

Press Release – 18.12.2006

**Statement of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on recent events affecting persons of Georgian origin in the Russian Federation**

(adopted on 15 December 2006 at ECRI's 41<sup>st</sup> plenary meeting)

Strasbourg, 18.12.2006 - From the standpoint of its mandate to combat racism and racial discrimination in the 46 member States of the Council of Europe, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) wishes to express its deep concern about recent events affecting Russian citizens of Georgian origin and Georgian citizens in the Russian Federation.

These events, which have in many cases occurred under the pretext of the need to clamp down on crime and illegal immigration, have included detentions, deportations, in some cases resulting in deaths, and reported cases of harassment. ECRI deeply regrets these measures, which have been directed by certain public authorities specifically at a particular ethnic group. In keeping with the recommendations contained in its third report on the Russian Federation published on 16 May 2006, ECRI emphasises the need for the Russian authorities to ensure that, in respect of persons of Georgian origin as well as all other minority groups within the Russian Federation, the rule of law is maintained and the principle of non-discrimination as embodied in Council of Europe standards is strictly observed.