

ECRI ROADMAP TO EFFECTIVE EQUALITY



Published on 27 September 2019



European Commission
against Racism and Intolerance
ECRI
Commission européenne
contre le racisme et l'intolérance



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

I. The situation in Europe regarding racism and intolerance

1. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) was established in 1994 at a time when Europe was facing developments of historic dimensions with the fall of the iron curtain. ECRI is proud of its achievements in the 25 years since it was set up. It has established a widely respected procedure for the regular monitoring of every member State of the Council of Europe and for engaging in dialogue with the governments about their successes and failures in combating racism and intolerance and developing an inclusive and fair society. ECRI's work is informed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Its General Policy Recommendations (GPRs) set standards in a wide range of areas and assist governments in developing their policies.
2. ECRI notes that there is increased awareness in the member States of the phenomena of racism and intolerance and their various forms, both open and hidden. We believe that ECRI's work has contributed significantly to combating racism and intolerance and in particular to the adoption by member States of an increasingly robust legal framework against hate crime, hate speech and discrimination. Member States have also established a stronger institutional framework to promote equality and protect individuals and groups against racism and intolerance, especially through the creation of equality bodies.
3. At the same time, ECRI recalls that the deeply engrained roots of racism and intolerance have repeatedly led to catastrophic wars and genocide. While much progress has been made since ECRI was established, regrettably in more recent years Europe has experienced the emergence of new racist, xenophobic and homo/transphobic movements, sometimes even supported by governments. In the present times of increasing globalisation, many people feel threatened and become susceptible to racism and hatred. Politicians not only from fringe parties but increasingly also from mainstream political parties have played on these fears and made use of xenophobic and ultra-nationalistic rhetoric and populist hate speech to win elections and gain power. There has been a surge in the use of hate speech in social media and on the Internet. Different groups, notably Roma, Muslims, Jews, migrants, Black and LGBTI persons, have become targets of the hatred and violence provoked by it. Parallels with the developments that led to the most terrible periods of European history become apparent.

4. This trend has also resulted in new tensions and armed conflicts between some member States, and the Council of Europe's aim of achieving greater unity and cooperation in Europe has been called into question. Continued efforts and high vigilance are needed to build and maintain strong safeguards against both persisting and new forms of racism and intolerance. The member States, ECRI and all stakeholders need to continue joining forces to contain these threats, ensure respect of human dignity and pave the way to greater equality throughout Europe.

II. ECRI's focus over the years to come

5. In these challenging times, ECRI's work is more relevant than ever and we are determined to carry on that work. In the years to come, ECRI will use its 6th monitoring cycle to contribute to further strengthening effective equality and access to rights, including through promoting the independence and effectiveness of equality bodies, inclusive education and LGBTI equality. We will also focus on combating hate speech and hate-motivated violence and on inclusive integration as cornerstones for building diverse and fair societies. ECRI will continue to call for humane conditions for all migrants and for generous and effective programmes for their integration in host countries, especially for children.
6. ECRI will put an increased focus on highlighting and promoting good practices that member States have developed at central, regional and local levels and that can serve as a model for other states.
7. ECRI has also become aware from its monitoring work of cross-cutting issues where the intersection of national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and other grounds can lead to further discrimination. We will seek to include this aspect, as well as a gender perspective, in all our future work.
8. Building on the results of country monitoring and the collection of good practices, ECRI aims to update its GPR No. 5 on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims and GPR No. 9 on the fight against antisemitism. We also intend to engage in work on a new GPR to combat discrimination and intolerance against LGBTI persons. ECRI will continue to combat hate speech and, based on its GPR No. 15, will consider initiating a revision of the Charter of Political Parties for a non-racist society.

9. ECRI will pursue a variety of avenues to promote and support the implementation of its recommendations. In this context, it welcomes the Council of Europe's new focus on country-specific action plans and cooperation in the fields covered by ECRI's mandate.
10. ECRI believes that the struggle against racism and intolerance requires allies. Accordingly, we will strengthen our cooperation with other Council of Europe bodies, international organisations, civil society, academia and the media. In addition, firmly believing in the importance of strong and independent equality bodies, ECRI will continue to work closely with the equality bodies in member States.
11. Aware of the potential danger of racial profiling and discrimination that may arise as a result of the increasing use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, ECRI commits to raising awareness about the challenges. At the same time, these new technologies could also be used for combating racism and intolerance, and we will recommend ways to take advantage of the opportunities they bring.

III. ECRI's recommendations to member States and stakeholders

12. ECRI thanks the member States for the constructive dialogue and the excellent cooperation that have developed with their authorities and the National Liaison Officers over the last 25 years.
13. Building on this, ECRI calls on the member States to further intensify their efforts to implement its recommendations. To this end, it strongly recommends that each member State should introduce an effective system to ensure expeditious and systematic implementation of ECRI's recommendations. Equality bodies can and should play an important role in this respect.
14. Given the worrying increase in hate speech and intolerance in the political discourse in recent years, ECRI calls on parliaments and governments of the member States to be aware of their responsibility for promoting equality and inclusiveness, to rebut divisive discourse and refrain from scapegoating specific sections of the population.
15. Finally, ECRI calls on the member States and donors to fund policies, long-term activities and projects that implement ECRI's recommendations.