European Commission against Racism and Intolerance: Media Provisions in Recent Recommendations

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In recent months, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) adopted two new General Policy Recommendations ("on combating racism while fighting terrorism" and "on the fight against anti-Semitism"), both of which contain provisions concerning the media. ECRI is a monitoring 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 (see also: IRIS 2002-7: 3).

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 8 on combating racism while fighting terrorism, published in June, strongly condemns terrorism as "an extreme form of intolerance", but also calls on States authorities to ensure that anti-terrorist legislative and other measures do not have discriminatory effects, either directly or indirectly. Specifically regarding the media, the Recommendation urges Governments:

- "to encourage debate within the media profession on the image that they convey of minority groups in connection with the fight against terrorism and on the particular responsibility of the media professions, in this connection, to avoid perpetuating prejudices and spreading biased information;

- to support the positive role the media can play in promoting mutual respect and countering racist stereotypes and prejudices"

Similarly, ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 9 on the fight against anti-Semitism, presented in September, draws attention to the "particular responsibility of media professionals" to endeavour to "report on all world events in a manner that avoids perpetuating prejudices". It calls on Governments to "support the positive role the media can play in promoting mutual respect and countering anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices". It also urges Governments to ensure that criminal legislation extends to cover "anti-Semitic crimes committed via the internet, satellite television and other modern means of information and communication".

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 8 on combating racism while fighting terrorism, adopted on 17 March 2004 and published on 8 June 2004

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http://www.coe.int/T/E/human%5Frights/Ecri/1%2DECRI/3%2DGeneral%5Fthemes/1%2DPolicy%5FRecommendations/Recommendation%5FN%B08/

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 9 on the fight against anti-Semitism, adopted on 25 June 2004

http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/1-ecri/3-general_themes/1-policy_recommendations/recommendation_n9/Rec.09%20en.pdf

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