

# Executive summary

The Multicultural Centre (Mångkulturellt centrum, MKC) was commissioned by the Minister for Integration Mr. Erik Ullenhag (Ministry of Employment) to conduct a systematic review of the current situation on afrophobia experienced by Swedes with African descent in Sweden, based on existing statistics and previous research. The report indicates that afrophobia is widespread and a problem in Sweden. The issue of afrophobia and the situation for Afro-Swedes is not solely an integration issue: It is above all an issue concerning fundamental democratic rights and equality for all.

The definition of Afro-Swedes used in the report includes all residents in Sweden of sub-Saharan African descent including the Americas and the Caribbean. The number of Afro-Swedes stands at around 180 000 people, of whom 60 % are foreign-born, while 40 % were born in Sweden.

Afrophobia is a term used by the United Nations, and means hostility toward people with a background in sub-Saharan Africa or who are African diaspora. Afrophobia manifests for example as verbal abuse, spatial segregation and physical attacks as well as systematic racial discrimination within areas such as employment and housing.

The report reveals that Afro-Swedes are the Swedish minority most exposed to hate crimes according to statistics on hate crimes, and which also indicate an increase in afrophobic hate crimes by 24 % since 2008. Afrophobic hate crimes are characterized by a high proportion of physical violence, that often take place in public areas, such as schools, place of work, residential areas, shopping malls and restaurants, hence making the public areas the most threatening and hostile for Swedes of African descent.

The marginalisation of Afro-Swedes is apparent within all sectors of Swedish society, such as education, health, housing and employment. As for housing, it is evident that experiences of everyday racism are more widespread in areas dominated by the white majority population. On the labour market, Afro-Swedes suffer from the lowest educational payback, and the risk of being unemployed is significantly higher among university-educated Afro-Swedes. Afro-Swedes born in Africa are also highly overrepresented among the low-income groups.

Stereotypes about Africa and people of African descent that date back to colonialism are still predominant in Swedish culture, and to date, still affect the everyday lives of many Afro-Swedes. The Swedish attitude to race, which says that race is non-existing in Sweden, is an obstacle for constructive discussions about the effects of racial discrimination, and an obstacle for Afro-Swedes when coming to terms with experiences of everyday racism.

The same applies to the Swedish self-image which says that Sweden was not involved with colonialism and therefore makes issues of race and racism are non-relevant in today's Sweden. An unknown fact to many Swedes is that Sweden declared the end of slavery in Saint-Barthélemy, a Swedish colony in the Caribbean, as late as 1847.

The report contains a list of organisations and networks committed to strengthening Afro-Swedes' rights with a focus on equality and democracy. The report ends with a number of recommendations that targets various areas of the Swedish society. The report was submitted to the Ministry of Employment on 3 February 2014. ¶