

Commission: EU 2030 Goal Zero Violence

Subject: How to eradicate gender, homophobic, xenophobic, racist and antisemitic conflicts on a European scale?

Author: Italy

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) was established by the Council of Europe. It is an independent human rights monitoring body specialized in questions relating to racism and intolerance. ECRI conducts country-by-country monitoring work, which analyses the situation in each of the member States including Italy regarding racism and intolerance and draws up suggestions and proposals for dealing with the problems identified.

Since the publication of ECRI's third report on Italy on 16 May 2006, progress has been made in several fields covered by that report. The National Federation of the Italian Press and the Order of Journalists have adopted a code of conduct (the "Rome Charter") aiming to make the media's handling of issues related to asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking, and migrants more objective. Some municipalities are implementing programs intending to promote the social inclusion of Roma, for example by facilitating access to school for Roma children and supporting the inclusion of Roma in the labor market.

Despite the progress achieved in Italy, some issues continue to give rise to concern. The use of racist and xenophobic discourse in politics appears to be increasing. Some particularly disturbing attacks have been launched against the Roma community. And with the current migration crisis in Italy, discrimination seems to be increasing instead of decreasing. Italy has on several occasions deported non-citizens from its territory. Prejudice against foreigners and migrant workers also persists, affecting their access to jobs and their position in the workplace.

In response, the ECRI requested that the Italian authorities take further action in several areas by making a list of recommendations. ECRI strongly recommends that Italy ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights as soon as possible stating that "The enjoyment of any right set forth by law shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. No one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on any ground such as those mentioned above. ECRI reiterates its recommendation that Italy ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the European Convention on Nationality and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. ECRI encourages Italy to ratify as soon as possible the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

The authorities have pointed out, however, that the legislation currently in force in Italy goes beyond the minimum criteria adopted by the EU Council in its 2008 framework decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia using criminal law: in particular, Italian law carries heavier penalties and punishes certain types of behavior even if there is no threat to public order.

More recently, in 2014 a Juncker Commission was formed with one of its goals being the promotion of gender equality and the emancipation of women. In 2017, the Commission proposed a comprehensive package of legislative and policy measures "Work-life balance", aimed at encouraging greater participation of women in the labor market.

Since 2015, the EU has been committed to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Juncker Commission behind the initiative provides an overview of how EU actions are contributing to delivering on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both within the EU and in partner countries worldwide. Among those are goal number 5: gender equality and goal number 10: reduced inequalities. To tackle discrimination (SDG 10 and SDG 16), the Commission has adopted the EU anti-racism action plan, the EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, the LGBTIQ equality strategy, the EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life and the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030. To contribute to peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16), the Commission has set out a new Security Union Strategy which seeks to tackle violence, abuse and trafficking, organized crime and terrorism.

To what concerns Italy, a monitoring report has shown that regarding goal number 5 challenges remain but the score is moderately improving, still insufficient to attain the goal. Regarding goal number 10, significant challenges remain; the score is stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of the required rate. Overall, whilst many changes have yet to be made, Italy has over the years shown a strong desire for change.