

# ECRI

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

## ECRI's Round Table in Ukraine

Great Conference Hall of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine  
Kiev, 7 May 2009

### EXPLANATORY NOTE

[Ukrainian version](#)

ECRI's Round Table in Ukraine is part of a series of national round tables in the member States of the Council of Europe, which are organised by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe in the framework of its Programme of action on relations with civil society.

These national round tables are regularly organised following the publication of ECRI's country monitoring reports, in which ECRI thoroughly analyses the situation as regards racism and intolerance in each country and makes suggestions and proposals as to how to tackle the problems identified. The main aim of these round tables is to encourage reflection in the governmental and non-governmental circles concerned, by bringing together the relevant national actors in this field: government officials; representatives of national human rights institutions; representatives of local and regional authorities; parliamentarians; victims of discrimination; academics; NGOs etc. The objective is to develop together ideas as to how to solve the problems of racism identified in the country and to ensure the implementation of ECRI's specific recommendations.

The main themes of ECRI's Round Table in Ukraine are: (1) ECRI's report on Ukraine; (2) responding to racially motivated violence; (3) the fight for equality – implementing anti-discrimination laws; (4) racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in public discourse and in the public sphere.

In its [third Report on Ukraine](#), ECRI noted that on 27 March 2006, Ukraine ratified Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights. This instrument, which entered into force in Ukraine on 1 July 2006, provides for a general prohibition of discrimination. In its third report, ECRI also acknowledged that in recent years, Ukraine has made progress in a number of the fields covered in its second report. For example, in March 2007, the State Committee for Nationalities and Religion became fully operational, receiving asylum applications and combating racism and racial discrimination among other tasks. In addition, the Office of the Ombudsman has conducted a monitoring program on the situation of minority groups in Ukraine.

At the same time, in its **third Report on Ukraine**, ECRI expressed its concern that criminal legislation against racially motivated crimes had not been strengthened and that

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the authorities had not yet adopted a comprehensive body of civil and administrative anti-discrimination law. Although the program for Roma achieved some success by raising local authorities' awareness of the problems facing Roma, ECRI noted that it was insufficiently funded and that members of this community still faced many inequalities in areas such as education, employment and housing. Due to the inadequacy of the legislation against incitement to racial hatred and the lack of a monitoring system for antisemitic incidents, there had been very few prosecutions against people who made antisemitic statements or published antisemitic literature. ECRI also noted that in the Crimea, racially motivated violence primarily targeting Crimean Tatars and Jewish communities had increased and more measures were necessary to ensure peaceful coexistence among the different communities living in that region.

All of these issues will be discussed at the Round Table in Ukraine with representatives of the relevant governmental agencies and victims of discrimination in the light of the **existing legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination** in Ukraine. One full session will deal with the question of how best to respond **to racially motivated violence**, with special emphasis on the **role of the criminal justice system** in this regard. Finally, the **dangers of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in public discourse and in the public sphere** will also be analysed in more detail by experts in this field.

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