

Statement by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance concerning racist and xenophobic political activities in Greece

Strasbourg, 10.12.2012 - The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe wishes to express its deep concern about the rise and activities, in Greece, of Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi, racist and xenophobic political party, which is represented in the Hellenic Parliament.

This party openly uses virulent nationalist and anti-immigration rhetoric, drawing on the vulnerability of the Greek public during a time of extreme economic crisis in the country.

Members of Golden Dawn have systematically carried out acts of violence and hate crimes, at times tolerated by the police, against immigrants, political opponents, ethnic minorities and those who express concern about the situation.

ECRI calls upon the Greek authorities to take firm and effective action to ensure that the activities of Golden Dawn do not violate the free and democratic political order or the rights of any individuals.

While ECRI recognises that everyone has the right to associate freely in political parties, their prohibition or enforced dissolution may be justified in the case of parties which advocate the use of violence.

ECRI furthermore recalls its declaration on the use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse, adopted on 17 March 2005.

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

For more information on ECRI: www.coe.int/ecri

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