

Press Release

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Statement of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on recent events affecting persons of Georgian origin in the Russian Federation

(adopted on 15 December 2006 at ECRI's 41st plenary meeting)

Strasbourg, 18.12.2006 - From the standpoint of its mandate to combat racism and racial discrimination in the 46 member States of the Council of Europe, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) wishes to express its deep concern about recent events affecting Russian citizens of Georgian origin and Georgian citizens in the Russian Federation.

These events, which have in many cases occurred under the pretext of the need to clamp down on crime and illegal immigration, have included detentions, deportations, in some cases resulting in deaths, and reported cases of harassment. ECRI deeply regrets these measures, which have been directed by certain public authorities specifically at a particular ethnic group.

In keeping with the recommendations contained in its third report on the Russian Federation published on 16 May 2006, ECRI emphasises the need for the Russian authorities to ensure that, in respect of persons of Georgian origin as well as all other minority groups within the Russian Federation, the rule of law is maintained and the principle of non-discrimination as embodied in Council of Europe standards is strictly observed.

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The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is the Council of Europe's independent human rights monitoring body in the field of combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. ECRI's action covers all the measures needed to combat violence, discrimination and prejudice against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin. ECRI's programme of activities comprises three aspects: (1) country-by-country monitoring; (2) work on general themes; and (3) activities in relation with civil society.

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A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 46 member states.