



General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 July 2015

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Thirtieth session

Agenda item 6

Universal periodic review

Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Croatia

* The annex to the present report is circulated as received.



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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1, held its twenty-second session from 4 to 15 May 2015. The review of Croatia was held at the 13th meeting, on 12 May 2015. The delegation of Croatia was headed by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Vesna Pusić. At its 17th meeting, held on 15 May 2015, the Working Group adopted the report on Croatia.

2. On 13 January 2015, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of Croatia: Bangladesh, Brazil and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of Croatia:

- (a) A national report (A/HRC/WG.6/22/HRV/1);
- (b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (A/HRC/WG.6/22/HRV/2);
- (c) A summary prepared by OHCHR (A/HRC/WG.6/22/HRV/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by the Czech Republic, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America was transmitted to Croatia through the troika. These questions are available on the extranet of the Working Group.

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The head of delegation, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, said she was proud of the progress made by Croatia in the human rights area and was conscious that making progress was a continuous task. She pointed out that the level of protection and the scope of definition of human rights was a basic test for any State of its efficiency and functionality, highlighting especially minority rights, which could be seen as reflecting the overall status of human rights in a country. Emphasis was placed on the need for constant interaction between the State and civil society. The legislative and institutional framework for the protection of human rights in Croatia was based on the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016. Croatia had four ombudswomen, one for human rights, one for women's rights, one for the rights of children and one for the rights of persons with disabilities.

6. The Minister highlighted, among other the issues, free legal aid, the rights of persons with disabilities, social rights, the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, national minorities, anti-discrimination, ethnic discrimination (specifically against vulnerable groups), hate crime, war crimes, the issue of missing persons, displaced persons and human trafficking.

7. Concerning free legal aid, the new Free Legal Aid Act has two segments, one on primary legal aid in the form of advice, which can be provided to everybody regardless of income, and the other on secondary legal aid, which is provided in cases before the court, depending on the material status and assets of the citizen. Secondary legal aid can only be

provided by lawyers. Aid for victims of domestic violence is universally accessible without an “income census” (information on income).

8. On the issue of the efficiency of the judiciary, the backlog of cases had decreased from 1.6 million cases in 2004 to 579,032 cases as of May 2015. Although more effort was needed, it was highlighted that the improvement was due, in particular, to specialized courts. The reform of the courts and the public attorney’s system, the reduced number of courts and public attorney offices, the introduction of information technology, including the assignment of cases and a simpler misdemeanour procedure had also contributed to the increased efficiency.

9. Croatia was still dealing with the consequences and the human rights challenges of the war, even though the war had ended in 1995, just as every society had to deal with the consequences and the brutalization that happen during war. Croatia had four specialized courts, in its four biggest cities, with jurisdiction over war crimes. With regard to the previous practice of sentencing people in absentia, all of those cases were being reviewed and individuals who had been sentenced in absentia could request that their specific case be reviewed. There were 16 cases before the European Court of Human Rights regarding war crimes. In 3 of those cases, the Court had ruled in favour of the plaintiff, stating that the procedures had indeed not been conducted as they should have; in another 3 cases, the Court had reconfirmed the procedure and verdict by the Croatian court; and 10 cases had been dismissed by the Court. That data reflect positively on the functioning, efficiency and procedural correctness of the Croatian specialized courts. With regard to the prosecution for war crimes, from 1992 to the end of 2014 proceedings were initiated against 3,553 persons, of whom 589 were convicted and 220 were undergoing additional investigations.

10. With regard to the issue of sexual violence during the war, a new bill would recognize the rights of rape victims during the war, including the right to compensation.

11. The rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons were extremely important and significant progress had been made since the first gay pride parade was held in Zagreb 12 years previously, in a precarious atmosphere. Pride parades had become a celebration of freedom rather than a struggle. In Split, the Government reacted to the violence that had occurred during the first gay pride parade by having five government ministers and the mayor of Split march in the following year’s parade. Not only through legislation but also by leading by example, the State showed that it had a role to play in defending human rights. The law on registered partnerships allowed lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex partners to have all the same rights as married couples except the right to adopt children.

12. In Croatia, over 20 national minorities were recognized by the Constitution. The status of Serbs and Roma was underlined. Information was shared on the constitutional provisions for the protection of human rights of national minorities, including the eight seats reserved in the parliament for ethnic minorities, which had great influence, since they could make or break a government. Roma were seen as actively making an important contribution to society. Among the achievements was the fact that Romany was being taught at Zagreb University and that a Romany-Croatian dictionary had been published. The land where Roma settlements were built has been legally registered and over 1,500 illegally built Roma houses had been legalized. Funds had been provided by the State. The Roma had also started the Roma National Council. Moreover, plans had been announced to build new schools in two communities with a high Roma population, ensuring better conditions and facilitating integration.

13. Minorities represented 3.5 per cent of State employees, a figure that would have to improve.

14. It was noted that quotas worked and that a system of quotas for women had been applied first in the local elections and would be applied in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Croatia had a modified proportional system of representation; the country was divided in 10 electoral districts, from each of which 14 members of parliament were elected. Six of the 14 candidates in each list would have to be women.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

15. During the interactive dialogue, 68 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue can be found in section II of the present report.

16. Trinidad and Tobago noted with satisfaction that since the first cycle of the universal periodic review in 2010 Croatia had made several improvements to its legal and institutional framework in the area of human rights. It also welcomed the broad scope of the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016.

17. Turkey applauded the efforts of Croatia to improve the institutional and legal framework and to contribute to the overall well-being and harmony of diverse communities. It noted with satisfaction steps taken to combat corruption, appreciating the range of policies and programmes on the rights of the child, and encouraged strengthening the anti-discrimination dimension. It appreciated efforts to prevent violence against women and to improve women's general standing and self-esteem.

18. Ukraine appreciated the consultations with different stakeholders and civil society in the preparation of the national report. It acknowledged steps taken by Croatia since the first cycle of the universal periodic review and commended the adoption of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence 2011–2016, and encouraged the effective implementation of those important documents. It recognized the steps taken to improve the health-care system, particularly for children.

19. Germany encouraged Croatia to continue on the path of improving human rights and cooperating with neighbouring countries and with civil society. It noted shortcomings with regard to the duration of judicial trials and in the area of non-discrimination of women and minorities, in particular the Serb minority and the Sinti and Roma communities. Germany was also concerned about discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.

20. The United States of America hoped Croatia would continue to serve as a model in respecting human rights, which is key to democratic development and economic growth. It commended the leadership shown by Croatia on women's issues as a chair of the Equal Futures Partnership, a multilateral initiative, and steps taken to address trafficking in human beings. It expressed concern about discrimination and violence against women and girls, against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and against ethnic minorities, particularly Serbs and Roma. It commended the robust structure for addressing human trafficking and urged for more implementation efforts.

21. Uruguay welcomed the plan on the deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes and on legal persons performing social welfare activities for 2011–2016. It welcomed the entry into force of the Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders and encouraged Croatia to continue the work in relation to people with disabilities, particularly people with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities.

22. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela commended the efforts in the implementation of the recommendations of the first cycle. It welcomed the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and noted that Croatia had

demonstrated progress in awareness-raising on minorities and vulnerable groups. It also welcomed the National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the promotion of gender equality and political participation of women.

23. Albania congratulated Croatia for the significant steps taken to follow up on the recommendations since the first cycle, emphasizing the strengthening of the institutional and legal framework and raising public awareness regarding minorities and vulnerable groups. It also noted the commitment to proceed to the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the fact that Croatia had actively supported the drafting of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

24. Algeria noted with satisfaction the establishment of national programmes in the areas of health care, the protection of children and prevention from violence within the family. It also welcomed the existence of such mechanisms as the ombudspersons for children, for gender equality and for persons with disabilities, as well as cooperation with human rights mechanisms.

25. Angola welcomed efforts undertaken by Croatia to promote and protect women's rights, in particular by adopting the law and national policy for gender equality. It encouraged the Government of Croatia to continue implementing measures to combat discrimination through the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

26. Argentina congratulated Croatia on the establishment of the Action Plan for the Employment of National Minorities in Public Administration Bodies 2011–2014. It also noted efforts to combat human trafficking by harmonizing national legislation with international norms. It encouraged Croatia to push forward with the additional measures mentioned in its national report.

27. Armenia appreciated the steps taken to combat trafficking in women and children, cooperation with civil society on this issue as well as awareness-raising initiatives through the media and trainings. It noted efforts to protect the rights of national minorities and promote inter-ethnic tolerance; however, it also noted that the concerns and issues of national minorities were not sufficiently represented.

28. Australia acknowledged efforts to address gender-based discrimination and domestic violence. Australia also noted reports of continued societal discrimination against minority groups, including in education, employment, housing and health care.

29. Austria noted the measures taken to reduce overcrowding in detention centres and to improve health care for persons deprived of their liberty. It noted the concerns expressed by the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child about the lack of legal safeguards for these persons and prolonged pretrial detention, particularly for children. Austria also expressed concern about reports of police officers being inadequately trained to respond to domestic violence and of victims sometimes being arrested and charged along with the perpetrators.

30. Benin appreciated the efforts made by Croatia since the first cycle and welcomed the ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect to Intercountry Adoption and the adoption of the protocol on procedures relating to acts of sexual violence.

31. Bosnia and Herzegovina noted the concerns expressed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that, of the Serb minority returnees, 15 per cent did not have access to potable running water, 33 per cent lived in villages without paved roads and 40 per cent did not have access to public transportation. It also noted the high

unemployment rate (68 per cent) among minority returnees. It also noted that minority returnees faced problems regarding their right to a pension.

32. Brazil commended Croatia for strengthening its national legal and institutional human rights framework through the entry into force, in 2011, of the Act on the Ombudsman, which also performs the functions of a national preventive mechanism, and the Act on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

33. Bulgaria commended the implementation of key strategic documents and efforts to combat hate crime, ensure free legal aid and improve education on human rights. It appreciated concrete measures taken to strengthen the effectiveness of its efforts to protect women's rights and combat domestic violence. Bulgaria noted the adoption of some progressive legislation on gender-based violence. It acknowledged the efforts within the national preventive project entitled "Living without violence", which involves different stakeholders including police and non-governmental organizations.

34. Canada welcomed the support of Croatia for the 2010 universal periodic review recommendation to take measures to eliminate discrimination against the Roma community. Canada expressed concern about reports that Roma are often unable to access State services because they lack legal status inside the country.

35. Chile commended the commitment to human rights and the ratification of human rights treaties. It welcomed the adoption of laws on discrimination against national minorities, gender equality and the right to legal assistance. It highlighted the entry into force of the Act on the Ombudsman in 2011. It also commended the establishment of an office to promote gender equality.

36. With regard to the rights of persons with disabilities, the head of the Croatian delegation emphasized deinstitutionalization as the leitmotif of current policies and said that this was a process for people with both physical and mental disabilities. A number of institutions that used to be centres where people with disabilities lived had been transformed to provide outpatient services within the community. People with disabilities had achieved integration through assisted living, among other means, and children with disabilities had achieved integration by attending regular schools. Assistance was provided where it was necessary. People with mental and intellectual disabilities specifically were being integrated, including by having voting rights. A measure introduced in order to further facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities stipulated that every company with more than 20 employees had to employ at least one person with disabilities; that figure increased as the number of employees increased.

37. Concerning the questions about domestic violence, changes had been made to the Criminal Code, namely the stipulation that domestic violence was a criminal offence. Dual arrests (the arrest of the victim and the perpetrator) were no longer happening. Information was provided on the measures in place during and after the proceedings to separate the perpetrator from the victim and the home. Croatia had 19 safe houses for victims of domestic violence.

38. On the fight against corruption, Croatia had taken a bold and controversial step in prosecuting and investigating officials at the highest levels in order to address the issue at the highest possible levels. The anti-corruption strategy for 2015–2020, which had been adopted in February 2015, had been developed in a participatory manner: over 40 participants took part in designing it, including non-governmental organizations.

39. On gender equality, the pervasive, covert discrimination against women in the area of employment was noted. To eliminate the disadvantage faced by women seeking employment, paternity leave had been introduced.

40. Croatia had spent 5–6 billion euros on housing some 354,000 returnees, of whom about 130,000 were ethnic Serbs. Through the housing programme, 149,887 persons had been provided with houses and others with the material to restore their houses or were housed in another way. Some 480 people were still without a house or had the status of refugees. Regarding abandoned property given for use to other persons, all but 13 cases have been resolved, of which 7 were in the process of being resolved.

41. China commended Croatia for its constructive engagement with the universal periodic review. It also commended the adoption of the new Free Legal Aid Act, the Social Welfare Act 2014 and the four-year national policy for gender equality, to further improve and protect women's rights to employment and health and to prevent domestic violence. It welcomed efforts on Roma rights and on developing the national strategy for Roma inclusion for 2013–2020.

42. Costa Rica commended Croatia for the progress made towards a fairer society in terms of access to power and for the law on gender equality, which promotes the participation of women elected to office. Costa Rica urged Croatia to strengthen human rights education programmes through the Croatia national programme.

43. Cuba appreciated the implementation of the National Programme for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and the National Policy for Gender Equality 2011–2015; the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Violence in Sport; the adoption of the new Law on the Position and Jurisdiction of Courts and Law Jobs and the Jurisdiction of State Prosecutors.

44. Cyprus commended measures taken by the Government of Croatia to implement its international human rights obligations. It particularly welcomed the initiatives undertaken for the promotion of the rights of women and children, as well as measures taken for the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

45. The Czech Republic welcomed the delegation of Croatia and thanked it for its national report and appreciated the response to some of the advance questions.

46. Egypt acknowledged positive developments in institutional and legislative reforms and policy implementation. It welcomed the efforts to eliminate sexual violence, combat hate speech, enhance the availability and quality of legal aid in the context of the judicial system, upgrade the national human rights institution and combat and prevent torture and ill-treatment in detention centres. Egypt commended the strides made in ensuring better representation of women in public and political life.

47. Estonia noted the progress in the area of human rights and in the implementation of most recommendations and commended Croatia for implementing the policy suggestions made during the previous review. Estonia welcomed the entry into force of the Act on the Ombudsman and the adoption of the acts on asylum and anti-discrimination, among others. It acknowledged the ongoing endeavours to promote gender equality and stop discrimination against women.

48. France welcomed the ratification of the Hague Convention in December 2013 and efforts to grant to the victims of sexual violence during the 1991–1995 war the status of civilian victims of the conflict. France wished to know about measures to prevent and suppress hate speech and punish threats against journalists.

49. Georgia welcomed the ratification of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and commended Croatia for its efforts to strengthen human rights protection at the national level. Georgia asked Croatia to provide information on how the correctional measures had been implemented towards juvenile criminal offenders. It noted the steps taken in respect of juvenile pretrial detention.

50. The United Kingdom noted the adoption of progressive legislation on civil partnerships, the implementation of the national strategy for Roma inclusion and the constitutional law on minorities. It recognized the work of the ombudsperson for disabled persons, but regretted the lack of coordination in implementing the national strategy for equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

51. Greece noted with appreciation developments with regard to the rights of women, particularly the gender equality act and the development strategy for female entrepreneurship 2014–2020 and commended Croatia for increasing the representation of women. It also commended it for developments in promoting the rights of the child and for efforts to promote the rights of children and the National Strategy on the Rights of Children 2014–2020 as well as efforts to promote the rights of children with disabilities.

52. Hungary welcomed the steps taken to strengthen the institution of the ombudsman and acknowledged difficulties in allocating more resources. It acknowledged progress in combating discrimination, but noted that challenges remained, particularly with regard to national and ethnic minorities.

53. Indonesia commended Croatia for the measures taken in implementing recommendations from the first universal periodic review by ratifying the Hague Convention as well as continuing the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and welcomed the emphasis on gender equality. It noted the positive developments in the institutionalization of mentally ill persons and the implementation of laws to combat human trafficking and protect victims of domestic violence.

54. Iraq noted the progress that had been made in protecting human rights, particularly the adoption of social protection laws and the workplan on minorities. It welcomed measures to combat corruption and domestic violence, promote the participation of women in public life and remove pay inequality between men and women.

55. Ireland welcomed measures taken to promote inclusive education through the national strategy for Roma inclusion and its associated action plan and hoped that these efforts would continue and would assist Croatia in executing the European Court of Human Rights ruling in *Oršuš and Others v. Croatia*. It urged Croatia to increase the administrative capacity of the courts to adjudicate on war crimes cases. It noted the concerns of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women about reparations for women victims of wartime violence and expressed concern at the treatment of persons with disabilities, particularly the increasing number of children with disabilities in institutional care and the lack of adequate treatment and care in institutions.

56. Israel welcomed the delegation of Croatia and thanked it for its national report. It noted the progress that has been made in the field of human rights since its first universal periodic review. It referred to the reports of the Croatian ombudsperson and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in providing its recommendations.

57. Italy commended Croatia for adopting the protocol on procedures in cases of sexual violence. It took note of the legal framework to protect the rights of persons belonging to minority groups and expressed satisfaction with the level of protection and integration enjoyed by the Italian autochthonous minority in the Istrian county.

58. Kyrgyzstan noted the engagement of Croatia with the United Nations, particularly OHCHR, and other international organizations in the area of human rights, the measures taken to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for the empowerment of women and the results achieved through the implementation of the national plan of activities for the rights and interests of children (2006–2012).

59. Libya applauded Croatia for implementing recommendations from the first review and valued the progress made in protecting human rights. It welcomed the measures taken in respect of racial discrimination, gender equality, domestic violence and violence against women, children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, migrants, trafficking in persons and asylum seekers. Libya welcomed measures in the administration of justice and the efforts to reduce the backlog of unresolved cases.

60. Malaysia noted efforts made since the first review to strengthen the legislative and institutional framework. It commended efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment as well as on children's rights through the adoption of the National Strategy on the Rights of Children. It noted challenges in the promotion and protection of human rights, including in combating domestic violence and the negative attitudes and prejudices against ethnic minorities.

61. Maldives welcomed the entry into force of the Act on the Ombudsman, the amendment of the Social Welfare Act and the adoption of the Family Act of 2014. It noted efforts to provide inclusive education for children with disabilities and achievements on the welfare of children. It encouraged coordination between government bodies dealing with the welfare of children.

62. Mexico commended Croatia for the entry into force of the Free Legal Aid Act and expressed the hope that access to legal aid would be ensured pursuant to the principle of non-discrimination, including to migrants and asylum seekers. It encouraged Croatia to ensure that the functions of the Ombudsman would receive appropriate support from the parliament and other government bodies.

63. Montenegro commended Croatia for its endeavours in relation to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex population and welcomed the adoption of the Life Partnership Act establishing legal rights, including to marry, for same-sex couples. It asked about the results achieved and about future plans to promote and protect the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Montenegro appreciated the efforts in promoting and protecting the rights of children. It noted progress in reducing the number of children in institutions and strengthening day-care services.

64. Morocco welcomed the measures taken to combat discrimination. It noted the adoption of a national strategy to create a favourable environment for civil society. It congratulated Croatia for the progress made in improving the rights of women and combating domestic violence. It noted the ongoing implementation of policies for gender equality.

65. Namibia applauded Croatia for the various efforts made to eliminate discrimination and equality, such as the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016, the action plan for removing barriers to achieving equal rights in the area of integration (2013–2015) and the National Policy for Gender Equality 2011–2015.

66. The Netherlands welcomed efforts to achieve gender equality and expressed concern about the levels of domestic violence against women. It expressed concern over the administrative capacity of the courts to deal with war crime prosecutions and witness support and protection, the speed of investigations and the dealing with the remains. It also expressed concern about the lack of independence of the judiciary, which weakened the rule of law.

67. Nicaragua stated that the human rights situation in Croatia had improved with the adoption of the gender equality act and the ratification of the Hague Convention, as well as of the Family Act, which governs the rights of the child.

68. Nigeria commended the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013-2016 and the set-up of the Ombudsman mechanism. It welcomed

government efforts to implement anti-discriminatory measures, promote gender equality and introduce a mechanism for combating hate crimes. It further commended Croatia for the implementation of the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities and noted efforts on the project entitled “Living without violence”.

69. Norway commended Croatia for its efforts to improve its legislation against hate crimes and discrimination, noting that incidents of violence, particularly towards Serbs and Roma, remained a serious issue. It was concerned by the number of unresolved cases relating to severe human rights violations during the war, while the selection of cases remain disproportionately directed against Serbs. Norway noted the lack of an efficient system to support victims of sexual and domestic violence.

70. The Philippines was encouraged by the national policy for gender equality, which, among others, addresses the wage gap and provides support for female entrepreneurs. The Philippines encouraged Croatia to include Roma women as beneficiaries of equal treatment. It also appreciated the measures to strengthen the protection of victims of trafficking.

71. Poland thanked the delegation of Croatia for the presentation of its national report and acknowledged the work done in recent years regarding the implementation of international human rights standards.

72. Portugal welcomed the commitment to protect and promote human rights, especially since its first report under the universal periodic review. Portugal highlighted improvements to the institutional framework and the signing of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

73. The Republic of Korea welcomed the ratification of the Hague Convention, the establishment and implementation of National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence, as well as the legislation of the new Free Legal Aid Act. It remained concerned about the lack of an adequate response to family violence or violence against children.

74. The Republic of Moldova commended the progress made, including through implementing the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and strengthening the Ombudsman’s Office. It acknowledged the activities to increase sensitivity in reporting on human trafficking. Noting concerns about unfavourable views towards victims of trafficking among professionals, it was interested in learning more about public awareness activities targeting doctors, prosecutors and judges to better understand the situation of these victims. It noted the National Strategy on the Rights of Children and the incorporation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in the Criminal Act.

75. Romania welcomed the adoption of various strategies and action plans, such as the National Policy for Gender Equality 2011–2015 and the national strategy for Roma inclusion 2013–2020 and its action plan, and the measures taken to combat hate crimes. It also noted the positive action taken in the treatment of persons belonging to minorities and in education.

76. The Russian Federation noted the efforts of Croatia to implement its international human rights obligations. It also noted that challenges remained with regard to gender equality, discrimination against the Serb and Roma minorities and the rights of people with disabilities.

77. Rwanda commended Croatia for adopting the protocol on procedures in cases of sexual violence and for implementing anti-discrimination measures. It noted with appreciation that plans for the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance had been initiated.

78. Serbia acknowledged measures taken to protect the rights of members of national minorities, but noted that discrimination still persisted and that members of the Serb minority, including returnees and refugees, continued to face severe problems. It also stated that accountability for past human rights violations should be ensured and unresolved cases of enforced disappearance should be investigated in an impartial and transparent manner.

79. Sierra Leone commended Croatia for drawing up human rights policies and strategies including the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence, the National Strategy on the Rights of Children and the National Health-Care Strategy. It urged Croatia to further facilitate the promotion of women, particularly from minority groups, in sociopolitical spheres and the labour market. Sierra Leone also called on Croatia to submit long overdue reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

80. Slovakia commended efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional framework through the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and the work of the Office of Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities. Recognizing the focus put on the rights of the child, Slovakia encouraged the authorities to ensure that all children with disabilities and children placed in institutions have equal access to education. It was pleased with the efforts made to integrate persons with disabilities.

81. Slovenia welcomed the positive development in promoting gender equality and the rights of women, children and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons. It commended the work of the Ombudsman's Office and specialized ombudsmen for children, gender equality and persons with disabilities.

82. Spain congratulated Croatia on all the measures it had adopted to eradicate violence against women. Spain commended Croatia for the measures taken to ensure inclusive education for children with disabilities.

83. The State of Palestine welcomed the efforts made to promote the rights of the child and commended Croatia for the steps taken to improve inclusive education. However, it remained concerned that children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations did not always enjoy equal access to education.

84. Sweden noted that the integration of minorities in Croatian society had proved challenging and that Croatia had received the lowest number of asylum seekers in the European Union. It appreciated the recent law aimed at encouraging employers to hire and create jobs for persons with disabilities.

85. Switzerland welcomed the efforts made by Croatia to think critically about the war of the 1990s and stated that it was essential to pursue efforts, in particular regarding the crimes committed during that period. It also reiterated its concerns on the protection of the rights of minorities.

86. Thailand commended the numerous legal reforms, such as the voter registry act, and praised the achievements in promoting gender equality. It encouraged Croatia to continue addressing the remaining gender disparities. It remained concerned about domestic violence and noted the lack of resources allocated to the ombudsperson for persons with disabilities. It welcomed the National Health-Care Strategy.

87. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia commended the establishment of the working group for reforming rules to entry in the judicial profession as a means of safeguarding the independence of judiciary. It asked the delegation to expand on concrete steps taken to protect victims of domestic violence and to give information on the progress made on the empowerment of women in political and economic spheres.

88. Timor-Leste commended the adoption of several laws, including the Law on Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders, welcomed the entry into force of the Act on the Ombudsman and noted with appreciation the achievements made to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. Timor-Leste remained concerned about the lack of adequate support systems for victims, particularly the limited access to prevention programmes for children.

89. In concluding remarks, the head of the Croatian delegation touched upon a number of issues raised by the delegates. Four conventions (the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) were at different stages of ratification. Concerning the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, Croatia, as a State member of the European Union, adhered to the common policy on migration and would, therefore, continue functioning within that framework. Moreover, Croatia had provided a ship as part of European efforts to save refugees in the Mediterranean.

90. On the issue of trafficking in human beings, the important challenges of such trafficking were addressed. Education and training efforts such as seminars on recognizing cases of human trafficking and awareness-raising programmes were taking place. Since Croatia had been identified as a country of both origin and destination, especially during the tourist season, emphasis had been placed on training police officers, border guards and communities.

91. Concerning the issue of children in prisons, delegates were informed that there were currently 65 children in different forms of detention, correctional institutions or juvenile prisons. Pretrial detention was being reduced to the shortest possible period and took place in secured educational facilities where continual psychological, social and health care was being provided.

92. On the overcrowding of prisons, an issue from 2010, delegates were informed that, by introducing probation for minor offences and community work instead of prison sentences, Croatian prisons now held a population (3,800 prisoners) that was slightly below capacity (3,900 prisoners).

93. Concerning language and, specifically, the use of Cyrillic script for the Serb minority, Croatian law prescribed that when 30 per cent or more of a community was composed of a minority, that group had the right to use its language and script. The Government had implemented that law not only in areas where the situation was not very controversial but also where it was controversial, as in Vukovar, which had been completely destroyed during the war and still nursed very deep wounds. The Government was fighting opposition to the law in that town and had called for cross-border cooperation, especially with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, on raising awareness of the importance of minority languages in those sensitive areas.

94. On pensions for returnees, it was clarified that returnees had pensions. The unresolved issue concerned the pensions of those who had not returned and who remained outside Croatia; the issue was under review and a solution was being sought, also with the Government of Serbia.

95. On the issue of missing persons, there were still 1,590 such persons, of whom 930 were ethnic Croats and 660 ethnic Serbs; almost all of them were from Croatia. Serbia and Croatia, including the heads of the respective delegations personally, were working together on the issue.

96. On hate crimes, information was provided on the protocol on acting in hate crime incidents and on the statistics. In 2014, the police identified 22 cases of hate crime incidents, while the prosecutor's office acted in 60 such cases. Of those cases, 12 were solved, 6 with in a conviction; the others were still being processed.

97. On the independence of judiciary, the Croatian judiciary was completely independent of the State and the Government. That was not enough, however, as the judiciary also needed to be independent from any other influence outside of the law and the rules of procedure and had to function to the highest standards. It was something that Croatia was working on.

98. The head of the Croatian delegation concluded by thanking the President of the Human Rights Council and the delegates for the discussion and the recommendations and for raising important issues.

II. Conclusions and recommendations**

99. **The following recommendations will be examined by Croatia, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the thirtieth session of the Human Rights Council, in September-October 2015:**

- 99.1 **Join more human rights treaties and optional protocols (Israel);**
- 99.2 **Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and recognize the competence of its Committee (Uruguay);**
- 99.3 **Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Argentina) (France) (Costa Rica) (Portugal);**
- 99.4 **Ratify without delay the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Bosnia and Herzegovina);**
- 99.5 **Accelerate efforts to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Rwanda);**
- 99.6 **Accelerate the progress to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Iraq);**
- 99.7 **Proceed to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Serbia);**
- 99.8 **Intensify efforts to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Sierra Leone);**
- 99.9 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Portugal) (Greece);**
- 99.10 **Sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (France);**
- 99.11 **Consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Namibia);**
- 99.12 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Morocco) (Portugal) (Benin);**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

- 99.13 **Speed up the process of the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Slovakia);**
- 99.14 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Kyrgyzstan); accede to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Sierra Leone);**
- 99.15 **Consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (Rwanda) (Philippines) (Nicaragua);**
- 99.16 **Consider ratifying the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization (Nicaragua) (Philippines);**
- 99.17 **Sign and ratify relevant international instruments relating to refugees and asylum seekers (Benin);**
- 99.18 **Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Netherlands) (Austria); accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Turkey)**
- 99.19 **Ensure rapid ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Italy);**
- 99.20 **Strengthen its efforts to properly respond to allegations of domestic violence, including by training police officers, prosecutors and judges, and to ensure that women victims of violence obtain adequate redress and support (Austria);**
- 99.21 **Approve the budgetary funds needed to assume the obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and therefore proceed to its ratification (Spain);**
- 99.22 **Take concrete measures to fight all forms of violence against women, including by ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Germany);**
- 99.23 **Recognize the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in pursuance to article 14 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Algeria);**
- 99.24 **Continue to strengthen its human rights framework, including through giving full implementation to existing institutional and legal protections (Australia);**
- 99.25 **Review compliance of the Criminal Code, which now defines domestic violence only as a bodily injury, with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and as elaborated on in general recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Czech Republic);**
- 99.26 **Strengthen the legislation suppressing advocating crimes against humanity and ensure the training of judges on its application, as well as the issues of civic education in public schools (France);**

- 99.27 Strengthen the legal framework in order to reduce the adverse effects affecting victims of domestic violence, in particular women (Angola);
- 99.28 Address the legislative gap that relates to domestic violence offences and update the Criminal Code to recognize domestic violence as a criminal offence (Trinidad and Tobago);
- 99.29 Translate the initiatives of the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence 2011–2016 and the National Anti-Discrimination Plan 2008–2013 into concrete laws (Indonesia);
- 99.30 Redouble efforts aimed at the implementation of legal provisions against domestic and gender violence, with particular attention to raising the awareness and proper training of the police (Mexico);
- 99.31 Address remaining legislative and implementation gaps, including to fully protect and support victims (Australia);
- 99.32 Amend the social welfare act and other laws which deny persons with disabilities their right to work or which allow their placement in institutions without their consent (Mexico);
- 99.33 Decriminalize defamation (Estonia);
- 99.34 Review the legislation on defamation and strengthen the training for judges on the implementation of freedom of expression (France);
- 99.35 Consider reviewing its Aliens Act in favour of temporary residents on humanitarian grounds (Nigeria);
- 99.36 Intensify efforts at improving and strengthening its human rights institutions (Nigeria);
- 99.37 Increase the human and financial resources made available to the office of the ombudsperson to enable it to fulfil its expanded mandate (Sierra Leone);
- 99.38 Allocate the necessary resources to ensure the effective operation of the office of the ombudsman (Timor-Leste);
- 99.39 Even if only in a modest and gradual way, increase the personnel and financial allocations to the ombudsman in order to ensure that the stronger legal position of the office is also reflected in its human and financial capacities (Hungary);
- 99.40 Explore ways of providing the necessary resources to ensure the independent and effective operation of the ombudsman's office (Ukraine);
- 99.41 Consider establishing an interministerial committee responsible for the implementation of its international human rights obligations, inter alia, for coordinating the drafting of national reports to the treaty bodies (Portugal);
- 99.42 Finalize the draft strategy and action plan to combat corruption and effectively prosecute the perpetrators of corruption acts (Turkey);
- 99.43 Implement and apply human rights legislation in practice as well as implement the ombudsman's recommendations (Slovenia);
- 99.44 Consider developing human rights indicators, as suggested by OHCHR, as an instrument that allows for a more precise and coherent evaluation of national human rights policies (Portugal);

- 99.45 Continue implementing its various national programmes and policies, in particular the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 and the action plan for removing barriers to achieving equal rights in the area of integration 2013–2015 (Indonesia);
- 99.46 Ensure the effective implementation of the new National Strategy for the Rights of Children 2014–2020 (State of Palestine);
- 99.47 Accelerate the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its harmonization at the national level (Uruguay);
- 99.48 Intensify awareness-raising campaigns and education programmes on human rights in order to prevent ill-treatment of boys and girls (Uruguay);
- 99.49 Take all necessary measures to deter perpetrators and to develop programmes and policies in order to prevent sexual exploitation as well as programmes to socially reintegrate child victims (Timor-Leste);
- 99.50 Develop a policy, strategy and action plan to address the reportedly widespread violence against women (Sierra Leone);
- 99.51 Effectively implement the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence 2011–2016 (Republic of Korea);
- 99.52 Intensify its efforts to ensure effective law enforcement for domestic violence against children and women, to bridge the gap between legislation and practice, along with enhancing awareness of victims' rights and training for public officers and legal professions (Thailand);
- 99.53 Step up efforts to effectively implement national strategies for gender equality (Morocco);
- 99.54 Continue efforts to generate greater inter-institutional coordination and availability of resources for the agencies responsible for the welfare of minors, both girls and boys (Chile);
- 99.55 Strengthen the national plan for combating discrimination through the incorporation of indicators and monitoring measures, through determination of the authorities responsible for its implementation and through a time frame for achievement of the goals (Mexico);
- 99.56 Promote inter-ethnic tolerance through adequate measures, including awareness-raising campaigns in the media in close cooperation with civil society and minority associations (Serbia);
- 99.57 Undertake awareness campaigns directed towards the judiciary with a view to promoting non-discrimination (Norway);
- 99.58 Dedicate additional resources to enhance the capacity of centres for victims of sexual and domestic violence (Norway);
- 99.59 Continue with its efforts in further increasing the awareness of gender equality and equal opportunities and foster implementation of its national policies in this regard (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia);
- 99.60 Continue strengthening the programmes developed for the promotion of employment, right to food and social assistance for national minorities and other vulnerable sectors of the population (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);

- 99.61 Establish a sustainable cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and civil society organizations dealing with domestic and gender-based violence (Poland);
- 99.62 Continue the implementation of the plan on the deinstitutionalization and transformation of social welfare homes and on legal persons performing social welfare activities for 2011–2016, with a view to reducing the number of children in institutions (Slovakia);
- 99.63 Consider allocating necessary resources to support programmes which promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities (Thailand);
- 99.64 Include civil society organizations in the process before finalizing and submitting the national report (Norway);
- 99.65 Submit its overdue reports to the human rights monitoring bodies (Portugal);
- 99.66 Submit its second periodic national report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been due since 2006 (Republic of Korea);
- 99.67 Strengthen efforts towards promotion of gender equality (Cyprus);
- 99.68 Take further steps to ensure and enhance women’s rights on all levels (Greece);
- 99.69 Enhance efforts to fight all forms of discrimination against women and gender-based violence (Italy);
- 99.70 Fully ensure gender equality in employment and in political posts (Russian Federation);
- 99.71 Adopt specific legislation pertaining to gender discrimination in the labour market, including sexual harassment in the workplace and discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and/or maternity (Trinidad and Tobago);
- 99.72 Ensure the elimination of any form of discrimination against children, especially children in marginalized and disadvantaged situations (Turkey);
- 99.73 Eliminate discrimination in employment, particularly for women and members of the Roma population, pursuant to recommendations of the International Labour Organization supervisory bodies; (United States of America);
- 99.74 Strengthen non-discrimination against women, particularly in the workplace (Algeria);
- 99.75 Intensify efforts to detect, prevent and combat trafficking in children for sexual and other types of exploitation (Uruguay);
- 99.76 Step up the fight against racism, xenophobia and hate speech and adopt measures to promote poverty reduction, social inclusion and social assistance (Angola);
- 99.77 Strengthen human rights protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, in line with Croatia’s international obligations and commitments as well as with domestic legislation (United States of America);

- 99.78 Continue to further improve conditions for juveniles in pretrial detention facilities (Georgia);
- 99.79 Continue its efforts to reduce overcrowding in prisons and improve detention conditions, including by promoting diversion and other alternatives to detention where possible (Austria);
- 99.80 Step up efforts to combat the overcrowding of prisons, and in particular provide more correctional detention facilities for female prisoners (Republic of Korea);
- 99.81 Implement programmes and policies for the prevention of all forms of violence against children, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and to strengthen social recovery and reintegration of child victims (Republic of Moldova);
- 99.82 Continue ensuring effective implementation of its domestic laws on the protection of the family and prevention of violence against women and children (Israel);
- 99.83 Reinforce its efforts to protect children, especially those in marginalized and disadvantaged situations (Maldives);
- 99.84 Redouble efforts in combating domestic violence and violence against women, including through ensuring effective implementation of the National Strategy of Protection against Family Violence 2011–2016 (Malaysia);
- 99.85 Further strengthen measures to prevent and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, with the prosecution of offenders and rehabilitation of victims (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);
- 99.86 Implement the Human Rights Committee's March 2015 recommendations on gender-based violence (Bulgaria);
- 99.87 Work towards the compliance of pretrial detention (remand) procedures, which includes children, with international law standards and national regulations (Libya);
- 99.88 Investigate and prosecute all cases of arbitrary detention in psychiatric hospitals and social care institutions, in line with the recommendation made by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women (Germany);
- 99.89 Increase the number of investigations, intensify the investigative work and improve the efficiency of judicial procedures before national courts in the case of crimes committed during the war of the 1990s and strengthen efforts to determine the fate of all missing persons in Croatia (Switzerland);
- 99.90 Investigate all unresolved cases of missing persons and bring perpetrators to justice (Estonia);
- 99.91 Enhance training methods for collecting evidence against suspected human traffickers to increase successful prosecutions, and ensure convicted trafficking offenders are punished with sentences commensurate with the gravity of the crime (United States of America);
- 99.92 Take urgent steps to ensure that women victims of wartime violence have access to justice and reparation, including adequate psychosocial and economic support, as well as access to health-care services (Ireland);

- 99.93 **Improve services and support for women victims of domestic violence by conducting effective investigations, vigorously prosecuting the perpetrators, ending the practice of prosecuting victims and ensuring victims have access to protection and shelters (Canada);**
- 99.94 **Tackle the subject of torture in a comprehensive way, including by fighting impunity and providing for compensation of victims (Costa Rica);**
- 99.95 **Prosecute all cases of human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity in a non-discriminatory and impartial manner, consistent with the requirements under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Serbia);**
- 99.96 **Continue working particularly with regard to protecting the rights of victims of sexual violence and domestic violence, in particular through training of health, police and judicial personnel (Uruguay);**
- 99.97 **Further step up its efforts to investigate and prosecute effectively war crimes and strengthen the capacity of domestic courts and witness protection mechanisms in this regards (Czech Republic);**
- 99.98 **Enhance the capacity of domestic courts and witness protection mechanisms so as to improve the efficiency in domestic war crimes prosecutions (Austria);**
- 99.99 **Increase the administrative capacity of courts to a sufficient level, to provide adequate support and protection to witnesses, to accelerate the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and to take the necessary steps to excavate all known mass/common graves and to identify all the remains (Netherlands);**
- 99.100 **Continue and deepen the measures necessary for the investigation and punishment in the courts of persons suspected of participation in war crimes and crimes against humanity (Argentina);**
- 99.101 **Demonstrate a clear track record of war crime cases which shows standardized sentencing through a fair and non-discriminatory process (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**
- 99.102 **Ensure accountability for all manifestations of ethnicity-based hate speech, racism and extremist rhetoric in the public sphere (Serbia);**
- 99.103 **Ensure efficient, non-discriminatory investigations and timely prosecutions as part of the enforcement of hate crime legislation (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**
- 99.104 **Give impetus to accelerate the regional process on the question of the thousands of persons who are still missing, which is vital for the rule of law as well as for regional reconciliation (France);**
- 99.105 **Continue the actions undertaken in the criminal processing of war crimes (France);**
- 99.106 **Continue ensuring the prosecution of cases of hate crimes (Israel);**
- 99.107 **Take effective measures to investigate and prosecute war crimes, including rape and other sexual abuse, and ensure that war crimes trials are carried out expeditiously and fairly by an independent and impartial tribunal (Canada);**
- 99.108 **Step up its efforts to curb domestic violence (Philippines);**

- 99.109 Promote policies and educational campaigns for the promotion and protection of the rights of women, and ensure that all allegations of violence against women are promptly, thoroughly and effectively investigated, that perpetrators are held accountable and that women victims of violence obtain adequate redress, including compensation and rehabilitation (Brazil);
- 99.110 Continue to provide adequate funding to its anti-human trafficking programmes and free legal aid system (Philippines);
- 99.111 Strengthen the accountability and prosecution of law enforcement officers who commit abuses against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and ethnic minorities (Chile);
- 99.112 Continue to realize the right to work for its citizens, including through providing opportunities for vocational training and technical education for young people (Egypt);
- 99.113 Continue working for a reduction in female unemployment and the elimination of discrimination against women in the labour market and for achieving equality of opportunities (Cuba);
- 99.114 Strengthen efforts on the empowerment of women by implementing programmes aimed at changing society's perception of women and removing barriers affecting the employment of women (Malaysia);
- 99.115 Continue the effective implementation of the action plan on employment for minority groups to achieve the set targets (China);
- 99.116 Continue its efforts to reach the threshold of 5.5 per cent share of minorities in the total number of employees, in line with the Action Plan for the Employment of National Minorities in Public Administration Bodies 2011–2014, in particular in those regions where minorities have significant presence (Hungary);
- 99.117 Take measures to safeguard the right to an adequate standard of living, including by expediting the return of Croatian Serbs to their homes and by upholding commitments under the regional housing programme (Canada);
- 99.118 Continue ensuring the full realization of the right to safe drinking water and sanitation for all (Egypt);
- 99.119 Strengthen the welfare system, particularly related to the protection of children without appropriate care and their access to education (Slovenia);
- 99.120 Realize the right to adequate housing by ensuring the right of post-war returnees to recover privately owned housing, regardless of their ethnic background, and by improving housing conditions in returnee communities (Germany);
- 99.121 Take further measures with a view to ensure that all children enjoy equal access to health services (Ukraine);
- 99.122 Take steps to ensure adequate support and access to health-care facilities for those in rural areas (Maldives);
- 99.123 Work towards more balanced geographical coverage of health-care services with specific focus on rural areas (Egypt);
- 99.124 Adopt clear, appropriate measures to improve the rights of children to education (Libya);

- 99.125 Establish State-wide inclusive education, including through the allocation of necessary resources, and provide regular training for school personnel (State of Palestine);
- 99.126 Ensure that children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations have equal access to education (Armenia);
- 99.127 Continue its efforts aimed at ensuring equal access to education, including to children in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations (Romania);
- 99.128 Increase its efforts to ensure that children in vulnerable situations, including Roma children, have equal access to education and to end segregation of Roma children in schools (Austria);
- 99.129 Intensify efforts towards providing all children with equal access to education, including the Roma children (Nigeria);
- 99.130 Consider ensuring an effective, inclusive education for children with disabilities, and to improve universal design to ensure accessibility to everyone (Israel);
- 99.131 Elaborate integrated measures to ensure unimpeded access for persons with disabilities (Russian Federation);
- 99.132 Take all necessary measures to lift all existing barriers in the enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities, with particular attention to their right to live independently, to have access to adequate health care services and to be integrated in the community (Greece);
- 99.133 Develop further actions to improve community services and support for persons with disabilities (Cuba);
- 99.134 Ensure that services for persons with disabilities support to the greatest extent possible their independence and that more community-based living choices are created for them in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Czech Republic);
- 99.135 Take all appropriate measures to ensure the rights of people with mental or intellectual disabilities (Cyprus);
- 99.136 Provide facilities to ensure that persons with disabilities can live independently, have access to public and private buildings and have equal opportunities to education, employment and health services, with a support structure particularly for children so challenged (Trinidad and Tobago);
- 99.137 Refrain from institutionalizing children with disabilities, and ensure sufficient alternative family- and community-based care options for children with disabilities (Ireland);
- 99.138 Monitor the implementation and ensure compliance with the law on vocational rehabilitation to make sure that persons with disabilities are not subject to discrimination and have equal opportunities to find employment (Sweden);
- 99.139 Provide comprehensive care to victims of landmines and cluster munitions through its development plans and the application of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Costa Rica);
- 99.140 Continue to develop measures that guarantee inclusive education for children and girls with disabilities without discrimination, with particular emphasis on rural areas (Spain);

- 99.141 **Adopt further measures in order to ensure the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the decision-making process (Romania);**
- 99.142 **Take all necessary measures to provide equal access to all public services for all members of minority groups in the country (Namibia);**
- 99.143 **Take effective measures to end all forms of discrimination against ethnic minorities, in particular the Serb minority and the Sinti and Roma (Germany);**
- 99.144 **Continue its efforts to combat discrimination and ensure equal treatment of all ethnicities and minorities (Ukraine);**
- 99.145 **Fully recognize the situation of the minority groups and take ample action in order to meet these challenges, including combating discrimination against minority groups, not least the Serb and Roma minorities (Sweden);**
- 99.146 **Fully ensure linguistic, religious and other rights of minorities, in compliance with international obligations (Russian Federation);**
- 99.147 **In light of the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, act on combating discrimination by targeting situations of discrimination and vulnerability affecting children belonging to all minorities (Nicaragua);**
- 99.148 **Continue work for improving the rights of the Roma community, in compliance with the national strategy for the inclusion of Roma and the Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion (Albania);**
- 99.149 **Step up existing efforts towards the protection of the rights of minorities, especially by fighting discrimination against children of Roma descent in the field of education, and by guaranteeing the right to adequate housing of the Serbian minority (Brazil);**
- 99.150 **Intensify its efforts to promote inter-ethnic harmony through education, and implement concrete measures for the integration of minorities into Croatian society (Norway);**
- 99.151 **Continue efforts to facilitate the professional, social and economic inclusion of all national and ethnic and other minority groups, including the Serbian minority, represented in Croatia (Poland);**
- 99.152 **Take measures aimed at increasing the representation of minority groups in the public and private spheres (Armenia);**
- 99.153 **Ensure that the Serbian minority is not discriminated against in the provision of posts in the public sector and in real estate acquisitions or rental applications (Switzerland);**
- 99.154 **Take further concrete and effective steps towards protection and social inclusion for all minority groups (Australia);**
- 99.155 **Enhance efforts to fight discriminatory attitudes and behaviours against all persons belonging to minority groups, including by allowing the use of one's own language at school and in interaction with the public administration (Italy);**
- 99.156 **Fully implement the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities and take action to implement Constitutional Court decisions**

regarding the Act on Usage of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities (Canada);

99.157 Provide full respect of minority rights guaranteed by positive legislation, including the right to use minority languages and scripts, specifically the Cyrillic script (Serbia);

99.158 Continue to implement the State policy on immigration, and constantly adjust and improve the policies and measures according to the new situations of the protection of the rights of migrants (China);

99.159 Review its asylum procedures to increase the efficiency of the asylum granting processes and ensure the protection of unaccompanied migrant children (Sweden);

99.160 Further sensitize the Croatian public to the asylum question, in order to facilitate the integration of asylum seekers (Sweden);

99.161 Continue its efforts to meet the benchmarks of the action plan regarding the building of the housing units for the returnees (Albania);

99.162 Adopt measures that guarantee access to rights for all people returning to the country irrespective of the cessation of the condition of refugees (Argentina);

99.163 Continue to implement the obligations deriving from the Sarajevo Declaration vis-à-vis the successful integration of refugees and to further accelerate the implementation of the existing national housing care programme (Bosnia and Herzegovina);

99.164 Give more priority to returnee communities for economic development initiatives, so that returnees are given easier access to social welfare systems and to take effective measures to recognize their years of work and their right to a pension (Bosnia and Herzegovina);

99.165 Ensure for asylum-seeking children effective and non-discriminatory access to education (Kyrgyzstan);

99.166 Protect the rights of minorities, in particular by providing access to basic services for the Roma minority, including the ability for stateless Roma to obtain Croatian nationality, in accordance with its human rights obligations (Switzerland);

99.167 Continue ongoing efforts, both nationally and in its bilateral dialogue with Serbia, to ensure the return of refugees and displaced Croatians of Serbian origin to their homes and the recovery of all their rights, especially with regard to their property, pensions and social rights, thereby ensuring a comprehensive solution to a problem that affects both Croatians of Serbian origin and Serbs of Croatian origin (Spain).

100. All conclusions and recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting States and the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.

III. Voluntary pledges and commitments

101. Croatia took the opportunity to announce that the midterm universal periodic review will be prepared in order to address the level of implementation of all recommendations received from the second cycle.

Annex

[English only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of Croatia was headed by H.E. Ms. Vesna Pusić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, and composed of the following members:

- H.E. Ms. Vesna Vuković, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations in Geneva
 - Ms. Vesna Batistić Kos, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
 - Mr. Krešo Glavač, Head of Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ms. Danijela Barišić, Spokesperson, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
 - Mr. Ivan Crnčec, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia
 - Mr. Branko Sočanac, Director, Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia
 - Mr. Dražen Vitez, Deputy of General Police Director for General Police Matters, Ministry of Interior
 - Ms. Dubravka Marušić, Head of Sector for Social Policy and Policies for Children, Youth and Family, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ms. Ana Puljić Žunjić, Head of the Division for Human Rights and Regional International Organisations and Initiatives, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ms. Zvezdana Janičar, Head of Service for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth
 - Mr. Josip Paradžik, Senior Advisor Specialist, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ms. Romana Kuzmanić Oluić, Counsellor, Division for Human Rights and Regional International Organisations and Initiatives, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ms. Tatjana Vlašić, Adviser, Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia
 - Ms. Ivana Kožar Schenck, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations in Geneva
 - Ms. Katarina Andrić, Attaché, Division for Human Rights and Regional International Organisations and Initiatives, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia
 - Mr. Tomislav Boršić, Expert Assistant, Department for Cooperation with International Criminal and Other International Courts, Directorate for European Affairs, International and Judicial Cooperation, Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Croatia
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