

Statement by
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Geneva, 25 September 2009

Human Rights Council 12th Session

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to present to you, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia, our comments on the recommendations offered during the UPR interactive dialogue held on 15 May 2009. But let me first of all reaffirm the appreciation of the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia for the frank discussions and valuable comments provided by the delegations on that occasion. I wish to assure you that your recommendations, which largely correspond to our priorities in respect of human rights promotion and protection on national and international levels, will constitute an additional valuable guidance in our action in this area.

The comments and suggestions clustered in 42 recommendations are generally acceptable for the Republic of Macedonia.

On this occasion I will focus on some of the recommendations. At the same time, I wish to underscore that some of them were commented on during the interactive dialogue. You will find more details in our written contribution.

International treaties, Recommendation No. 1, 3 and 4

On 29 July 2009, in New York, the Republic of Macedonia signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A working group consisting of representatives of the line ministries and of NGO's has been established to carry out all necessary activities for the ratification of the Convention and its Protocol.

The procedure for the signature and consequent ratification of the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR is expected to commence in the near future.

There are possibilities considered for the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Rights of the Child Recommendations Nos. 4 and 7

At its session held on 10 September 2009, the National Commission on the Rights of the Child adopted the Report on the implementation of the (2006-2015) National Action Plan on the Rights of the Child in the period from 2006 to 2009.

The provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are taken in full consideration in the process of assessing the applicable and in adopting new legislation. The UNICEF Office in the Republic of Macedonia is consulted and involved in the process of adoption of the relevant legislation. Furthermore, with the recently adopted amendments to the Law on Ombudsman, a separate department for the rights of the child is to be formally established.

**Reverting again to Ombudsman, Recommendation No. 5
and part of Recommendation No. 34**

Aiming at the consistent implementation of the provisions of the Law on the Ratification of the OP-CAT, the amendments to the Law on Ombudsman have been recently adopted by Parliament. They relate to the strengthening of the role and the financial independence of the Ombudsman and establish the Ombudsman as the national prevention mechanism. The new Law ensures financial independence in line with the Paris Principles.

**Ohrid Framework Agreement and inter-ethnic relations
Recommendations Nos. 6, 14 and 41**

The OFA remains a priority for the Government. All envisaged laws regulating rights of non-majority communities have been adopted. The recruitment procedures for persons belonging to the non-majority communities are pursued following the envisaged dynamics.

A Committee of Ministers has been established to monitor the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. This Committee is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia in charge of the OFA implementation and is now assessing its implementation at the local level.

There is also a series of projects implemented, among which a UNDP project supported by the Spanish Government centered on improvement of inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation among communities, aiming at increasing the capacities of the central and local bodies for resolution of problems through consensus building on the priorities of communities.

In cooperation with the OSCE, and acting upon recommendations of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Ministry of Education and Science is currently drafting a strategy entitled Integration through education, relating to primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia.

The four national Action and Operative Plans under the Roma Decade and Strategy have been revised. Coordinating closely with the UNDP Office in Skopje, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has designed a system of indicators to monitor the implementation of the these documents.

Supported by Norway, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia will start the implementation of a project intended for women in rural areas. The goal is to inform women in rural areas about their rights and how to exercise them. Special attention will be paid to women belonging to different ethnic communities.

Status registration Recommendation No. 8

The Law on Registers sets forth the obligation of registering the birth of a child born in a medical facility and the birth of a child born at home. No fees are charged for documents and procedures for registration and entry of data in the Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths. It has been established that the Roma population has the greatest problems with the registry records. Therefore, a large number of educational and information meetings and debates have been organized by governmental and non-governmental organizations. Brochures in the Roma language have been published and informative spots are broadcast at the state Television and at local TV stations in the Roma language.

**Action against torture and related issues
Recommendations Nos. 9, 19, 21, 27, 28, 30, 31, (part of 32),
33 and 34**

Following the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, the current penitentiary reform is aimed at improving the conditions in penitentiaries and at ensuring more efficient enforcement of sanctions in pursuance with international standards. The reform consists of two components: Improvement of the accommodation facilities for convicted prisoners, for remand prisoners and for juveniles, and improvement of the working conditions for the staff and increase the staff number. A Sector for Training and Education of the staff at penitentiaries and correctional institutions and been established at the Directorate for Execution of Sanctions. A Training and Education Program has been adopted, as well as an Operative Plan for staff training. The Project entitled "Piloting prison reforms in accordance with EU required standards" will be implemented with support of foreign partners.

Under the 2009 IPA, funds have been requested for preparation of a national Prison System Development Strategy, as well as for the assessment and implementation of a Prison Health Care Strategy.

Anti-discrimination Recommendations Nos. 13 and 18

The Draft Law on Protection against Discrimination is in Government procedure. The final draft of the Law has taken into consideration the opinions and recommendations of the Venice Commission, of the ODIHR and of NGO's. The public debates and

consultations with the NGO sector will continue until the adoption of the Law by the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.

In mid June, a series of non-discrimination trainings started, organized in cooperation with NGO's, intended for civil servants and social workers. The goal of trainings, organized under the program "Macedonian without Discrimination", supported by the EU PROGRESS program, is to enhance the capacities of state institutions for promotion of equal opportunities and of non-discrimination.

A series of public awareness raising campaigns about discrimination related issues have been implemented so far.

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender has been explicitly prohibited under the draft Law on Protection against Discrimination.

Rights of same-sex partners, Recommendation No. 18 b

At this stage, this recommendation is not acceptable for the Republic of Macedonia.

Women, Recommendations Nos. 15, 16 and 17

The implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities and of the Gender Equality Action Plan is expected to help continue the positive trend in the representation of women in all spheres of social life. There are activities under way to amend legislation from the gender perspective, in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

These amendments will make the basis for the changes to the curricula, especially in primary education aiming at avoiding stereotype contents that could affect the perception by children of the roles of women and men.

Analysis of the relevant legislation is prepared and citizens logs are designed in cooperation with Roma women's NGO's and the Ombudsman's Office in the context of activities to overcome unequal treatment and access of Roma, especially of Roma women, to state institutions.

Violence against women, Recommendations Nos. 20 and 22

The 2008-2011 National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence, in cooperation with foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations, is being implemented.

The protection system is improved through the introduction of counseling services to provide assistance to victim of domestic violence, then through preparation of their program of work and expansion of network. Victim assistance and support are provided through the established protection system, which covers measures undertaken by social work centers, accommodation of victims in shelters, where they are provided with psychosocial treatment, reception of calls through the national SOS line and urgent accommodation of persons in state and in NGO's facilities, motions for court decisions for temporary protection measures against perpetrators of domestic violence.

Legal assistance and representation are provided in cooperation with the NGO sector.

All relevant institutions and ministries undertake preventive measures in the context of improving the level of informing, the sensitizing and raising the expertise level of the relevant professionals. Measures are undertaken to improve public informing about legal measures to protect victims of domestic violence.

Protection of minors, Recommendation No. 24

An Action Plan is implemented aiming at the effective implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice, which has been in force since 30 June 2009.

Bylaws envisaged under the Law on Juvenile Justice have been adopted and initial and continual trainings have been organized for judges, public prosecutors, attorney's at law, all teams at Social Work Centers, police, then for educators at education-correctional institutions and in juvenile prisons, as well as for the security services at these institutions.

Programs for specialized trainings of all involved institutions have been prepared.

Trafficking in persons, Recommendation No. 25

The Republic of Macedonia continually improves the coherency of the activities of various institutions, non-governmental and international organizations which work on the detection and prevention of trafficking in human beings. In April

2009, the Republic of Macedonia ratified the European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

The National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking in human beings is successfully functioning. In the last period, three times more cases of trafficking in human beings have been detected. 300 police officers, social workers, doctors, labor inspectors and journalists have been trained and there have been information presentations organized for students in more than 20 municipalities throughout Macedonia.

New national 2009-2012 Action Plan has been adopted, as well as a new Strategy.

Reform of the judiciary, Recommendation No. 26

The reform of the judiciary and the promotion of its independence and efficiency remain major priorities the Republic of Macedonia. The 2004 Reform Strategy has been fully implemented. Currently, an Action Plan is prepared in cooperation with the EC for further reforms in this area. The judiciary budget has been increased by 11% also in the context of strengthening its independence.

Police oversight and prison guards internal control mechanism, Recommendation No. 28

According to the relevant legislation, in the Republic of Macedonia there are independent and external mechanisms for control of the work of the police: the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Macedonia, the Permanent Survey Committee for

the protection of human rights and freedoms at the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ombudsman, the non-governmental sector and the judiciary.

As far as the prison guards are concerned, the control of the enforcement of sanctions is exercised by the Directorate for Execution of Sanctions- Inspector for Execution of Sanctions, judge for execution of sanctions, and the State Commission for Execution of Sanctions in pursuance with the provisions of the Law on Execution of Sanctions.

Allegations of ill-treatment, Recommendations Nos. 29 and 34

The Internal Control and Professional Standards Sector objectively and professionally examines all allegations of abuse by the police. There have been a number of projects implemented with the focus on strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of the Interior and of the police for control of the work of the police. In order to improve the efficiency of the Internal Control and Professional Standards Sector, great attention is paid to the Sector's staff training. Furthermore, cooperation with the Department against Organized Crime, Public Prosecutor's Offices, courts and with the Ombudsman and NGO's has been intensified.

Elections, Recommendation No. 37

The Republic of Macedonia will fully implement the recommendations contained in the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation report of the presidential and local elections in 2009, which involve further reform of the election legislation, then of the

legislation closely linked with the election process, as well as revision of the Voters' List.

Education, more precisely drop-outs, Recommendation No. 40

In cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Education and Science pursues a mentor project which helps pupils and parents to enroll their children in school and follow up their progress. This Ministry has further awarded 650 scholarships for secondary school Roma students and has lowered by 10% the secondary school enrollment criteria for Roma students.

For three years now, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has been contributing to pre-school education, implementing projects covering Roma children a year before starting primary education. In the 2008/2009 and in the 2009/2010 school year this Project has been jointly pursued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Roma Education Fund and 19 units of local self-government. For the first time, the 19 units of local self-government where the project is implemented provide financial support to the project covering part of the costs for accommodation, food and transportation of Roma children within the municipality.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying that the Government of the Republic of Macedonia highly values the UPR process as

instrumental in assessing the implementation of national and international priorities and commitments in the area of human rights.

I thank you.