



ENAR response to the preliminary draft text of ECRI General Policy  
Recommendation No. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination at school

**in cooperation with:  
The Runnymede trust (UK)  
CEJI-European Jewish Information Centre**

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*The European Network against Racism (ENAR) is a network of some 600 European NGOs working to combat racism in all EU Member States. Its establishment was a major outcome of the 1997 European Year against Racism. ENAR is determined to fight racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national initiatives with European initiatives.*

## 1. Introduction

ENAR welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe on its next General Policy Recommendation that focuses on school education.

Education is a critical tool in building a multicultural Europe free from racism and discrimination. Youth and adults must be equipped with the sensitivity and skills required to succeed in diverse societies. Educational environments must be prepared to meet this need and to be able to demonstrate inclusion and equity in the process and content of the educational system.

ENAR has long been concerned with the question of education, both in terms of combating discrimination and racism in educational settings, as well as in maximising the potential of education to promote inclusive and equal societies. ENAR's Shadow Reports consistently identify discrimination in education as pervasive across the European Union Member States. As the 2005 report concludes:

“An examination of racism in the area of education across Europe (European Union) demonstrates issues of direct discrimination and more institutional forms of discrimination. Racism in the education system is manifested at a number of levels. It is evident in government departments responsible for education, in school management, by teachers, pupils and also by parents”<sup>1</sup>

In April 2006 ENAR organised, a major international conference to discuss the ongoing problems of access to quality education for Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Europe. During the conference a wide range of proposals and suggestions were made for moving forward. Many of these recommendations reflect the specific and acute challenges facing the Roma community, while others seek to promote inclusive education strategies that will enhance the quality of education for everyone living in the European Union.<sup>2</sup>

ENAR is currently producing a research report on education policies and strategies at the national and European levels, this report is expected to be published in the Spring 2007.

ENAR identifies the question of combating racism in the school environment and creating inclusive learning environments as a critical and we look forward to ECRI taking this matter forward, and giving it the attention it deserves and requires. This brief contribution to the General Policy Recommendation will provide a context for future discussions by highlighting the key findings of ENAR members in the field of education, before moving on to making concrete suggestions on the ECRI draft paper in light of these every day realities.

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<sup>1</sup> ENAR (2006) European Shadow Report 2005, p. 19

<sup>2</sup> Roma and Equal Access to Education, 28-29 April 2006, Brussels, Conference Recommendations, available at: [http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/roma/final\\_recommendations.pdf](http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/roma/final_recommendations.pdf).

## 2. Racism in the school environment: findings from ENAR members

Discrimination in the education system is consistently identified as one of the most serious and damaging manifestations of racial discrimination in Europe. The ENAR 2005 European Shadow report concludes that: “generally outcomes from the education system are poorer for members of ethnic and religious minority groups”.<sup>3</sup> An examination of racism in the area of education across Europe demonstrates issues of direct discrimination and more institutional forms of discrimination. The 2005 ENAR shadow report identifies six key areas of concern: (1) Right and access to quality education; (2) Bullying and harassment; (3) School segregation; (4) Drop out and expulsion rates; (5) Educational attainment; (6) Monitoring and redress mechanisms.

Issues of direct discrimination and more institutional forms of discrimination are prevailing in the school system and evident in government departments responsible for education, in school management, by teachers, pupils and also by parents. While education is an area where there are serious manifestations of both direct and indirect racism, it is also an area where many good practice initiatives are underway or being developed.

The right to education is an issue in a number of countries, particularly where this right is attached to residency status. In some other countries, however, the right to education is limited to those in possession of a residence permit or of a particular type of permit. The link between schools and government bodies with responsibility around immigration is also of concern to NGOs.

Segregation has been a problem experienced by Roma, Sinti and Travellers particularly where segregation is accompanied by a poorer quality of education. Across Europe it can be noted that Roma, Sinti and Travellers experience consistently high levels of educational disadvantage and discrimination from and within the education system. A conference jointly organised by ENAR and the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), in April 2006, called on the European Union and its Member States to: (1) 1. End all forms of education segregation of Roma, Sinti and Traveller Children; (2) Combat racism and discrimination in education and broader society; (3) Promote accommodation of diversity in all forms of education provision; (4) Put in place inclusive quality education systems; and (5) Ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education strategies.<sup>4</sup>

### **Role of NGOs in promoting good practice**

The experience of ENAR members demonstrates the critical role that NGOs play in combating racial discrimination in school education. NGOs are a direct source of support for the victims of racial discrimination, and play a crucial role in assisting them in overcoming experiences of discrimination. In addition NGOs are a source of good practice and innovative strategies in promoting inclusive education which makes a contribution to equality more generally.

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<sup>3</sup> ENAR (2006) European Shadow Report 2005, p. 19

<sup>4</sup> Roma and Equal Access to Education, 28-29 April 2006, Brussels, Conference Recommendations, available at: [http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/roma/final\\_recommendations.pdf](http://www.enar-eu.org/en/events/roma/final_recommendations.pdf).

### 3. ECRI recommendation

ENAR would propose a number of amendments to the ECRI recommendation and suggest that in particular two specific issues are addressed more clearly in the ECRI proposal:

1. The question of **segregation** affecting Roma students in the school system and how to respond to it. The recommendations issued by ENAR at the conference organized by the network in April 2006 provide a framework for identifying actions and measures in this area.<sup>5</sup>
  
2. More attention should be given to the important role of **informal education** in combating prejudices and stereotypes and the knowledge and expertise of civil society in this area. Recognising the focus of this paper on school education, it is important to acknowledge the contribution of informal education and civil society action in the context of mainstream education provision. Methods of certification and accreditation for informal education programmes in the field of anti-racism should be set up and recognized by educational institutions with a view to valuing informal training and the specific role of non-governmental organisations in this process.

Original	ENAR Proposal
Add new paragraph	[19] Aware that civil society organisations are currently implementing effective anti-discrimination education and diversity training programmes for youth within the school environment, and in community settings that indirectly impact the school atmosphere;
[24] Reaffirming the importance of having a mix of pupils in schools and convinced that good teaching is fully compatible with such a mix;	[24] Reaffirming the importance of having a diverse composition of pupils in schools and convinced that good teaching is fully compatible with such diversity;
[28] Emphasising that positive schemes can do much to improve the access of children from minority groups to school education in general and to good teaching in particular;	[28] Emphasising that positive and specifically targeted policies and actions can do much to improve the access of children from minority groups to school education in general and to good teaching in particular;
[32] Recalling that it is important that school textbooks and other teaching aids not convey prejudice and stereotypes;	[32] Recalling that it is important that school textbooks and other teaching aids not convey prejudice and stereotypes, and that they recognise the historic reality of Europe and its states as diverse and constantly changing entities;
Add new paragraph	[34] Aware that modern technologies such as the Internet and television are sometimes used for the spreading of hate,

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	and of the need to create media literacy and awareness in students;
[37] undertake, in conjunction with civil society, studies on the situation of children from minority groups in the school system, compiling statistics broken down by sex on participation and attendance rates, results achieved and progress made;	[37] undertake, in conjunction with civil society, studies on the situation of children from minority groups in the school system, compiling statistics broken down by sex on participation and attendance rates, results achieved and progress made; good data collection procedures should include ethnic and national categories to enable effective monitoring of achievement, participation and exclusion of particular ethnic groups.
New bullet [39 new bullet]	[39 new bullet] By setting clear standards and benchmarks to enable schools to measure their compliance and accomplishments;
[39 bullet 2] by devising, in consultation with all the parties concerned and in the light of the socio-economic dimension – namely, employment and housing-related issues – policies to avoid pupils from minority groups being over-represented in certain schools;	[39 bullet 2] by devising, in consultation with all the parties concerned and in the light of the socio-economic dimension – namely, employment and housing-related issues – policies to avoid pupils from minority groups being over-represented in certain schools; ensure that there is equal access to all schools and that schools use their admission policies to promote good community relations;
New bullet [39 new bullet]	[39 new bullet] by actively seeking the involvement of parents of pupils from minority ethnic groups at all stages: particularly encouraging their attendance at teacher-parent consultation meetings, and involvement in school governance and supporting parents for who language barriers may be in operation;
New bullet [39 new bullet]	[39 new bullet] Ensure that disciplinary procedures in schools do not operate in such a way as to disproportionately exclude young people from certain ethnic backgrounds from education, using educational sanctions that are appropriate yet enable ongoing access to education;
[39 bullet 7] by ensuring that parents of pupils from minority groups can play a full part in the school’s decision-making process and activities, particularly when measures taken by the school specifically concern their children	[39 bullet 7] by ensuring that parents of pupils from minority groups can play a full part in the school’s decision-making process and activities, particularly when measures taken by the school specifically concern their children including through acknowledging that written correspondence between home and

	school may be difficult for some to access;
[40 Bullet 1] by ensuring that the fight against such phenomena in schools is part of a long-term and continuous policy	[40 Bullet 1] by ensuring that respect for diversity and the fight against racism in schools are part of a long-term and continuous policy;
[40 Bullet 3] by setting up racism prevention units in schools, responsible for reporting incidents, offering support to victims and taking appropriate educational measures in liaison with school heads and teaching staff	[40 Bullet 3] by setting up racism prevention structures in schools, responsible for reporting incidents, offering support to victims and taking appropriate educational measures in liaison with school heads and teaching staff;
[40 Bullet 5] by making incitement to racial hatred in schools and any other serious racist act, including the use of violence, threats or damage to property, offences punishable by suspension or expulsion;	[40 Bullet 5] by making incitement to racial hatred in schools and any other serious racist act, including the use of violence, threats or damage to property, offences punishable with the most serious sanctions;
[3.1] provide them, at all levels, with initial and on-going training to enable them to look after pupils from different backgrounds;	[3.1] provide them, at all levels, with initial and on-going training to enable them to respond to the needs of pupils from different backgrounds;
[3.4.ii] the use of teaching material specifically intended for teaching human rights; and	[3.4.ii] the use of teaching material specifically intended for teaching equality and human rights; and
[3.5] provide a framework in which the teaching profession can regularly share experiences and update methods used for teaching human rights;	[3.5] provide a framework in which the teaching profession can regularly share experiences and update methods used for teaching equality and human rights.