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[Croatian version](#)

Croatia: Racist and hate speech against Serbs, LGBT persons and Roma escalating, says Council of Europe anti-racism Commission

Strasbourg, 15.05.2018 – Racist hate speech in public discourse is escalating in Croatia, according to a [report](#) published today by the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

The main target groups are Serbs, LGBT persons and Roma. The report – which analyses legislative issues, racist and homo-transphobic hate speech, violence and integration policies – notes a rise of nationalism, particularly from youth, which often takes the form of praising the fascist Ustaša regime.*

The report decries an inadequate response by Croatian authorities to such increasing intolerance, as criminal action is too often ruled out. Most cases of hate speech and hate motivated violence are treated merely as misdemeanours. While the report praises improved legal protection against hate crime through amendments to the Criminal Code – which includes a new provision criminalizing violent conduct in public places – anti-hate crime legislation is rarely applied. The report cites a lack of knowledge and expertise from law enforcement and the judiciary.

ECRI further notes that national Roma strategies are only partially implemented. The Roma continue to face high levels of social exclusion, and data suggests that their access to employment is alarmingly low and school drop-out rates still high.

While ECRI praises a new legislative framework for LGBT persons with the enactment of the Law on Registered Same-Sex Partnerships in July 2014, prejudice against them remains widespread and they experience different forms of discrimination in their daily lives.

ECRI praises legislative steps taken to ensure access to housing for returnees under the national Housing Care Programme. Through the Migration Policy for 2013-2015, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have had access – on an equal footing with Croatian nationals – to primary and secondary schooling free of charge, which is in line with ECRI's previous priority recommendation. Furthermore, in November 2017, an Action Plan to integrate persons who have been granted international protection (2017-2019) was adopted.

Among recommendations to the Croatian authorities, two should be implemented as a priority, because they will be the subject of a follow-up by ECRI within two years:

- The authorities should introduce compulsory human rights education as part of civic education into all school curricula, especially regarding equality rights and prohibiting discrimination. Appropriate text books should be developed and teachers should continue receiving necessary training.

* This regime was an ultranationalist organization active in its original form between 1929 and 1945. Its members murdered a large number of Serbs, Jews, Roma and political dissidents during World War II.

- The National Roma Inclusion Strategy (2013-2020) must be accompanied by an evaluation of all integration projects implemented over recent years, on the basis of comprehensive equality data. The strategy should be revised systematically to include more targeted measures and success indicators to measure its impact and to redefine its parameters and goals. This should be done in close cooperation with regional and local authorities and with members of the Roma community and adequate funding should be allocated for the strategy to be effective.

The report was prepared following [ECRI's visit to Croatia](#) in April 2017. It takes developments up 7 December 2017 into account, except where expressly indicated.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (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. ECRI monitors the situation in member states in five year cycles.

[Additional information on ECRI](#)

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