

Anti-racism experts highlight increasing hate speech and racist violence in the UK

Strasbourg, 04.10.2016 – Alongside several positive developments, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has highlighted a number of areas of concern in its [latest report](#) on the United Kingdom.

ECRI welcomed, among other things, the entry into force of the Equality Act 2010 and the generally strong legislation against racism and racial discrimination in the country, as well as the government's new hate crime action plan and substantial efforts to promote LGBT rights in the UK which have led to a significant change in attitudes.

At the same time, the commission noted considerable intolerant political discourse in the UK, particularly focusing on immigration. It said that hate speech continues to be a serious problem in tabloid newspapers, and that online hate speech targeting Muslims in particular has soared since 2013.

ECRI also noted a particularly high number of violent racist incidents in 2013, including a sharp rise in anti-Muslim violence, as well as record levels of anti-Semitic incidents the following year.

"It is no coincidence that racist violence is on the rise in the UK at the same time as we see worrying examples of intolerance and hate speech in the newspapers, online and even among politicians," said ECRI Chair Christian Ahlund.

"The Brexit referendum seems to have led to a further rise in 'anti-foreigner' sentiment, making it even more important that the British authorities take the steps outlined in our report as a matter of priority."

The report also underlines that there is no national strategy for the integration of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in the UK and these communities continue to suffer severe disadvantage.

It makes a total of 23 different recommendations to the UK government, the most pressing of which – relating to equality legislation in Northern Ireland and data collection on the application of the Equality Act 2010 - will be reviewed by ECRI in two years' time.

The report, including Government observations, was prepared following ECRI's visit to the United Kingdom in November 2015 [[Press release](#)] and takes account of developments between 2009 and 17 March 2016.

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

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