



D2.1 Integrated Afroequality Report
WP2 Development of an Action Plan combating
racism through active civic participation
of people of African origin at local level

19/07/2025

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Executive summary

The D2.1 Integrated Afroequality Report constitutes the central output of Work Package 2 (WP2) of the AFROEQUALITY project. This report synthesises qualitative and quantitative evidence to examine the lived realities of African diaspora populations, public attitudes towards them, and the effectiveness of policy frameworks in addressing racism and promoting inclusion. By doing so, it contributes to a more informed and justice-oriented approach to policy making, civic dialogue, and institutional reform.

The report is based on a mixed-methods research design encompassing five key components: cross-national desk research on legal and policy frameworks; a public e-survey examining perceptions and attitudes towards Afrodiasporic communities; focus group discussions with Afrodiasporic individuals; stakeholder roundtables; and media analysis of online press and social media in the three countries. Each method offers insights into how "race", colour, and citizenship intersect within structural and cultural systems, and how these intersections impact the everyday lives of people of African descent.

Key findings indicate that Afrodiasporic individuals across all three countries continue to face systemic and everyday racism, shaped by inadequate legal protections, racialised labour markets, and harmful media representations. In Greece and Italy, restrictive citizenship laws and limited access to rights reinforce socio-economic marginalisation, while in Spain, despite a stronger legal framework, discriminatory practices such as racial profiling persist. Across all contexts, people of African descent are frequently confined to low-paid, precarious employment and are either underrepresented or misrepresented in public discourse and the media. Public perceptions, shaped largely by mediated narratives, reflect widespread stereotypes, ignorance, and forms of cultural erasure. Nonetheless, the report also documents the agency and resilience of Afrodiasporic communities, who actively engage in cultural expression, advocacy, and civic life despite ongoing barriers. In addition to mapping challenges, the report identifies effective practices at national and local levels that promote racial equity, and it formulates targeted recommendations for policy, education, media, and community empowerment. These recommendations are grounded in an intersectional and decolonial approach that recognises the need to centre Afrodiasporic voices and address multiple forms of exclusion simultaneously.



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Partners List Abbreviations

Acronym/Abbreviation	Description
NKUA (Department of Communication and Media Studies)	The University of Athens is the largest public Higher Education Institution in Greece, and among the largest universities in Europe. The Department of Communication and Media Studies at the NKUA is one of the preeminent Media departments in Greece and the region and is particularly active in promoting and supporting research through its research laboratories; department-based publication outlets; dissemination events of international symposia organised by the department and active dissemination.
CONVERGENCE (CONV)	CONVERGENCE is a Greek NGO focusing on generating unbiased technology-based systems and establishing reliable human-machine collaboration environments, bridging the gap between the needs of diverse stakeholders, through research, consultancy, targeted capacity building, awareness raising activities etc, towards the vision of Society 5.0. Our approach is guided by the various social markers, such as gender/sex, sexual orientation, cultural background, dis/abilities.
SCI-Hellas	SCI-Hellas (a branch of the Service Civil International), the Greek NGO partner, SCI- hellas is a Non-for- Profit organisation based in Athens. SCI-hellas is a key actor as it has long experience working on issues of social inclusion of vulnerable groups -mainly refugees, migrants and asylum seekers from African countries (including Muslims and people of African descent). They also work towards organizing women of African descent to address incidents of domestic violence.
CESIE	CESIE is a non-profit, non-political, and non-governmental organisation based in Palermo (Italy), active in the field of social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees, including immigrants from Africa. CESIE is committed to promote the cultural, social, educational and economic development at local, national, European and international levels. CESIE contributes to growth and development through the active participation of people,

	<p>civil society and institutions, always valuing diversity. CESIE is therefore considered to be a very concrete and positive example of European values.</p>
<p>Instrategies</p>	<p>Instrategies is a think & do tank based in Barcelona specialized in European and international affairs, focusing on mobility, migration, inclusion and integration operating within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and mainstreaming gender equality.</p> <p>Instrategies work is dedicated to innovation through both knowledge and practical experience, designing, implementing and evaluating projects and policies. Instrategies has a multidisciplinary team and an extensive network of collaborators with a track record in EU funded projects.</p>



1. Introduction

1.1. Description and Objectives of the project

The AFROEQUALITY- ‘Empowering people of African Descent: Hate Speech, Violence and Racism- Training on Digital Skills and Civic Participation’ project aims at empowering Afrodiaspora towards claiming inclusion and belonging, through modes of citizenship and culture that include:

- identifying, reporting and addressing incidents of racism and Afrophobia in the partner countries
- developing digital citizenship and civic awareness skills that will increase civic participation and local capacity building within the African Community in the partner countries
- exchanging cultural knowledge through ‘everyday cultures in the city’, to increase empowerment against Afrophobia, xenophobia, hate speech and violence in Greece, Italy and Spain
- assist in a holistic approach towards ending gender and racial stereotypes, baseless notions of racial superiority, and incitement to racial hatred.

The project is implemented under the coordination of the Department of Communication and Media Studies at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) in collaboration with 4 partners in 3 countries, Spain, Italy and Greece.

Through a gender-sensitive and multi-stakeholder approach, AFROEQUALITY brings together a leading research public institution in Greece, CSOs working actively with Afrodiapsoric communities in Greece, Italy and Spain, as well as a socio-tech partner, who is an expert in data mining and app development, in order to explore, address and contribute to fighting Afrophobia and racism against People of Colour, via empowerment activities on digital and civic skills. Therefore, the project will assist directly Afrodiasporic people (hereinafter also mentioned as “target group/population” or “beneficiaries” or People of Concern) women and men aged between 18-45 – residing in Athens, Palermo, Barcelona and the respective regions. It provides training in civic participation and cultural awareness, including notions of human rights and digital/media skills, drawing upon our objective to empower beneficiaries on issues of racism, violence, hate speech and related hate crimes through an intersectional perspective.

The following outcomes are expected to be produced by the end of the project:

- 60 people of African descent per partner country (target reach 180 in total) will benefit from hands-on training, empowerment and local skills-building activities.
- Increased awareness raised within the general public in each of the three countries

- via an e-survey which will address national audience perceptions and attitudes towards Afrodiaspora in respective countries (500 people surveyed in each country)
- through AFROEQUALITY visibility activities in social media
- via beneficiaries' stories and posts in social media, using #MylifeinAthens, #MylifeinPalermo, #MylifeinBarcelona hashtags, and
- the project's awareness raising campaign
- Epistemologically robust quantitative and qualitative data collected across the three participating countries:
 - Survey with 1500 individual responses across the three participating countries, about perceptions of Blackness and issues of inclusion, racism and human rights regarding the Afrodiaspora
 - 6 Focus Groups across participating countries with 6-10 Afrodiasporic participants each (36-60 participants in total, exploring lived experiences, issues of racism, hate speech and Afrophobia
 - 6 roundtables across participating countries with 4-6 stakeholders each (24-36 participants in total), aiming to identify perspectives of institutional and civil society stakeholders on xenophobia and racism targeting Afrodiaspora with special focus on identifying possible synergies to promote civic participation to combat racism.
 - Press and social media analysis across the 3 participating countries, focusing on the representation of Black people in the media with special focus on hate speech and incidents of violence and racism in Greece, Italy and Spain
- For the first time, beneficiaries, stakeholders and the general public across all countries will benefit from knowledge emerging from the lived experiences, cultural background and cultural histories of Afrodiasporic people
- Sustainability and added value from the development of a gaming empowerment App targeting diverse groups of citizens (at least 60 users in each country, 180 in total) and aiming at both informing and empowering them towards a more inclusive understanding of diversity deriving from colour.

The project is organized in 4 work packages:

WP1: Project Management and Coordination which includes all activities related to the proper and effective implementation, monitoring and management of the project, the internal procedures and communication of the partnership as well as effective project evaluation. Key objectives include: effective administrative and financial management of the project as well as guaranteeing the scientific quality of proposed activities and deliverables.

WP2: Development of an Action Plan combating racism through active civic participation of People of African Origin at local level. This WP includes all research activities leading to the development of an Action Plan that will be addressing issues of racism and will be promoting practices and modes of active participation of the Afrodiaspora. Key objectives include: a) mapping perceptions about representations of People of African Descent in the public sphere in Greece, Italy and Spain b) mapping incidents of xenophobia, Afrophobia and racism at the local level as well as c) the needs of the African diaspora in terms of participation and inclusion in the local community, and ways of engagement and interaction with host country culture and d) identifying good practices promoting civic participation of the Afrodiaspora in the host population

WP3: Enhancing civic participation activities for People of African Descent. This WP includes all empowerment activities aiming to benefit 180 Afrodiasporic people across participating countries through a number of ‘empowerment workshops’, which will unfold in the axes of Cultural identity, Interculturality and Alternative Narratives. Key objectives include: a) the provision of training resources towards the capacity building of Afrodiasporic people to address hate speech through media literacy skills b) the provision of training materials on digital education and digital citizenship c) the promotion of African cultures in the 3 partner countries

WP4: Initiatives to fight Afrophobia, xenophobia and hate speech. This work package focuses on formulating project outcomes and activities into sound policy briefs and educational cultural knowledge (gaming app), and in their effective dissemination. Key objectives include: a) communication and therefore advocacy of the project outcomes and proposals to combat xenophobia and racism at a policy level b) raising awareness and engagement of both stakeholders and the general public on matters of equality, participation and culture of Afrodiaspora c) communication and dissemination of the project at local, national and international level so as to further exploit its results d) bolstering its added value through sweeping activity in social media (hashtag culture) and fun cultural practices (gaming app).

1.2. An ontological statement of the AFROEQUALITY consortium

This report is the first public deliverable of the AFROEQUALITY project, a three-country project aiming to address issues of racism, hate speech and Afrophobia in Greece, Italy and Spain through research and empowerment activities in close collaboration with the African diaspora in all three countries. It is not though merely an EU project identifying the needs of people who are being targeted for their colour, ethnicity and religion (and related social and cultural categories like gender and sexuality). Neither is it merely a project attempting to design and implement training activities wherein members of the African diaspora will participate as beneficiaries of one-way information about citizenship. Instead, it embraces a

decolonial perspective towards how the Afrodiaspora across all partner countries is being acknowledged through their voice and cultures at all levels of project design, implementation and monitoring. At the same time, it aims at establishing a dialogue with members of the Afrodiaspora in Italy, Greece and Spain, as well as at ensuring that the signifiers of colour, race, ethnicity and religion which are centrally the target of racism and hate speech (systemic and everyday) remain at the top of public and policy agendas. To this end, the AFROEQUALITY project progresses via making continuous changes in the terminology used in research material and deliverables, but also by inviting more members of the national Afrodiasporic communities to have a central role in the Advisory Boards and empowerment activities.

For this reason, the AFROEQUALITY consortium would like to begin by listing the changes made in the project design, monitoring and implementation as a result of continuous critical reflection and feedback from members of the Afrodiaspora in all three countries who participated in its research activities and sit at the national Advisory Boards, as well as from the partners' systematic dialogue and networking with key figures of the Afrodiaspora across countries (e.g. Activists, Community Chairs, NGO representatives, politicians, public figures and celebrities):

- Instead of a single Advisory Board, the partnership decided early on to set up three National Advisory Boards attending to the needs of each national case separately, but also paying due respect to the Board members whose role is vital to the project but do not speak a language other than their national one. This decision led to smaller and more flexible Advisory Boards that reflect upon the project's nature and progress on a regular basis and are able to provide targeted and context-specific feedback on the project.
- The National Advisory Boards include at least two members of the Afrodiaspora per country, while, as the project unfolded, people who participated in research activities (e.g. Roundtables) were invited to become members of the National Advisory Boards (e.g. Greece). As a result, the National Advisory Boards (which convene twice a year with the national project teams) have become larger (yet flexible) and include more members from each country's Afrodiaspora. This leads to a more extensive and inclusive Afroequality Network.
- In the course of the project, AFROEQUALITY teams are conducting regular meetings with community representatives and prominent figures of the Afrodiaspora, while also attend forums and spaces of dialogue and cultural expression, in order to spread the word about the project and establish the need for a constructive and reflexive dialogue between Afrodiaspora and national stakeholders to progress.
- The AFROEQUALITY project originally used the term 'People of African descent' to include all people of African origin in partnering countries. However, after incorporating feedback from participants in Focus Group and Roundtable activities and from the National Advisory Boards, the partnership decided to shift towards the terms 'Afrodiaspora' and 'African diaspora'. Especially for the design and implementation of the e-survey across all countries, the terms adopted changed from 'People of African descent' to the following: AfroSpanish (AfroGreek and Afroitalian),

Afrodendants, and Greeks (Spanish or Italian) of African Origin. Those terms -the partnership contends- embrace a more inclusive and just approach to all members of Afrodiasporic communities whose citizenship, ethnic and racial status might differ.

- From April 2025 onwards, all deliverables submitted by the AFROEQUALITY project, including all related material, steadily adjust to the revised terminology explained above so that the partnership's shift to more inclusive and fair terms is practically imprinted in the project's activities, impact and added value.

The rationale behind this statement at this point in the report serves to establish how the AFROEQUALITY project evolves as an ongoing platform of dialogue between Afrodiasporas and policy-oriented and research discourse in Greece, Italy and Spain. It also evolves as a platform prompting this dialogue to highlight usually unseen or obscured aspects of Afrodiasporic identities, cultures and challenges in said countries. Such a dialogue prolongs and bolsters the focus on matters of race and racism at this historical, social and political conjuncture, wherein the overlapping conditions of Afrophobia, Islamophobia, colour and religious stereotyping permeate the social and political fabric of democratic EU societies.

1.3. Overview – The context of WP2- Scope of this report

Work Package 2 of the AFROEQUALITY project aims at providing an overview of how African diasporas across Greece, Spain and Italy are being represented in public, media and policy discourses. In addition to this, it also provides insights about how members of the African diasporas across the three countries reflect upon issues of Black identity, citizenship, Afrophobia, racism and hate speech. In short Work Package 2 employed mixed methodologies research to:

1. Explore perceptions about and representations of people of African descent in the public sphere in Greece, Italy and Spain
2. Map incidents of xenophobia, Afrophobia and racism at the local level
3. Map the needs of the African diaspora in terms of participation and inclusion in the local community, and ways of engagement and interaction with the host country culture
4. Identify good practices promoting civic participation of Afrodiasporic people t in the host population

To this end, the following activities have been designed and developed across all three partner countries:

- *Desk research to collect evidence on racist incidents against members of the African diasporas and identify good practices across Greece, Spain and Italy (T2.1)*

This Task focused on reviewing studies and documents about representations of Afrodiasporic people in Greece, Italy and Spain; furthermore, about the construction of Black

identity and Black cultures across the three countries. This review has included relevant academic and policy literature and resulted in three national reports and a final comparative report. The task and resulting reports managed to a) map the literature and identify gaps at both the research and policy level and b) to identify at least 3 good practices on active citizenship, means of preventing racism and combating hate speech in each country. The final comparative report provided a summary of the research about how Afrodiasporic people are constructed across the three cultures and about issues of racism and Afrophobia while it also provided a cross-country comparison on issues emerging in research and policy making. On the same grounds, it managed to identify and list some incidents of racism together with a list of good practices at the national or international level on how to address this.

- *E-survey addressed to the general public in Greece, Italy and Spain (T2.2)*

All participating countries (Greece, Italy and Spain) have designed and run an e-survey to map current attitudes towards the African diaspora in each country. Through this survey, partners managed to gather information about how members of the African diasporas are seen in each culture, as well as map stereotypes and possibly xenophobic and Afrophobic notions within the general population. NKUA has developed an online questionnaire of nineteen questions (19), thirteen (14) closed and five (5) open ended, grouped in 4 thematic sections (social media and news consumption; knowledge about people of African descent, issues of discrimination; knowledge holders' demographic profile). The e-survey has resulted in three national reports and a cross-country comparative report (D2.5). NKUA has developed the questionnaire with contributions from CESIE and Instrategies. NKUA, CESIE and Instrategies pilot-tested the questionnaire, conducted country analyses and produced each country's report, while all partners have disseminated the questionnaire as widely as possible.

- *T2.3 Conduct 2 focus groups per country with Afrodiasporic people (NKUA lead, SCI, CESIE, Instrategies)*

In order to explore the experiences of people of African descent in the three countries, 2 focus group discussions have been conducted per country (6-10 participants, maintaining a gender balance for participants, max 10 participants per country with max 5 men and 5 women in the FG). Participants have been selected from local African communities from partners' networks, paying attention to community level and host communities. WP lead (NKUA) has prepared a Focus Group Guide with instructions, questions, tips and suggestions for partners. The aim was to identify personal experiences of Blackness in each country (including issues of Afrophobia, racism, violence and intersectional discrimination based on gender and other), willingness to participate in the local activities and processes designed and implemented by different agencies or stakeholders (local NGOs, the Municipality, Universities), the existence of intercommunal interaction and to make sense of the level of inclusion by giving voice to Afrodiasporic people themselves. Data from the FGs will be used to design the training activities as well as to inform policy recommendations and the content of the empowerment app.

- *T2.4 Conduct 2 roundtables per country with key stakeholders (NKUA lead, SCI, CESIE, Instrategies)*

In order to engage relevant key stakeholders (associated with combating racism and bias against people of African descent) to the project activities, 2 roundtables (4-6 participants) per country have been organized. Stakeholders were selected from academia, policy makers and CSOs, with the assistance of associated partners. The aim was to get further acquainted with the issue of xenophobia and racism against Afrodiasporic people. Participants of Roundtables are expected to be representatives of public institutions related to Human Rights, Associations of Migrants, African NGOs, local initiatives for civic participation and coexistence etc. Said representatives will form an informal Afroequality network.

- *T2.5 Conduct media analysis of online press and social media in Greece, Italy and Spain (NKUA lead, SCI, CESIE, Instrategies, CONV)*

As part of this activity, an analysis of online press and social media has been conducted in all three countries. The analysis has been accompanied by a mapping of incidents of verbal violence and other non-appropriate behaviour towards Afrodiasporic people in e-resources (i.e. social media, e-press). The aim of the activity is to collect data on the representation of Black people in the media with special focus on hate speech and incidents of violence and racism in Greece, Italy and Spain. The data, if possible, will be disaggregated to media, gender and racial approach. CONV has been responsible for this action as it has great experience in research techniques in online sources. The partners provide the online links from where data sources can be extracted (always following the GDPR regulation). A list of potential words or phrases leading to hate speech has been identified by the research team of NKUA. The media analysis sought out words or phrases that have a “hate speech” goal. Data collected from the media analysis have been processed by the NKUA team and are part of the Integrated Afroequality report (having included all information from T2.1-5).

- *T2.6 Development of the Action Plan of the project (NKUA lead, SCI, CESIE, Instrategies)*

Based on data collected from previous activities, the methodology of the project has been developed together with the report, an action plan has been developed, to be followed as part of its implementation. The action plan will thoroughly address the activities aiming at a) identifying the ways in which discrimination, hate speech and other racist and Afrophobic behaviours take place b) providing means of empowering people of African origin through tailor-made capacity building activities (as described under WP3) to address racial stereotypes, discrimination and hate speech, c) Develop SOPs for developing the Policy Recommendations by the members of the African community, and d) outline the scope and design of the Empowerment App (see next). The Action Plan will be shared with the participated stakeholders and will be widely disseminated via partners’ networks.

Scope of this report

The report at hand (D2.1) is an outcome of the research activities implemented in all three countries (ES, IT, EL) in the context of WP2. The Integrated Afroequality Report includes findings from the desk research in all three partner countries, good practices, media search and data mining, derived from primary and secondary research. This report draws from the national and cross-comparative reports and data collected within T2.1- T2.5. The aforementioned tasks include secondary and primary research activities undertaken by all partners so as to provide an as much as possible coherent overview of the current situation of multiple discriminations and particularly Afrophobia in participating countries. The report will be developed based on national and comparative findings produced across participating countries through:

- A. Extensive desk research at a national and cross- national level (T2.1)
- B. E-survey across Greece, Italy and Spain: Attitudes and perceptions on racism, Afrophobia and People of African Decent (T2.2)
- C. Focus groups with people of African descent (T2.3)
- D. Roundtables with key stakeholders working for, deliberating with or advocating for african communities (T2.4)
- E. Online press and social media analysis at a national level (T2.5)

Therefore the report is structured as follows:

Section 2: Cross-national desk research: Key findings and recommendations. This section maps policy discourse, best practices and knowledge gathered on topics of Afrophobia, racism and hate speech targeted against African diasporas across Greece, Italy and Spain.

Section 3: Public perceptions about People of African Descent: Results from Greece, Italy and Spain. This section presents the findings of a quantitative survey across all partner countries. It maps attitudes and perspectives about African diasporas in Italy, Spain and Greece, including experiences and knowledge regarding incidents of racism and Afrophobia

Section 4: The knowledge holders' voice: Recommendations from Focus Groups and Roundtables. This section provides findings emerging from the findings of qualitative research activities with members and representatives of the African diasporas across Greece, Italy and Spain and respective recommendations for policy making.

Section 5: Online press and social media analysis. This section presents findings from a mapping of public discourse both across mainstream media and of online discourse in all three participating countries. Analysis attempted to identify elements of stereotypical representations of the African diaspora as well as elements of racism and Afrophobia in everyday discourse online.

Section 6: What does empirical evidence teach us? Key findings from AFROEQUALITY research activities. After providing a descriptive analysis of the findings of AFROEQUALITY research activities, this section summarises the key findings emerging from both primary and secondary research within WP2.

Section 7: Mapping African identity in Greece, Spain and Italy: How is inclusion achieved after all? Emerging issues in citizenship and cultural integration- Recommendations for policy and research. The final section of this report engages with policy and research recommendations emerging from the consortium's gathered knowledge and findings within WP2.

2. Cross-national desk research: Key findings and recommendations

Findings from desk research both at a national and cross-national level confirm how African diasporas in countries like Greece, Italy and Spain are being systematically marginalized, denied of full citizenship rights and still fall victims of systemic and everyday racism (in the forms of Afrophobia, xenophobia and Islamophobia). Although reforms in citizenship rights - especially in Spain (Mastora et al., 2024)- have secured a safer political and economic space for members of the African diaspora, challenges remain significant at the social and cultural level, where systemic and everyday racism, Afrophobia and Islamophobia are not just part of everyday discourse but are also reiterated through media stereotyping in news and popular culture.

Policies towards establishing citizenship rights and tackling hate speech and Afrophobia are mainly driven by larger EU directives and policy frameworks¹ and are implemented to different degrees. For example, in Spain there is a need for more intersectional policies to tackle multiple discriminations (overlapping racial, ethnic, religious discrimination), while Italy and Greece are still quite a few steps back with either outdated citizenship laws still in force (Italy), or with a legal framework inadequate to address the current and ongoing needs and rights of first and second generation Afrodiaspora (Greece). Challenges with citizenship and systemic racism reinforce both everyday instances of racism and Afrophobia, while they per se lead Black communities to further marginalisation. Therefore, in countries like Italy and Greece members of the Afrodiaspora face serious challenges in accessing education and health services, while at the same time they are directed towards low skilled and low salaried jobs. Especially in the Greek case, it is the main case for people of African descent to work in precarious health and financial conditions (without contracts or insurance, i.e. primarily in what is termed the 'black market'). In the case of Spain, although Latin Americans are integrated more easily due to shared language and cultural capital, the Afrodiaspora from sub-Saharan countries meet severe challenges and obstacles in employment. Colour, language and ethnic origin are therefore key factors in how members of the Afrodiaspora are

¹ Such as for example, the [EU Anti-racism action plan \(2025\)](#), the [EU Strategy on victims' rights \(2020-2025\)](#) and the [Racial Equality Directive \(Council Directive 2000/43/EC\)](#)

constructed across Italy, Greece and Spain having profound impact upon their cultural and social integration but also upon their everyday lives and life trajectories in the countries of residence. To this adds the inadequate legal framework about citizenship, which is, at cases, gravely hostile as well (e.g. in the case of Greece) and does not serve as a systemic pledge for social and cultural integration.

2.1. Discrimination against Afrodiasporic people

Issues of citizenship, even in the case of countries like Spain where the status of citizenship and related rights are more effectively secured, does not mean that the cultural and social implications of citizenship in everyday life are equally guaranteed. It is therefore not surprising that EU generated data from studies and observatories indicate high rates of Afrophobia, racism and hate speech and a rise in said cases to 47% in 2024 compared to 39% in 2016 (FRA, 2024)². Racist crimes across Europe and especially in the countries of intervention are either linked to far-right groups' attacks on Black people (e.g. in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Sweden) (Nwabuzo, 2015)³, or as a result of systemic racism and Afrophobia (covert or overt) (ENAR Factsheet, 2024)⁴. The fact that even when training activities and advocacy from NGOs are implemented, such actions are scarce, fragmented or loosely documented, obscures the cases of racism and Afrophobia that come to light to be systematically monitored. At the same time, "absence of people of African descent from media, educational curricula, several fields of employment and parts of public spaces is equated with lack of belonging and lack of entitlement to political and civic rights. As seen in all three countries to different degrees, people of colour and Afrodescendants, even when born in these countries, are faced with lack of recognition as equal members of society.

Underrepresentation and/or misrepresentation reinforces stereotypes and perpetuates a cycle of invisibility, exclusion and marginalization" (Mastora et al., 2024: 5)⁵. Therefore, issues of racism and Afrophobia emerge within the context of the following: a) *lack of visibility and scarcity of data* b) *institutional racism* c) *challenges with employment*.

As our Comparative Desk Research summarises (Mastora et al., 2024), issues with citizenship, political and social rights are reflected in the ways and extent that members of the

² FRA (2024). *Fundamental Rights Report 2024*. Luxembourg: Publications Office for the European Union. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-fundamental-rights-report-2024_en.pdf

³ Nwabuzo, O. (2015). *Afrophobia in Europe-ENAR Shadow Report 2014-2015*. Brussels: European Network Against Racism. Available online: https://manoteises.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Shadowreport_afrophobia_2014-2015.pdf.

⁴ ENAR (2024). *ENAR Factsheet: Intersectionality of Discrimination in the Workplace*. Brussels: European Network Against Racism. Available at: <https://www.enar-eu.org/wp-content/uploads/Fact-Sheet-Intersectionality-2024-FINAL-1.pdf>

⁵ Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D., Bashir, O. M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2024). *AFROEQUALITY Desk Research Comparative Report*. Internal Project Report. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500).



Afrodiaspora in each country are being represented (Holtzman et al., 2022)⁶. Following the Comparative Desk Research report, “the scarcity of data, or the presence of inconsistent or incomparable information, suggests a reluctance to engage with or even acknowledge the problem, indicating a possible lack of interest in addressing the experiences of particular social groups” (Mastora et al., 2024: 5). In what concerns the countries of interest, Italy and Greece show extensive scarcity of data about issues of racial identity and racism, with Greece only having data about its Afrodiaspora through EU bodies and reporting. Spain seems to have more initiatives to collect systematic data on racism and discrimination both at a national and EU level, while Italy is also offering data from both EU and national sources that cover some key indicators such as employment, housing, health and social relations.

In what concerns deeply embedded institutional racism largely feeding everyday racism too (and vice versa), all countries show that discrimination-based law enforcement activity (expanding from systematic and unjustified stop-and-search incidents to racial attacks) is a key source of institutional racism (Racist Violence Recording Network, 2022⁷; FRA 2024). At the same time, Black people avoid reporting such racist incidents either from fear of retaliation from law enforcement officers, or due to lack of trust in authorities’ effectiveness and trustworthiness (FRA, 2023)⁸. 2023 data from Greece show an especially problematic situation, with 63% of incidents having gone unreported (RVRN, 2022).

Last but not least, racism, hate speech and Afrophobia in what concerns employment status and potential opportunities, underscores a situation where members of the Afrodiaspora across countries of interest are facing hardships. In Spain, numbers of people in paid work and with at least temporary contracts (45% of those in paid work according to the 2023 FRA report) are a lot higher than in the other two countries (63%). In Italy, most people of African descent between 20-64 have the same rate of employment integration as the general population, yet 1/3 is employed in low-skilled jobs, while men are significantly overemployed in comparison to women. However, the case in Greece is significantly more problematic. Most people are at the margins of the market, mostly employed in what is termed ‘the Black market’, and therefore without contracts, social security or proper wages. As data from MOMENTUM project (2022-2024)⁹ showed, women of colour and especially Black women face racism while working and in searching for a job. They are being treated in very dehumanizing ways and work much more than men but paid less.

⁶ Holtzman, G. S., A. Khoshkhoo, N., & Nsoesie, E. O. (2022). The racial data gap: lack of racial data as a barrier to overcoming structural racism. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 22(3), 39-42.

⁷ RVRV (2022). 2022 Annual Report. GNCHR: Racist Violence Recording Network. Available at: <https://rvrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ETHSIA-EKTHESH-2022-ENGLISH.pdf>

⁸ FRA (2023). *Fundamental Rights Report 2023*. Luxembourg: Publications Office for the European Union. Available at: https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-fundamental-rights-report-2023_en_1.pdf

⁹ MOMENTUM project (2022). *Primary research finding report - Mapping of obstacles hindering access of young TCN women to vocational training and labour market, with a focus on social economy*. EURICSE: MOMENTUM project (2022-2024) (GA 101038465)

To identify and contextualise racial discrimination against members of the Afrodiaspora across Italy, Spain and Greece is a complex matter. In this section, we chose to chart three key factors serving as platforms of discrimination, racism and hate speech on the basis of colour and racial identity across all three countries. The point to be made is that the cultural markers of colour and racial identity, the lack of systematic data about people's living and social integration conditions as well as inadequate frameworks about citizenship and racial equity (as we will discuss next) feed systemic and everyday racism, evident across areas of employment and representation in public and media discourse.

2.2. Policy making at a European and National level

For about 25 years, the EU has been building on a comprehensive and robust framework for addressing and combating racial discrimination based on colour, race, ethnic background and religion through Directives, Action Plans and Decisions. The framework available is, at least in theory, binding member states towards ensuring racial equality in areas like employment and civil society. Nevertheless, rarely have these measures been practically applied at the level of everyday experiences for people of colour, particularly across countries like Greece and Italy. This means that although a robust legal framework protecting people of African descent across Europe exists, its provisions rarely make a discernible difference in everyday lives and racial discrimination of members of the Spanish, Italian and Greek Afrodiasporas.

Briefly, the EU legal and policy framework addressing issues of racial equality, racism, hate speech, Afrophobia includes the following acts and tools: a) the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** promoting equality and prohibiting discrimination based on colour, race, ethnic background, religion and other characteristics (Article 21). Legally binding since 2009, the Charter expects member states to harmonize its provisions with their national policies, practices and interventions. b) the **Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC)** prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination based on race or ethnic origin in employment, social protection, healthcare, education, and access to goods and services. c) the **Employment Equality Directive (2000/79/EC)**, although a miscellaneous act spanning across all forms of discrimination in employment, has been applied in cases of multiple discriminations wherein racial identity was included. d) the **EU Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia (2008)** calling all EU signatories to penalize racism and xenophobia, followed by e) **Victim's Rights Directive (2012/29/EU)** listing the minimum standards for the protection and support of victims of racially motivated crimes. Last but not least, the **EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025** has specifically focused on fostering initiatives that promote anti-discrimination law enforcement, on supporting and strengthening CSO through targeted funding, as well as on supporting social and cultural integration monitoring and related protection mechanisms. Finally, the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**, founded as an independent EU body in 2007, has been occupied with monitoring and collecting data regarding matters of discrimination and rights protection, including a particular focus on issues of racism and xenophobia across the EU. Part of the agency's work includes



policymaking and advocacy on related matters, including Afrophobia and hate crimes as a result of this.

As already mentioned Greece, Italy and Spain have been expected to integrate the aforementioned framework in their national policies. Encouraged by a more liberal political condition, Spain has most successfully integrated said measures in both national and regional legal frameworks (Law 62/2003 about racial discrimination in employment, education and social services, Law 19/2020 in Catalonia against racism and xenophobia), therefore is better aligned with EU directives. Additionally, the country has penalized hate speech under articles 510 and 511 of the Penal Code. Italy on the other hand, has been less effective with implementation of such measures despite bringing an anti-discrimination law into force as early as 1993 (Mancino Law 1993). Long now surviving right-wing populism and anti-immigration rhetoric have led to a critique that the country has not been effectively implementing anti-discrimination laws and has failed to protect people of diverse racial and ethnic background from hate and racist crimes. As noted in the AFROEQUALITY Desk Research Comparative Report, “The CERD (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) has called out Italy for its failure to effectively address discrimination against people of African descent” (Mastora et al., 2024: 9). Finally, Greece is falling behind the other two countries both regarding the implementation of EU policies and when it comes to rights protection. Although bound by the aforementioned directives, Greece is called out for human rights violations (e.g. illegal push-backs and rights violation at its borders) (United Nations Special Rapporteur, 2022)¹⁰. Hate speech and incitement to racial violence have long now been criminalised under the law (Law 927/1979), however the rise and persistence of far-right politics and everyday discourse lead to increasing cases of racist attacks as a result of Afrophobia and racism. Not least, state practices of law enforcement and refugee flows regulation, such as Xenios Zeus operations are particularly telling of the extent to which racial profiling has been institutionalised. Operations such as Xenios Zeus (2012 onwards) include arbitrary detention and questioning of migrants in the country’s big urban centers. Large-scale controls including stop-and-search, arrests and detention processes targeting migrants without legal documentation led to thousands of migrants being kept in police stations and detention centers with rare if at all contact with legal and social support organisations or groups and almost no contact with the world ‘outside’ the detention center or police station (Pillant, 2015)¹¹.

To organize our comparative discussion within the desk research, we grouped provisions and acts across Greece, Italy and Spain into three thematic categories: a) *Legal framework on equality and non-discrimination* b) *Addressing racism, Afrophobia and hate crime* c) *Integration policies and social support for migrants*.

¹⁰ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (2022). Human rights violations at international borders: trends, prevention and accountability. available at: <https://bit.ly/3VNoYpV>

¹¹ Pillant, L. (2015) Operation “Xenios Zeus”: A strategy for deterring immigration through detention, intimidation and violation of migrants’ rights, in Maloutas T., Spyrellis S. (eds) Athens Social Atlas. Digital compendium of texts and visual material. <https://www.athenssocialatlas.gr/en/article/operation-xenios-zeus/>, DOI: 10.17902/20971.17

Reviewing the legal framework developed and implemented across all countries (a), our analysis shows that notwithstanding the variations in law and policy implementation between the three countries, the key challenge spanning across different legislation and policymaking concerns how legislative inadequacies, problems with implementation and the social construction of race and colour, foster systemic racism and reiterate racism at the everyday level. Spain offers the most comprehensive legal framework addressing matters of discrimination, racism, Afrophobia and hate speech, as well as of racial equality in employment, both at a national and regional level. Nevertheless, racial profiling remains a key challenge for policy making and legislation in the country. Legislation in Italy is considered largely comprehensive too, however it is also deemed ineffective in terms of implementation, therefore lacking to provide protection to people of diverse racial background and especially the Afrodiaspora. The *jus sanguinis*-derived citizenship laws prevent members of the Afrodiaspora in the country from gaining legal recognition. Finally, Greece offers the least comprehensive legal framework, mostly derived from EU policy making, while any progress in addressing racial discrimination against members of the Afrodiaspora has been laggard. Moderate reforms mostly concern second generation Afrodescendants, while first-generation and asylum seekers remain at the margins of citizenship laws and policy measures and largely unprotected.

Apart from legislation and the extent of implementation across countries, the three countries differ in what concerns practices and ways of addressing racism, Afrophobia and hate crime (b). Although Spain has again the most effective institutional mechanisms for monitoring and combating racism, and Afrophobia, such as the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE), as well as specific articles of the Penal Code (510 & 511) criminalizing hate crimes, *online hate speech and racial profiling still remain prevalent* within everyday experiences of race, colour and ethnicity. In Italy, where also provisions about hate crime are made in the national Penal Code, *African migrants in southern parts of the country and especially in the sector of Agriculture face exploitation* and the results of the restrictive migration policies that have recently become harsher due to a broader shift in the country's political narrative against migration. Finally, Greece where both the legislative framework and law enforcement is loose and reactionary has, according to the AFROEQUALITY Comparative Desk Research report, "witnessed an increase in hate crimes, often perpetuated by groups like Golden Dawn" (Mastora et al., 2024:11), but also as a result of unprovoked police violence with racial motives and institutional racism embedded within practices such as Xenios Zeus.

Such gaps in lawmaking and policy frameworks lead to loose or inefficient integration policies across all countries, however, not to the same extent. Spain's Strategic Plan for Citizenship and Integration, focusing on housing, employment and education, fosters a much friendlier culture towards the Afrodiaspora in the country, as do tailor-made regional policies (the Bilbao Intercultural City Plan and Barcelona's anti-islamophobia initiatives). Nevertheless, incidents of discrimination in employment and housing remain observable. On the contrary, Italy's integration policies appear limited and rather inefficient, with only a few measures attempting to provide targeted solutions for specific marginalized, low SES African migrants

(land workers) who face extensive exploitation and segregation. The case of Greece is even worse, with inadequate integration policies particularly for the Afrodiaspora in the country. The situation gets worse if one considers the conditions of reception centers for incoming refugees, the country's economic instability, problems in accessing education, health services and the marketplace and the broader discursivity around non-Greekness as intrusive, problematic and damaging for the country.

To sum up, rather limited or restrictive legislation and policy making at a national and European level appears to be further shaped by political, social, economic and primarily cultural factors that make integration of members of the Afrodiaspora more challenging and render issues of racism and Afrophobia persistent and more stringent. It comes therefore as no surprise that *low numbers of hate crime and racial attacks reporting* (as in the case of Spain), for which “the need for continued development of safe reporting mechanisms and victim support services to ensure the effectiveness of Spain’s anti-racism frameworks” is strongly advised (Mastora et al., 2024: 13). Also, since certain regions of the participating countries (as for example in North Italy) demonstrate more racist attitudes and islamophobia, calls for a more effective institutional framework against Afrophobia providing legal and social support become even more relevant and important. Finally, apart from making legislation more robust, there is an urgent and continuous need for awareness raising in cases like Greece, where everyday and institutional racism span across different institutional, political, social and cultural arenas.

2.3. Best practices and ways forward

An integral part of our Comparative Desk Research Report was to identify good practices in monitoring incidents of racism, mechanisms collecting data about said issues, anti-racism and social integration tools and frameworks as well as active communities that keep racial equality and race awareness high in the public and political agendas. **Those mechanisms and tools should be working in tandem with sound legislative frameworks and with ongoing initiatives that aim to change dominant discursive narratives about colour, race and ethnicity.**

Within this matrix of agents combating racism, Afrophobia and hate speech the following stand out:

- **Monitoring tools and platforms** such as the [INACH](#) global network, with Italy being a member, is active in monitoring and combating hate speech online in an attempt to contribute to a discrimination and hate free online condition. Alongside INACH, the EU-wide ‘[Get the Trolls Out](#)’ aims at providing counter narratives to racism and hate speech especially those targeting migrants and the Afrodiaspora, by monitoring and combating online hate speech and by training media professionals and young people to respond to hate speech. At the level of policy advocacy [ENAR \(European Network Against Racism\)](#), [OBERAXE](#) (Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia) and [Racist Violence Recording Network \(Greece\)](#) serve as platforms of monitoring,

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knowledge, data analysis and advocacy on matters to do with racism, xenophobia, Afrophobia and racist violence, with the Racist Violence Recording Network (RVRN) also providing support to victims in reporting incidents.

- The partnership identified **good practices relating to strategic plans and educational initiatives and tools** that could prove useful to the AFROEQUALITY empowerment collaborative activities with members of the Afrodiaspora across Greece, Spain and Italy, but are also some very effective and insightful tools against everyday discourses of racism and Afrophobia: Spain's Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion Against Racism and Xenophobia, 2023-2027 promotes ideas, frameworks and guidelines towards inclusive, just and diverse societies 'that fosters wealth, employment and development, while eliminating racism, xenophobia and intolerance' (Mastora et al., 2024: 15). Same goes for Barcelona's [Plan to combat Islamophobia](#) with measures addressing Islamophobia in urban contexts and a particularly supportive framework for vulnerable groups such as Muslim women. A result of the plan has been the establishment of the Office for Non-Discrimination (OND), managing documentation of Islamophobic incidents, providing training and support to hate crime victims. Equally important are the educational initiatives and tools in all three countries: The [School of Solidarity in Greece](#) is an educational initiative, offering school programs and teachers' training that address racism and discrimination. In a similar vein, the [Anti-rumours toolkit for Youngsters](#) (Spain) focusing on educators', teachers' and tutors' equipment with tools that assist them in developing anti-rumour educational activities, especially in what concerns issues of stereotyping and prejudice regarding socio-cultural diversity. Finally, Italy offers two innovative and dynamic educational initiatives, aiming at debunking racist and colonial narratives through podcasts and anti-racist education. The [Sulla Razza](#) podcast aims at reconceptualising the dialogue about race within the Italian culture, via putting popular race and colour sensitive concepts and terms from Anglo-american culture (e.g. 'BAME', 'colourism', 'fair skin privilege') into the Italian context. [Sambu](#) is an educational initiative targeting children in early education, aiming to equip them with knowledge and critical skills in ways that derive from decolonial perspectives to education and early education more specifically. Such an initiative offers playful ways of understanding key social and historical contexts of race and racism and encourages not just critical and inclusive thinking, but also prevents future cultures of discrimination.
- Alongside the aforementioned initiatives, frameworks and mechanisms, sits the work of diverse **communities** who work tirelessly towards supporting the Afrodiaspora in all three countries, primarily by creating spaces of free speech, social and cultural expression that give voice to the Afrodiaspora in each country, but also by serving as platforms of cross-cultural dialogue that aids social and cultural integration. The [Group of Interfaith Dialogue](#) in Tenerife (2017) fosters spirituality through understanding and appreciation of diverse beliefs and religious practices. [We Africans United](#) is an Italian social project where Black Italians and African communities offer



stories, trajectories and life experiences where traumas, stereotyping and experiences of racism become visible and are effectively addressed. In contrast to the profound lack of state led initiatives, Greece fosters an ongoing cultural and social dialogue through the work of communities and Fora like the [Greek Forum of Migrants](#) working to empower people of migrant and refugee status, including the Afrodiaspora in Greece (among other ethnic and racial groups of migrant and refugee status), and promote issues of rights and citizenship through policy advocacy. The Afro-Greek Youth Collective initiative works to empower Afro-Greek Youth through cultural dialogues and activity, dialogues addressing issues of Afrophobia and leadership training programs. [Afrosocially](#) is the first African community engagement platform in Greece, serving as a hub for the African diaspora in Greece. [Anasa Cultural Center of African Art and Cultures](#) serves as a platform of cross-cultural dialogues, promoting matters of social and cultural awareness and integration, but also working towards combating racism and discrimination through cultural educational programs and initiatives. Last but not least, [United African Women Organization](#) (UAWO), a community-driven initiative supporting African women in matters to do with social justice, integration and empowerment, facilitating the dialogue about African women's position and contribution to Greek society. Finally, [Emantes](#) is an international social cooperative in support of the LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees. Offering legal, psychosocial and community support and advocating for a 'Greece free from discrimination', the cooperative offers important work in sustaining an ongoing dialogue about multiple discriminations against LGBTQIA+ persons.

The partnership interest in best practices across countries emerges from the belief that the significant legislative space that EU policy frameworks and legislation offers becomes effective and bears fruit through national and cross-national initiatives, toolkits and activities that sustain the dialogue about race, colour, ethnicity and religion in educational, cultural and social spaces. To this end, in the context of the AFROEQUALITY Comparative Desk Research, we moved towards raising further issues that need to be addressed in the broader policy discourse and activity regarding matters of Afrophobia, racism and hate speech. As included in the AFROEQUALITY Comparative Desk Research Report (Mastora et al., 2024), our recommendations span across the following areas:

2.4.1. Policy and institutional change

Strengthen legal frameworks preventing and combating racism and discrimination in all aspects of life, such as education, employment, housing and public services. Effective application of the legal frameworks entails and presupposes accountability for acts of non-compliance with anti-discrimination laws.

Monitoring and reporting mechanisms are crucial in this effort, providing information and data on the current situation in each country. Independent bodies should carry this effort to

ensure unobstructed and unbiased collection, analysis and wide publication of findings for the state, organizations and the general public to have a clear image of the societal state in terms of racism. Data should be used in evaluating existing policies and their implementation, offering recommendations for improvements or policy changes.

Effective Institutional change at the attitudinal level should be aimed through capacity building targeting public servants and law enforcement officers. Mandates for intercultural competence training for public sector employees, including law enforcement, healthcare providers, and educators should be in place. This training should focus on recognizing and addressing biases, improving service delivery, and fostering inclusive environments.

Offering Support to victims through an integrated mechanism including access to legal aid and psychosocial services. With a support mechanism in place, victims of racist attacks will feel able to report such incidents and become more empowered through recognition and punishment of perpetrators of violent racist attacks or harassment.

2.4.2 Education and capacity building

Formal education should include in the curricula topics related to Black history, colonialism, critical race theory, multiple identities and diversity. Adapted for different ages at school, formal curricula and education in the classroom are the main tools and channels to form and share common understanding of current multicultural societies and promote equality and coexistence based on human and civic rights.

Capacity building for the Afrodiaspora in Spain, Italy and Greece should also be offered widely, covering various subjects related to civic participation, employment and empowerment. Members of communities, usually marginalized and/or with less access to information, education and development, are trapped in low societal strata. Capacity building can empower people and facilitate their growth providing information, tools, access, a network of support and knowledge to participate equally in the local social life and the labor market. Role models of African descent themselves, people who are empowered and have overcome difficulties, can mentor and inspire others in the context of capacity building activities.

Training on digital literacy and protection from online racist attacks should be in place in order to assist young people, parents and carers, and teachers learn about the risks of online behavior: cyber safety programs for schools; resources for dealing with and reporting cyber bullying; and contacts for help and further information.

2.4.3 Awareness raising and cultural representation

Campaigns and social media campaigns raising awareness about racism against the Afrodiaspora, disseminating messages that promote equal rights and positive representations

of these communities, can have a strong impact at large scale, reaching the general population in all three countries.

Cultural events presenting the history and culture of African communities could bring different parts of the population together engaging in intercultural exchange. Also, events that present life trajectories, life experiences and life histories through a decolonial perspective. In this context where personal exchange is in place, attitudinal change is more possible, and perhaps long term, compared to awareness raising campaigns.

Media representation of the Afrodiaspora should change drastically, adopting alternative, positive and diverse representations where the diverse cultural, ethnic and social characteristics of the Afrodiasporic identity are highlighted and celebrated and not demonized and marginalized. This includes ensuring that media portrayals reflect the richness and diversity of these communities and challenge stereotypes and biases.

More importantly, the *media should be encouraged to form a platform for dialogue* facilitating public discussions and dialogues on discrimination, racism and xenophobia with the participation of members of African communities. This includes hosting interviews, panel discussions, and public forums that address these issues and promote understanding and empathy.

Finally, *media organizations should be encouraged to adopt ethical journalism* standards that promote accuracy, fairness, and respect in reporting on issues related to race, ethnicity, and migration. This includes avoiding sensationalism and ensuring balanced coverage of all perspectives.

2.4.4 Private Sector and Civil Society Engagement

Community Outreach and Engagement to discuss particular and local concerns and develop recommendations to address discriminatory practices identified in different aspects of local life, can be achieved by establishing mechanisms for meaningful dialogue between public institutions and diverse communities.

Ethical Business Practices can be promoted to prioritize diversity and inclusion. This includes creating inclusive work environments, celebrating cultural diversity, and addressing discriminatory practices within the workplace.

Civil Society Advocacy actions aiming to combat racism and xenophobia should be supported. These organizations often play a crucial role in raising awareness, providing support, and advocating for policy changes. Governments and private entities can partner with these organizations to amplify their impact.

Public-Private Partnerships should be fostered, including public institutions, the private sector, and civil society, to address discrimination and promote social cohesion. Collaborative efforts can lead to innovative solutions and more effective implementation of anti-discrimination policies.



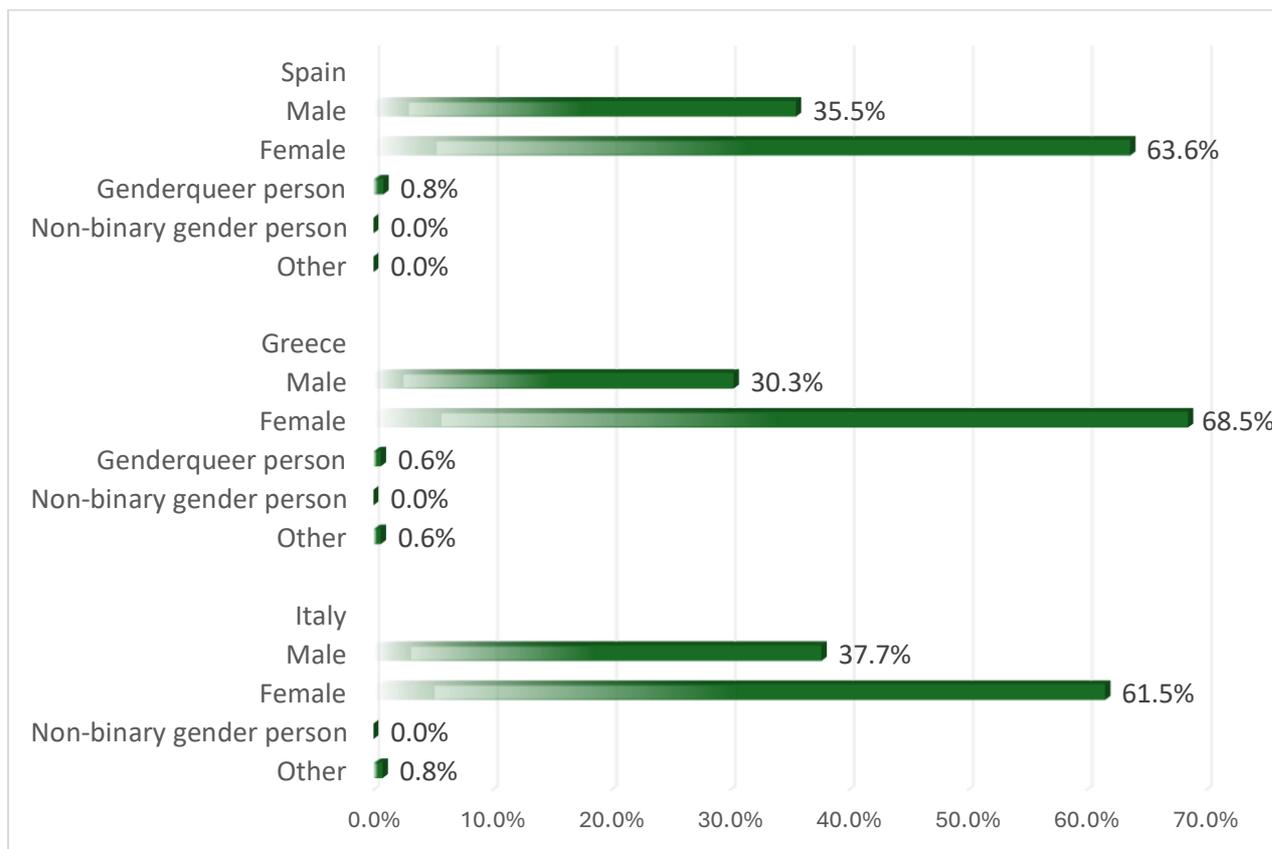
3. Public perceptions about People of African Descent: Results from Greece, Italy and Spain

All participating countries (Greece, Italy and Spain) have designed and run an e-survey to map current attitudes towards the African diaspora in each country. Through this survey partners managed to gather information about how members of the African diasporas are seen in each culture, as well as grasp the stereotypes and possibly xenophobic and Afrophobic notions within the general populations' attitudes. NKUA has developed an online questionnaire of nineteen questions (19), fourteen (14) closed and five (5) open-ended, grouped in 4 thematic sections (social media and news consumption; knowledge about people of the Afrodiaspora, issues of discrimination; knowledge holders' demographic profile). Each country's aim was to gather a random online sample of 500 questionnaires. The questionnaire was developed in English and translated and cross-translated in Greek, Spanish and Italian to overcome language barriers and bias to the best possible extent. The tool was then tested in 10% of each country's targeted sample (50 questionnaires per country) before being finalised and posted online. Nevertheless, despite multiple waves of questionnaire dissemination (including publicizing the questionnaire through nationwide news sites), countries collected 416 questionnaires in total (GR: 165; IT: 130; ES: 121).

3.1. Our knowledge holders' profile

Survey respondents have predominantly identified as either male or female across all three countries with a very limited number of persons identifying as either genderqueer or non-binary. This is an interesting finding in itself since most of them also belong to the 18-35 age group which is expected to have adapted to gender pronouns like 'they-them' and 'cis' or with lgbtqia+ inclusive terms for self-identification.

Figure 1. Participants' gender across countries



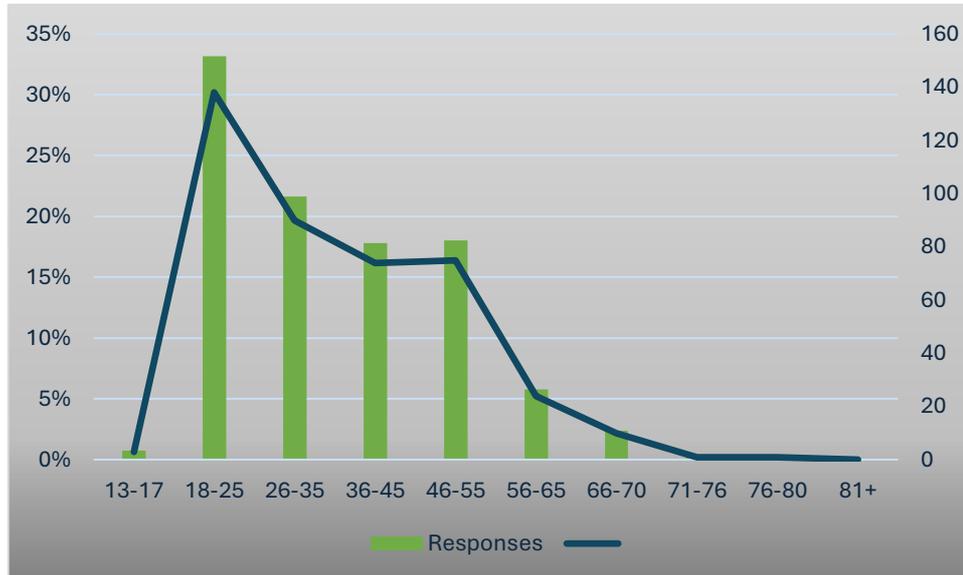
In terms of nationality or ethnic background, the majority of participants represent the three counties of implementation. 38% of participants identified as Greek, 30% as Italian, and 14% as Spanish. Other nationalities, such as Albanian, Moroccan, Senegalese etc. are represented in small numbers.

As already mentioned, the majority of responses have been collected from people between 18 and 55 years of age. Indeed, the electronic format of the tool might be one reason for collecting less responses from people over 65, but not the only one. Lack of time to invest in filling a survey may also have led to limited motivation to participate, as does what is regularly termed as ‘survey fatigue’ (Karlberg, 2015; Jeong et al., 2023)¹², a term contextualizing people’s lack of interest in filling questionnaires since they have increasingly become part of the quantification and datafication of everyday life. Last but not least, surveys that are not

¹² Karlberg C. (2015). The Survey Fatigue Challenge: Understanding Young People’s Motivation to Participate in Survey Research Studies [thesis]. Lund: Lund University.
 Jeong D, Aggarwal S, Robinson J, Kumar N, Spearot A, Park DS (2023). Exhaustive or exhausting? Evidence on respondent fatigue in long surveys. *Journal of Development Economics*, 161:102992. doi: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2022.102992.

thought to be deriving from or impacting upon individuals’ everyday lives and needs also seem to attract less interest (Piekut, 2019)¹³.

Figure 2. Participants’ age across countries

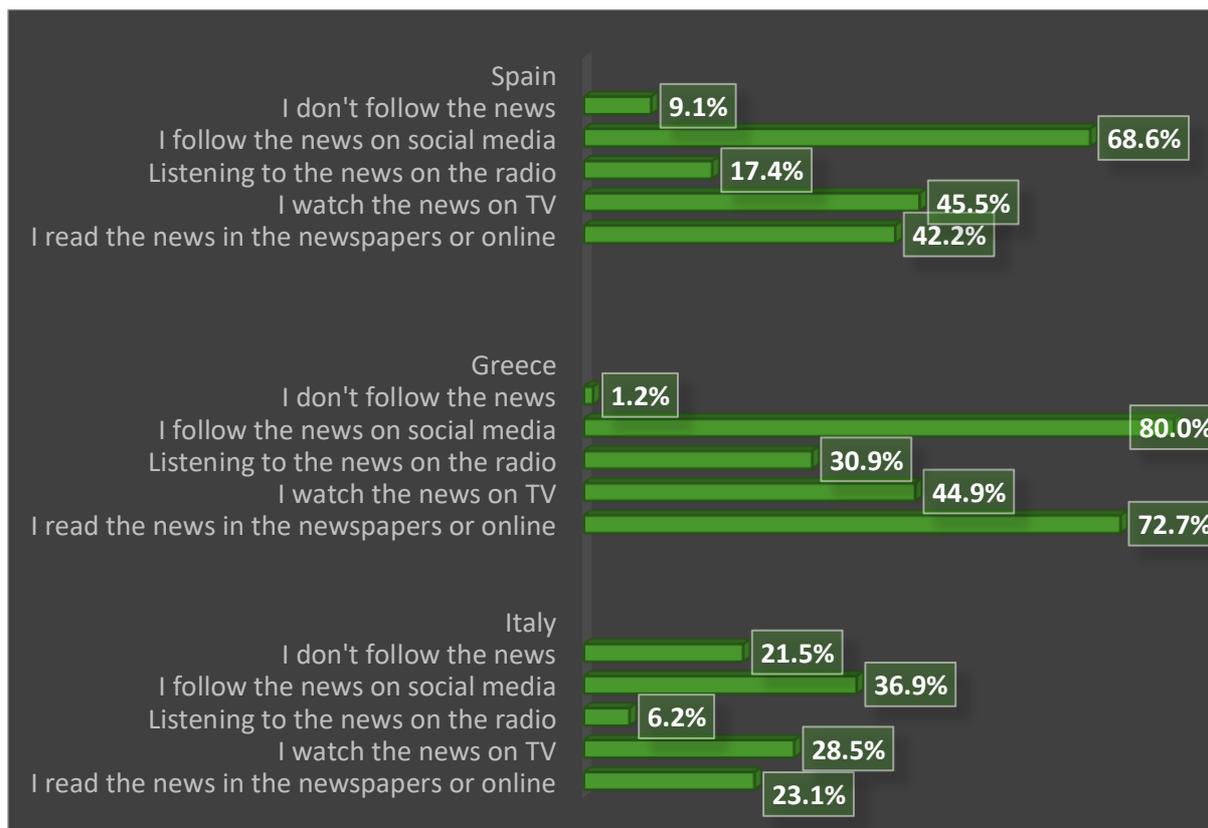


Contrary to claims circulated in media discourse and the public sphere about people’s lack of interest in news consumption, our data indicates that news consumption takes place through a diverse number of media; even when it takes place through social media, it still counts as news consumption for them (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2021)¹⁴.

¹³ Piekut, A. (2019). Survey nonresponse in attitudes towards immigration in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(5), 1136–1161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1661773>

¹⁴ Kalogeropoulos, A., Rori, L., & Dimitrakopoulou, D. (2021). ‘Social Media Help Me Distinguish between Truth and Lies’: News Consumption in the Polarised and Low-trust Media Landscape of Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 26(1), 109–132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2021.1980941>

Figure 3. News Consumption practices across countries

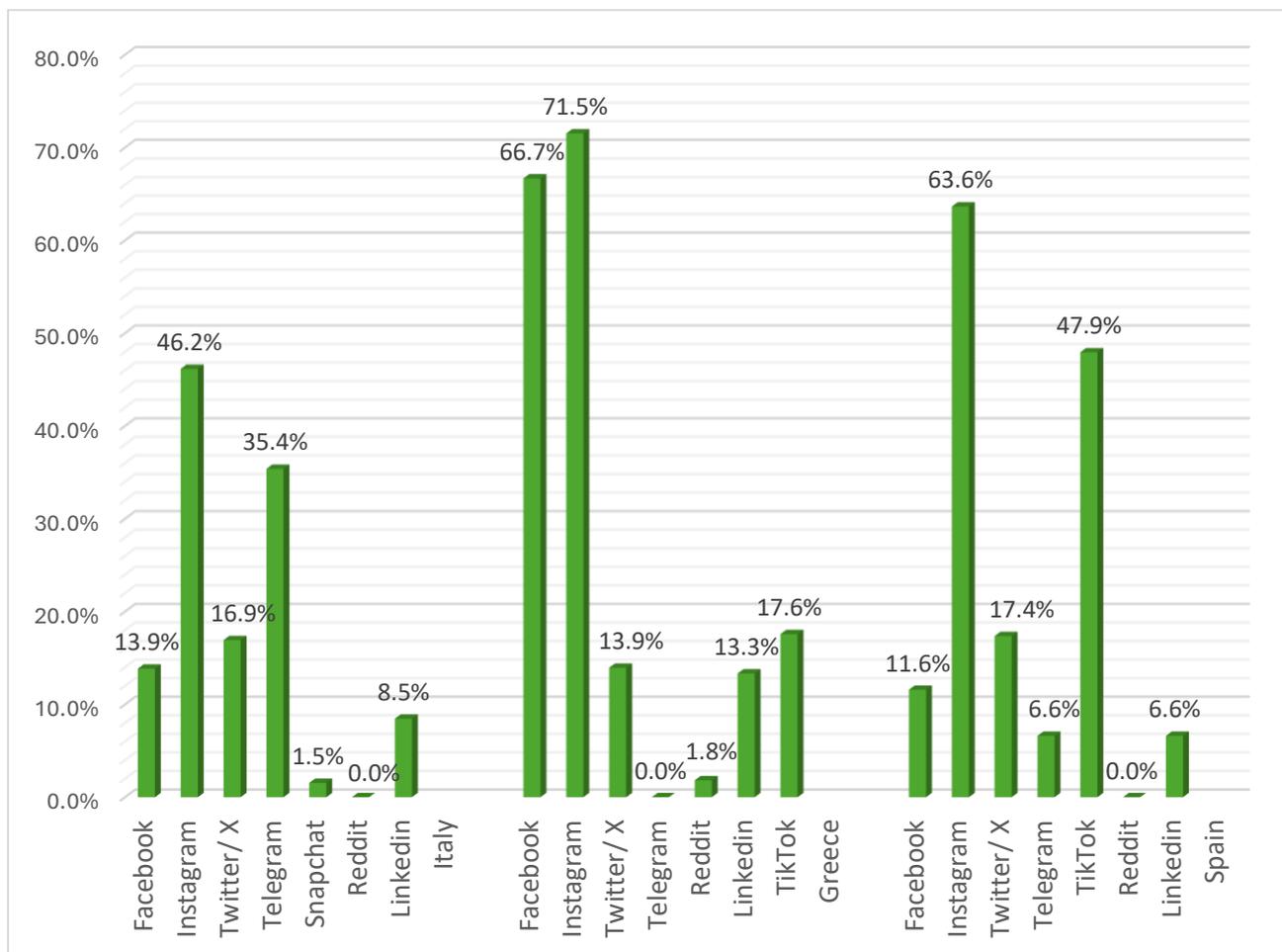


At the same time, although there are fears that television news are a waning source of news consumption -a much-debated claim in academic discourse (see Papathanasopoulos et al., 2013 for a critical discussion)¹⁵- our data indicates that TV news consumption across all countries still holds a significant share among other news media (Figure 3). The press, online press and news sites hold the largest share of news consumption according to our knowledge holders' preferences, which is to be expected given the popularity and affordability of the online news genre (Newman et al., 2024)¹⁶. We therefore acknowledge that our respondents have in diverse ways access to current affairs, domestic and international news and any sort of information that speaks to their interests, anxieties and lives more broadly. And as expected, they have access to the circuit of dominant narratives about the Afrodiaspora and the social construction of Afrodiasporic cultures through mainstream news media.

¹⁵ Papathanasopoulos, S., Coen, S., Curran, J., Aalberg, T., Rowe, D., Jones, P., ... Tiffen, R. (2013). Online Threat, But Television is Still Dominant: A comparative study of 11 nations' news consumption. *Journalism Practice*, 7(6), 690–704. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2012.761324>

¹⁶ Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Ross Arguedas, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2024). Reuters Institute digital news report 2024. Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism. Available at <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024>

Figure 4. Most popular social media platform (use on a daily basis)



At the same time, our respondents are also active on social media (Figure 4). On a daily basis most respondents use Instagram, then comes Facebook and TikTok across all three countries. One reason for this is obviously the fact that the majority of people who filled the questionnaire are young adults and adults between 18 and 45. Those groups are particularly familiarised with online technologies and app consumption since most of their cultural and social activities, including communication, work and news consumption, is to a large extent taking place through such platformed technologies (Hendrickx, 2024; Tiidenberg et al., 2024)¹⁷. People’s diverse social media use reflects a diverse array of consumption practices with media, access to and negotiation of an amplitude of narratives about gender, race,

¹⁷ Hendrickx, J. (2024). ‘Normal news is boring’: How young adults encounter and experience news on Instagram and TikTok. *new media & society*, 14614448241255955.

Tiidenberg, K., Karatzogianni, A., Parsanoglou, D., Matthews, J., Lepik, K. S., Raig, M., & Suitslepp, M. L. (2024). Social media as a shaper, enabler, and hurdle in youth political participation. In *Understanding The Everyday Digital Lives of Children and Young People* (pp. 351-377). Cham: Springer International Publishing.



colour, ethnicity, age and class. Social media affordances (technological, communicative, social or cultural) (boyd, 2010; Gray, 2015; Bucher & Helmond, 2018)¹⁸ allow audiences to negotiate constructions of race in different ways, perform race and ethnicity as well and have access to (intended or not) different stories, ideologies and knowledge. It seems then that our knowledge holders belong to diverse age and gender groups (our data indicate a diversity in terms of SES, too), also engaging with a rather rich bundle of media platforms and genres wherein they are informed and where they perform and negotiate narratives, identities and knowledge.

Speaking of narratives, the AFROEQUALITY team was particularly interested in the sorts of narratives and representations of the Afrodiaspora that respondents have access to. The following two figures reflect a) **the main media platforms (legacy media and online) through which respondents have access to Black identities, the Afrodiaspora**, and any related form of information that is available to them and b) the **most popular narratives/stories and representations of the Afrodiaspora in each country**. The choice of those questions does not imply that the media have some sort of direct effects upon audiences and that certain media or certain stories affect the ways audiences think or talk about Black people. Instead, the following results reflect the range of narratives (usually stereotypical) available to them for negotiation in the process of cultural consumption, and the range of media where those narratives are circulating within a broad media ecosystem.

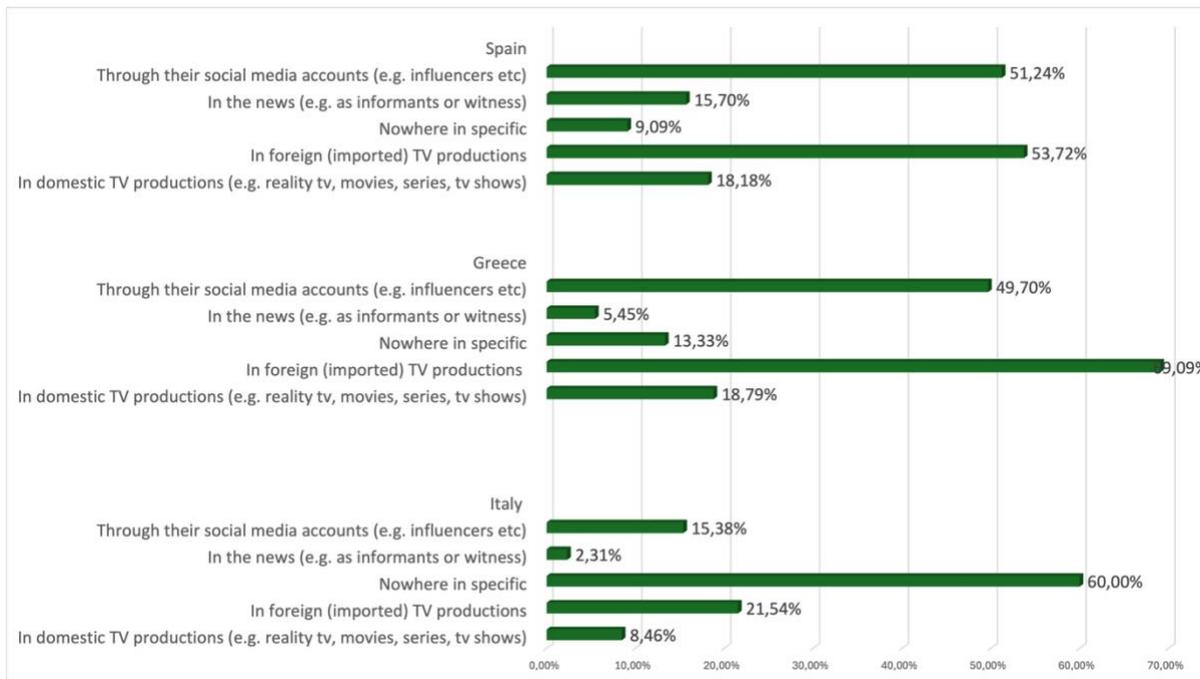
¹⁸ boyd d (2010) Social network sites as networked publics: affordances, dynamics, and implications. In: Papacharissi Z (ed.) *Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites*. New York: Routledge, pp. 39–58.

Gray M (2015) Putting social media in its place: a curatorial theory for media's noisy social worlds. *Social Media + Society* 1(1): 1–3.

Bucher, T., & Helmond, A. (2018). The affordances of social media platforms. In J. Burgess. A. Marwick & T. Poell (ed) *The SAGE handbook of social media*, pp.233-253. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473984066>



Figure 5. Media where the Afrodiaspora is most frequently represented (per country)



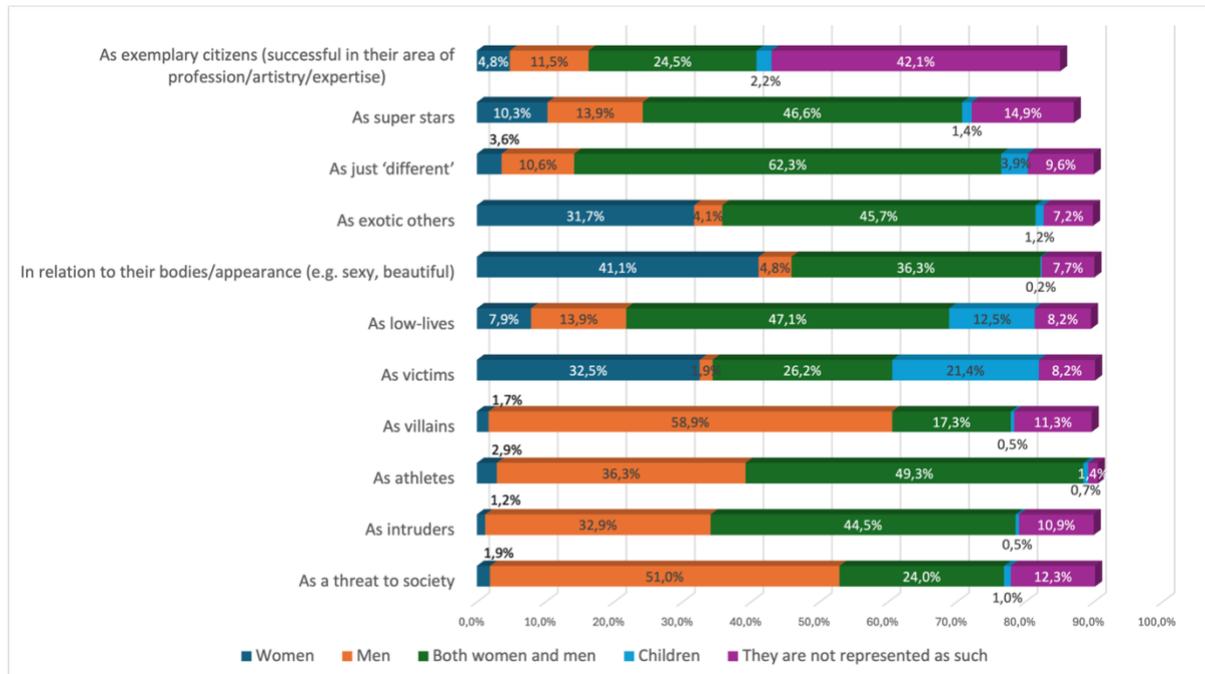
Respondents in Spain and Greece report seeing most Black people either through their social media accounts (ES: 51,24%; GR: 49,7%), as followers of certain celebrities. or in foreign TV productions, that is movies, TV series and other shows (ES: 53,7%; GR: 69,1%). In Italy, the most popular response is ‘nowhere in specific’ (60%), while imported (foreign) TV productions come second (21,54%) with a significantly lower percentage than in Spain and Greece. Considering that the largest number of our respondents belong to GenZ, consuming global representations and narratives of Blackness through social media and through global popular TV texts, which become part of their everyday cultural routines and practices (Barnes et al., 2023; Atay, 2024)¹⁹. Nevertheless, as Italian data show and the rest corroborate, the Afrodiaspora across the countries is rather invisible. People do recall seeing Black people across media platforms but either nowhere in specific or through global and not domestic narratives. Finally, about 18-19% of respondents in Spain and in Greece report seeing the Afrodiaspora represented in domestic TV production (i.e. reality TV, TV shows, movies etc.), reflecting that there is a nascent culture of celebrities and artists of African descent and mixed

¹⁹ Barnes, C., Blanton, R., Dotson, S. R., Esposito, A., Fradley, M., Jacob, N., ... & Trandafoiu, R. (2023). *Millennials and Gen Z in Media and Popular Culture*. Rowman & Littlefield
 Atay, A. (2024). Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age. *Contemporary Sociology*, 53(3), 257-259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00943061241240882v>



race across all countries (Asala & Africanews, 2024)²⁰. Nevertheless, there is an intense public discussion – and ongoing academic discourse (Papailias, 2024; Boampong, 2023;)²¹- about how artists, creatives and celebrities of African descent struggle for visibility (Anderson, 2019; Tzannatou, 2023)²² and face everyday instances of shadowbanning and racism (Kostouros, 2020)²³.

Figure 6. Most popular representations of the Afrodiaspora in Italy, Spain and Greece



Apart from the media platforms where respondents consume representations of the Afrodiaspora, what matters is how the latter are most regularly represented. Data from all countries indicate that Black women are extensively exoticized (31,7%) or are constructed in

²⁰ Asala, K. & Africanews with AP (2024). Predominantly Afro-Italian cast in Netflix 'Zero' makes history. *Africanews.com*. Available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2021/05/06/predominantly-afro-italian-cast-in-netflix-series-zero-makes-history/>

²¹ Papailias, P. (2024). From AfroGreeks to the Black Mediterranean: De/facing whiteness in the rap of Negros tou Moria. In *The Routledge Handbook of Popular Music and Politics of the Balkans* (pp. 513-527). London: Routledge.
Boampong, J. (2023). Coping to survive? A study of female 'Afro-diasporic' actors of Spain. In J. Borst, S. Neu-Wendel and J. Tauchnitz (eds) *Women's perspective on (post) migration: Between literature, arts and activism- Between Africa and Europe* (pp.279-303). Hildesheim: OLMS

²² Anderson, J. (2019). 8 Afro-Italian creatives share their struggle to be seen. *Document*. <https://www.documentjournal.com/2019/02/8-afro-italian-creatives-share-their-struggle-to-be-seen/>
Tzannatou, E. (2023). Idra Kayne in 'K': "I want AfroGreeks to be a popular image everywhere. *Kathimerini*, 21 March 2023. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/culture/562331008/intra-kein-stin-k-thelo-oi-afroellines-na-ginoy-n-mia-synithismeni-eikona-pantoy/>

²³ Kostouros, V. (2020). Idra Kayne grew up hearing "I won't play your songs because you are black". *Vogue Greece*, 7 June 2020. <https://vogue.gr/living/culture/i-idra-kayne-megalose-akoygontas-synecheia-de-se-paizo-giati-eisai-mayri-vogue-greece/>

terms of appearance and aesthetics (41,1%). However, for a large number of respondents, the exoticization of the Black body is true for both men and women (45,7% and 36,3% respectively). For almost half of the respondents, both men and women are constructed as low-lives (47,1%) or as just 'different' (62,3%). Such data indicate not only that Black people's visibility is classed, racialized and sexualized, but that it also reduces Black personhood, African cultures and identities within the Afrodiaspora to stereotypical, well- established narratives of race.

What is even more disconcerting are the high numbers of respondents who feel that Black men are usually constructed as 'villains' (58,9%), as 'intruders' (32,9% for men, 44,5% for both men and women) or as a threat to society (51% for men). Those figures potentially add to the previous chart (5) results namely, that the Afrodiaspora does not appear somewhere in specific (i.e. Black people are largely invisible) (Merill. 2022)²⁴, in the sense that representations of Black people across all countries are either missing, or are at least stereotypical, at most negative. Obviously further qualitative research is needed in order to clarify where do those representations appear more regularly (news, popular culture or other), whether they are domestic or global narratives (e.g. popular series, movies etc) and how those are talked about by respondents themselves. Nevertheless, such data indicate that the alienation of the Afrodiaspora and the demonization of Black people and Black cultures as a threatening condition to the white western societies of this project (Greece, Italy and Spain), are continuously reiterated within domestic media discourse (Kompatsiaris, 2017)²⁵ and add to a broader culture of racism, Afrophobia and multiple discrimination against the Afrodiaspora.

3.2. Knowledge holders' critical reflection on public perceptions about the Afrodiaspora

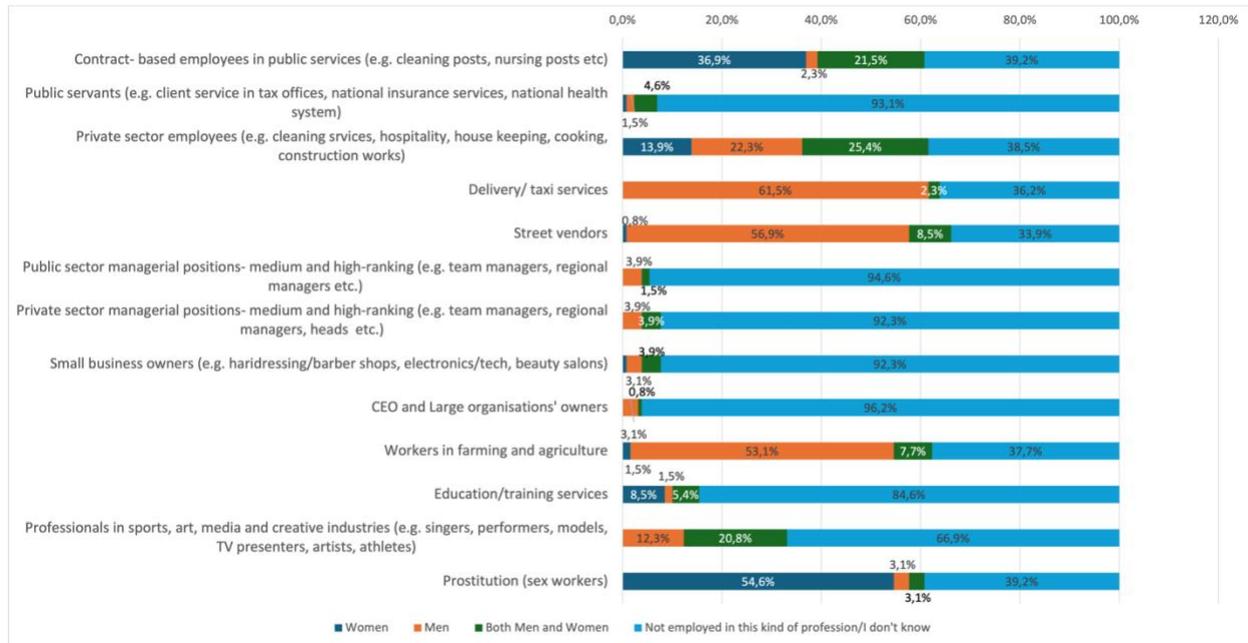
The survey conducted reflects how each host society thinks about the Afrodiaspora. It aimed at mapping public perceptions towards the Afrodiaspora across Italy, Greece and Spain, but also at how people reflect critically upon established narratives within which the Afrodiasporic identity is constructed. Some very interesting data emerging from this survey concern the modes of labour that respondents believe Black citizens engage with (or are forced into as in the case of prostitution). This question aimed at understanding either which spaces of labour people of the Afrodiaspora occupy, are seen into, or are assumed to occupy. Below, we present data from all countries separately since we opine that a context -specific image of the situation in each country reflects and speaks to established narratives and constructions of the Afrodiaspora.

²⁴ Merrill, H. (2022). Silence and reckoning—African-Italians in popular culture. *Italian Studies in South Africa*, 35(1), 118-140.

²⁵ Kompatsiaris, P. (2017). Whitewashing the nation: Racist jokes and the construction of the African 'other' in Greek popular cinema. *Social Identities*, 23(3), 360-375.

In Italy, knowledge holders report that women or both women and men occupy contract - based jobs in public and private sector services (when it comes to construction-related jobs, men occupy an almost equal percentage to women) (see Figure 7) (Campani, 2000; Colombo, 2007)²⁶. About 2/3 of the respondents in Italy believe that primarily men are employed in delivery and taxi services (61,5%), as land workers (53,1%) or as street vendors (56,9%). And more than half (54,6%) believe that women either work or are forced into sex work and prostitution.

Figure 7. Perceptions about Afrodiasporic modes of employment (or forced labour) across countries- Data from Italy



These figures reflect a reality monitored in public and policy discourse in Italy; researchers and policy experts discuss the exploitative conditions of those forms of labour and issues of social exclusion for Afrodiasporic citizens (Allasino et al. 2004)²⁷, especially women who are employed in domestic labour (Marchetti, 2014)²⁸ or as prostitutes (Campani, 2000; Colombo, 2007). Equally, respondents image that men of African descent are employed as low-paid

²⁶ Colombo, A. D. (2007). 'They call me a housekeeper, but I do everything.' Who are domestic workers today in Italy and what do they do? *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 12(2), 207–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545710701298258>
 Campani, G. (2000). Immigrant Women in Southern Europe: Social Exclusion, Domestic Work and Prostitution in Italy. In: King, R., Lazaridis, G., Tsardanidis, C. (eds) *Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780333982525_7

²⁷ Allasino, E., Venturini, A., & Zincone, G. (2004). *Labour market discrimination against migrant workers in Italy*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

²⁸ Marchetti, S. (2014). *Black girls: Migrant domestic workers and colonial legacies* (Vol. 16). Brill.

labourers in farming and agriculture is reflected in discussions about conditions of exploitation and control especially of Sub-Saharan African migrant tomato pickers in the country (Melossi, 2021)²⁹. On the other hand, Black people in Italy are rarely (if ever) seen in medium and high ranking jobs in the public or private sector (3,9% men), even more rarely become CEOs or large organisations owners (3,1% men), very few women and men in the Italian sample report that the Afrodiaspora is employed in education or training (8,5% and 5,4% respectively). An interesting finding concerns how invisible African-Italian's entrepreneurship is, i.e. our respondents do not mention seeing the Afrodiaspora as small business owners (only 3,1% men and 3,9% women believe that both women and men are small business owners). Hawthorne (2021:1)³⁰ argues that Afro-Italian businesspersons (especially women) are contributing to the Italian material culture transformation, in Northern Italy more specifically, making entrepreneurship "a key terrain of struggle through which Afro-Italians have begun to assert claims to Italian citizenship and belonging in the context of both economic stagnation and a refugee 'emergency'". Nevertheless, and although entrepreneurship is a space where Black people claim social, economic and cultural agency in the country, the AFROEQUALITY survey data shows that such attempts remain largely invisible and not imprinted in public perceptions, while entrepreneurship remains exceedingly racialized.

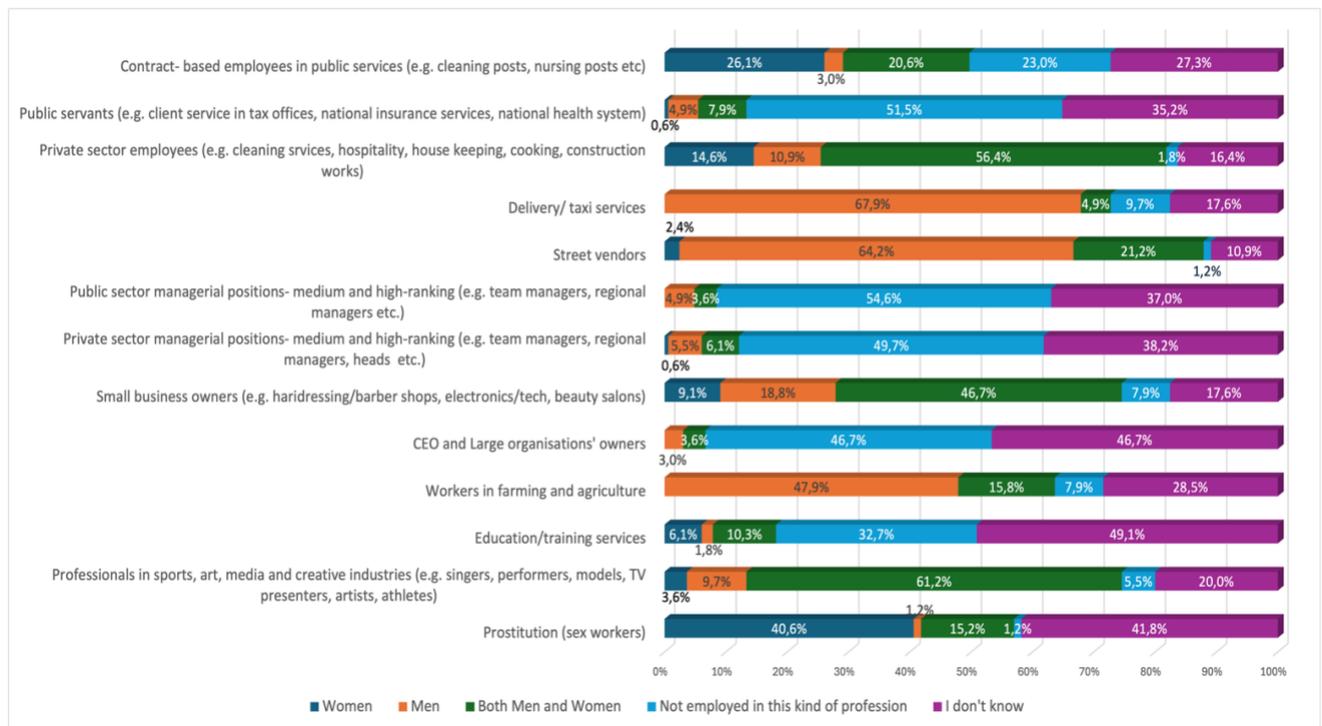
The case of Greece is not entirely different, nevertheless there are a few observations that illustrate the national case to be made:

To a large extent, participants in Greece report lack of knowledge about the status of labour of the Afrodiaspora in Greece. This may mean that participants are not willing to disclose their opinion; nevertheless, it may also reflect the invisibility of the labour activity of the Greek Afrodiaspora. Here, women of the Afrodiaspora are seen or assumed to be employed in contract-based jobs in public services such as cleaning and nursing (26,1%), and in similar and equally low paid jobs in the private sector (14,6%). To a limited extent, they are visible in entrepreneurship as small business owners (mainly beauty salons) (9,1%) and for almost half of the respondents (40,6%), they are also seen as offering sex services, being prostitutes or forced into prostitution (40,6%).

²⁹ Melossi, E. (2021). 'Ghetto tomatoes' and 'taxi drivers': The exploitation and control of Sub-Saharan African migrant tomato pickers in Puglia, Southern Italy. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 88, 491-499.

³⁰ Hawthorne, C. (2023). Black Mediterranean geographies: Translation and the mattering of Black life in Italy. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 30(3), 484-507.

Figure 8. Perceptions about Afrodiasporic modes of employment (or forced labour) -Data from Greece



Agathangelou (2004; 2013)³¹ has extensively discussed issues of racialization of globalization and the global political economy of sex, gender and race across the Mediterranean. She provides a systematic, rigorous empirical account of racialized (including Black) women’s vulnerability and exploitation in domestic and sex labour serve to sustain and reinforce traditional social mores and roles, particularly in countries like Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. Also, as Zaphiriou – Zarifi (2017: 118)³² contends, a nationalist gendered and racialized discourse informs debates, stereotypes and constructions of Black women in Greece as victims or sex workers, while those discourses are frequently legitimized by conservative and far-right politicians who reiterate racist notions of an allegedly ‘unhealthy, contaminating’ black womanhood (Carras 2012)³³ in the context of an ultra-conservative political narrative.

³¹ Agathangelou, A. M. (2013). “Sexing” globalization in international relations: Migrant sex and domestic workers in Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. In *Power, postcolonialism and international relations* (pp. 142-169). London: Routledge.
 Agathangelou, A. M. (2004). *The global political economy of sex: Desire, violence, and insecurity in Mediterranean nation states*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

³² Zaphiriou-Zarifi, V. (2017) Navigating (in)visibility : the everyday lives of African women in crisis Greece. PhD thesis. SOAS University of London. <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/26655>

³³ Carras, I. (2012). Is Greece A Racist State? Open Democracy. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/iannis-carras/is-greece-racist-state>

As also observed in Italy, men of the Afrodiaspora in Greece are seen in delivery (67,9%) farming and agriculture (47,9%) and as street vendors (64,2%). Those data also agree with existing academic discourse about the racialized nature of low paid and precarious labour, wherein Black men are usually seen (Papadantonakis, 2019)³⁴. At the same time, knowledge holders in Greece opine that both men and women of the Afrodiaspora are seen to engage in aforementioned forms of labour including forced sex labour and not just sex work. Therefore, although Black people are visible in the public space and across spaces of labour activity, they are nonetheless assumed to constantly occupy low wage, high risk and socially berated jobs. As a result, it comes as no surprise, as in the case of Italy, that citizens of Afrodiasporic origin are neither seen to occupy medium or high ranking jobs in the public (54,6%) or private sector (49,7%), nor executive posts (as CEOs or large organisations' owners) (46,7%) as well as in education/ training services (32,7%) whatsoever. Such a condition does imply – as will be discussed in the next chapter of this report – that dominant narratives about the social and economic position of the Afrodiaspora and the challenges in social and cultural integration are further intensified by the working conditions and life trajectories of Afrodiasporic people in Greece (Mastora et al., 2025 a and b)³⁵.

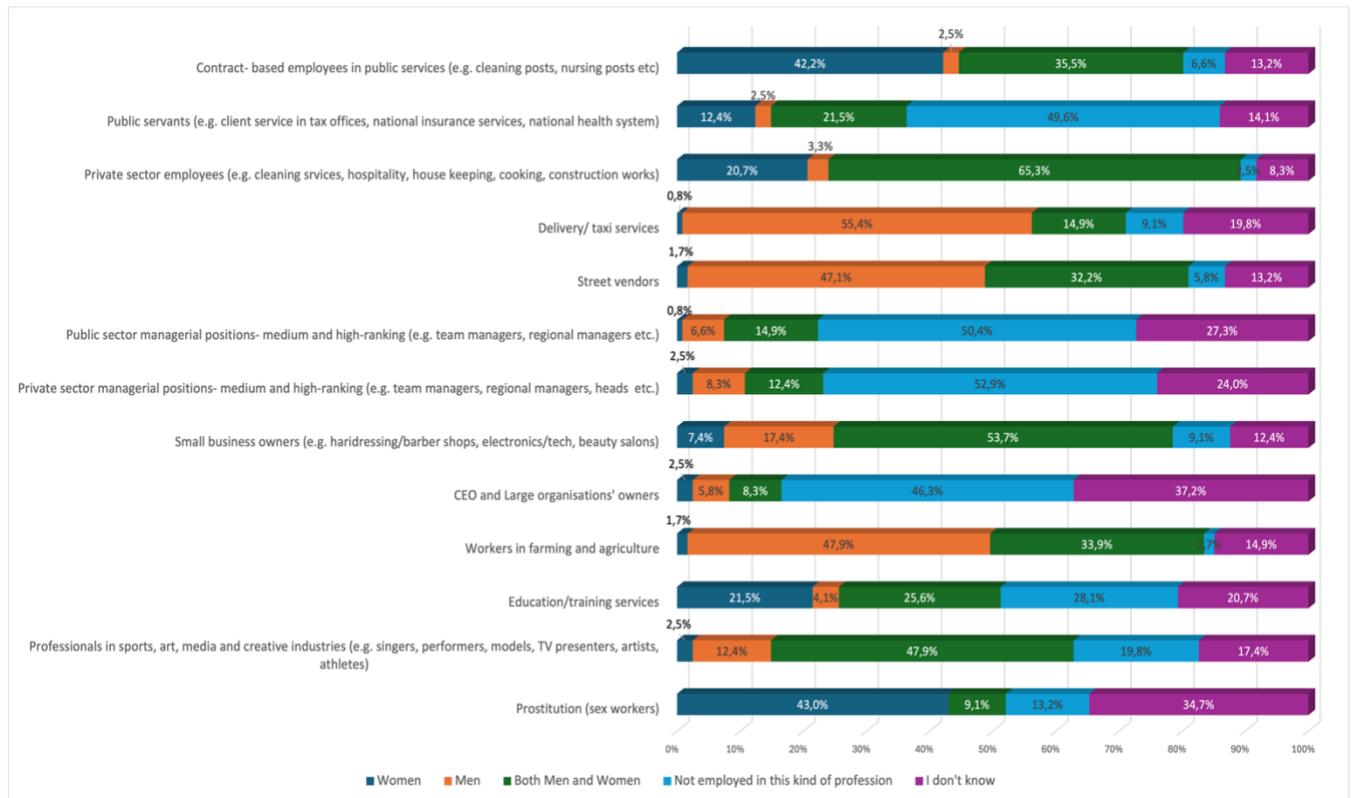
As discussed in the Comparative Desk Research Report (Mastora et al., 2024), Spain offers the most comprehensive legal framework addressing matters of discrimination, racism, Afrophobia and hate speech, as well as of racial equality in employment, both at a national and regional level. Both the legislative framework and due to the fact that Spain is a much more multicultural society (given the large numbers of Spanish citizens of Latin American origin), the Afrodiaspora in the country faces different challenges than in the other two countries. We therefore anticipate a rather different picture in the public understanding and assumptions about the forms of labour in which the Afrodiaspora in Spain engages.

³⁴ Papadantonakis, M. (2019). Black Athenians: Making and Resisting Racialized Symbolic Boundaries in the Greek Street Market. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 49(3), 291-317. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241619891229> (Original work published 2020)

³⁵ Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. Bashir Omar, M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2025)a. *D2.3 Focus Groups*. Deliverable submitted to the European Commission within WP2. Dissemination Level: Sensitive. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500)

Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. Bashir Omar, M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2025)b. *D2.4 Roundtables*. Deliverable submitted to the European Commission within WP2. Dissemination Level: Sensitive. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500).

Figure 9. Perceptions about Afrodiasporic modes of employment (or forced labour) -Data from Spain



Although low ranking posts in contract-based jobs across the public domain is primarily a job where Black women are employed (42,2%), respondents in Spain see here both men and women (35,5%). An illustrative finding indicating that non-white citizens and citizens of the Afrodiaspora are possibly better integrated in Spain, than in Italy and Greece, is reflected in how many respondents report seeing both women and men in different forms of employment: as public servants (21,5%), as small business owners (53,7%), as workers in farming and agriculture (33,9%), in education/training jobs (25,6%), as street vendors (32,2%). In posts such as medium and high-ranking positions across the public (14,9%) and private sector (12,4%) that Black people in Italy and Greece are rarely seen to occupy, in Spain, there is some visibility of the Afrodiaspora. The very small percentages of men (5,8%) or men and women (8,3%) reported as CEOs or large organisation owners, is a small but still suggestive indicator that social and cultural integration in the country, as well as people’s attempts to ensure upward mobility, is not entirely unrealistic. This does not mean that challenges such as racial profiling, discrimination, social marginalization and Islamophobia do not still prevail in the country (see for example Sole´ & Parella, 2003; Agudelo-Suárez et al., 2009)³⁶; as well as a culture of silencing the Afrodiasporic identity within Spanish collective memory and

³⁶ Sole´, C., & Parella, S. (2003). The labour market and racial discrimination in Spain. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 29(1), 121–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183032000076759>

society, broadly deriving from how the country negotiates its colonial past (Borst, 2021)³⁷. At the same time, academic discourse raises the issue of the vulnerability of African women working in agriculture in the country (Loezar-Hernández et al., 2025),³⁸ focusing on labour and sexual harassment as key issues for said working women. Last but not least, the academic discourse on the Afrodiaspora in Spain is also context-specific, in that there are ongoing discussions about certain Afrodiasporic people who seem to carry a heavy social burden of invisibility and unequal economic opportunities such as for example Equatoguinean women (Aixelà-Cabré, 2020)³⁹.

A final observation to be made at this point (given that this report does not allow for extensive analysis and discussion of the quantitative findings) is the 43% of respondents who see African women either working as prostitutes or being forced into sex labour. The condition of female sex workers of African descent is a persisting one across all countries and apart from being real for many Black women, it is also a stereotypical narrative within which Black womanhood is being understood, since it is sustained and reiterated by western sexist colonial discourses of the 'exotic black female body' (Sharpley-Whiting, 1999; Waring, 2013; Tsaliki, 2019)⁴⁰. It is therefore not just the reality of Black women who are employed as sex workers and prostitutes or forced into sex labour and the related challenges or traumas (e.g. García-España, 2019)⁴¹, but it is also how they are being constructed within collective understandings of Black women's sexuality, something that holds for all countries in this survey.

Apart from looking to understand how citizens of African descent (or mixed race) are understood by respondents in this survey, acknowledging that everyday and life observations regularly co-exist with collective social and cultural imaginaries, a practical question was asked - about whether respondents believe that the Afrodiaspora across Italy, Greece and Spain may potentially enjoy same rights as other citizens:

³⁷ Borst, J. (2021). Imagining Afrodescendance and the African Diaspora in Spain: Re-/Decentering Belonging in Literature, Photography, and Film. *Research in African Literatures*, 52(2), 168–197. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48679106>

³⁸ Loezar-Hernández, M., González-Rodríguez, A., Urrego-Parra, H. N., del Mar Jiménez-Lasserrotte, M., del Mar Pastor-Bravo, M., & Briones-Vozmediano, E. (2025, March). The vulnerability of migrant women working in agriculture in Spain: A qualitative study from the perspective of social and health professionals. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 109, p. 103065). Pergamon.

³⁹ Aixelà-Cabré, Y. (2020). The presence of the colonial past: Equatorial Guinean women in Spain. *Itinerario*, 44(1), 140-158.

⁴⁰ Sharpley-Whiting, T. D. (1999). *Black Venus: Sexualized savages, primal fears, and primitive narratives in French*. Duke University Press.

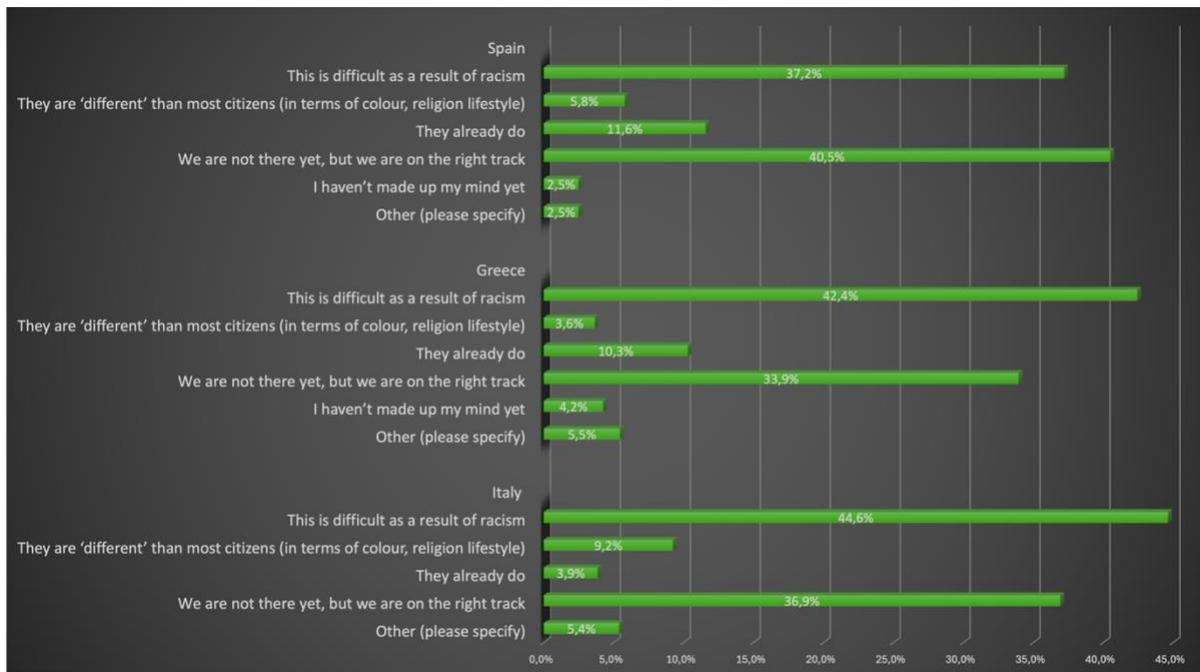
Waring, C. D. (2013). "They See Me as Exotic... That Intrigues Them:" Gender, Sexuality and the Racially Ambiguous Body. *Race, Gender & Class*, 299-317.

Tsaliki, L. (2019). The exoticisation of motherhood: The body politics of pregnant femininity through the lens of celebrity motherhood. *Feminist Encounters: A Journal of Critical Studies in Culture and Politics*, 3(1-2), 1-14

⁴¹ García-España, E. (2019). Human trafficking, sexual exploitation and African Women in Spain: Invisible Slaves of the Twenty-First century. In: A. Kalunta-Crumpton (Ed) *Violence against women of African Descent: Global perspectives* (pp. 173-190). Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books



Figure 10. Do you believe that Afrodiasporic citizens may potentially enjoy the same rights as other citizens?



The results are particularly telling in that across all countries, respondents mention that racism is the main reason why Afrodiasporic people cannot potentially enjoy full citizenship rights (ES:37,2%; GR:42,4%; IT: 44,6%). And although more than 1/3 in each country opines that the situation in their country is getting slightly better (ES:40,5%; GR:33,9%; IT: 36,9%), this optimism is still far from the reality that discrimination and prejudice on the basis of colour and ethnicity remains the key barrier in the social and cultural integration of the Afrodiasporas. Moreover, one needs to consider the severe backlash in human rights and racial equality in a social, political and cultural environment where hate speech and racist discourse unleashes with the rise of far-right ideologies within the EU but also in the aftermath of Donald Trump’s 2025 reelection. Donald Trump’s institutional attack upon Black people and communities at an economic (Walker, 2024)⁴², social and health (Amnesty

⁴² Walker, A. R. (2024). Trump-appointed judges strike down fund for Black female entrepreneurs. *The Guardian*. 4 June 2024. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/jun/04/black-women-business-grant-suspended-court>

International, 30 April 2025)⁴³, cultural and symbolic (The New York Times, 16 March 2025)⁴⁴ level in the USA and across Africa, following the severe cutting in USAID funding (Chironda, 2025),⁴⁵ opens the space for the intensification of racist attacks and the mainstreaming of stereotypical and racist attitudes towards non-white people.

3.3. Discrimination, racism and Afrophobia: public perceptions and critical reflections

Respondents have been asked about issues of discrimination and racism against the Afrodiaspora in their countries.

As the figure below shows, about 38% of people in total report that they haven't witnessed or do not remember any form of discrimination against the Afrodiaspora. This number may imply that racism does not always translate in visible and explicit forms of attack. Invisible forms of racism, covert and congenial racism, or even the reproduction of stereotypical attitudes and sets of knowledge that are not categorized as racist, frequently go below the radar and as a result are not reported or understood as such (Turra, C., and G. Venturi, 1995; Sierra, 2024; Quintero Ramírez 2017)⁴⁶. Nevertheless, one should also notice that some people may indeed be unaware of incidents of discrimination against Black people, especially those who do not share everyday life, work or social experiences alongside Black citizens, or may have never experienced any such.

⁴³ Amnesty International (2025), President Trump's First 100 days: Attacks on Human Rights, Cruelty and Chaos. *Amnesty International*, 30 April 2025. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/04/president-trumps-first-100-days-attacks-on-human-rights/>

⁴⁴ Black Lives Matter Plaza is Gone. Its Erasure Feels Symbolic. *The New York Times*, 16 March 2025 <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/16/us/black-lives-matter-trump.html>

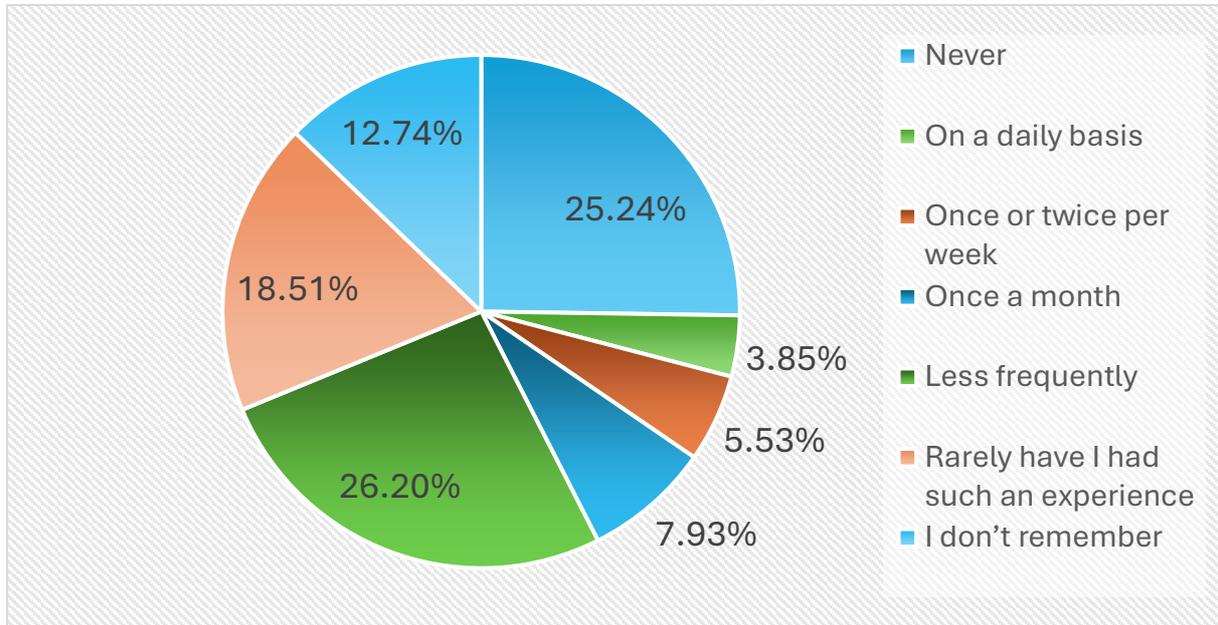
⁴⁵ Chironda, M. (2025). Africa: USAID Funding Freeze Puts Millions of Women at Risk. *AllAfrica.com*, 2 April 2025. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202504020329.html>

⁴⁶ Sierra, M. (2024). On the trail of banal racism: a Gypsophile genealogy of Romaphobia. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 30(2), 253–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14701847.2024.2370146>

Turra, C., and G. Venturi. (1995). Racismo cordial: a mais completa análise sobre o preconceito de cor no Brasil. São Paulo: Editora Atica.

Quintero Ramírez, O. (2017). "Aprendiendo la 'R': racialización y racismo prosaico en escuelas bogotanas." *Revista Antropologías del Sur* 4 (8): 105–125. <https://doi.org/10.25074/rantros.v4i8.759>

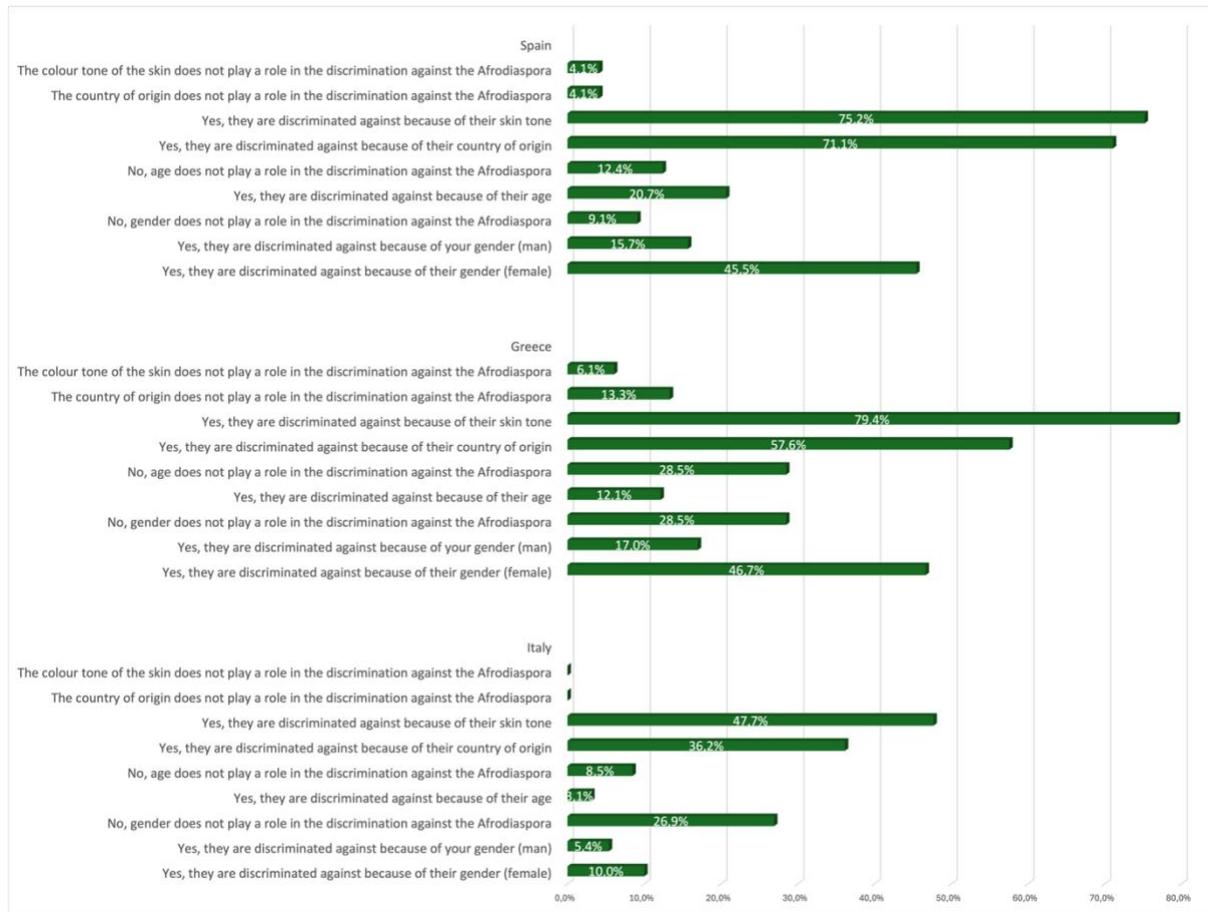
Figure 11. Knowledge holders reporting having witnessed forms of discrimination/racism (all countries)



Those who report having witnessed forms of discrimination and Afrophobia against the Afrodiaspora, amount to approximately 2/3 of the respondents. Although it is challenging to expect respondents to quantify how many times they might have witnessed an act of racism or discrimination, the data illustrate how mainstream it is to witness such acts in the public space and how deeply embedded different forms of discrimination are.

Having been asked about which factors they believe engender discrimination against the Afrodiaspora, skin tone and ethnic origin rank on top across all countries. Although in Spain and Greece the numbers are higher, as seen in the figure below, skin tone also gathered most responses in Italy.

Figure 12. Factors engendering discrimination

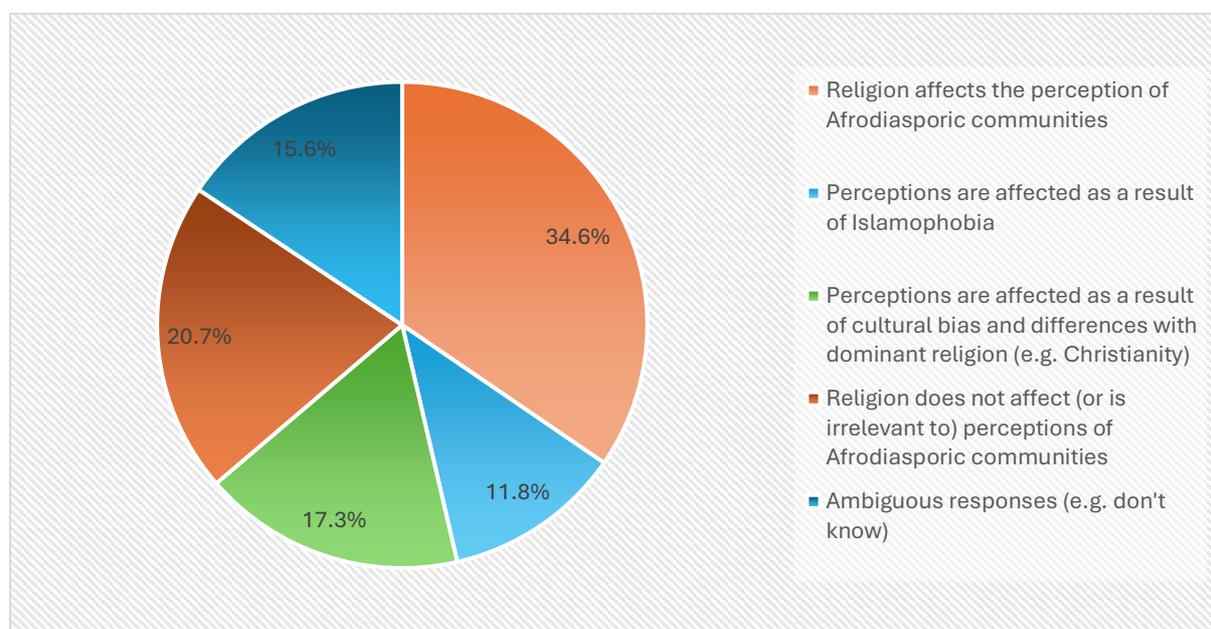


As expected, more than 2/3 of the respondents in Greece and Spain attribute racism and different forms of discrimination to people’s skin tone (ES: 75,2%; GR: 79,4%) or country of origin (ES: 71,1%; GR: 57,6%). Although the same figures are smaller in Italy (skin tone: 47,7%; country of origin: 36,2%), they are still considered the most important factors of discrimination and racism against the Afrodiaspora. Especially in Greece and Spain, respondents also acknowledge the extent of sexism (ES: 45,5%; GR: 46,7%) in discrimination against women of the Afrodiaspora, which leads us to talk about how Black women face extensive misogynoir (Noble & Palmer, 2022)⁴⁷ and multiple discrimination. Although in Italy the figure is a lot smaller (10%) and in fact, about 1/3 of respondents (26,9%) deny that gender plays a role in discriminations against the Afrodiaspora, the problems remain that markers of colour, ethnic identity and gender are heavily shaping cultures of discrimination against non-white, non-western people and against women within said cultural groups. Although the

⁴⁷ Noble, D., & Palmer, L. A. (2022). Misogynoir: Anti-blackness, patriarchy, and refusing the wrongness of black women. In *The Palgrave handbook of critical race and gender* (pp. 227-245). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

AFROEQUALITY e-survey does not provide data from a representative sample of the host populations, the data provided reflect ongoing academic and policy discussions about issues of multiple discrimination against Black people across Italy (Moscatelli, 2011)⁴⁸, Spain (Cea D’Ancona, 2023)⁴⁹ and Greece (Grigoriadou, 2018)⁵⁰. In this respect, AFROEQUALITY **acknowledges that initiatives, legislation and societies more broadly need to constantly work towards addressing a condition of multiple discrimination against the Afrodiaspora across all countries**. And although national and EU bodies, monitoring mechanisms as well as research organisations, provide recommendations and action plans towards legislative reforms that tackle the issue of multiple discrimination (e.g. Sarris et al., 2018)⁵¹, the latter (especially against women) persists and shapes constructions of non-white and non-western individuals and populations. The aim to address and combat multiple discrimination, therefore, implies **debunking dominant narratives about race, ethnicity and gender**, which coexist and inform each other. In the process, debunking dominant narratives also entails **acknowledging one’s own predominantly white, western, male and cis- gender privilege**, which is in many cases an uncomfortable condition for western societies.

Figure 13. Religion’s role in perceptions about the Afrodiaspora (all countries)



⁴⁸ Moscatelli, S. (2011). The multiple discrimination in the European and Italian context. *Acta Jur. Hng.*, 52, 316.

⁴⁹ Cea D’Ancona, M. a. Á. (2023). Racial discrimination, Black identity, and critical consciousness in Spain. *Race and Social Problems*, 15(2), 187-200

⁵⁰ Grigoriadou, D. (2018). Vulnerable social groups and multiple discrimination in Greece: Face-to-face interviews with six targets groups in the Attica region. *Tackling multiple discrimination in Greece*, 167-187

⁵¹ Sarris, N. (2018). The legislative framework for tackling multiple discrimination in Greece: theoretical approach, best practices and results from surveys. *Tackling multiple discrimination in Greece*. Athens: Ion Publishing Group and EKKE (National Centre for Social Research), 61-103.

The AFROEQUALITY e-survey asked an open question about the role of religion in affecting perceptions about the Afrodiasporic identity. The open-ended answers were grouped together and coded thematically in order to provide a quantified version of the results. As figure 13 shows, about 36,3% of responses include a) people's observations and opinions that religion does not affect perceptions about the Afrodiaspora b) people who mention not having an opinion about the matter. Nevertheless, 63,7% of responses collected mention that religion does play a role in how the Afrodiaspora is being understood and constructed, while observations or opinions that negative perceptions are a result of Islamophobia cover some 11,8% of the responses. The issue of religion as a shaping factor of perceptions about different groups of non-white, non-western citizens and particularly the issue of Islamophobia (markers of which are assumed to be the skin tone, the country of origin and clothing elements such the hijab), emerge in both the respondents' observations in this survey but also in the context of Focus Groups.

Islamophobia and the construction of Islam as a cultural and actual threat for western societies and especially countries with strong Christian culture (such as Greece, Italy and Spain) are consistently a topic of academic and policy enquiry within relevant discourses. As Galindo-Calvo et al. (2020)⁵² observe, there is an intensification of Islamophobia in the last decade both across Europe and more specifically in Southern Europe, with repercussions across social, political, economical, labor, educational, religious and cultural spaces. Their argumentation is based on a mixed methodology analysis of constructions of Muslim identity and groups in online discourse and an analysis of national victimization surveys, statistics of national hate crimes and data from national and EU observatories and other monitoring mechanisms.

As already noted this survey reflects how people in Greece, Spain and Italy think about the Afrodiaspora. It also reflects dominant narratives and assumptions about Afrodiasporic people within host societies, narratives that foster and frequently reinforce stereotypical and racist behaviours. In the next section we discuss the findings and of the qualitative research activities and contribute recommendations emerging from Afrodiasporic people's experiences.

⁵² Galindo-Calvo, P., Jiménez-Roger, B., Cantón-Correa, F. J., & do Nascimento Esteves-Mateus, M. (2020). Islamophobia in southern Europe: the cases of Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal. In *Social Problems in Southern Europe* (pp. 35-49). Edward Elgar Publishing



4. The knowledge holders' voice: Findings from Focus Groups and Roundtables

Through Focus Groups (T2.3) and Roundtables (T2.4), the partnership aimed at collecting experiences and knowledge pertaining to how members of the Afrodiaspora (including prominent figures of African communities and Greek celebrities of African Descent) are talking about race, identity politics, citizenship and African cultures. In the process, such activities were also expected to generate knowledge about incidents and experiences of racism and discrimination, hate speech, Afrophobia and stereotypical constructions of Africanness.

Knowledge holders were recruited through each national team's networks with an invitation to communities and organisations to which the latter responded after being informed about the nature and objectives of the AFROEQUALITY project and of the activity in which they were invited to participate. They all signed an informed consent form prior to commencing each activity.

To achieve data comparability and an as much as possible unified coding of data, NKUA developed a single methodological tool (interview guide) for each activity in English, which was then translated in Greek, Spanish and Italian, for two reasons: a) to ease implementation of each activity in the national language and b) adjust the terminology and concepts raised in the national context. Each team developed a national report of the findings of each activity, focusing on the topics that mattered the most for knowledge holders in each country. Therefore, the findings and recommendations in this section of the Integrated Afroequality Report reflect the needs and specificities of each culture.

4.1. Topics of discussion and information about our knowledge holders

4.1.1 Focus Groups

As mentioned already, the Focus Groups organised gave us insight into ,knowledge holders' experiences and life trajectories wherein information about cultures, social relations, racism and Afrophobia was extensively shared. The discussion agenda developed included introductory questions related to the background and demographics of the participants, followed by sets of questions related to key points of inquiry:

- √ Bringing home cultures in Greece/Italy/Spain
- √ Role of faith/Church/religion in everyday life and cultural practices

- ✓ Being a ‘good’ person- modes of propriety
- ✓ Racism and Afrophobia
- ✓ Participation in empowerment activities

As seen in the table below, twenty six (26) individuals participated in the Focus Group activity across the three countries. The partnership ensured that both men and women took part in the activity. Since the issue of gender identity is a culturally specific and sensitive personal information, the teams did not ask participants to self- identify unless they themselves would choose to do so. For this reason, this report chooses to use the ‘male’ and ‘female’ identifiers in the table below. Eight (8) belong to the 17-30 years old age group, five (5) to the 30-45 years old age group, and three (3) to the 45-60 years old age group. For eight (8) knowledge holders, no specific age information was provided.

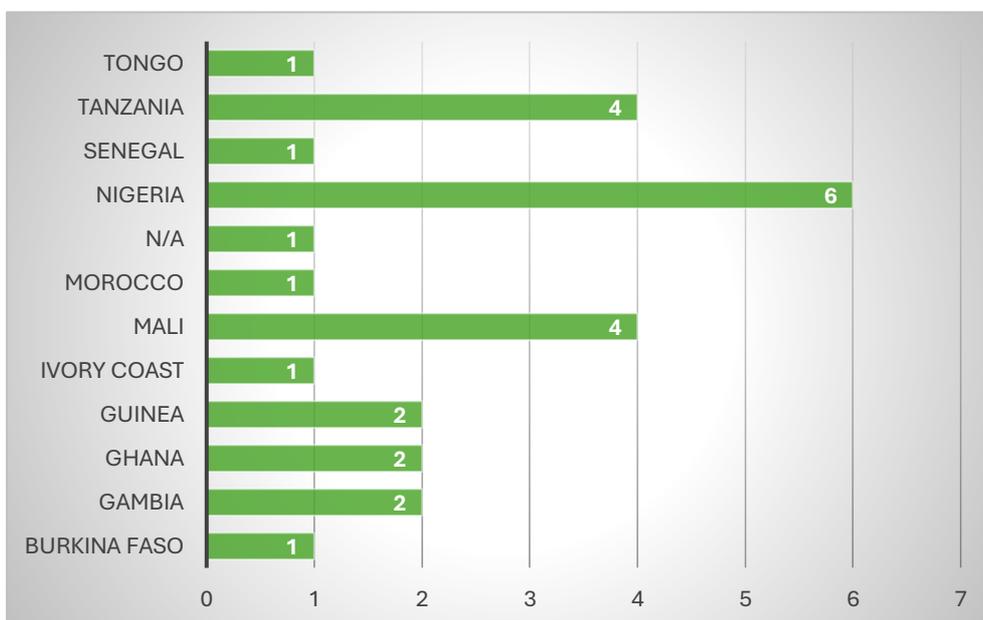
Table 1.Focus Groups’ knowledge holders

No.	Country of implementation	Gender	Age	Country	Occupational status
1	Spain	Male	N/A	Spain/Gambia	Employed
2	Spain	Male	N/A	Mali	Employed
3	Spain	Female	N/A	Ivory Coast	Employed
4	Spain	Female	N/A	Morocco	Employed
5	Spain	Male	N/A	Senegal	Student
6	Italy	Female	17	Mali	Student
7	Italy	Male	17	Guinea	Student
8	Italy	Female	49	Nigeria	Employed
9	Italy	Female	44	Nigeria	Employed
10	Italy	Female	40	Nigeria	Employed
11	Italy	Female	36	Nigeria	Unemployed
12	Italy	Female	40	Nigeria	Employed
13	Italy	Female	38	Nigeria	Employed
14	Italy	Male	N/A	Gambia	Employed
15	Italy	Male	N/A	Burkina Faso	Student
16	Italy	Male	21	Guinea	Employed
17	Italy	Male	28	Mali	Employed
18	Italy	Female	17	Mali	Student
19	Greece	Male	N/A	Tongo	Employed
20	Greece	Male	55	Tanzania	Employed
21	Greece	Male	61	Tanzania	N/A
22	Greece	Male	52		N/A
23	Greece	Female	25	Tanzania-Greece	Student

24	Greece	Female	20	Ghana-Greece	Student
25	Greece	Female	20	Ghana-Greece	Student
26	Greece	Female	52	Tanzania	Employed

The majority of our knowledge holders came from Nigeria, followed by Tanzania and Mali. Participants in Italy were all born in their respective home countries before embarking on their migration journey. In contrast, Spain had two second-generation migrants in the focus group, while Greece had three. This generational difference was apparent in how participants reflected upon their relationship with their African ethnic identity, since some of them have never lived in their maternal or paternal country of origin, nor do they speak the African ethnic language (as in the case of Greece).

Figure 14. Countries of origin



The table has been generated for D2.3 Deliverable (Focus Group Report) of this project (Mastora et al., 2025a)

Finally, sixteen (16) participants were employed at the time of the activity implementation, eight (8) were college/university students and one (1) was unemployed. For two (2) knowledge holders, no specific information about employment status was provided.

Not all our participants migrated from an African country to Spain, Italy and Greece. In fact some of them are the offspring of people who moved to any of the three countries to study, then got married and stayed on permanently. Nevertheless, such a condition never made the

experience of colour and race less challenging, and at times traumatic, for them. As mentioned in the Focus Groups Report (Mastora et al., 2025a)⁵³, for those who migrated from an African country to either Greece, or Italy or Spain, a number of reasons shaped their decision to do so:

- **Economic Hardship:** The majority cited poverty and lack of opportunities as their primary reason for leaving. Many migrated without having a concrete plan, driven by the hope of securing a better future.
- **Conflict and Political Instability:** Armed conflict, violence, and political tensions forced some participants to flee, making it impossible to live safely and with dignity in their home countries.
- **Environmental Disasters:** Drought and other harsh climate conditions devastated agricultural livelihoods, pushing some to seek a more stable environment.

4.1.2 Roundtables

For the Roundtables, twenty (21) people joined the roundtables across the three countries. They represented institutions and organizations including academic bodies (3), public institutions (2), migrant associations (3), CSOs (12), and one public figure.

Table 2. Types and number of participating organizations

Country	Academia/Research centers	Public Institutions	Associations of Migrants	CSOs	Public figures	Total
Greece	1		2	3	1	7
Italy		1	1	4		6
Spain	2	1		5		8
Total	3	2	3	12	1	21

More specifically, stakeholders including NGO field experts, public and academic bodies’ representatives, CSO representatives and one celebrity of African descent, as well as representatives of African voices, were invited to share knowledge about matters of interest to the Afrodiaspora in each country. They were also invited to share information about the challenges individuals and groups face in each national context. In the process, they were also invited to provide feedback on the activities planned for the AFROEQUALITY project. The agenda for the Roundtables’ discussion included the following topics:

⁵³ Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. Bashir Omar, M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2025)a. *D2.3 Focus Groups*. Deliverable submitted to the European Commission within WP2. Dissemination Level: Sensitive. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500).

- ✓ Current legal and policy frameworks regarding Afrodiasporic people
- ✓ People of African Descent integration in the host countries (attitudes of the members of the host country-positive or discriminatory, racist behaviours, main challenges and needs identified through the work with the Afrodiaspora, etc.)
- ✓ Feedback on AFROEQUALITY project and activities, with a focus on upcoming empowerment activities.
- ✓ Explore possible synergies and establish an informal network to support the project activities.

4.2. Key findings from Focus Groups (T2.3) and Roundtables (T2.4) Activities

The WP2 Focus Groups and Roundtables activities, planned and implemented to give voice to members of the Afrodiaspora across the three countries, brought forward the multifaceted nature of citizenship. In this section of the report we emphasize on how citizenship is being conceptualised through cultural and social routines of everyday life, cultural expression and collective action. Experiences of racism and Afrophobia become in this context much more significant and political, highlighting how modes of ‘banal racism’ (Sierra, 2024)⁵⁴ (i.e. mundane, trivial forms of racial discrimination or identification such as repetitive questions on ones’ origin (apart from the country’s of residence), aesthetic comments on skin colour and texture, hair, clothing or modes of address). Those ‘forms of racial differentiation all carry a high charge of symbolic violence that moreover, manifests itself in experiences of daily suffering’ (Sierra, 2024: 257). What has been repeatedly identified in academic discussions as congenial racism, as ‘racismo cordial’ (Turra & Venturi, 1995)⁵⁵ or as prosaic racism (Quintero Ramírez, 2017)⁵⁶(e.g. allegedly ‘harmless’ jokes about race, colour etc), become a condition in which members of the Afrodiaspora learn to live within a ‘banality of racism’ (Dei et al., 2004)⁵⁷. In this context, fear, everyday forms of violence and rights or expression violation, are life experiences and parts of people’s life trajectories in the countries where they either migrated or were born. In the context of the Focus Groups and Roundtables

⁵⁴ Sierra, M. (2024). On the trail of banal racism: a Gypsophile genealogy of Romaphobia. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 30(2), 253–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14701847.2024.2370146>

⁵⁵ Turra, C., and G. Venturi. (1995). *Racismo cordial: a mais completa análise sobre o preconceito de cor no Brasil*. São Paulo: Editora Atica.

⁵⁶ Quintero Ramírez, O. (2017). “Aprendiendo la ‘R’: racialización y racismo prosaico en escuelas bogotanas.” *Revista Antropologías del Sur* 4 (8): 105–125. <https://doi.org/10.25074/rantros.v4i8.759>

⁵⁷ Dei, G. J. S., Karumanchery, L. L., & Karumanchery-Luik, N. (2004). CHAPTER SIX: The Banality of Racism: Living “Within” the Traumatic. *Counterpoints*, 244, 127–146. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42979562>

activities then, the national teams aimed at: a) identifying modes of citizenship in everyday cultural, social and political practices and b) how those practices (traditions, values, religious beliefs, culinary and clothing cultures) are performed in a context of ‘banal racism’ wherein members of the Afrodiaspora are expected to adapt. At this point and prior to moving to a discussion of the findings, we should note that we take on a notion of citizenship as a broad collection of practices and manifestations of identity through which people experience and live in the societies and cultures where they reside, as well as through the ways in which they claim a position within those societies.

4.2.1. Focus Groups

To explore everyday forms of citizenship and how members of the Afrodiaspora across the three countries reflect upon issues of integration and upon experiences of racism and Afrophobia, Focus Group discussions focused on five thematic areas : a) bringing home cultures in hosting countries b) the role of faith/religion in everyday life and cultural practices c) modes of propriety – on being a ‘good’ person d) racism and Afrophobia e) potential participation in empowerment activities.

4.2.1.1 Bringing home cultures in hosting cultures

This thematic section aimed at understanding how members of the Afrodiaspora in Greece, Spain and Italy connect with their African origin, whether they are first or second generation migrants, or mixed-race citizens. Home, paternal or maternal African cultures are manifested in different-yet-shared ways in our countries of interest.

In Greece, sustaining elements of African identity relates to: **speaking or being familiar with the maternal or paternal language** (this is different between first and second-generation migrants), to **learning or practicing religion**, to **being part of one’s own ethnic African community** where collective cultural and social practices take place. It also relates to travelling to the country of origin in Africa, and last but not least to how traditions and values pass on through **maternal cultural upbringing**. Motherhood is acknowledged as significant in how children learn their African heritage (dressing cultures, religion and language of the African country of origin). In cases where the father is Greek and “the extent of integration of the African culture decreases significantly” (Mastora et al., 2025a: 21)⁵⁸, the role of motherhood in passing on key elements of the ethnic culture becomes even more significant

⁵⁸ Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. Bashir Omar, M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2025a). *D2.3 Focus Groups*. Deliverable submitted to the European Commission within WP2. Dissemination Level: Sensitive. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500).

for sustaining one's own Black identity. When it comes to strong elements of cultural identity, such as hair cultures, young Greek women whose father is of African descent, stress **the significance of learning about hair cultures and hair care by their fathers**. In a context where hair is a site of perennial expressions of racism (and cordial racism) ("*How is your hair like that, can a comb get through that?*" or "*You don't need a pillow.*", Woman, 20, GR), sustaining and acknowledging in the public context of Focus Groups **the cultural and political significance of hair, is a manifestation of what 'inclusive citizenship' connotes** (Ngandu-Kalenga Greensword, 2022)⁵⁹.

In the case of Italy, **cultural practices and participants' African cultural identity emerges in the broader context of the politics of identity**. And it manifests 'not only as a right but also as a kind of a "litmus test" to assess a community's ability to preserve its cultural heritage, despite the challenges of integration' (Mastora et al, 2025a: 21). It therefore has a broader political significance in how it is performed and sustained since it is directly linked with issues of integration and citizenship. Culinary traditions, clothing and dressing cultures, celebrations and customary practices are debated amongst participants. **A significant part of the group feels that manifesting cultural identity through customary practices** like traditional clothing, evokes feelings of discomfort, engaging them in a **tug-of-war between asserting cultural identity and a pressure to socially adapt**. Such pressure does reflect ways in which cultural self-policing is a result of a lack of social acceptance. Also, although acknowledged as spaces of community, sustainability and intercultural exchange by most participants, **second-generation knowledge holders expressed a weakened need to visibly perform their cultural identity**; this may be a result of either an eagerness to integrate in the country more fully or of the need to avoid experiencing othering, discomfort or even discrimination.

Within Italian focus groups, the partnership monitored the broader claims to social inclusion and integration. In Spain on the other hand a rather straightforward process emerged. **Second generation citizens of the Afrodiaspora claimed more effective integration and a more nostalgic and romantic approach to preserving African cultural heritage**. This nurturing of cultural identity through practices of language learning, of **passing down oral histories and family historical trajectories or carrying on religious and social practices was seen as an act of resistance** and identity affirmation. Therefore, doing citizenship in the context of both Italian and Spanish focus groups meant performing cultural identity as an inherently political position. In fact, they further stressed how established institutions like education need to incorporate Black history, and African cultures in school curricula and cultural programs as the only way to effectively address persisting issues of stereotyping and misrepresentation of the Afrodiaspora in the country.

⁵⁹ Ngandu-Kalenga Greensword, S. (2022). Historicizing black hair politics: A framework for contextualizing race politics. *Sociology compass*, 16(8), e13015.



4.2.1.2 The role of faith/religion in everyday life and cultural practices

Religion and its role in how identities are shaped and negotiated (but also contested) is a particularly relevant matter for AFROEQUALITY and its effective implementation. It has therefore been particularly significant for the partnership to understand what religion means to different Afrodiasporic communities and what role it plays in the process of social and cultural integration. Especially in countries like Greece (and to an extent, Italy and Spain), **Islamophobia still holds and becomes a site of discrimination, also engendering multiple discriminations** (for example in the case of black Muslim women) (Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris, 2020; Zaphiriou-Zarifi, 2017)⁶⁰; therefore, **understanding how religion is lived and experienced, but also how it may engender discrimination and racist attitudes further is pertinent to planning AFROEQUALITY empowerment activities.**

Notwithstanding the strong Christian Orthodox culture in the country and how the Orthodox narrative permeates national identity and shapes how Greek society is organized at a political, legislative, social and cultural level, knowledge-holders who participated in the AFROEQUALITY research activities explain how religious spaces become loci of connection and belonging where cultural identity is asserted and reinvented. They **demonstrate a great deal of openness when it comes to other religions, proving how religion is a core element of sustaining one's cultural identity.** Elements from different religions and beliefs (i.e. elements of animistic beliefs hold a significant place and power in how certain African societies and cultures are shaped) are understood as **broader parts of shaping Afrodiasporic identities.** Religion also works as a site of intergenerational connection and dialogue. First-generation migrants practice religion more regularly:

"I go to a mosque on a Friday, I pray, and we have breakfast. Every year, we fast for 30 days. 30 days. Ramadan, we call it Ramadan"

Second-generation knowledge-holders though are instructed and taught to religious narratives and beliefs more with the aim of sustaining one's cultural trajectories, history and ethic (Tsaliki et al., 2023)⁶¹. For this reason, participants explained how it is mothers who sustain religious practices and pass them down to the next generations- especially to young girls.

⁶⁰ Kirtsoglou, E., & Tsimouris, G. (2020). Migration, crisis, liberalism: the cultural and racial politics of Islamophobia and "radical alterity" in modern Greece. In S. Gupta & S. Virdee (eds). *Race and Crisis* (pp. 128-146). London: Routledge.
Zaphiriou-Zarifi, V. (2017) Navigating (in)visibility : the everyday lives of African women in crisis Greece. PhD thesis. SOAS University of London. <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/26655>

⁶¹ Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. & Derzioti, O. (2023) 'Black girlhood and emerging sexual identities: sexual citizenship and teenage girls of African descent in Athens', *Journal of Gender Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/09589236.2023.2172558
<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/KPHPFRXRIFIYPTVJAUHT/full?target=10.1080/09589236.2023.2172558>

Discussions about religion in Italy are of a more political nature: They point out how Christianity is understood and manifested as the privileged religion - and so are people of African descent who self-identify as Christians. Contrary to what academic discourse shows (Dotti, 2020),⁶² **Italian knowledge-holders note that since Christian identity is an integral part of Italian national identity and culture, Black Catholics are more easily accepted within Italian society.** However, the Italian sample is relatively small and geographically specific, therefore not representative. On the other hand, **discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs, holds strong when it comes to Black Muslims and so are challenges for said religious group** (Alietti, A., & Padovan, 2013)⁶³. The latter underscore the lack of spaces to pray and practice their religion, discriminatory behaviours and attitudes towards Black Muslims and Muslim women wearing hijab, and not least stereotypical narratives about Islam and related cultural expressions of Muslim identity in news media and popular culture.

Finally, in Spain, religion did not emerge as a topic of extensive discussion and since it is also **a sensitive topic that may well cause discomfort**, the Spanish team avoided putting emphasis on it, per chance it made knowledge-holders feel uncomfortable. The few points made regarding religion and religious identity, focused on how **prejudice and stereotypes stemming from assumptions about race and religion impact upon social interactions within host society** and amplify the challenges of social and cultural integration.

Data from the Focus Group discussions underscore the multifaceted role of religion in how people of the Afrodiaspora shape and negotiate their identities, lives and experiences across all three countries. As mentioned in the AFROEQUALITY Focus Group Report, 'participants' experiences reveal that **religious identity is not fixed but negotiated in response to social context, generational change, and cultural hybridity**' (Mastora et al., 2025: 25). Data might not be extensive- however they do illustrate that religion, as an inherent part of the politics of identity for the Afrodiaspora, is of the essence in designing and implementing empowerment and collaborative activities aiming to combat racism and Aforphobia.

4.2.1.3 Modes of propriety – on being a 'good' person

Academic discourse has extensively contextualised how modes of propriety and shaping the self within a western neoliberal context is a result of colonialism, colonial sensibility and related social reforms and essentially an integral part of Black identity (e.g. Gordon, 1997; Rhodes, 2016; Wolcott, 2013; White, 2001; Mocombe et al., 2023)⁶⁴. Being a good person and

⁶² Dotti, G. (2020). Racism, xenophobia, and migration in Italy, a Post-Catholic country. *The Ecumenical Review*, 72(1), 37-47.

⁶³ Alietti, A., & Padovan, D. (2013). Religious racism. Islamophobia and antisemitism in Italian society. *Religions*, 4(4), 584-602.

⁶⁴ Gordon, E. T. (1997). Cultural politics of black masculinity. *Transforming anthropology*, 6(1-2), 36-53.

Mocombe, P.C., Tomlin, C., Mapfumo, E., & Murray-Sakumai, S. (2023). Black Assimilationism in Neoliberal Globalization. *Annals of Archaeology*, 5(1), 01-07.

shaping a neoliberal moral self, is gendered but also linked to religion. This is also how participants in Focus Groups reflected upon what ‘being a good person is’; **in Greece knowledge-holders contextualised morality in terms of gender, talking about what it means to be a good man and a good woman.** Most women elaborated on social expectations of women’s morality, which is also related to being respectful and living by religious values as taught within the family (Tsaliki et al., 2023)⁶⁵.

Italian knowledge-holders talked extensively about modes of propriety and the ethics of the self, both as universal but also as context specific constructions. As reported in the AFROEQUALITY Focus Group Report, half of them contend that morality is a matter of cultural heritage passed down through generations, defining a shared set of moral values and shaping a moral guide to how one should behave (Mastora et al., 2025a). The majority, however, opines that it is **mostly a context-specific condition, since the social and cultural context in which behaviours occur, shape what is considered ‘socially acceptable’ or not.** Family and education are considered the most significant spaces of learning about morality and respect, even though individuals’ life trajectories may lead them to adapt to the social and cultural standards of propriety within the society they live. Being a bad or good person has been discussed as a gendered condition too, emphasising on the prerequisite of mutual respect, healthy and peaceful coexistence between genders in a broader social context, where gender dynamics are shaping social relations overall. At the same time, however, it has been acknowledged that **gendered behaviours may invite different moral judgements. Women’s moral scrutinization is definitely more extensive than men’s:** ‘For instance, references were made to personal freedom and clothing choices, highlighting how decisions expressing female autonomy are sometimes seen as unjustifiable, eliciting harsh social judgments’ (Mastora et al., 2025a: 27)⁶⁶. Last but not least, **performing the moral self is according to the Italian knowledge-holders, also a result of the desire to be accepted by the community,** therefore what it means to be ‘good’ or ‘bad’ in a context where norms are rigid, is a particularly challenging process and one that requires careful curation of the ethical self.

In the context of the Spanish Focus Groups, the issue of neoliberal morality as an element of how Black identity is construed, emerged more clearly. **Constructions of being a ‘good person’ are understood as part of a collective cultural identity and is embodied as a ‘collective burden’** in the sense that “behavior and actions are often viewed not just as

Wolcott, V. W. (2013). *Remaking respectability: African American women in interwar Detroit*. UNC: Press Books.

White, E. F. (2010). *Dark continent of our bodies: Black feminism & politics of respectability*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Rhodes, J. (2016). Pedagogies of Respectability: Race, Media, and Black Womanhood in the Early 20th Century. *Souls*, 18(2–4), 201–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999949.2016.1230814>

⁶⁵ Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D., & Derzioti, O. (2024). Black girlhood and emerging sexual identities: sexual citizenship and teenage girls of African descent in Athens. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 33(5), 645-657.

⁶⁶ Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D., Bashir Omar, M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2025a). *D2.3 Focus Groups*. Deliverable submitted to the European Commission within WP2. Dissemination Level: Sensitive. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500).

individual choices, but as reflections of the representative behavior of a group of people” (Mastora et al., 2025a: 30). Therefore, the **construction of morality and the Black neoliberal self, are complex constructions shaped as an individual and as a collective identity**. It is a constant process of negotiation, at times a process of resistance, and definitely a process wherein the Black individual’s curation of an ethical racial morality defines their life trajectories. Further, as noted in the AFROEQUALITY Focus Group Report, “being a good person was essentially about moral behavior, but sometimes also linked to navigating the additional pressures of (visually) representing an entire group of people in a society where prejudice often blurs the line between the individual and the collective” (Mastora et al., 2025a: *ibid*). A condition that Kobena Mercer has identified in the past as 'the burden of representation' (Mercer, 1990)⁶⁷.

4.2.1.4 Racism and Afrophobia

Experiences of racism and Afrophobia were extensive and covered a large part of each Focus Group in all countries. Most stories were about institutional racism, stereotypical assumptions about Blackness, African identity and Muslim identity, as well as about misogynoir, physical racist attacks, and not least, about challenges in cultural recognition of mixed-race families and individuals.

Knowledge-holders in Greece argue how racism does not just take place from white Greek people to AfroGreeks, citizens of African descent and Greeks of African descent (namely the Afrodiaspora overall), but it also takes place within and between different African communities - making challenges for social integration even more intense. Establishing from the very start that racism is a broader issue, **knowledge-holders prioritise the danger of verbal and physical racist attacks from fascist and far right groups** (most prominently groups affiliated with the Golden Dawn party) who regularly enjoy the institutional protection of police (Mastora et al, 2025: 31)

“The police, they refused us. And they were signaling to Chrysi Avgi (Golden Dawn) to beat us. So, this is the first thing, the one I face most is [this kind of] racism.”(Male, 55 years old from Tanzania)

At the same time, **hostility and well-embedded racial stereotypes within local societies and communities, create an unfriendly and unprotected space for Black citizens in the country**. As another knowledge-holder mentions, people shout on a regular basis *“Go away, you have no place in Greece”* (Male, 52 years old, country of origin N/A). **Institutional racism is experienced across a diverse array of authorities and public services**, with public servants, but also white Greek citizens, verbally attacking Black people (whether AfroGreeks, citizens

⁶⁷ Mercer, K. (1990). Black art and the burden of representation. *Third Text*, 4(10), 61-78.

of African descent or Greeks of African descent)⁶⁸: *'You are everywhere, why don't you go back to your country?'* (Female, 52 years old, Tanzania). As our participants explained, **the trauma from such forms of extreme racism is in several cases negotiated in a broader context of empowerment, when they respond to those attacks in their national language, or via reason and robust argumentation** (Mastora et al., 2025). According to participants who made this point, empowerment derives from neutralising the power of Whiteness asserted by the aggressor. Nevertheless, this is not a regular response to hate speech from the majority of Black individuals who, as already argued in the beginning of this section, **learn to embody the trauma of hate speech and Afrophobia**.

Knowledge-holders in Greece talk extensively about lack of education on race, and family teachings about racial othering, shape how people in Greece think of the Afrodiaspora. An example offered by a young knowledge-holder is particularly illuminating here:

*"I remember an incident in the kindergarten, when we had a problem with my sister with one of our shoes, which was hurting us, and our father brought us different ones. And from that time I realized how parents influence their children. **We were all sitting in a circle, and the children were pointing to where my father had sat and said: 'Don't sit there, the nigger sat there'**" (Female, 20 years old, Ghana-Greece)*

The lived experiences of racism and hate speech offered by our participants come in many forms: from banal and 'ignorant' racism, to physical and verbal attacks. This particular example manifests how a heavily loaded racist term (nigger) that is so easily uttered by a young person, reflects how those **attitudes and terms are available (most possibly legitimised too) within the domestic space and familial discourse**. This participant's traumatic memory also led to a pause in discussions within the Focus Group, with the NKUA team trying to compensate for what the knowledge-holder experienced. The memory, the experience and the response within the group, brought forward **the need for researchers, activists, policy makers and all related stakeholders to engage with 'diasporic thinking'** instead of talking about racism (Fizvi, 2015; Hall, 1978; 1980)⁶⁹, a concept with significant implications for public pedagogy about race. As mentioned in the Focus Group report, **Black people's hair, especially women's, became a distinguishing feature for many, but instead of admiration, it often led to objectification and exoticization** (see Tsaliki, et al., 2023;

⁶⁸ Carras, Iannis (2012) 'Is Greece a racist state?', Open Democracy, Available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/iannis-carras/is-greece-racist-state>, accessed 13 February 2013.

Law, I. (2014). Mediterranean Racisms: Connections and complexities in the racialization of the Mediterranean region. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁶⁹ Rizvi, F. (2015). Stuart Hall on racism and the importance of diasporic thinking. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 36(2), 264–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1013251>.

Hall, S. (1978). Racism and reaction. In B. Parekh (Ed.), *Five views of multiracial Britain* (pp. 56–70). London: Commission for Racial Equality.

Hall, S. (1980). Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance. In UNESCO, *sociological theories: Race and colonialism* (pp. 305–345). Paris: UNESCO.

Zaphiriou- Zarifi, 2017); but also **discomforting statements about someone being afraid of Black people when in the company of Black friends**. Such forms of cordial racism (in the case of hair) or banal racism (in the latter example), signify how normalised and everyday acts of racism and stereotypic assertions of Blackness take place and sustain everyday ideologies about the Afrodiaspora in Greece; they also shape Black identity in a context of ongoing trauma and exclusion, through the internalisation of stereotypical and discriminatory constructs of Blackness in Greece. Last but not least, **the complexity of understanding and negotiating mixed-race identity is what Greeks of African descent offered to the Focus Groups**. As young knowledge-holders note:

“We are three different things, neither Greek, nor Ghanaian, [but] somewhere in-between. We feel Greek, but there are behaviors that make you feel you do not belong” (Female, 20 years old, Ghana-Greece)

Last but not least, **mixed-race nationals also face challenges emerging from their social and cultural encounters with both Greek and Afrodiasporic people**. They are considered neither white nor Black, and as academic literature suggests, they are caught in between discriminatory and othering discourses that derive from colour but also from ethnic identity (Brennan, 2002; Daniel, 2002; Leverette, 2009)⁷⁰. According to their own accounts, **such a discriminatory condition, sustains a struggle for identity and belonging which is rarely acknowledged** since in both cases, colour is demonized for belonging to the ‘opposite’ racial group.

Knowledge-holders from Italy have also elaborated on issues of racism, Afrophobia and hate speech. **All of them reported experiencing different forms of racism**, from comments about their skin colour, to physical attacks (**one third of participants mention having experienced physical attacks**) (Mastora et al., 2025a: 33). **Attacks take place in different public spaces, such as schools, public transport and the street**, places of high visibility but also institutional spaces where victims of racism should be able to feel protected. Instead, as extensive academic literature (e.g. Mantovan, 2018; Small, 2019)⁷¹ and previous EU projects report (Revert project-Greece, 2019)⁷² **discriminatory behaviour across urban space and in public transport, comprises regular instances of racism and racist attacks against Black people**. Of

⁷⁰ Brennan, J. (2002). *Mixed race literature*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Daniel, G.R. (2002). *More than Black? Multiracial identity and the new racial order*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Leverette, T. (2009). Speaking Up: Mixed Race Identity in Black Communities. *Journal of Black Studies*, 39(3), 434-445. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934706297875>

⁷¹ Mantovan, C. (2018). ‘They treat us like criminals’: urban public spaces and ethnic discrimination in Italy. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 52(4), 338–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2018.1476209>

Small, S. (2019). Ethnicity, Race, and Black People in Europe. In: Ratuva, S. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Ethnicity*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0242-8_169-1

⁷² Revert Project (2018-2021). *Resilience without Violence, Resistance without Hate in Public Transport*. 809116 — REVERT — REC-AG-2017/REC-RRAC-RACI-AG-201. Available at: <https://www.revertproject.eu/en/home/>

particular significance to the project is that many of these racist behaviours fall into the category of **misogynoir**, since **more than half of the women who participated in the Italian Focus Groups, mentioned such incidents**. Misogynoir is a frequently experienced form of discriminatory behaviour targeting Black women both for their gender (misogyny) and colour (racism), rarely raised however in other contexts than in feminist research and critique (Tsaliki et al., 2023; Hawthorne, 2023)⁷³. An interesting point raised within the Italian group relates to how **Black citizens are described or called in policy making and formal discourse. Two thirds of knowledge-holders (including some participants from the Roundtables activities in Greece), mention the discomfort that the term ‘People of Colour’, or the abbreviation ‘POC’ makes them feel**. Whether invoking a discourse of homogenization, or understood as a stereotypical or even discriminatory term, this point underscores the need to think diasporically about race and the Afrodiaspora. Acknowledging the significance of this point for the nature and progress of AFROEQUALITY, **the partnership decided to change all terminology and references to: Afrodiaspora, citizens of African descent, Afro-Greeks/Italians/Spanish, Greeks/Italians/Spanish of African descent and the use of both nationalities for mixed-race citizens**.

The observations made in the Comparative Desk Research Report (Mastora et al., 2024), also emerge in the context of Focus Groups discussions through knowledge-holders’ accounts and lived experiences within the Greek, Italian and Spanish societies. The severe problems of discrimination, hate speech, Afrophobia and everyday and institutional racism have more extensively been discussed in the Greek Focus Groups. The political nature of experiencing racism and discrimination for being a Black Italian, an Italian of African Descent (or Afro-Italian) or a citizen of African descent in Italy, emerged more intensively in this country’s Focus Groups. In the case of Spain, the Comparative Desk Research Report identified the need to focus on issues of Islamophobia and institutional racism and banal racism, notwithstanding the improved state of inclusion and policy protection that the country is in. Here now follow knowledge-holders’ remarks on racism and Afrophobia in Spain: a primary remark concerns how underlying biases and systemic barriers affecting how people of the Afrodiaspora are understood in the country, not least in the case of people constantly looking over their shoulder when close to Black people, which demonstrates the extent of underlying social mistrust against the latter. Reflections of societal unease emerge in instances of banal and cordial racism (Sierra, 2024; Turra & Venturi, 1995), wherein discomforting and offensive questions about one’s ‘actual origin’ as well as other forms of patronizing politeness, occur on a regular basis. At the same time, systemic and institutional racism is still a problem in Spain, according to knowledge-holders and emerges predominantly at schools, public authorities, in public services and as a result of racial profiling.

⁷³ Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. & Derzioti, O. (2023) ‘Black girlhood and emerging sexual identities: sexual citizenship and teenage girls of African descent in Athens’, *Journal of Gender Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/09589236.2023.2172558

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/KPHPFRXRIFIYPTVJAUHT/full?target=10.1080/09589236.2023.2172558>.

Hawthorne, C. (2023). Black Mediterranean geographies: translation and the mattering of Black Life in Italy. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 30(3), 484-507.

4.2.1.5 Participation in empowerment activities

Among the topics of particular interest for us is the extent to which the Afrodiaspora across Italy, Greece and Spain would be interested to collaborate with the AFROEQUALITY partnership in the context of the empowerment activities of the project (WP3), where different forms of empowering collaborative activities are planned. The findings of this section are particularly educating in this respect:

Knowledge-holders in Greece argue that there is an **abundance of activities planned and implemented, wherein they are invited to participate and offer knowledge and experiences** (i.e. they invest personal and work time to participate in said activities). Nevertheless, as they also argue, **rarely do those activities (mostly taking place in the context of EU-funded projects) result in actual change both in their everyday lives or in what concerns policy making and legal issues of citizenship**. They do not therefore leave a meaningful and practical imprint in society. One reason for this is the **temporary duration of activities and short-term life of the projects, which does not guarantee long-term and beneficial results for those participating**. Moreover, participants underscore that the **different ways in which people of different origin perform citizenship**, rarely occupy public space or are highlighted. Those who have either been born, grew up or reside in Greece for more than a decade, do not consider themselves as potential participants/collaborators to empowerment activities. Instead, they argue, **it is the newcomers who are in most need of said activities as individuals who need to find their way to social and cultural integration**. All those observations made within the Focus Groups, have also been raised in the context of the National Advisory Boards and the Roundtables, the discussion of which follows below. Such conditions result in a limited interest for the Afrodiaspora across all three countries to participate in empowerment activities.

Knowledge-holders in Italy engage in a vivid debate during the discussion about potential participation in empowerment activities. **Most participants were younger than 30 years of age** and had recently arrived in Italy, therefore **did not meet the legal requirements to apply for citizenship**. A few participants were over 40, and have been in Italy for about 15-20 years, therefore had already become citizens. **The emerging status and emotions of precariousness and vulnerability contextualized the notion of citizenship as discussed in this thematic section** and also shaped the questions about whether those participants would be willing to join the empowerment collaborative activities. In fact, **they take the tool of residence and work permit as a mechanism for social exclusion and not as contributing to achieving social integration**. Such a state of precarity in everyday life, but also an everyday experience of **social and systemic marginalization, does not motivate people to participate or join empowerment activities**, which, as already mentioned, are usually short-term and do not have an actual impact on their lives. As reported in the Focus Group report (Mastora et al., 2025: 37),

“Several participants conveyed feelings of invisibility and a lack of recognition, underscoring how legislative barriers leave them feeling relegated to the margins and unable to build a stable, integrated future in Italy. Additionally, some noted that this condition leads to a perception of institutions as distant or unresponsive to their needs”

Life conditions in which Black people in Italy are excluded from civil rights, struggle to remain in the country in poor working conditions and constantly experience multiple discriminations, result in what has been observed in the Focus Group report (Mastora et al., 2025: 37), that “even with citizenship, invisible barriers remain that hinder full social acceptance, particularly for those who do not align with stereotypes of an “Italian citizen.” In this sense, **knowledge-holders prioritize activist action as well as engagement with grassroots movements and associations towards accelerating social integration processes for the Afrodiaspora** (Borst & Neu-Wendel, 2023)⁷⁴.

Focus Group participants in Spain talked along similar lines, **offering that social and activist action is broadly considered political (freedom of religious expression, community activities etc)** (León-Távora & Cornejo-Parriego, 2024)⁷⁵ **keep matters of significance such as citizenship and social rights high in the agenda** and serve as a counter-reaction against the political instrumentalization of the Afrodiaspora as a token of cultural diversity during elections. Therefore, instead of merely responding to whether they would be willing to participate in empowerment activities about citizenship, rights, racism and Afrophobia, participants **across all three countries offered valuable reflections of what citizenship, social inclusion and civic engagement mean to them**. These accounts matter the most for AFROEQUALITY activities planning and effective implementation, as they point at the very matters that interest Afrodiasporic people and organizations across partner countries.

4.2.2 Roundtables

Roundtables were conducted with the aim of mapping the main issues at stake for the Afrodiaspora across all three countries, as reported by Afrodiasporic communities representatives, prominent public figures of African descent or mixed race, activists and political figures belonging to the Afrodiasporic communities. Findings from the Roundtable activities have been organized by country, since different topics and issues emerged, reflecting the social, cultural and legal conditions for the Afrodiaspora in each country.

⁷⁴ Borst, J., & Neu-Wendel, S. (2023). Decolonized Bodies: Aesthetic Activism in Afrofeminist Blogs from France, Spain and Italy. *Women’s Perspectives on (Post) Migration*, 205.

⁷⁵ León-Távora, A., & Cornejo-Parriego, R. (Eds.). (2024). *Colonialist Gazes and Counternarratives of Blackness: Afro-Spanishness in 20th-and 21st-century Spain*. London: Taylor & Francis.

4.2.2.1 Challenges for citizenship -pressing matters for the Afrodiaspora in Greece

In Greece, two main issues emerged: **a)** the policy framework and challenges relating to acquiring Greek citizenship **b)** pressing matters for the Afrodiaspora in Greece.

Policy framework and challenges relating to acquiring Greek citizenship

Acquiring citizenship in Greece is a major issue for the Afrodiaspora (and all migrate and refugee populations). As knowledge-holders suggest, it is **a time consuming and complex process, due to, among other reasons, a hectic bureaucracy**, which is often made even more complex due to the ideological stance (and related measures) of the status quo and government policy, aiming at reducing refugee flows and citizenship procedures (Mastora et al., 2025b)⁷⁶. As a result, **the requirements of economic criteria and the naturalization exams have become stricter and reflect a securitization discourse towards any non-Greek or non-white citizen.**

Apart from the institutional barriers set by citizenship acquisition processes and legislation, the **lack of participation of representatives from the Afrodiaspora in decision making bodies** makes the process of social integration and advocacy for the rights of the Afrodiaspora even more challenging. Participants highlighted the lack of legal assistance to help them navigate through institutional hurdles and **the weak political efficacy of African vocies that lead to a weak support of their needs and claims**. As an official representative of an African community puts it (Mastora et al., 2025b: 12)m

“From what I see here, people are very disappointed—very much. And there are many reasons behind that. The communities you see here, they are only communities without action [...] People think that when we talk about help, we mean money. No. If there is somewhere where you can learn Greek, to have someone say ‘We can help you’—that’s important.”

As the representative notes, it is a **broader lack of trust in institutions** (even of their own communities) and sanguineness about the progress of society that makes people lose their interest to participate in activities and collective actions or contribute to communities. Together with **the inability to access information about services and support services discourages people further**. In this respect, knowledge holders stressed the need for monitoring racism and discrimination, furthering and pushing for policy developments and for producing robust academic research that supports public advocacy for the Afrodiaspora.

Pressing matters for the Afrodiaspora in Greece

⁷⁶ Mastora, L., Tsaliki, L., Chronaki, D. Bashir Omar, M., Caraballo, S., Pinyol-Jiménez, G. (2025b). *D2.4 Roundtables*. Deliverable submitted to the European Commission within WP2. Dissemination Level: Sensitive. Athens, NKUA: AFROEQUALITY Project (GA 101144500).

Knowledge-holders of the Roundtables in Greece are particularly concerned with the challenges the Afrodiaspora faces in the labour market as well as the skills that potentially guarantee a satisfying, good or appropriate job. Nevertheless, they stress that **language learning, education and training fall severely behind due to people joining the labour market**. Major financial constraints prevent them from joining programs and training, and at the same time, already acquired skills and experience are not necessarily recognised in jobs occupied. To add insult to injury, **discrimination based on nationality, race and ethnic origin, exacerbates further job search, making it more challenging** (even in cases where an NGO acts as an intermediary), leading to a concern shared by our knowledge-holders: racism across different arenas.

Racism and Afrophobia were the main running threads in participants' accounts- and more particularly: everyday racism, organized racist violence and institutional racism (Mastora et al., 2025b). Although participants acknowledged how the Afrodiaspora in Greece becomes slightly more visible due to prominent celebrities and public figures (of the likes of. Giannis Antetokoumpo, Jerome Kaluta, Emmanouil Karalis, Idra Kayne, Vegas, among many others), they also stressed that this does not translate into actual, lived change for the everyday lives of most Afrodiasporic communities. Even in the case of artists like Negros tou Moria, whose performance according to Papailias is "an act of citizenship – a claiming of visibility, rights and voice for those to whom these have not been granted" (2024: 523)⁷⁷, such celebrityhood does not seem to speak directly to the everyday reality of the Afrodiasporic layperson.

Returning to the issue of racism, and **notwithstanding small changes in the visibility of the Afrodiaspora, Roundtable participants offer that there is a mainstreaming, even an intensification, of everyday racism, impacting public life**, from prosaic racism (e.g. Howitt & Owusu-Bempah, 2005) to explicit verbal abuse⁷⁸:

"Even now, if I take the metro [underground], securing a seat will not be my first choice. I will first check that everyone else [in the carriage] is seated. I know I am not a citizen who has priority [...]. Due to colour, not age. I will check that everyone is ok, in order to minimize chances that someone comes up and tells me 'You are Black, get up'. And this has already happened to me..."

The next quote comes from a Greek mixed-race celebrity who reflects upon the constant self-censorship and policing when in public spaces. **The issue of everyday racism and the need to address how the stress of racism and of constantly being alienated even in one's own**

⁷⁷ Papailias, P. (2024). From Afrogreeks to the Black Mediterranean: De/facing whiteness in the rap of Negros tou Moria. In *The Routledge Handbook of Popular Music and Politics of the Balkans* (pp. 513-527). London: Routledge.

⁷⁸ Howitt, D., & Owusu-Bempah, K. (2005). Race and ethnicity in popular humour. In *Beyond a joke: The limits of humour* (pp. 45-62). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

country (as in the case of Greeks of African descent, mixed-race Greeks or Afrogreeks), was a recurring topic in the Roundtable discussions.

*“Most of us experience an everyday stress, ok, it is so embodied now **and in our nature, that wherever you are, you expect to hear something**. There is no way you will not hear something [berating].”*

The labour of coping with racism, of being constantly alert or being preoccupied with being attacked, runs across all instances of public as well as private social and cultural exchanges for the Afrodiaspora. It is therefore not just the overtly visible and hostile, organised, attacks against Black people from the Far Right that translates into what they experience as racism in the country. It is mostly the **embodied stress caused by the expectation to be attacked and insulted that shapes Afrodiasporic identity**, social performance and life trajectories (e.g. Essed, 2008; Dei et al., 2004)⁷⁹.

Institutional racism then becomes another space where Black people in Greece expect to experience discrimination, and racist behavior. Their **everyday encounters with public administration are a mere reminder that no space (institutional or other) can potentially be a safe space that guarantees a normal route to citizenship and social integration**, with no ability to offer them a sense of security from physical threat and violence.

“In 2010, 2012, 2013, we were going to the Police Precinct of Agios Panteleimonas to sue Golden Dawn— specific people, we were not speaking in general and vaguely. There were specific people, with names and surnames. - who were already there, at the Precinct, together with some MPs. And the Captain had received them in his office and we waited outside. He knew us by name. He said ‘N. are you here again? Go away, there is no need’”

As seen in the quote above, institutional racism is not just a form of racism experienced due to an exclusionary or restrictive legislative and policy framework. It is **manifested in everyday discourse within institutional spaces, in the discriminatory and unequal treatment of people who lack the privilege of colour and ethnicity**, and therefore are not seen as legitimate claimants of security and protection from the official state. As sharply put by a Roundtable participant,

“If you are not Greek, you are treated differently. But with Black people it’s different. Only if you are white, are you welcome to Greece.”

⁷⁹ Essed, P. (2008). Everyday Racism. In A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies (eds D.T. Goldberg and J. Solomos). <https://doi.org/10.1111/b.9780631206163.2002.00020.x>.

Dei, G. J. S., Karumanchery, L. L., & Karumanchery-Luik, N. (2004). CHAPTER SIX: The Banality of Racism: Living “Within” the Traumatic. *Counterpoints*, 244, 127–146. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42979562>

4.2.2.2. Building synergies and collaborations to promote civic participation and coexistence: Insights from Italy

The composition of the Italian Roundtables brought together experts, field-workers and representatives of intercultural associations who put the issues of racism and xenophobia in analytical perspective and mostly focused on the need for potential collaborations and strategies for promoting civic participation and coexistence. In the process, they placed particular emphasis on the role of institutional and Civil Society actors. As reported in the Roundtables Report (Mastora et al., 2025b:16), historically “there was a predominance of communities from West Africa (Senegal, Ghana), Egypt, and Tunisia; in recent years, there has been an increase in Bangladeshi communities, while those from Somalia, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Eritrea remain smaller in number”. Although younger generations (most prominently Gen Zs) are more active in civic and political participation, and work on social integration in diverse ways, there is **still a generational gap between them and first-generation communities who remain largely closeted and loyal to a more unalloyed perspective of cultural identity**. This perspective also extends to a tendency in maintaining traditional gender roles (observed in the Greek context too), which complicates social integration further. At the same time, **first-generation language barriers sustain challenges to social integration since they limit access to services and job opportunities**. On top of these actual, everyday challenges, sit prejudice and stereotypes about the Afrodiaspora, frequently leading to acts of racism, as does the **lack of educational policies and specific interventions to promote interculturality**. Last but not least, the culture of discrimination fostered and reinforced in this respect, results in the stigmatisation of whole communities, leading to the “the closure of certain communities, creating a vicious cycle that hinders integration processes and reinforces social divisions” (Mastora et al., 2025b:16).

To address the aforementioned issues, three priorities emerged in the context of the Roundtables in Italy: **a)** the role of institutional and civil society actors, **b)** the need for targeted strategies for promoting participation and coexistence and **c)** the need for synergies between different stakeholders with the aim of fostering a broader culture of decolonising dominant social and cultural narratives.

Knowledge-holders highlighted the inefficacy of the policy framework around inclusion, making unresolved issues like legal regularization, access to social, administrative, and housing rights even more intense. Apart from the need to solidify and implement inclusive intercultural policies, **social workers’ and related professionals’ training is of paramount importance in overcoming intercultural challenges**, as is the **support and intensification of academic research on the topics of inclusion, racism and Afrophobia**. As in the case of Greece, the need for representation of the Afrodiaspora in boards, political parties and bodies, is also considered as being crucial in what concerns effective institutional and civil society interculturality and integration.

Moreover, targeted, sustainable and long-term **strategies for promoting participation and coexistence** have also been underscored by the Roundtable knowledge-holders. Among the key frameworks proposed are **sustainable Intercultural Workshops** that stress the significance of preserving one's cultural heritage and identity (*"These workshops can help create a safe space where participants can explore their cultural identities and engage with other peoples experiences"*), while making alternative cultural histories and identities more visible. Afrodiasporic communities will be potentially further supported by implementing **Alternative Narratives Projects**, which foster a broader culture of decolonising dominant narratives about race, colour and ethnicity across different public arenas (e.g. media, academia, public discourse). An already existing grass-root culture of civic participation that is largely sustained by second-generation Afroltalians, Italians of African descent and mixed-race Italians, **Youth Inclusion programs** are expected to solidify the sense of belonging and promote social integration further. Last but not least, **Housing and Social Relations Orientation** is a concept expected to promote shared spaces and cultures of dialogue and social and cultural exchange among diverse social and cultural groups.

Strategies of the sort mentioned above will potentially be furthered by **Synergies between different stakeholders**, i.e. between **public institutions, academia, and intercultural associations**. Those synergies may encourage **knowledge transfer** of best practices and initiatives through, for example, permanent working groups and dedicated observatories. Such an intersectional dialogue between said stakeholders through **research, field work and policy making**, potentially advances a broader move towards decolonizing dominant narratives about race, fosters intercultural dialogue and makes a measurable impact upon the everyday lives of the Afrodiaspora.

4.2.2.3. A call to define the agenda against racism- Insights from Spain

In Spain, "Afro-descendants encompass a wide range of profiles, from North African nationals (mainly Moroccan) to Sub-Saharan African individuals (notably from Senegal and Gambia, though not exclusively)" (Mastora et al., 2025b:18). Nevertheless, **they are frequently constructed as a homogenous group of 'migrants' - denied therefore an acknowledgement of being citizens of the country**. On top of this, sits prejudice and persistent discourses of alienation and othering through which the Afrodiaspora in the country is seen, and a lack of role models or people in leadership positions who would serve as legitimising factors of the Afrodiaspora. Also, a severe **lack of awareness about the group-specific systemic barriers that the Afrodiaspora faces, among employers and the labour market more broadly** (see also Agudelo-Suárez et al., 2009)⁸⁰. According to the Roundtables Report therefore (Mastora et al., 2025), there is a **need to distinguish between racism and migration-related**

⁸⁰ Agudelo-Suárez, A., Gil-Gonzalez, D., Ronda-Pérez, E., Porthe, V., Paramio-Perez, G., García, A. M., & Garí, A. (2009). Discrimination, work and health in immigrant populations in Spain. *Social science & medicine*, 68(10), 1866-1874.

xenophobia, since the first is what deeply impacts upon the lives and trajectories of the Afrodiaspora in different everyday and systemic forms (Sos Racismo, 2024)⁸¹: “barriers in education, employment, and housing, with daily discrimination that often goes unnoticed by the wider society” (Mastora et al., 2025: 17).

A focus on how the complexity of Spain’s Immigration Law and employers’ limited understanding of such structural inequalities and a call among younger generations to reshape the narratives in the country (also a prerequisite in the Italian case) contextualised the Roundtable discussion in the country. Going further with the **issues relating to education and the need to be addressed at a structural level so that dominant narratives are decolonised**⁸², knowledge-holders in Spain underscored a) **the significance of incorporating courses about Black history and colonialism into school and university curricula** b) **the urge for educators to be taught ways of preventing discrimination at school and develop ways of supporting** (instead of discouraging) **young citizens of the Afrodiaspora to pursue tertiary education and professional success**. Although far-reaching, participants in the Roundtables explained how such moves are key tools in addressing structural inequalities – systematically experienced by young people of the Afrodiaspora.

Apart from the need for sweeping systemic changes in educational cultures and policies, Roundtable participants explain how targeted **practices need to take place to untangle the dominant ‘migrant’ discourse that denies the Afrodiaspora the right to be considered fundamental for Spanish society**. In this respect, supporting cooperatives belonging to entrepreneurs of the Afrodiaspora is an effective way of creating opportunities and overcoming systemic administrative hurdles. At another level, it was reminded how the media **often portray Africa and the Afrodiaspora through the discourse of forced migration and poverty, obscuring the diversity of ethnic cultures and histories**. In this sense, those misconstructions of African identities and cultures, of countries and histories, need to be made not just more visible but also more diverse in terms of representation, if the dominant narratives are to be stirred.

This last element links to the need for broader cultural visibility as a means to disturb dominant narratives and introduce alternative cultural narratives in the agenda. Self-managed spaces, celebrated about being autonomous cultural spaces of the Afrodiaspora, and projects such as the Itinerant African Film Festival in Catalonia (CICAP) and the theatre production *Periferias Cimarronas*, “were mentioned as examples of spaces for expression and reflection on the Afro-descendant experience” (Mastora et al., 2025: 18), but also spaces fostering civic and political participation.

⁸¹Sos Racismo (2024). Informe Anual: Racismo en el estado Español: La discriminación racial en el ámbito deportivo. Available at: <https://sosracismo.eu/informe-sos/>

⁸² Arday, J., Zoe Belluigi, D., & Thomas, D. (2020). Attempting to break the chain: reimagining inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 53(3), 298–313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1773257>



4.3. Final remarks emerging from Focus Groups (T2.3) and Roundtable (T2.4) Activities

The qualitative research activities implemented (Focus Groups and Roundtables) aimed at mapping the different needs and experiences of the Afrodiaspora in Greece, Italy and Spain, but also at shedding light to aspects of the different Afrodiasporic cultures which are rarely discussed in public and policy discourse (e.g. the media, in the context of policy-oriented EU funded projects).

Twenty-six people of diverse African ethnic background, different age groups and gender, contributed knowledge and experiences to the Focus Groups across five thematic sections:

- ✓ Bringing home cultures in Greece/Italy/Spain
- ✓ Role of faith/Church/religion in everyday life and cultural practices
- ✓ Being a 'good' person- modes of propriety
- ✓ Racism and Afrophobia
- ✓ Participation in empowerment activities

What emerged from the discussions and accounts briefly illustrate the following:

- What means home culture is a broad understanding of different cultural, ethnic and social elements through which the Afrodiaspora self-identifies and negotiates in different ways depending on their gender, age and ethnic cultural background. In this sense, it is broadly part of how knowledge-holders negotiate the politics of identity.
- Knowledge-holders are keen to talk about cultural identity, pass cultural heritage down to the next generation, and elaborate on shared but also distinct elements of cultural identity as those are negotiated at the level of gender, age, family hierarchies and broadly the community
- They are keen to share cultural and social knowledge deriving from the specific African culture it originates from, and also explain how this talks to the Spanish, Italian or Greek culture where many also originate from. At the same time, different identities are also being negotiated in a context where people are pressured to socially adapt, and as a result it is not uncommon that their African component of their identity is silenced, oppressed or denied to them.
- Religion plays a significant part in sustaining cultural identity and cultural heritage. It serves as a reminder of values, hierarchies and social or cultural dynamics. Especially in Greece, there is a great deal of openness when it comes to other religions, proving how religion is a core element of sustaining one's cultural identity.

- Nevertheless, the ways religion is performed in public (either through appearance, through one's practices or merely as an assumption about one's colour), it becomes a site of discrimination and racism, ranging from underlying prejudice and stereotypes, to explicit racist violence, verbal or physical.
- Whether people are willing to talk about religion or not, religion needs to be a space of open discourse in activities that are designed to be empowering and fostering open intercultural dialogue.
- In the same way religion talks to how hierarchies and values are negotiated and performed, so do accounts about modes of propriety and what shapes the moral and ethical self. In the accounts collected, morality is gendered and is context-specific. At the same time, it is a result of the desire to be accepted by the community, both one's own community and the broader society. Not least, it is frequently understood as a 'collective burden' in the sense that people's behavior and actions are often viewed not just as individual choices, but as reflections of the representative behavior of a social group.
- Racism is a diverse threat, ranging from verbal and physical racist attacks from fascist and far right groups, to institutional and structural racism, to everyday acts of banal and prosaic racism. Moreover, hostility and well-embedded racial stereotypes within local societies and communities create an unfriendly and unprotected space for Black people, especially in Greece.
- The trauma from such forms of extreme racism is in several cases negotiated in a broader context of empowerment when people respond to attacks in the national language, or via reason and robust argumentation.
- In many instances, people acutely ascribe racist attitudes to the family context, wherein they believe those attitudes are learnt and fostered. Across all three countries, participants call for different stakeholders to work together and develop a culture of 'diasporic thinking', in order to address issues of stereotyping of Black identities and personhood, combat racism and Afrophobia more effectively and work towards debunking and decolonising dominant white narratives.
- Racist attacks and hate speech takes place extensively in public space (e.g. schools, public transport, streets, public services, authorities). Black individuals are exposed and unprotected from such unprovoked attacks and assertions of racial and ethnic power which become a manifestation of racial and ethnic superiority, leading to further marginalisation and feelings of insecurity for the Afrodiaspora.
- Knowledge-holders expressed discomfort at the term 'People of Colour' or the abbreviation POC. This is also a reminder that even the most formal and widely accepted terminology may potentially be **understood as discriminatory or homogenizing and therefore as silencing marginalized cultural groups' identity.**
- Last but not least, the conditions shaping the Afrodiasporas' everyday lives and experiences across partnering countries reflect the precarity, marginalization and insecurity Black individuals feel in their attempt to integrate socially and in the pathway to acquiring formal citizenship. These conditions discourage them from

participating in EU funded and other initiatives and empowerment activities which at the same time are short-lived, sporadic and do not impact significantly upon their lives. On the contrary, to participate in such activities means losing a day's or more wages, something most of them cannot afford.

- Nevertheless, younger generations are open to grassroots activities and movements which allow them to make a more significant impact upon the Afrodiasporas' status especially in Italy and Spain. At the same time, it seems that such acts of civic and political participation contribute to the Afrodiasporas' social integration since they meet other political and civic causes, broadly served by grass-root movements in said countries

The knowledge offered by nineteen (19) participants in the Roundtables across all countries illustrates the following:

- The legislative and policy framework across all three countries is complex, unfriendly to those aiming at establishing a life in any of them and engenders a culture of discrimination against non-white and non-western citizens.
- The lack of representation of the Afrodiaspora in decision making bodies does not help establish an awareness of citizenship and social integration in the sense that the invisibility of the Afrodiaspora implies challenges in people being heard or claiming social, economic and political rights
- The lack of representation, unfriendly legislation, institutional and everyday racism and the challenging social and economic context in which the Afrodiaspora is expected to live, reduces the interest in looking for or participating in language learning programs, empowerment programs, business development schemes or even cultural and social exchange initiatives or political activities.
- The mainstreaming, and at times intensification, of everyday racism affecting nearly every aspect of public life (schools, public transport, streets, neighborhoods, public services, authorities, media etc.) and the **labour of coping with racism before it happens**, adds to the stress embodied and trauma endured (e.g. constantly being afraid to express themselves, invest in economic ventures, talk, participate in programs and initiatives, claim a seat at a decision making body, interact at an everyday social or cultural context). Such a condition does not promote inclusive participation in society and makes the Afrodiaspora (i.e. economically, politically and socially productive citizens) more introverted and marginalized.
- Unequal treatment of people who lack the privilege of colour by institutions, police authorities and public administration are a mere reminder that no space (institutional or other) can potentially be a safe space that guarantees a normal route to citizenship and social integration
- Apart from the need to solidify and implement inclusive intercultural policies, social worker and related professional training is of paramount importance in overcoming

intercultural challenges, as is the support and intensification of academic research on the topics of inclusion, racism and Afrophobia.

- The generational gap between first and second- generation Afrodiasporic people reflects different social and cultural practices, different awareness of citizenship and social integration. Such a gap requires effective educational policies and related interventions that debunk colonial narratives and reshape narratives and stories about race, ethnicity and colour.
- Synergies between academia, field workers, activists, communities and policy advocates are seen as a much needed strategy to organise and systemize the attempts that a) establish that the Afrodiaspora has a 'seat at the table' and b) ensure that matters about and for the Afrodiaspora, including the pressing ones about citizenship, racism and Afrophobia, are constantly visible in different public, policy and academic arenas.
- Different strategies for promoting participation and coexistence include sustainable Intercultural Workshops, Alternative Narratives Projects and Youth Inclusion programs; they work towards engaging the different Afrodiasporic communities and age groups within the broader community, but also debunk and conceptualize the narratives about race, ethnicity and colour.
- Different stakeholders (e.g. employers) need to understand the specific systemic barriers that the Afrodiaspora faces (colour-based discrimination, assumptions about being a homogenous group of migrants, lack of access to housing, advanced education, healthy entrepreneurship). The dominant 'migrant' discourse denies the Afrodiaspora the right to be considered fundamental to the host societies.
- Finally, issues relating to education and the need for racism to be addressed at a structural level, suggest a) there is a need to incorporate courses about Black history and colonialism into school and university curricula and b) educators should be taught ways of preventing discrimination at school and develop ways of supporting young citizens of the Afrodiaspora to pursue tertiary education and professional success.

5. Online press and social media analysis

An analysis of online press and social media was conducted in all three countries to identify incidents of verbal violence and other non-appropriate behaviour towards people of African descent in e-resources (i.e. social media, e-press). The main aim of the activity was to collect data on the representation of Black people in the media with special focus on hate speech and incidents of violence and racism in Greece, Italy and Spain.

5.1 Methodology

This study utilized the **TweetEval** dataset from Hugging Face to analyze social media discourse, focusing specifically on the “hate” classification task. TweetEval is a widely recognized benchmark for NLP research on Twitter data, offering pre-labeled, balanced, and scalable content. Although the dataset lacks geographic or cultural metadata, it was selected in the absence of a more context-specific alternative from project partners. Further annotation was applied to isolate hate speech targeting Afrodiasporic people, aligning with AFROEQUALITY focus.

Sentiment Analysis

Sentiment analysis was conducted using the VADER model, which is well-suited for short, informal online text. VADER assigns each text a compound score (ranging from -1 to +1) and evaluates positive, negative, and neutral sentiment intensities. This analysis supported the identification of emotional tone in tweets and news articles, revealing patterns of hostility, support, or bias in public discourse.

While effective in detecting overt emotional content, VADER has notable limitations. It struggles with sarcasm, coded language, irony, and context-specific cultural nuance. For instance, statements expressing approval of discriminatory practices may be misclassified as positive sentiment. These challenges were addressed through manual review and contextual interpretation.

Hate Speech Detection Using AI

Hate speech classification was performed using ChatGPT 4.0 Mini, an advanced language model capable of detecting explicit and subtle forms of racial hate speech. The model was asked ‘to think’ as a “political scientist with expertise in hate speech and discrimination” to ensure legally and institutionally grounded analysis. Separate prompts were used for news

articles and tweets, requiring binary (Yes/No) judgments on whether the text contained hate speech and whether the author's motivation was racist. Responses followed a strict CSV-compatible format to support structured data analysis.

Importantly, hate speech was only marked as present if author motivation was also classified as racist. This rule aligned the analysis with the project's emphasis on intentional, explicitly motivated discrimination.

Methodology Summary

- **Data Collection:** News articles were scraped from Greek, Italian, and Spanish outlets; tweets were extracted from the TweetEval dataset.
- **Sentiment Analysis:** VADER was applied to all content to assign sentiment labels and scores.
- **Hate Speech Classification:** ChatGPT 4.0 Mini assessed both hate content and author intent; outputs were formatted for structured comparison and reporting.

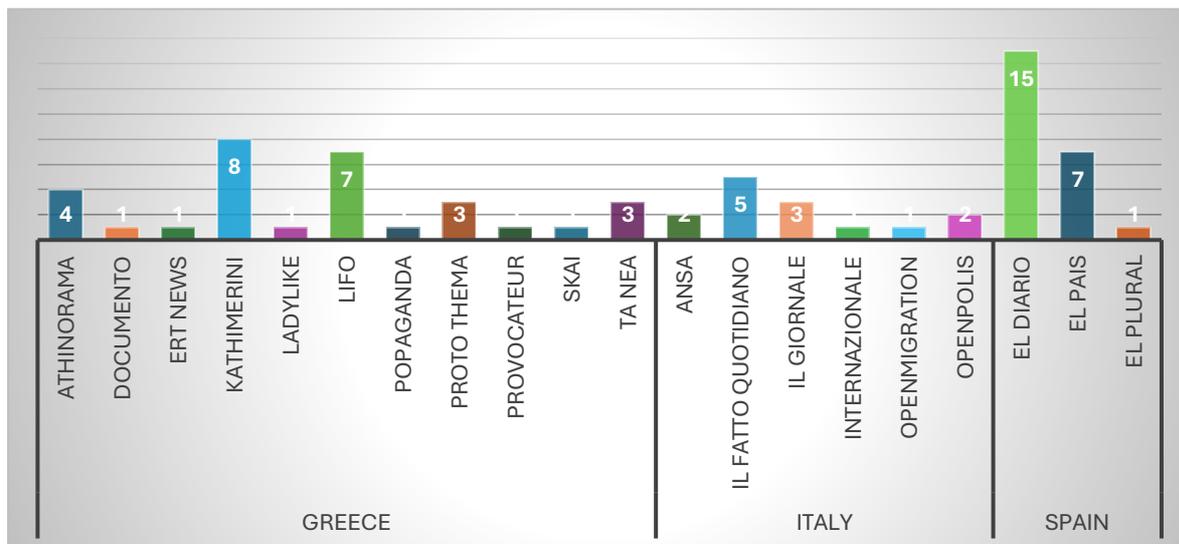
Limitations

It should be noted that while the analysis provided valuable insights, two key limitations must be acknowledged. First, although the TweetEval dataset enabled large-scale, cross-platform analysis, it lacked cultural and geographic context. As a result, the interpretation of content could not be meaningfully linked to specific cultural, political, or socioeconomic factors, thereby limiting the ability to draw context-specific conclusions or formulate targeted recommendations. Second, both the VADER and ChatGPT models encountered challenges in detecting irony, cultural nuance, and structural or implicit forms of racism. Given that AI tools remain in a developmental phase, their ability to recognize subtle or coded language—particularly in complex sociopolitical contexts—remains limited.

Sample

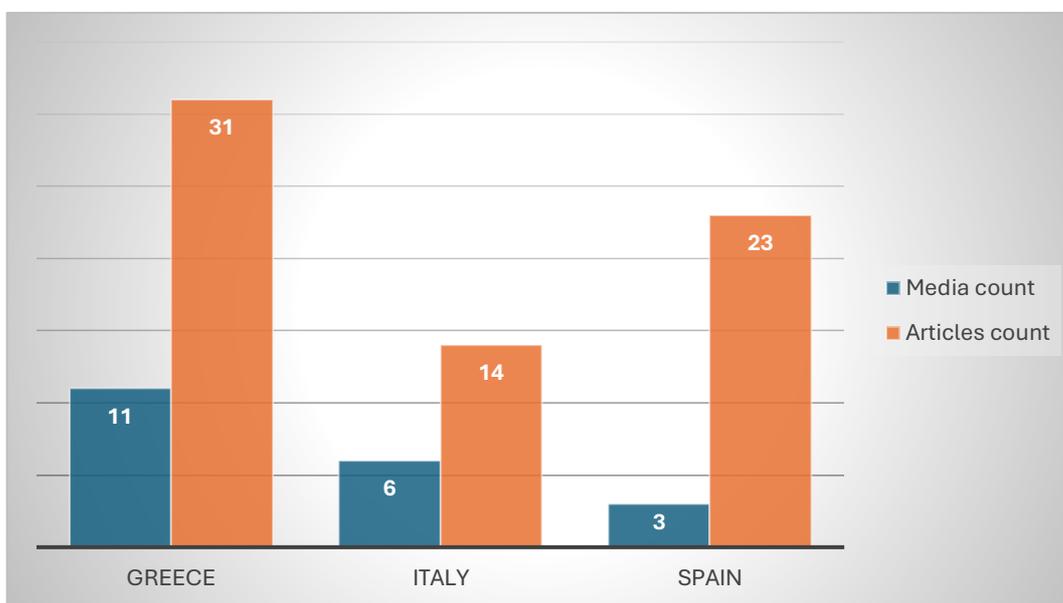
The news articles were gathered by partners, who identified 50 relevant articles in each country. Of those articles, 68 articles were accessible across the countries and were available for analysis. In addition to news articles, this study included social media content from former Twitter, currently X.

Figure 15.Count of articles by media and country



As seen also in more detail in Figure 16, 11 media outlets were used in Greece, 6 in Italy and 3 in Spain. This resulted in 31 articles from Greek media outlets, 14 from Italian and 23 from Spanish.

Figure 16.Media and articles count by country



5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Sentiment

Sentiment analysis was conducted using the **VADER (Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner) model**, which is particularly suited for analyzing online text. The VADER analysis of the news articles provided trends regarding the sentiment around issues related to migrants, people of African descent, etc.

Figure 17.Count of sentiment_total

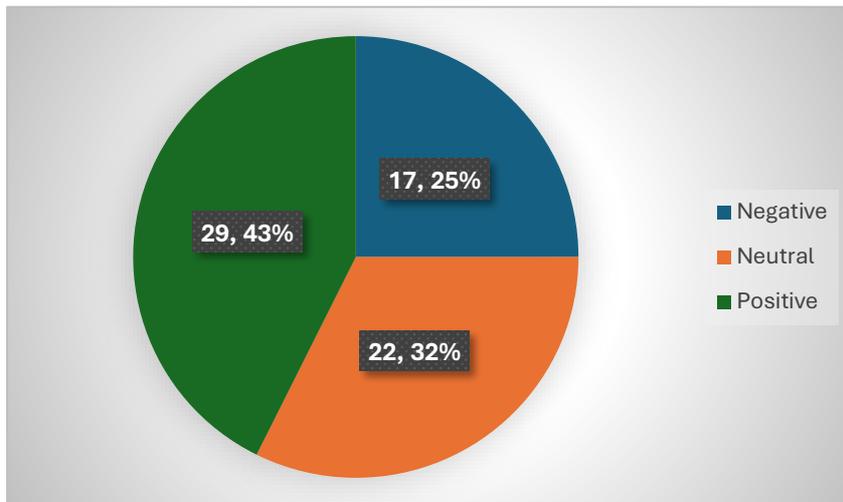


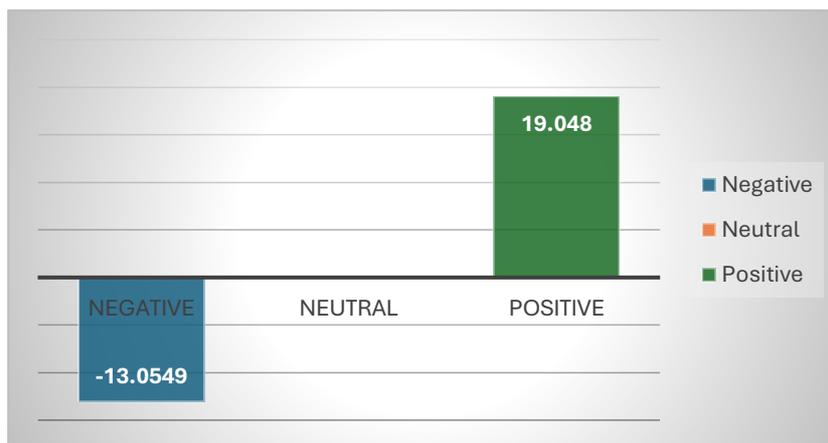
Figure 18 below indicates that positive, negative and neutral sentiments are almost equally distributed when analysed for all three countries and media. In Greece, the majority of the articles are neutral in terms of sentiment, followed by 8 articles with positive and 2 with negative. In Spain, 14 articles have negative sentiment and 10 positive. Finally, in Italy, articles in their majority (11) have positive sentiment.

Figure 18.Count of Sentiment in Greece, Spain and Italy



Overall, the sentiment valence for all countries is 19,048 and -13,0549 as seen in the following figure.

Figure 19.Sentiment valence in total



This indicates that discussion related to migrants, the Afrodiaspora or refugees, usually has a negative valence. Whether expressing hate against people of African descent or opposing it, the content cultivates negative emotions. Considering that dominant narratives about race reinforce stereotypical constructions of the Afrodiaspora, finding common ground to overcome such phenomena is hindered.

5.2.2 Racist Hate Speech

As mentioned in the Methodology, ChatGPT 4.0 Mini was used to detect hate speech content and assess the author’s motivation. As seen in Figure 21, the system detected hate speech in 29 articles across countries, whereas in 39 articles no racial hate speech was detected. The number of racial hate speech detected in each country can be seen in the following figure. Spain appears to have more articles with hate speech compared to other countries and almost an equal number of articles without any racial hate speech. In Greece, the difference between articles with and without hate speech is the widest compared to the other two countries, while in Italy the number of articles with hate speech is almost double to the articles where no hate speech was detected.

Figure 20.Count of hate speech by country

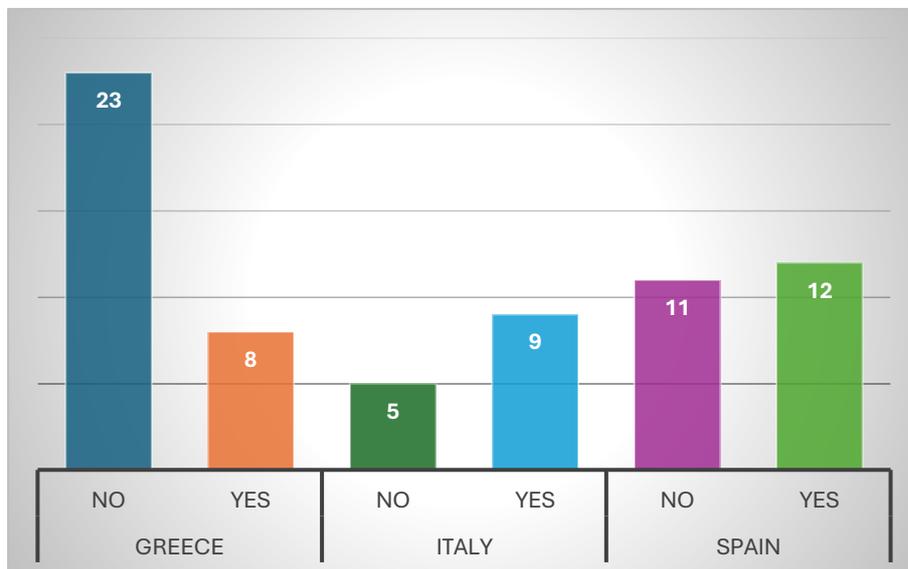
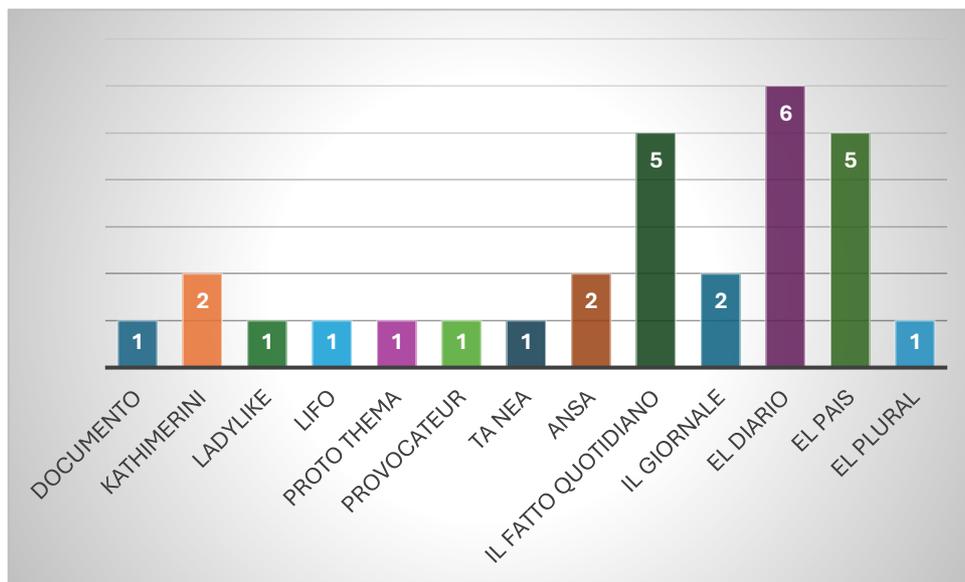


Figure 21.Count of hate speech by media in all three countries



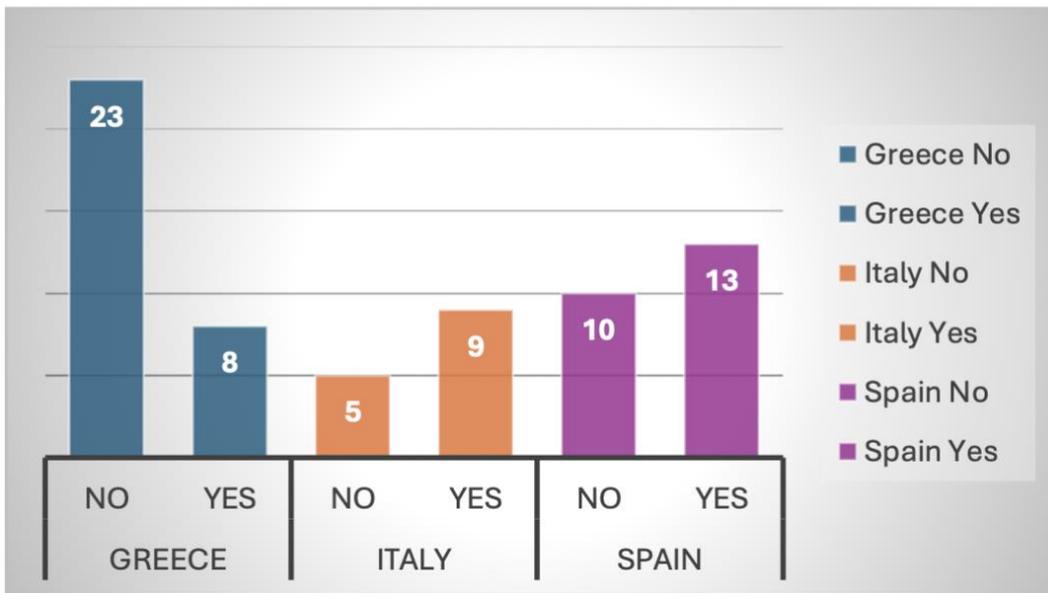
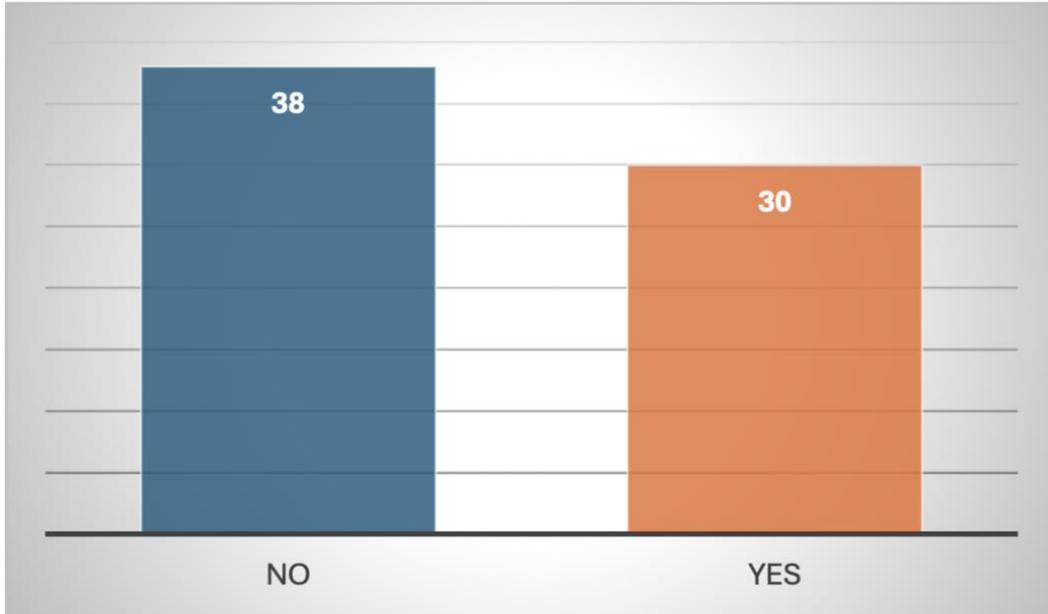
The highest number of articles with hate speech were identified in the Spanish media outlet El Diario with 6 articles, whereas El Pais, again in Spain, and Il Fatto Quotidiano in Italy follow with 5 articles each.

In Italy, only half of the media examined include hate speech, whereas 3 media outlets do not include any hate speech. In Greece, three media outlets do not include any mention on hate speech.

5.2.3 Motivation of Author

To further analyze the racist hate speech identified in the articles, the author's motivation was examined. The system offered a simple "yes" or "no" response to indicate whether the author appeared to be motivated by racist hate. In addition, a brief description of the content was provided, offering further insight into the author's intent.

Figure 22.Count of racist hate motivation in total



As seen in Figure 22, racist hate motivation is detected in 30 articles and their distribution by country can be seen in Figure 10. Racist hate motivation is detected in 8 articles in Greece, 9 in Italy and 13 in Spain.

However, when examining the explanation of the motivation, these numbers drop significantly and only in 8 articles does the motivation of the author appear to be racist. More particularly, the motivation of the author appears to be racist in two Greek articles, 3 Italian and 3 Spanish. The rest of the articles, initially identified as including hate speech, were actually addressing the issue of racist hate speech, approaching the phenomenon critically and raising awareness to combat it. This finding alerts us in relation to the model used and its limitations, and demands attention and scrutinization of data to avoid possible misinterpretations.

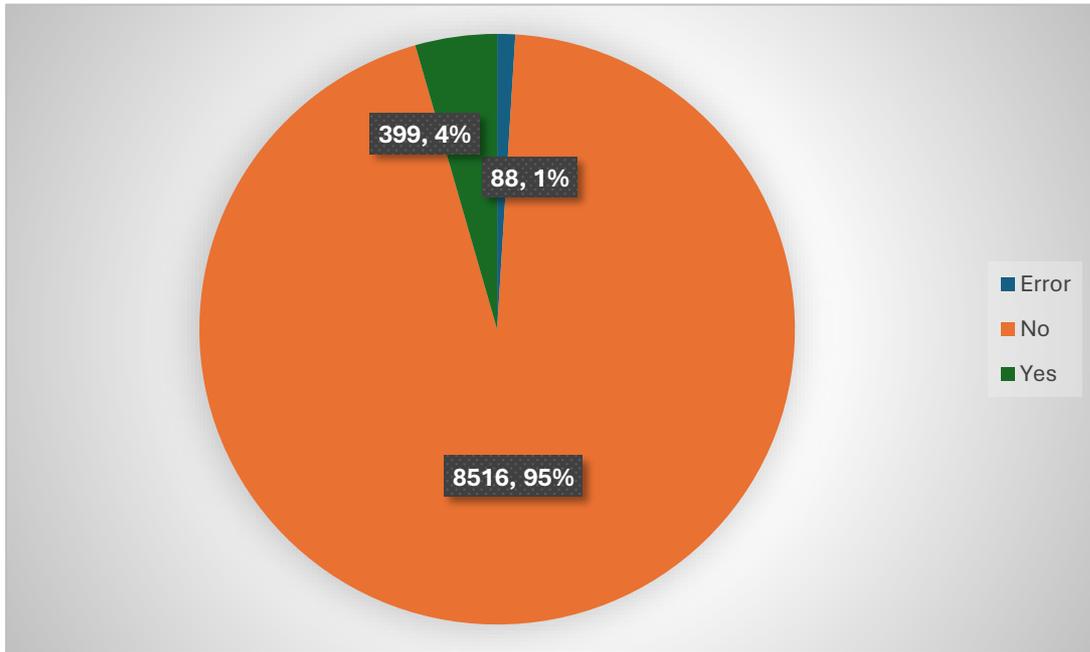
The findings indicate that newspapers and informative media avoid the use of racist hate speech.

5.3 Social Media Analysis

The social media analysis included the collection and analysis of 9003 tweets which are not distributed by country due to the limitations of the TweetEval used to analyse online content. Therefore, this short social media analysis complements the findings from the news articles analysis, conducted for each of the countries and in total, presented in the previous section. The social media analysis applied an additional filtering and classification process using ChatGPT to focus only on racial hate speech targeting Black people and/or people of African descent.

Hate speech was detected in only 4% of the analysed tweets. The majority of tweets, namely 8.516 tweets did not contain hate speech against Black People and People of African descent.

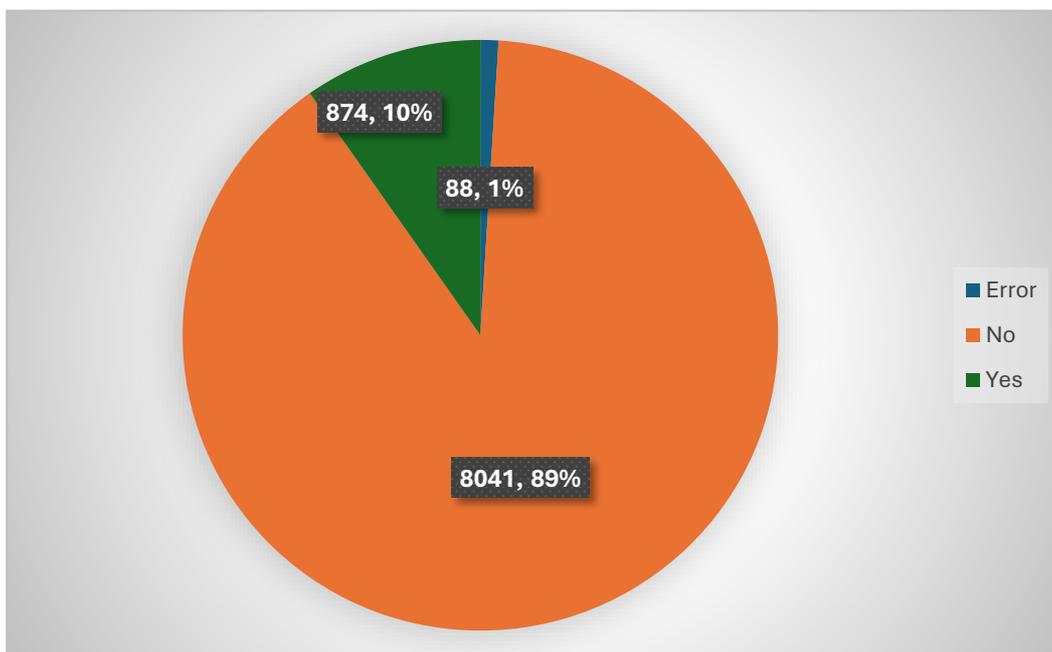
Figure 23.Count of Hate Speech



5.3.1 Motivation of the author

Through the motivation of the author, we tried to further explore the content of the tweets containing hate, with a focus on racist hate against Black people and people of African descent.

Figure 24. Motivation of the author



The explanation of hate speech identified different categories of racist discourse, such as the following:

1. Explicit racist language, such as **“nigga”**, **“niggas”**, **“black in a negative context”**, and other derogatory terms.
2. Dehumanizing language, including comparisons to animals or criminals and references to slavery. For example, **“dance like a monkey”**, **“rapefugees”**, **“troglodyte”**
3. Negative social categorization and stereotyping by:
 - linking Black people or people of African descent with crime, rape, violence, and low intelligence
 - linking Black people, and especially men, with sexual violence
 - describing immigrants of Black communities as ‘a burden’, ‘chaotic’, or ‘aggressive’
4. Portraying Black people as a threat to White identity through inclusion, increased diversity, and the growing Black population that may eventually surpass the White population demographically.
5. Calling for deportations and exclusion of Black people and people of African descent through statements like **“Send them back”**, **“They don’t belong here”**, **“Should return to Africa”**

6. Misogynoir (Gendered Racial Hate) targets Black women by sexualizing Black women, combining misogynistic attacks with racial elements, and shaming women for associating with Black men.
7. Incitement and threats of violence were detected calling for physical harm, revenge or deportation based on race.
8. Implicit hate was detected through tweets like “Your people”, “Their kind” and through negative framing of diversity, demographics and access.

5.4 Conclusions

The media analysis conducted under Task 2.5 of the AFROEQUALITY project offers a comprehensive view of how people of African descent are represented across online news media and social media in Greece, Italy, and Spain. By combining automated sentiment analysis and AI-driven hate speech detection, the research provides both quantitative and qualitative insights into contemporary digital discourse on race and racism in Southern Europe.

In total, 68 news articles from 20 media outlets were analyzed. The sentiment distribution across countries shows a complex picture: Greek media tended toward neutrality, while Italian articles were more frequently positive in tone. In contrast, Spanish media exhibited a relatively higher number of negatively toned articles, particularly around issues related to migration and racialized communities. This indicates that although overt hate speech may be rare in mainstream news, underlying sentiment and framing vary significantly across national contexts.

Hate speech was detected in 29 articles, but after further analysis of the authors' motivations, only 8 were found to reflect explicitly racist intent. Many articles identified as containing hate speech were in fact critical discussions of racism itself. This suggests that while AI classification tools are valuable for initial detection, **human interpretation remains essential to avoid misclassification**, especially when analyzing complex topics like race and discrimination.

The social media analysis, based on 9,003 tweets using the TweetEval dataset, reinforces the finding that **digital spaces are not free from racial hostility**. Although only 4% of the tweets contained hate speech, the nature of that speech was deeply concerning. It included **explicit racial slurs, dehumanizing metaphors, incitement to violence, and the intersection of racial and gender-based hate (misogynoir)**. Furthermore, much of this language was embedded in subtle or coded terms, making it more difficult for automated systems to identify without context-aware review.

Sentiment analysis of tweets showed a clear dominance of negative emotional tone. Out of the total sample, 4,914 tweets were classified as negative, compared to 2,647 positive and 1,442 neutral. Not only were negative tweets more frequent, but they also exhibited stronger emotional intensity. This points to an underlying negativity in public discourse on race-related issues on social media, especially when anonymity allows more extreme views to be expressed.

Overall, the findings suggest that while traditional media generally avoids explicit hate speech, **they may still reflect subtle bias or fail to critically engage with issues of structural racism. Social media, by contrast, provides a less moderated space where hate speech**—including that targeting people of African descent—can proliferate in both explicit and implicit forms.

The combination of VADER sentiment analysis and ChatGPT 4.0 Mini classification proved effective for large-scale processing, but limitations persist—especially around cultural nuance, multilingual text, and covert racism. The project demonstrates the value of using AI tools in media monitoring, but also underlines the need for interpretive, human-led frameworks to ensure accurate, context-sensitive understanding of hate speech and discriminatory narratives.

In conclusion, this analysis highlights both the persistence of racial prejudice in European digital media and the potential of integrated methodological approaches to expose and challenge these patterns. It calls for further research, policy attention, and media literacy efforts to foster a digital environment that is inclusive, respectful, and informed.



6. What does empirical evidence teach us? Key findings from AFROEQUALITY research activities

This report summarizes the findings of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research activities, aiming to map the available policy discourse around issues of Afrophobia, racism and hate speech, public attitudes and perceptions, as well as experiences of the Afrodiaspora (particularly regarding racism and hate speech). The following findings emerge from Greece, Italy and Spain through: a) an extensive discussion of the available desk research, b) an e-survey mapping public perceptions about the Afrodiaspora c) Focus Groups with people of the Afrodiaspora on life trajectories, cultures and experiences with racism, Afrophobia and hate speech, d) Roundtables with experts, fieldworkers, prominent figures of the Afrodiaspora and e) an attempt to identify stereotypical discourse and hate speech on media and online discourse.

Policy-oriented findings

- As it emerges from desk research across all participating countries, issues of racism and Afrophobia emerge within the context of the following: a) *lack of visibility and scarcity of data* b) *institutional racism* c) *challenges with employment*. Spain has moved to the most generous reforms in citizenship rights, attempting to secure a safer political and economic space for members of the African diaspora. Nevertheless, the case in all countries is that challenges remain significant at the social and cultural level, where systemic and everyday racism, Afrophobia and Islamophobia are not just part of everyday discourse but are also reiterated through media stereotyping in news and popular culture
- Challenges with citizenship and systemic racism reinforce both everyday instances of racism and Afrophobia, while they lead to a further marginalisation of Black communities. Barriers in accessing education and health services, spaces where institutional racism is still prevalent, as well as housing problems and a direction towards low skilled and low salaried jobs, make social integration for the Afrodiaspora across all three countries particularly challenging and far-fetched.
- Colour, language and ethnic origin are key factors in how members of the Afrodiaspora are constructed across Italy, Greece and Spain, having profound impact upon their cultural and social integration but also upon their everyday lives and life trajectories in the countries of residence. Alongside those, gaps in lawmaking and policy frameworks lead to loose or inefficient integration policies across all countries making the lives of Afrodiasporic people, and mixed-race nationals even more challenging.
- The lack of systematic data about Afrodiaspora (with the exception of Spain), such as data on racial identity both at a national and EU level, employment, housing, health, social relations and incidents of racism does not help to shape systematic and

sustainable Action Plans, strategies and initiatives against racism, Afrophobia and prejudice, promote social integration and interculturality and motivate victims of racism to speak out.

- Low numbers of hate crime and racial attacks reporting make the need for **continued development of safe reporting mechanisms and victim support services** pertinent. Since certain regions of the participating countries demonstrate more racist attitudes and Afrophobia, calls for a **more effective institutional framework against Afrophobia providing legal and social support to the victims**. Moreover, there is a need for **continuous awareness raising**, since everyday and institutional racism span across different institutional, political, social and cultural arenas.

The social construction of Afrodiaspora

- Blackness is largely invisible in much of the media discourse, while it is also mostly 'imported', in the sense that Black people mostly appear in foreign productions or as influencers in social media. Therefore, the Afrodiaspora -with the notable exception of some celebrities across all three countries- is absent from domestic media production.
- Stereotypical narratives about race, ethnic origin and the Afrodiaspora are still prevalent in much of the mainstream media discourse both in news and popular culture genres. Where sportspeople, artists or influencers are not the focus of media coverage, the Afrodiaspora (which is by no means a homogenous group of people), is mostly constructed as 'different' due to colour, as low-lives (i.e. people of extremely low SES), as villains, intruders or a threat to society. They are also predominantly exoticized and objectified, which is particularly a condition concerning women of the Afrodiaspora.
- Dominant narratives such as the above circulate across the media and online media, yet they go hand in hand with how the Afrodiaspora is imagined by survey respondents in relation to their socioeconomic status (SES). As the survey indicates, Afrodiasporic people are rarely, if ever, seen to occupy medium and high-ranking positions in the public or private sector, managerial positions or educational/ training posts. Instead, they are seen into or assumed to occupy low paid, precarious (if not dangerous) jobs (e.g. agriculture/farming, cleaning, construction and caring services, sex services including forced sex labour, street vendors, delivery services) that contribute to those people's further marginalization at a social, cultural, economic and citizenship level.
- Especially when Afrodiasporic people are led to do precarious jobs of the sort mentioned above, issues such as work and sexual harassment, racist attitudes and attacks and hate speech become even more frequent and intense. Therefore, the emergence of a culture of fear, marginalization and self-marginalisation result in a vicious circle of discrimination, marginalization and shadow-banning of the Afrodiaspora, with no opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and social integration.

- Equally, the acceptance of banal and everyday racism that Black citizens are led to adapt to as an unavoidable everyday condition, sustains a culture of trauma and a culture of introversion, which discourages them from claiming their rightful position within the societies where they contribute economically, socially and culturally.
- Different forms of racism originating from colour in combination with country of origin, gender and religion are acknowledged as reasons why Afrodiasporic people (Greeks, Italians or Spaniards of African descent, Afro-Greeks, Afro-Spaniards, Afro-Italians, mixed-race nationals and African migrants) do not enjoy same full citizenship rights as other (white) citizens.
- Although more than 1/3 in each country opines that the situation in their country is getting slightly better with matters of social integration, discrimination and prejudice on the basis of colour and ethnicity remains the key barrier in Afrodiasporas' social and cultural integration and unruffled life. Moreover, one needs to consider the severe backlash in human rights and racial equality in a social, political and cultural environment where hate speech and racist discourse unleashes with the rise of far-right ideologies within the EU but also in the aftermath of Donald Trump's reelection.
- Incidents of racism and hate-speech are acknowledged by survey respondents, yet to a large extent the cultures of racism, banal and institutional racism and Afrophobia within which Black people live, remain largely invisible too. People do not easily identify subtle or covert forms of discrimination as racist; nevertheless, there is a need to develop and sustain an awareness of racist lay discourse if the dominant narratives of race and cultures of appropriation are to be debunked and decolonized.
- Initiatives, legislation and societies need to constantly work towards addressing a condition of multiple discrimination against the Afrodiaspora across all countries.
- To aim at addressing and combating multiple discrimination therefore, implies debunking dominant narratives about race, ethnicity and gender, which coexist and inform each other. This also entails acknowledging one's own predominantly white, western, male and cis- gender privilege which is, in many cases, an uncomfortable condition for western societies

Life experiences of Afrodiaspora across Italy, Spain and Greece

- Sustaining elements of African identity relate to: speaking or being familiar with the maternal or paternal language (this is different between first and second-generation migrants), to learning or practicing religion, to being part of one's own ethnic African community where collective cultural and social practices take place. Also, it relates to travelling to the country of origin in Africa, and last but not least to how traditions and values pass on through maternal cultural upbringing. Racism against one's own cultural identity, therefore, is not just an attack to one's own origin and roots, but an attack to their social and cultural modes of being and becoming.
- African cultural identity emerges in the broader context of the politics of identity. It is manifested through customary practices like traditional clothing, celebrating,

mourning or behaving in an everyday social context. A pressure to socially adapt through the disavowal, rejection or caricaturing of those elements of cultural identity is another performance of racially categorising, devaluing and segregating people who are constructed as less deserving.

- Second generation individuals of the Afrodiaspora claimed more effective integration and a more nostalgic and romantic approach to preserving African cultural heritage. This nurturing of cultural identity through practices of language learning, passing down oral histories and family historical trajectories or carrying on religious and social practices, was seen as an act of resistance and identity affirmation
- Islamophobia is predominantly a site of discrimination, also engendering multiple discriminations (for example in the case of Black Muslim women); therefore, understanding how religion is lived and experienced, but also how it may engender discrimination and racist attitudes further is pertinent to planning the AFROEQUALITY empowerment activities.
- The Afrodiaspora demonstrates a great deal of openness when it comes to other religions, proving how religion is a core element of sustaining one's cultural identity. Elements from different religions and beliefs (i.e. elements of animistic beliefs hold a significant place and power in how certain African societies and cultures are shaped) are understood as broader parts of shaping Afrodiasporic identities. Second-generation knowledge holders though are instructed and taught to religious narratives and beliefs more with the aim of sustaining one's cultural trajectories
- Constructions of being a good person are understood as part of a collective cultural identity and are embodied as a 'collective burden'. Therefore, the construction of morality and of the Black neoliberal self are complex constructions shaped as an individual and as a collective identity.
- Verbal and physical racist attacks from fascist and far right groups who regularly enjoy institutional protection rank high in the Afrodiaspora's experiences of racism. Hostility and well-embedded racial stereotypes within local communities create an unfriendly and unprotected space for Black people in the countries, while institutional racism experienced across authorities and public services make everyday life, social and economic activity even more challenging.
- Trauma from such forms of extreme racism is in several cases negotiated in a broader context of empowerment, when people respond to attacks in the national language, or via reason and robust argumentation. Nevertheless, this is not a regular practice of counter-acting against racism.
- Mixed race nationals face challenges emerging from their social and cultural encounters with both white people and Afrodiasporic communities. Such a discriminatory condition sustains a struggle for identity and belonging which is rarely acknowledged since in both cases colour is demonized for belonging to the 'opposite' racial group.
- Experiences of different forms of racism, from comments about skin colour to physical attacks (one third of participants mention having experienced physical attacks) are

reported to take place in different public spaces like schools, public transport and the streets, places of high visibility but also institutional spaces where victims of racism should be able to feel protected. Such attitudes seem to be circulating and legitimised within the domestic space and familial discourse too, a condition that reiterates and multiplies cultures of racism and Afrophobia

- Misogynoir is a particularly intense problem for Black women who are being judged and discriminated against both because of their colour and gender.
- Black people urge for an inclusive term to be described within policy making and in formal discourse. The term People of Colour or the abbreviation POC is discomfoting and makes them feel marginalised and excluded. For this reason the partnership decided to change all terminology and references to: Afrodiaspora, people of African descent, Afro-Greeks/Italians/Spanish, Greeks/Italians/Spanish of African descent and the use of both nationalities for mixed race people.
- The activities (mostly taking place in the context of EU funded projects) where Afrodiasporic communities are invited to participate, investing personal and work time, are temporal, short-term, not inclusive and do not result in actual changes in their everyday lives or in policy making and legal issues of citizenship
- For the Afrodiaspora, precariousness and vulnerability contextualizes what they understand as citizenship. Further, the tool of residence and work permit is more considered as a mechanism for social exclusion and not as contributing to achieving social integration. Such a state of precarity in everyday life, but also an everyday experience of social and systemic marginalization does not motivate people to participate or join empowerment activities.
- Knowledge holders prioritize activist action and engagement with grassroots movements and associations towards accelerating social integration processes for the Afrodiaspora. In fact, social and activist action is broadly considered political (freedom of religious expression, community activities etc.) and keeps matters of significance such as citizenship and social rights high in the agenda
- Aforementioned findings reinforce the need for researchers, activists, policy makers and all related stakeholders to engage with '**diasporic thinking**' (Rizvi, 2015; Hall, 1980), wherein Black personhood, identity and cultures are the point of reference in thinking about social integration, interculturality, racism and citizenship when it comes to Afrodiasporic identities.

Towards 'diasporic thinking'

- Acquiring citizenship is a time-consuming and complex process, among other reasons due to a hectic bureaucracy. The legislative and policy framework across all three countries is complex, unfriendly to those aiming at establishing a life in one of the three countries and engenders a culture of discrimination against non-white and non-western citizens



- The lack of representation, unfriendly legislation, institutional and everyday racism and the challenging social and economic context in which the Afrodiaspora is expected to live and make a living, reduce the interest in looking for or participating in language learning programs, empowerment programs, business development schemes or even cultural and social exchange initiatives or political activities.
- Synergies between academia, field workers, activists, communities and policy advocates are seen as a much needed strategy to ensure that the Afrodiaspora has a 'seat at the table' in discussions about issues that matter to them and that matters about citizenship, racism and Afrophobia are constantly in different public, policy and academic arenas
- Different strategies for promoting participation and coexistence include sustainable Intercultural Workshops, Alternative Narratives Projects and Youth Inclusion programs that work towards engaging Afrodiasporic communities within the broader community, but also debunk and conceptualize the narratives about race, ethnicity and colour.
- The dominant 'migrant' discourse denies the Afrodiaspora the right to be considered foundational to society. Different stakeholders (e.g. employers) need to understand the specific systemic barriers that the Afrodiaspora faces (colour-based discrimination, assumption about being a homogenous group of migrants, lack of access to housing, advanced education, healthy entrepreneurship).
- Issues relating to education and the need for racism to be addressed at a structural level so that dominant narratives are decolonised. To this end, there is a need to incorporate courses about black history and colonialism into school and university curricula and educators to be taught ways of preventing discrimination at school and develop ways of supporting young citizens of the Afrodiaspora to pursue tertiary education and professional success.



7. Mapping African identity in Greece, Spain and Italy: How is inclusion achieved after all? Emerging issues in citizenship and cultural integration- Recommendations for policy and research

Achieving social inclusion for people of the Afrodiaspora in Europe, and specifically in Greece, Spain and Italy, requires more than isolated interventions—it demands a structural and systemic transformation of how institutions, societies, and narratives are organized. Through Work Package 2 (WP2) of the AFROEQUALITY project, a comprehensive situational analysis was conducted regarding the lived realities of people of African descent (PAD) in Spain, Italy, and Greece. This analysis drew upon both the voices of Afrodiasporic individuals and a broader examination of societal dynamics, employing a mixed-methods approach that included desk research, e-surveys, focus groups, roundtables, and media and social media analyses.

The findings reveal a complex interplay between shared structural barriers and national dynamics affecting Afrodescendant people across Europe. On a broad level, systemic racism, xenophobia, and exclusion persist as common challenges, while national contexts introduce additional obstacles such as administrative hurdles, differing citizenship laws, and contrasting narratives around migration and national identity. At the individual level, these dynamics are further shaped by intersecting factors, such as generational status, regional origin (e.g. North or Sub-Saharan Africa), gender, religion, age, and legal status, which influence how exclusion is experienced. This context reflects not just policy failures but the broader socio-political construction of ethnicity and citizenship within European societies. Together, these layers highlight a pressing challenge: to ensure equal access to rights, resources, and opportunities for all individuals of African descent, irrespective of their background or status.

A recurring point of reflection across all national contexts was the question of how to foster meaningful societal integration and challenge a deeply embedded “us versus them” mindset. The present research highlights the importance of moving beyond reductive group categorizations and embracing an intercultural approach that recognizes the complexity and individuality of identities. This requires not only acknowledging diverse experiences within the Afrodiaspora, but also dismantling normative assumptions about national belonging and who is considered part of “the public.”

These findings, supported by empirical data and by the lived experiences of people of African descent, demonstrate that combating racism and promoting inclusion requires more than surface-level solutions. Structural transformation is necessary, both in terms of legal and institutional reform, and in reshaping public discourse, educational systems, and media representation. Crucially, this transformation must be grounded in participatory governance, intersectional policy design, and long-term public investment. It requires inclusive and



participatory policy processes that place Afrodiasporic people at the centre. Only through such systemic change can the EU move toward a more equitable, intercultural society in which diversity is recognised and valued.

The following policy recommendations, developed at both general and national levels, are grounded in these findings and aim to support effective, sustainable, and meaningful change across institutions and society.

Institutional Recognition and Representation: Institutional recognition and representation are crucial to ensure that Afrodiasporic people are not just passive recipients, but active co-creators of the policies that affect their lives. National and local consultative bodies must be reinforced with mechanisms that guarantee meaningful and proportional participation of People of African Descent, so they can help design, monitor, and improve public policies from the inside. This also means transforming public institutions by implementing affirmative action and inclusive recruitment strategies to open access to advisory councils and decision-making positions, ensuring Afrodiasporic perspectives are reflected at all governance levels and that institutional structures no longer perpetuate exclusion.

Combating Racism and Afrophobia: Effectively combating racism and Afrophobia requires going beyond laws to address deep-rooted societal biases and institutional practices. Enforcement of anti-discrimination and hate crime legislation must be strengthened through well-resourced independent oversight bodies, streamlined reporting pathways, and mechanisms that guarantee accountability. National campaigns and educational programs should actively challenge Afrophobia, racial profiling, and hate speech in public spaces, workplaces, and institutions, with particular attention to the police, media, social media and other sectors where bias is often perpetuated and normalized, so that cultural attitudes shift alongside legal protections.

Empowerment through Civic Participation: Empowering Afrodiasporic individuals and entities through civic participation means enabling them to exercise their rights, shape decisions, and amplify their voices in public life. This requires institutional backing and long-term, sustainable funding for Afrodiasporic associations, cultural platforms, and youth-led networks, ensuring they have the resources to build capacity and influence. Governments should create structured dialogue mechanisms, such as citizen assemblies and designated community liaisons, to establish regular, meaningful interactions between Afrodiasporic individuals and/or associations and authorities, making sure that participatory governance leads to real influence rather than symbolic consultation.

Inclusive Education and Cultural Policy: Inclusive education and cultural policies are essential for reshaping public narratives and dismantling harmful stereotypes. African histories, cultures, and contemporary contributions must be fully integrated into curricula, teacher training, and educational materials across all levels of schooling to foster critical thinking,

diversity awareness, and historical accuracy. Governments should also actively support cultural events, museums, artistic projects, and public media campaigns that elevate Afro-descendant stories, challenge exoticized or deficit-based framings, and promote a vibrant, multifaceted image of African heritage that reflects both past and present.

Religious and Cultural Inclusion: Religious and cultural inclusion means ensuring that Afrodiasporic individuals can fully practice their faiths and cultural traditions in dignity and security. Policy frameworks and urban planning must guarantee access to appropriate religious spaces and uphold freedom of worship, while also supporting initiatives that foster interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Prioritizing Afrodiasporic projects that bridge diverse communities and challenge religious prejudice is key to building trust, strengthening social cohesion, and preventing the marginalization of Afro-descendant religious and cultural identities.

Gender and Intersectional Justice: Advancing gender and intersectional justice demands that public services and policies explicitly address the compounded discrimination faced by Black women, LGBTQI+ individuals, and other marginalized subgroups within Afrodiasporic individuals. Governments should adopt intersectional frameworks that recognize how overlapping identities shape experiences of inequality and ensure that services respond accordingly. At the same time, they should support mentorship, leadership development, and safety initiatives led by and for Black women and youth, creating spaces of empowerment that strengthen individual agency and collective resilience.

Legal Pathways and Socioeconomic Rights: Creating fair legal pathways and guaranteeing socioeconomic rights are essential for dismantling exclusionary structures affecting the Afrodiaspora. Citizenship laws and documentation procedures must be reformed to eliminate discriminatory barriers, with particular attention to the challenges faced by second-generation youth and undocumented workers. Governments should enforce labour protections and ensure access to social services, especially in sectors like domestic work and agriculture where the Afrodiaspora is highly vulnerable to exploitation, so that economic participation is grounded in rights, dignity, and equal opportunity.

Monitoring, Data Collection, and Accountability: Robust monitoring, data collection, and accountability systems are critical to track progress and address systemic inequalities. Governments need to develop standardized methods for collecting disaggregated data on racial discrimination, violence, and socioeconomic outcomes to inform evidence-based policymaking. At the same time, independent observatories and civil society organizations should be empowered and funded to evaluate national policies, report on structural racism, and hold institutions accountable, ensuring that commitments to racial equity translate into measurable and sustained change.



Digital Justice and Inclusive Online Spaces: social media and digital platforms are powerful spaces that shape public opinion, identity, and access to information, but they also reproduce and amplify anti-Black racism, misinformation, and harmful stereotypes. Ensuring digital justice requires targeted regulation, platform accountability, and support for Afrodescendant voices online. Governments should work with civil society, digital rights organizations, and platform providers to strengthen content moderation systems, address algorithmic bias, and prevent the spread of racialized disinformation. Particular attention must be paid to coded language, visual memes, and indirect forms of hate speech that disproportionately target Black people especially women and youth. In parallel, investment is needed in digital literacy programs, community-led monitoring initiatives, and support for Afrodiasporic media and digital content creation. Afrodiasporic individuals must be included in shaping digital governance frameworks and AI regulations to ensure equitable and human rights based online environments.

7.1. Country-specific recommendations

GREECE

Accelerating and simplifying access to legal status and nationality for Afrodiasporic youth and long-term residents is essential given Greece's highly bureaucratic, restrictive, and often exclusionary legal system, which particularly burdens second-generation Afro-descendant youth. Inclusive reforms should reduce excessive requirements (such as long employment histories) and simplify naturalization processes, while outreach programs actively guide individuals and associations through legal hurdles, ensuring they are informed and supported throughout.

Institutionalizing anti-racism and intercultural training for frontline public servants is crucial, as the information gathered points to entrenched institutional racism and exclusionary practices. Training should target police, administrative offices, and social services, and include community-led monitoring systems to ensure accountability and build trust, particularly as many individuals from the Afrodiaspora feel ignored or dismissed in public spaces.

Creating safe spaces for interaction offers not only cultural and social opportunities but also much-needed protection and empowerment. These spaces would provide access to services, cultural dialogue, and civic tools, allowing the Afrodiaspora to reclaim agency, share experiences, and build resilience against everyday discrimination and isolation.

Combating employment exclusion in Greece requires tackling the informal labour market, which traps many Afrodiasporic people in precarious, unregulated work. This means introducing accessible regularization pathways for workers, strengthening anti-discrimination enforcement, and supporting Afro-descendant workers' rights in sectors like agriculture and domestic work, where they face disproportionate exploitation.

ITALY

Reforming citizenship laws to recognize second-generation Afrofiaspora is an urgent task in Italy, where despite being born or raised locally, many young Afro-descendants remain excluded due to rigid legal frameworks. The project actions have highlighted the need to remove discriminatory barriers and acknowledge these individuals as rightful Italian citizens, fully integrating them into national life.

Establishing intercultural community centres in high-density Afrodiasporic areas, particularly in diverse cities like Palermo, should be co-managed with Afrodiasporic leaders to provide culturally-sensitive services and strengthen local cohesion. These centres would foster cross-cultural exchange, offer youth programs, and support social integration, addressing the specific needs of both first- and second-generation individuals.

Developing anti-racist media literacy and public education campaigns is key, as Afro-descendants in Italy face gendered, Islamophobic, and stereotypes in media and public discourse. Campaigns should challenge harmful narratives, promote positive representations, and engage media actors in reshaping how Afrodiasporic individuals are portrayed, helping reduce prejudice and raise awareness across Italian society.

Funding collaborative programs between municipalities and Afrodiasporic initiatives is essential for participatory governance. By embedding Afrodiasporic perspectives into local planning, budgeting, and urban development, these programs can co-create solutions, foster shared ownership, and ensure Afrodiasporic voices actively shape the environments they inhabit.

SPAIN

Strengthening educational policies to include African and Afro-descendant perspectives is vital in Spain, where results of project activities have shown a need to dismantle stereotypes and colonial legacies still embedded in curricula. Schools should adopt intercultural teacher training, integrate Afrodiasporic histories, and develop resources that promote historical awareness and pride.

Promoting the social and economic empowerment of Afrodiasporic women and youth requires targeted investments in employment access, entrepreneurship, leadership training, and intersectional initiatives. Recognizing that women and youth face compounded barriers, these programs should ensure equal access to economic opportunities while fostering confidence and leadership in community spaces.

Enhancing public oversight of policing practices is critical, as ethnic profiling and discriminatory policing remain persistent problems. Introducing robust rights-based training for security forces, setting up independent monitoring mechanisms, and ensuring that the Afrodiaspora is involved in shaping fair and accountable policing practices are actions to help reduce these practices.

Fostering local citizenship initiatives and reinforcing participation at the municipal level can institutionalize inclusion. By adopting participatory budgeting and inclusive planning frameworks, municipalities can empower Afro-descendant residents to help design local policies and decisions, strengthening civic engagement and addressing local inequalities from the ground up.

These recommendations reflect a holistic, evidence-based approach rooted in both comparative policy analysis and the lived realities of Afrodiasporic individuals. Moving beyond integration toward empowerment, these actions call for collaborative governance and sustained investment in equity and dignity. Recognizing the richness of African heritage and dismantling systemic barriers is not only an ethical imperative, but also foundational to building cohesive, democratic societies across Europe.

