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PRESS RELEASE

ECRI criticises, the Romanian Government adopts the policy of "hiding garbage under the rug"

On 3 June 2014, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published its fourth monitoring report¹ ECRI Romania. This appendix report includes Romanian Government's views of the ECRI's analysis and proposals. A democratic and responsible state should take criticism from a body of the Council of Europe in order to take advantage of its expertise and implement the recommendations issued by it. On the contrary, the Romanian Government has chosen to uphold and justify discriminatory practices.

In the Annex, the Government argues that the decision to treat pregnant Roma women in separate wards was taken only in isolated cases, for the reasons of "hygiene" or "refusal of medical treatment"². This government statement reveals the implicit yet profound racism underlying the decision, which only confirms the conclusions of ECRI.

ECRI had included in the report some example of cases, in order to identify and explore the systemic problems which Roma in Romania face. The ECRI took over 14 cases reported by Romani CRISS and made reference to 17 of the observations and criticisms made by Romani CRISS³.

The government has responded to these cases in the same discriminatory tone. They have argued that the Roma receive at least the minimum provision of health services, regardless of their quality, whether the Roma are insured or uninsured. In other words, pregnant Roma women should be pleased with the generosity of the state rather than criticize medical practices such as segregation in wards of hospitals. We also wish to emphasize the fact that not only uninsured Roma receive the minimum package of health services, all Romanian citizens who are in the same situation are able to benefit from these services as well.

The Government believes that some cases should not be mentioned in the report, because they create a false image of "*measures taken by the Government of Romania to achieve a better inclusion of Roma*"⁴. One such case is the one in Baia Mare. There, Roma were evicted and by the municipality, and resettled in a former factory, where toxic substances were still present at the time of relocation⁵. We remind the fact that the Mayor of Baia Mare has been

1 <http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Romania/ROM-CbC-IV-2014-019-ENG.pdf>

2 ECRI, Report regarding Romania, Par. 131

3 Comments written by Romani CRISS on the fourth monitoring cycle of

ECRI regarding Romania: http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/Romani%20CRISS_ECRI%20report.pdf

Bibliography Report ECRI : 1) Romani CRISS – Roma Centre for Social Interventions and Studies and Roma

Civic Alliance of Romania, Shadow report for the committee on the elimination of racial discrimination, 27 July 2010.

4 ECRI, Report regarding Romania, Par. 144

5 Romani CRISS Press release on the case:

<http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/Comunicat%20Baia%20Mare.pdf>

sanctioned by the National Council for Combating Discrimination for building a wall that separates a Roma community from the rest of the town⁶.

The cases mentioned in the report are symptomatic of broader issues, yet the Romanian Government lacks the willingness to acknowledge the problems. Rather, it prefers to support discriminatory actions such as those of the mayor of Baia Mare. Furthermore, it is also willing to promote discriminatory practices, as indicated by its response to the pattern of extremely racist segregation in hospitals.

The comments written by Romani CRISS on the fourth cycle monitoring Romania by ECR are available in English on the website of the organization:

http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/Romani%20CRISS_ECRI%20report.pdf

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6 <http://www.mediafax.ro/social/iccj-cncd-l-a-sanctionat-corect-pe-primarul-chereches-pentru-zidul-din-baia-mare-care-desparteaza-romilor-de-restul-orasului-11426426>.