

ECRI

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

ECRI's Round Table in Spain

PALACIO DE CONGRESOS DE MADRID
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BRIEFING PAPER

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

ECRI's Round Table in Spain 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 Spain; (2) minority groups as victims of racism and racial discrimination; (3) the legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination (4) and the reception of refugees and asylum seekers in Spain.

In its recently published [Report on Spain](#), ECRI acknowledges that over recent years, Spain has made progress in a number of the fields covered in this report. This includes that there has been a recent willingness on the part of the Spanish authorities to move from an aliens' policy to an immigration and integration policy. At the same time the tone of public, and notably political, debate on immigration has improved since June 2004. ECRI notes also with satisfaction that measures have been taken to reduce the disadvantage faced by many members of the Roma communities of Spain and some of these measures, notably in the field of employment, are reported to have yielded tangible positive results.

At the same time ECRI observes that in Spain lack of awareness of issues of racism and racial discrimination across Spanish society affects the institutional response to these phenomena in a negative way. Racial discrimination in a wide range of areas, including employment, housing and access to public places still affects the daily lives of members

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of ethnic minority groups, including Roma, North Africans, people from sub-Saharan Africa and South Americans. These persons are also particularly affected by ethnic profiling practices by the police. Finally, racial and xenophobic violence still needs to be adequately recognised and countered.

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 existing legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination in Spain. A whole session will be dedicated to policies and practices as regards the **reception of immigrants and asylum seekers** in Spain, with a special emphasis on the situation of persons from sub-Saharan Africa trying to gain access to Spanish territory through Ceuta and Melilla. Finally, special attention will be also paid to analysing the situation of other vulnerable groups, including Roma, Moroccans and South Americans, 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 Spain.