

CRI(2019)25

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

*Adopted on 3 April 2019<sup>1</sup>*

*Published on 6 June 2019*

---

<sup>1</sup> Except where specifically indicated, any developments which occurred after 30 January 2019, the date on which the response of the Lithuanian authorities to ECRI's request for information on measures taken to implement the recommendations chosen for interim follow-up was received, have not been taken into account in this analysis.

ECRI Secretariat  
Directorate General II - Democracy  
Council of Europe  
F-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex  
Tel.: +33 (0) 390 21 46 62  
E-mail: [ecri@coe.int](mailto:ecri@coe.int)

[www.coe.int/ecri](http://www.coe.int/ecri)

## FOREWORD

As part of its fifth round of monitoring work, ECRI has renewed its process of interim follow-up with respect to two specific recommendations made in each of its country reports.

In line with the Information Document on ECRI's fifth monitoring cycle brought to the attention of the Ministers' Deputies on 14 November 2012<sup>1</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.

---

<sup>1</sup> CM/Del/Dec(2012)1154/4.2.



1) *In its report on Lithuania (fifth monitoring cycle) published on 7 June 2016, ECRI recommended that the Lithuanian authorities, as part of the Action Plan for Roma Integration 2015-2020, resolve the difficult housing situation of Roma, inter alia by (i) co-operating more closely with and financially supporting relevant local authorities, in particular the Municipality of Vilnius, to provide sufficient social housing to vulnerable members of the Roma community; and (ii) working with rental agencies and associations of private landlords to overcome prejudices against Roma in the private-sector housing market. Furthermore, recalling its 2011 recommendation concerning the Kirtimai settlement and expressing concern that no steps have been taken to provide suitable accommodation since then, ECRI strongly recommends that the authorities take steps as soon as possible to provide proper accommodation for this community and, in the meantime, ensure that no evictions take place, and that all necessary public services are provided to the people in the Kirtimai settlement.*

ECRI has been informed by the Lithuanian authorities that the municipality of Vilnius adopted a programme for the integration of the Kirtimai Roma community (2016-2019). The extremely difficult housing situation in the Kirtimai settlement is to be addressed in two ways: (i) providing social housing to Kirtimai residents, or (ii) subsidising rental costs for residents who find alternative accommodation in the housing market.

Concerning the first approach, ECRI was informed that in 2016, six families (six women, three men and 21 children), in 2017, four families (four women and 17 children) and in 2018, two families (three women and two children) were able to move into social housing accommodation. In addition, in 2018, four families (four women and two children) moved into municipal dormitory accommodation, which also offers common living areas. Priority for social housing was given by the municipality to families with a large number of children. During 2016-2017, for example, all families with five or more children were provided with social housing.

Concerning the second approach, 46 families (four in 2016, 18 in 2017 and 24 in 2018) with a total of 119 persons (12, 42 and 65 respectively) benefitted from the rental subsidy scheme, with each family member receiving € 72 towards covering the cost of their new accommodation.

In February 2018, the municipality also approved a one-year assistant position in the municipal housing company dedicated to working with Roma families which are affected by demolition orders to secure housing for them. In addition, social workers are tasked to work with Roma families who relocated in order to help them integrate into their new neighbourhood and prevent prejudices among residents.

The authorities informed ECRI that while some 10 years ago the estimated number of residents in Kirtimai was around 500, this number had decreased by about 50% in 2017 and was further reduced to some 200 persons in mid-2018. Unfortunately, ECRI did not receive any information concerning the provision of public services in the Kirtimai settlement.

While the above-mentioned efforts are useful steps towards tackling the difficult housing situation of Roma in the Kirtimai settlement, they remain far from sufficient as of yet. ECRI strongly encourages the Lithuanian authorities to significantly scale up their efforts in this respect and to ensure suitable housing solutions are also found for the remaining Kirtimai residents.

ECRI considers that this recommendation has been partially implemented.

2.) *In its report on Lithuania (fifth monitoring cycle), ECRI recommended that the Lithuanian authorities, as part of the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for 2015-2020 on Non-Discrimination, set up an inter-institutional working group to develop a comprehensive strategy to tackle effectively the problem of racist and homo-/transphobic hate speech. This group should include the relevant authorities, as well as civil society organisations, including, amongst others, representatives of the LGBT community.*

In November 2016, the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior created a working group on hate crime monitoring, analysis and evaluation.<sup>1</sup> ECRI has been informed by the authorities that this working group consists of experts from the Ministry of Interior, including the Ministry's Information Technology and Communications Department, the Police Department, the Criminal Police Bureau, the Prosecutor's Office, the Government Department for National Minorities, the Law Institute and civil society organisations, including the Human Rights Monitoring Institute, the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights and representatives of the Jewish community and the LGBT community. The group met twice in 2016 and 2017. No meetings took place in 2018 and uncertainties remain as to the agreed tasks of the working group. Some activities, however, continued. On 8 March 2018, a seminar took place organised by the OSCE/ODIHR and the EU-FRA, jointly with the Ministry of Interior, for civil society members of the working group on improving monitoring of hate crime and the collection of related data in Lithuania in line with international standards.

ECRI was also informed that the Prosecutor's Office, the Office of the Inspector for Journalist Ethics and the Ministry of Interior started the implementation of a joint 20-months project entitled "Strengthening responses to hate crimes and hate speech in Lithuania". The project aims to ensure effective investigations, prosecutions and adequate sentencing in hate crime cases; raise awareness among national authorities about the impact of hate crime and hate speech; understand the needs of vulnerable communities; address the problem of under-reporting and intensify efforts to counter on-line hate speech.

Furthermore, in 2017, 12 police officers took part in the OSCE/ODIHR's "Training against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement (TAHCLE)" programme and in 2018 the Police Commissioner General ordered the training of some 200 law enforcement officers on hate crime issues at the Lithuanian Police School and its partner institutions.<sup>2</sup> Such training for police officers is implementing measures foreseen in the Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-discrimination (2017-2019).<sup>3</sup> While ECRI recognises the positive intentions contained in the Action Plan, its overall level of coordination does not appear to be well developed, which is also highlighted by the fact that the Action Plan was adopted by only one Ministry, namely the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and shows no evidence of being based on an integrated inter-agency strategy.

In spite of some useful steps taken by the authorities, ECRI concludes that the various measures do not yet constitute a comprehensive strategic approach to effectively tackle the problem of racist and homo-/transphobic hate speech. The inter-institutional working group has also not arrived at developing such a strategy. ECRI encourages the Lithuanian authorities to continue and scale up its efforts to prevent and combat hate speech and hate crime and to overcome fragmentation by making effective use of the existing working group.

ECRI considers that this recommendation has been partially implemented.

---

<sup>1</sup> Order No. IV-813 (21 November 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Order No. 5-V-88 (29 January 2018).

<sup>3</sup> See sections 4.4 and 4.5 of the Action Plan.

