

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO BULGARIA – Add.1

CZECH REPUBLIC

- Could you please provide information how the Government of Bulgaria ensures that racist offences are duly prosecuted and what steps the Government of Bulgaria takes to raise the awareness among the police and judiciary about dealing with perpetrators of racist offences?
- How the Government of Bulgaria implements the CRC recommendation to establish juvenile courts or chambers within the existing settlements? Is the term “anti-social behaviour” defined by law? Could you please elaborate further on what steps has Government taken to ensure effectiveness of child protection measures and policies?

DENMARK

- Has Bulgaria taken steps to adhere to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in the near future?
- Denmark would like to highlight the issue of the Roma minority in Bulgaria and the persistently noted discriminatory practices against this group whose members are Bulgarian citizens in their full right. While acknowledging the complex and multifaceted nature of the issue, Denmark would appreciate further information on recent concrete measures taken to combat those practices and the consistency of those measures with a broader long term national strategy aimed at solving the issue.
- Denmark wishes to highlight the importance of promoting efficiency and consistency throughout the justice system - and not least the accountability of the judiciary. What are the perspectives and status on the ongoing work to reform and change practices in the Bulgarian justice system?
- Could Bulgaria provide further information on the ongoing capacity-building work with regards to establishing and strengthening the juvenile justice system?

GERMANY

- CRC welcomed the legislation restricting child labour and the development of a National Plan for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labour. However, it was concerned at the large number of socially vulnerable children, especially Roma children, engaged in harmful and exploitative labour, particularly in agriculture, industry and domestic service. It recommended that Bulgaria, inter alia, introduce monitoring mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of labour laws and protect children from economic exploitation. Germany would like to know how Bulgaria has been following up to these recommendations?

NORWAY

- Although some progress has been made by the Government, what are the measures to implement the necessary reforms to fight organized crime and corruption, especially in the judiciary? What are the concrete actions taken to ensure a transparent, independent and efficient court system to guarantee fair justice to all citizens?
- We acknowledge that women in Bulgaria enjoy all rights formally, but there is significant difference between men and women when it comes to poverty, work conditions and possibilities to participate in political life. Do you recognize further steps such as affirmative action to ensure a more gender sensitive and gender active policy both in public and private sector?
- It has been revealed that several social institutions for children without parental care have inflicted upon the children serious physical and psychological damage. What are the plans to close down these institutions and to establish an alternative care system for vulnerable children taking into account their specific needs?
- The overall situation for minorities in Bulgaria is satisfactory except for the Roma people. A clear overall strategy for their integration seems to be lacking. What will the Government do in order to fight poverty, social exclusion and discrimination of the Roma people and to ensure that they can enjoy their full rights as citizens?
- How is the security of investigative journalists guaranteed? What are the efforts to promote more diversification of the ownership in the media? Are cases of harassment against journalists being fully investigated?
- LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) organizations need support to raise the public awareness on the situation of sexual minorities. What will the authorities do in order eliminate de facto discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity?

SLOVENIA

- How has the Government of Bulgaria met CRC concerns relating to the provision of sufficient human resources, an adequate strategic approach and effective coordination for the effective implementation of the Programme for Equal Integration of Roma into Bulgarian Society, related to the National Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015)?
- What progress was made with regards to the CERD`s recommendation for further development of structures and means for teaching ethnic communities their mother tongue?

SWEDEN

- The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee has reported many credible complaints from detainees who claimed they were ill-treated by police officers during or after detention. The same report indicated that in 2009, as compared to preceding years, there was a lack of any positive dynamics with regard to the use of force by police officers at the time of detention and inside the police station. Furthermore in this regard, the European Court of Human Rights announced two judgments during 2009. In both cases, Article 3 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, had been violated by the Republic of Bulgaria.

Non-governmental organizations and the CPT have, as well, expressed concern about conditions in places of detention and in national prisons.

Could the Republic of Bulgaria elaborate on efforts to ensure that detention conditions fully meet international human rights standards and could the Republic of Bulgaria inform what plans it has to further address the situation in prisons, in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, to which Bulgaria is party?

- The legal framework in the Republic of Bulgaria for protection against racially and other bias motivated crimes, has been criticized by credible reports from civil society organizations. The organisation have expressed serious concern and underlined the scope of the legislation, as being too narrow and not taking into account motives that lead to commission of these crimes.
- The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination last reviewed a consolidated report from Republic of Bulgaria in 2009. The committee expressed concern with regard to a series of issues related to the discrimination against the Romani minority in Bulgaria, including: selective transfer of Roma children to special schools for children with developmental disabilities; discrimination against the Roma in employment, housing, healthcare and education; use of excessive force by law enforcement officials against Roma; poor knowledge and inadequate application by the judiciary bodies of the standards for the protection against racial discrimination.

Could the Government of Bulgaria elaborate on the measures it is taking to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons belonging to the Romani minority, including with regard to combating discrimination and violence against such persons?

SWITZERLAND

- How does the government of Bulgaria ensure the effective monitoring and evaluation of counter-trafficking strategies?
- 2) Excessive use of force by law enforcement officials continues to be a serious problem. What concrete steps does the government of Bulgaria undertake to investigate such allegations of excessive use of force by police officials?

- Bulgaria has ratified most of the important international human rights instruments. What is the process of ratifying the outstanding treaties such as the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which was opened for signature in September 2009 or the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment?
- Domestic violence is a problem in all countries in the world. What are Bulgaria's strategies and activities on a legal and practical level to combat domestic violence, specially in minority communities such as the Roma?