



T +33(0)388412560

[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

[pressunit@coe.int](mailto:pressunit@coe.int)

Ref. DC 021(2015)

## **Anti-racism commission commends Greece's antidiscrimination law, but says xenophobia, anti-migrant violence and segregation of Roma children persist**

[\(link to the Greek version\)](#)

Strasbourg, 24.02.2015 - The Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) today published its [fifth report](#) on Greece analysing new developments and outstanding issues, and providing recommendations to the authorities.

"Despite steps forward – including the enactment of a new anti-racism law – problems persist, including worrying levels of xenophobia and violence against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and the ongoing segregation of Roma children in some schools, in spite of the European Court of Human Rights' judgements confirming the need to end this practice" said ECRI's Chair, Christian Ahlund.

The report welcomes the introduction in late 2012 of new special police units tasked to tackle racist violence; the appointment of public prosecutors for the prosecution of acts of racist violence in October 2013; and the enactment, in 2014, of a new anti-racism law, which amended existing provisions in the criminal legislation.

However, public and political discourse is widely permeated by hate speech against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, who often become targets of racist violence. The report also finds that the activities of the Golden Dawn party increased xenophobia and racism, creating a climate of racial hatred and fear that went unchecked for too long.

ECRI has made recommendations to the authorities, among them the following that require prompt implementation and will be reviewed in two years' time:

- create a task force composed of the authorities, including the Ombudsman and the National Human Rights Commission, as well as NGOs, that will develop a comprehensive national strategy to combat racism and intolerance;
- consider the question of racist and/or homo-/transphobic motivations from the outset in the investigation and judicial proceeding of cases of violent incidents, and offer training to the judiciary on the application of the new Article 81A of the Criminal Code, which renders more severe the lowest sentences for hate motivated offences and stipulates that they cannot be suspended.

The report, including government observations, was prepared following ECRI's visit to Greece in March 2014 [[Press release](#)]; except where expressly indicated, it takes account of developments up to 18 June 2014.

\* \* \*

*ECRI is a human rights unit 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.*

### **Contact:**

[Panos Kakaviatos](#), Spokesperson/Media officer, Tel. +33 3 88 41 25 60 ; Mobile +33 6 98 37 64 04