

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BULLETIN**  
**1/2007**

**1. POLICIES, INITIATIVES AND PUBLIC DISCOURSE**

**Ban on broadcasting a pre-election video spot for inciting ethnic and racial intolerance**

On 11.05.2007 the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) adopted a decision recommending all Bulgarian TV channels not to broadcast a video spot produced by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Bulgarian National Movement (IMRO-Bulgaria). According to the CEC the video incited national, political, ethnic, religious and racial intolerance. The spot was launched as part of the campaign preceding the first elections of Members of the European Parliament in Bulgaria. Commenting on the decision the leader of IMRO-Bulgaria accused the CEC of an attempt for political censorship.

<http://www.vmro.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=208> (in Bulgarian)

## 2. LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AND AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS

### **Amendments to the internal regulations of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination**

In March 2007 the Commission for Protection against Discrimination adopted amendments to its internal regulation entitled Rules on the Organisation and Activity of the Commission for Protection from Discrimination. The amendments were published in State Gazette No. 28 of 3.04.2007 and became effective on 7.04.2007. The main change refers to the regional representatives of the commission. Before the amendments the commission had only an opportunity to appoint territorial representatives and the latter were part of its general administration, i.e. they had only administrative and technical responsibilities. Now the commission is obliged to have regional representatives. Their status was also changed so they are no longer part of the general administration but are included in the specialised administration, i.e. they could work on the investigation of complaints. The changes also provided for an increase in the total number of the personnel of the commission from 42 to 52 persons.

<http://lex.bg/laws/ldoc.php?IDNA=2135506845> (in Bulgarian)

### 3. RESEARCH

#### **Report *Roma in Bulgaria – New Challenges* by Friedrich Ebert Foundation**

The report *Roma in Bulgaria – New Challenges* published by Friedrich Ebert Foundation concludes that 64 per cent of the Bulgarians feel antipathy against representatives of the Roma population, 72 per cent would not live in the same neighbourhood with Roma, and 46 per cent admit that they would not work together with Roma. There are very high levels of mistrust and suspiciousness towards the Roma population in general. Only 7 per cent admit that they like Roma as ‘open-minded’ people. About 69 per cent share the opinion that it is absolutely unacceptable to have Roma representatives at governmental or municipal positions. On the other hand, the persons belonging to the Roma community find it very important their children to be raised and brought up in their family environment, so they could obey their society’s customs. Many of them even consider school as a way for assimilation. When it comes to education, almost every fifth adult person is illiterate, 80 per cent of them have only elementary school or even lower education. The percentage of the ones with higher education is close to zero. ‘If these trends in the field of education continue in the next 15 years, the chances that half of the Roma population will remain illiterate are very high. And this would be a menace not only for the Roma but also for the whole society’ says Dr. Maria Simeonova, director of the research.

[http://www.fes.bg/en/PressRelease/2007/03\\_12\\_bta\\_news.html](http://www.fes.bg/en/PressRelease/2007/03_12_bta_news.html) (in Bulgarian)

#### **Study on police stops of minorities in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain by the Open Society Justice Initiative**

On 19.04.2007 the Open Society Justice Initiative released a new book examining ethnic profiling by police in Europe. Ethnic profiling is a violation of fundamental human rights norms, but this widespread practice is little understood and concrete data are scarce. The report, entitled *I Can Stop and Search Whoever I Want – Police Stops of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain* fills major gaps in what is known about ethnic profiling by police – a practice that has not been expressly outlawed by any European government. Using quantitative data as well as interviews with police officers and members of minority groups, the book looks closely at the practice in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain – three countries whose significant minority populations make them the face of a changing Europe. ‘Ethnic profiling by police in Europe is only beginning to be acknowledged as a significant problem,’ said James A. Goldston, Executive Director of the Open Society Justice Initiative. ‘But the dynamics of the problem need to be understood before it can be effectively addressed. This study was designed to provide an educational foundation for action’. Combining statistical analyses, first-person accounts and policy recommendations, the report makes clear that ethnic profiling occurs in all three countries and is discriminatory and ineffective in combating crime. It recommends concrete steps to improve policing and curb this pernicious practice.

[http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res\\_id=103735&preprint=1](http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=103735&preprint=1)

#### 4. Official / unofficial statistical data

##### **Study by the the Commission for Protection from Discrimination**

A national study done by the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (the Bulgarian equality body) shows that the Roma issue is the main discrimination problem in Bulgaria. According to the conclusions of this inquiry the Bulgarian society is in serious jeopardy of an ethnic tension as a result of the feeling of discrimination. It is not really 'Bulgarians against Turks' but more likely 'Roma against everyone else'. The situation with the young generation of Roma is very alarming – almost 40 per cent of the children drop out of school and they would not have any chances of finding a job later on. This vicious circle condemns them to misery and no chances of getting out of the ghetto. All of this will bring some more ethnic intolerance and discrimination. Additional factor to the existing situation is the presence of some nationalistic movements. At the same time there are not many effective anti-discrimination laws. The main conclusions are that this is a very serious and dangerous process of ignoring a social community, which considers itself highly discriminated.

[http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=38](http://www.kzd-nondiscrimination.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=38) (in Bulgarian)

## 5. Upcoming events

N/A