

## Combating discrimination in Serbia: Round Table of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in Belgrade

**Date:** 16 November 2011.

**Venue:** Belgrade – Palace of Serbia, Belgrade Room.

**Organised by:** the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe, in co-operation with the Protector of Citizens (National Ombudsman) and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality of Serbia.

Participants will discuss the follow-up given to the recommendations contained in ECRI's 2011 report on Serbia concerning a number of themes divided into four sessions:

- the general situation in Serbia as reflected in ECRI's report;
- legislative and institutional framework for combating racial discrimination;
- religious freedom;
- integration of Roma.

The event will be opened by Milan Marković, Minister for Human and Minority Rights, Public Administration and Local Self Government, and Winnie Sorgdrager, member of ECRI. Opening speeches will be given by Saša Janković, National Ombudsman, and Nevena Petrušić, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. Gun Kut, member of ECRI, will present ECRI's last report on Serbia. In addition to representatives of the authorities, the round table will bring together the Parliament, the justice system and academia, representatives of international organisations and of the Roma communities, as well as NGOs and religious representatives.

In its [second report on Serbia](#) of May 2011, ECRI expressed its concern about some issues, for example the Law on Churches and Religious Communities and courts' practice relating to racist crime. ECRI made also a certain number of recommendations to the Serbian authorities, among which the following three will be revisited in 2013:

- strengthen the institution of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality by ensuring that it has the human and financial resources to function effectively;
- strengthen the training provided to the judiciary on racism and racial discrimination, inter alia, to ensure better sentencing practices for racist crime;
- take immediate measures to ensure that all Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians have identity documents.

The round table is **open to the press**. It will start at **9.30 am** and end at **5.30 pm** on **Wednesday 16 November 2011**.

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[Link to the programme](#)

*ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, religion and language, as well as xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance, prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States. For more information on ECRI: [www.coe.int/ecri](http://www.coe.int/ecri)*