

ECRI

European Commission
against Racism and Intolerance



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ECRI*i*

Commission européenne
contre le racisme et l'intolérance

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

■ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is a human rights monitoring body which specialises in questions relating to the fight against racism, discrimination on grounds of “race”, ethnic/national origin, colour, citizenship, religion or language (racial discrimination), xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance.

A pan-European Commission, composed of independent members, set up by Heads of State and Government

■ ECRI was set up by the first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe. Its statute was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of this Organisation on 13 June 2002.

■ ECRI is composed of 47 members appointed on the basis of their independence, impartiality, moral authority and expertise in dealing with issues of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. Each Council of Europe member state appoints one person to serve in ECRI. In a resolution adopted in October 2013, the Committee of Ministers updated ECRI’s statute in order to improve compliance with the above criteria by clarifying the modalities for members’ appointment and for bringing their term of office to an end.

Activities

■ ECRI’s statutory activities cover country monitoring, work on general themes and relations with civil society.

■ ECRI also maintains special relations with independent authorities responsible for combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance at national level (specialised bodies) and with relevant intergovernmental bodies, such as the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE.

Country monitoring

■ In its country monitoring work ECRI analyses the situation closely in each of the member states and makes recommendations for dealing with any problems of racism and intolerance identified there. A contact visit is organised before the preparation of each new country report in order to obtain as comprehensive a picture as possible of the situation in the member state concerned. During the visit an ECRI delegation meets key players in the fight against racism and intolerance.

All countries dealt with on an equal footing

■ ECRI's country approach places all Council of Europe member states on an equal footing. The work is organised in rounds; 9 to 10 countries are visited per year.

Thematic angle of the 5th round

■ In 2013 ECRI started work on the 5th round of its country monitoring. The 5th round reports focus on four main themes common to all countries. These are: legislative issues, hate speech, violence and integration policies. The reports also deal with topics specific to each country and, in particular, with follow-up to the interim recommendations adopted in the 4th cycle. LGBT issues are addressed in the 5th round when they arise in connection with themes such as hate speech, violence and discrimination.

Working methods in the 5th round

■ The country reports contain fewer recommendations than in the 4th round, but those made are more concrete and are expressed in such a way that their implementation can be measured. As in the 4th round, a process of interim follow-up takes place two years after publication of the reports, focusing on two recommendations selected as priorities. Lastly, where countries so request, ECRI's contact visits can be organised jointly with those of similar monitoring mechanisms, such as the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Open dialogue

■ The publication of ECRI's country reports is an important stage in the development of an ongoing dialogue between ECRI and the authorities in the member states with a view to identifying solutions to the problems of racism and intolerance which they face. The input of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other bodies or individuals active in this

The following country reports are expected to be published

▶ **in 2014**

Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Slovak Republic and Switzerland;

▶ **in 2015**

Albania, Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Norway and Poland;

▶ **in 2016**

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, France, Georgia, Italy, Lithuania, Monaco, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey and the United Kingdom;

▶ **in 2017**

Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Serbia, Spain, and Sweden;

▶ **in 2018**

Finland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, San Marino and Ukraine;

▶ **in 2019**

the Netherlands, the Russian Federation and Slovenia.

field is welcomed as a part of this process, to ensure that ECRI's contribution is as constructive and useful as possible.

Work on general themes

ECRI issues General Policy Recommendations (GPRs) addressed to the governments of all member states. These recommendations provide guidelines which policy makers are invited to use when drawing up national strategies and policies.

Some recommendations concern the tools necessary for fighting effectively against racism and intolerance. For example, GPR No. 1 defines the basic requirements for combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance, GPR No. 2 identifies the specialised bodies which need to be set up at national level, GPR No. 4 advocates a system of national surveys and GPR No. 7 specifies the key aspects to be dealt with in national legislation.

Others lay down guidelines to support the fight against racism in specific fields. For example, GPR No. 6 concerns the Internet, GPR No. 8 terrorism, GPR No. 10 school education, GPR No. 11 the police, GPR No. 12 sport and GPR No. 14 employment.

Lastly, some recommendations focus on measures relating to particular vulnerable groups, such as GPR No. 3 and GPR No. 13 on Roma/Gypsies, GPR No. 5 on Muslims and GPR No. 9 on antisemitism.

Relations with civil society

■ To be effective in the fight against racism and intolerance, ECRI must reach out to society at large. NGOs are key partners for ECRI. They are vital sources of information on the situation of the groups covered by ECRI's mandate and on racist and homo/transphobic incidents. They are also major players in bringing about real change at national level.

Round tables

■ At national level, round tables are held regularly following the publication of ECRI's country monitoring reports. They are organised with the specialised bodies and aimed at representatives of civil society and the national authorities, the main aim being to encourage all parties concerned to think about ways of jointly solving the problems of racism and intolerance and ensuring that ECRI's recommendations are implemented.

Thematic meetings

■ At European level, ECRI organises seminars on topics of particular interest. These thematic meetings are designed to establish a link between national situations and the inter-governmental level and bring together specialised bodies or other international partners.

■ Recent events include seminars with the specialised bodies on:

- ▶ local authorities and national specialised bodies combating racism and intolerance (May 2014);
- ▶ challenges faced in the current institutional and budgetary environment (May 2013);
- ▶ anti-discrimination bodies: recent trends and challenges (May – June 2012);
- ▶ discrimination in employment (May 2011);
- ▶ communicating on racism and racial discrimination (February 2009),

and the joint ECRI/UNHCR/ODIHR round table on combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance against asylum-seekers and refugees in Europe (November 2013).

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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