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Abstract:

This document analyses the current state of racism and teaching about racism in higher education, with the aim of establishing a solid basis for the development of the BRISWA 2.0 project, which is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The project's objective is to formulate and implement a specialised training course aimed at students, professors and university sports coaches, with a view to improving strategies to prevent and combat racism in academic environments. The research focuses on reviewing existing policies, programmes and practices in several European countries, highlighting specific cases that have proven to be effective in promoting social and cultural inclusion. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of racism in education in Europe, with special emphasis on higher education. Through a review of the scientific literature and the analysis of empirical data obtained through surveys, it examines the manifestations of racism in academic institutions and its impact on students, teachers and coaches. The study highlights the various manifestations of racism in higher education, including the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in faculty and academic leadership positions, as well as structural discrimination in admissions and evaluation processes.

Furthermore, evidence is provided of the persistence of prejudices and microaggressions that affect the academic and professional trajectory of racialized students. Despite the existence of robust regulatory frameworks within the European Union, the data reflects that anti-racist policies implemented in universities present challenges in their application and effectiveness.

The study further explores educational strategies and policies adopted in various European countries to mitigate the impact of racism in education, with a particular focus on Italy, Spain, Greece and Cyprus. The analysis delves into the efficacy of initiatives such as teacher training programmes, curricular reforms and awareness campaigns in universities and schools. However, it is acknowledged that the success of these endeavours hinges significantly on their implementation and the institutional commitment to their long-term sustainability.



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The document establishes a foundation for the development of a more equitable and inclusive academic environment, proposing a series of recommendations for the improvement of educational policies in Europe. It concludes that the eradication of racism in higher education requires a comprehensive approach combining legislation, awareness-raising and effective institutional practices

1 Introduction

Racism has historically been one of the most persistent forms of inequality and social exclusion, manifesting itself in various areas, from the labor market to access to fundamental rights such as education and health (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Globally, racism takes multiple forms, from institutionalized racism to everyday microaggressions, generating negative impacts on the lives of millions of people (Essed, 1991). Throughout history, the racialization of individuals has served as a mechanism of social hierarchy, justifying the marginalization and exclusion of certain groups in multiple contexts (Goldberg, 2009). In contemporary society, manifestations of racial discrimination are not limited to explicit forms of segregation and violence; there is also a prevalence of institutional practices that, although unintended, serve to perpetuate systemic inequality. The European context has seen an escalation in the visibility of this phenomenon, precipitated by the influx of new migratory waves and the increasing demographic presence of racialised communities across various societal sectors (ECRI, 2020). The presence of xenophobic discourses on social networks and the rise of far-right political movements have served to exacerbate the problem, reflecting the persistence of racism in the daily lives of millions of people.

Various reports have revealed that higher education institutions are not immune to exclusionary dynamics. The underrepresentation of racial minorities within the teaching faculty, the marginalisation of non-Eurocentric viewpoints in curricula, and the presence of discrimination in admission and evaluation processes are some of the ways in which racism manifests itself in this domain (Arday & Mirza, 2018; Stevenson et al., 2021). A recent report on higher education in the UK found that racial minority students more frequently report experiences of exclusion and microaggressions in universities (Stevenson et al., 2021). These experiences range from derogatory comments to biases in academic evaluation and difficulty in accessing mentoring and professional development opportunities (Sue et al., 2007). A particularly salient issue is the dearth of effective reporting mechanisms and the pervasiveness of microaggressions within university



campuses, which have been shown to have a deleterious effect on the emotional well-being.

Racism in higher education has direct implications on the college experience of racialized students. Research has shown that the effects of racism on these students include:

- Stress and anxiety: Systematic discrimination within the university environment contributes to psychosocial stress, affecting students' well-being and mental health (Harwood et al., 2012).
- Inequality in access to academic opportunities: Students of color face barriers in accessing scholarships, mentoring networks, and academic exchange programs, which impacts their professional and educational development (Gusa, 2010).
- Underrepresentation in student leadership positions: Systematic exclusion prevents these students from accessing leadership roles within university institutions, perpetuating the lack of voice in academic decision-making (Ahmed, 2012).

The initial phase of the project is concerned with the analysis of the manifestation of racism in higher education. This will be achieved by contextualising the phenomenon through a review of the scientific literature, complemented by empirical data obtained through surveys carried out on teachers, students and coaches. The following objectives are being pursued:

- This first part of the Project aims to analyze the manifestation of racism in higher education, contextualizing the phenomenon from a review of the scientific literature and complementing it with empirical data obtained through surveys carried out on teachers, students and coaches.
- To examine the literature on racism in Europe, with an emphasis on its presence in the educational field.



- To analyze the relationship between racism and higher education, identifying structural barriers and experiences of racialized students.
- To present the data collected through surveys as a starting point for a diagnosis of the problem in European universities.

2. Racism in Europe: Overview

Racism is defined as an ideology that upholds the superiority of one racial group over others, leading to discrimination and marginalisation of those deemed inferior. This belief manifests itself in attitudes, behaviors and policies that perpetuate inequalities based on racial or ethnic characteristics (Amnesty International, 2024). According to Buraschi and Aguilar, racism can be understood as "a system of domination and inferiorization of one group over another based on the racialization of differences, in which the interpersonal, institutional, and cultural dimensions are articulated" (Wikipedia, 2025). This system is expressed through ideas, discourses and practices that include stigmatization, discrimination, exclusion and aggression towards racialized groups. Racism is a complex phenomenon that transcends individual attitudes to manifest itself as a social structure rooted in institutional norms, policies and practices. According to Bonilla-Silva (1997), modern racism takes more subtle forms where racial inequalities are explicitly denied but perpetuated through implicit and systematic mechanisms. This conceptualization underscores the importance of examining not only individual biases, but also the structural dynamics that perpetuate disparities.

The European Union (EU) has implemented several directives aimed at combating racial discrimination, most notably Directive 2000/43/EC, which establishes fundamental principles of equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin. (EUR-Lex, n.d.). In addition, Directive 2000/43/EC, known as the Racial Equality Directive, implements the principle of equal treatment between individuals, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, in areas such as employment, education and access to goods and services (EUR-Lex, n.d.). Although these regulations have established an important legal framework, their effective

implementation remains uneven between Member States. Recent research indicates that racial discrimination persists across multiple sectors, even when protective laws are in place (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [FRA], 2020). A study conducted by FRA (2020) revealed that approximately 30% of people belonging to ethnic minorities in Europe reported experiencing some form of racial discrimination in the last five years. This suggests that, although policies are fundamental, they must be accompanied by concrete measures to ensure compliance and effectiveness. In 2020, the European Commission adopted the EU Action Plan against Racism 2020-2025, which seeks to intensify efforts to eradicate racism through actions such as:

- **Improving enforcement of legislation:** Ensuring that anti-discrimination laws are effectively implemented in all Member States.
- **Awareness and education:** Promote educational campaigns that challenge stereotypes and foster intercultural understanding.
- **Data collection:** Improve data collection and analysis on racial discrimination to guide evidence-based policies (European Commission, 2020).

While these initiatives seek to address the root causes of racism through comprehensive strategies involving education, training, and promotion of social inclusion, it is observed that the effectiveness of these policies will depend on political will and coordination between different levels of government.

The current situation of racism in Europe reflects a mixed but worrying picture. Contemporary studies show that people of African descent, Muslims and other ethnic minorities continue to face high levels of discrimination in key areas such as employment, housing and education. A report by Amnesty International (2021) documented cases of racial discrimination in the European labor market, where applicants with names associated with ethnic minorities received fewer positive responses than those with names considered "white" or Western, even when their CVs were identical. This phenomenon, known as "name-based discrimination," shows how racial perceptions can influence seemingly objective decisions. In the field of education, research carried out in countries

such as Spain indicates that African immigrant students face additional barriers in terms of access to quality educational resources and recognition of their skills (Cea D'Ancona & Valles Martínez, 2015). These disparities contribute to perpetuating cycles of social and economic exclusion. In addition, data collected by Farkas (2017) show that ethnic minorities in Europe have significantly lower rates of access to advanced professional and academic opportunities, reinforcing the need for more effective interventions to reduce these gaps.

The world of sport is no stranger to the problems that racism entails. There are numerous situations in which discrimination based on the color of skin or race of some athletes causes situations of racist insults and contempt by other athletes or by the public attending sporting events. Below are some of the most current racist cases in sport: Racist Insults in Spanish Football: In February 2025, during a match between RCD Espanyol and Athletic Club, Moroccan player Maroan Sannadi was subjected to racist insults from the stands. The referee stopped the match and activated the anti-racism protocol, projecting anti-discrimination messages on the stadium screens. Iñaki Williams, captain of Athletic Club, strongly condemned these acts, recalling similar incidents in the past and emphasising the need to eradicate racism from football (Cadena Ser, 2025; Reuters, 2025). Abandonment of the match due to racist insults: CD Otxarkoaga decided to abandon a match in February 2025 after one of their players received racist comments. Although the referee did not identify the perpetrator of the insults, the squad, consistent with its values of respect and equality, chose not to continue the match, underlining its stance against any form of discrimination.

3. Racism in Education

Racial discrimination in the educational environment manifests itself through structural barriers and biases that negatively impact the academic experience of students belonging to ethnic minorities. These barriers include lower academic expectations from education staff, limited access to quality resources, and underrepresentation in curricula. A

study by Delbury (2020) highlights that ethnic discrimination in the classroom is frequently associated with stereotypes and prejudices that presuppose the superiority of norms and values of European origin. This phenomenon, known as the "reverse Pygmalion effect," can limit the academic performance of these students. For example, a study by Souto-Maior (2023) showed that the presence of white students in racially diverse schools can influence the appearance of disparities in advanced course enrollment between black and white students. This finding suggests that social expectations and dynamics within the classroom may contribute to educational inequality. It should also be noted that school segregation and unequal distribution of resources perpetuate educational disparities. Sethi (2022) analyzed how school desegregation can influence disparities within schools in the delivery of advanced courses. The results indicate that although desegregation may increase the enrollment of Black and Hispanic students in college preparatory courses, inequalities persist due to institutional and social biases.

Disparities in education are subsequently reflected in the labour market, where ethnic minority graduates face significant disadvantages compared to their peers from the ethnic majority. These inequalities manifest themselves in higher unemployment rates and lower incomes, even when academic qualifications are equivalent. Whitcomb and Singh (2020) analyzed institutional data over a decade and found that students belonging to underrepresented ethnic minorities experience a greater penalty in their overall academic averages and in STEM areas, compared to non-minority students with similar socioeconomic disadvantages. This phenomenon, known as "ethnic criminalization", is evidence of the persistence of prejudice and discrimination in the transition from education to employment. In addition, Souto-Maior (2023) investigated emerging inequalities within schools and concluded that the presence of white students may influence the emergence of disparities in advanced course enrollment between black and white students. This finding suggests that the racial composition of educational institutions may affect the academic opportunities available to minority students.

To address educational inequalities, various strategies and programs have been implemented aimed at promoting inclusion and equity in the school environment. These



initiatives seek to create educational environments that recognize and value the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of students. Intercultural education is presented as a key tool to promote inclusion. Arroyo González (2013) argues that intercultural education and educational inclusion share common objectives and propose concrete ways of "doing school" that promote relationships and mutual understanding between students from different backgrounds. In addition, UNESCO (2020) highlights that carefully planned and delivered inclusive education can improve academic achievement, social and emotional development, self-esteem and peer acceptance. Including diverse students in mainstream classrooms can prevent stigmatization, stereotyping, discrimination, and alienation. However, the effective implementation of these programmes requires genuine institutional commitment and adequate training of education personnel. Delbury (2020) emphasizes the need to adopt a critical interculturality perspective that questions power structures and promotes inclusive pedagogical practices that recognize and value the cultural identities of all students.

4. Racism in Higher Education

Racism in European higher education institutions manifest itself in a variety of ways, from discriminatory attitudes and behaviors to institutional structures that perpetuate inequalities. Recent research has shown the prevalence of these practices and their impact on the academic community. Racism in European universities takes multiple forms, from everyday microaggressions to exclusionary institutional practices. According to Arday and Mirza (2018), racialized students in the United Kingdom frequently face discriminatory behaviors based on their physical appearance, language, or accent. These experiences can include demeaning comments, social exclusion, and lack of academic recognition. A study conducted by the European University Association (EUA) in collaboration with several European institutions revealed that more than 20% of racialized students reported experiencing some form of racial discrimination during their time at university (European University Association, 2021). These figures vary significantly by country and institution but reflect a worrying trend that requires urgent attention. In addition, qualitative research has highlighted how covert racism can manifest itself in small gestures or attitudes that,

although not always intentional, perpetuate negative stereotypes. For example, a study conducted in Spain indicated that African students perceived fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities due to implicit biases of their peers and teachers (Cea D'Ancona & Valles Martínez, 2015). Another study conducted by the University of Burgos revealed that foreign students in physical education programs experience forms of covert racism in the classroom. These manifestations include behaviors and actions based on skin color, language, accent, physical traits, and even body odor (University of Burgos, 2023).

Recognizing the seriousness of the problem, a number of European universities have implemented policies and practices aimed at combating racism and promoting inclusion. Many institutions have adopted explicit policies against racial discrimination, establishing codes of conduct and procedures to address racist incidents. These policies seek to create a safe and welcoming environment for all students, regardless of ethnicity. For example, the University of Oxford launched a program called "Challenging Racism" aimed at raising awareness among the university community about the dynamics of structural racism and fostering an inclusive environment (University of Oxford, 2020). However, the effectiveness of these policies depends on their practical implementation and institutional commitment. Research suggests that the most successful initiatives are those that actively involve all members of the university community in their design and execution. The effective implementation of these policies requires institutional commitment and the active participation of the entire university community. Universities such as Cambridge have developed mandatory training programs for teachers and administrative staff on implicit biases and inclusive practices (Cambridge University, 2021). These programs seek to reduce discriminatory behaviors and promote an environment of mutual respect.

5 Existing theories and conceptualization of anti-racism policies in Europe



5.1 Anti-racism policies in Italy

- Decree No. 215/2003 – Implementation of the Council Directive 2000/43/EC for the equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin
- National Observatory Against Discrimination in Sport
- Colour? What colour? Relazione sulla lotta contro la discriminazione e il razzismo nel calcio
- Commissione "Jo Cox" sull'intolleranza, la xenofobia, il razzismo e i fenomeni di odio
- Commissione straordinaria per il contrasto dei fenomeni di intolleranza, razzismo, antisemitismo e istigazione all'odio e alla violenza
- Piano Nazionale d'azione contro il razzismo, la xenofobia e l'intolleranza
- DL 12.07.2018 ART 3 comma 1 -a,b,c,d-

5.2 Anti-racism policies in Greece

- Law on Combating Certain Forms and Manifestations of Racism and Xenophobia through Criminal Law of 2014 (4285/2014)
- Law 4326/2015 Urgent measures to tackle violence in sport and other provisions

5.3 Anti-racism policies in Spain

- Law 15/2022, of July 12, comprehensive for equal treatment and non-discrimination
- Law 19/2007, of July 11, against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport

5.4 Anti-racism policies in Cyprus

- Law on Combating Certain Forms and Manifestations of Racism and Xenophobia through Criminal Law of 2011 (134(I)/2011)
- The 2008 Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Violence in Sports Venues (Law 48(I)/2008)

5.5 Anti-racism policies in Europe (other countries)

- Annual report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

5.2.1 Germany

- Federal Law on Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - AGG)



6 Socio-political and educational programs in Europe to fight against racism

6.1 Educational and socio-political programs in Italy

- LGBTIQ Equality (2020-2025)
- Streetfootballworld, Balon Mundial
- Progetto Ultrà, Mondiali Antirazzisti
- Progetto Ultrà, Piazza Antirazzista
- Progetto Ultrà, A scuola di antirazzismo: il calcio come strumento di mediazione interculturale (At the anti-racist school: football as an instrument of intercultural mediation)
- Unione Italiana Sport Pertutti Genova, Cartellino rosso al razzismo (red card to racism)
- Progetto Ultrà, Fan initiatives
- Liberi Nantes Football Club, Liberi Nantes football and touch rugby
- UISP Genova and Macaia Association, Arcobaleni
- UISP Turin, Inclusion of Migrants in and through Sports - A Guide to Good Practice
- UISP - Italian Union of Sports for all, Migrants' Inclusion Model of Sports for All (MIMoSA)
- Almanacco delle Iniziative Antirazziste

6.2 Educational and socio-political programs in Greece

- The EYESS project (European Youth Engaging in Solidarity and Sport)
- Greece's "Colourful School" against homophobia and racism
- Refugee Support Aegean (RSA)
- EMILIE (A European Approach to Multicultural Citizenship Legal Political and Educational Challenges)
- Education for the Inclusion of "Otherness", Combating Racism and Discrimination in Multiculturalism (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Intercultural Education: theoretical and experiential approaches (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Education and Support for Refugees and Migrants: Intercultural Considerations and Practical Applications (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Contemporary Migration and Refugees in Greece (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)
- Cross-Cultural Learning and Skills (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

6.3 Educational and socio-political programs in Spain

- La Liga & UNICEF in partnership with the Spanish Footballers' Association and the National Sport Council, Professional Football with Refugees



- Fútbol Club Barcelona & the Red Cross, Tant se val d'on venim (It doesn't matter where we come from)
- Mancomunidad El Záncara, Interocio por la Diversidad
- Red Deporte y Cooperación
- Professional Football Foundation/ LaLiga
- La Liga VS Racismo
- 'Agreement on joint action to prevent and combat hate speech in sport'.

6.4 Educational and socio-political programs in Cyprus

- KISA, Equality, No discrimination, No racism in Employment
- KISA, MigrAID
- KISA, NiceR - New approach to Strengthen the cultural integration of the young refugees
- KISA, TRACKS - identification of TRafficked Asylum seeKers' Special needs
- KISA, Human Rights for All!
- CARDET and the Institute of Development, TACKLE Project
- PeacePlayers Cyprus, Education for a Culture of Peace – 'IMAGINE'
- PeacePlayers Cyprus, The Friendship Games
- PeacePlayers Cyprus, Color the Court

6.5 Educational and socio-political programs in Europe (other countries)

6.5.1 Austria

- Fairplay, Sport Welcomes Refugees
- Streetfootballworld, Kicken Ohne Grenzen (Kicking without limits)
- Ece Bulls Kapfenberg, Ece Junior Bulls
- Caritas Styria, Sport Integration Qualifikation
- Sport Union Tyrol, Inclusion of Migrants in and through Sports - A Guide to Good Practice
- Caritas Styria, Creating a Level Playing Field: Social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities in Sport

6.5.2 Belgium

- Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism, Role of specialised bodies in discrimination and sport
- FEFA Asbl., FEFA (Football-Studies-Family-Anderlecht)
- Kraainem Football Club, Jeunes réfugiés à Kraainem Football

6.5.3 Denmark

- ForeningsGuiderne+, Increasing diversity and inclusiveness in sport associations and clubs



6.5.4 England

- Football Unites Racism Divides, Streetkick
- Show Racism the Red Card, Challenging Racism in Football
- Show Racism the Red Card, Promoting Equality and Tackling Racism in Schools (taught course)
- Commission for Racial Equality & Sport England, Sporting Equals
- UK Sport, Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Kick It Out, Racial Equality Standard for Professional Football Clubs

6.5.5 Finland

- Kisakeskus Sport Institute, Peer Instructor Training for Immigrant Women
- Cosmos Juniors, Sportis Plus
- Finnish Football Association, Multicultural After School Sports Programme

6.5.6 France

- Sport dans la ville, Association d'insertion par le sport

6.5.7 Germany

- Streetfootballworld, CHAMPIONS ohne GRENZEN (Champions without limits)
- German Children and Youth Foundation & supported by the Federal Ministry for Migration, Refugees and Integration, Welcome to Football
- Koordinationsstelle Fanprojekte, The Fan Project Coordination Centre

6.5.8 Hungary

- Internationale Club de Football SE, Integration of marginalized communities through sport / Working with migrant communities through football: Internationale Club de Football

6.5.9 Ireland

- Football Association of Ireland, Integration Through Football Project, supported by the European Union Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and administered by the Department of Justice and Equality
- Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI), Soccerfest
- Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI), One Race - Human Race

6.5.10 Netherlands

- Royal Dutch Football Association, Our Football Belongs to Everyone
- Johan Crujff Foundation, Crujff Courts

6.5.11 Norway

- Furuset Allidrett IF, Alna School Project

6.5.12 Romania

- Romanian Football Federation, Racism Breaks the Game
- Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, How to successfully tackle anti-Gypsyism in sports: Racism Breaks the Game

7 Analysis of the results and best practices

This section of the report presents an analysis of anti-racism practices and interventions identified by project partners across different European countries, particularly within the context of higher education and local community engagement. The objective is to highlight best practices that can be used as reference models for future implementation at universities and other educational institutions.

The analysis resulted in the categorization of existing initiatives into five distinct groups, each representing a unique approach toward combating racism, promoting social cohesion, and fostering inclusive environments.

Group 1: Sports as a Vehicle for Social Integration

Programs in this category emphasize the power of sport—particularly football—as a tool to unite communities and bridge cultural or racial divides. These initiatives aim to:

- Promote teamwork, solidarity, and mutual respect among participants from diverse backgrounds.
- Use organized sports events to foster non-discriminatory interaction and understanding.
- Build inclusive communities where ethnic differences are seen as strengths rather than barriers.

Sport is recognized not just for its physical benefits, but also as a symbolic and practical medium for promoting shared values and dismantling stereotypes in informal yet powerful ways.

Group 2: Creation of Inclusive Forums and Public Events

These programs focus on creating physical and virtual spaces where community members can come together for dialogue and intercultural exchange. Their goals include:

- Facilitating conversations about racism, identity, and belonging.
- Encouraging active citizenship and democratic participation.
- Strengthening community ties by offering neutral, open venues for engagement.

Such initiatives typically include conferences, cultural festivals, panel discussions, and thematic workshops that allow for the sharing of experiences and the development of mutual understanding between ethnic groups.

Group 3: Assistance to Vulnerable and Discriminated Individuals

The third category includes programs that offer direct support to people affected by racism and exclusion. These may include:

- Educational opportunities such as scholarships or training programs for marginalized groups.
- Economic support in the form of donations, resources, or access to essential services.
- Legal aid or psychological support for victims of racial discrimination.

These efforts are based on a social justice framework and aim to reduce structural inequalities that disproportionately affect racial or ethnic minorities.

Group 4: Awareness-Raising and Anti-Racism Campaigns

Awareness campaigns are key tools in shaping public perception and reducing prejudice. Programs in this group aim to:

- Inform and educate the general population about the roots and consequences of racism.
- Promote empathy and challenge harmful narratives through media, art, and education.
- Influence cultural norms and encourage societal introspection regarding racial attitudes.

These campaigns often involve collaboration between governmental bodies, NGOs, and educational institutions and are designed to reach both local and national audiences.

Group 5: Educational Programs to Combat Prejudice and Promote Inclusion

The final group includes initiatives aimed at equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge to critically reflect on their own biases and behaviors. These programs:

- Provide training on intercultural competence, anti-bias education, and inclusive communication.
- Encourage proactive allyship and civic responsibility among participants.
- Target both educators and students, fostering institutional change from within.

By instilling anti-racist values through formal education and workshops, these initiatives work toward long-term cultural transformation.

Concluding Remarks

Together, these five categories represent a multifaceted approach to addressing racism within educational and societal contexts. The programs identified demonstrate the importance of:

- Combining grassroots activism with institutional support.
- Promoting inclusive policies across all sectors of society.
- Sustaining long-term commitments rather than short-term reactions.

The report concludes that best practices in anti-racism must be context-sensitive, community-driven, and reinforced by policy frameworks. They should also involve a balance between reactive (supportive) and proactive (educational and preventative) strategies to create a truly inclusive society.

8 Survey: BRISWA 2.0 QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of the BRISWA 2.0 project, a comprehensive survey was conducted across universities in Spain, Greece, Italy, and Cyprus to assess perceptions, experiences, and institutional responses to racism and cultural diversity in higher education. The survey targeted both national and international participants, aiming to identify barriers to inclusion and inform the design of anti-racist educational strategies.

The questionnaire was completed by 406 individuals, primarily students (69%), with a mean age of 29.5 years. The majority identified as male (60.7%), followed by female

(38.8%) and a small percentage (0.5%) as non-binary. Most respondents were single (55.2%), and 86.4% reported having university or postgraduate-level education. Ethnic composition was predominantly Caucasian (79.9%), with very limited representation from racialized minorities.

Participants resided mostly in Spain (36%), Greece (34%), Italy (19.6%), and Cyprus (7.7%). While 88.6% were of European origin, a notable 11.4% came from outside Europe, offering insight into the experiences of migrants and international students.

One of the most striking findings was that 18.3% of respondents reported experiencing racial discrimination in their country of study. These incidents occurred most frequently in public spaces (46.9%), followed by educational institutions (22.4%), social media (12.2%), and workplaces (16.3%). Alarming, 87.5% of those who experienced racism did not receive any form of institutional support, highlighting a significant gap between discriminatory experiences and institutional response mechanisms.

Despite these challenges, 63.2% of respondents felt that their university provided adequate or sufficient support for integration. In terms of cultural sensitivity, 90.6% of students stated that their professors respected their cultural identity, and 77.2% reported that their peers often or always showed cultural understanding and respect.

Regarding diversity education, 63.7% believed their university addressed cultural diversity appropriately, although 24.4% were uncertain and 11.9% disagreed. Meanwhile, nearly half (46.4%) agreed that their university had effective educational programs to tackle racism, though 19% felt otherwise and 34.7% were unsure.

When asked about their own cultural openness, 49.6% of participants rated their interaction with people from other cultures as high or very high, and 79.6% believed that cultural diversity enriched the university experience. However, 21.8% of respondents had witnessed racial discrimination at their institution, particularly in public areas (42.1%), classroom settings (25.3%), and online platforms (22.2%).

These findings reveal both encouraging and concerning trends: while many students perceive their academic environments as inclusive and respectful, the persistence of racial discrimination and lack of institutional support for victims point to the urgent need for reinforced anti-racist policies, education, and mechanisms of accountability.

9 Qualitative Analysis of the results

This section analyzes responses to an open-ended question about effective strategies for teaching racism in university environments. The analysis proceeded in three phases:

- content analysis,
- categorization.
- and thematic clustering.

The responses were standardized, translated into English, and cleaned of special characters. Text was lowercased and tokenized.

A frequency analysis revealed that the most common words were 'interactive' and 'workshops', indicating a preference for participatory methodologies. Responses were categorized into: (1) Interactive Methods (e.g., workshops, simulations; 201 responses), (2) Discussion-Based Methods (e.g., debates; 162 responses), and (3) Theoretical Approaches (e.g., lectures; 58 responses). Twelve responses were not classifiable.

Using TF-IDF vectorization and K-Means clustering, responses were grouped into three clusters that corresponded to the categories above. This confirmed the predominance of active and collaborative learning preferences in anti-racism pedagogy.

Participants were asked if they considered sport effective for promoting social integration and combating racism. Most responses emphasized sport's role in fostering empathy, participation, cultural awareness, and collective integration.

Thematic clustering identified three clusters: (1) Sport as a universal connector, (2) Teamwork and mutual understanding, and (3) Diversity and inclusion. A small number of ambiguous or abstract responses were categorized as 'Uncategorized'.

This section explores educators' responses about teaching racism in predominantly white classrooms as white instructors. Key themes included empathy, inclusivity, creating safe environments, and fostering collaboration. A substantial portion expressed uncertainty or conceptual difficulties.

Five thematic clusters were found: (1) Storytelling and real examples, (2) Hesitation and uncertainty, (3) Empathy-based approaches, (4) Student engagement and historical reflection, and (5) Individual reflections on racism.

Participants proposed initiatives categorized as follows: Education-Based Projects, Community Engagement, Workshops and Training, Cultural Exchange, Digital and Narrative Tools, Policy and Historical Awareness, Creative Engagement, and Interdisciplinary Collaboration.

The suggestions reflect a wide range of strategies grounded in both institutional policies and community practices aimed at reducing racism through education and collaboration.

The analysis highlights the following findings:

- Interactive and discussion-based methods are highly valued in anti-racist education.
- Sport is widely seen as a vehicle for inclusion and empathy.
- Educators need support in navigating racial issues, particularly regarding positionality.
- A broad spectrum of practical, interdisciplinary projects suggests a strong foundation for implementing anti-racist theory in real-world contexts.



10 Conclusions from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire:

From the exhaustive analysis of the state of racism in Europe, particularly in Italy, Greece, Spain and Cyprus, several fundamental conclusions can be drawn that highlight the persistence of racial discrimination and the need to strengthen strategies for its eradication:

1. **Racism remains a structural reality.** Despite legislative advances and awareness-raising initiatives, racism persists in many areas, from education to sport. The data reflects that ethnic minorities continue to face discrimination in access to fundamental rights and social opportunities.
2. **Existing regulations are insufficient without effective enforcement mechanisms.** Although the European Union has developed a strong legal framework against racial discrimination, its implementation varies considerably between countries. The lack of effective monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms weakens the impact of these regulations, allowing racist practices to persist without significant consequences.
3. **Barriers persist in education and higher education.** Racism in education continues to limit the inclusion of ethnic minority students. The underrepresentation of these groups in higher education, both in the student population and in the faculty, perpetuates structural inequalities. In addition, the absence of more diverse perspectives in curricula reinforces Eurocentric narratives that make the history and contributions of minorities invisible.
4. **Sport continues to be a space for the expression of racism.** Racist incidents in sports competitions, particularly in professional football, show the inadequacy of current protocols to prevent and punish these behaviors. Although there are initiatives and campaigns to eradicate discrimination in sport, the lack of exemplary sanctions continues to allow these behaviors to be repeated.
5. **Perceptions of racism reflect a gap between legislation and social reality.** The survey results show that a significant part of the population considers that existing



measures are not effective in combating racism, suggesting a disconnect between formal policies and their actual impact on society. In addition, racism is perceived to be still normalized in many areas, making it difficult to eradicate.

6. **Socio-educational and sports initiatives have potential, but they require greater support.** Various programmes have shown a positive impact in promoting inclusion and raising awareness against racism, but their scope is limited due to lack of funding and continuity over time. Without sustained structural commitment, these initiatives fail to generate deep and lasting change.
7. **It is necessary to strengthen the representation of minorities in decision-making spaces.** The low presence of racialized people in leadership positions, both in educational institutions and in sports and political bodies, perpetuates inequality and limits the implementation of inclusive policies. It is urgent to promote greater diversity in these spaces to ensure equitable representation of all communities.
8. **To move towards a more inclusive society,** it is essential to strengthen the application of existing regulations, implement stronger sanctions against racist acts, and strengthen educational and sports programs with an intercultural approach. In addition, a change in the social perception of racism must be promoted, encouraging greater representation of minorities in the academic, political and sports spheres. Only through a comprehensive strategy that combines legislation, education and social awareness, will it be possible to reduce racial inequalities and build a more just and egalitarian environment.

11. General Conclusions

The BRISWA 2.0 report draws several key conclusions about the current state of racism in Europe, particularly within the context of higher education:

1. Racism Remains a Structural Reality

Despite legal progress and awareness-raising initiatives, racism persists across multiple sectors, including education, sport, and employment. Ethnic minorities continue to face barriers in accessing fundamental rights and social opportunities.

2. Legal Frameworks Are Insufficient Without Enforcement

Although the EU has established comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, their implementation is inconsistent across Member States. The lack of monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms reduces the real impact of these regulations.

3. Persistent Barriers in the Educational System

In higher education, the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities among students and faculty reinforces structural inequality. Curricula often reflect a Eurocentric perspective, marginalizing non-Western histories and contributions.

4. Sport Continues to Be a Space for Racist Expression

Racist incidents in professional sports, especially football, highlight the limitations of current protocols. The absence of exemplary sanctions contributes to the recurrence of such behavior.

5. Gap Between Legislation and Public Perception

Survey data suggest that many individuals perceive existing anti-racism measures as ineffective, indicating a disconnect between legal frameworks and their tangible societal impact.

6. Socio-Educational and Sport-Based Initiatives Show Promise but Lack Support

While some programs have proven effective in promoting inclusion and awareness, their reach remains limited due to insufficient funding and continuity. Sustained institutional commitment is essential to foster long-term impact.



7. Minority Representation in Decision-Making Is Urgently Needed

The lack of racial diversity in leadership positions across academia, sports, and politics limits the implementation of inclusive policies. Increasing minority representation is essential to achieve systemic change.

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