



## NEWS REPORT

<b>Date:</b>	14 June 2011
<b>Expert:</b>	Corina Demetriou
<b>Title:</b>	ECRI publishes its fourth Report on Cyprus
<b>Country:</b>	Cyprus
<b><u>Context</u></b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	ECRI's fourth country report on racism and intolerance in Cyprus was published on 31.05.2011
<b>Ground of discrimination:</b>	Race, ethnic origin
<b>Source:</b>	Council of Europe report
<b>Field:</b>	Education, employment, housing, health, administration of justice, public discourse, racist violence, conduct of law enforcement officials
<b>Legislative provisions:</b>	The Commissioner for Administration Laws 1991-2004; The Combating of Racial and Other forms of Discrimination (Commissioner) Law N.42(I)/2004; law 58(I)/2004 and 59(I)/2004 transposing the two Equality Directives.

### Content

**Description:** The fourth ECRI report follows the developments since the previous ECRI report of 2006. In this vein, it welcomes the **'significant' efforts** made towards dissemination and awareness raising of the legal provisions on anti-discrimination; the multicultural training of the police; the development of the police system for recording racist crime; the setting up of an independent authority for the investigation of police misconduct; the measures to reinforce multiculturalism in school including teacher training; the setting up of an observatory to monitor school violence; a number of positive measures in favour of Turkish Cypriots including free healthcare, free education, the maintenance of mosques, cemeteries and Turkish Cypriot properties, as well as the adoption of a new law in 2006 allowing Turkish Cypriot residents to vote and be elected in elections; and the hiring of new staff at the asylum service reducing the backlog of pending asylum applications. The report marks the following as **'areas for concern'**: The anti-racist and anti-discrimination legislative provisions are rarely applied; there is no record on court decisions regarding discrimination; the Equality Body/Ombudsman lacks sufficient human and financial resources, does not enjoy the freedom to appoint its own staff and is not well known to vulnerable groups; there is a disproportionately high concentration of Turkish Cypriot and Roma pupils in particular schools suggesting the existence of segregation; the educational needs of the Roma are not met, effectively amounting to a denial of their right to education; the lack of access to education for some Roma children residing in rural settlements; the

marked increase in racism in schools; the lack of integration policy; the vulnerable situation of foreign domestic workers; the draft legislation currently under way introducing measures to address irregular migration by means of “sham marriages”; negative attitudes towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees commonly expressed in political discourse and in the media; the rise in prominence of extremist anti-immigration groups; the dissemination of hate speech through extreme nationalist websites; asylum seekers, like all other applicants for public assistance, must wait several months for the processing of their claims and receipt of welfare and face problems in finding accommodation and access employment, whilst lack of coordination between the various government offices creates additional problems for asylum seekers with health problems trying to access the labour market; legal aid is only available at the appeal stage against negative asylum decisions and the conditions are such that very few obtain it; Cyprus has yet to ratify the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level, the European Convention on Nationality, the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

The report makes the following **recommendations** to the Cypriot authorities: To systematically collect data on the implementation of civil and administrative legal provisions against racism and racial discrimination; to develop further the Crime Report System; the Courts should develop an archiving system to classify cases by subject matter and indicate racist elements; to ensure that new criminal legislation expressly states that racist motivation constitutes an aggravating circumstance; the Ombudsman should be granted the necessary human and financial resources and freedom to appoint its own staff, to enable it to function effectively and independently, to disseminate information about rights and non-discrimination in the languages of vulnerable groups; to distribute Greek-speaking and non-Greek speaking children more evenly in different schools; to implement fully the programme Zones of Educational Priority in respect of the 18th Primary School; to offer free transportation to and from school to Roma children living at the Polemidia settlement in order for them to exercise their right to education; to consult with the Roma community living at this settlement with a view to closing it down and moving the inhabitants to standard housing; to monitor the activities of extremist groups and punish incitement to hatred; to prevent the Internet from being used to disseminate racist material; to investigate, prosecute and punish all acts of racist violence; to review the plans to adopt a policy requiring third country nationals to pass a premarital interview with the migration authorities before being given permission to marry Cypriot or EU citizens; to develop a comprehensive housing policy for migrants and asylum seekers and designate a body to provide housing services; to adopt a less restrictive approach to the employment of asylum seekers and take measures to facilitate their integration into the job market; to ensure that asylum seekers have access to legal aid throughout the asylum procedure and not just at the appeal stage;



To ensure that asylum seekers are fully aware of the availability of legal aid to challenge negative asylum decisions before the Supreme Court.

**Internet link:** <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Cyprus/CYP-CbC-IV-2011-020-ENG.pdf>