Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Institutional racism of law enforcement authorities against Roma and Travellers

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Racism in police forces and racist behaviour in police interactions with members of the general public have been described by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) as an ongoing problem. Its monitoring work and that of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, regularly throw light on human rights violations committed against Roma and Travellers by members of law enforcement authorities throughout Europe.

The death of Romani man Stanislas Tomáš while in police custody in the Czech Republic in June 2021, in circumstances that shared similarities with the killing of George Floyd in the United States in May 2020, should have prompted widespread outrage. Yet the Council of Europe was one of only a few institutional voices raised to call for an urgent, thorough and independent investigation into his death. More recently, blatant discrimination by law enforcement officials against Romani refugees fleeing Ukraine has been reported in several member States.

Harassment, marginalisation, provocation and violent raids form part of the shared experience of law enforcement authorities for many Roma and Travellers. These constitute clear human rights violations, while also destroying the trust of Roma and Travellers in authorities that should protect their safety and security.

Council of Europe member States must work harder to prevent such violations, to hold accountable all those who commit them, and to dismantle the systems, institutional cultures and prevailing climate of antigypsyism that enable such practices to persist. They must learn from and build on the good practices being developed and implemented in some States. The Parliamentary Assembly must take up this issue, remind member States of their obligations in this field, and promote the sharing of good practices.