

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

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¹ Any developments which occurred after 1 March 2021, the date on which the response of the authorities of Latvia to ECRI's request for information on measures taken to implement the recommendations chosen for interim follow-up was received, have not been 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 interim follow-up recommendations 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 Latvia (fifth monitoring cycle) published on 5 March 2019, ECRI recommended that the authorities establish a unit within the State Police tasked with reaching out to vulnerable groups in order to increase trust in the police and address the problem of under-reporting of racist and homo-/transphobic hate crimes.*

The Latvian authorities informed ECRI that in order to reach out to vulnerable groups for the purpose of increasing trust in the police and tackling the problem of under-reporting of racist and homo-/transphobic hate crimes, the Ministry of Interior has opted for a different approach to the recommended establishment of a specialist unit within the State Police, namely that of community policing. The authorities consider community policing as a legitimate alternative, as both approaches share the same objectives. Therefore, no specialised unit has been created yet within the State Police.

The Latvian authorities have taken several measures with regard to addressing hate crime, including its incorporation into the curriculum of the State Police College and in non-formal adult education programmes for police officers. They are also planning further activities in the near future, such as the implementation of the project “Capacity Building and Awareness Raising to Prevent Intolerance in Latvia” and the participation of State Police officers in the OSCE/ODIHR anti-hate crime training programme “Words into Action”. While ECRI recognises these efforts, it considers that they are still far from sufficient. More importantly, ECRI does not agree that community policing constitutes an acceptable alternative to the creation of a specialised unit within the State Police. Community policing, if implemented effectively, can be a useful measure *in addition* to the creation of a unit specialised in the handling of racist and homo-/transphobic hate crimes, but not an adequate replacement.

ECRI concludes therefore that this recommendation has not been implemented.

2) *In its report on Latvia (fifth monitoring cycle), ECRI recommended that the Latvian authorities provide for the automatic recognition of Latvian citizenship for children born to “non-citizens”.*

The Latvian authorities informed ECRI about the adoption on 17 October 2019 of the Law “On the Discontinuation of Assignment of the Status of Non-Citizen to Children”. According to this law, as of 1 January 2020, all children born to “Non-Citizens” in Latvia are automatically assigned Latvian citizenship, unless the child’s parents opt for the citizenship of another country for their child or unless the child is a citizen of another country.

This law also applies to children born to “Non-Citizens” residing outside the territory of Latvia, and in situations when one of the parents is a citizen of another country. In such cases, parents of the child are required to contact the Latvian Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs and confirm that the child is not a citizen of any other country.

ECRI is pleased to note that with the entry into force of this law, the assignment of “Non-Citizen” status to newborn children in Latvia has been terminated.

ECRI considers that the recommendation has been implemented.

