



# Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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## Committee against Torture Fifty-fifth session

### Summary record of the 1330th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 28 July 2015, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Grossman

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention**

*Third periodic report of Slovakia (CAT/C/SVK/3/Rev.1; CAT/C/SVK/Q/3/Add.1 and Add.2; HRI/CORE/SVK/2014)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Slovakia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Rosocha** (Slovakia) said that his country was a party to all the core international human rights instruments, which superseded national laws. Giving an overview of the main relevant developments since the end of the reporting period, he said that Act No. 78/2015 provided for alternatives to imprisonment in order to avoid prison overcrowding and enhance the social reintegration of offenders. Furthermore, under the Criminal Code, the end of a prison sentence could be commuted to house arrest. The legally binding acts of the European Union had been transposed into domestic law on 1 July 2015 through the enactment of the Bill on the European protection order. The Ministry of the Interior had taken a number of steps to more effectively prevent torture, such as the video recording of police activities, the requirement to precisely document deprivations of liberty and the duty of high-ranking officers to conduct regular inspections of places of detention. Nearly 800 police vehicles had been equipped with front-facing cameras to record police interventions, and body cameras were being tested.

3. The Residence of Aliens Act had significantly broadened the rights of foreign nationals subject to deportation or detention procedures. For example, they had a right to interpretation at every stage of the proceedings and could request a written translation of rulings. They were also informed of options for appeal. When foreigners were detained, whether at police or other facilities, they were immediately informed of the reasons for their detention and of the possibility of communicating with close relatives, a lawyer and the embassy of their country of origin. In addition, further safeguards had been put in place to ensure that foreigners were not returned to countries that might deport them to a third country where they would be at risk of being tortured. Pursuant to amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure, courts had to issue their decision on appeals of administrative detention within seven days. Negotiations were currently under way with Austria regarding the resettlement of asylum seekers.

4. Regarding vulnerable groups, the Government had adopted the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014-2019. One of the key projects had been the establishment of the Coordination-Methodical Centre for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, whose purpose was to design, implement and coordinate a comprehensive national policy in that field. In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family had set up a 24-hour toll-free helpline for women victims of violence. The National Strategy for the Protection of Children against Violence, the first interministerial policy instrument in that domain, had been adopted, and the annual assessment of the National Action Plan for Children 2013-2017 took into account measures to eliminate violence against children. The Government was in the process of ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, in whose preparation Slovakia had played a leading role. The Commissioner for Children and the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities had been appointed in 2015 to monitor observance of the rights of those two groups, including in places of detention and protection facilities.

5. The Government had adopted the Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020 and associated action plans in the areas of education, employment, health care and housing. Under the Strategy, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities was developing separate action plans on non-discrimination, financial inclusion and relations with mainstream society. The Government acknowledged the need to improve the education of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly the Roma. In that connection, the School Act had been amended the previous month to prohibit the enrolment of children from such backgrounds in special schools, improve their integration into mainstream schools and establish education subsidies.

6. The country's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention remained under consideration.

7. **Mr. Modvig** (Country Rapporteur) commended the State party on its comprehensive report and replies to the list of issues. Referring to the statement that the definition of torture in domestic law was consistent with, but not identical to, the definition contained in the Convention, he asked what the differences between the two were, what legal consequences those differences might have and whether the purpose of discrimination had been introduced in the domestic definition.

8. Pointing out that the State party's replies addressed only the legal provisions on fundamental safeguards and not the way in which they were implemented in practice and that there was some confusion between the terms "accused" and "detained person", he wished to know whether all persons deprived of their liberty had access to a lawyer from the moment of arrest, whether police officers were required to inform them of that right, whether disadvantaged detainees were entitled to free legal aid and, if so, in how many cases it had been provided. He also enquired whether persons deprived of their liberty informed their relatives of their arrest themselves or whether notification was carried out by a police officer. He asked whether persons in police custody had access to an independent doctor at all times without having to provide a reason for wishing to see one; whether doctors were called only in cases of acute illness; how much discretion police officers had in assessing the person's need to see a doctor; whether medical services were free of charge and, if not, whether treatment could be denied when a person could not afford it; and whether all persons deprived of their liberty were entitled to doctor-patient confidentiality.

9. In reference to paragraph 17 of the replies to the list of issues, he asked whether police officers and doctors were required to report and document injuries and cases of self-harm and, if so, to whom. What body investigated such incidents? He requested additional information about the Corps of Prison and Court Guards, in particular how many doctors it consisted of and to whom they reported. The fact that the doctors treated a range of patients was not in itself a guarantee of independence; it was more a matter of the reporting structure and of who managed the budget. Moreover, it was ill-advised for the Corps doctors to also treat Corps members as conflicts of interest could arise. He invited the delegation to explain the State party's argument that detainees could not choose their own doctor because that might threaten their life in an emergency.

10. According to the Committee's information, complaints of police ill-treatment must be filed with a subsidiary body of the Ministry of the Interior and their processing was not prompt, impartial or thorough. He therefore, wished to know how many complaints had been filed with that body, what the average investigation time was, what the outcomes had been, particularly in terms of prosecutions and convictions, whether there were plans to make the mechanism more independent from the police and the Ministry, and how judges ensured that evidence obtained under torture was not adduced in court. He asked how many individuals had availed

themselves of the mechanism mentioned in paragraph 47 of the report and whether the figures contained in the table in paragraph 52 corresponded to those individuals. He enquired about the proportion of arrests in which the 48-hour period for the review of the lawfulness of the arrest had been exceeded.

11. He requested information on progress achieved in access to legal aid, including data on the number of persons deprived of their liberty who had benefited from it, disaggregated by nationality. Further details about the provision of interpreting services to asylum seekers would be appreciated.

12. While the initiatives undertaken to reform the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights seemed reasonable, it would be useful to know the timetable for their implementation. He asked whether non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would be on the Centre's board and, if so, which ones and what their role would be in ensuring the Centre's independence. Had steps been taken to expand the Centre's authority to include launching investigations, conducting visits to places of deprivation of liberty and interviewing prisoners? Irrespective of financial constraints and the non-ratification of the Optional Protocol, the Committee encouraged the State party to make the establishment of an independent and effective human rights and torture-prevention institution a priority.

13. The Committee would like information about the status of a bill to authorize the Constitutional Court to rule on the compatibility of domestic law with international treaties, an issue that had not yet been addressed.

14. He asked whether there had been any new initiatives to investigate, prosecute and provide redress for cases of sterilization of Roma women without consent. How many cases had been or were being considered by the courts and what were their outcomes? What were the results of monitoring the implementation of Act No. 576/2004 Coll. for compliance with informed consent procedures on sterilization and special training for health personnel? The Committee had information that that training had not been fully implemented and that health professionals were not fully aware of, or able to apply, those procedures. What measures had been taken on the issue of informed consent in connection with anti-androgen treatment of sex offenders?

15. In order to follow up on issues raised in the 2009 report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), information would be welcome regarding steps taken to improve the independence of investigations of ill-treatment by the police. Had fixtures for attaching persons been removed from all police stations? How had the policy of zero tolerance for police ill-treatment of Roma been enforced? What had been the results, if any, of the monitoring of police stations by public prosecutors, which was currently the only monitoring mechanism in place? What steps had been taken to ensure that police officers recorded all relevant information in custody reports, including any signs of injury?

16. The Committee requested the State party to review and justify its unwillingness to make available criminal justice statistics disaggregated by ethnicity. That was not a tenable position in the case of Slovakia, as the Roma community had allegedly been subjected to poor treatment in the criminal justice system. It was important to determine any abnormalities in the application of security measures or in the occurrence of crime.

17. As to the issue of non-refoulement, there seemed to be a discrepancy in the figures for asylum seekers provided by the State party for the period 2011 to 2014. He invited the delegation to explain the difference between the number of applicants and the number of accepted and rejected applications. How many asylum seekers were currently in detention? Did an asylum seeker whose case had been rejected have the

right to judicial appeal or review? If so, how many cases had been upheld and how many decisions had been changed? During the reporting period, how many cases had there been where legal aid had been provided to asylum seekers? How did the State party ensure that victims of torture among asylum seekers, as well as among immigrants who had not formally sought asylum, were effectively identified, and what remedies were offered to them?

18. He asked how many cases there had been where asylum or prolonged complementary protection had been rejected during the reporting period, and in how many of those cases legal remedies had been provided. Were there any plans to amend exceptions to article 3 to include threats to persons suspected of serious crimes?

19. With regard to articles 5 to 9, he enquired whether any measures had been taken to establish State party jurisdiction over alleged offenders in the territory of Slovakia and to extradite or prosecute them.

20. Referring to paragraph 109 of the replies to the list of issues, he asked what were the plans for implementing the legislation referred to and how the rights to redress and specialized care would be provided to victims of torture and ill-treatment. Would those rights also apply to foreigners and refugees who were victims of torture? If not, what support was provided to those persons?

21. Referring to question 20 of the list of issues, he asked in how many cases during the reporting period support had been provided to persons having psychological problems relating to violence and inhuman treatment, and what legal steps had been taken to investigate and prosecute such cases.

22. **Mr. Tugushi** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee had received information, complaints and evidence indicating that the investigations carried out by the internal control department of the Ministry of the Interior had not consistently met the criteria set out by the European Court of Human Rights or the recommendations made by the Committee in its concluding observations. Examples that raised questions about the effectiveness and impartiality of the investigations included: the 2009 case of six Roma minors allegedly abused by the police in Košice, which six years later had yet to be concluded; the 2012 case involving Roma settlements raided by police in the Kežmarok district, which was still at the pretrial stage; the June 2013 case of members of the Roma community of Moldava nad Bodvou allegedly being subjected to ill-treatment by police; and the investigation of another reported case from June 2013, which was still ongoing. Was there any plan to amend legislation to include a general provision that racist motivation constituted an aggravating circumstance for all criminal offences?

23. On the issue of monitoring of police activities and places of deprivation of liberty, the Government had generally referred to the General Prosecutor's Office and the Office of the Public Defender of Rights, which were supposed to conduct their work independently. However, there was no national preventive mechanism and no public or NGO commissions were able to carry out independent monitoring, and the Prosecutor's Office was not doing an adequate monitoring job. The Office of the Public Defender was apparently underfunded and, although it had a mandate effective from 2002 to conduct visits to places of detention, it had only begun to do so many years later. The visits were a welcome development, but the Committee had limited information about them.

24. There were questions about the independence of, and resources available to, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, which had been entrusted with monitoring the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation. Investigations by the Government itself had also revealed shortcomings in the Centre. What did the State

party plan to do to ensure that the functioning of the Centre would be further brought into line with the Paris Principles?

25. Slovak prisons were not overcrowded and there had been a slight drop in the prison population, which was a welcome development. Noting that it was still somewhat high, however, he asked whether there was any particular plan aimed at increasing the use of non-custodial measures. The situation of prisoners serving life sentences was also a concern. It was unacceptable that those prisoners should be frequently handcuffed outside the cell, even when visiting a doctor. He asked whether any prisoners serving life sentences had been integrated into the general prison population. Was there any plan to amend legislation to ensure that such prisoners had the opportunity to be considered for release after having served a certain number of years, thus bringing national law into line with recent judgements by the European Court of Human Rights? Were there plans to change the regime so that those prisoners would not be confined to the cell for 23 hours a day and would be allowed to participate in more group activities? Would those improvements extend to juvenile detainees and remand prisoners?

26. He asked whether there had been any investigations of the alleged internal hierarchies that prisoners created. Did they exercise any control over prison institutions? Had any prison guards been disciplined, prosecuted or convicted for ill-treatment of prisoners within the previous four years?

27. Updated information would also be welcome regarding the placement of prisoners in secure units, an action known as being “put in protection”. What were the criteria for doing so? Was written justification provided to the prisoner? Was there any possibility for appeal? And were there regular periodic reviews of the secure units?

28. Given reports of police officers or guards being present during the initial physical examination of a prisoner, even without the doctor having so requested, he asked whether medical confidentiality was guaranteed. Were injuries identified by a doctor during the examination of a newly arrived prisoner adequately recorded and communicated to the relevant independent prosecutorial authorities? In view of the incidence of acute mental disorders among prisoners, had there been any increase over the previous two years in prison medical personnel specializing in psychiatric care?

29. Research indicated that many cases of domestic violence against women went unreported and unnoticed by the authorities, perhaps because the social stigma made victims reluctant to file complaints. There might therefore be room for improving awareness and police training on the issue. Were there any plans to increase the number of shelters provided to victims of domestic violence? Updated disaggregated statistics on the issue would be welcome.

30. On the issue of the criminal offence of human trafficking, there was concern that the prosecution of perpetrators was incommensurate with the grave nature of the offence. In view of the fact that many countries had zero tolerance for those offences, what was the policy of the Slovak judiciary and prosecution service on the question of reducing punishments? Was there any plan to increase funding for shelters for victims? What was the reasoning behind the reduction of Ministry of the Interior funds for fighting organized crime, especially given indications that the training of investigators of trafficking crimes was inadequate and investigations were ineffective?

31. **Ms. Belmir** commended Slovakia on recognizing its responsibility for providing protection, the foundation on which human rights were built. However, it had a long way to go to ensure that all people in the country were protected and enjoyed their rights. That there was the political will to do so was not in question, but the State party must step up its efforts to put that will into effect and make real improvements.

32. Her main concern was that vulnerable groups, including the Roma, foreign nationals, women and children, were still not treated as full citizens and did not enjoy all their rights. The Roma community was the largest minority group in Slovakia and a major component of the population, yet its members continued to live on the edge of society. She welcomed new legislation prohibiting the segregation of Roma children from other children in education, but the lack of access to justice was a persistent problem. Roma people in detention continued to be ill-treated or tortured on a daily basis. The police operated its own internal control system and there were few investigations into alleged cases of ill-treatment or torture, as corroborated by the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. Arrested persons from the Roma community and other minority groups were still denied their rights, such as access to a lawyer and the right to be informed of the charges against them, and they were often held in custody for longer periods than other citizens.

33. **Mr. Bruni** sought information on the findings of the evaluations carried out by the Ministry of Justice concerning the human rights training provided to public officials. Had the training had a real impact on the functioning of the judiciary and on the monitoring of places of detention?

34. He enquired about progress made on plans to increase the minimum prison cell size to 4m<sup>2</sup>, and whether prisoners serving life sentences were included in those plans. What was the minimum size of accommodation for solitary confinement? The 2011 General report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) had found that many prison cells used for solitary confinement were too small (3 to 4m<sup>2</sup>), and had stressed that any cell measuring less than 6m<sup>2</sup> should be withdrawn from service as prison accommodation. He asked the delegation whether it would be willing to endorse the position taken by the CPT. He requested more information on the legislation introduced to allow prison governors to reduce capacity temporarily in order to alleviate overcrowding. How long could such a measure be in place? And who supervised the reduction of capacity once a governor had taken the decision?

35. **Ms. Pradhan-Malla** asked whether Slovakia had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Protocol), and whether national legislation had been brought into line with the Protocol. She enquired whether the definition of human trafficking included all of its possible forms. What types of punishment were imposed and in what circumstances could punishment be reduced? She requested information on the success rate of human trafficking prosecutions, on how the backlog of cases was being handled and on reparation provided to victims.

36. **Mr. Zhang Kening** welcomed the adoption of legislation that would lead to the development of alternative punishments to imprisonment, and asked how the new measure would be implemented. He requested the delegation to provide more information on the new law on the residence of foreign nationals. He wished to know whether it was in line with article 3 of the Convention relating to the expulsion or refoulement of foreign nationals, and what steps had been taken to ensure that they were better protected.

37. **Ms. Gaer** requested an update on developments in the case against 10 policemen accused of abuse of authority, particularly on what had happened to them. Were there specific rules on the admissibility of video evidence, and what had been the basis for finding the video evidence in the case in question inadmissible? She would like to know more about claims that the Slovak Public Defender of Rights had been subjected to threats and harassment by politicians from a certain party following her public criticism of police abuse. What steps would be taken to prevent such action, which could be seen as crossing the line between expressing political differences and harassment?

38. She asked the delegation to provide details of all criminal, civil and State investigations carried out in the State party into cases of forced sterilization since the cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights. She requested an update on the implementation of the Committee's previous recommendation calling for the training of public officials in the area of informed consent. What actual training had taken place, as opposed to merely informing health officials of the new decree on informed consent?

39. With regard to the segregation of Roma children in education, she sought clarification on whether the amendment to the School Act of June 2015 prohibited the placement of children from socially disadvantaged environments in special schools or classes, or whether segregation was permissible under certain conditions defined by law. Would the new amendment modify Slovakia's response to the European Commission's infringement proceedings regarding the alleged segregated schools in Slovakia? The State party had submitted that separate schools were justified because limited mental capacity was allegedly more prevalent in the Roma community.

40. **Mr. Gaye** asked whether the amendment to the law on the residence of foreign nationals took full account of the provisions of article 3 of the Convention. What remedies were available to foreign nationals in cases of expulsion, extradition or refoulement? And did they have suspensive effect?

41. **The Chairperson** asked whether the Convention was directly applicable in national legislation. If so, were there instances where it had been invoked by petitioners and applied by judges? He asked what steps would be taken to ensure that the right of access to a lawyer was guaranteed from the moment of detention. He invited the delegation to comment on reports that section 74 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure on the right to inform a third party of the detention of an accused only applied to those detained under section 19 of the Code and was sometimes left to the discretion of the police officer concerned. What measures would be adopted to ensure enjoyment of that right?

42. He requested statistics on the number of complaints lodged about injuries sustained during arrest and custody due to the use of coercive action by the police. He sought clarification on reports that police officers were routinely present while detainees were examined by a doctor. How many investigations of extremely serious criminal offences were completed within the required six-month deadline and how many were not?

43. He appreciated the anti-corruption initiatives taken and, in particular, the establishment of an "anti-corruption line" but wished to know whether statistics were available on how many times the line had been used to deliver messages to the Ministry of Justice and whether the information received had been acted on.

44. Concerning the application of article 3, he wished to know whether the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Moscow planned to make any follow-up visits to Mr. A. Chentiev after the initial visit of 28 April 2015. He asked whether there were any other cases of refoulement in which the State party was relying on diplomatic assurances concerning conditions of detention. In the context of article 3, he appreciated the statement by the State party that legal aid was provided to detainees.

45. He noted the steps taken to reduce overcrowding in prisons and wished to know whether there were statistics concerning the number of remand prisoners able to use the open system. He asked whether the State party intended to implement legislative changes to the maximum sentence for remand detention.

46. In paragraph 85 of the replies to the list of issues, the State party had detailed the substantive measures taken to prevent torture and ill-treatment in custody, and the



Council of Europe CPT had noticed improvements over time. Nevertheless, he was aware of reports of ill-treatment of detainees, including allegations of punching, kicking and verbal abuse, and he wished to know what action had been taken in response. In introducing legislative measures concerning redress and compensation, the State party might wish to take account of the Committee's general comment No. 3 on implementation of article 14.

47. He noted the creation of the Roma civil guard, the purpose of which was to prevent escalation of tension between Roma and the police, and requested an evaluation of its success. He asked how a decision of the domestic courts in 2012 that segregation of Roma children in education was unlawful had been implemented.

48. He wished to know whether there had been an independent investigation concerning the alleged misconduct of lawyers and whether the State party intended to establish a specialized body for that purpose, outside the authority of the police.

49. Regarding violence against women, the introduction of an integrated system of crisis intervention, including a free telephone line and dedicated social services, had been an important step but it was troubling to learn that a man had killed two women after a failure by the courts to order his detention, despite his having made threats against one of the women. He asked what action had been taken to prevent similar situations in the future.

50. He asked whether steps were envisaged to improve the representation of women in parliament since, in the March 2012 elections, only 26 per cent of candidates and 16 per cent of elected members of parliament had been women. He noted that some public officials who were in a position to influence public opinion in general had expressed views criticizing the LGBTI community. He asked what measures had been taken in response to that criticism.

51. He requested statistical information concerning reported cases of human trafficking and any prosecutions brought.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.15 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

52. **Ms. Danová** (Slovakia) said that the issue of the sterilization of Roma women without informed consent had been addressed in various international human rights forums to which her Government had supplied information concerning the legislative and practical measures it had taken to eliminate shortcomings and prevent new cases. Under legislation concerning the rights of patients, health care and health services adopted in 2005, medical practitioners were obliged to provide information to patients about the aim, consequences and risks of treatment, the possibility of choice in the proposed procedures and risks connected with refusal to accept treatment. Further draft regulations set out detailed instructions concerning informed consent before sterilization, including the duty to provide relevant information in minority languages. The obligation to inform women had been disseminated to all medical practitioners and to senior hospital staff; it was also incorporated in training activities.

53. In the European Court of Human Rights rulings against Slovakia had been made in three cases relating to the sterilization of women without their informed consent. In the landmark judgement in *V.C. v. Slovak Republic*, the Court had not required the Slovak authorities to initiate criminal proceedings on their own initiative as it had not found that medical practitioners had acted with the intention of ill-treating the applicant. In the case of *N.B. v. Slovak Republic*, the Court had not accepted the applicant's allegation concerning the effective investigation of her sterilization. The Court had stated that the procedural part of article 3 had been violated in the cases of *I.G., M.K. and R.H. v. Slovak Republic* since the State had not acted in compliance with the requirement of reasonable promptness. The Court had not been convinced by

the allegations that the sterilization of Roma women had been part of an organized policy or that medical staff had been racially motivated. The Court's rulings had not confirmed that numerous illegal sterilizations of Roma women had taken place. The execution of judgements was currently supervised by the Council of Europe; the applicants had been awarded financial compensation and the cases were used to provide important guidance to the domestic courts on reviewing claims for compensation from women who had undergone sterilization. It should be noted that none of the 146 recommendations issued as part of the universal periodic review of Slovakia in 2014 had concerned sterilization of Roma women. No new cases of alleged sterilization had been submitted to the Ministry of Health in 2015.

54. **Mr. Csémi** (Slovakia) said that comprehensive answers would be submitted on the principle of non-refoulement and human trafficking. In the meantime, he wished to provide assurance that legislative amendments concerning foreign nationals had expanded the provisions concerning non-refoulement, in particular for persons who had travelled from countries in which they might be subjected to torture or inhuman treatment or in which their lives might be threatened. Upon first contact, the police were obliged to inform foreign nationals, in a language they could understand, of their right to communicate with close relatives, legal representatives and their consulate.

55. For the past two years, investigation of human trafficking had been delegated to the border police since the problems were similar to those encountered in dealing with illegal immigration, an area in which they had already acquired expertise. Legislation on human trafficking had been expanded to cover forced marriage and other illegal acts.

56. **Mr. Griger** (Slovakia) said that prison governors had the authority to commute a prison sentence to one of house arrest if certain conditions had been met: the initial term must be for imprisonment of up to 5 years and for a less serious crime; the length of the unserved term must not exceed 2 years; and the behaviour of the prisoner must be taken into account. Approximately 1,000 prisoners, or 10 per cent of the prison population, were eligible for house arrest. Social and reintegration training programmes were provided for individuals under house arrest. Perpetrators of domestic violence were obliged to undergo cognitive behavioural therapy.

57. **Mr. Kadlečík** (Slovakia) said that his Government had participated in all nine drafting meetings for the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), and it had been one of the first signatories in 2011. The Ministry of Justice had undertaken an analysis of the legal steps required for ratification, and a national coordination centre for combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence had been established in 2014. In amending its Criminal Code, which now covered stalking, the Government had consulted the international NGO Women against Violence in Europe. In preparation for ratification in 2016, the Istanbul Convention and its explanatory report had been translated into the Slovak language, and directive 2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime had been incorporated into national legislation. The Government conducted awareness-raising activities at the national and local levels, and a conference on effective ways to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, hosted by the Ministry of Justice in Bratislava in November 2011 had contributed to the entry into force of the Istanbul Convention in 2014.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*