Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1968 (2014)[1]
Final version

Tackling racism in the police

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Racism does not spare any level of society and no institution appears immune to racism. The police is no exception. Racism can be present in the attitudes or behaviour of police officers, in their interaction with the population or with other officers. It can also be found in rules and regulations applied by the police, which would in that case qualify as institutional racism.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly is particularly concerned about racial profiling. This is the use by the police, with no objective and reasonable justification, of grounds such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin for control, surveillance or investigation activities. Racist behaviour and practices within the police against visible minorities have a negative impact on public opinion and can increase stereotyping and prejudice.

3. Considering that the acknowledgement of the existence of a problem is the first step towards its solution, the Assembly encourages all member States to look at the situation in their respective countries and have the courage to acknowledge and address, when relevant, the existence of racism in the police. There can be no impunity for manifestations of racism within or by the police and police officers must be held accountable individually for their behaviour.

4. Few Council of Europe member States have established independent police complaints mechanisms. Effective and independent investigations of racist crimes should be conducted and treated as a priority in order to maintain trust in the police and to encourage reporting of such crimes.

5. The Assembly is convinced that concrete change will not happen if there is no change in mindset and that political will can change cultural attitudes within the police. In addition, diversity training and lifelong learning contribute to ensuring that the police reflects and understands the population it serves. The Assembly acknowledges the difficulties and challenges faced by police officers in their daily work. They represent a link between the law and the population, which should have a high level of trust in them and never hesitate to report violence, including racist violence.

6. The Assembly recalls Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2001)10 on a European code of police ethics and encourages the wide application of its principles. It also recalls the work of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and its General Policy Recommendation No. 11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing, which provides guidelines on ways to prevent racial discrimination and prohibit racial profiling.

7. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:

7.1. with regard to preventing racism in the police:

7.1.1. review existing legislation and practices of the police with a view to identifying and modifying those that might have a racist connotation;

7.1.2. ask police forces which have not yet done so to adopt an internal code of conduct with regard to the prevention of racism;

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1. *Assembly debate* on 28 January 2014 (4th Sitting) (see Doc. 13384, report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr David Davies). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 28 January 2014 (4th Sitting).

7.1.3. encourage diversity in police recruitment, including targets also for senior ranks;

7.1.4. provide training following recruitment and throughout each individual's career on preventing and combating racism and racial discrimination, in addition to diversity training;

7.1.5. provide, when possible and relevant, language training classes to police officers to allow them to interact and exchange with the population they serve;

7.1.6. carry out research and collect information on racist incidents in the police, including the police reaction to acts of racism by police officers so as to monitor the situation and ensure an appropriate institutional response;

7.1.7. provide the police with sufficient resources to work in satisfactory conditions; take specific measures to ensure that police officers have absolute respect for the rights of the persons they deal with;

7.1.8. encourage the exchange of good practices between police forces in preventing racism;

7.2. with regard to condemning racism and prosecuting racist behaviour or incidents in the police:

7.2.1. urge political leaders and senior officers of the police forces to publicly condemn any form of racial discrimination;

7.2.2. establish independent police complaints mechanisms where they do not yet exist, allocate appropriate means for their functioning and ensure that sanctions are imposed on police officers following a racist incident;

7.2.3. investigate in a prompt, thorough, effective and impartial manner all allegations of racial discrimination, including by the police;

7.2.4. ask police officers to adopt a public profile and attitude, including on social networks, corresponding to the fundamental values of the police;

7.3. with regard to enhancing trust in the police:

7.3.1. implement the provisions of ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing;

7.3.2. clearly define racial profiling, ensure its prohibition and provide specific training on identity checks to all police officers;

7.3.3. ensure that police officers wear a visible form of identification, such as identity numbers, at all times;

7.3.4. establish the practice of filling out stop forms following identity checks and searches, where it does not yet exist;

7.3.5. monitor identity checks and search operations;

7.3.6. encourage the establishment of police community liaison officers, where they do not yet exist;

7.3.7. encourage members of parliament and the police to enhance their interaction through regular consultations, including through appropriate parliamentary mechanisms.

8. The Assembly calls on civil society representatives to strengthen their dialogue with the police through regular consultations and other appropriate means.