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Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Slovakia*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 8 stakeholders' submissions[1] to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies[2]

2. The Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR) welcomed the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2014.[3] It recommended that Slovakia intensify the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.[4]

3. The SNCHR stated that Slovakia had signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) in 2011. However, the Government decided to postpone the ratification of the Istanbul Convention for an indefinite period.[5] The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (CoE-Commissioner) encouraged Slovakia to accelerate the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.[6]

4. Furthermore, the CoE-Commissioner urged the authorities to accede to Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights as well as to the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter Providing for a System of Collective Complaints.[7]

5. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) recommended that Slovakia sign and ratify the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as a matter of international urgency.[8]

* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.

B. National human rights framework[9]

6. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (CoE-ECRI) reported that the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights regained accreditation with the United Nations International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions (now GANHRI) with B status in 2014. It noted that the sub-committee on accreditation encouraged Slovakia to pursue a number of legislative changes in order to strengthen the mandate and independence of the Centre. The CoE-ECRI observed that the reform of the Centre has been on the agenda of a number of Governments for last years and that all attempts at reform had yielded no concrete results in terms of change of legislation as of March 2017.[10] The SNCHR made similar observations.[11]

7. The SNCHR recommended that Slovakia, without further delay, complete the process of legislative changes to ensure that the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights is fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and can apply for re-accreditation with status A.[12] Likewise, the Committee of Ministers of (CoE-CM) and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities (CoE-ACFC) of the Council of Europe recommended that Slovakia speed up the reform of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights to ensure that it is functioning in full independence.[13]

8. Furthermore, the CoE-Commissioner invited the authorities to consider extending the mandate of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights with the power to issue effective and dissuasive sanctions in cases of human rights violations. He urged the authorities to lend their full support to the work of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and the Ombudsperson and to provide these institutions with adequate human and financial resources enabling them to effectively carry out their mandates.[14]

9. The SNCHR welcomed the establishment of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the Commissioner for Children as independent public bodies carrying out their mandates separately from the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights and the Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsperson).[15]

10. The SNCHR welcomed the adoption of a national strategies on the protection and promotion of human rights, on gender equality and on Roma integration.[16]

11. The CoE-Commissioner commended the focus of the first national human rights strategy on strengthening the institutional protection and the enforceability of human rights, improving human rights education, advancing civil, cultural and economic rights, and fighting discrimination and intolerance. He noted, however, the concerns expressed that the strategy did not define clear objectives, tasks and benchmarks or assign coordination, implementation and monitoring responsibilities to concrete bodies.[17]

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination[18]

12. The CoE-Commissioner encouraged the authorities to continue the reform of the anti-discrimination framework so as to close gaps in the level of protection afforded on various grounds of discrimination, including gender. The reform of the equal treatment legislation should be accompanied by continued awareness-raising work and training of concerned professionals and local and regional authorities.[19]

13. Joint submission 1 (JS1) stated that the Anti-Discrimination Act remained largely under-implemented due to several reasons.[20] The CoE-ECRI stated that the Anti-discrimination Act was not applied adequately as the body empowered to monitor its implementation, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, did not function independently.[21]

14. The CoE-ECRI reported that there was no general provision that racist motivation constituted an aggravating circumstance for all criminal offences. Citizenship and language were not included among the characteristics of potential victims of racist conduct and racial discrimination, which were punishable under the Criminal Code.[22] It recommended that the authorities ensure that citizenship is included among the characteristics of potential victims of racist conduct and racial discrimination. It recommended that the authorities insert a provision in the Criminal Code expressly stating that motivation on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, citizenship, or national/ethnic origin constituted an aggravating circumstances for any offense.[23]

15. The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended ensuring that law enforcement officers are adequately trained to properly investigate and follow-up all cases of racial discrimination, including through the initiation of independent investigations of alleged cases of police abuse.[24]

16. The CoE-Commissioner called on Slovakia to develop further and implement initiatives aimed at combating racism and extremism in all sections of society. Priority should be given to actions which aim to raise awareness of the dangers of intolerance and racism, promote tolerance and enhance human rights education in schools.[25]

17. In 2014, the CoE-ECRI reported that the leader of a far-right party was elected as a regional governor.[26] The SNCHR reported that a far-right extremist party gained 13 seats in the 2016 parliamentary elections. In 2017, the General Prosecutor had filed a proposal to dissolve the party taking into account evaluation of materials and a conclusion that the party with fascist tendencies violated the Constitution.[27]

18. The CoE-ECRI recommended that the authorities implement legislation on banning political parties openly hostile to human rights and enact legislation on suspending state funding for those parties and banning persons convicted of offences of racism or racial discrimination from running for public offices.[28]

19. The SNCHR reported that hate crimes had been increasing as well as incidents of hate speech.[29] The CoE-ECRI noted that hate speech was recurrent on the Internet and in part of the traditional media. It stated that anti-"minorities" rhetoric and offensive discourse targeting sexual orientation were common among politicians.[30]

20. The SNCHR recommended that Slovakia adopt preventive measures to tackle increasing intolerance and radicalisation in its society, particularly among young people.[31] The CoE-Commissioner stated that the authorities need to use all available means to end impunity and to combat all kinds of hate crimes and hate speech, especially when they take on the extreme forms that destabilise social cohesion and erode the fundamental human rights principles.[32] The CoE-CM and CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia systematically and promptly condemn all instances of anti-minority rhetoric in the public discourse and design a comprehensive strategy to promote respect and intercultural understanding among different groups in society.[33]

21. The SNCHR recommended that Slovakia increase efforts to effectively monitor, investigate and prosecute all hate crime and hate speech incidents.[34] The CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to ensure that law enforcement officials and legal professionals are adequately and systematically trained to be able to recognise and effectively investigate and sanction hate crimes.[35]

22. In 2014, the CoE-ECRI recommended ensuring that a mechanism for collecting disaggregated data on hate speech incidents is put in place, recording the specific motivation and the follow-up given to them by the justice system and that this data is made available to the public.[36] In 2017, the CoE-ECRI, as a follow up of its 2014 recommendations, noted with satisfaction that statistics have been disaggregated according to the specific bias motivation of the offender and that those statistics were made public as part of the annual report on extremism. However, the CoE-ECRI noted that there was still no recording of the follow-up given to hate speech incidents by the justice system.[37]

23. The CoE-Commissioner commended the progress made in the past few years by Slovakia in strengthening the policy and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and intersex (LGBTI) persons.[38]

However, the CoE-Commissioner was worried at the growing negative rhetoric and hate speech directed against LGBTI persons in recent years.[39]

24. The CoE-Commissioner urged the authorities to extend the provisions of domestic hate speech legislation to cover sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics. He called on Slovakia to ensure that law enforcement officials and legal professionals are adequately equipped to recognise and effectively confront such incidents.[40]

25. Furthermore, the CoE-Commissioner urged the authorities to take a strong public position against violations of the human rights of LGBTI persons and promote respect on issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics, for example through systematic human rights education and awareness-raising campaigns.[41]

26. The CoE-ECRI reported that there was no adequate access to gender reassignment treatment, although this was required by law in order to change name and identification number.[42] The CoE-ECRI recommended that Slovakia ensure that gender reassignment treatments are made available for transgender persons and that their cost is reimbursed by public health insurance schemes.[43]

27. The CoE-Commissioner called on Slovakia to improve the protection afforded to trans and intersex persons, including intersex children. Attention should be paid to countering unlawful practices imposing medical interventions and non-marriage requirements for the official recognition of gender reassignment. He urged the authorities to set up strong, explicit guarantees protecting intersex children from unnecessary surgical procedures aimed at assigning them a sex without their free and informed consent.[44]

28. The CoE-Commissioner invited the authorities to consider favourably the possibility of providing cohabiting different sex and same-sex couples with legal means to address the practical problems related to the social reality in which they live.[45]

Development, the environment, and business and human rights

29. The SNCHR reported that the activities of international and local businesses operating in Slovakia had certain negative impacts on the enjoyment of human rights, including discrimination of vulnerable groups (e.g. women, members of ethnic and national minorities, older persons etc.), forced labour, work conditions in production, treatment of the migrant workers, destruction of the environment, violation of rights during the expropriation of land, corruption and protection of personal data and privacy.[46] It noted that there have been more than 300 national action plans, programmes and strategies and that some of them have been slightly touching on the issues of business and human rights. However, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights had not been comprehensively implemented, concluded the SNCHR.[47]

30. The SNCHR recommended that Slovakia start actively monitoring negative impacts of business on the enjoyment of human rights with special focus on vulnerable groups, initiate implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights without undue delay and adopt a national action plan on business and human rights.[48]

2. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person[49]

31. The CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to ensure that all allegations of ill-treatment by law enforcement officers are promptly and effectively investigated, and that those who commit these violations are brought to justice. He stressed that the lack of an adequate response by the authorities to long-standing serious concerns raised by police ill-treatment of Roma persons needed to be urgently addressed.[50]

32. The CoE-Commissioner found it crucial that Slovakia established, as a priority, a fully independent and well-functioning complaints mechanism covering all law enforcement officials.[51]

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law[52]

33. With respect to judges, the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe (CoE-GRECO) concluded that the corruption prevention framework had been reinforced by the new Judicial Code of Conduct, which was implemented through a unified approach involving judges, judicial self-governing bodies and professional associations of judges. The combination of the new rules and the new supervisory and advisory/counselling functions attributed to judicial bodies amount to a dedicated policy aimed at preventing and managing conflicts of interest within the judiciary. Nonetheless, the CoE-GRECO noted that the Code itself was worded in too general terms and remained to be complemented by detailed "interpretation rules", relating inter alia to conflicts of interest and give explanations and concrete examples of actual and potential conflicts of interest derived from practice. Furthermore, while the adoption of legislation establishing an obligation on judges to declare liabilities and gifts was a positive development, the threshold for declaring gifts received by judges in their personal capacity remained too high and more efficient scrutiny of judges' asset declarations has to be ensured.[53]

34. The SNCHR recommended that Slovakia establish a national preventive mechanism with sufficient financial, technical and material capacity to conduct independently and effectively its mandate.[54]

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

35. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR) noted the high damages in civil defamation cases envisaged by the legislation and referred to the Representative on Freedom of the Media of the OSCE calling on the authorities to limit compensation in those cases.[55] It was concluded in the 2016 report of OSCE/ODIHR that defamation should be decriminalized and proportional legal limitations of damages in civil libel cases should be introduced in order to prevent self-censorship and remove unjustified strain on the financial stability of the media.[56]

36. Concerning the safety of journalists, the CoE-Commissioner called for a prompt and effective investigation in the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak and his partner Martina Kušnírová in order to identify and punish the perpetrators. He also called for an urgent public discussion about media freedom and the safety of journalists, focusing in particular on political discourse.[57]

37. Furthermore, CoE-Commissioner invited the authorities to review whether legislation and practice sufficiently protect journalists who made information requests, and ensure they do not increase the vulnerability of journalists working on sensitive topics.[58]

38. The Alliance Defending Freedom International (ADF International) noted the legal requirement for the religious groups to register and that only religious groups meeting a threshold number of adherents, which was raised from 20 000 to 50 000 in 2017, could register. The ADF International stated that members of a religious group were required to provide some personal information in order to meet the threshold. Those groups that were unable to register were restricted from certain activities such as renting property and opening a bank account.[59] It recommended that Slovakia remove burdensome registration requirements and reform its relevant laws to facilitate the registration process so that everyone can fully exercise their rights.[60]

39. It was concluded in the 2016 report of OSCE/ODIHR that the 2016 parliamentary elections were held in a competitive and pluralistic environment and fundamental freedoms were respected. Voters had the opportunity to make an informed choice from a variety of political options.[61] The OSCE/ODIHR offered several recommendations in its report with a view to further enhancing the conduct of elections in Slovakia. It stated that consideration should be given inter alia to introducing provisions prohibiting the misuse of administrative resources for campaign purposes and requiring that political parties disclose all types of income, including donations, bank loans and in-kind contributions, on a quarterly basis. It was recommended that legal provisions be introduced to ensure full access to all stages of the electoral process to citizen and international observers and that adequate time limits for

election-related complaints at all levels are provided by the legislation to ensure the implementation of the right to effective remedy.[62]

Prohibition of all forms of slavery[63]

40. The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe (CoE-GRETA) considered that Slovakia should strengthen its efforts to prevent trafficking for the purpose of exploitation and the prevention of trafficking in children through the implementation of measures and programmes aimed at supporting children in vulnerable situations, including Roma children, street children and children in residential care.[64]

41. The Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CoE-CP) and the CoE-GRETA recommended that Slovakia improve the identification and assistance to child victims of trafficking and ensure that child victims of trafficking are afforded special protection measures taking into account the best interests of the child. The police, prosecutors and judges, and social workers acting as legal guardians of children, should be trained and made aware of the particular vulnerability of child victims of trafficking.[65]

42. The CoE-CP and the CoE-GRETA recommended that Slovakia take additional legislative and practical measures to ensure that human trafficking cases are investigated proactively, prosecuted successfully and lead to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions, that financial investigations are systematically carried out to locate the proceeds of crime and other assets of the traffickers and that the offence of trafficking in human begins is excluded from the plea bargaining procedure.[66] Additionally, they recommended that Slovakia make full use of measures available to protect victims and witnesses of human trafficking and ensure that they are adequately protected from potential retaliation or intimidation in the course of judicial proceedings, including by reviewing the practice of direct confrontation of victims with suspected traffickers.[67]

43. The CoE-GRETA considered that Slovakia should ensure that all presumed and identified victims of human trafficking receive adequate assistance, including by ensuring that the victims have effective access to legal aid and legal counselling.[68] The CoE-CP and CoE-GRETA recommended that Slovakia adopt measures to facilitate and guarantee access to compensation for victims of trafficking.[69]

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to education[70]

44. In 2015, the CoE-Commissioner stated that despite the acknowledgment from the government of the need to tackle school segregation, as well as some of the legislative and policy measures that had been put in place, examples of successful inclusion were usually not due to a systemic approach. He noted the lack of a clear roadmap to desegregation at the national, regional or local levels. The CoE-Commissioner expressed concern about the non-enforcement of legal obligations in the field of inclusion, even after court orders to desegregate.[71]

45. In 2018, the CoE-Commissioner called on the authorities to start addressing the continuing segregation of Roma children and children with disabilities in education in a more comprehensive manner. Noting that little meaningful progress had been achieved in this field since his visit in 2015, the CoE-Commissioner stressed that measures to tackle school segregation could not be ad hoc and temporary. They must be bold and sustainable and reflect a long-term vision of inclusion shared by all stakeholders and supported across all levels and areas of the administration.[72]

46. Furthermore, the CoE-Commissioner called on Slovakia to introduce in law a clear obligation to desegregate and an enforceable right to inclusion, combined with a strong and internally coherent system of support to schools and pupils, including providing teaching and other assistants, funded through a stable budget that makes it reliable and long-term, and not primarily through temporary projects.[73]

47. The CoE-Commissioner noted that human rights education did not constitute a compulsory part of the state educational curriculum. Moreover, very little resources were allocated to teacher training in this field.[74] He invited the authorities to explicitly include human rights in the attainment targets for primary and secondary education and to take measures to ensure that civil servants working at central and local levels are systematically trained on human rights issues. He stressed that teaching methods should encourage critical thinking and create a participatory learning environment free from discrimination and intolerance.[75]

4. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women[76]

48. The SNCHR stated that discriminatory stereotypes concerning social and family roles of women and men were deeply rooted in Slovakia. Women continued to bear a disproportionate share of family and household responsibilities. The SNCHR explained that, in terms of gender stereotyping, a fundamental problem laid on misinterpretation of the term "gender equality". Some groups of society considered gender equality as a threat to traditionalism. The SNCHR recommended that Slovakia strengthen its efforts to take effective and proactive measures, including awareness-raising campaigns, to promote general understanding of gender equality.[77]

49. JS1 reported that gender inequality remained evident in many areas of private and public life.[78]

Children[79]

50. The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GIEACPC) noted that Slovakia supported recommendations from the second universal periodic review to prohibit corporal punishment in the family as a form of discipline by parents.[80] The GIEACPC reported that no progress has been made in this respect during the reporting period and that corporal punishment had been prohibited in all settings except at home. GIEACPC stated that legislation should be enacted to explicitly prohibit all forms of corporal punishment in the family.[81]

Persons with disabilities[82]

51. The CoE-Commissioner welcomed a legislative reform aimed at prohibiting the full incapacitation of persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities. He called on the authorities to finalise the process as a matter of priority and to develop a flexible system of supported decision-making, based on individual consent. In respect of supported decision-making, safeguards must be put in place to ensure that the provided support respects the preferences of the persons receiving it, is free of conflict of interest and is subject to judicial review.[83]

52. The CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to ensure that persons placed under guardianship have effective access to judicial review proceedings to challenge the guardianship or the way in which it is administered. He called on the authorities to ensure that persons with disabilities are recognised as persons with equal standing in courts and tribunals and can effectively challenge any interference with their right to legal capacity.[84]

53. The CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to speed up the deinstitutionalisation process, with the active involvement of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. The first step in this respect should be to immediately stop new placements in institutions. The authorities should avoid opening new –even if smaller – institutions. He called on the authorities to move resources from institutions to the development of individualised support services and adopt legislation providing clear guarantees for the respect of the right to independent living.[85]

54. Furthermore, the CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to ensure that persons with disabilities have effective access to a range of community-based arrangements, including the personal assistance necessary to support independent living and inclusion in the community.[86]

55. The CoE-Commissioner noted that Slovakia had a tradition of special schools for children with various disabilities. The majority of children with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities attended special schools, which were segregated from mainstream educational systems and facilities. The CoE- Commissioner stated that inclusive education for persons with disabilities was not guaranteed under legislation.[87]

56. The CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to adopt inclusive education as a fundamental principle of their educational policies. The authorities must ensure that children with special education needs effectively benefit from individual support and reasonable accommodation in mainstream settings. He encouraged Slovakia to take measures making the transition to inclusive education possible, including through provisions establishing an enforceable obligation on mainstream schools to reasonably accommodate children with disabilities. Such measures should be accompanied by a clear and ambitious timetable and an adequate budget.[88]

Minorities[89]

57. The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia increase attention to minority rights as an integral part of human rights in the government agenda and ensure effective inter-institutional co-ordination on all issues pertaining to human and minority rights protection, in close consultation with national minority and civil society representatives.[90]

58. The Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for the Regional and Minorities Languages (CoE-ECRML) noted that Slovakia had continued to fund a network of minority culture museums and provided funding to the activities prompting the culture of national minorities.[91] The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia maintain regular support to national minority cultural activities and ensure that representatives of all national minorities are effectively consulted in all relevant decision making on allocations.[92]

59. The CoE-ECRML stated that the existing offer in the school system, except for Hungarian, did not guarantee any systematic provision of minority language education and did not provide for the necessary continuity throughout all levels of education. The steps taken to reduce costs (so called school rationalisation) were particularly affecting minority language education. The number of schools has been decreasing, even in the case of Hungarian.[93]

60. The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia increase efforts to maintain high quality minority language education and to pursue a close dialogue with national minority representatives, parents and school administrations to ensure that the eventual closure of small schools does not hinder effective opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities to learn in their minority languages. They recommended ensuring that teachers of minority language schools have adequate access to relevant training programmes for teaching in all subjects and that textbooks contain adequate portrayals of all national minority communities and their history in Slovakia.[94]

61. The CoE-ECRML stated that the Slovakia had a highly detailed and complex legislation governing the use of the official language and the minority languages. Despite amendments made, some of the legal provisions, especially the State Language Act, and their implementation contradicted the principle under the European Charter for the Regional and Minorities Languages to encourage and facilitate the use of minority languages in public life, and in some cases prevents their use.[95] It reported that the use of minority languages in administration remained on the whole limited. The legislation in force continued to exclude the use of minority languages in the administration in areas where the speakers were present in sufficient numbers.[96]

62. The CoE-ECRML stated that minority language broadcasting in radio and television was insufficient and the publication of weekly newspapers was non-existent, with a partial exception of Hungarian. The Bulgarian, Croatian, German and Polish languages had only a very limited presence on television.[97] The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia increase its support to minority language media, particularly in the languages of numerically smaller minorities and Romani.[98]

63. The CoE-ACFC noted that many Roma continued to face grave obstacles in accessing rights in a number of spheres, such as health, housing, employment and social services.[99] The SNCHR observed that Roma communities remained one of the most discriminated communities in Slovakia and that discrimination against the Roma was grave in education, housing and employment.[100] JS1 reported that Roma remained underrepresented in elective bodies at local and national levels.[101]

64. The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia intensify efforts to effectively protect the Roma from discrimination in all spheres of life, including by raising awareness on their rights.[102] The CoE-Commissioner urged the authorities and political leaders at all levels to abstain from using stigmatising rhetoric against Roma.[103]

65. The CoE-Commissioner expressed concern about persistent deficiencies in Roma children's access to education. He remained concerned by the long-standing, widespread practice consisting in placing Roma children either in special schools or classes, or in separate classes or schools within the mainstream education system.[104] The SNCHR, JS1 and the EU-FRA made similar observations.[105]

66. The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia comprehensively address anti-Gypsyism in the education system and put in place the necessary measures to ensure that Roma children are systematically placed in integrated regular classes.[106] The CoE-Commissioner made similar recommendations.[107]

67. The CoE-Commissioner urged Slovakia to deal effectively with the issue of the excessively high rate of Roma with no formal education and the high early drop-out rates of Roma children. He encouraged Slovakia to develop integrated support measures aimed at eradicating and preventing school drop-out and ensuring the full reintegration of Roma children in the education system.[108]

68. The CoE-ECRI recommended ensuring that pre-school education as readily available to all Roma children, support Roma parents so they can afford to send their children to pre-school and create measures conductive an inclusive environment in pre-school facilities.[109]

69. The SNCHR stated that access to adequate housing and basic services remained a major problem faced by the Roma. A significant part of the Roma lived in settlements, where large parts of dwellings did not meet basic standards with no access to drinking water, electricity, gas, sewage, missing roads and public lights. Roma were also discriminated in the provision of housing services. They were either unlawfully denied access to such services or faced segregation practices.[110] The CoE-Commissioner also expressed concern about dire housing situation of Roma.[111]

70. In 2015, the CoE-Commissioner stated that some local authorities reportedly blocked Roma from obtaining construction permits or purchasing land and that partly as a result of lack of tenure, many Roma faced the threat of forced eviction.[112] In 2018, the SNCHR reported that new legislation was adopted to help settle lands under the dwellings in Roma communities.[113]

71. The CoE-Commissioner was concerned about the continued trend for building walls separating Roma and non-Roma communities.[114] The SNCHR made similar observations and reported that nine towns out of 13 towns it monitored from 2014 to 2017, had built such walls.[115]

72. The CoE-Commissioner urged the authorities to address dire housing situation of Roma as a matter of priority. He urged the authorities to ensure that evictions are means of last resort. When evictions cannot be avoided, they should take place in full compliance with international standards, including the provision of adequate alternative accommodation, due process and legal remedies, compensation and protection from homelessness.[116]

73. The SNCHR recommended that the authorities undertake additional measures to reduce Roma residential segregation and develop clear housing policies to eliminate segregation and discrimination in housing as well as ensure that all "anti-Roma walls" are removed without undue delay and support integration of the affected communities.[117] The

CoE-Commissioner stressed the importance of ensuring that local authorities are made accountable for any segregation policies and actions.[118]

74. The CoE-ECRI noted that educational and employment gaps, associated with poor housing conditions in most Roma settlements, resulted in poor health conditions for the Roma population.[119] The CoE-ACFC called on the authorities to continue and enhance their support for targeted measures to promote equal access to healthcare services by Roma, while paying due attention to the specific concerns of Roma women.[120]

75. The CoE-ECRI stated that there was a failure to implement the Roma integration programme due to a lack of will and because various programmes remained under the responsibility of individual ministries. An assessment of the progress of the Roma integration programme was impaired by the absence of comprehensive data.[121]

76. The CoE-CM and the CoE-ACFC recommended that Slovakia implement the Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan at central, regional and local levels in close consultation with Roma representatives and intensify efforts to counter anti-Gypsyism in society to effectively promote access of Roma to socio-economic rights.[122]

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons[123]

77. The CoE-ECRI recommended that the authorities promote the integration of persons with subsidiary protection through a State-funded integration programme guaranteeing minimal rights, such as free access to Slovak language classes, the recognition of educational and professional diplomas obtained abroad and all other social services provided to refugees.[124]

78. The CoE-ECRI reiterated its recommendation that measures be taken to provide asylum seekers with the possibility of working in Slovakia earlier than the current one year time-limit which runs from the beginning of the asylum procedure.[125]

Notes

[1] The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ADF International	Alliance Defending Freedom International, Geneva Switzerland;
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Geneva, Switzerland;
SNCHR	Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, Bratislava, Slovakia;

Joint submissions:

JS1	**Joint submission 1 submitted by**: the World Esperanto Youth Organisation, Rotterdam, The Netherlands and its Slovak Member Organization (SKEJ), and the European Youth Forum, Brussels, Belgium.

Regional intergovernmental organization(s):

CoE	The Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France; **Attachments**: (CoE-Commissioner) Report by Mr. Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, following his visit to the Slovak Republic from 15 to 19 June 2015, Strasbourg, CommDH (2015) 21; (CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018) Press release following a visit of the Commissioner for Human Rights to the Slovak Republic in June 2018 entitled Slovak Republic: adopt a bolder approach to ensure inclusive education and strengthen the safety of journalists, Bratislava, 16 March 2018;

	(CoE-ECRI) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report on Slovakia, adopted on 19 June 2014, CRI (2014) 37; (CoE-ECRI Conclusions) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance's conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of the Slovak Republic subject to interim follow-up, adopted on 24 March 2017, CRI (2017) 24; (CoE-GRETA) - Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Slovak Republic, Second Evaluation Round, Strasbourg, adopted on 3 July 2015; GRETA (2015) 21; (CoE-CP) Committee of the Parties to the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Recommendation CP (2015) 16 on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Slovak Republic, adopted on 30 November 2015; (CoE-ACFC) Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities, Strasbourg, Fourth Opinion on the Slovak Republic adopted on 3 December, 2014 ACFC/OP/II (2014) 004; (CoE-CM Resolution) Committee of Ministers, Resolution CM/ResCMN (2016)6 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Slovak Republic, adopted on 13 April 2016; (CoE-ECRML) Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for the Regional and Minorities Languages, Fourth Monitoring Cycle, Strasbourg, adopted on 4 November, 2015 ECRML (2016) 2; (CoE-CM Recommendation) Committee of Ministers, Recommendation CM/RecChl (2016)2 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by the Slovak Republic, adopted on 27 April 2016; (CoE-GRECO) Second Compliance Report on the Slovak Republic, Fourth Round Evaluation, Corruption Prevention of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors, adopted by the Group of States against Corruption on 18 October, 2017, GrecoRC4 (2017) 19;
EU-FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Vienna, Austria;
OSCE/ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Warsaw, Poland; **Attachment**: (The 2016 Elections Report: OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report, Parliamentary Elections on 5 March, 2016, Warsaw, 22 April, 2016.

[2] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12, paras. 110.1-110.6, 110.11, 110.99.
[3] SNCHR, para. 1.2.
[4] SNCHR, para. 2.2. See also CoE-Commissioner, para. 36.
[5] SNCHR, para. 2.1.
[6] CoE-Commissioner, para. 36.
[7] CoE-Commissioner, para. 36.
[8] ICAN, p. 1.
[9] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12, paras. 110.12 -110.20, 110.23 – 110.27 and 11.30.
[10] CoE-ECRI Conclusions, pp. 5-6. See also CoE-Commissioner, para. 17.
[11] SNCHR, para. 3.1.
[12] SNCHR, para. 3.1.

[13] CoE CM Resolution, p. 2 and CoE-ACFC, para. 21 and p. 31. See also CoE-ECRI, paras. 36 and 120.
[14] CoE-Commissioner, para. 37. See also CoE-ECRI, para. 120, CoE CM Resolution, p. 2, CoE-ACFC, para. 21and SNCHR, para. 3.1.
[15] SNCHR, para. 1.2. See also EE-FRA, p. 10.
[16] SNCHR, para. 1.2.
[17] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 5, 6 and 8.
[18] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12, paras. 110.28, 110.29, 110.36 -110.70, 110.92 - 110.95, 110.97, 110.98, 110.102.
[19] CoE-Commissioner, para. 54.
[20] JS1, p.1.
[21] CoE-ECRI, p. 9.
[22] CoE-ECRI, p. 9 and paras 4 and 9.
[23] CoE-ECRI, paras. 8 and 10.
[24] CoE CM Resolution, p. 1 and CoE-ACFC, p. 31.
[25] CoE-Commissioner, para. 104.
[26] CoE-ECRI, p. 9. See also paras. 44-46.
[27] SNCHR, para. 4.2.
[28] CoE-ECRI, para. 47.
[29] SNCHR, para. 4.2.
[30] CoE-ECRI, p. 9. See also CoE-ECRI, paras. 44, 49, 54 and 64 and JS1, p. 1.
[31] SNCHR, para. 4.2.
[32] CoE-Commissioner, para. 103.
[33] CoE CM Resolution, p. 2 and CoE-ACFC, p. 31. See also CoE-Commissioner, para. 102.
[34] SNCHR, para. 4.2.
[35] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 57 and 105.
[36] CoE-ECRI, p. 10 and para. 43. See also CoE-Commissioner, paras. 57 and 105.
[37] CoE-ECRI Conclusions, p. 5.
[38] CoE-Commissioner, para. 183.
[39] CoE-Commissioner, para. 187.
[40] CoE-Commissioner, para. 187. See also EU-FRA, pp. 16-17.
[41] CoE-Commissioner, para. 188.
[42] CoE-ECRI, p. 10.
[43] CoE-ECRI, para. 143. See also EU-FRA, pp. 17-18.
[44] CoE-Commissioner, para. 186. See also EU-FRA, pp. 17-18.
[45] CoE-Commissioner, para. 185.
[46] SNCHR, para. 3.2.
[47] SNCHR, para. 3.2.
[48] SNCHR, para. 3.2.
[49] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12/Add.1, paras. 110.57 -110-60, 110.94, 110. 96.
[50] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 106 -107.
[51] CoE-Commissioner, para. 108.
[52] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12/Add.1, paras. 110.87-110.91, 110.99, 110.100.
[53] CoE-GRECO, para. 83.
[54] SNCHR, para. 2.2.
[55] The 2016 Elections Report, p. 12.
[56] OSCE/ODIHR, p. 3 and the 2016 Elections Report, p. 17.
[57] CoE, p. 4 and CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018.
[58] CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018.
[59] ADF International, paras. 4-6.
[60] ADF International, para. 24.
[61] OSCE/ODIHR, p. 2.
[62] OSCE/ODIHR, pp. 2-3 and the 2016 Elections Report, pp. 17 and 18.
[63] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12/Add.1, paras. 110.74-110.84.
[64] CoE-GRETA, paras. 63 and 68.
[65] CoE-CP Recommendations, para. 2 and CoE-GRETA, paras. 119 and 169.
[66] CoE-CP Recommendations, para. 2 and CoE-GRETA, para. 161.
[67] CoE-CP Recommendations, para. 2 and CoE-GRETA, para. 169.
[68] CoE-GRETA, para. 108.
[69] CoE-CP Recommendations, para. 2 and CoE-GRETA, para. 139.
[70] For relevant recommendations see 110.21 and 110.114.
[71] CoE, p. 3 and CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018.
[72] CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018 and CoE, p. 3.

[73] CoE, p. 3 and CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018.
[74] CoE-Commissioner, para. 28.
[75] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 39 and 41.
[76] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12, paras. 110.32-110.35. 110.71, 110.104, 110.105
[77] SNCHR, para. 2.1. See also EU-FRA, p. 9.
[78] JS1, p. 3.
[79] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12/Add.1, para. 110.72 and 110.73.
[80] For the text of the recommendations see A/HRC/26/12/Add.1, para. 110.72 (Estonia) and 110.73 (Portugal).
[81] GIEACPC, paras. 1.1-1.3 and para. 2.
[82] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12, paras. 110.115.
[83] CoE-Commissioner, para. 149.
[84] CoE-Commissioner, para. 150.
[85] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 154 - 157.
[86] CoE-Commissioner, para. 153.
[87] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 142 and 144.
[88] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 159 - 160.
[89] For relevant recommendations see 110.102, 110.21, 110.47, 110.50-110.56, 110.116-110.144 and 110.145.
[90] CoE CM Resolution, p. 1 and CoE-ACFC, p. 31.
[91] CoE-ECRML, para. J, para. 89.
[92] CoE CM Resolution, p. 2 and CoE-ACFC, p. 32.
[93] CoE-ECRML, para. 7 and para. E, p. 89.
[94] CoE CM Resolution, p. 2 and CoE-ACFC, p. 32. See also CoE CM Recommendations, p. 1. See also JS1, pp. 2-3.
[95] CoE-ECRML, para. 4.
[96] CoE-ECRML, paras. C and H, p. 89. See also para. 5.
[97] CoE-ECRML, para. 9.
[98] CoE CM Resolution, p. 2 and CoE-ACFC, p. 32; See also CoE CM Recommendations, p. 1.
[99] CoE-ACFC, para. 25.
[100] SNCHR, para. 4.1. See also EU-FRA, p. 11 and JS1, p. 1.
[101] JS1, p.3.
[102] CoE CM Resolution, p. 1 and CoE-ACFC, p. 31.
[103] CoE-Commissioner, para. 102.
[104] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 81 and 82.
[105] SNCHR, para. 4.1, JS1, p.1 and EU-FRA, pp. 4, 5 and 8.
[106] CoE CM Resolution, p. 1 and CoE-ACFC, p. 31.
[107] CoE, p. 4 and CoE-Commissioner's Press Release 2018.
[108] CoE-Commissioner, paras. 112 and 113.
[109] CoE-ECRI, para. 132.
[110] SNCHR, para. 4.1. See also EU-FRA, p. 5.
[111] CoE-Commissioner, para. 117. See also CoE-ECRI. paras. 98-100.
[112] CoE-Commissioner, para. 96.
[113] SNCHR, para. 4.1. See also EU-FRA, p. 4.
[114] CoE-Commissioner, para. 119. See also CoE-ECRI. para. 98.
[115] SNCHR, para. 4.1.
[116] CoE-Commissioner, para. 118. See also CoE-ACFC, para. 87 and CoE-ECRI, para. 101.
[117] SNCHR, para. 4.1.
[118] CoE-Commissioner, para. 119.
[119] CoE-ECRI, para. 102.
[120] CoE-ACFC, para. 88.
[121] CoE-ECRI, pp. 9-10.
[122] CoE CM Resolution, p. 2 and CoE-ACFC, p. 32.
[123] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/26/12, paras 110.45 and 110.46.
[124] CoE-ECRI, para. 106.
[125] CoE-ECRI, para. 109.