

ECRI REPORT ON MONTENEGRO

(sixth monitoring cycle)



Adopted on 1 July 2025

Published on 28 October 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4
SUMMARY	5
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
<i>I. EFFECTIVE EQUALITY AND ACCESS TO RIGHTS</i>	7
A. EQUALITY BODIES	7
B. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	7
C. IRREGULARLY PRESENT MIGRANTS	9
D. LGBTI EQUALITY	9
<i>II. HATE SPEECH AND HATE-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE</i>	12
A. HATE SPEECH	12
B. HATE-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE	14
<i>III. INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION</i>	16
A. REFUGEES AND BENEFICIARIES OF SUBSIDIARY OR TEMPORARY PROTECTION	16
B. ROMA AND EGYPTIANS	18
INTERIM FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS	25
LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY	28

FOREWORD

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), established by the Council of Europe, is an independent human rights monitoring body specialised in questions relating to the fight against racism, discrimination (on grounds of “race”, ethnic/national origin, colour, citizenship, religion, language, sexual orientation and gender identity), xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance. It is composed of independent and impartial members appointed on the basis of their moral authority and recognised expertise in dealing with racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance.

In the framework of its statutory activities, ECRI conducts country monitoring work, which analyses the situation in each of the member States of the Council of Europe regarding racism and intolerance and draws up suggestions and proposals for dealing with the problems identified.

ECRI's country monitoring deals with all member States on an equal footing. The work takes place in 5-year cycles. The reports of the first round were completed at the end of 1998, those of the second round at the end of 2002, those of the third round at the end of 2007, those of the fourth round in the beginning of 2014, and those of the fifth round at the end of 2019. Work on the sixth round reports started at the end of 2018.

The working methods for the preparation of the reports involve documentary analyses, a visit to the country concerned, and then a confidential dialogue with the national authorities.

ECRI's reports are not the result of inquiries or testimonial evidence. They are analyses based on information gathered from a wide variety of sources. Documentary studies are based on a large number of national and international written sources. The in situ visit provides the opportunity to meet with the parties directly concerned (both governmental and non-governmental) with a view to gathering detailed information. The process of confidential dialogue with the national authorities allows the latter to provide, if they consider it necessary, comments on the draft report, with a view to correcting any possible factual errors which the report might contain. At the end of the dialogue, the national authorities may request, if they so wish, that their viewpoints be appended to the final ECRI report.

The sixth round country reports focus on three topics common to all member States: (1) Effective equality and access to rights, (2) Hate speech and hate-motivated violence, and (3) Integration and inclusion, as well as a number of topics specific to each one of them.

In the framework of the sixth cycle, priority implementation is requested again for two specific recommendations chosen from those made in the report. A process of interim follow-up for these two recommendations will be conducted by ECRI no later than two years following the publication of this report.

The following report was drawn up by ECRI under its own responsibility. Unless otherwise indicated, it covers the situation up to 19 March 2025; as a rule, developments since that date are neither covered in the following analysis nor taken into account in the conclusions and proposals therein.

SUMMARY

Since the adoption of ECRI's fifth-cycle report on Montenegro on 20 June 2017, progress has been made and good practices have been developed in a number of fields.

The government's Bureau for Educational Services, together with its partners, holds annual seminars that include topics of multiculturalism and inclusive education. Since 2019, more than 200 teachers participated in these events which are part of the mandatory in-service training.

High school exchanges, involving 17-18-year-old pupils, have taken place between regions and municipalities of Montenegro with different historical ethnic, linguistic and religious populations. These encounters have been described as very helpful in creating awareness amongst teenagers about the existing diversity in the country and in promoting tolerance.

The authorities developed and adopted the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBTI Persons in Montenegro for the period 2019-2023, and subsequently, in June 2024, they adopted the new Strategic Document for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBTI Persons in Montenegro for 2024-2028. In 2020, the authorities also established a new unit for LGBTI rights within the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.

In 2020, the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Persons was adopted by the Parliament. The authorities are in the process of drafting a new law on legal gender recognition for adoption by Parliament. According to the authorities, the process is taking the relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights into account in order to ensure that the law will be in full conformity with it. It is envisaged that no surgical or other medical interventions will be required.

Montenegro has continued to implement the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights' training against hate crimes for law enforcement (TAHCLE). Furthermore, in 2023, the country amended its legislation to include public acts provoking or inciting racial and religious hatred.

With regard to the integration and inclusion of Roma and Egyptians, the authorities informed ECRI of increases in the enrolment numbers for children from these communities in preschool and primary school institutions.

ECRI welcomes these positive developments in Montenegro. However, despite the

progress achieved, some issues give rise to concern.

The Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman) is still not fully independent in terms of its financial and human resource recruitment decision-making.

ECRI notes that not all schools have yet received the assistants for the prevention of vandalism and violence, whose task will also include preventing and countering all forms of bullying and discrimination.

The necessary bye-laws and legal amendments to fully apply the new Law on Same-Sex Partnerships have not fully been enacted yet.

Racist hate speech, although not a widespread phenomenon in Montenegro, reportedly still occurs. The main targets are said to be members of historical ethnic groups (e.g. Albanians, Bosniaks, Serbs). Such hate speech is also very often affected by incidents in the wider region, as well as by controversial debates about historical events and their commemoration, and frequently also targets religious identities.

Hate speech against LGBTI persons has reportedly occurred frequently since ECRI's last report on Montenegro. Public condemnation of, and counter speech to racist and anti-LGBTI hate speech appear to be rare. Racist and anti-LGBTI violence, especially acts of vandalism, also remain a problem.

In the area of integration and inclusion of Roma and Egyptians, educational outcomes remain low and completion of secondary schooling stands at only 14%. This also has severe consequences for employment: in 2020, a survey found that around 70% of Roma and Egyptians were unemployed. In the area of health care, a substantial gap in terms of life expectancy exists between Roma and Egyptians and the general population. Reportedly, the housing situation in informal settlements also remains very precarious and difficult for many members of these communities.

In this report, ECRI requests that the authorities take action in a number of areas and makes a series of recommendations, including the following.

ECRI recommends, as a matter of priority, that the authorities ensure the full independence of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman), in particular in the areas of human resource recruitment and financial management, in line with ECRI's revised General

Policy Recommendation No. 2 on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level.*

ECRI recommends that the authorities continue and expand high school exchanges in the country with the aim of facilitating encounters and contacts between pupils belonging to different historical ethnic, linguistic or religious communities. The authorities should also involve the existing religious communities in order to facilitate visits of school groups to places of worship so as to promote tolerance and respect for diversity.

ECRI recommends that the authorities complete the process of amending existing legislation and issuing necessary secondary legislation in the context of the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Persons (2020) without further delay.

ECRI recommends that the authorities promote among politicians and high-ranking government officials the active condemnation of, and counter speech to racist and anti-LGBTI hate speech. In addition, the authorities should also promote such responses from other parts of society, including leaders in the areas of culture, religion, business, media and sports. In this regard, the authorities should take inspiration from ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech and the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech.

ECRI recommends that the authorities fully reactivate the LGBTI liaison unit in the national police, consider establishing similar units or posts to reach out to other communities affected by hate-motivated violence, and ensure that the officers working in these units receive the necessary training.

ECRI recommends that the authorities take strong and effective measures to ensure equal treatment and inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the area of health by: i) closing the life expectancy gap between them and the general population as soon as possible; ii) substantially increase the number of health mediators working in Roma and Egyptian communities; iii) ensuring that discrimination against Roma and Egyptians in health care institutions does not occur, notably by reiterating at regular intervals to all health care staff their duty to provide the relevant treatment to everyone in need, irrespective of national or ethnic origin, and providing all staff working in such institutions with suitable training on countering antigypsyism and related discrimination in health care.

ECRI recommends, as a matter of priority, that the authorities complete the registration of all displaced Roma and Egyptians (as well as persons self-identifying as Ashkali) from Kosovo*¹ present in Montenegro, including their children.*

*¹ All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

* The recommendations in this paragraph will be subject to a process of interim follow-up by ECRI no later than two years after the publication of this report.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. EFFECTIVE EQUALITY AND ACCESS TO RIGHTS

A. Equality bodies¹

1. The Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman), established in December 2003, is the national equality body. The 2011 Law on the Protector of Rights and Freedoms defines this institution as an institutional mechanism for the protection against discrimination. In its fifth-cycle report on Montenegro, ECRI was pleased to note that legislative amendments in 2014 had expanded the competencies of the Ombudsman further.²
2. As concerns the independence of the Ombudsman institution, ECRI did not receive any information about political interference in its work. However, there are some limitations to the institution's organisational and operational independence.³ ECRI has noted already in its previous report that the Ombudsman's freedom to appoint staff members was still limited because recruitment, including the advertising of vacancies and the evaluation of candidates, could only be carried out by the government's Human Resources Management Authority.⁴ The selection process, particularly the ranking rules under the Law on Civil Servants, limits the Ombudsman institution's freedom to appoint its own staff. This problem persists.
3. Similarly, the Ombudsman is not completely financially independent, because spending funds from the institution's budget requires approval from the Ministry of Finance, which must authorise monthly spending allocations for non-salary expenditures. According to information received by ECRI from the Ombudsman institution, this poses particular problems for its work in the two-month period before elections when a de facto budget and recruitment freeze is imposed on most public institutions.
4. ECRI notes that the above-mentioned restrictions do not apply to all public institutions, as several of them, such as the courts, the national parliament, or certain regulatory agencies, benefit from exemptions. ECRI cannot see any reason why such exemptions could not be extended to the Ombudsman institution as well in order to grant it full independence for recruitment and financial management. In this context, the authorities informed ECRI that a process of revising the current Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman) was launched in autumn 2024. In ECRI's view, this constitutes an excellent opportunity to close the existing gaps regarding the independence of the Ombudsman institution.
5. ECRI recommends, as a matter of priority, that the authorities ensure the full independence of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman), in particular in the areas of human resource recruitment and financial management, in line with ECRI's revised General Policy Recommendation No. 2 on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level.

B. Inclusive education

6. The government's Bureau for Educational Services, together with other institutions relevant to teacher training, holds annual seminars that include the topics of multiculturalism and inclusive education in schools. Since 2019, more than 200 teachers participated in these events, which are part of their mandatory in-service training. ECRI encourages the authorities to continue and further expand such

¹ The term "national specialised bodies" was updated to "equality bodies" in the revised version of GPR No. 2 which was published on 27 February 2018.

² Law on the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms, Official Gazette of Montenegro No.18/ 14. Cf. ECRI 2017: § 13. – See also ECRI 2017: §§ 80ff.

³ See also ECRI's revised GPR No. 2 on equality bodies, 2018: § 27.

⁴ ECRI 2017: § 81.

activities aiming to improve the competences of teachers through better teacher training, both in-service and pre-service.

7. The authorities also informed ECRI that in primary and secondary schools, education for and about human rights is mandatory as a cross-cutting topic to be applied by teachers in the 10-20% open and flexible part of the curriculum. How this topic is integrated into different subjects is also part of the regular evaluation of schoolteachers. In recent years, three training courses for teachers about how best to mainstream the topic into other parts of the curriculum have been held in bilingual⁵ municipalities, where due to the existing ethnic and linguistic diversity the topic was considered to be of particular relevance. ECRI encourages the authorities to build on this initiative to provide all teaching staff with suitable training to prepare them to educate and respond to the needs of pupils from different backgrounds.
8. As part of events commemorating the Holocaust, in particular on 27 January⁶ each year, the Jewish community is often invited to give presentations in schools. This is commendable. However, interlocutors also mentioned to the ECRI delegation during the 2024 visit to Montenegro that school textbooks could deal with this topic in more depth, which would also be a good entry point for enhanced general human rights education. In this context, ECRI was informed that the government has had plans for some time already for Montenegro to join the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) but has not done this so far. ECRI strongly encourages the authorities to do so, to draw on the IHRA's and the Council of Europe's expertise in the field of Holocaust education and take inspiration of Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on passing on remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity, which also places emphasis on the Roma genocide and the persecution of Roma by the Nazis as part of a tradition of antigypsyism in Europe.
9. Several civil society organisations mentioned a **promising practice** of high school exchanges, involving 17-18-year-old pupils, between regions and municipalities of Montenegro with different historical ethnic, linguistic and religious populations. These encounters have been described as very helpful in creating awareness amongst teenagers about the existing diversity in the country and in promoting tolerance. Such activities could also involve the different religious communities to facilitate the visits of school groups to places of worship and thereby help the younger generation to learn and appreciate different religious identities (and the ethnic identities often associated with them in the country) as a shared cultural asset for all citizens of Montenegro and not as a potentially antagonistic identity fault line.
10. ECRI recommends that the authorities continue and expand high school exchanges in the country with the aim of facilitating encounters and contacts between pupils belonging to different historical ethnic, linguistic or religious communities. The authorities should also involve the existing religious communities in order to facilitate visits of school groups to places of worship so as to promote tolerance and respect for diversity.
11. Regarding racist and anti-LGBTI harassment and bullying in schools, ECRI was informed that from 2024 on all schools in the country are scheduled to receive assistants for the prevention of vandalism and violence, whose tasks will also include preventing and countering all forms of bullying and discrimination. However, ECRI noted that not all schools have been allocated such assistant posts yet and the authorities explained that the schools they consider to be more problematic received them first. ECRI trusts that this scheme will cover all schools

⁵ See also: European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Report of the Committee of Experts presented to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in accordance with Article 16 of the Charter - Fifth Report – Montenegro, 2020: 11-15.

⁶ The United Nations General Assembly designated the 27th of January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

very shortly and, more generally, invites the authorities to take inspiration from its General Policy Recommendation No. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education when planning further measures to prevent incidents of racism and intolerance and promote inclusive education.

C. Irregularly present migrants

12. Montenegro is a transit country on the Balkan migration route. Most irregular migrants are only passing through the country on their way to Western Europe. In 2018, the authorities introduced the “declaration of intention to seek asylum”, valid for two weeks, as a first step in the asylum process, for which subsequently a formal asylum application needs to be submitted.⁷ The number of persons who actually submit such a follow-up request is usually only a fraction of those that made an initial declaration. In 2021, for example, out of 3 336 persons who declared their intention only 272 (8.2%) submitted a formal application. In 2022, the ratio was even lower with 8 326 to 175 (2.1%) and in 2023 it was 4 973 to 145 (2.9%).⁸ During the two weeks period, however, persons who made an initial declaration cannot be considered as irregularly present in the country.⁹
13. A particular group of irregularly present migrants that has been residing in the country for a considerable time already, are Roma and Egyptians (as well as some who might identify as Ashkali) displaced from Kosovo*¹⁰, which will be specifically dealt with in section III.B of this report.
14. ECRI received information that irregular migration status does not prevent children from being enrolled in schools, as school administrators tend to find pragmatic solutions in such cases. However, these children might not be able to receive the standard end-of-year certificate. As concerns access to health care, it appears that emergency health care is provided irrespective of migration status. ECRI did not receive any information about other “firewalls”, as proposed in its General Policy Recommendation No. 16 on safeguarding irregularly present migrants from discrimination and it invites the authorities to take inspiration from this document when designing policies for this group in the future.

D. LGBTI equality¹¹

15. The authorities informed ECRI that they recognise the need to promote LGBTI equality and to prevent and combat discrimination against persons belonging to this group. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights is the lead government agency in this respect and has, according to its information, established a new unit for LGBTI rights within the Ministry in 2020. In this regard, ECRI notes that Montenegro has indeed made considerable progress regarding LGBTI equality since its previous report. Representatives of LGBTI community organisations, as well as other NGOs, are involved in the creation of national policies, legislative and strategic frameworks through participation in the relevant working groups. Nevertheless, certain gaps remain and further efforts are required.
16. Together with relevant civil society groups and with input from international partners, the authorities developed and adopted the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBTI Persons in Montenegro for the period 2019-2023. It was adopted by the government in March 2019.¹² The strategy focused on three main

⁷ UNHCR (1 July 2024) Protection Brief – refugees and asylum seekers in Montenegro.

⁸ Ibid.: Graph No. 5.

⁹ See ECRI (2016), General Policy Recommendation No. 16 on safeguarding irregularly present migrants from discrimination: 5.

¹⁰ * All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

¹¹ For terminology, see ECRI's [glossary](#).

¹² The Government of Montenegro (21 March 2019), The quality of life of LGBTI persons continues to improve through a new strategic document; available at: <https://www.gov.me/en/article/201807--the-quality-of-life-of-lgbti-persons-continues-to-improve-through-a-new-strategic-document>.

goals: improved social acceptance of LGBTI persons, an improved normative framework and the protection of rights of LGBTI persons, and improved access to labour, services and support for this group. To facilitate and measure implementation, 15 operational goals had been set, covering a series of broad areas. Following the expiry of the strategy, an evaluation was conducted with expert support from the Council of Europe. The findings indicated that a certain number of indicators lacked clearly defined initial values or there was a clear indication of their nonexistence. None of the set indicators had a defined data source based on which it would be possible to monitor their achievement.¹³ The evaluation found that only one operational goal was achieved in full and four were achieved in part. It concluded that the Strategy did not fulfil its purpose, especially not in the area of making a contribution to the social acceptance of LGBTI people and their access to labour, services and support services.¹⁴

17. The persistence of these problems, despite the government's efforts to improve the situation of LGBTI persons in the country, is also shown by the fact that public attitudes towards this group have not improved. On the contrary, according to a 2022 survey, the only category for which a substantially *increased* degree of discrimination was identified, compared to 2010, was sexual orientation. It was found that the overall *perception* of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation was on average and across all areas of social life five percentage points higher than it had been in 2010, while for all other groups a decrease, stagnation or only minimal increase was observed.¹⁵ LGBTI activists and other civil society interlocutors also conveyed similar impressions as regards negative attitudes towards homosexuality and LGBTI persons in general in the country to ECRI. It appears that further public awareness raising about LGBTI equality is needed.
18. A new Strategic document for improving the quality of life of LGBTI persons in Montenegro for the period 2024-2028 was adopted in June 2024. The Council of Europe provided support for this process as well. LGBTI NGOs indicated to ECRI that they consider the new strategy to be more realistic and equipped with measurable indicators. In their view, the previous strategy had also focused too much on work that was to be carried out by NGOs, who did not always have the necessary capacity.
19. ECRI recommends that the authorities ensure the full implementation of the Strategic document for improving the quality of life of LGBTI persons in Montenegro for the period 2024-2028. The authorities should in particular provide the necessary funding to carry out all envisaged activities and build the capacity of relevant public bodies at all levels (local and national) as well as of civil society actors involved in the implementation process.
20. The authorities are in the process of drafting a new Law on the Protection of Equality and the Prohibition of Discrimination. It is envisaged that this Law includes a comprehensive list of grounds, including newly recognised characteristics such as gender identity and sex characteristics, in addition to sexual orientation. A representative of the Ombudsman's Office participated as an observer in the working group, that was tasked with drafting the law. The authorities also engaged in a consultation process regarding the draft Law with the European Union (EU) Commission, within the framework of Montenegro's ongoing EU accession negotiations.
21. In 2020, the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Persons was adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro. It entered into force on 15 July 2020 and became applicable one year later. According to the authorities, within the first year of its

¹³ Marina Vuković, Evaluation of Implementation of the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBTI Persons in Montenegro 2019-2023 (2023): 3-4.

¹⁴ Ibid.: 4.

¹⁵ CEDEM / Council of Europe (2022), Patterns and Degree of Discrimination in Montenegro: 30 and Table 9.

application some 20 same-sex partnerships were concluded in the country. However, not all necessary secondary legislation or amendments to existing laws have been completed. So far, out of the nearly 30 by-laws that are required, only six have been completed. The authorities informed ECRI that three more laws would be amended by the end of 2024, namely on property and on contractual obligations. Laws in the fields of criminal law, social protection and health care are scheduled to be amended after that. Given that the original deadline for completion of all necessary amendments and secondary legislation was one year after the introduction of same-sex partnerships, ECRI considers it urgently necessary to complete this process as soon as possible in order to enable same-sex couples who concluded or will conclude partnerships under the new law to fully benefit from it in practice, as intended.

22. ECRI recommends that the authorities complete the process of amending existing legislation and issuing necessary secondary legislation in the context of the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Persons (2020) without further delay.
23. Legal gender recognition is not regulated by legislation but instead by different internal regulations of relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Health's "Rulebook for change of sex". Legislation exists on changing the gender-marker in identity documents, which so far requires medical certificates, including proof of so-called gender reassignment surgery¹⁶ having been carried out. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and other ministries are involved in the process, together with a joint Working Group that includes relevant NGOs and representatives of international organisations, to draft a law on legal gender recognition for adoption by Parliament in 2025.¹⁷ According to the authorities, the process is taking the relevant jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights into account in order to ensure that the new law will be in full conformity with it. In particular, it is planned that no surgical or other medical interventions will be required. ECRI strongly encourages the authorities to complete this process along the above-mentioned lines and when doing so also to take inspiration from ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons.
24. No substantive information is available about intersex persons and so-called sex-normalising surgery on children. While some LGBTI activists hinted that in at least a few cases such surgery might have been carried out in past years, the authorities emphasised to ECRI that no surgery on children below the age of 16 years is allowed to be carried out if it is not medically necessary. The authorities further mentioned that there is no reference to this contained in the relevant medical Rulebook and that no guidance exists from the Ministry of Health regarding this issue.
25. ECRI recommends that the authorities take action to ensure the enjoyment of the right of intersex persons to bodily integrity by developing and distributing guidance to medical practitioners on how to provide support to intersex children and their parents and to avoid any surgery on intersex children that is not medically necessary. In doing so, the authorities should take inspiration from ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons and from other relevant international standards.

¹⁶ The authorities of Montenegro refer to it as gender reassignment surgery, while ECRI refers to it as gender affirming surgery (for further details see ECRI's GPR No. 17).

¹⁷ As part of this ongoing process, the authorities informed ECRI that any requirement for medical documentation under current rules for changing gender-markers in documents were expected to be phased out by the end of 2024.

II. HATE SPEECH AND HATE-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

A. Hate speech¹⁸

26. Although racist hate speech does not seem to be a very widespread phenomenon in Montenegro, as confirmed also by many civil society interlocutors met by the ECRI delegation during the visit, there are nevertheless clear indications that it exists and it raises concerns. The authorities themselves reported that in recent years Montenegro has “been marked with deep social polarisations, increasing hate speech and intolerance, and additional efforts need to be focused on strengthening intercultural relations and social cohesion”¹⁹. The main targets are often members of historical ethnic groups (e.g. Albanians, Bosniaks, Serbs).²⁰ In this context, racist hate speech based on ethnicity is also very often affected by incidents in the wider region, as well as by controversial debates about historical events and their commemoration, such as cases of denying the Srebrenica genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina or increasing conflict between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs in Kosovo*. Resulting tensions frequently spill over to Montenegro. However, the government seems keen on decreasing inter-ethnic tensions and promoting intercultural inclusion and tolerance. It does so, *inter alia*, through the newly established Directorate for Interculturalism within the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.²¹
27. Examples of the above include an incident in December 2019, in which the Muslim community was threatened with ethnic cleansing by a member of Parliament who had previously praised convicted war criminals.²² Acts of vandalism against mosques (see section II.B on violence below) also frequently involved graffiti or other messages referring to or praising the Srebrenica genocide.²³ In 2020, the Mission of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to Montenegro reported a case in which house walls in three different locations inhabited mainly by Bosniaks²⁴ and Muslims²⁵ were vandalised with fascist graffiti. The incidents took place following a fascist gathering in a nearby village and shortly before the country’s parliamentary elections.²⁶ In the same year, the OSCE Mission also reported that the Serb community felt threatened when a comment inciting violence against them was posted on social media on the occasion of a local “patriotic gathering”.²⁷
28. Given that many cases of hate speech also include a religious dimension, as religion is often closely tied to ethnic identities in Montenegro, ECRI notes positively that many, although not necessarily all, religious leaders have called for interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance.

¹⁸ See definitions of hate speech and hate crime in [ECRI's glossary](#).

¹⁹ Quoted in: Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), Fourth Opinion on Montenegro (2024): § 70.

²⁰ FCNM 2024: § 70 ff.

²¹ See: *Ibid*.

²² OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2019; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2019>.

²³ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2021; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2021>.

²⁴ Referring to the Bosniak ethnic group traditionally residing in Montenegro which is recognised as one of the country’s national minorities. Most Bosniaks are of Islamic faith.

²⁵ In the context of Montenegro, the term “Muslims” refers to the group of ethnic Montenegrins who in the past adopted Islam as their religion. “Muslims” is therefore a specific term for this group, which is recognised in the country as a national minority, and does not comprise all persons of Islamic faith in Montenegro (who are often members of other recognised national minorities such as Albanians or Bosniaks).

²⁶ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2020; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2020>.

²⁷ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2020; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2020>.

29. ECRI recommends that the authorities, without interfering in the internal affairs of religious communities, facilitate and promote interreligious dialogue in order to strengthen joint activities against intolerance and hatred.
30. A particular problem occurs in the context of defining Montenegrin national identity, where opposing views between those self-identifying as ethnic Montenegrins (and thereby as a distinct ethnic group separate from Serbs) and persons identifying as ethnic Serbs who claim that there is no clear separate Montenegrin ethnicity lead to tensions, and at times incidents of hate speech. This issue has been particularly virulent in the run-up to and during the 2023 population census (carried out 3-15 December 2023), when large public posters displayed the clash of these different narratives, which strongly impacts on the political fabric of the country.²⁸ According to the census results, 41.12% of persons declared themselves as ethnic Montenegrins and 32.93% as ethnic Serbs.²⁹ For many who self-identify as ethnic Montenegrins, this seems to be a cultural struggle for an independent identity as much as a political struggle to reject what they consider to be political influence – or, as some interlocutors claimed, attempted domination – from Serbia. For some of the ethnic Serb representatives met by the ECRI delegation, the narrative of a genuine ethnic Montenegrin identity is, in their view, a fabrication by “Western interests” to split Montenegro from its common historical roots with Serbia. While ECRI does not consider it to be its role to interfere in such discussions, it strongly encourages the authorities of Montenegro to ensure that such competing national narratives do not lead to ultranationalist and racist hate speech. In this regard, ECRI also refers to the work of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.³⁰
31. According to members belonging to LGBTI communities met by the ECRI delegation during the visit, anti-LGBTI hate speech is still very common, in spite of government policies aimed at achieving greater tolerance towards this community. Civil society actors mentioned to the ECRI delegation several cases of death threats received by LGBTI activists, especially after 2020. According to the information provided by these groups, in many cases these threats were not reported to the police due to lack of trust in the law enforcement agencies and their willingness to take such cases seriously. While in 2017 the national police had established a specific liaison unit to reach out to the LGBTI community (“team of trust”), this ceased to be functional in 2020 due to management changes within the police force. LGBTI organisations reported to ECRI that, although it has nominally been reinstated, it is not active.
32. Until 2022, an LGBTI community centre was run by NGOs in a central location in Podgorica, the country’s capital city. However, according to these organisations, the staff, volunteers, activists and visitors of the centre were frequently insulted with derogatory terms, other expressions of hatred or in some cases even threats. Ultimately, the situation became unbearable, and the community centre was moved to a less visible location in the city. While moving the facility and showing discretion about its new location largely resolved the problem of being frequently targeted with hate speech, ECRI emphasises that LGBTI persons should not have to face such a choice and it recalls that nobody should be forced to hide from the public due to sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics. In this regard, ECRI refers to the need for fully reactivating the LGBTI liaison unit in the police referred to above and in section II.B below.

²⁸ FCNM 2024: §§ 4, 11, 28-29.

²⁹ MONSTAT (15 October 2024), Release 135/2024 - The 2023 Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings - Population of Montenegro by National, i.e. Ethnical Affiliation, Religion, Mother Tongue, and Language a Person Usually Speaks: 1. – It is also interesting to note that 43.18% of persons declared the Serbian language as their mother tongue, while the Montenegrin language is mother tongue for 34.52% of persons (ibid.).

³⁰ FCNM: §§ 30-31.

33. Hate speech, including forms of hate crime such as threats, were not new in the country. In April 2019, for example, a male LGBTI activist was subjected to homophobic insults and threats in a supermarket.³¹ Online hate speech against LGBTI community groups and political activists increased in particular in the context of political and parliamentary debates about the legislative proposal for registered same-sex partnerships. On the positive side, LGBTI Pride marches and related events were held in Montenegro in recent years without incidents. They received suitable police support and were, in some instances, also attended by municipal and national politicians.
34. According to various interlocutors met by the ECRI delegation during the visit, condemnations of hate speech and counter speech by high level politicians or government officials are rather few and far between. It seems evident that the scarcity of such responses is insufficient to address the problem of racist and anti-LGBTI hate speech more vigorously and adequately. ECRI notes that there is general agreement, including amongst interlocutors met from the authorities, that more condemnation and counter speech can and should be expected.
35. ECRI recommends that the authorities promote among politicians and high-ranking government officials the active condemnation of, and counter speech to racist and anti-LGBTI hate speech. In addition, the authorities should also promote such responses from other parts of society, including leaders in the areas of culture, religion, business, media and sports. In this regard, the authorities should take inspiration from ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech and the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech. In this connection, all political parties should also be encouraged to sign to the Charter of European political parties for a non-racist and inclusive society as endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in its Resolution 2443 (2022).

B. Hate-motivated violence

36. The Montenegrin authorities regularly provide data on recorded hate crime cases to the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), although certain gaps remain in the statistics. According to this data, 19 such cases were recorded by the police in 2023, three in 2022 and seven in 2021. No data was provided for 2020, but civil society organisations reported four attacks against persons and three attacks against property for that year. In 2019, the number of officially recorded cases was 31.³² Nearly all of the cases recorded in 2023 concerned incidents of "disturbance of the peace" under Article 399 of the Criminal Code of Montenegro, corresponding to offences of "Hooliganism", which entail misdemeanour charges.³³ It should be noted that it remains uncertain from the data as to what extent violence was used in these cases.³⁴ ECRI's delegation received some information from civil society interlocutors it met that the classification of "disturbance of the peace" is often problematic and might at times be used by law enforcement officials to record reported cases as less severe than they actually are. In the light of the preceding remarks, ECRI reminds the authorities of the importance of training and instructing police officers to recognise and take seriously all reported hate crime incidents (see also below).
37. A particular problem with the reported hate crime data is the fact that in many, if not most, cases the specific hate element (bias motivation) was not recorded. For 2023, for example, only one case specifically mentions the bias motivation (anti-

³¹ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2019; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2019>.

³² OSCE/ODIHR, Hate crime report - Montenegro; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro>.

³³ OSCE/ODIHR, Montenegro Hate Crime Report 2023: 4. - One case concerned threats or threatening behaviour.

³⁴ The OSCE/ODIHR data also mentions that two of the 19 cases reported in 2023 involved incidents of criminalised hate speech that, however, fall outside of the ODIHR hate crime definition.

Muslim hatred), while in all other cases in the same year the motivation is registered as “unspecified”.³⁵ Indeed, the authorities themselves acknowledged this shortcoming in their discussion with ECRI’s delegation and are aware of the need to improve this crucial aspect of their hate crime statistics in order to better understand which groups are particularly affected by this problem and the related trends and dynamics.

38. A further shortcoming in the hate crime statistics of Montenegro is that cases in which hate elements have been recognised by courts as aggravating circumstances are not automatically integrated into the data and are therefore not easily statistically identifiable. Again, representatives of the authorities met by the ECRI delegation were aware of this problem and indicated that they were working to address this by improving the data collection system.
39. Examples of hate motivated violence include vandalism and attacks against property belonging to the targeted communities, as well as – although less often – direct attacks against persons.
40. Anti-Muslim attacks against property, mosques and other Muslim community institutions have been recorded. In August and September 2020, around the time of the country’s parliamentary elections, several such attacks were recorded.³⁶ In an incident reported by the OSCE Mission to Montenegro that had occurred after the parliamentary elections, the windows of a Muslim community centre were broken and an anti-Muslim note was left at the scene. Around the same time, other attacks were also reported, including one in which a glass door of an Islamic community centre as well as several houses owned by Muslims were vandalised and two Bosniak men were threatened and attacked following the victory of a pro-Serb politician in the elections.³⁷ Similar attacks happened in February and March 2021 as well.³⁸ In 2022, an attack against a Christian church was recorded.³⁹
41. As concerns anti-LGBTI violence, in 2019 a transgender man was forcibly removed from his family home, subjected to transphobic and homophobic insults and beaten unconscious by a group of perpetrators at night. The victim suffered psychological trauma and received care in a psychiatric institution.⁴⁰
42. In 2022, an attack against an LGBTI community centre was recorded by the OSCE/ODIHR.⁴¹ According to LGBTI NGOs, vandalism against the LGBTI community drop-in centre in Podgorica occurred, mainly by youngsters, and two misdemeanour cases were brought before the courts in this regard. However, the previously existing LGBTI liaison unit in the police (“team of trust”) ceased being operational in 2020 due to management changes and, according to LGBTI activists met by the ECRI delegation, it is no longer functional. Civil society organisations indicated that in the past, this unit had helped to slowly increase trust in the police among members of the LGBTI community.

³⁵ Ibid.: 3. – See also, for example, ODIHR hate crime data and report on Montenegro for 2019; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2019>.

³⁶ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2020; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2020>.

³⁷ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2020; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2020>.

³⁸ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2021; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2021>.

³⁹ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2022; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2022>.

⁴⁰ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2019; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2019>.

⁴¹ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2022; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2022>.

43. ECRI recommends that the authorities fully reactivate the LGBTI liaison unit in the national police, consider establishing similar units or posts to reach out to other communities affected by hate-motivated violence, and ensure that the officers working in these units receive the necessary training.

Responses

44. In 2017, Montenegro adopted measures for the effective prosecution of hate crimes following the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Alkovic v. Montenegro* (No. 66895/10). In 2023, the country amended its legislation to include public acts provoking or inciting racial and religious hatred (Article 370), as well as special circumstances for sentencing hate crimes (Article 42a).⁴²
45. Montenegro has implemented the OSCE/ODIHR's Training Against Hate Crimes for Law Enforcement (TAHCLE) since 2014. In 2022, ODIHR organised a refresher training following the changes to the country's hate crime legislation. Furthermore, police officers can attend hate crime training sessions as part of a course on Human Rights and Ethics, as well as during ad hoc courses on specific bias motivation, such as anti-LGBTI hate crimes. In 2022, Montenegro also signed a Memorandum of Co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR to deliver the Prosecutors and Hate Crime Training (PAHCT). In May 2023, ODIHR trained 14 prosecutors and judges as part of this programme.⁴³
46. Training of judges, state prosecutors and other criminal justice actors (advisors from courts, advisors from state prosecution offices, trainees from courts and from state prosecution offices, as well as attorneys-at-law) is carried out by the Centre for Training in the Judiciary and the State Prosecution. Training for judges and state prosecutors is organised and conducted as both a part of initial and of in-service training programmes. Within the initial training programme, the Centre organises a one-day module on the concept of hate crime, the legislative framework and in the handling of hate crime cases. As a part of the annual in-service training programme (curriculum), a course on hate crime and hate speech is conducted at least once a year.⁴⁴
47. ECRI recommends that the authorities evaluate the training activities on hate crime and, based on the evaluation's findings, continue and expand them in line with an emphasis on current hate crime trends in the country, which should be analysed using improved statistics that should routinely indicate the hate motivation or other hate element.

III. INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION

A. Refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary or temporary protection

48. According to information received by ECRI from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), around 200 persons have applied annually in recent years for asylum in Montenegro. While the number of persons indicating an "initial intention" to make an asylum application,⁴⁵ a requirement for regularising one's presence in the country and being eligible for short-term assistance, has been between 1 500 and 8 000 persons per year,⁴⁶ only a fraction of them eventually proceeds to submit a formal application. It is estimated that the

⁴² See OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro.

⁴³ OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime report - National frameworks to address hate crime in Montenegro; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/national-frameworks-montenegro#capacityBuilding>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ To be made to the Border Police, it is valid for up to two weeks after which a formal asylum application to the Ministry of Interior should be submitted.

⁴⁶ UNHCR, Protection brief – refugees and asylum seekers in Montenegro (1 July 2024): 1-4.

remainder continue their migration along the so-called Balkan route towards Western Europe.

49. In 2024, 21 persons were recognised as refugees (mainly citizens of the Russian Federation), in 2023 the number was 14, and in 2022 it was nine. Altogether, since 2007, 144 persons were granted refugee status in Montenegro. Refugees receive an ID card, have the right to work and to access health care. They are entitled to at least two years of social welfare assistance payments, which can be extended afterwards depending on personal circumstances and relevant reasons (e.g. disability, unaccompanied minor).
50. It is foreseen that refugees, as well as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, receive an individual integration plan covering a period of two years and involving various training activities, including language classes and vocational skills building, if necessary. However, it appears that until recently UNHCR had to organise these support measures, such as the language training and social support, as the government did not provide them itself. While ECRI was informed that the government has now started to take over at least the provision of Montenegrin language courses, there is apparently a strong need for better structuring of these courses and the enrolment procedures. ECRI trusts that the authorities will do so.
51. ECRI notes positively that refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have the right to family reunification upon receipt of their status and that there are no specific income or housing requirements applicable.
52. In 2018, the new Asylum Law was adopted, which, inter alia, provided for the Ministry of Interior to take over the entire management of the refugee reception centres, including the immediate and short-term integration activities and social services that had hitherto been managed and provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Various interlocutors indicated to the ECRI delegation that, while the Ministry of Interior has very well-developed competencies and capacities when it comes to the registration of asylum claims and the process of status determination, it does not have the same expertise on social integration as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. ECRI finds the calls for a reversal of this transfer of responsibility therefore reasonable. In addition, ECRI learnt that in recent years two high-level politicians (the Chair of the Parliament's Human Rights Committee at the time and a person from the Ministry of Defence) made semi-public statements about the need of a "securitisation" approach towards migration and refugees. In such a context, handing responsibility for social integration of refugees back to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs would also be a welcome symbolic gesture to counter such ideas and ECRI invites the authorities to consider this seriously.
53. The authorities informed ECRI that since the beginning of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, some 10 000 Ukrainians received temporary protection status in Montenegro, of which around 7 000 were still in the country in September 2024. This is the first time that this type of protection category has been activated.⁴⁷ Temporary protection grants the right to residence, health care, education⁴⁸ and employment.
54. However, the ECRI delegation was informed by public officials and other interlocutors during the visit that Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection, although entitled to services from the public health fund, are currently not able to access the fund's services directly. There were no legal provisions in place for granting direct access. In addition, even though the relevant law has been amended, the necessary bye-law has not yet been put in place. The authorities informed ECRI that the technical link that can connect the public health fund with

⁴⁷ The Decision on granting temporary protection to persons from Ukraine came into force on 14 March 2022.

⁴⁸ As regards school education, most Ukrainian children reportedly engaged in online schooling offered by the Ukrainian authorities.

temporary protection status will be established soon, but no precise date was known. Admittedly, no temporary protection beneficiary was so far denied health care services because of this technical problem. However, cases often needed to be transferred to the Montenegrin Red Cross as “emergencies”, which caused delays, complications and uncertainties for the persons in need of medical care. ECRI trusts that the authorities will ensure as soon as possible the direct access of temporary protection beneficiaries to the public health fund and related health care services.

55. According to the authorities, there is no data available on the labour market participation rate of refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection or temporary protection beneficiaries. Such information would obviously be extremely useful in order to assess which additional support (e.g. language training, skills building) these categories of persons might need in order to have better chances to access the labour market. In this regard, ECRI also emphasises the need to have gender-disaggregated statistics in order to better understand possible gender-specific problems and barriers to employment.
56. ECRI recommends that the authorities carry out a survey on the labour market participation of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary or temporary protection in order to assess the possible support needs of these groups. Such a survey should include a gender-dimension and also look into particular vulnerabilities and barriers to employment faced by women with refugee or subsidiary or temporary protection status.

B. Roma and Egyptians

57. In the 2023 Montenegro census, 5 629 persons (0.90%) self-identified as Roma and 1 655 (0.27%) declared themselves to be Egyptians.⁴⁹ Both groups face very similar socio-economic circumstances, and public policies are usually designed and implemented for both of them together. Data provided by the authorities shows that the greatest level of ethnic distance is between Roma and Egyptians on the one hand, and numerically larger ethnic groups on the other.⁵⁰ As a result, Roma and Egyptians are the most exposed to social marginalisation and exclusion.
58. In 2021, the government adopted the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025, which was developed together with members of these groups.⁵¹ The Strategy’s measures cover a range of areas, in particular education, employment, housing, health, poverty, political and social participation, as well as culture and discrimination (antigypsyism).⁵² About half of the € 6.6 million for financing the implementation of the Strategy over its five-year period comes from the country’s budget, with the remainder coming from international donors, especially the EU.⁵³ According to the authorities, the implementation of the previous strategy for 2016-2020 had brought about successes in the area of education by increasing the enrolment and attendance rates among Roma and Egyptian pupils.⁵⁴

Education

59. While the Strategy indicates 16% of Roma and Egyptian children attending preschool in 2021, with an envisaged target of 23% in 2023 and 30% in 2025,⁵⁵

⁴⁹ MONSTAT (15 October 2024): 2.

⁵⁰ FCNM 2024: § 71.

⁵¹ Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025 (2021).

⁵² Government of Montenegro, Fourth Report submitted by Montenegro Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (8 December 2022): 20-22.

⁵³ Ibid.: 22.

⁵⁴ See also FCNM 2024: § 41.

⁵⁵ Government of Montenegro 2021: 52.

the authorities informed ECRI that very good progress has been made and in 2023, according to their figures, 61% of Roma and Egyptian children were enrolled in preschool education. Apparently, this is especially due to a recent expansion of capacity in several towns, in particular Nikšić, Budva, and Berane. Such an increase is indeed very positive, although *enrolment* and *attendance* rates may differ, at times considerably. It appears that good progress has also been made at primary school level, where the percentage of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled was 56% in 2021 and was foreseen in the Strategy to reach 65% in 2023 and 75% in 2025.⁵⁶ Indeed, the authorities informed ECRI that in 2023, already 88% of Roma and Egyptian children of the relevant age group were enrolled in primary schools. Again, it needs to be borne in mind that enrolment is a requirement but not a guarantee for attendance.

60. In the course of the visit, the ECRI delegation was informed by different interlocutors, including staff working in the education system, that attendance rates of Roma and Egyptian pupils are very often negatively affected by the difficult socio-economic conditions at home, which also had a particularly challenging impact during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as in some cases bullying by non-Roma/Egyptian pupils. For girls in 8th and 9th grades, early marriages are often the reason for dropping out of school.⁵⁷ Moreover, several interlocutors mentioned that even when Roma and Egyptian children complete primary education, the learning outcomes are frequently unsatisfactory, including very limited literacy skills. Such problems in primary education cannot be remedied by an exclusively quantitative approach (i.e. increasing enrolment rates) alone.
61. Problems with irregular attendance and low educational achievements are also strong contributing factors for the persistently low percentage of Roma and Egyptian children in secondary education, in spite of some improvements recently. These shortcomings in primary schools have a strong impact on their proclivity to continue education at secondary level: in 2021, only 3% of Roma and Egyptian children at the relevant age completed secondary education.⁵⁸ Although the authorities informed ECRI that this has increased since to 14% in 2023 (more than the 10% envisaged for that year in the Strategy), it remains very low and requires urgent attention, including by addressing the aforementioned problems encountered by this group already in primary education.
62. Education mediators for Roma and Egyptian communities have been reported to have a positive effect and have been appreciated by many members of these communities. Some 58% of surveyed Roma and Egyptians with a mediator working in their community found them to be “very useful”, and a further 16.5% found them to be useful “to some extent”.⁵⁹ In this regard, ECRI notes positively that the authorities plan to revise the existing ratio of one education mediator for 70 Roma pupils, which many – including school staff and managers met by the ECRI delegation during the 2024 visit to Montenegro – consider insufficient,⁶⁰ to a more appropriate ratio of 1:40 or even 1:35. ECRI strongly encourages the authorities to implement their plan to bring the ratio of education mediators for Roma pupils to a more appropriate level, in close consultation with school managers, teachers and other education professionals working with Roma and Egyptian pupils.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ According to the authorities, one or two awareness-raising seminars are now organised for members of the Roma and Egyptian communities per year, with the aim of conveying information about the negative impacts of this practice, including on educational outcomes for girls. See, in connection with early marriages, Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls.

⁵⁸ Government of Montenegro 2021: 51 and 52.

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 50. See also ECRI 2017: §§ 66-67.

⁶⁰ See also FCNM 2024: 34.

63. The authorities also informed ECRI that they operate a scholarship scheme for Roma pupils in secondary schools, whose parents receive € 60 per month. However, there have been regular complaints about payments not being made on time, making this support scheme less predictable and thereby reducing its effectiveness as an incentive for school attendance.⁶¹ In this regard, ECRI refers to the recommendation made by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities according to which the authorities should ensure that scholarship payments for Roma and Egyptian pupils in secondary education are made in a timely manner.⁶²
64. A particular problem concerns the de facto segregation of Roma and Egyptian children in education in the Konik settlement on the outskirts of Podgorica.⁶³ On the one hand, the primary school near Konik has a very high percentage of Roma/Egyptian children due to the neighbouring Konik area being nearly exclusively inhabited by Roma and Egyptians. Although it is a legal requirement not to exceed a ratio of 50:50 of pupils of Roma/Egyptian background and other ethnic groups, it is not always possible for the school to adhere to it due to frequent refusals from other schools to accept Roma and Egyptian pupils who should normally be transported there with buses from Konik. As concerns the system of bus transport for the purpose of de-segregation, unfortunately, ECRI was informed that bus transport was not organised in time for the beginning of the school year,⁶⁴ with the obvious negative results for Roma and Egyptian pupils' schooling. Clearly, both of the above-mentioned administrative (schools' refusals) and logistical (bus transport) problems need, should – and can, if the will to do so exists – be solved quickly, and ECRI strongly encourages the authorities to do so.
65. On the other hand, the preschool facility in the Konik area is attended only by Roma and Egyptian children, reflecting the de facto housing segregation and ethnic composition of Konik. According to information received by the ECRI delegation from various interlocutors met during the visit, the situation is made more complicated by the fact that the parents do not wish their children to be enrolled in preschool facilities further away as they consider the proximity to be very convenient, also given the young age of the children. The authorities themselves recognise that this is not a satisfactory situation but have so far not succeeded in proposing an adequate alternative. ECRI strongly encourages the authorities to address this problem, in cooperation with the parents concerned.
66. During its field visit, ECRI noted that the children of Roma and Egyptians not originally from Montenegro but displaced from Kosovo*, so-called non-domiciled Roma and Egyptians have considerably lower educational results than both non-Roma/Egyptians as well as so-called domiciled (originally from Montenegro) Roma and Egyptian pupils. This is in particular due to a strong language barrier – as members of the first group usually speak Albanian rather than Montenegrin or Serbian –, even higher levels of poverty and poor housing conditions, and little contact with the general population or, in many cases, the “domiciled” Roma and Egyptians. Thus, these pupils often have limited social interactions with children outside of their group, which intensifies their difficult situation. Education professionals met by the ECRI delegation pointed to the strong need for additional language classes and tutoring for these children to ensure that they can follow the standard curriculum, have the same opportunities to achieve positive educational results, and are adequately integrated and included into society.

⁶¹ Ibid.: 33-34.

⁶² Ibid.: 35.

⁶³ See also ECRI 2017: § 68 ff., and FCNM 2024: 34.

⁶⁴ See also FCNM 2024: 33.

67. ECRI recommends that the authorities provide adequate and sufficient Montenegrin language classes and additional tutoring options to pupils from displaced Roma and Egyptian families with insufficient knowledge of the Montenegrin language.

Employment

68. The unemployment rate among Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro remains high. A survey in 2020⁶⁵ found that 70.7% were without employment. Although this is a reduction from 84.4% and 81.9% in 2016 and 2018 respectively, it is still disproportionately high by comparison with the unemployment rate of the country's overall population which stood at 16.3% at the beginning of 2020.⁶⁶ The main reason is a lack of relevant skills due to long-standing problems with educational outcomes for Roma and Egyptians. Additional problems are also caused by antigypsyism and the resulting discrimination.⁶⁷
69. Many Roma and Egyptians are active in the informal sector. Among those with formal employment, certain low-paid job categories are most common, including street cleaners or rubbish collection workers. Given the often very low level of achievement in formal education, including literacy skills, Roma and Egyptians frequently face problems to meet minimum requirements for participation in vocational training or other skills building activities provided by the public employment office.
70. ECRI recommends that the authorities take resolute action to fight against the unemployment of Roma and Egyptians, notably by: i) providing more vocational training/skills building activities with low or no formal education entry thresholds to them, and ii) organising information events jointly with private sector employer networks to prevent and combat antigypsyism and related discrimination in recruitment.

Housing

71. The housing situation is still very difficult for many members of the Roma and Egyptian communities in Montenegro. Informal and temporary settlements, housing without adequate access to electricity, water, sewage network or other municipal infrastructure, as well as overcrowding, continue to be problems that urgently need to be addressed.⁶⁸ In its most recent opinion, the FCNM's Advisory Committee expressed the view that measures were needed to address the precarious housing situation of Roma and Egyptians in Bijela Gora and Ulcinj, including by improving the capacities and resources of local authorities in this field.⁶⁹ ECRI noted the same during its visit to Berane, where the *Riverside* settlement, mainly inhabited by "non-domiciled" Roma and Egyptians is frequently subject to flooding that renders the area unsuitable for habitation. In spite of the various efforts undertaken by the municipal authorities, a sustainable solution has still not been found.⁷⁰
72. Furthermore, many Roma and Egyptian families are living in settlements separated from areas inhabited by the non-Roma/Egyptian population. In 2020, a survey

⁶⁵ DeFacto Consultancy and Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, Socio-economic position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro, (2020); available at: https://mmp.gov.me/organizacija/OUZ_RAE/234675/NOVO-ISTRAZIVANJE-O-SOCIJALNOJ-INTEGRACIJI-ROMA-I-EGIPCANA.html

⁶⁶ Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights 2021: 55.

⁶⁷ Ibid.: 53; and Ombudsman 2023: 25.

⁶⁸ Institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro (Ombudsman), The Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro (2023): 22-23; and Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights 2021: 41-43.

⁶⁹ FCNM 2024: 6.

⁷⁰ See also Ombudsman 2023: 23-24.

found that some 42% of them still lived in Roma-/Egyptian-only settlements, indicating a high level of spatial segregation.⁷¹

73. Admittedly, the Strategy acknowledges the importance of improving the housing situation for Roma and Egyptians and includes two objectives and indicators for this.⁷² However, in the view of ECRI, these might be insufficiently ambitious. It also appears that there are considerable problems in translating strategic documents into improvements on the ground at local level.⁷³ Several interlocutors indicated that stronger support and increased resources for municipalities are required to address this problem effectively.

74. ECRI recommends that the authorities improve the housing situation for Roma and Egyptians living in informal settlements, as soon as possible and in consultation with the Roma and Egyptian communities concerned, either by improving the existing conditions or, if this is not possible, by providing adequate alternative accommodation. In this regard, the authorities should increase the support and resources for municipal authorities to address the problem of housing conditions for Roma and Egyptians.

Health care

75. According to the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025, members of these groups encounter numerous obstacles to accessing the health care system, such as lack of information and knowledge, language and financial barriers, unregistered residence and discrimination.⁷⁴ Roma and Egyptians have a low frequency of medical appointments (25.6% only twice per year and another 27.9% “rarely”⁷⁵), also due to discrimination from health care staff, with women generally reporting more health problems than men.⁷⁶ A particularly dire result of this situation is the fact that the life expectancy of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro is considerably lower than that of the overall population: in 2020 it was 55.9 years – nearly four years less than in 2018 and 20 years less than the national average.⁷⁷

76. ECRI notes that the authorities are aware of this problem and indicated that they have taken steps towards remedying the situation. These measures include increased outreach to provide gynaecological services to Roma and Egyptian women, the further roll out of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR), as well as Polio, vaccination programmes for Roma and Egyptian children, and the recruitment of health mediators, although a limited number and only project-based, working in Roma and Egyptian communities.⁷⁸ These activities are in line with achieving the Strategy’s operational objective no. 7 on improving health care for the Roma and Egyptian population, in particular by increasing the average life expectancy of members of the Roma and Egyptian population (performance indicator no. 1) and by reducing the extent of discrimination faced by members of these groups when accessing health care services (performance indicator no. 2).⁷⁹ While these are laudable activities, ECRI nevertheless considers that the goal for improved life expectancy stated in the Strategy, namely 58.9 years by 2025,⁸⁰ is

⁷¹ Ibid.: 22.

⁷² Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights 2021: 41, 46.

⁷³ See also FCNM 2024: 6.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights 2021: 59.

⁷⁵ Ibid.: 63.

⁷⁶ Ibid.: 62.

⁷⁷ Ibid.: 63. According to the World Health Organisation, the average life expectancy in Montenegro is 75.9 years (see: World Health Organisation, Data, Countries, Montenegro; available at: <https://data.who.int/countries/499>).

⁷⁸ See also FCNM 2024: 41.

⁷⁹ Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights 2021: 65.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 65.

insufficiently ambitious given the enormous gap between Roma and Egyptian communities and the general population in this regard and the fact that this target remains below the level already achieved in 2018.

77. In a case of discrimination in health care against Roma, on 18 October 2019, staff members of the Institute for Emergency Medical Assistance (IEMA) were said to have refused to provide medical assistance to a Roma woman. They allegedly refused to enter her room due to an unpleasant smell. Medical aid was urgently needed as the patient faced a life-threatening situation and subsequently passed away the following day.⁸¹ A complaint was submitted by the husband to the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman) and proceedings were opened by the Basic State Prosecutor's Office in Podgorica, based on a report against staff of the IEMA. However, the Ombudsman also noted that the prosecution service had not taken the relevant measures until he had initiated his own investigation.⁸² On 20 February 2024, the Ombudsman finally issued an opinion with a recommendation to the Basic State Prosecutor's Office to take procedural measures without further delay. The opinion states that more than four years have passed since the event and that the criminal proceedings are still ongoing, concluding that they are taking an unreasonably long time, were ineffective, and could not be considered as in line with the procedural-legal aspect of Art. 2 of the ECHR. In its opinion, the Ombudsman emphasises the fact that there is a suspicion that the patient's life was knowingly endangered by denying access to emergency medical treatment that could have saved her life, especially considering the fact that she belonged to a vulnerable group.⁸³ The Ombudsman also noted that the IEMA took disciplinary measures against one of the doctors, who was fined 20% of her monthly salary for a period of three months.⁸⁴
78. ECRI recommends that the authorities take strong and effective measures to ensure equal treatment and inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the area of health by: i) closing the life expectancy gap between them and the general population as soon as possible; ii) substantially increase the number of health mediators working in Roma and Egyptian communities; iii) ensuring that discrimination against Roma and Egyptians in health care institutions does not occur, notably by reiterating at regular intervals to all health care staff their duty to provide the relevant treatment to everyone in need, irrespective of national or ethnic origin, and providing all staff working in such institutions with suitable training on countering antigypsyism and related discrimination. In this context, the authorities should take inspiration from General Recommendation No. 37 on Racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to health of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

*Displaced Roma and Egyptians from Kosovo**

79. Reports clearly indicate that many members of the Roma and Egyptian communities (as well as persons self-identifying as Ashkali), who arrived as internally displaced persons from Kosovo* during and after the 1998-1999 war, face a particularly difficult situation.⁸⁵ This group is characterised by a number of features that puts them at a disadvantage even when compared to Roma and Egyptians originating from Montenegro. The two groups are often differentiated by referring to them as either “domiciled” or “non-domiciled” Roma and Egyptians. However, this terminology can also be misleading as many Roma and Egyptians from Kosovo* have resided in Montenegro for some 25 years now. Nevertheless, some of them do not have a regularised status in the country (neither citizenship

⁸¹ Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro (Ombudsman), Opinion (20 February 2024).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Decision No. 7214 of 12 June 2020.

⁸⁵ See also FCNM 2024: 14.

nor refugee status or any other residence permit), and often do not have and cannot obtain all the necessary documents due to non-cooperation between the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina.

80. This lack of status and documents causes members of the “non-domiciled” Roma and Egyptians severe problems in integrating into the society of Montenegro and often they are disadvantaged or excluded from accessing full social rights in the areas of health care, employment or social protection. The Montenegrin authorities informed ECRI that in spite of their lack of status, persons belonging to this group have nevertheless de facto access to basic health care (but not the full range available to regular residents) and that their children are enrolled in schools (but no end-of-year certificates can be issued to them). In addition, many of them, especially Egyptians (and Ashkali), speak Albanian as mother tongue, which also renders communication with and integration into the “domiciled” Roma and Egyptian community of Montenegro, whose members mostly speak Romani, Montenegrin or Serbian as mother tongue, difficult.
81. The authorities informed ECRI that around 90% of the original 5 000 displaced Roma and Egyptians from Kosovo* have already been registered and regularised over the previous decade. Several hundred are at a stage of “pre-registration”. Between May and July 2024, the authorities conducted a further survey among families and households belonging to the “non-domiciled” Roma and Egyptian community. Through this survey, the authorities gained a better understanding of the situation of this group and identified additional, previously unknown, persons. According to the authorities, the purpose of this exercise was also to prepare a process of registration for the remaining unregistered displaced Roma and Egyptians from Kosovo* in order to somehow regularise their residence status and provide better access to social services and integration/inclusion measures for these persons. A further survey and completion of registration of all displaced Roma and Egyptians (and Ashkali) from Kosovo* and their children is still outstanding and should be carried out.
82. ECRI recommends, as a matter of priority, that the authorities complete the registration of all displaced Roma and Egyptians (as well as persons self-identifying as Ashkali) from Kosovo* present in Montenegro, including their children.

INTERIM FOLLOW-UP RECOMMENDATIONS

The two specific recommendations for which ECRI requests priority implementation from the authorities of Montenegro are the following:

- (§ 5) ECRI recommends that the authorities ensure the full independence of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman), in particular in the areas of human resource recruitment and financial management, in line with ECRI's revised General Policy Recommendation No. 2 on equality bodies.
- (§ 82) ECRI recommends that the authorities complete the registration of all displaced Roma and Egyptians (as well as persons self-identifying as Ashkali) from Kosovo* present in Montenegro, including their children.

A process of interim follow-up for these two recommendations will be conducted by ECRI no later than two years following the publication of this report

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The position of the recommendations in the text of the report is shown in parentheses.

1. (§5) ECRI recommends, as a matter of priority, that the authorities ensure the full independence of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsman), in particular in the areas of human resource recruitment and financial management, in line with ECRI's revised General Policy Recommendation No. 2 on equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level.
2. (§ 10) ECRI recommends that the authorities continue and expand high school exchanges in the country with the aim of facilitating encounters and contacts between pupils belonging to different historical ethnic, linguistic or religious communities. The authorities should also involve the existing religious communities in order to facilitate visits of school groups to places of worship so as to promote tolerance and respect for diversity.
3. (§ 19) ECRI recommends that the authorities ensure the full implementation of the Strategic document for improving the quality of life of LGBTI persons in Montenegro for the period 2024-2028. The authorities should in particular provide the necessary funding to carry out all envisaged activities and build the capacity of relevant public bodies at all levels (local and national) as well as of civil society actors involved in the implementation process.
4. (§ 22) ECRI recommends that the authorities complete the process of amending existing legislation and issuing necessary secondary legislation in the context of the Law on Life Partnership of Same-Sex Persons (2020) without further delay.
5. (§ 25) ECRI recommends that the authorities take action to ensure the enjoyment of the right of intersex persons to bodily integrity by developing and distributing guidance to medical practitioners on how to provide support to intersex children and their parents and to avoid any surgery on intersex children that is not medically necessary. In doing so, the authorities should take inspiration from ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 17 on preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons and from other relevant international standards.
6. (§ 29) ECRI recommends that the authorities, without interfering in the internal affairs of religious communities, facilitate and promote interreligious dialogue in order to strengthen joint activities against intolerance and hatred.
7. (§ 35) ECRI recommends that the authorities promote among politicians and high-ranking government officials the active condemnation of, and counter speech to racist and anti-LGBTI hate speech. In addition, the authorities should also promote such responses from other parts of society, including leaders in the areas of culture, religion, business, media and sports. In this regard, the authorities should take inspiration from ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech and the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech. In this connection, all political parties should also be encouraged to sign to the Charter of European political parties for a non-racist and inclusive society as endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in its Resolution 2443 (2022).
8. (§ 43) ECRI recommends that the authorities fully reactivate the LGBTI liaison unit in the national police, consider establishing similar units or posts to reach out to other communities affected by hate-motivated violence, and ensure that the officers working in these units receive the necessary training.
9. (§ 47) ECRI recommends that the authorities evaluate the training activities on hate crime and, based on the evaluation's findings, continue and expand them in line with an emphasis on current hate crime trends in the country, which should be

analysed using improved statistics that should routinely indicate the hate motivation or other hate element.

10. (§ 56) ECRI recommends that the authorities carry out a survey on the labour market participation of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary or temporary protection in order to assess the possible support needs of these groups. Such a survey should include a gender-dimension and also look into particular vulnerabilities and barriers to employment faced by women with refugee or subsidiary or temporary protection status.
 11. (§ 67) ECRI recommends that the authorities provide adequate and sufficient Montenegrin language classes and additional tutoring options to pupils from displaced Roma and Egyptian families with insufficient knowledge of the Montenegrin language.
 12. (§ 70) ECRI recommends that the authorities take resolute action to fight against the unemployment of Roma and Egyptians, notably by: i) providing more vocational training/skills building activities with low or no formal education entry thresholds to them, and ii) organising information events jointly with private sector employer networks to prevent and combat antigypsyism and related discrimination in recruitment.
 13. (§ 74) ECRI recommends that the authorities improve the housing situation for Roma and Egyptians living in informal settlements, as soon as possible and in consultation with the Roma and Egyptian communities concerned, either by improving the existing conditions or, if this is not possible, by providing adequate alternative accommodation. In this regard, the authorities should increase the support and resources for municipal authorities to address the problem of housing conditions for Roma and Egyptians.
 14. (§ 78) ECRI recommends that the authorities take strong and effective measures to ensure equal treatment and inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the area of health by: i) closing the life expectancy gap between them and the general population as soon as possible; ii) substantially increase the number of health mediators working in Roma and Egyptian communities; iii) ensuring that discrimination against Roma and Egyptians in health care institutions does not occur, notably by reiterating at regular intervals to all health care staff their duty to provide the relevant treatment to everyone in need, irrespective of national or ethnic origin, and providing all staff working in such institutions with suitable training on countering antigypsyism and related discrimination. In this context, the authorities should take inspiration from General Recommendation No. 37 on Racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to health of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).
 15. (§ 82) ECRI recommends, as a matter of priority, that the authorities complete the registration of all displaced Roma and Egyptians (as well as persons self-identifying as Ashkali) from Kosovo* present in Montenegro, including their children.
-

BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography lists the main published sources used during the examination of the situation in Montenegro. It should not be considered as an exhaustive list of all sources of information available to ECRI during the preparation of the report.

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

1. ECRI (2020), Conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Montenegro subject to interim follow-up, CRI(2020)26.
2. ECRI (2017), Second report on Montenegro, CRI(2017)37.
3. ECRI (2015), Conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Montenegro subject to interim follow-up, CRICRI(2015)7.
4. ECRI (2012), Report on Montenegro, CRI(2012)5.
5. ECRI (1996), [General Policy Recommendation No. 1](#): Combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance, CRI(96)43.
6. ECRI (2018), [General Policy Recommendation No. 2 \(revised\)](#): Equality bodies to combat racism and intolerance at national level, CRI(2018)06.
7. ECRI (1998a), [General Policy Recommendation No. 3](#): Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies, CRI(98)29.
8. ECRI (1998b), [General Policy Recommendation No. 4](#): National surveys on the experience and perception of discrimination and racism from the point of view of potential victims, CRI(98)30.
9. ECRI (2022a), [General Policy Recommendation No. 5 \(revised\)](#): Preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination, CRI(2022)6.
10. ECRI (2001), [General Policy Recommendation No. 6](#): Combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and antisemitic material via the Internet, CRI(2001)1.
11. ECRI (2003), [General Policy Recommendation No. 7](#): National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, CRI(2003)8rev, as amended in 2017.
12. ECRI (2004), [General Policy Recommendation No. 8](#): Combating racism while fighting terrorism, CRI(2004)26.
13. ECRI (2021b), [General Policy Recommendation No. 9 \(revised\)](#): Preventing and Combating Antisemitism, CRI(2021)28.
14. ECRI (2007a), [General Policy Recommendation No. 10](#): Combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education, CRI(2007)6.
15. ECRI (2007b), [General Policy Recommendation No. 11](#): Combating racism and racial discrimination in policing, CRI(2007)39.
16. ECRI (2009), [General Policy Recommendation No. 12](#): Combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport, CRI(2009)5.
17. ECRI (2011), [General Policy Recommendation No. 13](#): Combating antigypsyism and discrimination against Roma, CRI(2011)37rev, as amended in 2020.
18. ECRI (2012), [General Policy Recommendation No. 14](#): Combating racism and racial discrimination in employment, 2012, CRI(2012)48.
19. ECRI (2016a), [General Policy Recommendation No. 15](#): Combating Hate Speech, CRI(2016)15.
20. ECRI (2016b), [General Policy Recommendation No. 16](#): Safeguarding irregularly present migrants from discrimination, CRI(2016)16.
21. ECRI (2023) [General Policy Recommendation No. 17](#): Preventing and combating intolerance and discrimination against LGBTI persons.
22. ECRI (2022b), [Statement](#) of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on the consequences of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine (adopted at its 88th plenary meeting, 29 March-1 April 2022).
23. ECRI (2022c), [ECRI Glossary](#).

Other sources (listed in alphabetical order)

24. Amnesty International (2023), [Human rights in Montenegro Amnesty International](#).
25. AP (2022, October 7), [Orthodox Church leads protest against Montenegro pride | AP News](#).
26. Balkan Insight (2022, October 4), [Orthodox Christians to Rally Against LGBT Pride March in Montenegro | Balkan Insight](#).

27. Balkan Insight (2023, May 31), [Montenegrin Prosecution Investigates Football Fans Over Hate Chants | Balkan Insight](#).
28. [Balkan Insight \(2024, July 15\), LGBT Pride and Euro 2024 Become Focus for Online Hate Speech | Balkan Insight](#).
29. CEDEM / Council of Europe (2022), Patterns and Degree of Discrimination in Montenegro
30. Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) (2024), [Fourth Opinion on Montenegro](#), ACFC/OP/IV(2024)1.
31. Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2022), Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech.
32. Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights (2011), Discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity in Europe, 2nd edition.
33. Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights (2024, March 22), [Montenegro: Seize the moment to strengthen protection of human rights - Commissioner for Human Rights \(coe.int\)](#).
34. Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers (2010), Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.
35. Council of Europe Office in Podgorica (2023, May 4), Level of discrimination against Roma and Egyptians still high in Montenegro, says Ombudsperson's report, 4 May 2023. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/podgorica/-/level-of-discrimination-against-roma-and-egyptians-still-high-in-montenegro-says-ombudsperson-s-report>.
36. DeFacto Consultancy and Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, Socio-economic position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro, (2020); available at: https://mmp.gov.me/organizacija/OUZ_RAE/234675/NOVO-ISTRAZIVANJE-O-SOCIJALNOJ-INTEGRACIJI-ROMA-I-EGIPcANA.html.
37. Equinet, [Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro \(Ombudsman\) – Equinet \(equineteurope.org\)](#).
38. [European Commission \(2023, November 8\)](#), Commission staff working document, Montenegro 2023 Report, SWD(2023) 694 final.
39. European Network of Legal Experts on gender equality and non-discrimination (2022), Country Report, Montenegro, <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/5737-montenegro-country-report-non-discrimination-2022-1-38-mb>
40. Government of Montenegro (2019, March 2), The quality of life of LGBTI persons continues to improve through a new strategic document, <https://www.gov.me/en/article/201807--the-quality-of-life-of-lgbt-persons-continues-to-improve-through-a-new-strategic-document>.
41. Government of Montenegro (2022, December 8), Fourth Report submitted by Montenegro Pursuant to Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
42. Human Rights Action (2024, February 28), Children's Right to Human Rights Education in Montenegro: The Subject of Civic Education Should Once Again be Made Compulsory, [Children's Right to Human Rights Education in Montenegro: The Subject of Civic Education Should Once Again be Made Compulsory – HRA \(hraction.org\)](#).
43. Human Rights Action (2023, July 11), [28 years since the genocide in Srebrenica – Montenegro to establish memorial day – HRA \(hraction.org\)](#).
44. Institution of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro (Ombudsman) (2023, April), The Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro through the prism of the operations of the protector of human rights and freedoms of Montenegro and the status observed during field visits.
45. International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), [IHRA Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Persecution and Genocide of the Roma during the Nazi Era](#).
46. International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) Youth & Student Organisation IGLYO (2022) LGBTQI Inclusive Education Report.
47. Marković, M. and Perry, J. (2021), Analysis and recommendation regarding legislation, investigation and prosecution, and data collection on hate crime, hate speech and discrimination in Montenegro.
48. Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights (2021), Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025.
49. MONSTAT (15 October 2024), Release 135/2024 - The 2023 Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings - Population of Montenegro by National, i.e. Ethnical Affiliation, Religion, Mother Tongue, and Language a Person Usually Speaks.
50. Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Hate crime report - National frameworks to address hate crime in Montenegro, <https://hatecrime.osce.org/national-frameworks-montenegro#capacityBuilding>.

51. OSCE/ODIHR, Hate crime report - Montenegro; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro>.
52. OSCE/ODIHR, Montenegro Hate Crime Report 2023.
53. OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2021; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2021>.
54. OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2020; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2020>.
55. OSCE/ODIHR Hate crime data – Montenegro, 2019; available at: <https://hatecrime.osce.org/montenegro?year=2019>.
56. Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro (Ombudsman) (2024, February 20), Opinion.
57. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (Rferl.org) (2023, August 14), [Barred From The Pool, Doused With Alcohol: Muslims Targeted At Montenegrin Beach Resorts \(rferl.org\)](https://www.rferl.org/article/Barred-From-The-Pool-Doused-With-Alcohol-Muslims-Targeted-At-Montenegrin-Beach-Resorts/2912478)
58. ROMACTED Programme: Promoting Good Governance and Roma Empowerment At Local Level. 2019 <https://rm.coe.int/service-analysis-montenegro-romacted/1680a01524>
59. UNHCR (2024, July 1) Protection Brief – refugees and asylum seekers in Montenegro.
60. UNHCR (2024, July 1), Protection Brief – Ukrainian Refugees in Montenegro.
61. UNICEF (2021, February), Multidimensional Child Poverty Study in Montenegro: Understanding the Complex Realities of Children in Poverty Using a Mixed-Method Approach.
62. Vijesti (2023, May 14), Chances are less in the ghetto: Roma and Egyptians are isolated in Montenegro, Vijesti. <https://en.vijesti.me/news-b/society/656503/the-chances-are-less-in-the-Roma-ghetto-and-the-Egyptians-are-isolated-in-Montenegro> .
63. Vuković, M. (2023), Evaluation of Implementation of the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of LGBTI Persons in Montenegro 2019-2023.
64. World Health Organisation, Data, Countries, Montenegro; available at: <https://data.who.int/countries/499>.

ECRI Secretariat
Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity
Council of Europe
Tel.: +33 (0) 3 90 21 46 62
E-mail: ecri@coe.int

www.coe.int/ecri

 @ECRI_CoE

www.coe.int

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is a unique human rights monitoring body which specialises in questions relating to the fight against racism, discrimination (on grounds of “race”, ethnic/national origin, colour, citizenship, religion, language, sexual orientation and gender identity), xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance in Europe; it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.