The Equal Rights Trust

Alternative report submitted to the 90th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in relation to the combined twenty first to twenty third reports of

the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Statement of Interest

1. The Equal Rights Trust (the Trust) submits this alternative report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (the Committee) commenting on the sixth periodic report of the United Kingdom.

2. The Equal Rights Trust is an independent international organisation combating discrimination and advancing equality worldwide. The Trust promotes a unified human rights framework on equality, focusing on the complex relationships between different types of disadvantage and developing strategies for translating the principles of equality into practice.

3. The Equal Rights Trust has been involved in promoting the rights to equality and non-discrimination in the United Kingdom since 2007. In particular, the Trust has consistently advocated for the strengthening of legislation in order to improve protection of the rights to equality and non-discrimination. This has included proposing amendments to the Equality Act 2010 and challenging amendments to this Act and to other laws which would weaken protections already enshrined in law. In addition, in 2015, the Trust engaged in a project working with Roma[1] organisations and statutory agencies to identify patterns of discrimination affecting Roma individuals and communities and develop proposals for policy responses to these problems.

4. This submission focuses on the extent to which the United Kingdom has met its obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right of all persons to non-discrimination on grounds of race. The report examines the particular patterns of discrimination and disadvantage suffered by the Roma community in the United Kingdom. As noted, in 2015, the Trust undertook a series of consultation meetings and workshops in the areas of the United Kingdom with some of the largest concentrations of Roma in the UK: London, Greater Manchester, the Midlands and South Yorkshire. Our wider research in the context of this project also identified other evidence of discrimination against migrant Roma in violation of the UK's obligations under the Convention. This submission presents the

[1] The UK is home to distinct Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (including immigrant Roma from Eastern Europe), communities each of which has its different culture and identity. Official documents in the UK usually refer to these communities as GRT (Gypsies, Roma and Travellers) (See for example: Department for Education, *Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: final report*, Research Report DFE-RR043, 2010, "Throughout the report, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller is used as an umbrella term embracing all Gypsy and Traveller groups as well as Roma from Eastern and Central Europe. Within this, Roma is a generic term used to describe many different groups of Romani people including, for example, Gypsies, Tsiganes, Sinti Kalé, and Romanichal". In this submission, we will use this acronym when all three groups are referred to. By contrast, our references to "Roma" refer to members of the migrant Roma community – those who originate in other European countries and whose families have immigrated to the United Kingdom at some point in the past.

findings of these consultation meetings and our wider research. The submission then goes on to examine the recent increase in xenophobia, racist hate speech and racism in the United Kingdom, in particular following the outcome of the referendum on membership of the European Union.

5. The submission relies upon a number of the Committee's interpretations of the Convention, including in particular General Recommendation No. 27 on Discrimination Against the Roma. In addition, it relies upon the Declaration of Principles on Equality,[2] a document of international best practice on equality. The Declaration was drafted and adopted in 2008 by 128 prominent human rights and equality advocates and experts, and has been described as "the current international understanding of Principles on Equality".[3] It has also been endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.[4]

Discrimination against Roma

6. Whilst a range of different groups in the United Kingdom are vulnerable to discrimination, one of the most disadvantaged groups is the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) community. GRT communities face social stigma and discrimination in a variety of areas of life. In the case of migrant Roma – those who originate from European countries – this stigma has been exacerbated by a sharp rise in anti-migrant xenophobia in reaction to the lifting of restrictions for Bulgarian and Romanian workers in January 2014.

7. There are an estimated 197,705 migrant Roma living in the United Kingdom.[5] However, the exact number is difficult to ascertain, due to a lack of accurate data held by the government and the fact that many Roma avoid declaring their ethnicity, preferring to state their nationality. The absence of reliable data related to migrant Roma and the confusion in the public mind of Roma and Romanians feed anti-Gypsyism and anti-migrant racism. Thus, the Roma are living in an increasingly hostile environment, experiencing exclusion from many areas of life.[6]

Racism and Hate Crimes

8. According to the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission, racism towards the GRT community is "common, frequently overt and seen as justified"[7] and there are many reports of racist abuse and harassment towards GRT individuals.[8] A 2014 report indicated

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[2] *Declaration of Principles on Equality*, The Equal Rights Trust, London, 2008.

[3] *Naz Foundation v. Government of NCT of Delhi and Others* WP(C) No.7455/2001, Para 93.

[4] Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, *Resolution and Recommendation: The Declaration of Principles on Equality and activities of the Council of Europe*, REC 1986 (2011), 25 November 2011, available at: http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/ATListingDetails_E.asp?ATID=11380.

[5] Brown, Scullion and Martin, "Migrant Roma in the United Kingdom", 2013, available at: http://www.salford.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/363118/Migrant_Roma_in_the_UK_final_report_October_2013.pdf

[6] The AIRE Centre, *"Roma Rights"*, 2015, available at: http://www.airecentre.org/pages/roma-rights.html.

[7] Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Research Report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities: A review*, 2009, p. v, available at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/12inequalities_experienced_by_gypsy_and_traveller_communities_a_review.pdf.

[8] Laine, Dr. P, Spencer, S. and Jones, A. *Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by Experience: Reviewing UK Progress on the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, 2014, pp. 19-20,

that the most common hate speech in the United Kingdom on Twitter was directed towards Gypsies and Travellers.[9] Even so, it is generally accepted that hate crime against GRT individuals is under-reported with the College of Policing attributing this to "a historically poor level of positive, cooperative engagement with the police" and "inadequate or insensitive police responses when such a crime is reported".[10]

9. In its General Comment No. 35, the Committee expressly noted the need for effective implementation of the prohibition in incitement and discrimination.[11] Effective implementation requires the "investigation of offences" and "where appropriate, the prosecution of offenders".[12] In addition, in its General Comment No. 31, the Committee noted that states are required to guarantee an "effective remedy against the perpetrators of acts of discrimination" and further that complaints are properly received and investigated.[13]

10. There are also reports that members of the GRT community also experience racism and related discriminatory treatment from public authorities, including the police.[14] It has been said that the police have "particularly embedded racist cultures and practices".[15] As noted above, the College of Policing has accepted there has been "a historically poor level of positive, cooperative engagement with the police".[16]

11. Failure to adequately enforce laws prohibiting hate speech and hate crime and to prevent discrimination by state agents, is inconsistent with the UK's obligations under the Convention. In addition, these practices also contribute to an environment in which members of the GRT community find it difficult to access work and public services which are essential to the equal enjoyment of the rights protected under Article 5 of the Convention, in particular economic, social and cultural rights. Migrant Roma are particularly vulnerable to racism and associated problems, due to the stigmatisation associated with their dual status as both Roma and migrant.

12. The Equal Rights Trust urges the Committee to recommend to the United Kingdom that further steps be taken to address the hate crime and hate speech by Roma, Gypsies and Travellers. We urge the Committee to recommend that the United Kingdom to investigate and address discrimination against Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in the police force.

Discrimination under Article 5

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available at: http://ww2.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/news/roma_report.Maincontent.0007.file.tmp/Experts%20by%20Experience.pdf.

[9] Shubber, K., "Who is the number one target of hate speech on Twitter?", *Wired*, 18 June 2014, available at: http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2014-06/18/hatebrain-stats-uk.

[10] College of Policing, *Hate Crime Operational Guidance*, 2014, p. 31.

[11] UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *General Comment No. 35: Combating racist hate speech,* 26 September 2013, UN Doc. CERD/C/GC/35, Para. 17.

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *General Comment No. 31: on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system*, Paras. 6 and 11.

[14] See above, note 7, p. 118 and p. 153.

[15] *Ibid*., p. 214.

[16] See above, note 10, p. 31.

13. Under Article 5 of the Convention, the United Kingdom has committed to guarantee the right to equality in respect of other human rights, including the rights to housing, health and education. Our consultations and research have revealed that the GRT community face challenges in accessing housing, health and education on an equal basis with others.

Housing

14. Article 5(e)(iii) requires that state parties guarantee the right to equality in respect of the right to housing. In its General Comment No. 27 the Committee called on States Parties to end discrimination against Roma in accessing housing and in particular to address discriminatory practices by public authorities in accessing housing.[17]

15. There is a lack of **appropriate trailer sites** for Gypsies and Travellers, which detrimentally impacts upon their lives.[18] A *National Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites*, adopted in 2012 includes collaboration between local authorities, stakeholders, community groups and support organisations in order to encourage fair and inclusive planning strategies among its key principles. However, many community members consider that such collaboration is not taking place.[19] A study in the South East and East of England indicated that only four out of 115 authorities surveyed had implemented the policy.[20]

16. Moreover, the United Kingdom government has been found to have directly discriminated against GRT communities in decisions over the use of public land. Between September 2013 and September 2014, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government employed a policy whereby he would personally determine appeals by Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers to develop sites on certain areas of protected land, leading to significant delays in the hearing of those appeals. There was no similar policy, and consequently no delay, in relation to habitations other than traveller sites within the Green Belt. In January 2015, the High Court of Justice of England and Wales held that the conduct of the Secretary of State was "patently discriminatory", contrary to section 19 of the Equality Act 2010.[21] The High Court held that the Secretary of State had failed to heed the warnings of his department about the possible disadvantage caused to Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers by this practice and fell far short of demonstrating that he had considered whether his response was proportionate to his concerns over traveller sites.

17. For Roma, who are generally not nomadic, consultations undertaken by the Equal Rights Trust revealed that low quality housing, discrimination by public and private landlords and the high cost of housing have all contributed to difficulties in accessing housing on an equal basis with others. These findings are also reflected in research published by other organisations.[22] Further, as a result of racist abuse and harassment, there have been examples of Roma families being evicted and, in some cases, becoming homeless as a result.[23]

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[17] UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *General Comment No. 27 on discrimination against Roma*, Para 30.

[18] See above, note 8, p.25.

[19] *Ibid*.

[20] *Ibid*.

[21] *Moore and Coates v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2015] EWHC 44 (Admin).

[22] See above, note 8, p. 25.

[23] See above, note 8, p. 167.

18. Our consultation meetings revealed that Roma face considerable discrimination in accessing **public housing services.** In all of the areas in which consultations took place, Roma individuals and representatives of organisations working with the Roma community gave examples of problems faced by Roma individuals in accessing housing which would amount to direct and indirect discrimination and harassment.

19. One problem cited by consultees was of delays and disruptions in the application process for public housing, which some believed were the result of direct discrimination by housing officers. Participants also gave examples of harassment by housing officers, with the use of derogatory language about non-British claimants in general, and the Roma in particular, in their presence, with the effect of creating a degrading and hostile environment.

20. One significant problem cited at our meetings in London was that when Roma individuals or families had applied for housing they were often offered accommodation in locations a significant distance from the borough in question, without being told whether or not they had the right to refuse such accommodation. These individuals complained of being pressured by housing officers to accept the first offer of housing even where this was not suitable. Roma families tend to live in close proximity and the extended family is a very important aspect of their culture. However, our consultations found that these needs are not adequately considered by housing officers when they allocate housing. The Committee has expressly noted in its General Comment No. 27 the need to avoiding housing Roma in isolation and to ensure their access to healthcare and other facilities.[24]

21. More broadly, the Trust has found a distinct lack of cultural understanding between local housing authorities and the Roma community, which serves to act as a significant barrier to accessing housing. Consultees in Stratford stated that housing officers had not sought to understand and address the specific and individual cultural needs of the Roma community, which in many cases has led to Roma families being offered unsuitable housing. For example, some Roma said that they had been given housing which was far too small to accommodate the whole family, leading to significant overcrowding and poor living conditions.

22. Another significant issue identified in both London and South Yorkshire was in relation to language and translation services. Although, in general, interpretation services are provided by social housing providers at a local level, our consultations found that insufficient regard has been given to the specific needs of the Roma community. The Equal Rights Trust found that the lack of adequate language facilities in the housing sector has created a serious barrier in access to adequate social housing for Roma communities, particularly in relation to establishing legal homelessness and accessing social housing services. In London, Roma noted that when attempting to access local social housing services, they were forced to receive interpretations in their second language (usually Romanian) instead of in the Romani language, causing problems with comprehension on both sides. Further, throughout this consultative process, concerns were raised about the quality of interpretation services provided. The Trust is concerned that the paucity of translation services available to Roma communities in the United Kingdom may indicate a failure on the part of the state to ensure equality in enjoyment of the right to housing, as guaranteed by the Convention. In addition, we note that section 149(3)(a) of the Equality Act 2010 imposes an obligation on *inter alia* housing authorities to have due regard to the

[24] *Ibid*, Para 31.

need to "remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic", as in the case of the language disadvantages faced by Roma persons accessing housing.

23. During our consultations in London, many of the complaints made by participants concerned the operation of the "housing waiting list" system for prioritising needs and allocating public housing. One problem cited was the use of an online housing list system, which many were unable to use because of language, literacy or computer literacy problems. The operation of a system or practice such as this, which puts the Roma or another group that shares a protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with those who do not share this characteristic may constitute indirect discrimination. As the Committee noted in General Comment No.14, Article 1(1) of the Convention prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination.[25]

24. In addition to these problems in access to social housing, during our consultations, we found that the Roma community throughout the UK face significant discrimination from **private landlords**. Such discrimination took various forms, but many consultees made claims that they had been stigmatised and treated with racist bias by their landlords. For example, some consultees claimed that when they made complaints to their landlords about the maintenance of their accommodation, they were mistreated and ignored. Overcrowding was also identified as a serious concern in both Derby and Oldham. In Oldham, a police officer attested to the fact that he had visited overcrowded homes – with as many as eight to twelve people in a two-bedroom house – without electricity and with insufficient food preparation areas. A Roma participant in the same workshop stated that landlords rent a single room in a house to a family of four. Based on our consultations, we believe that problems of overcrowding, poor quality accommodation and the absence of tenancy protections affect Roma persons disproportionately because of their ethnicity.

25. While the Trust recognises the limits on the government's ability to regulate the actions of private landlords, we are concerned by this apparent evidence of a failure to protect Roma from racial discrimination in accessing housing as required by the Convention. As the Committee has noted in General Comment No. 27, states parties are required to protect Roma from discrimination in accessing housing from both public bodies and private landlords.[26]

26. The Equal Rights Trust urges the Committee to recommend that the United Kingdom take all necessary steps to identify, address and eliminate discrimination in access to housing for Roma, and to take measures to ensure the equal enjoyment of the right to housing.

Health

27. Article 5(e)(iv) of the Convention guarantees the right to equal enjoyment of the right to public health, medical care, social security and social services. The Committee in General Comment No. 27 has confirmed the need to ensure that Roma have equal access to health care and to eliminate any discriminatory practices against them.[27] Yet, as with housing, our consultations revealed that there are significant barriers which prevent Roma from accessing health services on an equal basis with others. In all four areas in which we held consultations, Roma individuals and representatives of organisations working with the

[25] UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *General Comment No. 14 on Article 1 Paragraph 1 of the Convention*, Para. 1.

[26] See above, note 23.

[27] See above, note 23, Para 33.

Roma community gave examples of problems in accessing healthcare services which would amount to direct and indirect discrimination and harassment.

28. The significant majority of complaints we heard concerned General Practice (GP) surgeries, with participants stating their view that Roma individuals were not treated in the same way as other patients when attending their GP. Roma participants at our meetings claimed they had been unfairly refused medical assistance because they did not have the required documentation. For example, one participant in Oldham claimed that he was denied medical treatment because he only had a Romanian National Insurance number, even though he had lived in the UK for four years. Similarly, one participant in Rotherham stated that he was taken off the register of his local GP surgery because his identification documents were due to expire within six months. The application of requirements such as these on a selective basis targeted at Roma or other ethnic minorities would constitute direct discrimination. The application of such requirements to all health service users but with a disproportionate impact on Roma would constitute indirect discrimination, if this could not be duly justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

29. In addition, many persons stated that they had been asked to provide excessive amounts of documentation in order to access GP assistance. Such documentation included, in addition to proof of address, the name and address of a previous GP. While it is not, in principle, problematic for healthcare providers to request documentation related to a person's medical history, the circumstances of Roma individuals and families mean that many were unable to provide one or more of these pieces of documentation. Again, where requirements to provide such documentation has the effect of denying or limiting access to health services to a group of persons who share a protected characteristic – such as ethnicity in the case of Roma individuals – this may constitute indirect discrimination, where the requirements cannot be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

30. Another significant issue identified in all four locations in which we consulted Roma communities was in relation to language and translation services. Although, in general, interpretation services are provided by healthcare providers at a local level, our consultations found that insufficient regard had been given to the individual and specific needs of the Roma community. The Equal Rights Trust found that the lack of adequate language facilities in the healthcare sector has created a serious barrier in access to healthcare for Roma communities, particularly in relation to general practice and primary care services.

31. In London, Roma persons noted that when seeing their local GP, interpretation was only provided in their second language (usually Romanian) instead of in the Romani language, causing problems with comprehension on both sides. In some cases, no interpretation services are provided. In Oldham, one Roma person told the Trust that when she was pregnant and in severe pain, she tried to make an appointment for a GP to visit her. She stated that when she asked for interpretation assistance during the appointment, she was told that no interpreter could be provided. Further, throughout our consultations, concerns were raised about the quality of interpretation services provided. Participants stated that interpreters did not know correct and accurate terminology in respect of different physical and mental health problems in the Romani language.

32. Another key issue identified in London was that different interpreters were being used for each medical appointment, causing further problems with comprehension and effective communication. Roma individuals stated that they were unable to choose to have the same interpreter even if they feel particularly comfortable or indeed uncomfortable with

a certain person. Finally, consultation participants explained that some interpreters lacked understanding of Roma culture as well as the Romani language, with the effect that they were unable to properly communicate on behalf of Roma individuals.

33. The failure to provide adequate and effective translation services for Roma persons accessing health services may constitute failure on the part of the state to meet its obligation, arising under Article 5, to ensure that the right to healthcare is enjoyed without discrimination. In addition, such omissions may constitute a violation of domestic equality legislation. In particular, this would constitute a failure to have due regard to the need to "remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic", or the need to "take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it", as required by section 149(3)(a) and (b) of the Equality Act 2010.

34. The Equal Rights Trust urges the Committee to recommend that the United Kingdom take all necessary steps to identify, address and eliminate discrimination in access to healthcare for Roma, and to take measures to ensure the equal enjoyment of the right to healthcare.

Education

35. Under Article 5(e)(v) of the Convention, the United Kingdom is obligated to guarantee equality in the right to education. The Committee has highlighted the need to promote the inclusion of Roma children in the school system and to eliminate any discrimination or harassment of Roma students.[28] Our research identified inequalities of outcome for Roma in education which raise concerns about the extent to which the United Kingdom is meeting its obligations under the Covenant.

36. Brian Foster, a consultant working with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, a Trustee of the Irish Traveller Movement in Great Britain and chairperson of the Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and Other Travellers, and Peter Norton, a Trustee of the United Kingdom's longest established charity working with the Roma community, the Roma Support Group, have said that "in the field of education, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities suffer manifestly unequal outcomes".[29] Their research identified at least three factors contributing to this:

- There are difficulties in registering as self-employed (the preferred form of employment for many GRT individuals) and the complexities in obtaining benefit entitlement mean many GRT experience financial challenges. Without access to benefits in order to supplement self-employment income, costs of school uniforms, sports equipment and footwear may be prohibitively expensive.[30]

- Relations between schools and GRT parents in secondary education are poorer than with other parents, in part because many GRT families do not consider secondary education to be important for their children. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, particularly boys, have the highest exclusion rates of all ethnic groups.[31]

[28] See above, note 23, Paras 17 and 20.

[29] Foster, B. and Norton, P., "Educational Equality for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People in the UK", *The Equal Rights Review*, Volume 8 (2012), p. 85.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 96.

[31] *Ibid*., p. 93.

- There are high levels of bulling and racism. Almost 90% of children from a Roma, Gypsy or Traveller background have suffered racial abuse at school and nearly two thirds have been bullied or suffered physical attacks.[32]

37. The Equal Rights Trust urges the Committee to recommend that the United Kingdom take all necessary steps to identify, address and eliminate discrimination in access to education for members of GRT populations, and to take measures to ensure the equal enjoyment of the right to education.

Hate speech and Incitement

38. Article 4 of the Convention prohibits the promotion of or incitement to racial hatred or discrimination. The Committee has emphasised that state parties are required to prohibit and eliminate racist hate speech or incitement to racial hatred in its General Comment No. 35.[33] This is echoed by Principle 12 of Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality which requires States to "prohibit any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence or hate speech."[34]

39. In recent months, campaigning on the referendum on the UK's continued membership of the European Union has disproportionately focused on the issue of immigration and negatively stereotyped migrants living and working in the UK as being a strain on social services. Certain well-known politicians have openly made negative statements about migrants. For example, in relation to the recent attacks on women in Cologne, Nigel Farage, the previous leader of the United Kingdom Independence Party, suggested that allowing migrants into the UK may place women at risk of attack from migrants due to 'cultural differences' between British society and migrants.[35]

40. The threshold for incitement to racial hatred or the dissemination of ideas of racial hatred requires consideration of a number of contextual factors, including the content and form of the speech, the economic, social and political climate, the position or status of the speaker, the reach of the speech, the objectives of the speech and the intention of the speaker.[36] Notwithstanding the prominent status of those commenting in relation to the referendum and the wide reach of the speech, it is not clear that this kind of speech in and of itself constitutes racial hatred, nor that it incites or encourages others to engage in acts of racial discrimination. As such, it is does not necessarily cross the threshold set out in Article 4.

41. The threshold under domestic law is, however, lower than that under Article 4; section 18 of the Public Order Act 1986 states that a person is guilty of an offence if he or she uses threatening, abusive or insulting words if either he or she intended to stir up racial hatred or racial hatred is likely to be stirred up thereby. The threshold under this offence is lower

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[32] Ureche, H. and Franks, M., *This is Who We Are: A study of the views and identities of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller young people in England*, The Children's Society, 2007.

[33] UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, *Combating racist hate speech*, UN Doc. CERD/C/GC/35, Para 7.

[34] Article 19, Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality, Principle 12.

[35] http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/04/nigel-farage-migrants-could-pose-sex-attack-threat-to-britain/

[36] See above, note 33, Para. 14-16.

than that of Article 4 as it does not require the speech itself to constitute racist hate speech, provided that either the intention or the result is racial hatred. In light of the reports of increased anti-immigrant and racist abuse and hate crime following the outcome of the referendum (see below), there is a case to be made that certain speech during the referendum campaign may have violated section 18 as it was likely to, and in fact may have, stirred up racial hatred.

42. Although the negative statements made in connection with the referendum may not constitute prohibited hate speech under the Covenant, they may be in breach of the domestic law regulating hate speech. Regardless of the exact legal quality of such statements, they are clearly ill-advised and very damaging to inter-cultural and inter-ethnic relations. Individuals who have been openly stigmatising migrants in the lead up to and following the referendum have undoubtedly been reckless as to the consequences of such speech. The Trust calls on the Committee to encourage politicians and other prominent public figures to be wary of creating or entrenching negative ethnic or racial stereotypes or prejudices.

43. More broadly, reports about a rise in racist abuse and hate crime following the outcome of the referendum are very concerning. According to the National Police Chiefs' Council, reports of hate crime have risen 57% in the aftermath of the EU referendum vote.[37] For example, in Cambridgeshire, leaflets which said "No more Polish Vermin" in both English and Polish were distributed outside homes and schools following the referendum.[38] In Hammersmith, London racist graffiti daubed on a Polish Cultural Centre; the incident is being treated by London Metropolitan police as suspected "racially motivated criminal damage".[39] In Birmingham, an individual was arrested and charged with two counts of racially aggravated public order offences following an English Defence League protest outside a mosque where racially offensive banners were displayed.[40] These are just a few examples of the numerous incidents of hate crime that have been reported by the press following the outcome of the referendum.

44. The Equal Rights Trust urges the Committee to recommend that the United Kingdom take positive steps to counter the rise in discrimination, racist abuse and hate crime following the outcome of the referendum on membership of the EU, and to take measures to ensure public figures do not create or entrench negative racial prejudices.

[37] http://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/hate-crime-is-unacceptable-in-any-circumstances-say-police

[38] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-36633388

[39] http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/26/racist-incidents-feared-to-be-linked-to-brexit-result-reported-in-england-and-wales

[40] http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/683816/man-charged-arrest-EDL-protest-Birmingham-mosque-Birmingham-Magistrates-Court