

Press Release

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"Ethnic and religious profiling clashes with human rights standards" says Commissioner Hammarberg

Strasbourg, 20.07.2009 - In his latest [Viewpoint](#) published today, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, states that "members of minorities are more often than others stopped by the police, asked for identity papers, questioned and searched. They are victims of 'ethnic profiling', a form of discrimination which is widespread in today's Europe. Such methods clash with agreed human rights standards. They tend also to be counter-productive as they discourage people from cooperating with police efforts to detect real crimes."

The Commissioner stress that "there should be an objective reason why a certain individual is stopped and searched, a reasonable and individualised suspicion of criminal activity. The colour of the skin, the dress or visible religious attributes are not objective reasons". He also underlines that these practices have "a detrimental and negative impact on the community in general. All groups in society should have reason to trust the police. All the more so for those groups who may be the targets of xenophobic action or even hate crimes."

Finally, he concludes emphasising that the police themselves should promote equality and prevent racial discrimination, be trained to work in a diverse society and recruit members from minority communities.

Published fortnightly in English, French and Russian, Viewpoints can be used without prior consent, provided that the text is not modified and the original source is indicated in the following way: "Also available at the Commissioner's website at www.commissioner.coe.int".

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