

ECRI

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

ECRI's Round Table in Greece

Hotel TITANIA
Athens, 18 November 2004

BRIEFING PAPER

ECRI's Round Table in Greece is part of a series of national Round Tables in the member States of the Council of Europe, which are organised in the framework of ECRI's Programme of Action on Relations with Civil Society.

The reasoning behind this Programme of Action is that racism and intolerance can only be successfully countered if civil society is actively engaged in this fight: tackling racism and intolerance requires not only action on the part of governments (to whom ECRI's recommendations are addressed), but also the full involvement of civil society. ECRI attaches great importance to ensuring that its anti-racism message filters down to the whole of civil society, and also to involving the various sectors of society in an intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect.

The main themes of this Round Table are: (1) ECRI's report on Greece; (2) racism and xenophobia in public discourse and in the public sphere; (3) national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination and (4) the situation of immigrants in Greece.

In its recently published [Report on Greece](#), ECRI acknowledges that over recent years, Greece has taken a number of steps to combat racism and intolerance. This includes the adoption of an integrated action programme aimed at improving the day-to-day life of the Roma population, as well as the reinforcement of a network of intercultural schools. Furthermore, progress is observed in the exercise of the religious freedom of minority religious groups. Finally, the situation of immigrants in Greece has been the focus of two legalisation procedures.

At the same time ECRI observes that in Greek society there remain stereotypes, prejudices and incidences of discrimination targeting members of minority groups. Furthermore, ECRI notes that the situation of immigrants is far from being fully regulated, and that there is still no comprehensive, targeted integration policy on immigration. Finally, criminal law is not enforced to a sufficient extent to curb racist acts, and existing civil and administrative law provisions are insufficient to effectively prohibit discrimination.

All of these issues will be discussed with representatives of the responsible governmental agencies and victims of discrimination in the light of [ECRI's General Policy Recommendation no.7](#) on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination

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and the new draft **anti-discrimination law**. A whole session will be dedicated to the issue of racism and xenophobia in public discourse, where the **Greek Anti-Racism Charter** as a tool to fight racism on the local level will be presented. Particular emphasis will be also put on the future creation of a **specialised body for combating racism and intolerance** and the implementation of the **Action Plan for the Integration of Immigrants in Greece**.

ECRI hopes that an open debate among all relevant actors on these extremely important issues will help to identify together effective ways of better implementing existing initiatives and will also provide the necessary impetus for further reform in Greece.

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