SLOVAK NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia

02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSION OF THE SLOVAK NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Fourth review of the Slovak Republic under the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations' Human Rights Council

October 2023

SLOVAK NATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia

02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

1. COMPLIANCE OF NHRI WITH THE PARIS PRINCIPLES

1. Since the 3rd cycle, there has been no legislative change bringing the national human rights institution, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (the Centre), in full compliance with the Paris Principles. The amendment of the Act No.308/1993 Coll. on Establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights[1] was rejected in July 2019. While a minor amendment from 2023 specified that reports prepared and published by the Centre are independent reports[2], it did not have significant impact on implementation of the Paris Principles.
2. Since the last review, the Centre has been gradually financially strengthened and increased its budget from EUR 565.356 in 2018 to 967.002 in 2023. In 2022, in addition to operational budget (EUR 870.287) the Centre was also allocated EUR 74.000 for capital expenditures to modernize its ICT infrastructure. Consequently, the Centre increased the number of its expert staff from 16 in 2018 to 26 in 2023.[3]

Recommendation

- ***Bring the legislation governing the functioning of the national human rights institution, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, in full compliance with the Paris Principles within the ongoing review cycle.***

2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION[4]

3. Despite some measures taken by Slovakia to introduce inclusive approaches in education, persistent, widespread and systemic discrimination and segregation of Roma children in education continues.[5] In 2020, 47% of Roma children living in excluded communities who attended regular schools had only Roma classmates in their class. Roma children also continue to form a majority of pupils in "special classes" and "special schools" for children with disabilities, segregated from mainstream education.[6]
4. In 2015, the European Commission launched an infringement procedure against Slovakia due to the breach of the prohibition of discrimination in education under the Race Equality Directive.[7] As no sufficient steps to eliminate segregation were done, in 2023, the European Commission referred Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union, arguing that "*Slovakia has undertaken a series of legislative reforms and adopted several strategies and action plans to foster Roma inclusion in education. However, after carefully assessing those measures and monitoring the situation on the ground, the Commission concluded that the reforms undertaken so far are insufficient*."[8]
5. In its 2022 human rights report, the Centre analysed the access of refugee children who have fled the international armed conflict in Ukraine to education. While the schools made significant efforts to include Ukrainian children in the educational process, relatively small number of refugee children were enrolled in the Slovak education system, while some were educated remotely in Ukrainian schools. As the state authorities do not keep records on this issue and school attendance of children of foreigners is not compulsory, authorities have no knowledge of how many Ukrainian refugee children do not attend any form of education.[9]

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

6. With regards to children with disabilities, Slovakia has also the highest proportion of primary school students in the special stream of education within the EU – 5,88% of students are educated in segregated special education stream as compared to EU average of 1,62%.[10] Despite measures to introduce inclusive approaches in education and national court decisions in individual cases on violations of the principle of equal treatment, the process of transformation is slow and maintaining of a parallel system of special education for children with disabilities often remains not understood as a form of segregation and rather defended as benefitting children with disabilities.[11]

Recommendations:

- **Aim to eliminate all forms of segregation in education, including existence of separate schools and classrooms for children with disabilities and Roma children.**

- **Adopt a legally binding plan of transition from segregated to inclusive education at all levels, and for all children, including by setting timelines and allocating adequate resources in line with the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

- **Include in the Antidiscrimination Act an explicit definition of reasonable accommodation and the denial of reasonable accommodation as disability-based discrimination, as well as definition of segregation as a form of discrimination.**

- **Introduce compulsory school attendance for migrant and refugee children and enable their full inclusion in mainstream education. Provide sufficient support to all refugee and migrant children, including provision of language courses.**

3. EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION OF ROMA

7. Discrimination and social exclusion of Roma is a persistent human rights issue in Slovakia. Most cases involving ill-treatment and excessive use of force by law enforcement authorities against Roma[12] have resulted in dismissal[13] or an outcome in favour of the law enforcement authorities.[14] The European Court of Human Rights has found violations of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in cases brought before it after unsuccessful domestic investigations,[15] including a large-scale police operation in a Roma-inhabited area in Moldava nad Bodvou in 2013 (*R. R. and R. D. v. Slovakia)*. In 2023, the investigation was re-opened, however, the case was assigned to the same investigator who stopped the original investigation in 2015 and 2016.[16]

8. Roma are also often the target of hate speech and hate crime. According to data of the National Crime Agency on extremism offences, in 2021 and 2022, in cases in which it was possible to identify a specific victim, most attacks were directed against Roma (29 in 2021[17] and 13 in 2022[18]). The increasing intensity of hate speech was also noticeable in the early stages of the ongoing parliamentary election campaign. The Centre researched the occurrence of hate speech on Facebook profiles of the most popular Slovak political representatives between March and June 2023, showing that most anti-Roma hate speech manifested in

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

incitement to or justification of hatred by reinforcing or replicating negative stereotyping.[19]

9. Ensuring equal treatment in healthcare remains a significant challenge in Slovakia.[20] Ethnic discrimination prevails also in attitudes and behaviours of healthcare workers, such as use of separate waiting rooms or outspoken hostility, which results in avoidance of healthcare settings by Roma.[21] In 2019, only around 53% of Roma living in excluded communities had access within 2 km to a general practitioner and 44% to a pediatric practitioner.[22] Segregation of Roma women in maternity wards including separating bathrooms for Roma women and segregation in canteens is alarming.[23]
10. Forced and coercive sterilizations of mainly Roma women in between 1966-1989 and 1990-2004 have been documented by several organisations and institutions.[24] Despite the formal "Apology of the Government of the Slovak Republic for sterilization of women in violation of the law"[25] from 2021, the current national framework does not allow the affected women to obtain effective redress and the state lacks information on the number of possible victims.[26] In 2023, there were legislative efforts to establish a compensation mechanism for women sterilized in violation of the law through a one-off financial compensation of EUR 5000.[27] The Centre[28] and the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights[29] raised several issues concerning the proposed mechanism.[30] The law was not adopted and it is unclear whether the upcoming government would continue with the process.

***Recommendations*:**

- ***Ensure that all allegations of excessive use of force and misconduct by law enforcement authorities are sufficiently and independently investigated, the perpetrators prosecuted and that victims have equal access to remedies.***
- ***Effectively investigate all incidents of hate crime and hate speech, including online, and ensure that data on hate crime and hate speech are comprehensively collected and published.***
- ***Adopt measures to end discriminatory practices against Roma and prevent verbal and physical abuse by healthcare professionals against Roma.***
- ***Ensure effective and impartial investigation of all past cases of involuntary sterilizations of Roma women and other victims and adopt national framework providing for an effective and accessible compensation for women sterilized in violation of the law.***

4. RIGHTS OF LGBTI+ PERSONS

11. Despite previous commitments in the Nationwide Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of 2015, Slovakia has yet not adopted an action plan or other strategic document setting framework measures to improve protection of LGBTI+ rights. While the country remains one of the last EU Member States that had not adopted any form of legal recognition of same-sex couples, the Slovak Constitution also defines marriage as a unique union between a man and a woman. Same-sex partners may currently be granted the status of a "close person" or "cohabitant in a shared household" under certain statutory provisions,

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

but it is in many cases unclear and difficult to prove. The rights, including social rights, arising from the status of a close person or cohabiting person in a shared household are not guaranteed, unlike for different-sex married couples.[31]

12. There has been an alarming number of legislative attempts to limit legal gender recognition, including proposals to introduce constitutional definition of gender identity as an irreversible concept defined by sex assigned upon birth, prohibit discussing issues related to gender identity in school, exclude the possibility to change the name and surname of a person during or upon transition or condition change of a birth registration number (with gender-specific marker) by submitting results of a genetical test confirming the gender of a person concerned.[32] In relation to legal transition, transgender persons cannot change their certificates on completion of secondary education issued prior transition as compared to university diploma, creating different standards of protection based on the level of education achieved. Additionally, accessibility of complex health care in relation to transition remains problematic due to lack of medical specialists in the area of sexology and psychiatry or the need for training to medical personal to ensure non-discriminatory and non-pathologizing approach to transgender persons in the area of healthcare.[33]

13. Furthermore, blood donation by gay and bisexual men is restricted in Slovakia. The screening questionnaire developed by the National Transfusion Service of the Slovak Republic used prior blood donation includes a stigmatizing question linking risky sexual behavior directly to sexual orientation without further criteria. Male donors are asked: *"Have you had a sexual intercourse with a man in the past twelve months?"*.[34] Consequently, any man that has had a sexual intercourse with a man in the past year, irrespective of whether this has been within a stable long-term same-sex relationship, cannot donate blood.

Recommendations

- ***Adopt a comprehensive action plan for the rights of LGBTI+ persons, including addressed measures to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which would be a result of a participatory process.***
- ***Adopt measures improving accessibility of medical transition and legal gender recognition, including clear and transparent procedures applicable to civil registries and legislative amendments enabling legal gender recognition in relation to certificates on completion of secondary education.***
- ***Remove the restriction of blood donations by gay and bisexual men on the basis of sexual orientation alone.***

5. WOMEN´S RIGHTS – ACCESS TO SAFE ABORTIONS

14. The state of exercising reproductive and sexual health and rights in Slovakia is alarming, especially for vulnerable groups. Moreover, there are continuous legislative attempts to further restrict access to safe abortions aiming to introduce restricting conditions such as longer waiting periods, obligatory ultrasounds with heartbeats, confirmation of two medical professionals, obligatory information to be provided by the woman concerned, compulsory

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

burial of aborted fetuses or prohibiting advertising of abortion services.[35] The situation has been contested also by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights.[36,37]

15. Accessibility of reproductive health services and information about them is insufficient and restricted by inadequate and inaccurate information regarding the provision of reproductive health services,[38] as well as by geographic inaccessibility of reproductive health services.[39] In terms of affordability of reproductive health services, the non-compliance with the maximum fee for abortion (EUR 248,95) set by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic is problematic. The ambiguity of information provided in the price list and the additional and hidden fees for associated administrative and medical services represent a barrier.[40]

Recommendations

- **Refrain from introducing legislative measures restricting access to abortions and diminishing existing rights in the field of sexual and reproductive health and ensure access to safe abortion by removing legislative and non-legislative barriers to access to abortion.**

6. MEDIA FREEDOM AND SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS[41]

16. Slovak journalists continue to face threats and harassment, including physical attacks. A survey conducted in 2023 by the Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak reported that 66.2% of Slovak journalists experienced an attack or threats in the past 12 months (while 4% experienced physical attack) and 47% think the number of incidents has increased over the last 5 years.[42] Besides attacks by the general public, journalists also face verbal attacks by politicians. In particular, two former Prime Ministers have criticised[43] and made baseless accusations[44] against journalists encouraging public hostility.[45] According to the survey, 33,3% of Slovak journalists think the intensity of verbal attacks by politicians has increased. The survey also showed that 2,74% of Slovak journalists have experienced legal harassment/SLAPPs.[46] The offence of defamation is also frequently used to intimidate and bully journalists and the media.[47]

7. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

17. In its 2023 Rule of Law Report on Slovakia, the European Commission noted that despite some planned measures for improvement, the civil society space in Slovakia is reported as "narrowed" with lack of systemic funding and fragmented regulation.[48] Challenges also remain in inclusion of NGOs and human rights defenders in participatory processes and consultation when adopting important legislation and reforms.
18. In 2022 and 2023, the Centre conducted research on challenges to safe democratic space for women human rights defenders working on sexual and reproductive health and rights[49] and for LGBTI+ human rights defenders.[50] Although not a representative research, the information points to personal or organizational risks women and LGBTI+ human rights defenders in Slovakia face. Human rights defenders reported harassment, online threats, organized slander campaigns and hate speech (including from top politicians, religious and public figures), which often included attacks due to their real or alleged identity (e.g. gendered forms of harassment or homophobic and transphobic hate speech and harassment). Respondents encounter strong "anti-gender movements" standing in opposition to sexual

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

and reproductive health and rights or advancement of human rights of LGBTI+ people, which have moved from fringe ultraconservative or religious forums into the mainstream and have been taken up by state administration employees, top politicians, and policymakers.[51]

Recommendations

- **Adopt legislative measures aimed at increasing safety of journalists and media freedom, including abolishment of the crime of defamation.**
- **Ensure available and efficient protection of journalists and human rights defenders to prevent and investigate harassment and intimidation, threats, violence and other restrictions of rights, including from politicians, and guarantee that they can carry out their activities in safe conditions.**
- **Adopt sustainable and long-term institutional support, including financial grants for civil society organizations and human rights defenders in Slovakia, including those working on gender equality and LGBTI+ rights.**

8. RIGHT TO LIVING INDEPENDENTLY AND BEING INCLUDED IN THE COMMUNITY

19. Slovak Republic's commitments to deinstitutionalization of social services have not yet been sufficiently implemented and the country still relies to a large extent on institutional care for persons with disabilities. The deinstitutionalisation process is slow, including due to the opposition of local and regional authorities.[52]

20. In 2022, the Centre published a study on availability of community social services for persons with disabilities and identified several important barriers, including lack of capacity, geographical availability and financial sustainability of community social services.[53]

Recommendations

- **Strengthen without delay further implementation of the deinstitutionalization process and create new community-based social services for all persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities and people with complex support needs, so they are fully accessible, cover all regions and are financially available to all.**

9. RIGHT TO CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

21. There is an absence of legislation addressing the climate crisis. In 2023, a proposal of a Climate Act[54] was introduced and included the right of the concerned public to bring an administrative action before the respective court in matters relating to achievement of climate targets. The Centre submitted several comments stressing compliance and respect for human rights. The Act proposal failed to be adopted in the current parliamentary term.

22. The Centre is not aware of any systemic action of the Slovak Republic to monitor or strengthen the safety of environmental human rights defenders (EHRD). In 2021, the Centre

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia
02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

mapped the experience of EHRD with intimidation, bullying or other restriction of rights. Although not a representative research, EHRD reported cases of defamation, intimidation and bullying and threats of violence from business entities, public administration bodies, residents of location of their environmental activities or by unknown persons.[55] EHRD also face online hate speech from politicians, in some cases labelling them as "ecoterrorists".[56]

Recommendations:

- ***Ensure the protection and realisation of the right to clean, healthy and sustainable environment, including by protection of natural reserves and natural resources and taking action in the area of water management.***
- ***Continue efforts to adopt national climate act with respect to the right to access information under the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (the Aarhus Convention).***

ENDNOTES

[1] The draft law was reviewed by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. See: OSCE/ODIHR: *Opinion on the Draft Amendments to the Act on Establishment of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights*, 2019, available at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/0/434804.pdf

[2] Act No. 110/2023 Coll. amending and supplementing the Act No. 564/2001 Coll. on Public Defender of Rights as amended and amending and supplementing certain other acts, available in Slovak at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2023/110/20230501

[3] Average numbers of employees per year: 2018 – 16, 2019 – 18, 2020 – 21, 2021 – 23, 2022 – 25, 2023 – 26/28 (2 project-funded positions).

[4] See also *Observations of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights in relation to the thirteenth periodic report of Slovakia to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, July 2022, pp. 15-20, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCERD%2FIFN%2FSVK%2F49201&Lang=en; and *Comments submitted by the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights concerning the 13th National Report on the implementation of the European Social Charter,* 29 July 2023, pp. 18-25, available at: https://rm.coe.int/comments-snchr-slovakia-13-nr-2023/1680ac5430.

[5] CERD/C/SVK/CO/13, para. 32.

[6] Markovič, F., Plachá, Ľ.: Income and living conditions in marginalized Roma communities: Selected survey indicators EU SILC_MRK 2020, pp. 34- 37, available in Slovak at: https://shorturl.at/ezALQ

[7] Lajčáková, J.: "Based on the European Commission's inquiry, we have acknowledged the problem of segregation in education. It still remains to be solved", *Minority Policy in Slovakia 1/2016*, available in Slovak at: https://shorturl.at/ajoLM

[8] European Commission: "The European Commission decides to refer Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union for not sufficiently addressing discrimination against Roma children at school", 19 April 2023, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_2249

[9] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic for the Year 2022*, pp. 94-98, available at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/HR-Report-2022.pdf.

[10] Hapalová, M.: "Overrepresentation of children in the special education system" in It Makes Sense initiative: *Analysis of findings on the state of education in Slovakia*, 2019, p. 71, available in Slovak at: https://analyza.todarozum.sk/analyza-zisteni-o-stave-skolstva-na-slovensku.pdf

[11] Pavlíčková, Z.: "Does the Slovak Republic declare an interest in achieving a truly inclusive education system?", *SME*, 12 April 2022, available in Slovak at: https://blog.sme.sk/preludskeprava/nezaradene/deklaruje-slovenska-republika-zaujem-dosiahnut-skutocne-inkluzivny-vzdelavaci-system

[12] For example, enforcement interventions in April 2013 in Vrbnica, June 2013 in Moldava nad Bodvou, February 2015 in Rudňany, May 2017 in Zborov, July 2019 in Milhosť or April 2020 in Krompachy.

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia

02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

See the Observations of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights in relation to the fourth periodic report of Slovakia to the Committee against Torture, 2023, available at: https://shorturl.at/KL479

[13] See for example: Police brutality in Milhosť, July 2019. Bernard Rorke: *'No case to answer: Slovak authorities dismiss another two police brutality cases against Roma'*, 2021, available at: https://shorturl.at/kwHN6

[14] See for example: Judgment of the District Court of Košice II of 4 December 2019 and the Judgment of the Regional Court of Košice of 11 December 2020, Case No, 4To/54/2020.

[15] See: Judgement of the ECtHR in case *R.R. and R.D. v. Slovakia*, Ap. No. 20649/18 of 1 September 2020, available at https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-204154, Judgement of the ECtHR in case *A. P. v. Slovakia*, Ap. No. 10465/17 of 28 January 2020, available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-200556, Judgement of the ECtHR in case *M. B. and Others v. Slovakia*, Ap. No. 45322/17 of 1 April 2021, available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-208879, Judgement of the ECtHR in case *M. B. and Others v. Slovakia (No. 2)*, Ap. No. 63962/19 of 7 February 2023, available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-223108, Decision of the ECtHR in case *M. H. and Others v. Slovakia*, Ap. No. 14099/18 of 3 May 2022, available at: https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-217769

[16] SME: **"**The Moldava raid is being handled by the same investigator who years ago said the Roma were making things up", 25 May 2023, available in Slovak at: https://domov.sme.sk/c/23173831/moldava-nad-bodvou-razia-policia-romovia-vysetrovanie.html

[17] Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic: *Status report on the investigation of extremism for 2021*, p. 14, available in Slovak at: https://shorturl.at/lmrS6

[18] Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic: *Status report on the investigation of extremism for 2022*, p. 16, available in Slovak at: https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/naka_opr/ptc/Rocna_sprava_2022_web.pdf.

[19] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Hateful language on political Facebook profiles. Report on monitoring hate speech*, Bratislava, 2023, p. 40, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/Nenavistny-jazyk-na-politickych-fb-profiloch-2023_web.pdf

[20] See the written submission of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights for consideration when compiling the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LoIPR) for Slovakia at the 139th session of the Human Rights Committee, 2023, available at: https://shorturl.at/ciuGZ

[21] People in Need: "Are Roma living in the settlements healthier than the majority?", 12 October 2021, available in Slovak at: https://clovekvohrozeni.sk/su-romovia-v-osadach-zdravsi-nez-majorita/.

[22] Government of the Slovak Republic: *Strategy of Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030*, p. 34, available in Slovak at: https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/site/assets/files/1113/strategia_2030.pdf?csrt=10693107727240994688

[23] Center for Reproductive Rights, Centre for Civil and Human Rights: *Vakeras Zorales, We Talk Loud. Experiences of Roma Women with Reproductive Healthcare in Slovakia*, 2017, p. 12, available in Slovak at: https://shorturl.at/doxY2.

[24] See for example: Center for Reproductive Rights and Center for Civil and Human Rights: *Vakeras Zorales – Speaking Out, Roma women's experience in reproductive health care in Slovakia*, 2017, available at: https://shorturl.at/btPRT, The Office of the Public Defender of Rights: *Report on the Activities of the Public Defender of Rights of the Slovak Republic for 2018*, 2019, p. 43-44, available at: https://vop.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/KVOP_Vyrocna_sprava_ENG_web.pdf, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: *'Letter to the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic and the Minister of Justice of the Slovak Republic'*, CommHR/DM/sf 026-2021, 12 July 2021, available at: https://shorturl.at/xLTZ9

[25] Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 674 on *Apology of the Government of the Slovak Republic for sterilization of women in violation of the law,* 22 November 2021, available in Slovak at: https://rokovania.gov.sk/RVL/Material/26642/1

[26] Reply to the request for information according to Act No. 211/2000 Coll. Act on free access to information and the amendment and supplementing of certain acts (Act on Freedom of Information) by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, received on 20 March 2023.

[27] Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic: *'LP/2023/64 Legislative intent of the law on one-time financial compensation for women sterilized in violation of the law'*, available in Slovak at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2023/64.

[28] Comments by the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights to LP/2023/64 Legislative intent of the law on financial compensation for women sterilized in violation of the law, available in Slovak at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2023/64/pripomienky/zobraz?page=4, Letter to Members of the Parliament on the forthcoming law on compensation for victims of unlawful sterilisation, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/list_poslancom.pdf

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia

02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

[29] Comissioner for Human Rights: Letter addressed to the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 2023, available at: https://rm.coe.int/letter-addressed-to-the-national-council-of-the-slovak-republic-regard/1680ab82ad

[30] Comments by the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights to LP/2023/64 Legislative intent of the law on financial compensation for women sterilized in violation of the law, available in Slovak at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2023/64/pripomienky/zobraz?page=4, Letter to Members of the Parliament on the forthcoming law on compensation for victims of unlawful sterilisation, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/list_poslancom.pdf

[31] For more information see: Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment for the Year 2022, pp. 61-64,- available at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/HR-Report-2022.pdf

[32] E.g. Proposals of the Constitutional Act amending and supplementing the Constitution of the Slovak Republic No. 460/1992 Coll. as amended (Nos.429 and 698), available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=429 and https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=698; Proposal of the Act amending the Act No. 300/1993 Coll. on Name and Surname as amended and Act No. 301/1995 Coll. on Birth Identification Number (No.697), available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=697; Proposals of the Act amending and supplementing the Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Upbringing (the School Act) and amending and supplementing certain other acts as amended (Nos.732 and 1249), available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=732 and https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=1249, Proposal of the Act amending and supplementing the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 301/1995 Coll. on Birth Identification Number as amended, available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=1486

[33] VAŠEČKOVÁ, B., Possibilities and limitations of transgender healthcare in the context of Slovak legislation, in BATKA, Ľ., RAKOVÁ, K., HORVAT, M. et al., 'Status of transgender persons in Slovakia. Interdisciplinary aspects', 2022, pp. 11-16, available in Slovak at: https://www.flaw.uniba.sk/uploads/media/Postavenie_transrodovych_ludi_na_Slovensku._Interdisciplinarne_pohlady.pdf

[34] National Transfusion Service of the Slovak Republic, Questionnaire for Donors of Blood, Plasma and Blood Cells, available at: https://shorturl.at/pzTY9

[35] See e.g.: Proposal of the Act amending Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health care, services related to the provision of health care, and on amendments and supplements to certain Acts (No.154), of 20 October 2020, available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=154; Proposal of the Act on assistance to pregnant women (No.665), available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=665; Proposal of the Act amending and supplementing Act No. 131/2010 Coll. On Burial Services as amended and amending and supplementing certain acts (No.1190), available in Slovak at: https://www.nrsr.sk/web/Default.aspx?sid=zakony/cpt&ZakZborID=13&CisObdobia=8&ID=1190. The list is not exhaustive. See also: Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Report on the Observance of Human Rights including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic for the Year 2019*, p.170, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/Sprava-o-LP-v-SR-za-rok-2019.pdf

[36] Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights letters to the Members of the Slovak Parliament available at: https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-the-national-council-of-the-slovak-republic-by-dunja-mijatov/168098eed2 (2019); https://rm.coe.int/commdh-2020-18-letter-to-parliament-slovak-republic-en/16809f7d70 (2020) and https://rm.coe.int/letter-to-the-slovak-national-council-by-dunja-mijatovic-council-of-eu/1680a43530 (2021).

[37] Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights: Letter to the Members of the National Council of the Slovak Republic, 15 October 2021, available at: https://bit.ly/3bS8qbo

[38] Holubová, B., Mesochoritisová, A. & Jojart, P.: *Accessibility of reproductive health services in Slovakia. Report on health-care providers*. 2021, p.39-51, available in Slovak at: http://moznostvolby.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/revAM_Dostupnos%C5%A5-slu%C5%BEieb-reproduk%C4%8Dn%C3%A9ho-zdravia-na-Slovensku.pdf.

[39] Ibid., p.61.

[40] Ibid., pp.70-76. See also: Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: Report on the Observance of Human Rights including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic for the Year 2019, p.176, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/Sprava-o-LP-v-SR-za-rok-2019.pdf

Laurinská 18
811 01 Bratislava
Slovakia

02/208 501 14
info@snslp.sk
www.snslp.sk

[41] See also *Written submission of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights for consideration when compiling the List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LoIPR) for Slovakia at the 139th session of the Human Rights Committee*, August 2023, paras. 25-31, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCCPR%2FICS%2FSVK%2F55467&Lang=en

[42] Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak: "Research: do Slovak journalists feel safe?", 20 February 2023, available in Slovak at: https://icjk.sk/229/Vyskum-Citia-sa-slovenski-novinari-bezpecne

[43] European Centre for Press and Media Freedom: Mapping Media freedom: "Slovak Finance Minister pledges to personally weed out journalists he views as corrupt", 12 October 2022, available at: https://www.mapmf.org/alert/25313, and "Deputy Slovak PM likens modern journalists to servants of Hitler", 29 September 2022, available at: https://www.mapmf.org/alert/25252

[44] European Centre for Press and Media Freedom: Mapping Media freedom: "PM Robert Fico defames journalist following question on ruling coalition", 12 September 2017 available at: https://www.mapmf.org/alert/21476

[45] Startitup.sk: "Another attack on the media. A group of protesters attacked a RTVS cameraman yesterday, police intervened", 31 July 2021, available in Slovak at https://shorturl.at/cqLY5

[46] Investigative Centre of Ján Kuciak: "Research: do Slovak journalists feel safe?", 20 February 2023, available in Slovak at: https://icjk.sk/229/Vyskum-Citia-sa-slovenski-novinari-bezpecne.

[47] Committee to Protect Journalists: "Slovak authorities file criminal defamation charges against columnist Michal Havran", 10 February 2020, available at https://cpj.org/2020/02/slovak-authorities-file-criminal-defamation-charge/.

[48] European Commission: *2023 Rule of Law Report Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Slovakia*, 5 July 2023, p. 27, available at: https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/56_1_52633_coun_chap_slovakia_en.pdf. Rating given by Civicus, https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/slovakia-overview/ with ratings on a five-category scale defined as: open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed and closed.

[49] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic for the Year 2021*, pp. 87-96, available at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/Human-rights-report_-for-the-year-2021.pdf, see also Center for Reproductive Rights*: Care in Crisis. Failures to Guarantee the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Refugees from Ukraine in Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia,* 2023, pp. 61-77, available at: https://shorturl.at/lwGZ8.

[50] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Report on the Observance of Human Rights Including the Principle of Equal Treatment in the Slovak Republic for the Year 2022*, pp. 71-79, available at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/HR-Report-2022.pdf.

[51] Ibid., p. 74.

[52] European Committee of Social Rights: *Conclusions 2021. Slovak Republic*, March 2022, pp. 24-25, available at: https://rm.coe.int/conclusions-2021-slovak-republic-en/1680a5da18.

[53] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: Availability of community social services for persons with disabilities, 2023, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/dostupnost-sluzieb_web-2.pdf

[54] Act on Climate Change and Low-Carbon Transformation of the Slovak Republic and on Amendment and Supplementation of Act No. 162/2015 Coll., the Administrative Procedure Code, as amended (Climate Act), available in Slovak at: https://www.slov-lex.sk/legislativne-procesy/SK/LP/2023/29

[55] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Experience of intimidation, bullying or other restriction of rights as a result of civic involvement in the field of the environment. Report on consultations with NGOs*, 2022, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/Sprava-z-konzultacii-s-MVO_enviro.pdf

[56] Slovak National Centre for Human Rights: *Hateful language on political Facebook profiles. Report on the monitoring of hate speech*, 2022, p. 19, available in Slovak at: https://www.snslp.sk/wp-content/uploads/Nenavistny-jazyk-na-politickych-fb-profiloch-2023_web.pdf