



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 September 2024

Original: English

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Seventy-sixth session

Summary record (partial)* of the 34th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Wednesday, 11 September 2024, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Crăciunean-Tatu

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

Consideration of reports:

(a) Reports submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant
(continued)

Seventh periodic report of Poland (continued) (E/C.12/POL/7; E/C.12/POL/Q/7; E/C.12/POL/RQ/7)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Poland joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Poland**, resuming his delegation's replies to the questions raised at the previous meeting, said that unemployment benefits were adjusted annually using a statutory indexation mechanism. The standard allowance was currently 1,660 zlotys (Zł) per month. Through a labour market and employment services bill, there were plans to increase the percentage of the allowance granted to individuals with less than five years' work experience from 80 to 100 per cent from the beginning of 2025. Increases to the allowance had to be balanced against budget constraints and the need to provide incentives to work.
3. **A representative of Poland** said that there were several European Union directives in place to protect so-called posted workers, in other words, employees sent by their employer to carry out a service in another European Union member State on a temporary basis. They included Directive (EU) 2018/957 of 28 June 2018 amending Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, which required member States to ensure subcontracting liability in the construction sector. In other economic sectors, member States could put in place a system of subcontracting liability that was even wider in scope, provided it was non-discriminatory and proportionate. Polish workers posted to another member State were covered by the relevant legislation of that State. According to 2022 data from the European Commission, Poland, Germany and Lithuania were the three European Union States that posted the most workers, with the main flows being from Poland to Germany, from Lithuania to Austria and from Poland to Austria.
4. **A representative of Poland** said that, as part of an ongoing review of the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040, consideration was being given to further developing not only wind and solar capacities but also renewable energy sources that were not weather-dependent, such as biomass. The use of renewable energy sources in hybrid installations and in energy clusters and cooperatives was viewed as highly desirable, as was maintaining a high level of cybersecurity in power grids. The growing share of renewable energy sources in the energy system required the development of energy storage facilities, in order to reduce the effects of potential disturbances in the production or transmission of energy. Poland was on track to install smart electricity meters for 80 per cent of consumers by 2028, thanks in part to the establishment of the Energy Market Information Operator, which was tasked with running the smart metering system.
5. In response to climate change, adaptation activities were being carried out in rural areas to build agricultural resilience, protect production, improve water retention and restore roadside vegetation, particularly in the regions most exposed to drought and desertification. Such activities were an important part of the Strategy for Sustainable Rural, Agricultural and Fisheries Development 2030.
6. **A representative of Poland** said that, in March 2024, the Supreme Audit Office had conducted an audit of the National Freedom Institute covering the period 2021–2023. In the resulting report, which had been published, the Office had criticized the actions of the former head of the Institute and had confirmed allegations of politically motivated funding decisions. The new head of the Institute, appointed following an open and competitive recruitment process, had expressed a commitment to implementing the Office's recommendations and had even requested several organizations to return unlawfully granted donations as part of an overhaul of the donation process.
7. **A representative of Poland** said that, since July 2024, the Minister for Equality had been responsible for the issue of domestic violence. Recent amendments to various laws aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence, which were outlined in paragraphs 93

to 95 of the replies to the list of issues (E/C.12/POL/RQ/7), had been put forward in the interests of implementing the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. In 2023, the police had arrested around 80,000 individuals on suspicion of domestic violence and had issued 12,000 protection orders, up from 3,000 in 2022. It was important to note that orders were also issued by prosecutors and civil and criminal courts. The Ministry of Justice had submitted statistics to the Committee in that regard.

8. **A representative of Poland** said that, to improve the handling of domestic violence cases, the Ministry of Justice had organized interdisciplinary webinars for some 500 probation officers, 30,000 police officers, 1,100 military police officers and almost 600 first responders. Furthermore, a handbook had been developed for police and military police officers on how to intervene in cases of domestic violence, including in migrant families. On 15 February 2024, the Family and Guardianship Code had been amended to strengthen the protection of children from violence and to introduce a more effective mechanism for responding to cases of abuse and neglect. The amendments were also designed to improve the legal representation of children in court proceedings, require family judges to complete specialized training on a periodic basis, ensure the transparency of procedures for dealing with suspected child abuse, and make criminal record checks mandatory for all persons wishing to work with children. An incident analysis team had been set up within the Ministry of Justice to investigate all child deaths and serious injuries, and a special team for the protection of minors had been established, with representatives of all ministries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the police, the Border Guard and religious associations.

9. **A representative of Poland** said that a review of national legislation was under way to ensure compliance with Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The deadline to implement the Directive was June 2027. It was a certainty that Polish criminal laws would need to be amended, in particular to cover cyberviolence. However, such violence was already included in the definition of domestic violence under the Act on Counteracting Domestic Violence, enabling victims to access support and the police to issue protection orders.

10. **A representative of Poland** said that, in October 2023, the Government had adopted the National Plan to Prevent Sexual Offences and Offences against Decency Suffered by Minors for the period 2023–2026. Activities under the Plan, coordinated by a dedicated team for the protection of minors within the Ministry of Justice, aimed to improve the detection of offences, create a juvenile-friendly justice system, raise public awareness of offences and improve coordination among relevant government and non-governmental institutions. Another key objective of the Plan was to establish codes of procedure in cases of cybercrime against children. To that end, specialized teams had been established, with support from the Ministry of Digital Affairs and experts from NASK, the Research and Academic Computer Network, to receive and analyse reports of cyberviolence.

11. **A representative of Poland** said that victims of psychological violence, like victims of any human rights violation, had access to justice under the Civil Code and could seek compensation in court.

12. **A representative of Poland** said that the recent surge in house prices had been driven by temporary external factors, including inflationary pressures stemming from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the huge influx of people from Ukraine following the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Individuals from Ukraine were being accommodated in regular apartments on a non-discriminatory basis, which had pushed up prices. However, the affordability of apartments was relatively unchanged compared to 2015, as the significant increase in prices had been matched by growth in average wages. In 2023, approximately 7.9 average annual salaries had been required to purchase an apartment of 70 square metres, compared to 8.1 in 2022 and 7.8 in 2021. The Government's response to house price inflation had been to boost support for the social housing sector, with plans for such support to total Zł 40 billion by 2030. In the first half of 2024, around 2,400 social housing apartments had been made available, the highest number in a decade. According to preliminary data from Statistics Poland, at the end of 2023, some 123,000 households had been on the social housing waiting list, 24.7 per cent fewer than in 2015.

13. **A representative of Poland** said that the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy produced a biennial report on homelessness covering every voivodeship (region), the most recent of which had been published in August 2023. The report contained details of policies to combat homelessness, the support provided to homeless persons, the number of beneficiaries, and the number of individuals who had been successful in securing accommodation of their own. It also outlined the measures taken to foster social inclusion and provided data on programmes to combat homelessness and their funding. The issue of homelessness was addressed in the Strategy for the Development of Social Services, the objectives of which included establishing an effective system of support for homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness, and transitioning from institutional to community-based support, in particular through the provision of flexible supported housing options. Homelessness support was offered mainly through the social welfare system and comprised a wide range of benefits and services, such as shelters and other facilities, social work and individual assistance programmes. According to a national homelessness survey conducted in February 2024, the first in five years, there were 31,000 homeless individuals in Poland, of whom 80 per cent were men. The total number of homeless people had remained stable in recent years, having stood at 33,000 in 2017 and 30,000 in 2019. Survey respondents had identified the main causes of homelessness as alcohol addiction, family conflict, and eviction or other housing issues. Under the Beating Homelessness Programme, 44 projects had been selected for implementation in 2024.

14. **A representative of Poland** said that measures to tackle regional disparities included the National Strategy for Regional Development 2030, regional programmes for all 16 voivodeships and the European Funds for Eastern Poland programme 2021–2027. The Government was also working on a medium-term country development strategy with a focus on polycentric development.

15. **A representative of Poland** said that the National Programme for Cardiovascular Diseases 2022–2032 provided for actions to enhance the coordination of care for cardiac patients, rationalize hospital care, shift the emphasis from inpatient to outpatient care, and improve coordination between the two. Those objectives would be achieved through the development and implementation of standards and guidelines for diagnostic and therapeutic management, as well as of organizational standards for the National Cardiology Network taking into account the current situation with regard to the public financing of health-care services. A pilot programme had been launched in seven voivodeships to evaluate the organization, quality and outcomes of cardiac care provided within the Network to patients suffering from resistant and secondary hypertension, heart failure, supraventricular and ventricular arrhythmia, conduction disturbance and valvular heart defects, among other conditions. Moreover, a bill was being drafted to improve the accessibility and quality of cardiovascular treatment nationwide.

16. **A representative of Poland** said that, on 9 August 2024, the Public Prosecutor General had issued guidelines for prosecutors designed to ensure that women who had undergone an abortion were questioned with the utmost respect for their dignity, avoiding any form of victimization.

17. **A representative of Poland** said that the Ministry of Health had taken several steps to enhance access to abortion services and guarantee that all health professionals complied with applicable regulations and respected patients' rights. It had amended the regulations governing the general terms and conditions of contracts for the provision of health-care services to require hospitals to perform legal abortion procedures even in cases of conscientious objection by a doctor. Non-compliance resulted in a contractual penalty of up to 2 per cent. In August 2024, the Ministry had issued guidelines on interpreting abortion legislation for hospital directors, senior consultants and heads of department. The purpose of the guidelines was to ensure the health, safety and lawful treatment of women who wished to exercise their abortion rights, and to confirm the legal security of doctors who acted in accordance with the law.

18. **A representative of Poland** said that, as part of reforms carried out within the mental health-care system since 2018, steps had been taken to move towards a community-based model of psychiatric care, and the Ministry of Health had established mental health centres, where appointments for admission in urgent cases were granted no later than 72 hours after

notification. Combating mental health stigma was one of the main goals of the cross-sectoral National Mental Health Protection Programme 2023–2030. The number of psychiatrists in Poland was increasing year on year, and psychiatry was among the seven most popular specialties for junior doctors. The Ministry had placed emphasis on the role of psychologists, psychotherapists and community therapists in the early detection of mental health crises. Since 2015, funding for mental health services had increased by 300 per cent.

19. **Mr. Nonthasoot** said that he would appreciate information on the availability of harm reduction services for drug users and a response to concerns that no such services existed in prisons.

20. **Ms. Lee** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would be interested to know when the bill recognizing civil partnerships would be adopted and whether the bill granted equal rights to same-sex and heterosexual couples. Given the limited availability and accessibility of harm reduction programmes, she wondered whether the State party had plans to review its policies on drug use. She would be grateful for an indication of whether legal amendments would be introduced to expand access to safe abortion, for a description of the steps taken to change the widespread perception among the general public and criminal justice officials that domestic violence, including marital rape, was a private rather than a criminal matter, and for a response to allegations that women who pressed charges were often revictimized through intrusive and negative media attention, smear campaigns, intimidation by defendants and drawn-out investigations.

21. **Ms. Saran** (Country Task Force) said that she wished to know whether it was true that the wealthiest 20 per cent of the State party's population received the same share of public cash transfers as the poorest 20 per cent and, if so, whether there were plans to reform the social security system to make it more redistributive.

22. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** (Country Task Force), noting reports that migrant workers in Poland had paid bribes averaging US\$ 5,000 to obtain a work permit, said that he wondered what steps the Government had taken to prevent such corruption and hold perpetrators to account, and what was done to protect the economic, social and cultural rights of Polish migrant workers, bearing in mind that the country was not a party to the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

23. **Ms. Rossi** said that she would welcome details of any financial assistance and employment and housing support offered to women victims of domestic violence who were forced to leave their homes. It would also be useful to know whether changes would be enacted to ensure that children entitled to Polish citizenship by descent who were born abroad to same-sex parents enjoyed the same right to be recognized as a Polish citizen as children born in Poland to heterosexual parents.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

24. **A representative of Poland** said that individuals fighting any form of addiction were able to access medical services such as detoxification, inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient psychotherapy and substance abuse treatment programmes free of charge.

25. **A representative of Poland** said that the Government was not in the process of drafting any amendments to abortion legislation. Instead, the Ministry of Health was focusing on ensuring the clear and transparent implementation of the provisions in force. The Sejm (the lower chamber of the parliament) currently had before it three abortion bills and had established an extraordinary committee to consider them.

26. **A representative of Poland** said that the Government had prepared the bill recognizing civil partnerships as part of its commitment to implementing the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The bill would be submitted to various ministries and civil society organizations for consultation by the end of September 2024, and it was hoped that it would be put forward to the Sejm before the end of the year. The bill made civil partnerships open to same- and opposite-sex couples on an equal basis. However, marriage remained available only to opposite-sex couples.

27. Children entitled to Polish citizenship by descent who were born abroad to same-sex parents had the same rights as other Polish citizens as long as they had been issued a Polish passport or identity card. Issues had arisen from the refusal of relevant authorities to transcribe the foreign birth certificates of such children into the Polish civil status registry. The European Court of Justice had ruled that, while the authorities were not obliged to register foreign birth certificates, they did have a duty to issue identity documents to citizens. The Ministry of the Interior and Administration was responsible for handling appeals against the refusal to issue an identity document on the basis of a foreign birth certificate and often overturned negative decisions. The Government was committed to ensuring the issuance of identity documents even in cases where a foreign birth certificate was not transcribed.

28. It was true that misconceptions about gender-based and domestic violence abounded in Polish society. Eradicating them had not been a priority until 2023. The National Programme for the Prevention of Family Violence provided for campaigns and other activities to combat negative stereotypes.

29. **A representative of Poland** said that the National School for the Judiciary and Public Prosecution organized training courses on domestic violence for justice officials.

30. **A representative of Poland** said that, while benefits were available for individuals on a low or no income, there was no specific financial support for victims of domestic violence.

31. **A representative of Poland** said that the Government was fully aware of the problem of bribery in the work permit procedure. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy had recently advised offices issuing work permits to treat applications very cautiously. A new law on the employment of foreigners, due to enter into force on 1 January 2025, would provide for increased penalties for offending employers and agencies and would introduce several new grounds for denying a work permit. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was working on a new act regulating the issue of visas. Other action included efforts to inform and cooperate with migrants' countries of origin and to coordinate across the various ministries involved, particularly through information technology systems. Numerous potential frauds had been brought to light in that way.

32. A project, supported by the European Social Fund, to establish best practices to ensure fair recruitment was in the pipeline. It would involve cooperation with three selected countries and Polish employers.

33. Every few years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs adopted a special plan for the Polish diaspora. The plan had a dedicated budget and contained numerous measures to support Polish migrants, including in respect of their social and cultural rights. There was also a dedicated web portal for returnees.

34. **A representative of Poland** said that a comprehensive system of protection against rape had been established in Polish criminal law. A significant recent amendment to the Criminal Code, due to enter into force in February 2025, had changed the definition of rape to take into account the absence of a victim's conscious and voluntary consent. The new provisions also applied to marital rape.

35. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he would like to know how many schools had benefited from the Active Blackboard Programme since its introduction in October 2020, and how the State party had ensured equal access to the Programme. He would be interested to hear whether the Programme had been adapted specifically to cater for children with disabilities or with special educational needs. Did the Government plan to ensure its sustainability beyond the current year? How was the use of the equipment and materials provided to schools monitored?

36. Referring to paragraph 135 of the Government's replies to the list of issues, he would like to know the name of the programme that had been launched to help students return to school after the COVID-19 pandemic, and in what languages classes had been provided as part of that programme.

37. Turning to the promotion of further education for Roma children, he wished to know to what extent the scholarships awarded in the Programme for the Social and Civic

Integration of the Roma in Poland 2021–2030 had met the social needs of the Roma population. Noting that, in 2022, a Roma organization had been asked to conduct a study into the effectiveness of the scholarship system, he wondered whether it had presented its report. If so, did the report contain information that would enable the State to maintain or improve the scholarship system? He would be interested to know why the Government had delegated the task of reporting on the matter to a local organization and how the quality of the study was guaranteed, in accordance with the State party's obligations.

38. He would appreciate further information to supplement the Government's replies to paragraph 25 of the list of issues (E/C.12/POL/Q/7). He would like to know the specific outcomes of the various projects and scholarships aimed at reducing dropout rates among Roma children in primary schools; the specific measures that had been taken to ensure access to education for asylum-seeking and refugee children; and how asylum-seeking and refugee children had been integrated into local education systems, taking into account the potential language or cultural barriers. He would like to know how many teachers working in minority or regional languages had been trained and recruited recently, and how the Government ensured that they were available in the regions where they were needed. He would like the delegation to explain how the State party monitored the impact of measures to improve school retention and performance among children from Roma and other minorities, and whether any statistics were available to show the progress made in that regard. What role did Roma families and communities play in implementing such educational programmes? Were their views taken into consideration in policy development?

39. Referring to paragraph 268 of the State party's periodic report (E/C.12/POL/7), he would be interested to learn what methodology had been used to ensure and verify that all Roma children did indeed complete primary education. The Committee had noticed that, notwithstanding the availability of scholarships, the rate of Roma enrolment in secondary and higher education was low. Did the Government have information on the causes of school dropout among the Roma, and what steps was it taking to tackle it? He would also like to know what measures were being taken to increase the number of Roma assistants in schools in the places where they were most needed.

40. There was a worrying lack of information in the periodic report on the right to free primary education, apart from a remark to the effect that there had been no change in that regard. Such information was vital if the Committee was to make relevant recommendations. He would appreciate it if the delegation could provide further information, in writing if necessary, on the number of children who were enrolled in school and the number not in school; measures taken to ensure high-quality primary education in general; the coverage of primary education; the proportion of gross domestic product devoted to investment in education; and any relevant monitoring measures.

41. With regard to cultural rights, the Committee had received information indicating that Silesians were not recognized as an ethnic minority and that their language was not recognized as a regional language. Furthermore, Vilamovian was not recognized as a regional language under the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Languages. He would be interested to hear whether the State party believed that such recognition was important, and what measures it intended to take to ensure that the lack of recognition was not an impediment to participation in the cultural life of the nation without discrimination. He would appreciate an update on the current situation.

42. In 2019, the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities had found that institutions for the preservation of the culture and language of certain minorities in the State party faced obstacles to obtaining funding. Given that such groups contributed to the cultural wealth of the State, he would like to know what public investment would be made to ensure that minorities could exercise their right to participate in cultural life and to engage in mutual cultural exchanges.

43. The Committee continued to be concerned at reports of discrimination against Roma on cultural grounds. It would be useful to know if there were any campaigns to raise awareness about funds that could be made available to Roma groups, and what administrative and legal measures might be used to prevent such discrimination.

44. **A representative of Poland** said that persons subject to compulsory schooling who did not speak Polish well enough to benefit from education had the right to assistance from a speaker of the language of their country of origin. Employment of such a teaching assistant was mandatory, and assistance was provided for a maximum of 12 months.

45. In addition, a recent regulation permitted schools to employ intercultural assistants, in part to help non-Polish citizens, whether pupils or their parents, in their contacts with the administration. Intercultural assistants assessed pupils' degree of culture shock, identified barriers to adaptation and integration, and took preventive and corrective action. They also worked with families and school staff in efforts to prevent violence, exclusion and discrimination. Such positions were open to Polish or non-Polish nationals with a sufficient command of spoken and written Polish to help a non-Polish-speaking student. They were also required to know the language and culture of the student's country, to have completed secondary education and have no criminal record. Intercultural assistants had the status of local government employees.

46. Students of Roma origin had access to education on the same basis as all students subject to compulsory schooling. In some cases, educational problems arose due to cultural differences and an attachment to traditional modes of raising and caring for children. One important reason for failure in school, as pointed out by representatives of the Roma community, was Roma children's poor knowledge of Polish. In such situations, schools were obliged to take additional action, such as providing classes in Polish or other subjects, or employing auxiliary teachers trained to work in a multicultural environment with bilingual children. They could also employ Roma educational assistants, who had the status of local government employees and whose most important task was to provide emotional support to Roma children and students while helping the school to apply school rules. They also monitored student attendance and progress. Other tasks included helping teachers to recognize Roma children's specific needs and problems, mediating in crisis or conflict situations, and organizing meetings for school communities to familiarize them with Roma culture and traditions. In the last quarter of 2023, there had been a total of 77 Roma educational assistants.

47. The Ministry of Education participated in the Programme for the Social and Civic Integration of the Roma. Action financed by the Ministry concerned not only students of Roma origin but often the entire Roma community in a given locality. In 2023, Zł 700,000 had been guaranteed for additional educational tasks, and in September 2023 additional educational tasks had been undertaken in respect of more than 1,900 children of Roma origin in kindergartens.

48. Every child aged between 3 and 5 residing in Polish territory had the right to a minimum of five hours' preschool education per day. Preschool education was the responsibility of local government bodies, with financial support provided from the State budget in the form of subsidies. In recent years, around 91 per cent of children in that age group had attended preschool, a figure that had fallen slightly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for preschool education and maintenance of the high quality of that education achieved to date were priority tasks for the Ministry of Education in the years to 2026. A new core curriculum would be developed and implemented.

49. To ensure equal treatment and tackle stereotyping and discrimination, the Ministry of Education engaged experts to assess textbooks' compliance with the core curriculum, with the general regulations governing a given stage of education, with linguistic standards and also with relevant legal provisions, the Constitution and international agreements ratified by Poland. A textbook was approved for use only if it met all the conditions specified.

50. In the 2023/24 school year, various formal teacher training courses had been held with the aims of increasing competence in developing positive relations in schools and the local community and of encouraging an understanding of how respect for diversity affected the equal treatment of children and young people with diverse educational needs.

51. A programme was in place to improve educational opportunities for young people from rural areas. Funding was provided to NGOs, associations and students' clubs for activities aimed at increasing access to culture for young people in small towns.

52. **A representative of Poland** said that the rights of national and ethnic minorities were regulated by law. Financial and organizational arrangements were in place to ensure that they could protect, maintain and develop their cultural identity and languages, and that the socioeconomic situation of minorities did not differ from that of other social groups.

53. The Government was sensitive to the needs of the Silesian community and was aware that the Silesian culture should be preserved. Although legislation on recognition of the Silesian language had not entered into force, dialogue with the Silesian community was ongoing.

54. In the 2021 national census, just over half a million people, or approximately 1.5 per cent of the total population, had self-identified as belonging to national or ethnic minorities. Minorities received funding for their activities on an annual basis.

55. The Government was aware of the difficulties faced by Roma people and had been implementing strategies to support Roma integration since 2001. Around 350 measures, in areas such as education and housing, were carried out each year under the Programme for the Social and Civic Integration of the Roma for 2021–2030. Approximately 70 per cent of the Programme's budget was spent on education initiatives, including support for preschool and elementary education. The number of Roma children attending secondary schools had risen gradually over the years. Roma culture was well preserved in Poland, and Polish society was open to cultural festivals organized by the Roma community.

56. **Mr. Fiorio Vaesken** said that he wished to know whether any legal or administrative measures had been taken to preserve academic freedom in universities and research institutes, including by preventing interference by political and other groups and protecting academics from threats and violence. He asked what specific steps would be taken to address the widespread shortage of teachers, and whether teachers in the public education system had a career progression plan. The delegation might wish to respond to reports that the education provided in detention centres was inadequate and to describe the educational activities organized in such centres, the way in which their effectiveness was assessed and any measures that would be taken to improve the situation.

57. **Ms. Lee** said that consultations with civil society at the national level as part of the reporting process were essential to ensure that the Committee's recommendations were properly understood and implemented. With that in mind, she wondered whether the State party would consider reviewing its decision to abolish civil society consultations. She wished to remind the State party that all State organs, including the parliament and the judiciary, had obligations to implement the Covenant and should be kept informed of the outcomes of the periodic review.

58. **Mr. Windfuhr**, noting that the recent change in government was likely to give rise to some major debates and policy changes, particularly in the area of human rights, said that he would be interested to know whether those developments were likely to be welcomed or met with resistance.

59. **The Chair** asked what measures had been taken in response to the recommendation made to Poland by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2020 concerning the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the need to condemn, at the highest political level, all manifestations of intolerance and ethnically motivated hostility in political discourse and in the media.

The meeting was suspended at 11.55 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.

60. **A representative of Poland** said that a team had been set up to propose changes to the teaching profession in areas such as pay, pensions and professional development, in order to improve the status of teachers. The team was composed of representatives appointed by various officials, including the Minister of Finance and the Director of the Educational Research Institute.

61. **A representative of Poland** said that the provision of education to foreign nationals was governed by the Education Act of 14 December 2016. Migrant children had the right to attend public primary and secondary schools on an equal basis with Polish children, regardless of their residence status. All children, including those in detention centres, were

subject to compulsory education. Access to education was ensured in all detention centres where children could be placed, through agreements with local schools. Such agreements were required by law and covered practical issues such as timetabling, teachers' access to the detention centres and contact between teachers and parents. Classes were held at the detention centres, conducted by teachers from local schools, and children were provided with all the necessary materials. The number of teaching hours and the course content were determined by the schools, taking into account the age and needs of the children. Preparatory classes were provided for children who had previously been in a different education system. Physical education sessions and other supplementary classes, as well as a wide range of educational, social, cultural and sporting activities, were run by detention centre employees with teacher training. Some officers had a professional background in education or psychology, and particular attention was paid to cultural sensitivity and awareness.

62. **A representative of Poland** said that the Government attached great importance to its cooperation with NGOs and worked with them to develop national policy on economic, social and cultural rights in accordance with the international conventions ratified by Poland. It was aiming to find the best ways to engage in a dialogue with NGOs on social rights in order to meet its obligations under the Covenant. An effective dialogue might involve discussions on the implementation of specific provisions of the Covenant but could also involve the process of drawing up social policy.

63. The Committee's conclusions were translated into Polish and made available to the general public on the website of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy. In the past, the Government had shared the outcomes of treaty body reviews with the parliament at the parliament's request. However, it was planning to share the outcomes of the current review with the parliament on its own initiative, once the Committee had published its concluding observations.

64. **A representative of Poland** said that the recent change in government had brought a change in attitude to the State's legal obligations under national and international law. The new Government attached great importance to human rights and to the Constitution, in which many rights and freedoms were enshrined. That change in attitude had been welcomed by civil society.

65. **Ms. Lee**, thanking the delegation for its constructive and detailed responses, said that she hoped the dialogue and the Committee's concluding observations would help the Government to advance the realization of economic, social and cultural rights in Poland in cooperation with civil society.

66. **A representative of Poland** said that the Government would continue to build on the positive changes presented during the review. Its aim was to guarantee to all people in Poland the opportunity to live safely and to allow them to develop and use their abilities and to contribute to the country's development. The Committee's concluding observations would be carefully analysed, shared with the parliament and used to develop social policy.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 12.25 p.m.