

NEWS REPORT

Date: 20 December 2009
Expert: Kádár, András
Title: Harassment of Roma pupils by teachers threatening them with the Hungarian Guard
Country: Hungary

Context

Issue at stake: Harassment is committed by teachers threatening Roma pupils by making references to the Hungarian Guard (an extreme rightist movement dissolved by the court due to its racist activities)

Ground of discrimination: race/ethnic origin

Source: national equality body

Field: education

Legislative provisions: Article 10 of Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities

Content

Case: According to the complainant, a teacher in an elementary school class consisting of mostly Roma pupils reacting to the misbehaviour of three Roma pupils said that “it comes as no surprise to me that members of the Hungarian Guard are killing Roma people”, after which she fainted (she has a serious illness). On the next day, before the first class, the school’s director talked to the class, and said: “Dirty Gypsies, you have no dignity, you have been reported to the Hungarian Guard, you deserve to be killed by them.” During their hearing, both the teacher and the director denied to have said the above, but both of them admitted that they had mentioned the Guard to the pupils. The teacher claimed to have said something like: “it comes as no surprise to me that the Guard is holding their rallies”, while the director said that she had only wished to warn the children, because she had known that the kids were afraid of the Guard, and she wanted them to know that the news was being spread in the village that a teacher had almost died because of three Roma kids. Although the statements of the pupils heard in the case were not unanimous, it was clear that on both occasions references were made to the Guard in a threatening context.

Decision of the Court: In its decision 654/2009, the Equal Treatment Authority established that the school has committed harassment by creating an environment that by raising fear in them, violated their human dignity and humiliated them. The Authority took into account that there had been some Guard rallies in the

region, where speeches targeted against the Roma and capable of intimidating members of this group had been made. This fear was increased by the teachers' references to the Guard which gave the pupils the impression that because of their behaviour they endorsed the creation of the Guard and agreed with its racist philosophy. The Authority attributed importance to the fact that teachers have an increased responsibility, they have to meet higher standards than members of some other professions. As a sanction, the Authority banned the school from future violation.

Internet link source and additional information:

<http://www.egyenlobanasmod.hu/zanza/654-2009.pdf>