

Statement by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on the situation of Roma migrants in France

Strasbourg, 24.08.2010 - The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is deeply concerned about the treatment of Roma migrants in France today.

In a [report published in June 2010](#), ECRI had called on the French authorities to combat the racist attitudes and hostility harboured by the majority population vis-à-vis this community. In recent weeks high-ranking officials have made political statements and the Government has taken action stigmatising Roma migrants. The latter are held collectively responsible for criminal offences and singled out for abusing EU legislation on freedom of movement. ECRI can only express disappointment about this most negative development.

Already [in 2005](#) ECRI had recommended that France should ensure Roma migrants' social rights to housing, health and education. In 2010 many such persons still live in squalid conditions in makeshift camps. A policy based on evictions and "incentives" to leave France, even assuming that relevant human rights standards are complied with, cannot provide a durable answer.

While France may impose immigration controls in accordance with its international obligations, ECRI wishes to recall that EU citizens have the right to be on French territory for certain periods of time and to return there. In these circumstances, France should look for sustainable solutions in cooperation with partner States and institutions.

Generally speaking, ECRI considers that anti-Gypsyism, which is a particular form of racism, should be effectively combated in all European countries. Well resourced programmes capable of reaching out to the real target groups are needed to counter Roma marginalisation and the negative image that inevitably accompanies it. Government policies or legislative proposals that are grounded in discrimination on ethnic grounds are impermissible and run counter to legal obligations binding on all Council of Europe member States.

ECRI is a Council of Europe independent human rights body that monitors problems of racism and intolerance by preparing country specific reports, and issues recommendations to member states.

More information on: www.coe.int/ecri

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