

## Combating racial discrimination and intolerance in Belgium: Round Table of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in Brussels

**Date:** 1 July 2015

**Venue:** Salle Storck – Rue Ernest Blerot 1, 1070 Brussels

**Organisers:** ECRI in cooperation with the Belgian Inter-federal Centre for Equal Opportunities

**Objectives:** provide the participants with the opportunity to discuss the follow-up to the recommendations contained in ECRI's monitoring report on Belgium, published in 2014. The round table will be divided into three sessions:

- ECRI report's main findings and recommendations;
- Assessment of the legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination;
- How to measure and encourage the inclusive participation in employment of non-nationals or persons of foreign origin.

Opening statements will be made by Koen Geens, Minister of Justice, Elke Sleurs, Secretary of State for Equal Opportunities, and Stelios Perrakis, ECRI member. Representatives of the federal and federated authorities, the judiciary and civil society, as well as academics will be among the speakers. François Sant'Angelo, ECRI member in respect of Belgium, and Loredana Marchi, Director of the NGO Foyer, will chair the sessions. Patrick Charlier, Director a.i. of the Inter-federal Centre for Equal Opportunities, and Jean-Paul Lehnens, ECRI member, will close the event.

In addition to federal and federated authorities, the round table will bring together NGOs and members of vulnerable groups. This event aims at contributing positively to the national debate on combating racial discrimination and intolerance in the country, as well as raising awareness among the general public about these issues.

In its report on Belgium of 4 February 2014, ECRI noted steps forward, but also a number of issues, such as questionable aspects of the integration programmes and the problematic application of the anti-discrimination legislation in certain areas. ECRI recommended that an assessment of the application and effectiveness of the legislation against racism and intolerance should be carried out and that the authorities should ensure that the civic integration programme is not discriminatory, thus deviating from its essential integration purpose.

The round table is open to the press. It will start at 9.30 am and end at 5.00 pm.

Link to the programme:

[French](#)

[Dutch](#)

Link to ECRI's report:

[English](#)

[French](#)

[Dutch](#)

*ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as "race", national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.*

**Press contact:**

***For the Council of Europe:*** Andrew Cutting, Tel.: +32.223.50.509 [andrew.cutting@coe.int](mailto:andrew.cutting@coe.int)

***For ECRI:*** Stefano Valenti, Tel: +33 (0)3 90 21 43 28, [stefano.valenti@coe.int](mailto:stefano.valenti@coe.int)

***For the Inter-federal Centre:*** Marisa Fella, Tel.: +32 (0)2 212 30 94, [Marisa.Fella@cntr.be](mailto:Marisa.Fella@cntr.be)