

**ECRI CONCLUSIONS
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS
IN RESPECT OF CROATIA
SUBJECT TO INTERIM FOLLOW-UP**

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¹Except where expressly indicated, any developments which occurred after 7 September 2020, date on which the response of the Croatian authorities to ECRI's request for information on measures taken to implement the recommendations chosen for interim follow-up was received, are not taken into account in this analysis.

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FOREWORD

As part of its fifth round of monitoring work, ECRI has renewed its process of interim follow-up with respect to two specific recommendations made in each of its country reports.

In line with the Information Document on ECRI's fifth monitoring cycle brought to the attention of the Ministers' Deputies on 14 November 2012¹, not later than two years following the publication of each report, ECRI addresses a communication to the Government concerned asking what has been done in respect of the specific recommendations for which priority follow-up was requested.

At the same time, ECRI gathers relevant information itself. On the basis of this information and the response from the Government, ECRI draws up its conclusions on the way in which its recommendations have been followed up.

It should be noted that these conclusions concern only the specific recommendations subject to interim follow-up and do not aim at providing a comprehensive analysis of all developments in the fight against racism and intolerance in the State concerned.

¹ CM/Del/Dec(2012)1154/4.2.

1. *In its report on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle) published on 15 May 2018, ECRI recommended that the authorities introduce compulsory human rights education as part of civic education into all school curricula, especially as regards the right to equality and the prohibition of discrimination. Appropriate textbooks should be developed and teachers should continue receiving the necessary training in these subjects.*

The state authorities informed ECRI that in January 2019, the Ministry of Science and Education adopted a curriculum for the cross-curricular topic of ‘Civic Education for primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia’.³ This topic comprises three domains: i) human rights; ii) democracy; and iii) society. It is compulsory in all schools along with six other cross-curricular topics. The introduction of this curricula coincided with the implementation of an experimental programme, entitled ‘School for Life’, which envisages a comprehensive curricular reform in the country. Within the scope of this programme, since 2019, trainings for teachers have been provided to increase their competences on cross-curricular themes whilst new appropriate textbooks were made ready for the school year 2020/2021. Several teaching materials and handbooks covering human rights topics, such as the prevention of violent extremism; combatting antisemitism and other forms of discrimination and learning about Holocaust, were also translated into Croatian language, and included into education tools available.

ECRI notes that several organisations⁴, in addition to underlining the low competence of pupils in civic literacy, expressed concerns about the design and conduct of the new topic of ‘Civic Education’ and argued that it has not yet been fully introduced across the country nor are the trainings for teachers deployed on a systematic manner. In this regard, ECRI reiterates the importance of having sufficient focus on learning about human rights within this recent civic education framework and emphasises that this often depends on the discretion and particularly the motivation of teachers. It therefore strongly encourages the Croatian authorities to ensure a comprehensive and consistent initial and continuous training with a view to providing the members of the teaching profession the necessary sensitivity to and skills on human rights education and to make topics such as the right to equality and prohibition of discrimination a priority in practice. This can further be supported by sharing experiences among teachers regularly, updating methods and materials used for teaching and mainstreaming good practices.⁵ Also, as this is a new curriculum, the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education should conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the curriculum so far, particularly in light of COVID 19 and online education.

In view of these considerations, whilst inviting the Croatian authorities to closely monitor the proper implementation of civic education framework, ECRI concludes that the measures that have been taken by the authorities met the objective set in its fifth report and considers that this recommendation has been implemented.

³ See [National Gazette no.10/2019](#).

⁴ See [Report](#) ‘Human Rights in Croatia: Overview of 2019’: p. 61-62.

⁵ In accordance with ECRI’s General Policy Recommendation No. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education.

2. *In its report on Croatia (fifth monitoring cycle), ECRI recommended that the authorities ensure that the National Roma Inclusion Strategy (2013-2020) is 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 where necessary. This should be done in close cooperation with regional and local authorities as well as members of the Roma community and adequate funding should be allocated for the strategy to be effective.*

ECRI notes positively that the Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities, which is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS), published a study⁶ collecting baseline data on the socio-economic position of the Roma community in 2018. Being the first example of its kind, this baseline study consisted of a mapping of the Roma population in combination with external and self-identification methods, which resulted in a comprehensive and precise data on Roma population. Enabling the better assessment of Roma inclusion measures at national, regional, and local levels, this data study was partially used for drafting the 2018 and 2019 Action Plans for the implementation of NRIS and a dedicated website (www.nsur.hr) was created for monitoring progress in the enforcement of the latter, albeit not updated regularly.⁷ ECRI welcomes these measures and considers them as a good practice.⁸ Furthermore, ECRI is pleased to note that the budget allocated to the targeted measures in the NRIS gradually increased from 25,607,617.33 HRK in 2017, and 32,571,074.13 HRK in 2018 to 43,711,878.82 HRK in 2019.

The authorities informed ECRI that a Working Group, which is composed of representatives of the state authorities, Roma community, equality body, civil society organisations and academia, was set up for drafting the new National Roma Inclusion Strategy (NRIS) for the period from 2021 to 2027 following the expiration of the previous one in 2020. The drafting process is under way. ECRI considers that this process might offer a good opportunity for systematic revision of the goals and measures of the Roma inclusion policy in the country and must be concluded in close cooperation with the Roma community, in light of relevant data and evidence provided through the above mentioned baseline data study.

Lastly, in autumn 2020, a new Commission for the Monitoring of the Implementation of the NRIS was established and the Roma national minority Member of Parliament is appointed as deputy chairperson of that Commission. Several stakeholders, however, raised concerns about the lack of coordination between central, regional and local authorities in implementing the NRIS and addressing difficulties Roma particularly encounter. In this respect, ECRI was pleased to learn that in Međimurje County, where most of the Roma population resides in Croatia, there were plans to set up teams of experts at regional level, representing the police, judiciary, education, health, social and employment services, as well as schools, civil society and Roma community. Welcoming this initiative, ECRI encourages the authorities to invest more in the setting-up and mobilisation of such teams across the country.

Against this background, ECRI welcomes the positive steps taken by the Croatian authorities and concludes that the recommendation has been implemented.

⁶ See Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study, [here](#)

⁷ See, [the Report of the Croatian Ombudsperson 2019](#); p.33-34.

⁸ See similar; assessment made by EU [FRA](#)

