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**CROATIA: DESPITE PROGRESS, DISCRIMINATION PERSISTS AGAINST NATIONAL MINORITIES SUCH AS SERBS AND ROMA, SAYS NATIONAL MINORITIES COMMITTEE**

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Council of Europe (10 June 2021)

Strasbourg

In its Fifth Opinion on Croatia, the Council of Europes Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities acknowledges that the countrys legislative framework for national minorities is overall in conformity with the provisions of the Framework Convention. Indeed, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has been enacted and structures to promote equal treatment and address individual cases of discrimination at national and regional levels are in place (See also the French version of the report and a summary of the Opinions main findings in Croatian).

But discrimination towards persons belonging to certain groups persists, notably for Roma and Serb national minorities, including returnees. Since the last report on Croatia, the Opinion also notes an increase in hate crime and incidents of hate speech in the media and in political discourse. Furthermore, a surge in radical nationalism has had an overall negative impact on the enjoyment of minority rights, particularly in heavily affected post-conflict areas. In this respect, the Opinion welcomes a reconciliation process that occurred in the summer of 2020 as the Croatian Deputy Prime Minister, who belongs to the Serb national minority, participated in a commemoration of the liberation of Croatias territory, and the mourning of the Serb victims of the 1991-1995 war by the Croatian Prime Minister and other members of his cabinet.

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