



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Estonia*

1. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Estonia (E/C.12/EST/3) at its 4th and 5th meetings (see E/C.12/2019/SR.4 and 5) held on 19 and 20 February 2019, and adopted the present concluding observations at its 30th meeting, held on 8 March 2019.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the third periodic report by the State party as well as the supplementary information provided in the replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/EST/Q/3/Add.1). The Committee appreciates the constructive dialogue held with the State party's interministerial delegation.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the legislative, institutional and policy measures taken by the State party to enhance the level of protection of economic, social and cultural rights in the State party, as referred to in the present concluding observations. It notes, in particular, the significant increase in the minimum wage during the reporting period and the adoption of the Welfare Development Plan for 2016–2023.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Applicability of the Covenant

4. The Committee notes that some Covenant rights are protected in the Constitution, and that article 123 of the Constitution establishes the primacy of international treaties over domestic law. However, the Committee is concerned at the lack of information on judicial remedies and of examples of cases where Covenant rights are protected by domestic courts.

5. The Committee recommends that the State party:

- (a) **Incorporate all the rights enshrined in the Covenant in the domestic legal order;**
- (b) **Strengthen judicial remedies for the protection of Covenant rights in its domestic legal order;**
- (c) **Enhance training for judges and lawyers on the Covenant;**

* Adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fifth session (18 February–8 March 2019).



(d) **Raise the awareness of the public on the Covenant and the justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights.**

In this context, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 9 (1998) on the domestic application of the Covenant.

The Chancellor of Justice

6. While noting that the Chancellor of Justice has a mandate to supervise the compliance of national legislation with international agreements, including the Covenant, the Committee is concerned that the Chancellor of Justice Act does not explicitly mandate the Chancellor to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights. Furthermore, the Committee regrets the absence of concrete examples of the exercise of the mandate of the Chancellor of Justice in the context of economic, social and cultural rights.

7. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the mandate and functions of the Chancellor of Justice are strengthened in the specific context of the protection and promotion of economic, social and cultural rights, and that it raise public awareness of the mandate and functions of this official so as to enhance the accessibility of the Chancellor of Justice for the public.**

Maximum available resources

8. The Committee is concerned at the low level of the public budget, as a ratio of gross domestic product, allocated by the State party to social services. It also regrets the absence of detailed information on allocations to the areas relating to the Covenant rights, such as social security, housing, food, water and sanitation, health and education (art. 2 (1)).

9. **The Committee recommends that the State party increase the level of social spending, particularly in the areas of social security, housing, health and education, paying special attention to disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and regions with high levels of unemployment and poverty, particularly Ida-Viru County. It also recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to mobilize additional resources, including by reviewing its fiscal policy, so as to achieve progressively the full realization of the Covenant rights.**

Non-discrimination

10. The Committee is concerned that the Equal Treatment Act only prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion or views, age, disability and sexual orientation in areas relating to working life and the acquisition of professional qualifications. It regrets the delay in amending the Act to broaden its scope and application to other social sectors. It is also concerned at the insufficient level of financial and human resources allocated to the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner to fully carry out the mandate (art. 2 (2)).

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party amend without delay the Equal Treatment Act with a view (a) to ensuring that it prohibits all direct, indirect and intersectional forms of discrimination, on the grounds set out in article 2 (2) of the Covenant and in all spheres relevant to economic, social and cultural rights, and (b) to providing effective remedies for victims of discrimination, including through judicial and administrative proceedings. It also recommends that the State party allocate a sufficient level of financial and human resources to the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner for the effective functioning of the mandate. In this context, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 20 (2009) on non-discrimination in economic, social and cultural rights.**

Discrimination based on language

12. While noting the efforts made by the State party to increase opportunities for the non-Estonian-speaking population to learn the Estonian language, the Committee remains concerned at the persistent discrimination experienced by this population due to a lack of proficiency in the Estonian language. This has led to systemic discrimination affecting their

enjoyment of Covenant rights, as illustrated by the high unemployment and poverty rates among the non-Estonian-speaking population (art. 2 (2)).

13. The Committee recommends that the State party address the systemic discrimination faced by the non-Estonian-speaking population in the enjoyment of the Covenant rights due to the language barrier, particularly in the areas of employment, housing education, health care, access to services indispensable for ensuring an adequate standard of living and enjoying cultural rights.

Persons with undetermined citizenship

14. While welcoming the overall achievement of the State party in reducing the number of persons with undetermined citizenship, the Committee remains concerned at the large number of such persons, comprising 5.5 per cent of the population as at 1 January 2019. The vast majority of such persons are citizens of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics who were not able to acquire Estonian citizenship due to their lack of proficiency in the Estonian language after the restoration of Estonian sovereignty in 1991. While welcoming amendments made to the Citizenship Law in 2015, under which Estonian citizenship is granted to children with undetermined citizenship born in the State party, the Committee is concerned that the amendments do not apply to stateless children aged between 15 and 18 years old as at 1 January 2016, children born to stateless parents who have not been legally resident in Estonia for the preceding five years and stateless children whose parents have Estonian nationality but are unable to transmit their citizenship to their child. It is further concerned at the lack of disaggregated data on the enjoyment by persons with undetermined citizenship of the Covenant rights (art. 2 (2)).

15. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Accelerate the acquisition of Estonian citizenship by persons with undetermined citizenship by removing the remaining obstacles;**

(b) **Grant Estonian citizenship to stateless children born in the State party regardless of their parents' legal status;**

(c) **Consider acceding to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness;**

(d) **Collect data on the enjoyment by persons with undetermined citizenship of the Covenant rights and provide disaggregated data thereon in its next periodic report.**

Asylum seekers and refugees

16. While appreciating the efforts made by the State party in cooperation with international and civil society partners to facilitate the reception and integration of refugees, the Committee remains concerned at:

(a) The poor living conditions in reception centres for asylum seekers;

(b) The acute shortage of housing available for refugees, which has led some of them to stay in reception centres even after they have been granted refugee status;

(c) The absence of a comprehensive national refugee integration strategy and policy framework (art. 2 (2)).

17. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Ensure that asylum seekers are accommodated in conditions that respect human dignity and that their basic economic, social and cultural needs are met;**

(b) **Intensify its efforts to provide refugees with adequate housing;**

(c) **Adopt a comprehensive national refugee integration strategy and policy framework in full consultation with organizations representing refugees, non-governmental organizations, relevant international agencies and other stakeholders.**

Equality between men and women

18. Despite measures taken to address inequalities between men and women, the Committee is concerned at the persistence of gender stereotypes, gender segregation in the labour market and in education and the fact that the greater burden of family responsibilities is borne by women (arts. 3, 6, 10 and 13).

19. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Eliminate gender stereotypes, including through awareness-raising campaigns and school education;**

(b) **Combat gender segregation in the labour market, including through special temporary measures;**

(c) **Create an enabling environment and opportunities for female students to pursue education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;**

(d) **Promote the equitable sharing of family responsibilities between men and women, including by improving the availability and affordability of childcare services.**

Gender pay gap

20. While noting the efforts made by the State party to identify and tackle the root causes of the gender pay gap, and the slight decrease in recent years, the Committee is concerned that the gender pay gap remains high, and has a lifelong adverse impact on the enjoyment of the Covenant rights by women, particularly with regard to rights to social security and to an adequate standard of living (arts. 3, 7, 9 and 11).

21. **The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to tackle the root causes of and close the gender pay gap, including through the expeditious adoption of the pending amendments to the Gender Equality Act and the full implementation of the Welfare Development Plan for 2016–2023. It also recommends that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value be effectively enforced through compulsory pay disclosure and labour inspections.**

Right to work

22. While welcoming the decrease in unemployment rates, the Committee is concerned at the structural causes of unemployment in the State party due to the fast-changing labour market and industrial restructuring, especially in the textile and oil shale industries, and the mismatch between the skill sets of the labour force and those required by the labour market (art. 6).

23. **The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts to improve its vocational education and training programmes in order to provide the workforce with the skills and knowledge to keep up with the changing demands of the labour market. It also recommends that the State party ensure that workers who are affected by industrial restructuring and the transition to renewable energy, including those in the textile and oil shale industries, are able to make an effective and smooth transition to new occupations that enable them to maintain an adequate standard of living.**

Occupational safety and health

24. While noting the explanation given by the delegation that statistical discrepancies are due to different data-collection methodologies used, the Committee remains concerned that the data collected by the State party does not portray the actual incidence of occupational accidents and diseases. It is also concerned that the incidence of occupational accidents has increased in recent years. It regrets the lack of comprehensive data relating to the occupational safety and health situation during the reporting period (arts. 7 and 12).

25. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Improve its data collection relating to occupational safety and health;**

- (b) **Prevent and mitigate the risk of occupational accidents and diseases;**
- (c) **Strengthen the capacity of the Labour Inspectorate to monitor working conditions, including by increasing its financial and human resources;**
- (d) **Establish an occupational health safety insurance scheme.**

Trade union rights

26. Despite the explanation given by the delegation, the Committee remains concerned that article 59 of the Civil Service Act does not allow civil servants to exercise their right to strike or to take part in other collective pressure actions that interfere with the performance of functions of the recruiting authority or of other authorities, as set out in the Act (art. 8).

27. **The Committee recommends that the State party review the Civil Service Act with a view to allowing civil servants who do not provide essential services to exercise their right to strike in accordance with article 8 of the Covenant and with the International Labour Organization Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).**

Old age pension

28. The Committee is concerned that the level of the State pension insurance (pillar I of the old age pension scheme), which is below the at-risk-of-poverty line, is not sufficient to ensure beneficiaries an adequate standard of living. It is also concerned that this has contributed to the high relative poverty rate (47.5 per cent) for persons over 65 years of age. It is further concerned that the mandatory funded pension scheme (pillar II) does not cover the self-employed and that its coverage among those born between 1942 and 1982 is only 62 per cent (art. 9).

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the level of State pension insurance benefits is sufficient to provide beneficiaries, particularly those who are living alone, with an adequate standard of living and to reduce the prevalence of pensioners at risk of poverty. It also recommends that the State party extend the coverage of the mandatory funded pension scheme to the self-employed and reopen the opportunity for those who were born between 1942 and 1982 to enrol in the pension scheme. In this context, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 19 (2008) on the right to social security.**

Unemployment benefits

30. The Committee reiterates its concern that the unemployment insurance benefit is not paid in cases where the employment contract has been terminated due to professional fault. The Committee is also concerned at the low coverage of the unemployment insurance benefit and the unemployment allowance schemes, and the insufficient level of these benefits to ensure an adequate standard of living to the beneficiaries (art. 9).

31. **The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation that the State party rescind the condition imposed on the payment of unemployment benefits, as regards the reason for the termination of the employment contract. It also recommends that the State party ensure that unemployment benefits cover all workers, including the self-employed and workers in the informal economy, and that the level of those benefits is sufficient to provide the beneficiaries with an adequate standard of living.**

Minimum age of marriage

32. While noting that the number of child marriages is minimal, the Committee remains concerned that, according to the Family Law, children aged 15 years and older can, in exceptional cases, be allowed to marry by the courts.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party revise its legislation in order to make it clear that the minimum age for marriage is 18 years for both girls and boys and that it take all measures to eliminate child marriage.**

Domestic violence

34. The Committee is concerned at the high incidence of domestic violence in the State party, despite its criminalization in the Penal Code, the absence of a specific law on domestic violence and the public perception of domestic violence as being a domestic matter (art. 10).

35. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a special law on domestic violence and intensify its efforts, through the implementation of the national strategy for prevention of violence for 2015–2020 and the Victim Support Act, with a view to:

- (a) **Encouraging the reporting of domestic violence;**
- (b) **Ensuring that all reported cases of domestic violence are promptly and thoroughly investigated and perpetrators are punished;**
- (c) **Providing survivors of domestic violence with all the necessary legal, medical, financial and psychological support;**
- (d) **Raising public awareness of the seriousness and criminal nature of domestic violence.**

Poverty and inequality

36. While welcoming the significant decrease in the absolute poverty rate during the reporting period, the Committee is concerned that the at-risk-of-poverty rate has increased and that the incidence of poverty, both in absolute and relative terms, has been continuously high among the unemployed, single-parent families and families with many children. It is also concerned that, as the current threshold of negative income tax (€500) is below the minimum wage (€540 in 2019), and given the increased at-risk-of-poverty rate, the flat personal income tax rate in the State party (20 per cent) may have an adverse impact on persons at risk of poverty and may not be sufficiently progressive to achieve redistributive effects (art. 11).

37. The Committee urges the State party to take effective measures to reduce the high at-risk-of-poverty rate, including through adequate social assistance and active employment services, and to take every possible measure to target the most disadvantaged individuals living under the absolute poverty line. The Committee also recommends that the State party review its fiscal policy with a view to reducing the at-risk-of-poverty rate and making the fiscal policy sufficiently progressive to reduce inequalities.

Right to housing

38. The Committee is concerned about the shortage of housing, particularly social housing, despite the investment by the State party in recent years in this area. It also regrets the absence of statistical data on housing during the reporting period, especially on the availability of social housing relative to need (e.g., waiting periods for social housing), the prevalence of homelessness, the prevalence of inadequate or substandard housing and the substantive and procedural safeguards in domestic law in cases of eviction (art. 11).

39. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations that the State party address the shortage of housing, especially social housing for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. It also requests that the State party include in its next periodic report information relating to housing, in particular the prevalence of homelessness and people living in inadequate or substandard housing, the provision of social housing relative to need, and the substantive and procedural safeguards provided in domestic law in case of evictions. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comments No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing and No. 7 (1997) on forced evictions.

Right to water

40. The Committee is concerned at the excessive content of fluoride and boron in the water in 7.2 per cent of the water supply systems in the State party. It is also concerned at the significantly high radon content in groundwater in northern Estonia, which is reported to be closely associated with incidents of various kinds of cancer among the affected population and may put workers charged with cleaning the filters at a high risk of negative health consequences (arts. 11 and 12).

41. **The Committee urges the State party to take immediate action to:**

(a) **Ensure that the content of fluoride and boron in the water remains below the limit in all water supply systems in the State party;**

(b) **Provide all people exposed to radon-contaminated water with alternative drinking water sources as well as appropriate health care, and put in place surveillance and treatment programmes for chronic diseases known to be caused by radon;**

(c) **Revisit legal regulations on radon in drinking water to ensure compliance with European Union and World Health Organization standards;**

(d) **Rigorously enforce existing laws on water treatment and effectively monitor compliance.**

In this context, the Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general comment No. 15 (2002) on the right to water and its statement on the right to sanitation.

Mental health

42. The Committee is concerned at the consistently high suicide rate in the State party, particularly among men, and the high and growing number of teenagers with mental health conditions (art. 12).

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a national mental health policy and intensify its efforts to tackle and address the root causes of the prevalence of, and increase in, mental health conditions, including in particular the high incidence of suicide, and to provide individuals and groups who are at risk of suicide with effective prevention programmes and support services.**

Drug policy

44. The Committee is concerned at:

(a) The persistent social stigma against drug users, particularly among the police, social workers, child protection officers and medical professionals;

(b) The decrease in the provision of harm reduction services in recent years and the limited coverage of opioid substitution therapy programmes (covering only about 20 per cent of those in need);

(c) The excessive fines imposed on drug users, leading to a de facto criminalization of drug use as many drug users cannot afford to pay the fine and end up in prison;

(d) The absence of gender-specific interventions targeting women drug users, particularly those who are pregnant or have children;

(e) Reports that women with children have been unlawfully forced to terminate opioid substitution therapies, under the threat of losing their parental rights;

(f) Reports of police harassing drug users, particularly women, and forcing them to undergo drug testing in the street, or involuntary testing through urinary catheters, which has serious health risks (arts. 2 (1), 3, 10 and 12).

45. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Combat the social stigma against drug users and guarantee the confidentiality of service users by training the police, social workers, child protection officers and medical professionals and sensitizing the public, especially about their right to health;**

(b) **Expand the provision of harm reduction services and opioid substitution therapy and allocate the necessary resources to the relevant programmes;**

(c) **Reduce the fine for drug use;**

(d) **Remove barriers to accessing treatment for women drug users, particularly those who are pregnant or have children, and develop a gender-sensitive drug policy;**

(e) **Investigate the cases where women with children have reportedly been unlawfully forced to terminate opioid substitution therapies, under the threat of losing their parental rights, and provide appropriate remedies to victims;**

(f) **Investigate the cases of abuse and harassment by police against drug users, particularly women, as well as the cases of deprivation of parental rights for using drugs and punish those responsible, and stop the practice of forced drug testing in the street as well as forced drug testing through the use of urinary catheters.**

HIV/AIDS

46. The Committee is concerned at the high prevalence of HIV, particularly among women and people who use drugs. It is also concerned that many persons with HIV do not seek antiretroviral treatment, despite the fact that treatment is provided free of charge, for fear of stigma and the disclosure of confidential information to family and employers (arts. 2 (1) and 12).

47. **The Committee recommends that the State intensify its efforts to:**

(a) **Prevent new cases of HIV;**

(b) **Improve HIV testing and the initiation of early antiretroviral treatment therapy;**

(c) **Combat social stigma against persons living with HIV/AIDS;**

(d) **Ensure that medical professions respect the confidentiality of medical information pertaining to HIV/AIDS status or treatment.**

Right to education

48. The Committee appreciates the achievements made in the education sector, including the high educational attainment rate at the secondary level, the high proportion of adults with a tertiary qualification and the almost universal access to pre-primary education. The Committee remains concerned, however, at:

(a) The decrease in the net enrolment rate in primary education;

(b) The substantial increase in the number of out-of-school children, particularly among boys;

(c) The challenges faced by the State party in attracting high-quality teachers, particularly mathematics and science teachers;

(d) The absence of uniform legal regulations for preschool education and of compulsory preschool education;

(e) The large gender disparity in enrolment at the tertiary level in favour of women;

(f) The low rate of students who have completed vocational education and the high proportion of young adults without professional or vocational qualifications;

(g) The lack of flexibility in the implementation of the 60 per cent quota of teaching in Estonian in the Russian-speaking secondary schools and vocational schools.

This often makes it difficult for Russian-speaking students in Russian-speaking schools to acquire mastery in core subjects that are taught only in Estonian and, in the case of vocational schools, leads to an insufficient number of qualified teachers capable of teaching the specialized subjects so as to adequately reflect this percentage and the school specificity (arts. 13, 14 and 15).

49. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Address the causes of the decrease in the enrolment rates in primary education;**
- (b) **Reduce the number of out-of-school children, particularly among boys, including through tackling the root causes;**
- (c) **Improve the status and benefits of schoolteachers in order to secure a sufficient number of qualified teachers, particularly in mathematics and science;**
- (d) **Adopt regulations regarding preschool education institutions and make preschool education compulsory;**
- (e) **Take effective measures to encourage male students to enrol in tertiary education;**
- (f) **Improve the quality and outcome of vocational education so as to equip graduates with adequate professional or vocational qualifications;**
- (g) **Gradually and flexibly implement the 60 per cent quota of teaching in Estonian in the Russian-speaking secondary schools and vocational schools, take measures to gradually increase the number of qualified teachers in vocational schools so as to better reflect the specificity of these schools and ensure that the quota does not undermine the right of children to education and is implemented in line with the principles stipulated in article 13 of the Covenant.**

Cultural diversity

50. The Committee is concerned at:

- (a) The punitive approach of the State party to enforcing the Language Act, including through the mandate and functions of the Language Inspectorate and the lack of monitoring of its activities, which may have an adverse impact on the implementation of the Integrating Estonia 2020 development plan;
- (b) Administrative barriers against the use of patronymics in official personal documents, which restricts certain national minorities from enjoying their right to protect their cultural identity;
- (c) The high threshold (50 per cent of residents must be minority language speakers) for allowing the use of a minority language in communications with the local authorities in areas where people belonging to a linguistic minority group reside traditionally or in substantial numbers;
- (d) The excessive conditions for the use of traditional local names, street names and other public topographical indications in a minority language in areas where people belong to a linguistic minority reside traditionally or in substantial numbers;
- (e) The fact that persons with undetermined citizenship are not in a position to fully enjoy their rights to take part in cultural life, including the cultural rights of persons belonging to national minorities (arts. 13 and 15).

51. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Remove all punitive elements of the enforcement of the Language Act, including by reviewing the mandate and functions of the Language Inspectorate and putting in place, with the participation of civil society, a mechanism to monitor its activities, and ensure the full implementation of the Integrating Estonia 2020 development plan;**

(b) **Remove all administrative barriers against the use of patronymics in official personal documents;**

(c) **Consider lowering the threshold for the use of a minority language to a reasonable level, with a view to facilitating communication with the local authorities in minority languages in areas where people belong to a linguistic minority group reside traditionally or in substantial number;**

(d) **Review the conditions for the use of traditional local names, street names and other public topographical indications in a minority language in areas where people belonging to a linguistic minority group reside traditionally or in substantial number;**

(e) **Remove all barriers to the acquisition of Estonian citizenship by persons of undetermined citizenship so that they can enjoy their right to take part in cultural life on the basis of equality with Estonian citizens.**

Information and communication technology

52. While noting the rapid digitalization of public services in the State party, including in the social security and health-care sectors, the Committee is concerned that a sizable portion of the population, predominantly older persons and persons with low levels of education and income, do not use the Internet or have limited digital skills, and that they may therefore be hindered from enjoying their rights guaranteed in the Covenant (arts. 9, 12 and 15).

53. **The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that digital assistance and face-to-face support are easily available for those who have neither access to the Internet nor the digital skills to access information and communications technology-based public services. It also recommends that the State party ensure that all persons in the State party enjoy the benefit of scientific progress and its applications, including information and communications technology, without discrimination.**

D. Other recommendations

54. **The Committee encourages the State party to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.**

55. **The Committee recommends that the State party consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.**

56. **The Committee recommends that the State party take fully into account its obligations under the Covenant and ensure the full enjoyment of the rights enshrined therein in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national level. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would be significantly facilitated by the State party establishing independent mechanisms to monitor progress and treating beneficiaries of public programmes as rights holders who can claim entitlements. Implementing the Goals on the basis of the principles of participation, accountability and non-discrimination would ensure that no one is left behind.**

57. **The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to progressively develop and apply appropriate indicators on the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights in order to facilitate the assessment of progress achieved by the State party in complying with its obligations under the Covenant for various segments of the population. In that context, the Committee refers the State party to, inter alia, the conceptual and methodological framework on human rights indicators developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HRI/MC/2008/3).**

58. The Committee requests that the State party disseminate the present concluding observations widely at all levels of society, including at the national, provincial and municipal levels, in particular among parliamentarians, public officials and judicial authorities, and that it inform the Committee in its next periodic report about the steps taken to implement them. The Committee encourages the State party to engage with the Chancellor of Justice, non-governmental organizations and other members of civil society in the follow-up to the present concluding observations and in the process of consultation at the national level prior to the submission of its next periodic report.

59. In accordance with the procedure on follow-up to concluding observations adopted by the Committee, the State party is requested to provide, within 24 months of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 11 (amendments to the Equal Treatment Act), 15 (a) and (b) (removal of barriers to acquisition of Estonian citizenship by stateless persons) and 45 (d) (development of a gender-sensitive drug policy) above.

60. The Committee requests the State party to submit its fourth periodic report, to be prepared in accordance with the reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee in 2008 (E/C.12/2008/2), by 31 March 2024. In addition, it invites the State party to update its common core document, as necessary, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I).
