



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Summary record of the 1956th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 16 February 2023, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Peláez Narváez

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

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)

*Seventh periodic report of Slovenia (continued) (CEDAW/C/SVN/7;
CEDAW/C/SVN/QPR/7)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Slovenia joined the meeting.*

Articles 7–9

2. **Mr. Maljevac** (Slovenia), responding to questions raised at the previous meeting, said that the Government was committed to ensuring that the progress made in increasing the participation of women in political life, including in high-level positions, was sustained. While quotas had been helpful, it was also important to introduce other additional soft measures.

3. On the basis of the draft Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023–2030, two-year action plans would be prepared, giving details of the activities to be carried out and the accompanying funding. The draft Resolution was currently being coordinated by the various ministries involved and would be adopted by the National Assembly in the coming months.

4. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Government had launched a two-year project, supported by the European Union, that was aimed at changing attitudes towards women's participation in politics by combating gender stereotyping. Developments under the project included an educational programme for the empowerment of women; workshops for secondary school and university students; an online tool and workbook for women seeking to be more active in politics; guidelines on integrating gender perspectives into new policies; and an awareness-raising campaign. In the economic sector, the Government had launched a gender diversity initiative aimed at achieving increased representation of women in executive board positions, and it had plans to enact legislation within two years providing for gender equality in management positions in private companies.

5. As to the financing of soft measures, the Equal Opportunities Division in the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities would have a yearly budget of €60,000 in 2024 for financing projects carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which would increase by €10,000 per year to reach an annual total of €120,000 by 2030. The Division also had a yearly budget of €30,000 for campaigns promoting active employment, and it was currently preparing programmes to support women at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which would be funded by the European Union. In addition, funds were available to strengthen the role and status of rural women, and plans were in place to issue biennial funding for measures promoting entrepreneurship among women. Significant funding had been earmarked for health education and protection, including in the areas of nutrition, exercise and HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and funds would be made available in the future for the prevention of violence and the promotion of equal representation of women. In addition, a significant increase in funds was expected for international cooperation and humanitarian aid.

6. **Mr. Maljevac** (Slovenia) said that, as stipulated in article 43 (4) of the Constitution of Slovenia, the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men to stand in national and local elections must be provided for in legislation.

7. **A representative of Slovenia** said that studies had shown that the gender gap in high-ranking diplomatic posts had closed significantly, with the percentage of women increasing from 16 per cent in 2009 to 40 per cent in 2020, and that, while fewer women applied for consular and diplomatic mission posts than men, the success rate was higher among women. Nevertheless, challenges remained: significantly more women experienced discrimination than men; family responsibilities were a greater burden for women diplomats than men, particularly those posted abroad; and women diplomats who had experienced sexual harassment seldom reported it. Recent data from November 2022 showed that 48 per cent of

management positions in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs were held by women and 34 per cent of ambassadors were women.

8. **A representative of Slovenia** said that incitement to hatred ran contrary to the Constitution of Slovenia and was punishable by law. A clear definition of hate speech was contained in a decision adopted by the Supreme Court in 2019. The Government had established a hate speech council whose responsibilities included monitoring hate speech in Slovenia and advising on the drafting of legislation, regulations and policy related to hate speech. In addition, under the Criminal Code, crimes shown to be motivated by hatred, such as femicide, carried more severe penalties.

9. **A representative of Slovenia** said that a parliamentary ethical code had been established in 2020, in accordance with which all members of the National Assembly must act in a conscientious, honest and non-discriminatory manner. Members were sanctioned for violations, more severely so for repeat violations. Serious offences were made public on the National Assembly website. Three alleged violations were currently under review.

10. **A representative of Slovenia**, responding to questions about Roma women's participation in political life, said that 4 out of the 20 currently serving Roma municipality councillors were women and that 4 out of 14 current members of the Roma Community Council were women.

11. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Government had reservations about ratifying the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness owing to the fact that, under article 12, certain provisions of the Convention applied retroactively to persons who were born before its entry into force. The occurrence of statelessness in Slovenia was prevented under the provisions of the Citizenship Act; acquiring citizenship was simpler under the provisions of that Act than under those of the Convention. However, discussions on the possibility of ratifying the Convention had been held during a meeting between the Ministry of the Interior and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in November 2022.

12. **Ms. Manalo** said that she would be interested to learn about women's participation in defence, including the percentage representation of women in the army, navy and air force; whether women could enter military training establishments and had the opportunity to advance to high-ranking positions; and whether the post of Minister of Defence in Slovenia had ever been held by a woman.

13. **Ms. Stott Depoja** said that she would be interested to know whether the State party was considering implementing any mechanisms to increase Roma women's participation in decision-making bodies and councils. In addition, the delegation might provide more information, possibly in writing, about the establishment and mandate of the hate speech council, and it might also comment on reports of sexist insults, violence and hate speech against public figures who were women, including journalists and human rights defenders.

14. **A representative of Slovenia** said that women comprised some 16 per cent of the Slovenian armed forces overall and around 9 per cent of those serving in missions abroad, and they had the opportunity to advance to a senior rank. Two women had served as Minister of Defence and one had served as Chief of the General Staff.

15. Twenty-seven per cent of the chief executive officers and 24 per cent of the directors of the major listed companies in Slovenia were women. In addition, under the Companies Act adopted in 2021, companies were obliged to include gender diversity data in their annual reports.

Articles 10–14

16. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that girls dominated in secondary school enrolment and in subjects such as education, health care and social studies but were significantly underrepresented in information and communications technology (ICT) and other related subjects. She would therefore be interested to know more about the State party's overarching policy for addressing the gender gap in digitalization and in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). She would also be interested to know whether the State party was considering using temporary special measures to bridge that gap. Similarly, vertical gender

segregation was an issue in tertiary education: the higher proportion of women than men engaged in master's and doctoral studies did not appear to be reflected in the proportion of women holding positions as deans, professors and higher education administrative staff. She would be glad if the delegation would provide more data to elucidate that situation. She wondered whether the State party had already implemented temporary special measures to improve that ratio and, if not, when such measures, including reallocation of resources and differential treatment, might be introduced.

17. Noting that girls accounted for only 33 per cent of pupils with special needs in schools, she wondered whether the delegation might comment on that low figure and state whether any measures had been taken to investigate and correct any underlying causes.

18. She wished to know whether the State party had conducted a gender impact assessment of the strategy for education of Roma and collected statistical data on rates of enrolment, attendance and dropout among Roma girls at the primary and secondary levels, as recommended by the Committee in its concluding observations on the State party's combined fifth and sixth periodic reports. If so, the delegation might comment on what those data showed. The delegation might also comment on the possibility that the marriage age of 15 years, with judicial consent, might be having some effect on those rates. In that connection, she asked whether the State party had plans to institutionalize the Committee's standard for comprehensive sexuality education, which was mandatory, universal and age-appropriate and addressed issues of power and responsible sexual behaviour. One of the many purposes of the application of that standard was to prevent early pregnancy.

19. As to the State party's preparations for conducting research, in cooperation with public universities, on sexual and other forms of harassment and violence within the higher education sphere in Slovenia, she wondered when that research would be concluded and whether the delegation could share any preliminary findings.

20. Lastly, she would be interested to learn more about the education of refugees in Slovenia, particularly in view of the current situation in the region.

21. **Ms. Akizuki** said that the Committee, while commending the fact that the State party had had one of the smallest gender pay gaps in the European Union in 2020, was concerned by reports that women with disabilities earned 8 per cent less than men with disabilities and that rural women with disabilities were particularly marginalized, as well as by reports of the gendered segregation of professions, the prevalence of gender pay gaps in the care sector and gender inequality in economic decision-making. She wondered what measures would be taken to address the gender pay gap in the care sector and to support women with disabilities and rural women; what measures had already been taken to assist women in gaining access to traditionally male-dominated fields of employment, including STEM fields; and what measures were being taken to ensure access to long-term employment for marginalized groups of women, including Roma women, and to increase women' participation in economic decision-making.

22. Noting the recent wage increases in the childcare sector, she would be interested to know more about how access to affordable and accessible childcare facilities was ensured for all parents, especially those from rural and poor communities. Information about the availability of childcare facilities and any subsidies offered would be of particular interest. Similarly, she wondered whether any measures had been taken to provide support for women in balancing their work and family life, apart from the programmes carried out by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the multigenerational centres set up by the Government.

23. Observing that sexual harassment was prohibited under article 45 of the Employment Relationship Act, she would be interested to know how the provisions of that article were enforced and, in particular, what procedures were in place to prevent, monitor and punish sexual harassment at work. Information about any harassment cases examined through such procedures and the outcomes of any such cases would also be welcome. Lastly, she wondered what steps the State party had taken towards ratifying the International Labour Organization Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

24. **Mr. Maljevac** (Slovenia) said that the care sector was a priority area for his Government. Discussions on improving working conditions in the sector were currently under way.

25. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Government had launched a strategy in 2022 for promoting gender equality in research, which included mechanisms for the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual violence in research institutions; the provision of support for research institutions in making structural changes to promote gender equality; and measures to ensure that gender equality was a consideration when allocating funding for projects, approving topics for research and appointing members of research bodies. Several measures were already in place to encourage women into non-traditional studies and careers; they included career centres in higher education institutions and a project to persuade women to choose engineering as a profession. Additional incentives had been introduced to increase the number of men studying for master's and doctoral degrees and also to encourage students to study ICT.

26. The Ministry of Education was endeavouring to establish a gender balance among primary schoolteachers, the majority of whom were currently women. The Ministry was also working on reforming the curriculum to include gender considerations and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of data. The latter would form the basis for taking decisions on how to improve the performance of boys at primary school.

27. Measures to support women in their professional development included ensuring an extensive network of high-quality State childcare facilities. If places in State facilities were not available, grants could be awarded to cover some of the cost of a place in a private facility. The opening hours of childcare facilities, which extended into weekday evenings and, where necessary, into Saturday, ensured that shift workers could also benefit from them.

28. Regarding the inclusion of Roma in education, the key achievement had been the project promoting the employment of Roma assistants in primary schools and some kindergartens.

29. Information would be provided in writing about women with disabilities and the temporary special measures being taken to increase the number of women working in high-level tertiary education positions.

30. **A representative of Slovenia** said that refugee children had access to primary and secondary schools, vocational colleges and higher education institutions and were enrolled under the same conditions as Slovenian children. Refugee children of primary school age receive additional teaching in the Slovenian language, whereas refugee children over 15 years of age must complete a 300-hour Slovenian literacy course before attending school.

31. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the sexual and reproductive health education would be revised as part of general reforms to the curriculum. No preliminary findings of the research on sexual and other forms of harassment and violence within higher education were yet available.

32. **A representative of Slovenia** said that a platform had been developed to offer career advice to students and encourage girls to enter professions in STEM fields. A law on digital inclusion had been adopted in 2022 to boost uptake of higher education subjects that involved digital competencies. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, in collaboration with NGOs, had launched a project to promote STEM education among girls and help them escape gender stereotypes. It had proved highly successful and would be repeated in 2023. In another project, girls were mentored by engineers and manufactured products using a range of technical and engineering skills.

33. To promote education for all, scholarships were available for marginalized groups, including children from low-income families, gifted children and those who wished to study abroad. The majority of students who received scholarships for gifted children were girls, although they accounted for only a small minority of those who were awarded company scholarships. A media campaign had been carried out to raise awareness of pensions among women and girls entering the labour market, in order to reduce the gender pension gap, and a project had been developed to encourage men and boys to enter care professions.

Furthermore, Slovenia would be hosting the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad in April 2023 to showcase girls' achievements in mathematics.

34. **Mr. Maljevac** (Slovenia) said that one third of research staff and a quarter of professors were women.

35. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she wished to know what measures the State party had taken to address regional disparities in access to health-care services and adequate insurance policies; how the State party ensured that women from minority or vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities and migrant and Roma women, received quality health care; and whether there were specific indicators and benchmarks for monitoring and assessing programmes to provide accessible and high-quality sexual and reproductive health-care services, including prenatal and postnatal care, safe abortions and post-abortion care, for women from vulnerable or minority groups. She wondered what measures had been taken to compensate for the adverse effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on access to such services; how the State party intended to address long waiting times; and how the Government might restructure and strengthen the primary health-care system to address the challenges posed by an ageing population and ensure that it responded to the needs of women, including at the local and community levels. She would be interested to learn whether the National Mental Health Programme had a specific focus on women; whether future plans and programmes would take ageing into account; how the State party would strengthen preventive care for the most common and most serious non-communicable diseases that affected women; what incentives the Government might introduce to encourage women to undergo regular testing and screening; and whether the State party planned to conduct thorough research on the main causes, risk factors, incidence and impact of breast cancer in Slovenia.

36. **Ms. Mikko** said that it would be useful to have information on how the parental leave system functioned from a gender equality perspective and how likely fathers in Slovenia were to take parental leave. Given that, among those over 75 years of age, women were more likely than men to be living below the poverty line, she would be interested to hear how the State party ensured that older persons lived with dignity and what strategy the Government had to address the widening gender pension gap. She wished to know what the outcome of the "My Work. My Pension" campaign and similar programmes had been, and whether the State party had devised an action plan in the light of a new European Union directive aimed at improving the gender balance on company boards.

37. **A representative of Slovenia** said that special programmes were in place to assist women with drug dependence, who often belonged to vulnerable groups. Shelters and treatment centres were available, and medical staff were given guidelines on how to handle cases involving vulnerable women. Psychosocial support was provided to women in prisons and, over the coming six-year period, a programme would be implemented to support female detainees, especially mothers. Education and literacy were an important part of the National Mental Health Programme. A network of mental health centres for children, adolescents and adults had been established, which employed multidisciplinary teams of professionals who focused on the needs of vulnerable groups.

38. The Government had developed three programmes for the early detection of cancer, which were funded from compulsory health insurance contributions. Free screening was provided for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer, in line with European Union recommendations, and almost three quarters of people who had been invited to take part had done so. The number of deaths from those types of cancer had decreased as a result. The programme had been suspended during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic but had resumed from mid-2020.

39. Rates of sexually transmitted infections in Slovenia were low, owing to good education and the possibility to undergo regular check-ups. Medical students played a role in providing sex education to children and adolescents. Testing and treatment for infections, including HIV and hepatitis B and C, were available directly from specialists without the need for referral from a general practitioner, as part of the compulsory health insurance scheme. Abortion rates among young women, in particular, had decreased over the previous decade.

40. **A representative of Slovenia** said that all refugees had access to urgent medical care and services such as contraception, abortion services, and prenatal and postnatal care were provided to women refugees. Psychotherapy and other forms of mental health care were also available. A special commission under the auspices of the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants had the discretion to offer a broader range of services to refugees as required. The Government was preparing a legislative amendment to grant Ukrainian refugee women access to health-care services on an equal footing with Slovenian citizens.

41. **A representative of Slovenia** said that amendments to the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act were being drafted to extend parental leave for mothers and fathers from 260 days to 320 days. The benefit payment would also be increased to encourage more fathers to take leave, both parents would have the option of working fewer hours, and an awareness campaign had been launched to tackle stereotypes surrounding parental leave. As part of efforts to reduce the gender pension gap, the average wage rather than the minimum wage was used to calculate pension entitlements. Broader pension system reforms were planned under the current Government and changes would be made to widows' pensions, in particular.

42. **Mr. Safarov** said that he wished to know how the Government planned to reduce the high poverty rate among older single women and single-parent families, and how social protection and security reform would affect women on low incomes, especially those in rural areas. He would be interested to hear whether the State party was taking measures to ensure sufficient capacity for asylum-seeking women and girls in reception centres; to streamline the process for asylum-seekers to access reception centres; to offer places at reception centres for single women; and to ensure adequate security conditions for families living in informal settlements. He wondered whether the State party was ensuring appropriate, safe and confidential settings and providing counselling about the importance of disclosing information on violence and exploitation, as well as about the right of all women to express their preference concerning the gender of interviewers and interpreters. What was the main challenge for the State in promoting equal participation by women and girls with disabilities in all services?

Articles 15 and 16

43. **Ms. Leinarte** said that she wished to know how notaries were able to identify cases where women were placed under pressure to divorce as a result of gender-based violence, and what safeguards against such violence were included as part of the uncontested divorce procedure. She wondered how the new definition of union under the Family Code differed from the concept of marriage; how many early marriages were registered each year on average; what steps the State party was taking to prevent early and forced marriage; and whether the Government intended to raise the marriage age to 18 years. She would appreciate information about the typical profile of persons who married early, including their ethnicity, level of education and reasons for marrying early.

44. **Mr. Maljevac** (Slovenia) said that the Government intended to reform the pension and long-term care systems in 2023. The Constitutional Court had rendered two decisions in 2022 that had declared the previous Family Code to be discriminatory against same-sex couples and thus unconstitutional. Under the new definition of marriage, all partners had equal rights, including adoption rights.

45. **A representative of Slovenia** said that positive discrimination measures were in place to protect vulnerable groups, including older persons, persons with disabilities and members of the Roma community. Albanian women, who were regarded as a vulnerable group, were offered Slovenian language classes separately from men, since they were not permitted to attend classes with members of opposite sex.

46. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the courts could allow persons aged between 15 and 18 years to marry under exceptional circumstances. Seven couples within that age range had married during the period 2018–2020.

47. **A representative of Slovenia** said that an action plan had been introduced to ensure that Roma communities had access to health care, education and employment. Programmes

had been implemented to raise awareness among Roma communities of harmful practices, including early and forced marriage.

48. **Mr. Maljevac** (Slovenia), expressing thanks to the Committee for a productive dialogue, said that answers to questions raised concerning articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Convention would be submitted in writing.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.