and incitements, and the number of active Skinheads has risen. In the case of the UK the statistics include all racially motivated violent racist assaults.

The second group of concern are those countries, which only within the last years have clear indications of a considerable rise of violent racism and of threats, incitements and/or the number of active Skinheads. Two of them are “new” immigrant’s countries; all have strong RWP-groupings either within conservative parties or as own ones.

4) Austria	1	714
5) Italy	(unclear)	599
6) Spain	2	777

On the other side there are some countries with clear indications of defending a low level of racist violence – like Portugal and the Netherlands—and a country which was able by political efforts to reduce considerably amount and intensity of racist violence in the course of the last years: France.

Differences and similarities in member states of the European Union.

Racist attitudes and acts of violence are in amount and intensity very different in the member states of the European Union. This is due to different political culture traditions between a liberal culture of diversity and ethno nationalism; to the given political constellation, be it the rise of the right-wing populist movement; to the amount and intensity of real or perceived insecurities and social-economic fears; and on the other side to the co-ordination and intensity of democratic liberal movements, parties and the political system as a whole. We try to refer a) to racist incidents and attitudes and experiences of discrimination, b) to RWP- and RWE-politics, c) to traditions of ethno nationalism and intolerance and d) to policies of anti-discrimination and active tolerance and integration.

States in Central Europe—Traditions of Ethnic-nationalism and Dealing with Post-War-Migration

Germany

In Germany the number of criminal offences with racist / xenophobic motives in 2000 totalled over 15 000. More than 1 000 acts of violence with racist / xenophobic motives were reported. Most violent acts with racist / xenophobic motives were aimed at people of foreign descent – two examples out of 1999: on 29 September a man from Mozambique died as a result of severe injuries received in an attack on 15 August by a 31 year old man with xenophobic convictions who hit him during a quarrel in a Bavarian cavern.

On 13 February 1999 an Algerian man died as a result of injuries, which he suffered, as he was running away from a group of skinheads. The offence was treated by the judge as a “breach of a peace” rather than the more serious crime of attempted murder (see. EUMC Report 1999:19). The Verfassungsschutz counts on 1999 over 50 000 members of right-wing extremists, over 9000 right-wing extremists and often violent skinheads and some 2 200 neo-nazi party members. The rise of new racism in Germany since the fall of the Berlin wall and the unification of Germany has been the result of an interaction of several causing factors: the political transformation and the anomie that comes with it especially in East-Germany; the ethnocentric mentality of parts of the population in East- and West-Germany; the public discourse, that partially can be perceived as ethnocentric and has instigated hatred against foreigners, and political strategies of the violent far right. A long tradition of ethno-centric authoritarianism and ethno-nationalism that still is represented by parts of the population, especially the elder-ones and younger-ones – in East Germany, prolonged and renewed by the authoritarian GDR System.

These factors came together as a West-East-result in the East-German transformation problems – under conditions of globalization and west German dominated capitalism.

Already since mid of the 80es West-Germany had new forms of right-wing extremism: a so-called “Republican”-Party with its anti-Semitism, racism and denying of the Holocaust – together with the old right-wing extremist “Deutsche-Volks-Union” (DVU) and the later neo-nazi “National-Demokratische-Partei-Deutschland” (NPD). Aside of that there are little tiny militant and neo-nazi gangs around of Michael Kühnen. And there exist a tendency, formed as a new right, to influence the public by right-wing cultural ideas. Already in the mid 80es the GDR had widespread youth gangs around fascists motives, the so-called “Fascho-Gangs” and skinheads, who were very violent. With the fall of the GDR system these tendencies were fused and extended within the vacuum and the social anomie, using the public discourse against asylum seekers as betrayers of the German welfare state by the Kohl-government. A few years of this wave of racist violence made them a “success story” within considerable parts of the socially deprived youth of East-Germany. In August 1992 they instigated together with parts of the normal population pogrom like attacks on gypsies and Vietnamese workers in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, fuelled by official statements of understanding by local and nationwide state authorities. With other violent attacks this established an antidemocratic culture within the youth with the result of everyday “volkish” racist culture, especially under male youngsters in East-Germany. Today we are faced with a well-embedded counterculture of ethnocentric racism. This 10 years long right-wing extremist’s movement resulted in more than 90 killed persons (according to estimations even more then 140); more then 10 000 violent acts especially against persons of different origin in the last 10 years; an established neo-nazi network, organised by international neo-nazis, so called “free comrades” and especially the neo-nazi “National Democratic Party of Germany” (NPD), that German authorities now asked to ban by the Federal High Court of the Constitution (Bundesverfassungsgericht).

Since summer 2000 this RWE-movement has been seriously addressed by the new red-green government and the public. This public discourse resulted in several activities of state authorities and of the civil society: nearly 100 million programme of the red green government is aimed, to support civil society’s activities against racism; to support victims of racial acts; to improve educational activities; to improve police and justice system, to crash down violent gangs and networks. Already in 1999 there was a first decisive step to end the ethno nationalistic law of citizenship (jus sanguinis); in 2001 the denying ideology, Germany is not an immigrant’s country, furiously defended by the National Conservatives, having dominated the CDU and especially the Bavarian populist CSU.

But these steps are only the first ones. As Wolfgang Thierse said, the ethnocentric racist mentality of relevant parts of the youth did not change – the amount of incidents neither. Still it is lacking a strategy for addressing successfully the mix of social despair and racist violence within the youth in large parts of Germany. Democracy didn’t approach local communities in a substantial way. It still has to be developed a strategy to combat social disintegration, apathy and xenophobic ethnocentrism in large parts of the population and the mix of despair, rage and racism in youth cultures. Secondly, it is still lacking a consistent strategy, to overcome discriminatory behaviour in state institutions especially against asylum seekers: They are not allowed to travel without permission, they are often just merely “tolerated” (“geduldet”), but not accepted as refugees according to the Geneva Convention (from 1951). They are forced, to stay in public buildings, ghettoised outside villages or towns and thus again and again physically endangered by neo-nazi thugs.

There is still a mood in some party sections lurking around, to abuse these problems as a ticket in election campaigns, to devalue foreigners, especially asylum seekers as “betrayers” of the social welfare state.

Racist authoritarian youngsters perceive themselves by acting racist violence as representing the mood of the people and sometimes even the government in the last decade. Still, after having had to face more than 90 killed people and 10 years of racist youth movement, the CDU of North-Rhine-Westphalia campaigned with the racist slogan: “Kinder statt Inver” (Children instead of Indian people) for the sake of the labour market (see. Williams 1993; Funke 1993; Ruud Koopmans 1996).

There is still lacking a decisive political will to develop a liberal and social consensus to fight the public discourse of devaluing foreigners in the worldview of a self-referential narcissistic Germanness as one of the central causing factors for amount and intensity of racist violence in Germany. Further, it seems to be necessary to address *all* the main causing factors to effectively combat racism in Germany: the mental ethnocentric xenophobic tradition; the public discourse of ethno nationalism; the discriminatory practices in state and society; social disintegration and the right-wing extremists ideology and networks. The new Government did necessary and decisive first steps – but this is by no means sufficient.

Austria

As has been stated in EUMC annual report 1999 (see p. 25), during the campaigning for the parliament, particularly in Vienna, the FPÖ, Austria’s Freedom Party employed campaigning techniques exploiting xenophobia and racism against immigrants; coupled with the previous statements made by its leader, Jörg Haider, a climate of fear and intolerance was attempted to be stoked up against the immigrants and Jewish community. “The use of the term “Überfremdung” in the campaigning caused particular concern among the Jewish community as it was the term used by the Nazis under Hitler regime. According to the Ministry of the Interior, 717 charges were brought against alleged perpetrators of racism in 1999 (against 392 in 1998). The charges were brought as result of 378 incidents with racial motivation (against 283 in 1998). Similarly an increase in the spread of xenophobic propaganda from groups of the extreme right it was recorded by the Ministry.” (ibid.26)

Of special importance is the rise of the right-wing populist party FPÖ under Jörg Haider. He was appointed to be the leader of the party in the same year in which the Waldheim debate (1986) took place. This debate made aware, that Austria is not just the first victim of the Nazi period, but was with big parts of the population inflicted. Similarly to Germany but in different ways Austria had to wrestle with its past. Jörg Haider sharpened the profile of the party by relativizing the Nazi horror system, supported by hardcore right-wing extremists (see Bailer 1993). In the same token the party was presented as a flexible new right-wing oriented populist one. The party used mounting insecurities by social and political change after the demise of east-European communism and the internal rigidity of the Austrian political system. Jörg Haider mobilised rage and projected it to foreigners – especially in electoral campaigns. He evoked hatred against foreigners (see. Decker 2000: 108-126). Since FPÖ is part of the government, the government try to restrict asylum seeker law practises. The participation of the FPÖ in the government is perceived by the far right and their racist and xenophobic belief system as a big support.

Nevertheless the now oppositional party SPÖ and the Green Party (also in opposition) and forces in the public arena (especially within the cultural community) are trying to combat this latent and often overt xenophobic atmosphere that is sparkled especially in election campaign times.

West-European States - Liberal Democratic Tradition, Post-Colonial-Migration and Social Exclusion

France

In France, according to the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Human Rights acts of racist and anti-Semitic violence are on a comparable low level. They had increased from 27 in

1998 to 36 in 1999 (EUMC, Annual Report 99:21). “The report also stated that there was a decrease in racist and anti-Semitic threats from 146 in 1998 to 130 in 1999. In addition, the overall number of threats has gradually fallen from its height of 656 in 1990. There were 11 people injured as a result of racism in 1991 compared to 4 in 1998. 1999 there were 4 people injured as a result of anti-Semitism”. (ibid.) Several prominent cases of ill-treatment in custody raised by the International Helsinki Federation of Human Rights; that had given rise to concerns on the treatment of ethnic minorities held in detention. Also, as in other member states of the EU, the treatment of detainees being forcibly deported also caused grave concern (ibid.). Social exclusion of young people of immigrant background is another area of particular concern in France. This has been recognised by the French authorities.

The French political constellation is different to the previous described countries. The rise of racist right-wing extremist groups goes back to the late 60es, after the Liberation War in Algeria. The stunning defeat of old colonialist right-wing extremist forces by de Gaulle’s recognition of Algeria as independent was used by new right theorists around Alain de Benoist , to redefine right-wing extremism. This and the rage of military personal like Jean-Marie Le Pen were the forces that finally led to the then influential “Front National”. Electoral successes between mid 80ies and late nineties were due to an instigation of anti-foreigner and anti-Muslim propaganda. The authoritarian personalised movement was as populist as right-wing extremist; it referred to the Holocaust as a myth; it fostered the social rage of workers and petit bourgeoisie in the East-French industrial zones, who faced experiences of crises and social anomie, by attacking foreigners and North-Africans. That supported racist attitudes and violence in the late eighties and early nineties.

But since mid nineties the fight against racism got momentum. In 1996 Conservatives like Juppé and also Jacques Chirac criticised Le Pen harshly, when the latter insisted, that races are unequal. Since then Le Pen became more and more isolated in the public domain. Two years later, in 1998 Front National was split by Bruno Mégret and could not continue to inflict conservatives with their positions. The final isolation of Le Pen by the democratic spectrum and vivid public activities of liberal civil society together with the change of the government in the late 90ies made it clear that the influence of Le Pen has had its peak.

Also, *legislation* helped to contain racism and discrimination. Legislation is ranging from the constitutional provision of article 2 to articles and the penal code at the institutional level; the High Council of Integration is responsible for examining the conditions of integration of alien residents in France. The member of this High Council J.M.Belorgey proposed the establishment of an independent body. The National Advisory Commission on Human Rights (NACHR) is since 1990 working on combating racism and discrimination. It is attached directly to the prime ministers’ office. These prominent organisations and institutions are of considerable influence and represent the liberal strategy of the government, aside of numerous NGOs, who have a specific influence in the public discourse.

Different to Germany and Austria the *French citizenship and philosophy of the nation* is based on “*ius soli*”. Children of immigrants are getting automatically full citizenship. The attempt to change this automatic citizenship was tried by the then conservative Ministry of Interior, Pasqua; he also tried to contain social rights. But these policies of the mid 90ies were changed by the government since 1998.

France faces *problems* on the field of *illegal immigrants* and their discrimination. It has a restrictive attitude towards refugees and migrants. With the exception of special groups of asylum seekers, because of grave violation of human rights.

But all in all it is less the state based discrimination, but *social uncertainties and high unemployment in the ghettos*, that caused civil and social discrimination and a deepening of social

cleavages along ethnic lines, that can be used by right-wing extremist groups and networks. Nevertheless, the national policy and the public awareness have contained overt and violent racism to a comparable high degree so far.

United Kingdom

In the UK “ethnic minorities account for around 6% of the total population. According to the Home Office the number of racially aggravated offences in the period April to September 1999 was 10 982, around half of which were related to harassment. In 1989-99 the police recorded 10 murders with racist motivation.(...) The police were less likely to identify suspect for murders involving black victims than for white or those from other ethnic groups, but differences in type of murder must also be taken to account (see Annual Report 1999, p.30). According to this report “the racist incidents recorded by the police rose by 66% to 23 050. This is believed to be a consequence of better recording and the wider definition applied to racist incidents after the MacPherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence” (ibid.). The result of the inquiry into the racist murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence was, the acceptance by the government, that “*institutional racism*” was prevalent in the UK.

With this support Trade Union Congress set up a taskforce to tackle institutional racism at the work place. The TUC report “*Black and Excluded*” shows unemployment among Black and Asian workers is higher than of white workers. According to the Report from the Social Exclusion Unit, ethnic minority groups are disproportional more likely to live in deprived areas, and in unpopular and overcrowded housing, that encouraged ghettoisation. Half of the local authorities have yet to adopt the Commission of Racial Equality, “race equality means equality standard”, as the Social Exclusion Unit found (s. Annual Report 1990: 44/45).

The UK tried to come to terms with their colonial heritage by accepting some millions of immigrants, especially as work force, often on very low levels. The United Kingdom favoured a kind of integration policy, especially in the 70ies, but throughout the 60ies and 70ies it was paralleled by class and race conflicts, especially between young people.

With the radical “modernisation” in the Thatcher era in the 80ies the social disparities and class conflicts, also along the ethnic lines, were deepened. Whole regions especially of the classic industrial zones in parts of northern England became deprived areas, where poor housing and poverty grew, like in the region of Manchester, Newcastle and the now well known Oldham.

Since the 60ies, often latent, social and cultural racism and racial conflicts again and again existed. But the political system, especially the party system, did not or merely not use this atmosphere for political aims. Contrary to Austria, Italy and France – there were no chances for right-wing popular parties. Nevertheless, tiny right-wing organisations and networks like British National Party existed and instigated race conflicts. The furious race riots of 2001 like in Oldham and other cities in Northern England came for the political class as a surprise. But these riots showed, that latent racism can be reawakened, especially, if hard core right extremists project social rage out of poverty experience s towards racist scapegoats. This is all the more the case, the less local communities are capable, to contain social despair of youngsters, be they of English or of different ethnic origin.

Aside of the political consequences of Stephen Lawrence Report, that were forcefully initiated, there seems to be an urgent need to contain social disintegration and to develop *economic, social and political competence in the deprived regions and especially in local communities* for to develop their own capacities to contain social unrest and racial acts of violence.

South-European States—Former Emigration Countries. New Immigration and “new” Racism

Italy

According to the of EUMC Annual Report 1999, Italy has no general statistics on criminal acts against immigrants. But there are reports that especially Gypsies are object of violence and discrimination, also foreigners of African descent. Amnesty International describes that especially the police system has mistreated foreigners of African descent, and Gypsies. Foreigners are often in the shadow economy experiencing low wages, heavy shifts, unhealthy conditions; the housing are subject to exorbitant rents (ibid.:38; Amnesty International 2001).

With the end of the old “Democrazia-Christiana”-dominated political system in 1992 forces of (Right-wing) Populism used their chance. In 94 Berlusconi’s “Forza Italia”, the new created “Alleanza Nazionale” of the neo-fascistic MSI of Gianfranco Fini and the overt racist “Lega Nord” of Umberto Bossi formed the first national government that included RWP since WWII. According to Fini Mussolini was still the “greatest leader of the century”; Fini campaigned for rehabilitation of the Fascist party; since mid of nineties he operated more moderate, to be acceptable as coalition partner of Populist “Forza Italia”. In 2001 Forza Italia, Alleanza Nazionale and Lega Nord built again the Italian government.

The Congress of AN in Verona 1998 decided a neo-liberal and nationalistic programme, argued for national patriotism, but members of the party are still reading the fascist “theorists” Benito Mussolini, Giovanni Gentile, Gabriel D’Annunzio, Julius Evola – and Ernst Jünger and the French extreme new Right theorist Alain de Benoist (see Piero Ignazi, *La Repubblica*, 23.4.95). Ignazi described a grave danger, a heritage of the fascist past, that RWP use mass media for controlling the public; he fears, that the rehabilitation of MSI is a sign, to deny the fascist past. Early 1998, the ban to use fascist symbols, were acquitted, with the support of the DC-successor Partito Popolare Italiano (PPI) (see *L’Espresso*, 5.3.98: “Il saluto romano è molto Popolare”).

Of overt racism is the other coalition partner of Berlusconi: racist Lega Nord of Umberto Bossi, who campaigned on the basis of racist mobilisation against newly immigrated people of Albanian descent, against Gypsies and people of African descent. Bossi alluded to terms of racist Apartheid.

With the integration of populist movement of Lega nord with its racist attitudes and behaviour and the post fascistic Alleanza Nazionale of Fini in the government of Berlusconi forces of ethnocentrism and aggressive inner-Italian regionalism are represented and will be supported. There is the concrete fear, that especially the state institutions, the police system will enforce institutional racism, already detected in the previous years (see Amnesty International 2001).

Yet, the in chapter (2.) above quoted surveys show, that the amount and intensity of xenophobia is not that widespread compared to other European countries; the rise of right-wing populist parties can invoke further latent tendencies of racism and xenophobia, especially in the political system. It depends much on the liberal, tolerant public and political forces, now in opposition, to contain potential racist escalation of right-wing populism and authoritarianism.(see Decker 2000)

Spain

Spain is like Italy a former emigration country that faces an influx from neighbouring North African countries. Racist attitudes against immigrants spread end of the nineties, although attitudes towards foreigners were traditionally liberal ones. It is said, that the new conservative government is supporting an atmosphere of distance that inspires Right-Wing-Extremist and Neo-nazi groups, to provoke racist incidents.

According to EUMC Annual Report 1999, racist attacks against immigrants continued to increase in 1999. In numerous cities, immigrants were the victims of racist incidents (ibid.:21)

“In mid-July, rioting occurred in Catalonia after two Moroccans were involved in an incident on the occasion of a local festival. Around 1,200 persons gathered in the town square, and, under the slogans “Moros fuera” (Moslems out), the angry demonstrators began to demolish several shops owned by immigrants. (...) Violent social tensions broke out over the following days in several Catalonia towns. In Girona, racists set fire to a mosque, and in Banyoles, a Gambian family helped put out a fire in their house while three women were led to the hospital with burns.” (ibid.)

Many immigrants, especially from the neighbouring North-African countries, are victims of discrimination in different fields of society, in the labour market, in housing, in paying and in unsafe work conditions. The press makes in three of four cases, according to a survey (ibid.:36) “negative” comments on immigration.

Especially the pogrom-like attacks on migrant workers in El Ejido (Andalusia) in early February 2000 and similar riots showed racism – for example three months later against gypsies in Amorad – of parts of the population, the active participation of hardcore neo-nazi networks and skinheads – and a behaviour of police units and of conservative politicians, that fuelled the rioting. The conservative Aznar government reacted by restricting the laws on foreigners, as if this is a copycat act of chancellor Kohl’s attitude after the Rostock pogrom of August 1992. There is a concrete danger that, like in East Germany, a pattern will be established.

North-European states – Democratic Welfare States, Active Social Integration, Small Experiences with Migrant’s Otherness

Sweden

“According to the Security Police Authorities racial crimes in Sweden had become more numerous and more violent in character during the last 3 years (from 1997 to 1999). In 1999 the Police Authorities received a total of 1 800 reports. There were total of 2363 crimes with racial / xenophobic motives directed against ethnic minorities in Sweden. (...) The three most common types of racial crimes aimed at ethnic minorities were illegal threats, assaults and molestation followed by deformation, persecution and illegal discrimination.(...) The amount of violent attacks has almost doubled from 1997 to 1999 and also anti-Semitic crimes had increased every year from 1997 to 1999.(...) In 1999 a total of 121 crimes were committed against persons and properties in the Jewish community.” (EUMC Annual Report 1999: 29)

In Sweden hardcore neo-nazi organisations are very decisive for the growing racial crimes statistic. They are resorting to terrorism. In 1997, 469 cases were reported in total of 966 crimes connected to the “White-Power-World”. The crimes are not just directed against Jews and immigrants, but also against political opponents and homosexuals. “The most serious of the violent crimes committed by neo-nazis and skinheads during 1999 were 4 murders and 4 attempts at murder. Two of the murdered persons were police officers, the third victim was a trade union leader, who was murdered in his home after protesting against the election of a neo-nazi as the representative of the local union. The fourth murder victim was a young man of Turkish origin, murdered in the street by skinheads.” (ibid. 29/30)

According to a study, 40% of the immigrants in Sweden said, that they have been exposed to threats, insults or other forms of harassment on the streets or other public places because of their foreign background. The Africans, Arabs and Turks reported more experiences of discrimination, especially by various authorities, then did the Vietnamese and the Slavs. The Ombudsman against the ethnic discrimination reports an increase from 1997 to 1999 in his received reports. Most cases of the report to the Ombudsman are the ethnic discrimination and discrimination on the employment sector.

Due to a relative small part of the Swedish population with its long lasting racist tradition (see Mussenet) and a decade long active neo-nazi terrorist network the rise of ethnic violence rose with a stunning intensity. There has been a racist counterculture in parts of the youth since late 80ies; already at that time more than a hundred attack son refugee homes took place.

This is the case, although Sweden had and has still a democratic tradition of liberal tolerance. Only 21% in Sweden tend to agree, that the presence of minority is a cause of insecurity (24 % in 2000) – whereas only 6% tend to disagree the highest percentage in the member states of European Union. (similar only in Norway, Finland and Portugal, to a degree in Spain and Denmark). The Swedish government and society developed quite a sufficient refugee and integration policy – for example towards Bosnian refugees. The attempts, to build the right-wing populist party, the new democrats weren't very successful.

Not the least: the Swedish Ombudsman against ethnic discrimination was already established in 1970. In 1999 the Ombudsman was given an increase of 60% in his resources to be able to implement to the new law of discrimination on employment. The Ombudsman insists victims of discrimination and has a certain circumstances a right to plead a person's case in court. The Ombudsman has also enforcement role concerning measures for ethnic diversity (EUMC Annual report 1999: 71). Furthermore: in Sweden there are prohibitions against ethnic and racial discrimination in the Swedish Constitution. In the area of civil and labour law and new law, the "Act on Measures to Counteract Ethnic Discrimination in Working Life" came into force on 1 May 1999. The new law prohibits discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, including race, colour, ethnic or national origin. (ibid. 68). 1999 the Swedish Prosecutor General presented a comprehensive plan of action furnishing the countries prosecution of over all guidelines for their effort to combat racist and xenophobic crime.

The Swedish neo-nazi activists' scenery shows, similarly to some regions in East-Germany and the still tiny, though violent neo-nazi groups in West-Germany, how difficult it is, to contain racial violent culture, once it is established.

More Risks. Candidates of European Union in East-Europe—Transformation Societies with Ethnic-nationalistic Traditions

The economic and political transformation problems in former communist states has evoked latent ethno nationalistic forces in new forms, to project long suppressed and socially escalated rage towards "traditional" scapegoats, in a sometimes fascistic sense: as shown in some regions of East Germany; in other countries especially against gipsies: statistics show, that state institutions and persons of the respective societies did serious physical attacks during 1996-2000 in Hungary (with 14 incidents), Romania (12),Cecchia (26), but especially in the Slovakia (33), and Bulgaria (62) (according to sources of EUMC-Vienna).

Of special importance is the situation after the demise of socialistic *Yugoslavia*, since long cultivated ethnonationalism of Serbs and Croats were brought to war, by the then political leader Slobodan Milosevic with his concept of Greater Serbia, especially, when he directed this ultra nationalistic aggression against the Muslims of Bosnia, the gipsies and the Kosovo Albanians; he waged this aggression, since he got power in late 1987, with genocidal effects, as it is stated by the International Court in La Hague.(see Funke/Rhotert 1999).

Summary and Consequences. Europe at the Threshold?

Attitudes. Dangerous 40 Percent

We face a mixed picture of slowly growing xenophobic and racist attitudes – mainly due to populist politics mistreating social fears. On the one hand, a majority of Europeans have voiced concern over minorities because they fear minorities are threatening social peace and welfare; this percentage increased over the period 1997-2000. Up to 40 % feel intolerant or ambivalent towards these minorities.(see EUMC Annual Report 2000:65)

On the other hand, many EU citizens favour policies designed to improve the coexistence of majorities and minorities. Support for such policies has increased over the past three years.. The number of those who view immigrants as enriching the cultural life of a country has increased, from 33 % in 1997 to 48 % (!) in 2000. It is particularly developed in countries without an ethno nationalistic and a more liberal tradition and politic.

Politics. Wavering between Active Tolerance and Recognition—and Right-Wing Populism

a) The increase of xenophobic and anti-tolerant attitudes varies with the democratic political culture of the member states, the amount and the intensity of perceived social fears under conditions of globalised capitalism and the usage of anti-tolerant and ambivalent attitudes towards minorities in populist campaigns.

b) This wilful radicalisation is part of the political game, that right-wing populist parties are playing in the political arena—like in Austria and in Italy (and as happened in France and Belgium with different successes). In at least half of European states we face RWP-movements, who are capable to escalate ethnic conflicts as "prophets of deceit" – in Austria, Italy, Belgium, Slovakia or with shrinking influence in France, aside of hardcore neonazi networks in a couple of states – in Germany and Sweden and to a degree in Spain and UK.

c) It is shown, that also without these right-wing populist parties and even without the strong minority in the population having xenophobic attitudes often tiny militant neo-nazi and terrorist groups, networks and gangs can evoke and escalate potential rage based racism and can bring it to the surface especially within a racist culture of youngsters like in Sweden, parts of Germany and parts of UK. This is all the more feasible, if it is accompanied by a lack of political will of state authorities and civil society, to combat racism and xenophobia in sufficient ways.

d) It was shown, what the respective member states can do more then they did in the last years. There is a tendency towards a Policy of "Fortress Europe" with respect to the support of restrictive measures against asylum seekers in a majority of European states.

European Politic has no sufficient answer to growing socio-economic problems and tensions in neo-liberal globalised capitalism, the experiences of loss of control on ones own life, the erosion of socio-moral milieus, the social anomie of too many in too many countries.

Consequently combined and coherent social, political, cultural and economic policy supported by strong political will is necessary in the member states of the EU as a whole, to combat racism and xenophobia:

Repression of the racist network and organisations; Recognition of Victims by Awarding Full Citizenship; Developing a liberal and tolerant atmosphere in state and society; Developing an active political strategy for integration, for a fair recognition of refugees in the tradition of the Geneva convention from 1951 and in the sense of dignity of man; Developing sufficient democratic policies of tolerance, justice and social solidarity, to fight social exclusion, social despair, especially for the young generation in local communities.

We experience, how decisive mounting of the political will can be, to change proracist trends and to make a difference by a pragmatic consensus to contain racism and RWE-Politics: This is the example of France – and can be of others like Germany and Sweden and UK, if the efforts of last years will be intensified.

Examples by Member States: A strong political will to contain racism matters

Examples of the selected states show different types of dealing with racism. As shown, it depends on a set of factors: (1) traditions and mentalities between liberal, socially committed political cultures and more ethno nationalistic ones, which press for subordination and assimilation; (2) politics between active recognition and integration of others and politics of restrictions; (3) public discourses between social and ethnic inclusion and racist and social exclusion; (4) presence and influence of RWP's and/or RWE's.

In *Germany and Austria* with their specific traditions of ethnonationalism and different levels of coming to terms with the past they both were confronted, that "guest workers" had to get their , although lower, status; fights about their status were used to define national identity – and one of the reasons, aside the nazi past for the overt and active resurface of RWE in the 80ies and racist attitudes in both of the countries. In Germany with unification by public discourse and the networking of neonazis a violent racist counterculture was established, that is still not crashed down.

The west European liberal democracies – *like France and UK* - made experiences by the influx of immigrants of their previous colonies especially and organised a kind of modus vivendi, different degrees of (controlled) integration, but with "fine" distinctions – with the exception of some metropolises like Paris, London or Amsterdam. Their liberal concepts of citizenship allowed , different to Central and East European states, a more coherent type of recognition – by still facing racist attitudes. This concept of nationhood supported decisive measures of policies against discrimination, especially in late nineties.

Firm liberal traditions and habits – also seen in the survey's on tolerance - in the societies of *Southern European* states – like Italy and Spain - , who had experienced massive emigration, are now challenged by the influx of migrants in these countries, often as a request for cheap labour by agriculture industries like in Andalusia. The blunt usage of potential frictions by national conservatives, RWP and RWE's, supported by proracist press coverage leads to pogrom like riots and waves of instant racism. The challenge to contain this is all the more urgent, because this may be just the start of further and even more severe rioting. But there are civil forces and NGO's of considerable strength.

The northern states have a long lasting tradition of liberal tolerance and social compassion, though only limited experiences with the culturally different ones. This lack was used as an entrance of RWE, in Sweden to push a youth counterculture of bitter murderous racism, that isn't crashed down yet; although decisive steps of an active integration policy towards minorities are enacted.

The European Union Dimension. Intensifying Activities against Racism

As already the European Year against Racism 1997 has shown, it requires a combination of legislation, institutional framework and mobilisation of the broader public to counter racial discrimination and also a social policy to contain the disintegrative effects of social anomie by neoliberal globalised capitalism. Although the last years are marked by numerous racist violence which caused death and injuries, EU is experiencing economic prosperity. It is worrying that the various initiatives at the European and national level "have not sufficiently alerted the authorities and public opinion". Racism and xenophobia is still a serious "threat to democracies and the harmonious

construction of Europe” (EUMC Annual report 1999:86). Furthermore, after right-wing populist parties has entered national governments.

Especially the “bloody and spectacular racist violence, even if its perpetrators are a minority, is the advanced warning, that our society are in fact stricken with racism.[...] These acts of violence constitute the tip of the iceberg, which must not divert our attention from the numerous threats, attracts, insults and acts of discrimination directed against men and women – foreigners, immigrants, member of ethnic minorities, Jews, Muslims and – member of religious and faith minorities - who live in Europe.[...] Combating racism and xenophobia does not involve being lax with immigration, but it does demand fairness, respect for the dignity of human beings and respect for the right of citizens and the fundamental liberties on which Europe is built”.(ibid.)

Although there are numerous activities and public declarations to count the racism and racial discrimination (also in legislation and education) and a lot of “good practices”, it is lacking “a strong political will to give coherence to these efforts” (ibid.), to combine them and create synergetic effects – on the national and the European level.

Since the European Year Against Racism of 1997 the work of European Commission and EU institutions was intensified. Of importance is *the article 13* (EC Treaty of Amsterdam), that “comprises a non-discrimination clause, included in the first pillar (Community level), which states:

“Without prejudice to other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” (ibid. 88).

In two directives, a “*Race Directive*” and a “*Directive for equal treatment of employment and occupation*” the EU is intensifying their efforts against discrimination. It will be combined by an “*Action programme against Discrimination*”. These partially already implemented programmes are assisted by a strategy of “*Mainstreaming*” (ibid.:91) that is integrating the fight against racism into community policies in programme as well as it is supported by occupational and educational programmes. Of special importance is, how far the attention in Europe institutions and public can be developed, that there is a growing pressure to create political will in the member states, to combat racism and xenophobia and to implement action programmes on the European level, the same authorities has formally decided, but is not sufficiently enacted. This is the challenge of the public pressure, that can be developed by NGOs, the national publics, the European level and not at least the UN level.

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