

**ECRI's Round Table in the Republic of Moldova
Chisinau 30 September 2014**

Concluding remarks

**presented by François Sant'Angelo
member of ECRI**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The main aims of this round table were to raise awareness of the right to equal treatment and to support the implementation of ECRI's recommendations addressed to the authorities of the Republic of Moldova. In this context, allow me to address a few concluding remarks on behalf of ECRI.

Since ECRI's delegation (of which I was a member) visited the country in 2012, significant progress has been achieved. The Council on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Ensuring Equality (the Council) has had a promising start. Legislative amendments – for example to the Code of Administrative Procedure – were enacted. The authorities have publicly renewed their commitment to ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights and I strongly encourage them to move forward with this process in order to meet the promised deadline of 2015.

Today, a legal and institutional framework to combat racism is in place in the Republic of Moldova. The commitment of the Ministry of Justice to set up a working group on eliminating remaining gaps concerning the criminal prosecution of hate crime should be welcome. Today we have also been glad to learn that civil society will contribute to this working group. ECRI is ready to assist this work with its legal expertise, as already requested by the representative of the Ministry of Justice during the discussion.

However, this legal framework needs to be applied. This requires increased synergy between all stakeholders: The authorities, the judiciary, the police and the independent institutions need to contribute, within their respective mandates, to the effective application of the law.

In this context, the fact that the Council has already issued a number of decisions should be welcome. Some of them have been implemented, although mostly in the private sector. The Council should adopt a litigation strategy targeting more discrimination cases from the public sector. To be able to do that, it needs sufficient staff, with substantial legal and communication expertise, as well as adequate budgetary means.

The recently reformed institution of the People's Advocates, the Police and the Prosecution office need to intensify their actions against hate crime and strengthen contacts with vulnerable groups, in order to address under-reporting. Civil society should also contribute by denouncing more cases of discrimination and reporting them also to the People's Advocates, when public authorities are involved.

We are glad to hear that the participants of the round table underlined that hate speech in public debate is highly dangerous for social cohesion and that the competent institutions need to raise awareness of this danger in order to prevent and counter hate speech, in particular during the upcoming electoral campaign.

Concerning the integration of Roma, positive results have been achieved with the help of Roma community mediators, for example in the field of education. However, this is not enough and proper funding is needed to ensure the implementation of other parts of the Roma integration action plan.

While ECRI's recommendations are addressed to the authorities, we encourage them to establish and maintain a regular dialogue with all stakeholders in society. This is a *conditio sine qua non* for the implementation of ECRI's recommendations, including those discussed today.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you for contributing so actively to the discussion until its very end. Special thanks go to the two co-organisers of this event, the Ministry of Justice and the Council. I very much hope that this round table will not remain a one-off event, but instead will contribute to a better understanding of ECRI's recommendations, thus paving the way towards their timely implementation.