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ECRI launches guidelines for governments to combat anti-Gypsyism

Strasbourg, 19.09.2011 – The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) today issued [guidelines](#) to the Council of Europe's 47 member countries to fight a rising tide of anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma.

The guidelines – contained in its thirteenth General Policy Recommendation – call for action to stop the segregation of Roma children at schools and integrate them with pupils from the majority population, to provide access to decent housing that is not segregated, to ensure that Roma are not evicted without notice or opportunity for rehousing, and for steps to be taken to legalise long-standing Roma sites built in breach of town planning regulations

It calls for Roma to have secure access to quality health care and for segregation in hospitals to end, and says discrimination in the health sector must be prosecuted and punished. There should be no obstacles to Roma exercising traditional trades, and Roma should be consulted to find alternatives, for instance through micro-loans or tax breaks. All Roma children should be registered at birth and given identity documents.

Governments should encourage Roma victims of violence and crime – including misconduct by the police - to lodge complaints. The media should avoid inflammatory reporting and all public discourse inciting discrimination, hatred or violence against Roma should be condemned.

The guidelines also urge equal provision in public services such as water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and transport for Roma communities concentrated in certain neighbourhoods. It asks governments to ensure freedom of movement legislation does not discriminate against the Roma and that their culture is protected and promoted amongst the majority population.

ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, religion and language, as well as xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance, prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.

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