



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee 145th session

### Summary record of the 4267th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 5 March 2026, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Soh

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Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 40 of the Covenant  
(*continued*)

*Fifth periodic report of Slovakia (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 40 of the Covenant**  
(continued)

*Fifth periodic report of Slovakia (continued)* (CCPR/C/SVK/5;  
CCPR/C/SVK/QPR/5)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Slovakia joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Slovakia**, responding to questions put by the Committee at the previous meeting (CCPR/C/SR.4266), said that there was no tension between the notion of national identity and the obligations of Slovakia under international law. The European Commission had initiated an infringement procedure against Slovakia on the grounds that the 2025 amendment to article 7 of the Constitution was in violation of the principles of primacy, autonomy and effectiveness of European Union law. However, the primacy of European Union law was not absolute. The argument of the European Commission did not take into account the principle of conferral of powers or the division of competences between the European Union and its member States. The status of the member States as the “masters of the treaties” was monitored by constitutional courts across the European Union. There were limits to integration, according to not only national law but the founding treaties of the European Union itself. In particular, article 5 (1) and (2) of the Treaty on European Union stipulated that the competences of the Union were governed by the principle of conferral. The Union could act only within the limits of the competences conferred upon it by the member States. The primacy of Union law applied only to areas for which member States had transferred competence to the Union.
3. Regarding the Committee’s concerns that the constitutional amendment relating to national identity was overly broad, it should be recalled that it was for each nation to define its own national identity. In Slovakia, the concept of national identity comprised cultural and ethical issues. The definition of national identity could not be imposed from outside. That position was in line with the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union. Several provisions of the founding treaties of the European Union directly or indirectly addressed cultural aspects of individual member States, such as traditions, culture, language and history. In the case of *Boriss Cilevičs and Others*, the Court of Justice of the European Union had confirmed that national identity included the protection of the official language of a member State. Similarly, in its judgment of 2009 on the Treaty of Lisbon, the German Federal Constitutional Court had linked the cultural and national identity of Germany to democratic self-determination. In its understanding of cultural and national identity, it had included the education system, family law, language, the media landscape and the status of churches and religious and ideological communities, stating that regulation of such issues must remain at the disposal of the democratic community linked with the culture and tradition of Germany. The Court had established a special procedure by which it verified whether European Union law was in conflict with the country’s constitutional identity.
4. Regarding the reference to the maxim of *lex specialis derogat legi generali*, there was no tension or direct conflict between national laws and the international obligations of Slovakia. Only in exceptional circumstances, when no agreement could be reached through political or judicial negotiations and bona fide cooperation, were international obligations not fulfilled. However, the possibility of a conflict would exist whether or not the Constitution contained a specific provision on national identity, as was clear from the case law of other European countries.
5. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the intervention centres regulated by the 2017 Victims of Crime Act were a key element of the system of protection for victims of domestic violence. At least one intervention centre operated in each self-governing region, thus ensuring nationwide geographical coverage. The centres were funded by the Ministry of Justice through a dedicated grant scheme. Access to assistance was ensured through a proactive protection mechanism whereby, when the police removed a violent person from the shared household, the intervention centre received a notification and contacted the victim within 72 hours to offer support. The fact that access to services was not conditional on filing a criminal complaint removed a barrier for victims who might be in a vulnerable or dependent

situation. The services provided by intervention centres were free of charge and accessible to all victims of domestic violence, regardless of factors such as disability or migration status. Intervention centres cooperated closely with social services, law enforcement authorities and specialist organizations working with persons with disabilities, migrant women and other vulnerable groups. If children were present in a household affected by domestic violence, the competent child protection authorities were notified and specialist assistance was provided.

6. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, following the adoption of new European Union directives on standards for equality bodies, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, had drafted new legislation that would strengthen the independence and legal status of the Centre and its ability to operate effectively. The Centre's management board was made up of nine members with at least five years of experience in the field of human rights who were independent of any political party or public authority. The legislative reform would enhance the transparency of the process for selecting the members of the management board. Candidates would be required to submit their curriculum vitae, a cover letter and an affidavit that they met the eligibility requirements, and the list of candidates would be made public. The Executive Director of the Centre, who managed daily operations, was elected for a five-year term through a public selection process. The new legislation would establish that the Executive Director must have appropriate professional experience and qualifications and must act independently and impartially. It would also require that resources be made available through the State budget to ensure that the Centre had sufficient personnel and finances to provide services throughout the country.

7. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, by law, healthcare in Slovakia was guaranteed for everyone without discrimination. Measures taken by the Ministry of Health to improve healthcare access for marginalized Roma communities included the deployment of field assistants in the regions. Any form of segregation in healthcare was contrary to national law and the country's international obligations. The Ministry had begun implementing updated standards in 2022, including in relation to marginalized Roma communities.

8. **Ms. Šurlan** said that, in view of reports that domestic violence was still widespread and underreported, the Committee would like to know what measures the State Party had considered or put in place to empower women and girls to report violence and build their trust in the police and to raise men's awareness of patriarchal patterns in order to promote respect for women in the home, the workplace and the public sphere. The Committee would also be interested to hear about training and awareness-raising for judges and law enforcement officers on their respective roles in handling cases of domestic violence. It would like to know whether there was an obligation on healthcare professionals to report cases of violence or abuse against women and children.

9. With regard to trafficking in persons, the Committee would be interested to know whether specialized training was organized for prosecutors and judges to enable them to render more appropriate judgments and impose suitable penalties. It would also like to know what had been done to facilitate access to compensation for victims through criminal proceedings; whether any consideration had been given to amending the relevant laws to provide for the compensation of victims directly by perpetrators, through the confiscation or freezing of their assets, for example; and whether evidence of financial gain as a result of the exploitation of victims was collected during criminal investigations. The Committee wished to know whether the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking had been introduced into the national legal system and what safeguards were in place to protect victims from criminal accountability. Lastly, it would be helpful to learn what measures had been developed to protect potential victims from online recruitment and exploitation.

10. **Ms. Tigroudja** said that the Committee would welcome an update on the status of the 2025 bill that provided for compensation of €12,000 for all persons subjected to illegal sterilization between 1966 and 2004 and on the timetable for the implementation of the compensation measures. In view of reports that women seeking an abortion faced numerous legal and practical barriers and that there were regular calls to restrict or even ban access to abortion, the Committee would appreciate information on the measures taken to guarantee access to safe, free abortion without discrimination throughout the State Party. It would also like to hear about the impact of the 2025 constitutional reform on sex education in schools and, more generally, on the State Party's sexual and reproductive health policy.

11. Regarding the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers, the Committee would appreciate statistics on the detention of migrants, including children and unaccompanied minors, and detailed information on the reasons for the lengthy asylum procedure and the low number of asylum claims granted. It would also be helpful to have up-to-date information on the measures taken to assist Ukrainians who had fled their country since the outbreak of conflict in 2014 and whether those not recognized as refugees continued to benefit from temporary protection and were entitled to equal access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

12. **Mr. Helfer** said that the Committee would welcome updated information on the implementation of the 2023 amendments to the anti-corruption framework and any concrete improvements they had achieved. It would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on threats to judicial independence and the efforts being made to insulate the judiciary from political pressure. In particular, it wished to know why nine members of the Judicial Council had been replaced by the Government in 2024 and whether the State Party would consider enhancing the transparency of the process for dismissing Council members.

13. With regard to freedom of expression, the Committee wished to know when the State Party intended to decriminalize defamation, which currently carried harsh penalties, and to transpose Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ("Strategic lawsuits against public participation") into national law. It would also appreciate further information on the registration system for such lawsuits.

14. In view of reports of rising violence and harassment against journalists and human rights defenders, including the assaults on political commentator Peter Schutz and journalist Kristína Kővešová and the murder of Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová, as well as the adoption of laws that had eroded media independence and pluralism, the Committee would be interested to hear what legislative and investigative steps would be taken to ensure that journalists and human rights defenders could safely carry out their work.

15. The Committee wished to know whether the State Party intended to introduce new legislation to regulate non-governmental organizations (NGOs), given that Act No. 109/2025, which had imposed significant regulatory burdens and penalties on NGOs, had been found by the Constitutional Court to violate the rights to freedom of association, privacy and information. If so, would the State Party commit to narrowing the reporting and disclosure obligations to what was strictly necessary and proportionate, as required by article 22 of the Covenant?

16. Regarding freedom of assembly, the Committee wished to know whether the State Party would consider revising the 2024 security law, known as the "Lex Assassination", which had been drafted hastily after the assassination attempt on the Prime Minister, to provide greater leeway for peaceful assemblies and ensure that any restrictions were strictly necessary and proportionate, as required by article 21 of the Covenant.

17. **Mr. Fernández Liesa**, referring to the 2025 constitutional amendment, said that cultural and national identity was such a vague concept that it could not be used to reserve total, unlimited sovereignty, as that amounted to an undeclared reservation to the Covenant. Reservations to a treaty must be made openly upon accession. In short, the constitutional amendment posed clear risks, inter alia in relation to the principle of religious freedom.

18. The Committee would appreciate disaggregated data on victims of excessive use of force, torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officers, as well as information on the number of investigations carried out, the number of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators, and the compensation provided to victims. It also wished to know whether there were plans to reform the body responsible for investigating abuses committed by the police, the Inspection Service Office, which currently reported to the Ministry of the Interior, in order to guarantee its independence. The Committee would be interested to hear what measures had been taken to achieve the objectives outlined in the Programme Statement of the Government of the Slovak Republic 2023–2027 in relation to the prevention of torture.

19. The Committee would welcome clarification as to whether all persons deprived of their liberty, including minors, enjoyed fundamental legal safeguards in practice, including the possibility to inform relatives or any other person of their choice of their detention. The Committee would like to know whether conditions of detention were in compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). It would also be interested to know whether there were plans to amend the law or relevant protocols to prevent prolonged periods of detention in confined spaces that could infringe upon the right to personal liberty and dignity.

20. The Committee wished to know whether the State Party planned to reamend the Religious Freedom Act to remove the discriminatory requirement that churches and religious societies applying for registration must prove that they had at least 50,000 adult members, and whether it would allow the Muslim community to register as a religious society rather than a civic association.

21. **Mr. Teraya** said that the Committee would welcome clarification of whether the current legal framework explicitly prohibited corporal punishment of children in all settings. In particular, it wished to know whether Act No. 372/1990 expressly covered corporal punishment in the child-rearing context. It would also welcome further information on the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Violence and the associated action plan, specifically the timeline, responsible authorities and impact evaluation mechanism.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11.15 a.m.*

22. **A representative of Slovakia** said that systematic measures had been implemented to strengthen the protection of victims of domestic violence. One such measure was the use of electronic monitoring to prevent contact between the aggressor and the protected person. Slovakia was one of very few countries in the European Union whose civil law allowed for electronic monitoring to be ordered based on a request for immediate protection, without the need for criminal proceedings. The Judicial Academy of the Slovak Republic provided training on domestic violence for judges and prosecutors, including courses on issues such as post-separation violence, understanding victims of domestic violence, and children as witnesses to violence between parents. The Ministry of Justice was currently implementing a national project that aimed to expand access to restorative justice services for victims and perpetrators of crime, including domestic violence.

23. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the authorities recognized that violence against women was often underreported due to factors such as fear, stigma and dependence on the perpetrator. Addressing underreporting was thus a priority under the victim protection framework. Intervention centres provided immediate support, legal information and psychological counselling, thus enabling victims to receive help in a safe environment and to make informed decisions about whether and how to report violence. Work was currently under way on the transposition of Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, which introduced stricter standards in areas such as victim protection, specialized support services, training of professionals and institutional responses to gender-based violence. As part of the transposition process, legislative and practical measures were being examined, including the regulation of reporting obligations in the healthcare sector in cases of suspected violence against women. Strengthening the role of healthcare professionals in identifying and responding to such cases might contribute to earlier detection of violence and improve victims' access to support services. The transposition of the Directive was expected to promote trust in public institutions and encourage more victims to report violence.

24. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the police had taken many measures to deal with domestic violence in recent years. In 2017, the police had introduced a risk evaluation questionnaire to be used in domestic violence cases in order to inform the necessary protection measures for victims. Under the Act on the Police Force, the police could remove the abusive person from the shared home for a period of up to 14 days, during which time the individual could not come within 50 metres of the victim. The protection order could be extended by the court at the victim's request. The police were required to inform intervention

centres of any protection orders imposed so that they could provide the necessary assistance to victims. Between 2008, when they had been introduced, and 2024, over 1,000 protection orders had been issued, the vast majority against men.

25. The police force was actively implementing the Victims of Crime Act, and police officers received specific training on how to deal with victims in an empathetic and sensitive manner and in collaboration with psychologists. As part of a project funded by the European Union, 25 special interview rooms had been set up in which police officers could interview victims, including children and victims of domestic violence and trafficking. Some 400 police officers had received training on how to conduct such interviews, and further training courses would be organized in 2026. Conferences and lectures were organized for the general public and various target groups, and information was posted on official websites and social media. Multidisciplinary procedures for addressing domestic violence had been developed in collaboration with the Office of the General Prosecutor, several ministries and civil society. The police force carried out its role in accordance with the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2022–2027.

26. **A representative of Slovakia** said that draft amendments to the Criminal Code, which were expected to be adopted in July 2025, would introduce a new criminal offence of knowingly using the services of victims of trafficking or exploitation. At the same time, the penalties for the basic offence of trafficking in persons, and the aggravated offence of trafficking in children, would be increased. The National Programme for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2024–2028 covered pre-return assistance, assisted voluntary return, crisis care and the provision of social, legal and other services. The Ministry of the Interior had established a working group that met on a quarterly basis to evaluate and streamline the provision of care and the conduct of assisted voluntary returns under the National Programme. The information offices for victims of crime played a key role in the prevention of trafficking and early identification of victims, carried out awareness-raising activities on the topic of trafficking and offered basic counselling to persons who might be at risk of exploitation. The offices also cooperated closely with the law enforcement authorities, social services and NGOs.

27. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the bill on the provision of financial compensation to persons who had been unlawfully sterilized between 1966 and 2004 was being drafted and was scheduled to be submitted to the Government for consideration in December 2026.

28. **A representative of Slovakia** said that reproductive rights were protected in accordance with national laws and the country's international legal obligations. Healthcare, including gynaecological care, was provided through the free national healthcare system. Information about reproductive health was available through healthcare providers, specialized health clinics and the website of the Ministry of Health. Under Act No. 73 of 1986, abortion was permitted during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, and after 12 weeks for specific health reasons. Abortion was performed surgically rather than medically. The performance of abortions at healthcare facilities ensured patient safety. Patients or their legal guardian must give their informed written consent prior to any abortion procedure. The Ministry ensured that pregnancy, birth and postpartum care was provided in accordance with evidence-based medicine. Healthcare professionals received specific instruction on reproductive rights as part of their training. High school and vocational students also received sex education that covered topics such as contraception and preparation for marriage and parenthood.

29. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, prior to any termination of pregnancy, due consideration must be given to article 15 (1) of the Constitution, which stipulated that human life should be protected even before birth. Furthermore, the Constitutional Court had ruled, in a 2007 decision in which it had endeavoured to balance the value of unborn life against women's right to autonomy, that any woman wishing to terminate a pregnancy must submit a formal written request, submit to a mandatory waiting period, undergo a medical examination and pay a fee.

30. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the new State education programme introduced in 2023 addressed issues of human rights, respect for dignity, online safety and

identifying misinformation, inter alia, but did not include sex education as a specific stand-alone subject. Rather, the various aspects of sex education were integrated in different subject areas, primarily the curricular modules entitled “man and nature”, “man and society” and “health and movement”.

31. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, since the start of the conflict in Ukraine, Slovakia had provided temporary protection under the European Union framework for around 180,000 Ukrainian refugees. Refugees and asylum-seekers had access to employment, healthcare, social services and, in the case of children, education. All refugees were offered accommodation for an initial period of 60 days, which might be extended in the case of persons over 65 years of age, single parents, mothers with children, and other vulnerable persons. As State facilities could house around 1,000 persons only, private housing options were also used.

32. In the past decade, the number of persons seeking refuge in Slovakia had increased from around 80,000 to approximately 360,000, with between 150 and 500 persons a year submitting an application for asylum. As the increase had tightened pressure on the housing system, a government working group had been established to develop mitigating measures encompassing three areas: capacity-building within the housing authorities; digitalization to speed up processing times; and legislative amendments to simplify the legal framework. Improvements in the second of those areas had included the introduction of an online housing application system in 2025. The launch of an online document issuance system was also planned, after which it would be possible to complete all relevant procedures without visiting government offices in person.

33. In 2025, the authorities had registered some 1,580 illegal migrants in Slovakia. Just 146 of that number had been placed in police detention; the majority had been subject to administrative measures only.

34. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, under the Education Act, the children of non-nationals, including unaccompanied minors granted temporary protection, were entitled to education, accommodation and school meals on an equal footing with Slovak nationals. As from 1 September 2025, education was compulsory for displaced children of school age, and the authorities had a legal obligation to keep records of all displaced children in the municipality and monitor their school attendance. The guardianship of unaccompanied minors was assured through the child protection system and any failure on the part of parents or guardians to ensure a child’s regular school attendance could result in administrative sanctions.

35. Since language barriers were one of the primary obstacles to effective integration, a set of targeted legislative and practical measures aimed at ensuring meaningful participation in learning had been rolled out. In January 2025, adaptation classes had been introduced within mainstream schools to provide intensive language support for pupils who did not master the language of instruction, with a view to their gradual transition to regular classroom activities. In addition, with support from the United Nations Children’s Fund and the National Institute for Education and Youth, needs-based assistance, including interpretation, psychosocial support in Ukrainian and methodological guidance, had been provided to displaced children from Ukraine since September 2022.

36. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, in a 2012 judgment, the Constitutional Court had confirmed that elected or appointed members of national institutions including the Judicial Council could be removed at any time. That ruling had been challenged, and had ultimately been overturned in 2019, with a stipulation that members could not be dismissed without justification. However, constitutional amendments in 2020 had re-established the previous provision, stating that members of the Judicial Council could be dismissed without reason being given. An adjustment to that provision was expected in future constitutional amendments but such changes took time to negotiate and implement.

37. **A representative of Slovakia** said that recent amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure had not removed the procedural tools for addressing corruption cases. Special investigative measures providing for the surveillance of persons and property and use of information technology thus remained in place, as did the specialist teams dedicated to corruption cases in regional police headquarters. Within the prosecution

service, although the office of the special prosecutor for corruption cases had been disbanded, a separate department dedicated to serious crime had been created and there were at least three prosecutors assigned to corruption cases in both the specialized department and the Office of the General Prosecutor, as well as in regional offices. In addition, judicial proceedings related to corruption cases were always heard in the Specialized Criminal Court.

38. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the Government had set a deadline of 31 May 2026 for the formulation of a strategic plan and monitoring system for implementing the Council of Europe recommendations for countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation, which would enhance safety for media workers. Furthermore, since March 2023, the Ministry of Culture's Safe.Journalism.sk initiative, coordinated by the Ján Kuciak Investigative Centre, had been providing journalists throughout the country with legal aid, telephone advice, security training and protection, and support in the event of online threats. In addition, new police procedures aimed at protecting journalists at high-risk mass events had been drafted, as provided for in the national strategy for the prevention of crime and other anti-social activities.

39. **A representative of Slovakia** said that a new methodology for protecting journalists had been introduced within the police force in 2023 and regional police forces had since been working more closely with the Ján Kuciak Investigative Centre. Protection was provided on request, on the basis of an assessment of the requestor's situation.

40. The main aim of Act No. 109/2025 was to increase the transparency of NGO funding and eliminate the risk of money-laundering and financing of terrorism, which were concerns frequently raised by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Council of Europe. The Act envisaged the introduction of new financial reporting requirements for NGOs, including NGOs with income of less than €35,000 that had not previously been subject to regulatory reporting requirements. However, the Constitutional Court had ruled against the new framework and the Government had accepted its ruling. The situation was now under comprehensive review.

41. The Lex Assassination had been enacted largely in response to public health and safety concerns and was intended to improve the management of assemblies. In addition to changes within the police force, it had introduced certain restrictions on the organization of public gatherings, but such restrictions were permitted only in very specific circumstances that were strictly defined in the new law.

42. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the police force had a zero-tolerance policy regarding excessive use of force, threats and threatening behaviour by officers. Amendments to the Act on the Police Force had been proposed that would prohibit the use of torture and any form of disrespectful behaviour towards persons deprived of their liberty and would introduce immediate reporting and preventive obligations for officers who witnessed such behaviours, and, in response to recommendations from international bodies, a two-step personal search procedure would be introduced. To increase professionalism within the police force, the scope of training had been extended, notably to accord increased attention to human rights, the public defender service, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and training frequency had been increased from once to twice yearly. To enhance public safety, body cameras were now worn by police officers, including traffic police officers.

43. **A representative of Slovakia** said that a unified methodology for the use of special interview rooms that addressed access, reasons for use and oversight was now in place. The rooms were not traditional interrogation rooms but rather designated spaces subject to special terms of use that had been drawn up in cooperation with the Public Defender of Rights.

44. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, while there were occasional, isolated incidents in which individual officers failed in their duties, the Slovak authorities were making systematic efforts to ensure that detainees were informed of their rights in a manner and language that they could understand. Part of those efforts entailed training prison officers, guards and other justice officials to ensure that information was conveyed in a way that was comprehensible even for persons with disabilities and minors.

45. Significant progress had been made towards compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules. The authorities were working in close cooperation with the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment with a view to implementing that body's recommendations as well as harmonizing national legislation and practice with international obligations under the Covenant.

46. Major amendments to the Act on the Execution of Detention were due to take effect in July 2026. The changes would increase the minimum size of prison cells, would allow for visits from persons in addition to close relatives, and, for prisoners with children, would ensure that visiting hours did not coincide with school hours and allow for video calls. In addition, it would no longer be possible to use bans on telephone calls as a form of discipline, and a prisoner's mental health would have to be considered before deciding upon any form of punishment. Mothers facing custodial sentences would be able to choose either to enter a special unit where their children could live with them up to the age of 3 or, in some cases, even 5 years old, or else to request a suspension or interruption of their sentence until their children reached the age of 3 years. New gender-specific resocialization programmes were also being developed.

47. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, pursuant to the case law of the Constitutional Court, registration as a religion or church was not a sine qua non for the exercise of religious activities. Muslims in the Slovak Republic were thus able to practise their religion individually or collectively without registration. It was true, however, that organizations of Muslims were not able to receive public funds or provide religious teaching in public schools, as only registered churches and religious movements were authorized to do so.

48. **A representative of Slovakia** said that protection against violence for all citizens, including children, was based on constitutional rights and the provisions of international instruments. The key legislation was the Family Act, specifically section 30 thereof, which provided that parents had a duty to protect and educate their children, to act in their best interests and never to undermine their emotional or physical dignity. Thus, corporal punishment or any other disciplinary measure that could have such effects were unacceptable. The legal framework for public institutions was stricter: corporal punishment was strictly prohibited in educational facilities and State guardianship institutions and was classified as a disciplinary violation or possibly even child abuse.

49. **Ms. Šurlan** said that she would appreciate a response to her question regarding the reporting obligations of healthcare professionals faced with cases of violence, as well as an update on the State Party's current position on ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), including the obstacles stopping it from becoming a State Party.

50. **Ms. Tigroudja** said that clarification regarding the number of approved asylum requests would be helpful, as it appeared that only a very small percentage of asylum applicants were granted asylum.

51. She would like confirmation as to whether obstacles to abortion such as the 48-hour waiting period and the fee payable remained in place, whether medical personnel were required, as had been reported, to forward information about abortions performed to the police, and whether access to abortion was authorized in cases of rape and marital rape. She would welcome further clarification regarding how protection for the unborn life tied in with women's right to abortion. Lastly, noting the importance of avoiding stereotypes, she asked what content was included in the courses for high school and vocational students on preparing for marriage.

52. **Mr. Helfer** said that it was still not clear to him whether the State Party would decriminalize defamation or at least reduce the penalties for such offences, and whether Directive (EU) 2024/1069 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ("Strategic lawsuits against public participation") would be transposed into national law. He would like more detail about the possible future constitutional amendments to further modify the circumstances in which members of the Judicial Council could be removed.

53. The concerns about money-laundering, the financing of terrorism, and public health and safety that were apparently at the root of Act No. 109/2025 and the Lex Assassination were obviously valid ones. However, as enshrined in the Covenant, constitutional jurisprudence and the case law of the European human rights system, any limits on the freedoms of association and assembly must be matched by safeguards ensuring that restrictions were not applied unnecessarily and did not impose disproportionate constraints. Accordingly, he would like to receive details of the safeguards in place in Slovakia.

54. **Mr. Fernández Liesa** said that he was still awaiting information about any plans to amend the Criminal Code to expressly criminalize the offence of torture and strengthen the independence of the body responsible for investigating abuses committed by the police. He would also appreciate disaggregated data on such cases.

55. Although Muslims and followers of other minority religions were free to practise their faith even if the religion was registered as a civic rather than religious association, the different status accorded to civic associations could pose problems nonetheless – for example making it difficult to establish burial sites or places of worship – and could lead to discrimination against certain religious communities.

56. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the Constitutional Court had concluded, on the basis of article 15 (1) of the Constitution, that the right to life enshrined therein was not a subjective right but rather an objective value that triggered two-fold protection: the Constitution directly protected the unborn child, requiring third parties to discourage and/or prevent women from terminating a pregnancy, but other legal frameworks and branches of law provided protection for the pregnant woman, thereby allowing a margin of discretion. The four-step procedure that women seeking an abortion must follow had been introduced to ensure that adequate consideration was given to the protection of unborn life and that the constitutional provision was upheld while at the same time providing due protection for women.

57. The constitutional amendments proposed in respect of the removal of members of the Judicial Council would make dismissal subject to objective reasons equivalent to those existing for the removal of judges. Those reasons included reduced legal capacity, criminal conviction and health issues that prevented the person from performing their functions.

58. **A representative of Slovakia** explained that, in 2005, there had been 163 applications for asylum, with 73 approved; in 2024, 165 applications, with 63 granted; and, in 2023, 416 applications, with 80 approved.

59. **A representative of Slovakia** said that, although the Slovak Republic had not ratified the Istanbul Convention, the legal framework and institutional mechanisms guaranteed protection against domestic and gender-based violence and the availability of specialized victim support services. More importantly, work was under way to transpose into national law Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, which established minimum standards similar to those set forth in the Istanbul Convention.

60. Healthcare professionals were bound by professional confidentiality in respect of patient information and could not report confidential details. However, legislative measures concerning the reporting of suspected cases of violence against women were currently being considered in the context of the transposition of the aforementioned Directive.

61. Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment were prohibited under the Constitution and national legislation, and torture was expressly criminalized as a stand-alone offence in section 420 of the Criminal Code.

62. **A representative of Slovakia** said that the purpose of the mandatory 48-hour waiting period for women seeking an abortion was to ensure that they had due time to evaluate their decision and that it was fully informed and voluntary.

63. **A representative of Slovakia**, thanking the Committee for the opportunity to report on progress in implementing the provisions of the Covenant, said that the Committee's recommendations, assessments and observations were very beneficial for his country and its efforts to meet its human rights obligations. His Government reiterated its support for the

work of the international community and the joint efforts of States, international governmental organizations and NGOs to strengthen and support democracy and uphold human rights in a just and balanced manner. It remained open to constructive dialogue and would make the maximum possible effort to implement the concluding observations issued by the Committee.

64. **The Chair**, thanking the delegation for the constructive dialogue, said that the Committee recognized the steps that the State Party had taken to implement the Covenant. However, some of the concerns raised had not yet been fully addressed. A more open and comprehensive exchange would have allowed for greater clarity and a deeper understanding of the challenges at hand. Nonetheless, the Committee had noted a number of encouraging developments, including efforts to strengthen the functioning and monitoring capacity of national human rights institutions, measures to enhance the protection of victims during criminal proceedings and initiatives to address gender inequality and reduce the gender pay gap. Matters of concern, on the other hand, included the continued structural discrimination faced by Roma communities, the implications of recent constitutional developments for the rights of lesbian, gay, transgender and intersex persons, the challenges to effective enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, the absence of a clear legislative framework addressing hate crimes, and the limited representation of women in political and senior leadership positions.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*