



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 2905th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 August 2022, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Shepherd

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Thirteenth periodic report of Slovakia ([CERD/C/SVK/13](#); [CERD/C/SVK/Q/13](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Slovakia joined the meeting.*
2. **Mr. Matulay** (Slovakia), introducing his country's thirteenth periodic report ([CERD/C/SVK/13](#)), said that the Government had, as a sign of its commitment to not only fight discrimination going forward but also rectify the shortcomings of the past, issued an apology on 23 June 2021 for the manner in which law enforcement agencies had carried out an operation against a Roma community in Moldava nad Bodvou in 2013, the subsequent treatment of certain victims as criminals and the suffering caused by the protracted search for the truth. On 24 November 2021, it had issued an apology to women who had undergone unlawful sterilizations. A working group comprising representatives of various ministries and the Slovak parliament was examining the circumstances surrounding the sterilizations and the possibility of providing financial compensation to the victims, and a bill on the identification of victims and on compensation was being drafted.
3. Despite the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government had fulfilled the tasks set out in its strategy for Roma integration up to 2020 and, on 7 April 2021, had adopted a new strategy for Roma equality, inclusion and participation until 2030, which would be funded with State and European Union resources. Action plans for the new strategy, covering the period 2022–2024, had been adopted on 6 April 2022 and addressed priority areas such as education, housing, employment and health. During the pandemic, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities had continued to implement projects to provide support to marginalized Roma communities, including with respect to public health.
4. The organization Healthy Regions, set up by the Ministry of Health to ensure equal access to health care and eliminate discrimination against Roma, ran national projects to create healthy communities. The project known as Healthy Communities 3A would focus on health promotion for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and lead to outcomes such as increases in the number of preventive check-ups and vaccination rates. Health promotion assistants, whose responsibilities included helping patients from marginalized Roma communities communicate with health professionals and providing psychosocial support, had been introduced in hospital gynaecology, obstetrics and paediatric wards in 2018 as a pilot project under the national project called Healthy Communities 2A. In January 2022, 13 such assistants had been working in 11 hospitals in central and eastern Slovakia under the Healthy Communities 2B project.
5. In 2021, the Government had adopted a strategy for an inclusive approach to education and training to ensure that all students had access to a quality education and equal opportunities in education, with no discrimination. Three-year action plans would be prepared to implement the strategy and would focus on areas such as support measures, desegregation, the removal of barriers, the training of teaching and professional staff and destigmatization. Various types of support measures would be offered under the provisions of the Education Act that would enter into effect on 1 January 2023. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport was preparing a grant scheme to support early care and intervention for children under 6 years of age, particularly those from marginalized Roma communities and in situations of generational poverty. In June 2022, in connection with the data on nationality, ethnicity and language that had been collected during the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the Government had called for the drafting of an amendment to the regulations to the act on the State language.
6. The Ministry of Justice was, together with the Ministry of Interior and non-governmental organizations, preparing comprehensive amendments to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code to provide increased protection against threats arising from the dissemination of propaganda, disinformation, or content in support of extremist groups. The category of hate crimes for which higher penalties could be applied was being expanded to include those committed on the basis of real or perceived citizenship, language, lack of

religious affiliation, disability and gender identity. A racist motivation for the commission of certain offences had, following a recommendation from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, been made an aggravating circumstance under the Criminal Code.

7. A recent amendment to the Victims of Crime Act (No. 274/2017) made it easier for victims of violent crime, including victims of hate crimes, to obtain compensation by applying to the Ministry of Justice after the initiation of criminal proceedings. The right to claim and recover compensation from the perpetrator would then pass to the State. In addition, relatives of deceased victims had been made eligible for compensation. The amendment also included provisions on intervention centres for victims of domestic violence and funding for entities accredited to provide assistance to victims. With such accreditation, the Human Rights League, a non-governmental organization, had been providing free legal, social and psychological assistance to victims of hate crimes since January 2022.

8. The Ministry of Justice had prepared a bill in 2021 to establish a national preventive mechanism in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Once the parliament adopted the bill, the Slovak Republic would proceed with the ratification of the Optional Protocol. A road map to improve the credibility, quality and performance of the judiciary – by, for example, promoting the specialization of judges, which would, in turn, speed up court proceedings and improve the quality of decisions – had been prepared on the basis of a report on the state of justice issued by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice and was in the process of being implemented.

9. The State Housing Policy for the period until 2030 aimed to increase the overall level of housing so as to make adequate housing affordable for all households. Specific priorities under the policy were the promotion of new public rental housing and the renovation of existing housing stock. In 2021, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities, in close cooperation with the representatives of national minorities who were members of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, had developed an Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups for the period 2021–2025 to ensure that there was an effective system to promote and protect those rights. The plan had six priority areas, including legislative and institutional arrangements, and set out 35 measures. Legislation that took effect on 1 August 2022 required the country's public service broadcaster, Radio and Television of Slovakia, to broadcast content in the languages of the national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic.

10. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** (Country Rapporteur) said that she wished to know what the State party's objective had been in adding questions on nationality, ethnicity and mother tongue to the most recent census. She would appreciate updated demographic statistics reflecting the results of that census, including data on socioeconomic disparities. She would welcome information on the following: how the functions of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and the Ombudsman differed, as both were tasked with combating racism and intolerance and promoting equality; whether the duties relating to the protection of human rights might be transferred to the Ombudsman, as proposed by the Ministry of Justice; how it was ensured that the Centre had the necessary financial and human resources to carry out its mission effectively; and why the parliament had rejected the bill proposed by the Ministry of Justice to increase the Centre's independence. She also wished to know whether the Centre had the legal authority to promote the ratification and application of international treaties and to file legal cases in its own name.

11. She wished to learn about any training programmes specifically designed to raise awareness of discrimination in law enforcement agencies and to combat it, particularly with respect to the excessive use of force by police against members of minorities. She would also be interested in hearing about any campaigns to make the public aware of the provisions of the Convention and the results of the measures taken to step up enforcement of the Anti-Discrimination Act, particularly in terms of the number of complaints of racial discrimination received and investigated. It would be helpful to have statistical data on investigations and prosecutions of hate crimes conducted by the National Crime Agency and on the resulting convictions and sentences. She wished to know what mechanisms were available to members of minority groups to raise claims of discrimination. She would also appreciate information

on any measures taken by the State party to prevent racist hate speech on social and broadcast media.

12. **Ms. Stavrinaki** (Country Task Force) said that the State party's common core document referred to the right of all persons to freely decide on their nationality, as enshrined in the Constitution. However, the meaning of the term "nationality" required clarification, especially given that the notion of citizenship had been introduced to hate crime legislation. She wished to know whether the term "marginalized Roma communities", used in the references to the 2011 census in the State party report, was standard official language, noting that describing a community as "marginalized" could unwittingly reinforce stereotypes. She wished to know what was being done to overcome such stereotypes.

13. She would like updated information on the follow-up given to the recommendations made by the Committee in its opinion on communication No. 56/2014, including its recommendation that the State party should convey an apology to the petitioner, grant her adequate compensation for the damage caused by the violations of the Convention and disseminate the opinion among judicial bodies.

14. Further information on the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Antisemitism and other Forms of Intolerance for the period 2016–2018 and on the preparation of a new action plan would be useful. The lack of public awareness of equality bodies in the State party was a matter of concern and updated information on measures taken to strengthen the trust of affected communities in equality and human rights bodies would be appreciated.

15. Turning to data on hate crimes, she asked what accounted for the decrease in the number of reports of such crimes, whether the data included hate speech cases and whether the legislation posed obstacles to the collection of evidence in such cases. She would like updated data on the number of reported cases of racially motivated crimes and investigations into such crimes. She would appreciate hearing more about the issue of hooliganism, which could mask hate crimes, and on enforcement of the legislation on hate crimes. She wondered what the police and judicial authorities were doing to build a relationship of trust with communities affected by police violence, especially the Roma communities. The Committee had received reports that hate speech, including by members of parliament, was a serious problem. What specific measures had been taken in cooperation with the parliament to condemn hate speech?

16. The Committee commended the Government for issuing an apology in June 2021 for the excessive use of force during the 2013 police raid in a Roma settlement in Moldava nad Bodvou and would like to know what measures had been taken to review the facts and remedy systemic issues resulting in such violations. It would be useful to have information on measures taken to investigate racially motivated police violence. It was unclear why numerous cases of police violence against Roma had failed to result in convictions or disciplinary sanctions.

17. Various judgments, including a request by the Supreme Court of Slovakia for an advisory opinion of the European Court of Human Rights, had revealed serious concerns about the compliance of the Office of the Inspection Service of the Ministry of the Interior with human rights standards, particularly as regards independence in investigations of police officers. Information on how independence was ensured, especially given that investigators did not have an independent status, would be welcome. She would like further details on the 2019 report of the Control and Inspection Service Section of the Ministry on crimes committed by police officers and other law enforcement officials, including crimes against members of groups protected under the Convention, and the kind of offences committed. She would like to know why the Office of the Inspection Service, like the Control and Inspection Service Section before it that it had replaced, did not register data on the number and nature of reported crimes motivated by racial intolerance, prosecutions, convictions and punishments.

18. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that it was regrettable that the Committee had not received an interim report on the implementation of its recommendations in its previous concluding observations relating to hate speech and residential segregation affecting Roma.

While the State party report referred primarily to hate crimes, there was scant information on hate speech.

19. With regard to the right to adequate housing, the Committee had urged the State party to adopt targeted measures with a view to ending residential segregation affecting Roma. He would like further information on the new Building Act before the legislature, mentioned in the State party report, which directly incorporated the obligation of the building authority to ascertain whether construction work led to the segregation of a group of inhabitants. He asked whether there were any remaining so-called Roma walls – walls built by local authorities to segregate the Roma communities from the rest of the population – and whether those who had built them were held accountable.

20. **Mr. Payandeh** said that he would appreciate additional information on the definition of racial discrimination within the country's legal framework, including on whether anti-discrimination law was limited to direct and intentional discrimination or also encompassed indirect discrimination. He asked what measures had been taken to ensure that the police and prosecutors were made aware of provisions of the law on hate crimes and that cases involving such crimes were duly investigated and prosecuted. He wondered whether data was available, discussions held and measures taken to address racial profiling, especially by law enforcement officials.

21. **Mr. Diaby** said that the Committee had received reports on the existence of over 500 members of neo-Nazi groups and several thousand supporters, who had a free hand to organize racist demonstrations and public assemblies, despite Act No. 184/1999 Coll. on the Use of Languages of National Minorities. Further information on the Act and on the way in which such groups circumvented it to promote racism would be welcome. He would like to know what was being done to prevent racism in sports, including measures to address racist insults and slurs shouted out during football and hockey matches. He asked what initiatives were in place to protect defenders of minority rights, especially those defending the rights of Hungarian and Roma communities.

22. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad**, noting that the Ombudsman's term of office had ended, asked why there had been no appointment to fill that position. She would be grateful if the delegation could clarify the current status of the national human rights institution.

The meeting was suspended at 4 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

23. **A representative of Slovakia**, speaking via video link, said that, in line with international best practices and recommendations, the 2021 census was based on new methodology for data collection that included, for example, questions on population by ethnicity and native language. The census data were disaggregated by a number of other characteristics, such as gender, education, place of birth, religion and others. The data on each of those characteristics could be produced for any ethnic group and broken down for the sake of comparison and analysis. Approximately 11 per cent of the population surveyed were persons from non-Slovak ethnic backgrounds.

24. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the 2021 census had introduced three questions relating to ethnicity, namely what the subjects' ethnicity was, whether they were affiliated with another ethnicity and what their native language was. Such an approach had been welcomed by ethnic minority groups, as it enabled more people to be registered in the census and was expected to have a positive impact on minority rights in his country. The Government had accepted the opinion of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities to take into account both single and multiple ethnicities when determining the 15 per cent threshold required in legislation on minority language use to calculate the ethnic population of given areas. As a result, the number of ethnic minority settlements would increase dramatically, including settlements using Hungarian, German and Roma languages.

25. **A representative of Slovakia** said that data collection was also governed by Regulation (EC) No. 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 June 2003 concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions. New questions had been introduced into the 2021 census, in line with the Regulation, regarding the well-being of children, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Roma population. The first round

of the 2021 census had revealed some 100,000 Roma households in the country, in addition to the Roma communities living in integrated housing projects. Methodology used for processing data on Roma communities was also being updated, and data regarding income and expenses of marginalized communities was being prepared for publication. Criteria concerning the income of Roma communities had first been included in the 2018 population census. Inclusion policies and their impact on Roma communities had also been assessed in 2018, with the support of the European Social Fund. In 2020, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, had conducted a questionnaire concerning discrimination against the Roma population in the State party, the results of which would provide data for the main indicators for the new Strategy for Roma Integration, 2030. The Roma community was thus adequately covered in national statistics, which would in turn be taken into consideration in the development of national programmes up until 2030.

26. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the functions of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights differed greatly from those of the Ombudsperson, which was an independent institution tasked primarily with surveillance of the administrative authorities. The Centre, on the other hand, served as the country's national human rights institution based on the Paris Principles. A draft amendment to the Act on the Establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights had been submitted by the Government in 2018 and 2019 but it had eventually been rejected by the National Council. There was no plan to propose major amendments to the Act during the current period, since priority was being given to ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the establishment of a national preventive mechanism. However, the European Commission was preparing a legislative initiative on new binding standards for equality bodies, which would be taken into account in any future amendment to the Act.

27. The budget of approximately €950,000 that had been allocated to the Centre in 2022 constituted an increase of about 40 per cent compared with 2018. There had also been an increase in the Centre's staff. The Centre had received 141 complaints of discrimination during the past year, compared with 107 complaints in 2020. It had organized 216 educational activities in 2021 for about 5,000 participants.

28. A parliamentary vote on the appointment of a new Ombudsperson was scheduled for September 2022.

29. With regard to the implementation of the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Ministry of Justice had launched a project aimed at providing grants to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that promoted human rights and freedoms by means of projects such as Holocaust remembrance, prevention of extremism and discrimination, and provision of aid to victims. The annual budget for grants was approximately €770,000 and every project was evaluated by experts.

30. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the Ministry of the Interior had issued a brochure on hate speech with a view to raising awareness of the phenomenon and preventing such conduct. The Ministry also participated in the United Nations online awareness-raising campaign against hate speech.

31. Population groups had objected during the COVID-19 pandemic to State restrictions on their daily lives and employment aimed at preventing the spread of the virus. Such emotions were exploited by extremists to engage in hate speech in the social media, for instance against Jews and immigrants. A movement had been prosecuted in 2021 for 37 offences. Some 31 cases had been brought for possession of extremist materials, 30 for dissemination of extremist materials and 3 for right-wing extremism and left-wing extremism in 2019. During 2021 there had been 29 cases brought for offences against members of the Roma community, 23 for offences against Jews and a large number of criminal proceedings had been conducted for offences against black people and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Five cases had been pursued for offences based on discrimination against Muslims.

32. The National Criminal Agency of the Presidium had charged 72 persons with 96 extremist acts. Forty persons had been charged with supporting extremist movements, 30

with disseminating extremist materials and 22 with possessing such materials. The Ministry of the Interior had published a report on extremism in March 2022, which contained statistics on cases involving hate crimes and hate speech.

33. **A representative of Slovakia** said that racially motivated crimes, hate speech and hate crimes were reflected primarily in the crime of extremism, which included the establishment, support and promotion of movements that sought to suppress fundamental rights, and criminal offences committed for the motives specified in section 140 (e) of the Criminal Code. Harsher penalties were prescribed for such acts. The list of offences would be expanded in a proposed amendment to the Criminal Code.

34. The poor quality and unreliability of existing statistics impeded the provision of disaggregated data on racially motivated crimes, hate speech and hate crimes. However, it had been found, on analysing the motives announced by judges when handing down judgments, that 16 judgments relating to hate crimes had been issued in 2019, 4 in 2020 and 11 in 2021. She was unable to provide an explanation for the figures submitted by ODIHR.

35. Extremism was also reflected in the Act on Criminal Liability of Legal Persons. The penalties prescribed included dissolution of corporate bodies, confiscation of assets and fines of up to €1.6 million. The Office of the Special Prosecutor had prosecuted a corporate body in both 2018 and 2019 for production of extremist materials. No corporate body had been prosecuted in 2020 and the statistics for 2021 were not yet available.

36. Extremist attacks were usually directed against groups or individuals because of their actual or alleged affiliation with a race, nationality or ethnic group or because of their sexual orientation. In recent years, 43 per cent of extremist attacks had been launched against the Roma community, 27.7 per cent against Jews, and 12.7 per cent against foreigners, immigrants and Muslims. In 2020, a total of 115 cases of extremism had been investigated by the national police force. According to the General Prosecutor's Office, 128 persons had been prosecuted in 2020 and 73 had been convicted by the Specialized Criminal Court. The criminal offences for which they were prosecuted included: expression of sympathy for a movement aimed at the denial of fundamental rights and freedoms; production, dissemination or possession of extremist materials; defamation of a nation, race and belief; incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred; and the hate crimes specified in section 140 (e) of the Criminal Code. Less serious extremist acts were punishable under section 47 (a) of Act No. 372/1990 on breaches of the law, as amended. One of the objectives was to prevent the imposition of harsh penalties for offences that were not deemed to be serious, especially those committed by juvenile offenders. Moreover, in the light of the principle of freedom of expression, only the most serious types of hate speech were prosecuted under the Criminal Code.

37. It had been found on analysing judgments handed down in 2019 that 16 cases involving hate crimes had been perpetrated primarily against the Roma community, and that 4 had been perpetrated against citizens of Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea and Ukraine and a person of African descent. In both 2020 and 2021, four cases had involved hate crimes committed against the Roma population.

38. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 50 per cent of hate crimes on the Internet had been perpetrated against migrants and refugees and 32 per cent had involved antisemitism. In addition, hate speech had been directed against the Roma community and against people's sexual orientation and gender identity.

39. The Supreme Court had convicted Marian Kotleba, the leader of the far-right People's Party of Slovakia, of expressing sympathy for movements that suppressed basic rights and freedoms. He had been sentenced by the Specialized Criminal Court to a term of imprisonment of 4 years and 4 months, but the Supreme Court had replaced it with a 6-month suspended sentence. Other members of the party had also been convicted of crimes of extremism.

40. **A representative of Slovakia** said that Act No. 264/2022 on media services had entered into force on 1 August 2022. Article 61 (1) (c) required broadcasters and audiovisual media service providers to respect human dignity and prohibited incitement to violence or hatred and defamation on grounds of sex, race, skin, colour, language, faith, religion, political

or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation, national, social or ethnic origin, or genetic characteristics. Sanctions for breaching such obligations included, depending on the seriousness of the offence, the requirement to publish a notification of the infringement, imposition of a fine, suspension of broadcasting for up to 60 days, and withdrawal of broadcasting and audiovisual media service authorization. Article 48 required video-sharing platform providers to adopt measures to protect the public from programmes, user-created videos and commercial communications that were unacceptable on the grounds specified in article 61 (1) (c). Failure to comply with the provisions of article 48 would entail a fine within the limits specified by law. Radio and Television of Slovakia, the public broadcaster, had sought to raise awareness of the need to eliminate racial discrimination and associated phenomena by highlighting specific topics during public programmes and discussions.

41. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the Police Force Act promulgated on 1 February 2019 had established the Inspection Service Office, which was mandated to investigate criminal acts allegedly perpetrated by police officers and prison directors throughout the country. It had also been authorized from 1 January 2020 to investigate acts allegedly perpetrated by customs officers. The staff of the Office were bound to comply with the Constitution, legislation, other binding regulations and international treaties to which Slovakia was a party. Decisions taken by Office investigators were supervised by the Public Prosecutor's Office.

42. In its programme statement for the period 2020–2024, the Government had committed to reviewing the procedures of the Office of the Inspection Service and to introducing legislation to increase its independence. To that end, a task force had been established to propose a new organizational structure for the Office. The Office had been restructured in 2020 with a view to improving the prevention of criminal acts by police officers and prison guards, protection and analysis. All its investigators were procedurally independent and acted in accordance with the Constitution and other laws.

43. All complaints of violence or ill-treatment against persons in police custody were duly investigated. Protection of detained persons from torture and ill-treatment was facilitated by the regular visits performed by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Office of the Inspection Service produced reports on criminal offences committed by police officers, which included recommendations for measures to decrease criminal activity and information on investigations relating to detained persons and police officers. The latest report for 2021 could be provided to the Committee.

44. **Mr. Matulay** (Slovakia) said that, although the delegation could not provide an exhaustive answer, he recognized the importance of issues of indirect discrimination and racial profiling, in Slovakia and throughout Europe.

45. **Ms. Ali Al-Misnad** said that she welcomed the policy changes made to reduce the use of force by the police but wished to highlight that they would be ineffective without changes to the attitudes of police officers. She wondered whether the increase in the number of Roma persons reflected in the 2021 census, which had gone some way to reducing the historical underrepresentation of Roma in statistics owing to their reluctance to self-declare as such, was related to the change in the questions asked.

46. **A representative of Slovakia** said that a question had been added to the census with a view to increasing the officially recognized size of the Roma community in Slovakia. Although the number of persons who identified as Roma in the census had increased from 80,000 to 156,000 in the previous three decades, that remained significantly lower than the figure of over 400,000 reflected in the Atlas of Roma Communities. The Government used the data from the Atlas when elaborating its strategic frameworks. Until 1991, when the Roma people had been granted the status of national minority, they had been viewed simply as a socially disadvantaged group. Speaking as a Roma person, he believed that further educational and cultural efforts to strengthen Roma identity were required.

47. **A representative of Slovakia** said that all national minorities perceived the additional census question as constituting progress. It had led to an increase in the recorded population of every national minority compared to previous censuses. Both the census form itself and the accompanying campaign materials had been produced in seven languages, including

Romany. In promoting the census, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities had worked with the cultural organizations of all minorities and with the municipalities responsible for the census taking. The progress made was the first step in the process of strengthening the identity of minority communities.

48. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would appreciate a reply to his previous question on racism and discrimination in sport. He would also like to hear about the measures taken to adopt a law to protect human rights defenders, especially members of minorities, who often faced police brutality.

49. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she welcomed the planned addition of protected characteristics to the State party's law on hate crimes. She would be interested to hear the reasons, apart from the recommendation of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, why the State party considered that its current legislation was not sufficiently effective. It would be helpful to have an assessment of the State party's problems with police violence, including whether it resulted mainly from the personal bias of law enforcement officers or from other systemic causes.

50. **A representative of Slovakia** said that she was not aware of incidents of spectator violence during hockey matches. However, a significant proportion of convictions for extremism were related to spectator violence at football matches. The disciplinary commission of the Slovak Football Association had taken action against major football clubs in relation to extremist hooligans. The general director of ŠK Slovan Bratislava football club had been convicted of an extremist offence.

51. **A representative of Slovakia** said that Slovakia had received recommendations to remedy its legislative gaps by expanding the list of protected characteristics in relation to hate crimes from a number of human rights bodies. The expansion had also been made necessary by the Constitutional Court ruling that the current definition of hate crimes, according to which the victim could be targeted based on "any other status", was unconstitutional because its scope was not clear.

52. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she would like to know whether the directors of legal entities held criminally liable for racist acts could be sentenced to terms of imprisonment and, if so, she would appreciate examples of judicial decisions in which such sentences had been handed down.

53. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the directors of such legal entities could be sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The legal entity could be held criminally liable regardless of whether a conviction was secured for its director. More detailed information on prosecutions for extremism would be submitted in writing.

54. **Ms. Tebie** said that she would appreciate more details about the relations between the Ombudsman and the National Centre for Human Rights. She wished to know the nature of the rejected amendments to the law on the National Centre and the reasons for their rejection.

55. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the amendments had been intended to bring the National Centre into full compliance with the Paris Principles and allow it to obtain category A status. However, even though the bill had been introduced by the Government, two parties in the ruling coalition had failed to vote for it in the National Council for political reasons. Legislation to establish a national preventive mechanism in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture had been proposed. If it was adopted, the offices of the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities would jointly constitute the national preventive mechanism, with the Ombudsman acting as coordinator. The Ombudsman and the National Centre for Human Rights sometimes worked together but were not legally obliged to cooperate because they had different mandates. The Ombudsman mainly addressed human rights violations related to the actions of public authorities, while the National Centre served as an equality body that could represent victims of discrimination.

56. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that the State party was to be commended for the harsh penalties it applied to hate crimes, demonstrating that it took them seriously.

57. **Mr. Payandeh** said that he wished to receive additional information on racial profiling in writing. He was aware that the State party's anti-discrimination law applicable to private individuals was compliant with the European Union requirement to prohibit indirect discrimination and would like to know whether the same prohibition applied to other fields of law, such as constitutional law and administrative law.

58. **Mr. Guissé** said that he wondered whether the State party had considered taking additional measures to ensure participation of minorities in political life in view of the recognition in the periodic report that no parties of national minorities were able to reach the 5 per cent electoral threshold for representation in the National Council.

59. **The Chair** said that she would like to know how the compensation for women subjected to forced sterilization, including Roma women, had been calculated and whether the affected community had been given the opportunity to negotiate the amounts.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.