

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

*Adopted on 5 December 2013<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Except where expressly indicated, any developments which occurred after 17 April 2013, date on which the response of the Armenian authorities to ECRI's request for information on measures taken to implement the recommendations chosen for interim follow-up was received, are 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](mailto:ecri@coe.int)

[www.coe.int/ecri](http://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 2007<sup>2</sup>, 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.

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<sup>2</sup> CM/Del/Dec(2007)986/4.1.



1. *In its report on Armenia (fourth monitoring cycle) published on 8 February 2011, ECRI recommended that the Armenian authorities immediately reduce the length of alternative service – military and civilian – by six months.*

The Republic of Armenia amended its Law on Alternative Service in May 2013. With the implementing regulations adopted in July 2013, the law now gives conscientious objectors the right to perform an alternative service in place of compulsory military service in accordance with ECRI's recommendations. The length of alternative service is now 30 months instead of 36 in the case of alternative military service and 36 months instead of 42 in the case of alternative civilian service. The law also prohibits all military supervision of alternative civilian service. In May 2013 the Republic of Armenia also amended its law implementing the Criminal Code by providing for criminal proceedings against conscientious objectors to be discontinued, those imprisoned to be released and their criminal records to be expunged.

According to NGOs, no conscientious objector has been prosecuted or imprisoned since the new law came into force. They also informed ECRI that there were no more Jehovah's Witnesses being held in prison and that several dozen conscientious objector Jehovah's Witnesses have already applied for the "alternative work" scheme.

ECRI concludes that the recommendation has been implemented.

2. *In its report on Armenia (fourth monitoring cycle), ECRI recommended that the authorities abandon the current system whereby the grant put at the disposal of the Co-ordination Council of Ethnic Minorities is distributed in equal shares independently of each minority's size. ECRI stipulated that it should be replaced by a system whereby the grant is distributed according to each ethnic minority's real needs.*

The Armenian authorities have made changes to the system of financial support for ethnic minorities. The sum allocated was doubled in 2013, thus raising it to 20 000 000 AMD. The Co-ordination Council of Ethnic Minorities has established the following procedure for distributing this sum: a first instalment of 10 000 000 AMD is still allocated according to the principle of equal distribution between the eleven ethnic minorities, which therefore continue to receive the same amount; the second instalment of 10 000 000 AMD is intended to finance special projects submitted by the NGOs representing ethnic minorities and selected by the Co-ordination Council.

ECRI considers that the above-mentioned changes represent significant advances. It stresses, however, that each ethnic minority has two representatives on the Co-ordination Council and that it is for this Council to decide on the allocation of the second instalment of 10 000 000 AMD to special projects. ECRI wonders, therefore, if the Council's rules of procedure provide guarantees to ensure that a majority of its members representing small ethnic minorities cannot obstruct project proposals submitted by or for members representing large ethnic minorities. It also wonders whether criteria have been set for assessing whether project proposals meet the real needs of ethnic minorities, thus enabling the Co-ordination Council to take its decisions on an objective basis.

While acknowledging the significant steps taken by the Armenian authorities, ECRI concludes that the recommendation has not yet been fully implemented.

3. *In its report on Armenia (fourth monitoring cycle), ECRI recommended that the authorities ensure that no refugee families live in non-renovated accommodation in the Nor Nork reception centre.*

ECRI was informed that the Armenian government has not made any significant improvements to the accommodation centre for persons granted refugee status, except for a few urgent repairs (roofing work to prevent leaks) and renovation work on some of the rooms in the buildings referred to in the recommendation. ECRI was therefore surprised to learn that the major donors' conference, which could have considered the question of accommodation for refugees, has not yet been organised<sup>1</sup>.

ECRI therefore concludes that the recommendation has not been implemented.

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<sup>1</sup> ECRI report on Armenia (fourth monitoring cycle), 8 February 2011, para. 114.



