

**ECRI CONCLUSIONS
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS
IN RESPECT OF ESTONIA SUBJECT TO INTERIM FOLLOW-UP**

Adopted on 4 December 2012¹

¹ Any developments which occurred after 28 March 2012, date on which the response of the Estonian authorities to ECRI's request for information on measures taken to implement the recommendations chosen for interim follow-up was received, are, in principle, not taken into account in this analysis.

ECRI Secretariat
Directorate General II - Democracy
Council of Europe
F-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex
Tel.: + 33 (0) 388 41 29 64
Fax: + 33 (0) 388 41 39 87
E-mail: ecri@coe.int

www.coe.int/ecri

FOREWORD

As part of the fourth round of ECRI's monitoring work, a new process of interim follow-up has been introduced with respect to a small number of specific recommendations made in each of ECRI's country reports.

Accordingly and in line with the guidelines for the fourth round of ECRI's country-by-country work brought to the attention of the Ministers' Deputies on 7 February 2007¹, not later than two years following the publication of each report, ECRI addresses a communication to the Government concerned asking what has been done in respect of the specific recommendations for which priority follow-up was requested.

At the same time, ECRI gathers relevant information itself. On the basis of this information and the response from the Government, ECRI draws up its conclusions on the way in which its recommendations have been followed up.

It should be noted that these conclusions concern only the specific interim recommendations and do not aim at providing a comprehensive analysis of all developments in the fight against racism and intolerance in the State concerned.

¹ CM/Del/Dec(2007)986/4.1.

1. *In its report on Estonia (fourth monitoring cycle) published on 2 March 2010, ECRI recommended that the Estonian authorities take all possible measures to ensure the quality of education while strengthening Estonian language instruction to Russian-speaking children and respecting their identity. This should include monitoring the achievement levels of children and strengthening the training of Russian-language school teachers to teach in Estonian in accordance with the reforms set out in the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, by inter alia, investing the necessary human and financial resources to that end.*

The Estonian authorities have assured ECRI of their commitment to quality education for Russian-speaking children. However, ECRI notes that the plan to make Estonian the primary language of education in all upper-secondary schools still meets with significant resistance by part of the population. The legal challenge mounted by the City of Tallinn against the central authorities' refusal to exempt 12 schools in the capital from the requirements of the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act is illustrative of the controversy surrounding the Government's plans¹. In ECRI's view, it is clear that more should be done to convince the Russian-speaking community that the reform aims at promoting integration and not assimilation.

Concerning the specific recommendations, ECRI has been informed that 205 679 EUR was spent on teacher-training activities and 58 388 EUR on study-material development under the Integration Strategy in 2011. Moreover, 178 953 EUR has been earmarked for personal language-training for teachers², within the Language Learning Development Programme 2011-2012. ECRI notes that doubts have been expressed as to whether the resources in question are sufficient³.

As for the achievement levels of Russian-speaking children, the national authorities have assured ECRI that the Ministry of Education and Research has been monitoring the transition process to Estonian-language instruction at the upper secondary level comparing examination results in different schools, gathering feedback from pupils and visiting educational establishments.

ECRI considers that this recommendation has been partially implemented.

2. *In its report on Estonia, ECRI also recommended that the Estonian authorities continue measures taken thus far to reduce the number of stateless persons, in full consultation with representatives of the concerned persons.*

The Estonian authorities have assured ECRI that they continue their efforts to reduce the number of stateless persons, by providing the parents of children below the age of 15 with relevant information⁴. ECRI understands that these measures complement others that are described in detail in its last report on Estonia.

However, it also notes that the percentage of non-citizens is still very high; according to a Government survey, around 7% of the population is stateless.

¹ In July 2012 the Tallinn Administrative Court rejected the challenge. The City of Tallinn has appealed.

² Teachers may also participate in the Estonian-language courses organised under the same programme for public-sector employees. It has been planned to spend 255 647 EUR on these courses.

³ The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities has welcomed the fact that young graduates of pedagogical institutes are offered additional financial incentives to teach Estonian in remote Russian-language schools, Third Opinion on Estonia, adopted on 1 April 2011, ACFC/OP/III(2011)004, p. 34.

⁴ In November 2011 the police and border guards were given easy access to the population register to improve the data they have compiled on persons without citizenship under the age of 15.

Therefore, ECRI considers that its recommendation has not yet been fully implemented.

3. *In the same report, ECRI also urged the Estonian authorities to remove Roma children who are not disabled from special schools and reintegrate them into mainstream schools; all necessary steps should further be taken to avoid such unjustified placements in the future.*

According to the national authorities, only five pupils attending special schools have identified themselves as Roma. ECRI has also been informed that, in the last two years, no new cases have been reported of Roma children being placed at special schools. However, there is no indication that the situation of the above-mentioned five pupils has been reassessed following ECRI's last report.

ECRI considers that its recommendation has been partially implemented.

