

ECRI

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

ECRI's Round Table in Croatia

Hotel WESTIN
Zagreb, 5 July 2006

BRIEFING PAPER

ECRI's Round Table in Croatia 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 Croatia; (2) the situation of ex-Yugoslav minority groups in Croatia; (3) the legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination and (4) problems faced by the Roma community in Croatia.

In its [third report on Croatia](#), ECRI acknowledges that over recent years, Croatia has made progress in a number of the fields covered in this report. This includes that Croatia has ratified Protocol No.12 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which introduces a general, freestanding prohibition of discrimination to the Convention. It also has reinforced some criminal law provisions designed to combat racism and some Labour Code provisions prohibiting discrimination. Finally, ECRI notes with satisfaction that the Croatian authorities have adopted a National Programme for the Roma and has mandated an expert working group to prepare a National Strategy against all Forms of Discrimination.

At the same time ECRI observes that in Croatia the problems surrounding the acquisition of nationality encountered by persons of non-Croatian origin who have lived in the country for a long time have not yet been fully resolved. The current civil and administrative law provisions are not sufficient to prohibit discrimination in all areas of life, including employment, housing, education and public services. Finally, substantial progress remains to be made concerning the return of refugees and displaced persons, especially in the matter of housing.

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

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and the existing legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination in Croatia. A whole session will be dedicated to combating racism and racial discrimination against **Roma**, with a special emphasis on the practical implementation of the National Programme for the Roma. Finally, special attention will be also paid to analysing the situation of certain **ex-Yugoslav minority groups**, who are particularly at risk of being subject to racism and racial discrimination by the general public, but also by certain public authorities.

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 Croatia.