



NEWS REPORT

Date: 30 July 2009
Expert: Colm O’Cinneide
Title: The UK Equality and Human Rights Commission has threatened the far-right British National Party (BNP) with legal action as a result of claims that the BNP discriminates on the grounds of race.
Country: United Kingdom

Context

Issue at stake: Race discrimination in the political process.
Ground of discrimination: Race/ethnic origin
Source: Newspaper Reports
Field: Other (enforcement, Equality Bodies)
Legislative provisions: Equality Act 2006, Race Relations Act 1976.

Content:

Legal development: The Equality and Human Rights Commission has written to the far-right and anti-immigrant British National Party (BNP) over possible breaches of anti-discrimination law. The Commission has demanded that the BNP address potential breaches of UK race discrimination laws related to its constitution and membership criteria, employment practices and provision of services to the public and constituents, with the Commission stating that in its opinion, the BNP is discriminating against non-English persons in its membership admission rules and how its elected representatives address the needs of constituents in their local areas.

The letter, sent to the BNP chairman Nick Griffin MEP, set out the Commission’s concerns about the BNP’s compliance with the Race Relations Act. It asked the BNP to provide written undertakings by 20th July that it would make the changes required by the Commission. Failure to do so might result in the Commission making an application to a county court for a legal injunction restraining the BNP from discriminating against non-English ethnic groups. The BNP has sought additional time to respond to the EHRC’s allegations.

Internet link source and additional information: See

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/letter_before_claim.pdf