



**International Convention
on the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Fifty-seventh session
31 July - 25 August 2000

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES
PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on the
Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Slovakia

1. The Committee considered the initial, second and third periodic reports of Slovakia, due on 28 May 1994, 1996 and 1998 respectively and submitted as one document (CERD/C/328/Add.1), at its 1407th and 1408th meetings (CERD/C/SR.1407 and 1408), held on 3 and 4 August 2000. At its 1419th meeting (CERD/C/SR.1419), held on 11 August 2000, it adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the consolidated report, which contains detailed information on the legal framework relating to the implementation of the Convention, and appreciates the supplementary material provided to update the report since its submission. The Committee welcomes the opportunity to be able to initiate an open and constructive dialogue with the State party.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee appreciates the fact that the State party has ratified several international human rights instruments. Further, the Committee notes with satisfaction that under the Constitution, international instruments, including the Convention, ratified by the Slovak Republic take precedence over national legislation.

4. The Committee welcomes the establishment of the post of the Deputy Prime Minister on Human Rights, National Minorities and Regional Development. The Committee also welcomes the establishment of the Government's Plenipotentiary for Addressing Roma Minority Issues, and the approval by the State of the 1999 Strategy for the Solution of the Problems of the Roma National Minority and the Set of Measures for its Implementation. The Committee will follow the progress of the work of the Plenipotentiary with interest and encourages the

State party to support the activities of this office and the implementation of the Strategy.

5. The Committee welcomes the many initiatives undertaken by the State party, such as convening international and national conferences on the issues of racism and national minorities, and legal reforms, including the adoption of the Law on the Use of Languages of National Minorities No. 184/1999 Coll., demonstrating its commitment to combating racial discrimination. It further welcomes the work towards the amendment of civil and criminal laws, taking into account the provisions of the Convention.

6. The Committee welcomes the State party's declaration under article 14 of the Convention.

C. Concerns and recommendations

7. The Committee notes the absence in the report of disaggregated data on the population, giving details of ethnic composition. The Committee recommends that the State party provide this data, including gender composition, in subsequent reports, in an appropriate form.

8. While noting detailed information on constitutional and legal provisions, the Committee regrets the absence of examples of the practical implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The Committee recommends that the State party include such an assessment, together with information on any difficulties encountered in implementing the Convention.

9. The Committee is concerned about settlement patterns with regard to the Roma minority. The Committee is particularly concerned about the fact that two municipalities issued decrees banning Roma from their territory and the duration of proceedings to lift them. The Committee recommends that the State party review legislation regulating local residence permits, investigate promptly and thoroughly incidents of discrimination in access to housing and give speedy consideration to these issues. The Committee invites the State party to monitor trends which give rise to racial segregation and indicate its findings in subsequent reports.

10. The Committee is concerned at the persistence of acts of violence by groups, particularly "skinheads", directed towards Roma and other ethnic minorities. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen procedures for timely and thorough investigations and effective prosecutions of racist organizations. The Committee further encourages the State party to expand throughout the State preventive programmes to curb racially motivated violence.

11. The Committee is concerned that despite school education being compulsory, a disproportionately large number of Roma children are not enrolled in schools, have high drop-out rates, do not complete higher education or are segregated and placed in schools for mentally disabled children. The Committee recommends that the State party address the various factors responsible for the low level of education among the Romas with a view to improving enrolment and continue efforts to develop and expand strategies to facilitate the integration of minority pupils into mainstream education.

12. While welcoming the adoption of Act No. 292/1999 concerning the prohibition of discriminatory vacancy announcements, the Committee recommends that further measures be taken for effective prohibition of discrimination in employment.

13. In light of the fact that the Roma are among the populations hardest hit by unemployment because of inadequate skill levels and low levels of education, the Committee recommends that

the State party ensure that the National Employment Plan contains adequate job-training initiatives, and implement affirmative action programmes to improve the employment situation among the Roma in various levels of employment.

14. The Committee is concerned that a disproportionately large number of Roma suffer higher mortality rates, have poorer nutrition levels, and low levels of awareness of maternal and child health. Moreover, the Committee is concerned about poor access to clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, and high exposure to environmental pollution in Roma settlements. The Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to ensure that the Roma enjoy the full right to health and health care. The Committee recommends that the State party prioritize and target social services for persons belonging to the most vulnerable groups.

15. With respect to the various initiatives undertaken pursuant to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, such as inclusion of human rights teaching in the school curricula, police academies and in detention facilities, the Committee would welcome information in subsequent reports on the effectiveness of these measures and public awareness-raising campaigns to prevent racial discrimination.

16. The State party is also invited, in its next report, to provide further information on the following issues: (a) the implementation of resolution No. 110 of the National Council on Human Rights and National Minorities, which calls for, *inter alia*, cooperation with NGOs to combat racial crimes and ongoing training at all levels for professionals working within the criminal justice system; and (b) comprehensive statistics on the number of racist offences that are reported, including against the police, the number of cases prosecuted, the reasons for not prosecuting, and the eventual outcome.

17. The Committee recommends that the State party ratify the amendments to article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention, adopted on 15 January 1992 at the Fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the wide dissemination of the text of the Convention and make its periodic reports readily available to the public from the time they are submitted, and that the Committee's concluding observations on them be similarly publicized.

19. The Committee recommends that the State party's next periodic report be an updating report, and that it addresses the points raised in the present observations.
