

ECRI

European Commission
against Racism and Intolerance



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Commission européenne
contre le racisme et l'intolérance

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

■ The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is a unique human rights monitoring body which specialises in questions relating to the fight against racism, discrimination (on grounds of “race”, ethnic/national origin, colour, citizenship, religion, language, sexual orientation and gender identity), xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in Europe.

A pan-European Commission, composed of independent members, set up by Heads of State and Government

■ ECRI was set up by the first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe in 1993 and became operational in 1994. As ECRI marks 25 years of combating racism and intolerance, current trends show that these are still persistent problems in European societies that require renewed efforts to be overcome.

■ ECRI is composed of 47 members appointed on the basis of their independence, impartiality, moral authority and expertise in dealing with issues of racism, discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. Each Council of Europe member state appoints one person to serve as a member of ECRI.

Activities

■ ECRI’s statutory activities cover country monitoring, work on general themes and relations with civil society and equality bodies.

■ ECRI also maintains special relations with independent authorities responsible for combating racism, discrimination, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance at national level (equality bodies) and with relevant international organisations, such as the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

Country monitoring

■ In its country monitoring work ECRI analyses the situation closely in each of the member states and makes recommendations for dealing with any problems of racism and intolerance identified there. A country visit is organised before the preparation of each new report in order to obtain as comprehensive a picture as possible of the situation in the country. During the visit the ECRI delegation meets key players in the fight against racism and intolerance in the country concerned.

The following country visits are scheduled to take place in 2019

- ▶ Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia and Switzerland.
- ▶ The remaining 6th cycle country visits will be carried out over the following years.
- ▶ In principle, the 6th cycle reports will be adopted not later than five years following the adoption of the 5th cycle report for each of the member states concerned.

All countries dealt with on an equal footing

ECRI's country monitoring approach places all Council of Europe member states on an equal footing. The work is organised in five-year cycles, covering eight to 10 countries per year.

Thematic angle of the 6th monitoring cycle

In 2019 ECRI started work on the 6th cycle of its country monitoring focusing on three main themes: effective equality and access to rights, hate speech and hate-motivated violence, and integration and inclusion. The reports also deal with topics specific to each country and follow-up to the interim recommendations adopted in the 5th monitoring cycle.

Working methods in the 6th monitoring cycle

In the 6th cycle ECRI will continue making concrete recommendations which are expressed in such a way that their implementation can be measured. As in the 5th cycle, a process of interim follow-up takes place two years after publication of the reports, focusing on two recommendations selected as priorities.

Open dialogue

The publication of ECRI's country reports is an important stage in the development of an ongoing dialogue between ECRI and the authorities in the member states with a view to identifying solutions to the problems of racism and intolerance which they face. The input of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other bodies or individuals active in this field is welcomed as a part of this process, to ensure that ECRI's contribution is as constructive and useful as possible.

Work on general themes

ECRI issues General Policy Recommendations (GPRs) addressed to the governments of all member states. These recommendations provide guidelines which policy-makers are invited to use when drawing up national strategies and policies.

Some recommendations detail specific elements or systems which it is necessary to introduce in order to fight effectively against racism and intolerance. Other GPRs lay down guidelines to support the fight against racism in specific fields. Lastly, some focus on measures relating to particular vulnerable groups. ECRI has adopted the following GPRs:

- ▶ **Combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 1 (1996)
- ▶ **Equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 2 (1997, revised in 2017)
- ▶ **Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 3 (1998)
- ▶ **National surveys on the experience and perception of discrimination and racism from the point of view of potential victims**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 4 (1998)
- ▶ **Combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 5 (2000)
- ▶ **Combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and antisemitic material via the Internet**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 6 (2000)
- ▶ **National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 (2002, revised in 2017)
- ▶ **Combating racism while fighting terrorism**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 8 (2004)
- ▶ **The fight against antisemitism**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 9 (2004)
- ▶ **Combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 10 (2006)
- ▶ **Combating racism and racial discrimination in policing**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 11 (2007)
- ▶ **Combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 12 (2008)
- ▶ **Combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 13 (2011)
- ▶ **Combating racism and racial discrimination in employment**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 14 (2012)
- ▶ **Combating hate speech**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 15 (2015)
- ▶ **Safeguarding irregularly present migrants from discrimination**
ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 16 (2016)

Relations with civil society and equality bodies

■ To be effective in the fight against racism and intolerance, ECRI reaches out to society at large, including through the activities of its working group on relations with civil society and equality bodies. NGOs are key partners for ECRI in the fight against racism and intolerance. They are vital sources of information on the situation of the groups covered by ECRI's mandate and on racist and homo/transphobic incidents. They are also major players in bringing about real change at national level.

Round tables

■ At national level, round tables are held regularly following the publication of ECRI's country monitoring reports. They are organised with equality bodies and aimed at representatives of civil society and the national authorities, the main objective being to encourage all parties concerned to think about ways of jointly solving the problems of racism and intolerance in the country and ensuring that ECRI's specific recommendations are implemented.

■ Recent round tables have been held in Armenia (2018), the Slovak Republic (2017), Norway (2016), the Czech Republic (2016), Belgium (2015), Finland (2015) and Romania (2015).

Thematic meetings

■ At European level, ECRI organises seminars on topics of particular interest. These thematic meetings are designed to establish a link between national situations and the intergovernmental level and bring together equality bodies or other international partners.

■ Recent events include:

- ▶ Launching of the Revised General Policy Recommendation No. 2 and good practices in combating hate speech (May 2018);
- ▶ Stakeholder Meeting on Safeguarding Irregularly Present Migrants from Discrimination – Launching of General Policy Recommendation No. 16 (October 2017);
- ▶ The role of national Specialised Bodies in advising legislative and executive authorities and other stakeholders (May 2016);
- ▶ The role of national Specialised Bodies in addressing under-reporting of discrimination and hate crime (May 2015);
- ▶ ECRI's 25th Anniversary Conference under the French Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe: «On the Road to Effective Equality» (September 2019).

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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