European Commission against Racism and Intolerance: Media Provisions in Annual Report

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The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recently published its Annual Report for the year 2001. One of the "main trends" identified in the Report as meriting priority attention from ECRI in the future is the use of new technologies of mass communication, in particular the Internet, for the dissemination of racist material. In this connection, ECRI expresses its hope that the First Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime (see IRIS 2001-5: 3, IRIS 2001-7: 2, IRIS 2001-9: 4, IRIS 2001-10: 3, IRIS 2002-1: 3 and IRIS 2002-3: 3) will be drafted imminently.

In the same vein, the Report also recalls ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 6: "Combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic materiel via the internet" (sic). This Recommendation urges the governments of Member States, inter alia, to ensure that the perpetrators of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic offences committed via the Internet are subject to the same national legislation as the perpetrators of such offences committed in the off-line world and that they are pursued with equal vigour by the relevant law-enforcement authorities. The Recommendation also encourages governments to support a variety of self-regulatory measures introduced and promoted by the Internet industry to combat online racism (eg. hotlines, codes of conduct and filtering software).

ECRI is a body of the Council of Europe that is committed to the advancement of the struggle against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance in Europe. Its work can be divided into three main categories: a country-by-country approach (which involves the compilation and publication of individual country reports); work on general themes and engagement with civil society. This categorisation is also reflected in the structural division of its latest annual report.

Annual Report on ECRI's activities covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2001, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 29 May 2002, CRI (2002) 19

General Policy Recommendation No. 6: "Combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and antisemitic materiel via the internet" (sic),

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European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 15 December 2000, CRI (2001) 1

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