



Final report - Dismantling discrimination. Towards a government that combats and prevents discrimination and racism

English summary

Discrimination and racism affect society as a whole. Directly or indirectly, everyone experiences discrimination, and its impact is significant. The State Committee against Discrimination and Racism (hereinafter: committee) was established in 2022 at the request of the House of Representatives, with the mandate to conduct scientific research into discrimination and racism in the Netherlands. The focus here is specifically on discrimination by the government. In doing so, the committee made a conscious decision to conduct research in both the European and Caribbean Netherlands. In recent years, the committee has already published some of its findings in various progress reports and other publications. This final report brings these insights together, synthesizes them into overarching observations, and describes the lessons that have emerged during the process. Based on this, this final report offers the government and society an action plan to combat and prevent discrimination and racism.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that discrimination and racism are also structural problems within and perpetrated by the Dutch government. The committee therefore has a clear vision for the future: a government that does not discriminate itself, actively promotes equality and equity, and thereby sets a good example for society.

The fight against discrimination and racism is a long-term struggle. A hundred years ago, the Netherlands looked fundamentally different. Thanks to the efforts of civil society organizations and movements, much has changed for the better in the areas of discrimination and equality since then. But while the most visible, explicit forms of discrimination are being addressed, the more subtle, deeply entrenched forms persist. Despite the seriousness of the problem, progress in combating these deeply entrenched forms of discrimination and racism by and within the government lags behind. The committee identifies three interrelated explanations for this:

First, legislation and policy are often developed from a limited perspective. Government organizations still do not sufficiently reflect the diversity of the population. In addition, people who are directly affected by discrimination are not sufficiently involved in a structural sense. Their experiences and expertise are not sufficiently reflected in legislation, policy, service provision, and oversight. This issue is particularly urgent for the Caribbean Netherlands, where the distance from the national government is even greater.

Second, the approach to discrimination and racism is reactive and focused on individual incidents. The system of legal protection and oversight is primarily geared toward addressing issues after they occur, rather than preventing them in advance. Because there is a lack of monitoring, structural patterns of discrimination and their impact remain hidden. Moreover, this reactive approach makes it difficult to anticipate new forms of discrimination in a changing society.

Third, the government and politicians remain aloof. Politicians and government officials regularly adopt a cautious or dismissive stance when addressing discrimination and racism. This aloofness is not limited to words; in practice as well, the government avoids making binding decisions and implementing structural guidance. This is problematic. Those who have the power to act but choose not to do so perpetuate the status quo.

These three statements are closely related and call for a coherent approach. That is why the committee is presenting an action agenda with five areas of focus and ten specific actions. These are aimed at strengthening civic engagement, knowledge development, governance, legislation,



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and oversight. The government has a particular role to play here, but society also has an important part to play:

Take pluralism as a starting point

This shifts decision-making from being made about people to being made with people. To this end, the following actions are necessary:

- 1. Ensure that the government truly reflects society**
- 2. Systematically involve citizen groups and residents in legislation, policy, implementation, and oversight**

Organize systematic monitoring and insight

A targeted approach to discrimination and racism cannot succeed without reliable expertise and (experiential) knowledge. The following actions are necessary:

- 3. Encourage systematic data collection and knowledge development regarding discrimination**
- 4. Invest in mutual knowledge of the Caribbean Netherlands**

Take the lead and prevent discrimination

A robust approach to discrimination and racism requires clear leadership, institutional anchoring, and a proactive, learning government. Take the following actions:

- 5. Strengthen central leadership, coordination, and action on the issue of discrimination**
- 6. Implement the Discrimination Assessment for Policy Processes and the Discrimination Assessment for Public Services across the entire public sector**

Stop profiling and update anti-discrimination legislation

Taking action only after discrimination and racism have occurred is not enough. Tackle discrimination and racism proactively. To this end, the following actions are essential:

- 7. Stop current and planned uses of data-driven profiling in the performance of tasks and services**
- 8. Enforce legal prevention through the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and update anti-discrimination law**

Contribute to equality and equity

Discrimination and racism affect the entire society, and everyone has a responsibility in this regard. It is essential that those with the most power make the greatest contribution. At the same time, everyone can be part of the movement toward greater equality. Take the following actions:

- 9. Make equality and equity the standard in the Caribbean Netherlands as well**
- 10. Society: establish equality and equity as the norm and actively live by them**

The ten actions are interconnected: knowledge informs policy, prevention supports enforcement, and a diversity of voices serves as a common thread. Together, the actions form a multi-year



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roadmap toward a government and society that actively prevent and combat discrimination and racism. To ensure that this change in course is actually implemented, the committee calls on the government to establish a compliance and monitoring committee to drive and oversee the implementation of the committee's actions.

Dismantling discrimination. That requires courage, moral leadership, concrete measures, resources, a diverse range of voices, and the ongoing commitment of all of us.