

CHRISTIAN AHLUND, ECRI'S CHAIR

CONCLUSIONS ON THE ECRI ROUND TABLE IN

ROMANIA - BUCHAREST, 29 SEPTEMBER 2015

First of all I would like to thank all the participants for today's lively, open and very constructive discussions.

We have used ECRI's last report on Romania as a starting point for this round table. The discussions throughout the day touched upon some very important issues that democratic societies face today.

By way of concluding remarks, let me concentrate on one core issue: we have a good legislative framework in place, but the application of the relevant provisions is not entirely satisfactory.

The conventional way of addressing this problem is to organise training for the police and the judiciary who are there to apply these provisions. But there is a disadvantage to this solution, namely that it will take time and money. Therefore, what is needed is to produce a change of attitude, primarily among the actors within the law-enforcement and judicial systems.

Today, victims of racism and racial discrimination are like victims of domestic violence in the past: in most European countries the legislative framework for this issue was in place, but it took lots of effort and energy to have it properly applied. The situation we are facing with regard to victims of discriminatory criminal offences at the moment is not very different. So, what needs to be done is to accelerate progress towards overcoming the obstacles to the proper application of the relevant legislative provisions.

A possible solution could be to launch a pilot project for a limited number of police officers, public prosecutors and judges. Such a project could illustrate to all the stakeholders involved the importance of properly applying the legislative provisions which are already in place. It could also produce a core of trainers that could be used to broaden the scope of the programme. We consider that such an initiative could also have a beneficial impact on the treatment of cases of racism and racial discrimination affecting the Roma population and other vulnerable groups; this remains a major concern in Romania.