



March 25, 2024

Nyanchama Okemwa, Chair of the ENAR Board
Kim Smouter, Executive Director ENAR

Dear Mx. Okemwa, Dear Mx. Smouter,

We are writing this letter to inform you that CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe is resigning from ENAR, effective immediately.

As an original member of the network, we have accompanied the organisation's growth over the past two decades and actively participated in its successes. We are proud of our fruitful collaboration on specific activities, including, for example, jointly preparing the First EU Fundamental Rights Colloquium in 2014, which resulted in the appointment of EU Coordinators on antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred; creating a Facing Facts online course on afrophobic bias indicators; and contributing to publications such as "Managing Religious Diversity in the Workplace."

We do not take the decision to leave lightly. However, as a pan-European Jewish organisation focused on Europe, we no longer believe that our voice is being heard at ENAR, and our strategic vision no longer coincides with ENAR's priorities.

Recap of CEJI's previous challenges with ENAR

This is the fifth time we have considered resigning our membership. Some previous incidents led to formal complaints being lodged, while others were "learning moments", which enabled us to engage more successfully with ENAR. To review:

1. When the 2001 First United Nations Conference Against Racism in Durban was mired in antisemitism, ENAR did not denounce this. Nonetheless, CEJI remained convinced that deeper engagement would lead to better outcomes. Our then-Director served two terms as VP of ENAR's Board and eventually became ENAR's Executive Director.
2. In 2006, a series of blatantly antisemitic emails circulated amongst ENAR board members leading to the resignations of several organisations ranging from the Christian Conference on Migrants in Europe to the Simon Wiesenthal Center. CEJI wrote a formal communication to the European Commission but did not resign. A new staff and board were brought in, and CEJI subsequently re-committed to ENAR.
3. In 2015, ENAR co-organised an event in Belgium against islamophobia with an explicitly antisemitic speaker, Abou Jah Jah. After CEJI intervened, ENAR reconsidered its co-sponsorship of the event. During a period of intense engagement, trainings on antisemitism were organised at governance and staff level, leading to new collaborative projects, and several new Jewish organisations joined ENAR.
4. In 2021, the first EU Summit against Racism was mired in conflict and ENAR played a part in this. As a concerned member, CEJI exchanged multiple times with ENAR's board and staff, after which CEJI hired a dedicated staffer as "Intersectional Action and Policy Officer" to work more fully with ENAR.

Why CEJI is leaving now

After 25 years of engagement with ENAR, recent events prove that little progress has been made despite our best attempts. Indeed, three areas have proven to be particularly problematic for us:

1. Transparency and membership accountability

On October 20, 2023, CEJI received an email from ENAR inviting us to a members' consultation to write a statement on the unfolding war between Hamas and Israel. The meeting was confirmed for Monday,

October 30, yet ENAR released its statement on October 25. We are no longer comfortable working with an organisation that does not listen to its membership before issuing important statements.

[\[Statement: ENAR Condemns Europe's Dehumanising Reactions to the Israel-Palestine Brutality and Calls for Justice and Peace for All - European Network Against Racism \(enar-eu.org\)\]](#)

2. The scope of ENAR's mandate

In the statement mentioned above, ENAR accuses the EU of "double standards" in foreign policy, yet the organisation has no previous record of expressing opinions about specific wars, terrorist acts, or any other human rights violations *outside of Europe*. Is this proclamation within the scope of ENAR's activities and in keeping with its mandate? CEJI's mandate does not include engaging on issues outside of Europe.

3. Commitment to the mission

We believe that ENAR's recent actions are contributing to an environment where Jewish people do not feel safe and where anti-Jewish resentment is nourished, which is antithetical to ENAR's stated mission. Some recent examples of the organisation's deviations include:

- a. November 2-3, 2023: The Conference "People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice and Development," organised by the Spanish Presidency of the European Union with the support of ENAR, did a disservice to its audience and participants when ENAR representatives commandeered the agenda away from the issues at hand. During the introductory remarks, ENAR staff and board members stood up with pre-prepared signs saying #stopwaringaza,¹ followed by a series of speakers who only addressed the "genocide in Gaza" rather than the topics of their panels.²
- b. November 4, 2023: The ENAR Executive Director engaged in problematic discourse on the Euronews segment, "European Jews and Muslims on edge as racism rises in Europe"³, effectively presenting European Jews as the perpetrators and benefactors of oppression against European Muslims.
- c. January 31, 2024: During the European Commission Workshop on "Shrinking Anti-racism Civic Space" organised with the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), ENAR staffers contributed to an environment considered hostile by Jewish participants.

Summary

CEJI's remains committed to proactively fighting against all forms of racism, and we will continue to work steadfastly in this field. However, ENAR's reluctance to learn from past challenges and continued lack of commitment to its stated mission leave us no choice but to conclude that the organisation no longer represents us. Please immediately remove all references to CEJI as an active member from your website.

Signed,

Alain Philippson, Chair of CEJI Board

Robin Sclafani, Executive Director

¹ https://www.instagram.com/p/CzJJ1Xws0Qx/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=ODhhZWM5NmlwOQ==

² See for example the intervention of one speaker at session 2 on Representation of People of African Descent in Public Office and the Media: <https://www.instagram.com/mohagerehou/reel/CzYmL57q7FI/>

³ <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/11/04/brussels-my-love-european-jews-and-muslims-on-edge-as-racism-rises-in-europe>