



Council of Europe

NEWS
Note
to Editors

tel : +33 (3)88 41 25 60 / fax : +33 (3)88 41 39 11 / e-mail : pressunit@coe.int

(English only)

ECRI's round table in Latvia to discuss the fight against racism and the integration of minority groups

Strasbourg, 14.05.2008 – The fight against racism and the problems faced by minority groups in achieving full integration in Latvia will be discussed at a round table organised by the Council of Europe's Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in Riga on 19 May.

In its latest monitoring report on Latvia in 2007, ECRI found progress in some aspects of the fight against racism, such as a clear prohibition of racial discrimination in the Labour Code and efforts by the government to increase the number of non-citizens being granted Latvian citizenship.

However ECRI said there were still some problems such as to the integration of the Russian-speaking population – for example in the access to employment due to the discrimination on grounds of language -, or that naturalisation processes remained slow. Other identified problems were the growing number of racially-motivated attacks to minorities and the racist discourse by some politicians and the media.

The meeting will be opened by Eva Smith Asmussen, Chair of ECRI. Nils Muiznieks, Latvian member of ECRI, and Romans Apsitis, Ombudsman of Latvia, will moderate the sessions.

Latvian government representatives and NGOs and ECRI experts will discuss the problems faced by minority groups, the necessary steps to building an integrated society in Latvia, the development of legislation for combating racism and the role of the criminal justice system in preventing and responding to racist incidents.

Programme

The round table will take place at the Reval Hotel Latvija, from 9.00 until 17.15, and is **open to the press**.

Press contacts at the Council of Europe:

Heike Klempa, ECRI Secretariat

Tel. +33 (0) 390 21 51 55, mobile (May 19) +33 662 18 55 42, heike.klempa@coe.int

ED079a08