

ECRI

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

ECRI's Round Table in Germany in co-operation with the German Institute for Human Rights

12 May 2010
NH Hotel Berlin-Friedrichstrasse 96
10177 BERLIN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

How to change employers' attitude towards persons of immigrant background? How to remove the barriers that they face in finding employment?

How to better respond to racial discrimination and racist violence in domestic legislation? How to make victims of discrimination aware of their rights? What role for the public institutions such as the Federal Agency against Discrimination, in responding to these phenomena?

Is racism really only a right-wing extremist phenomenon? What are the consequences of this understanding of racism in Germany?

Which evaluation can be made from the National Integration Plan in tackling the challenges of integration of migrants? What role for the German Islam Conference?

These are some of the questions that will be addressed at the Round Table organised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the German Institute for Human Rights on 12 May in Berlin.

This meeting is part of **ECRI's civil society programme** which aims at stimulating reflection in governmental and non-governmental circles on racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. The meeting will introduce the **2009 Report of ECRI on Germany** ([link to the report](#)) which made a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the country.

In this report, ECRI welcomed the introduction of the General Equal Treatment Act and the establishment of the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency which strengthened the protection provided to victims of discrimination. ECRI noted the continuous efforts of the German authorities to prosecute neo-Nazi and racist offences. It also found it positive that the dialogue with the Muslim community had improved and that specific measures had been taken to help migrants to participate fully in German society. However, ECRI expressed its concern about the persistence of violent racist, xenophobic and antisemitic attacks and hate speech, including racist propaganda on the internet. Muslim, Turkish, Black as well as Roma and Sinti communities were found to experience discrimination in the fields of education, housing, and employment. ECRI found it worrying that Muslims had increasingly been identified with crimes, and more specifically with terrorism since

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11 September 2001. In addition, ECRI called on the authorities to ensure that the language and naturalisation tests do not have counter-productive effects on integration.

All the above will be discussed at the meeting which will be structured around **three main sessions**: **1)** legislative and institutional framework on combating racial discrimination; **2)** preventing and effectively responding to racism; **3)** integration.

The Round Table presents an opportunity for the Federal and Länder authorities, national anti-discrimination agencies, academics, trade-unions and NGOs to hold a national debate on racism and related forms of discrimination and intolerance and identify the measures that need to be taken to follow-up on the many recommendations contained in ECRI's report.

Among the latter, the following three stand out:

- Raise potential victims' awareness of the General Equal Treatment Act
 - Ensure that students are not sent to schools in the lower academic stream unless this is strictly necessary
- Launch a campaign aiming at changing employers' attitudes towards persons with an immigrant background and promoting the positive aspects of diversity in the workplace

These are the interim follow-up recommendations, which ECRI will revisit in two years' time.

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