

## ECRI's Programme of action on relations with civil society

(adopted on 20 March 2002)

### **Introduction** ▲

Racism and intolerance can only be successfully countered if civil society is engaged in this fight. Tackling racism and intolerance requires not only action on the part of governments (to whom ECRI's recommendations are addressed), but also the full involvement of civil society. ECRI attaches great importance to ensuring that its anti-racism message filters down to the whole of civil society, and also to involving the various sectors of society in an intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect. It is in this context that ECRI has developed the programme of action on relations with civil society which is set out below. While it addresses primarily the various actors in civil society, ECRI nevertheless recommends to governments that they promote and facilitate dialogue and the various activities foreseen in the programme of action.

This programme aims, inter alia, to contribute in a positive fashion to the general efforts underway in the Council of Europe to combat terrorism and its consequences, through the strengthening of multicultural and inter-religious dialogue. This action falls within the framework of the global approach of the Council of Europe to promote tolerance, and should be seen as complementary to actions implemented in fields such as education and culture, as well as human rights awareness-raising. It also constitutes the basis for ECRI's contribution to the implementation of the conclusions of the European and World Conferences against racism, which stressed the importance of involving civil society in the fight against racism and intolerance.

### **Activities foreseen and priority areas of work** ▲

#### **- Organisation of information sessions in member States**

On the occasion of the publication of the various country-by-country reports, information sessions will be organised in member States, in co-operation with national partners, probably in the form of Round Tables convening the different parties involved in the fight against racism and intolerance.

#### **- Co-operation with NGOs**

Co-operation with NGOs will be strengthened through a variety of methods including information exchange, meetings and hearings. These methods will be employed in a systematic manner, with the aim of building up a network of NGOs working in partnership with ECRI. Such partnership should be a genuine two-way exchange: NGOs are valuable information sources for ECRI, and they may also play a role in contributing to the development of ECRI's own work.

#### **- Development of a media strategy**

A strategy will be developed, with the aim both of better utilising the media for communicating the results of ECRI's work and of spreading the anti-racist message as widely as possible among the general public. This communication strategy will include relations with opinion-makers as well as relations with relevant parties directly involved in the fight against racism. It will also cover the development of ECRI's website "Combating racism and intolerance" ([www.coe.int/ecri](http://www.coe.int/ecri)).

#### **- Information activities aimed at the political bodies of the Council of Europe**

Methods will be sought to improve the transmission of information concerning ECRI's work to the political bodies of the Council of Europe, in particular the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly.

**- Contacts with the Youth sector**

Close contacts will be established with the Youth sector of the Council of Europe, given the vital role of this sector for any action aimed at involving civil society in the fight against racism and intolerance.