

Czech version

Racial discrimination and intolerance in the Czech Republic - Council of Europe's Anti-racism Commission to hold a round table in Prague

Strasbourg, 27.10.2016 – The Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in co-operation with the Czech Public Defender of Rights and the Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation, is organising a round table in Prague on 3 November to discuss the follow-up given to the recommendations contained in ECRI's latest monitoring report on the Czech Republic, published in 2015.

This round table aims to contribute to the national debate on combating racial discrimination and intolerance in the country, as well as to raise awareness among the general public about these issues. The event will bring together national and local authorities, academics, representatives of international organisations and NGOs, as well as members of vulnerable groups of concern to ECRI.

The round table will be divided into three sessions:

- Main findings and recommendations of ECRI's report on the Czech Republic;
- Legislative and institutional framework for combating racism and racial discrimination;
- Roma integration.

The event will be opened by Christian Ahlund, Chair of ECRI, Jiří Dienstbier, Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation, and Anna Šabatová, Public Defender of Rights of the Czech Republic. ECRI's report on the Czech Republic will be presented by ECRI members Eva Smith Asmussen and Thomas Büchel. Christian Ahlund and Martina Štěpánková, Vice-Minister for Human Rights and Equal Opportunities of the Czech Republic, will close the event.

Dalibor Jílek, ECRI member in respect of the Czech Republic, Ambassador Emil Ruffer, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the Council of Europe, and David Beňák, of the Human Rights Section of Office of the Czech Government, will chair the sessions.

In its 2015 report, ECRI expressed concern about a number of issues, such as the limitations to the mandate of the Public Defender of Rights to combat racial discrimination effectively; the complex regime set out by the Anti-Discrimination Act concerning the sharing of the burden of proof; the limited effect of the "Concept for Roma Integration and Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion"; hate speech and discrimination of Roma in access to education and housing.

ECRI recommended amending the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act on the sharing of the burden of proof; enlarging the competences of the Public Defender of Rights; focusing the "Campaign against Racism and Hate Violence" primarily on the Roma, and introducing at least one year of compulsory and free of charge preschool for all children before entry to mainstream primary education.

The round table, which is **open to the media**, will start at 9.00 a.m. and end at 5.00 p.m. on Thursday 3 November 2016. It will be held at the Office of the Government, nábreží Edvarda Beneše 4, 118 01 Prague 1. Requests for accreditation and for interviews with the speakers should be addressed to the contacts below.

Link to the programme: [English](#)

Link to ECRI's report: [English](#) [Czech](#)

Conclusions [English](#)

ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as "race", national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.

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