Concept note – Securitising racialised people in Europe: Challenging the role of AI

Problem

Different Member States and EU institutions have been embracing the concept of the 'fortress of Europe', whilst criminalising people on the move and racialised people perceived as non-belonging to Europe.

CSOs reports such as ENAR's 'The sharp edge of violence' and 'Suspicion, discrimination and surveillance' have provided evidence on how law enforcement agencies are carrying out surveillance based on racial prejudices and how this is leading to increased violence and criminalisation of racialised people. Border management and the administration of migration are in hands of technology, and specially AI. Tools like facial and emotion recognition, drones, and social media monitoring have been normalised without preventive mechanisms.

With the AI Act, those technologies will be out of scope of this new regulation. The AI act approves the use of AI for surveillance and migration activities, prioritizing the interests of law enforcement agencies over fundamental right, and providing a blanket exemption on the use of these technologies for national security purposes. Who will protect then the unprotected? And who will police the police? When will anti-terrorism efforts stop targeting racialised people?

Objectives

- Understanding the positionality of the different parties in terms securitising Europe
- Challenge the role of AI and its biases in the securitisation process
- Address the racialisation of security in Europe
- Create an open debate regarding the role of the EU on funding projects of AI + security

Guiding questions

- How can we live with the AI Act and still make use of a fundamental rights approach?
- What are their proposals as a counternarrative to the securitisation of Europe?
- In which way do they think AI can help to shape a Europe based in the charter of fundamental rights?