

Fifth report on Sweden [\[en\]](#) - [\[fr\]](#) - [\[swe\]](#)

Press Release – 27 February 2018

Racist and xenophobic hate speech on the rise despite considerable preventive efforts

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) today published its [fifth report on Sweden](#) in which it analyses legislative issues, racist and homo-/transphobic hate speech and violence as well as integration policies. In the report, ECRI makes recommendations to the authorities (see also the Swedish version of the report).

ECRI welcomes the positive developments in Sweden since the previous report in 2012. The government has launched a National Plan to combat racism, similar forms of hostility and hate crime. The Swedish Media Council has received resources to tackle online xenophobia and intolerance among children and youth and the Defense Research Agency has been tasked to monitor extremist Internet propaganda. In addition, the authorities have made larger-scale efforts to address the need to integrate the extraordinary high number of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection who arrived during 2015, with the aim to facilitate their access to the labour market. There is also a new housing policy package and a long-term reform programme to reduce segregation.

However, some issues give rise to concern. Sweden's criminal, civil and administrative law provisions are still not entirely in line with ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No 7 on national legislation. In spite of the introduced legislation on establishing criminal responsibility for genocide, there is still no prohibition of the public denial, trivialisation, justification or condoning, with a racist aim, of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. There is also a lack of legislation to criminalise the creation or the leadership of a group which promotes racism, support for such a group or participation in its activities. Sweden should also add discrimination on the ground of language as well as segregation to the forms of discrimination listed in the Discrimination Act and enact legislation making it possible to withdraw public financing from parties promoting racism and to disband such organisations.

The number of incidents of racist and xenophobic hate speech has been rising over recent years, in particular in the context of large-scale arrivals of migrants and refugees and in spite of serious efforts by the Swedish authorities to prevent such hate speech. The main target groups are migrants, Muslims, Black persons and Roma. Antisemitic hatred remains a problem, and the clearance rate of hate crimes remains low.

In spite of the authorities' considerable efforts in the area of the Introduction Programme for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, the labour market participation rate following completion stood only at 27% in 2016, and was even lower for women at just 15%.

ECRI recommends that the Swedish authorities should take further action on awareness-raising and prevention modules covering antisemitism and homo/transphobia in the

introduction courses for newly-arrived migrants in a way that avoids stigmatisation of participants. In addition, ECRI points out that the Swedish authorities should include concrete, targeted and measurable actions to combat de facto ethnic residential segregation in the long-term reform programme to reduce segregation (2017-2015).

Among the recommendations, the following two are to be implemented on a priority basis and will be the subject of interim follow-up by ECRI within two years:

- Adequate powers and expertise to investigate discrimination by all public authorities, including law enforcement agencies, should be vested in the Ombuds institutions; and the Parliamentary Ombudsman should work in consultation with the Equality Ombudsman in these cases.
- Sweden should also review the Introduction Programme for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection with the aim of strengthening it and achieving higher success rates in labour market participation, with a special attention to the specific needs of women.

The report was prepared following ECRI's visit to Sweden in [February 2017](#) and takes account of developments up to 21 June 2017, except where expressly indicated.

ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as "race", national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.

Contact: [Paivi Suhonen](#), Spokesperson/Media Officer Tel +33 3 90 21 53 70