



# EU ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY 2026–2030

## QUEST'S EDUCATIONAL AND RIGHTS-BASED POSITION

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While we acknowledge the European Commission's continued efforts to support the integration of anti-racism education and research and implement intersectional approaches, our work begins with a structural truth : racism is embedded in policies, curricula, and institutional cultures. An effective strategy must therefore aim to collectively re-imagine these structures, not merely manage their symptoms. The new EU Anti-Racism Strategy, in contrast, opts for a path of least resistance, prioritising vague notions of diversity and inclusion over concrete confrontation and redistribution. In other words, it uses the language of inclusion to avoid transferring power, resources, or platform, thereby failing the right to equitable participation.

This approach is not only ineffective, but it actively protects the status quo by allowing institutions and states to appear progressive without enacting meaningful change, especially when it comes to education policies.

### A missed decolonial imperative when it comes to education

Parts of the strategy's educational vision seems functional and assimilatory (p.10). Indeed, by promoting "basic skills" and "citizenship" to foster "open mindsets" and "labour market" readiness, the goal is no longer equity or transformation, but to mold individuals (including children and young people) into economically productive and socially docile subjects, addressing racism only insofar as it threatens market efficiency and national cohesion.

This deliberately avoids the necessary epistemological confrontation : the decolonisation of knowledge. A transformative anti-racist education must centrally address Europe's colonial legacies and their enduring impact on power dynamics, racial hierarchies, and whose knowledge is valued ; and this can only be achieved with the active participation of young learners (or the necessary move from "citizenship education" to democratic education). The strategy's silence on this point risks perpetuating a Eurocentric narrative that violates **the right of every child and young person to a truthful, joyful, and non-discriminatory education**.

## The comfort of white privilege over the urgency of youth rights

As raised by DiasporaVote, there is no substantive focus on the lived realities of racialised youth and, we should add, children, who face compounded discrimination. This mirrors the dynamics we often see in schools, where the pace of equity work is set by those with the least stake in change, while those demanding justice (often youth and educators of colour) are given less weight\*. It seems that the EU has crafted a strategy that coddles the hesitancy of member states and institutions, effectively punishing the very children and youth whose rights it claims to uphold. True equity is not negotiable, nor can it be delayed for the comfort of the powerful.

### Refusing to name core racial systems

The strategy starts from the premise that racism is structural, and yet does not name EU policies that are inherently racist. One telling flaw is the complete erasure of EU migration policy, border militarisation and increased defence spending away from social and education spending.

In light of the unprecedented violence taking place in the United States with the far right in power, Europe must set a different example and uphold its fundamental values (mentioned at the very beginning of the strategy) : **democracy and respect for human rights**.

## QUEST'S DEMANDS : EDUCATION AS THE TRANSVERSAL LENS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

Europe was built on principles of equality, but these principles are under threat where they matter most such as education. Education is not one pillar among many but the lens through which all anti-racist policy must be formulated and assessed. We urge the EU to :

**1. Mandate decolonial education** : Indeed, when a state imposes a curriculum, the minimum requirement is to ensure it does not erase or misrepresent non-dominant groups - a form of systemic discrimination schools must actively dismantle. There is an urgent need to fix the neo-colonial mindset starting in education by valuing diverse histories and identities in practice, not just in rhetoric. The DECUS project free online training, open library, and toolkit (in 5 languages) are a great space to start.

\* Paul Gorski (2023) "Avoiding Racial Equity Detours", *Educational leadership: journal of the Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development*, N.E.A 76(7):56-61.

PDF : <http://www.edchange.org/publications/Avoiding-Racial-Equity-Detours-Gorski.pdf>

2. **Fund participatory, ambitious anti-racist training for white educators in particular** : While the Strategy mentions teacher training and professional development on diversity and inclusion, the student agency and reflexivity work required to fight discrimination in schools outlined in the European Education Area's "New issue paper: Tackling prejudice and discrimination in and through education and training" (2023) fails to be reinforced here. We will closely monitor how this is implemented.

3. **Redistribute power to children and youth** : They must be central to policy and practice. Enforceable targets to end segregation are needed, with EU funding tied to compliance. Moreover, redistributing power to children and youth is central to anti-racism in particular within schools. Beyond diversifying curricula, this requires redistributing power in the classroom. How? By implementing democratic education practices, where students co-decide and co-create knowledge, and using restorative justice to address harm instead of punitive discipline. Tools like sociocracy can also redesign decision-making so that young people's voices directly shape their learning environment.

4. **Confront racist migration policy** : Explicitly include a pillar on dismantling racism in EU migration and border policy, recognising it as a core human rights issue. Facilitate access to educational visas.

We do not need another strategy that makes Europe feel better. We need one that makes European institutions just. And education remains the most rewarding and fruitful arena in which to undertake this structural work.

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