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Ref. DC 101(2014)

([Link to the text in German](#))

Council of Europe anti-racism committee calls on Switzerland to strengthen anti-discrimination legislation and support the integration of migrants

Strasbourg, 16.09.2014 – In a [report](#) published today, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) says that there are positive developments in Switzerland but that some concerns remain, including the rise of xenophobia and discrimination against LGBT persons, and insufficient support for the integration of some migrants.

ECRI welcomes the fact that, at cantonal level, new institutions have been given the task of assisting victims of racism and discrimination and that several media combat hate speech on their websites. The Confederation and the cantons have adopted integration programmes and a system of indicators will measure their impact. Steps have been taken to ensure early education for children with a migrant background.

At the same time, Switzerland has not enacted effective legislation to combat racism and discrimination. Victims cannot submit a complaint to a body specialised in combating racism and discrimination everywhere in the country. Due to the xenophobic evolution of political discourse, several vulnerable groups experience significant deterioration in their living conditions. Young lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons are often victims of hate speech.

In its fifth report, ECRI has made several recommendations to the authorities, among which the following two require priority implementation and will be reviewed by ECRI in two years' time:

- confer to the bodies specialised in combating racism and discrimination the competence to hear and consider complaints;
- to task one or more independent authorities with combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBT persons.

The report was prepared following ECRI's [contact visit to Switzerland in October 2013](#) and takes account of developments up to 20 March 2014.

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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.

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