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Council of Europe calls on Hungary to combat hate speech and ensure proper accommodation for asylum seekers and Roma – among other challenges

Strasbourg, 09.06.2015 – A new [report](#) published today by the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance ([ECRI](#)) gives Hungary positive marks for recent initiatives, including a specialised unit on hate crime in the police and a network of 20 "equal treatment consultants" who assist the Hungary's Equal Treatment Authority, which penalises cases of discrimination and racism.

In spite of these and other positive developments, ECRI is concerned about racist violence targeting Roma, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees and the openly anti-Roma, anti-Semitic, homophobic and xenophobic hate speech of a radical right-wing populist party. It also relates examples of hate speech that are not restricted to extremist parties and groups but that sometimes occur across the political spectrum.

It regrets that 22% of all asylum seekers are deprived of their liberty, and strongly recommends that "open reception facilities" be used to accommodate them, in particular families with children.

As Roma face a shortage of social housing, the report also calls on the central government to take action in cases where local authorities attempt to force Roma out of social housing or evict them from their homes without ensuring suitable alternatives.

"We are indeed pleased with positive developments, but request priority implementation from Hungary to properly accommodate asylum seekers and ensure social housing for Roma," said ECRI's Chair, Christian Ahlund. ECRI will review progress on these two recommendations within two years.

Among other issues raised, the report notes that Hungary continues to place a disproportionate number of Roma children in schools for pupils with learning disabilities, amounting to a form of segregated education.

The report covers the situation in Hungary up to 12 December 2014, so developments since then are neither covered nor taken into account in conclusions.

ECRI reports on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance in greater Europe. ECRI [has reported on Hungary already in four previous reports since 1996](#). This fifth report covers legislative issues and hate speech, violence and integration policies.

[Link to the Hungarian version of the report](#)

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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", ethnic/national origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.

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