

ECRI

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
Commission européenne contre le racisme et l'intolérance

ECRI's Round Table in Austria

Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
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BRIEFING PAPER

[German version \(pdf\)](#)

ECRI's Round Table in Austria is part of a series of national Round Tables in the member States of the Council of Europe, which are organised in the framework of ECRI's Programme of Action on Relations with Civil Society.

The reasoning behind this Programme of Action is that racism and intolerance can only be successfully countered if civil society is actively engaged in this fight: tackling racism and intolerance requires not only action on the part of governments (to whom ECRI's recommendations are addressed), but also the full involvement of civil society. ECRI attaches great importance to ensuring that its anti-racism message filters down to the whole of civil society, and also to involving the various sectors of society in an intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect.

The main themes of this Round Table are: (1) ECRI's report on Austria; (2) policies and practice with regard to asylum, immigration and integration; (3) racism, antisemitism and xenophobia in political discourse and in public sphere (4) and the implementation of anti-discrimination laws in Austria.

In its recently published [Report on Austria](#), ECRI acknowledges that over recent years, Austria has made progress in a number of the fields covered in this report. This includes progress in the provision of human rights education in schools and the recent adoption of new anti-discrimination legislation, applying to a broad range of areas.

At the same time ECRI observes that in Austria there continues to exist a marked differentiation in law and practice between, on the one hand, Austrian and other EU citizens and, on the other, non-EU citizens, which negatively affects the social and political integration of all segments of Austrian society. Racism and racial discrimination still impinges on the daily lives of members of minority groups, and particularly of Black Africans, Muslims and Roma. Finally, manifestations of antisemitism still represent an issue of concern of ECRI in Austria.

All of these issues will be discussed with representatives of the responsible governmental agencies and victims of discrimination in the light of [ECRI's General Policy Recommendation no.7](#) on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination and the recently established legislative and institutional framework for combating racism

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and racial discrimination in Austria. A whole session will be dedicated to **policies and practices in the field of asylum and immigration**, with a special emphasis on the practical implementation of Austria's new asylum and immigration laws. Finally, also the dangers of the **use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic arguments in political discourse** will be analysed in more detail by renowned experts in this field.

ECRI hopes that an open debate among all relevant actors on these important issues will help to identify together effective ways of better implementing existing initiatives and will also provide the necessary impetus for further reform in Austria.