



**International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Sixty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1675th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 22 February 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. YUTZIS

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (continued)

Fifteenth and sixteenth periodic reports of France (CERD/C/430/Add.4, HRI/CORE/1/Add.17/Rev.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman the members of the delegation of France took places at the Committee table.
2. Ms. GUEDEJ (France) said that two particularly odious acts of racism had recently been committed in her country: there had been an arson attempt on a memorial railway carriage at the former transit camp at Drancy, from which many thousands of Jews had been deported during the Second World War; and on the same night, neo-Nazi graffiti had been scrawled on the walls of the Paris mosque. Those acts had been condemned roundly and unanimously by the Government and the entire French political establishment. They nevertheless enable her to stress how intensely France was engaged in combating racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, both nationally and internationally.
3. On 24 February 2005, the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) would meet in the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to adopt an opinion on combating racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, as well as preparing its fourteenth annual report on the same subject. On the same day, the European Union Council of Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs would meet to finalize a draft framework decision on action to combat racism and xenophobia. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance had also recently published its report on France. Efforts to combat racial discrimination were thus particularly intensive at the present time.
4. Since the submission of her Government's previous report, the situation in France had changed significantly in two areas. First, action to combat racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia appeared to have had a degree of success, with a decline in the number of reprehensible acts up to 2002, although there had been an increase since then. Secondly, a series of new initiatives had been introduced in areas which included preventive education, enforcement and integration policies; they were orchestrated by an inter-ministerial committee headed by the Prime Minister. That committee would soon be accompanied by an independent quasi-judicial body: the High Authority against Discrimination and for Equality. Plans for combating discrimination had also been prepared within each ministerial department. And the President had urged all elements of the population to be vigilant in their efforts to combat racism and anti-Semitism.
5. The upsurge of racist violence in France in the past two years had prompted the Government to take preventive and corrective measures in numerous fields, but also to think about the causes of that violence. To that end, since the late 1990s, contributions had been solicited from various elements of French society, including CNCDH, the French Economic and Social Council, senior members of the judiciary, and NGOs. The following four principal causes of racism had been identified.

6. First, specific difficulties arose for second-generation immigrants who were entering the labour market at a difficult time, with unemployment levels standing at least 9 per cent. According to a report commissioned by the Minister of the Interior from the head of a major NGO, many perpetrators of racist and anti-Semitic violence had attributes characteristic of the “culture of poverty”, such as the loss of traditional reference points and the breakdown of family ties. According to a 2004 report of the Court of Audit on the effectiveness of integration policies, immigration was perceived as the origin of discrimination within the host society. As a result of globalization, the threat of relocation and fear of exclusion had grown and led to an identity crisis. According to the National Scientific Research Centre, there was an ethos of “competitive victimization”.

7. The second cause identified related to the consequences of international conflicts where ethnic and religious issues played a key role, notably the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also Al-Qaida terrorism. CNCDH had noted that 2004 had not followed the same pattern as other years, when there had been a direct correlation between anti-Semitic attacks and international events. That merely seemed to indicate that the perpetrators of anti-Semitic acts were less reactive to current events. Since 11 September 2001, France had been obliged to review its tradition of generous hospitality to foreigners with the aim of ensuring that security was strengthened.

8. The third cause identified was the internal evolution of the European Union, and the difficulties linked to those changes, such as simultaneously defining its internal identity and its external role. France opposed the introduction of a reference to a historic Judeo-Christian identity of the European Union (EU) in the European Charter and the European Constitution, and had made its position clear. Although difficult, the ensuing debates were healthy and useful, but they encouraged simplistic agitators to make appeals which could be misinterpreted as incitement to violence. Legal proceedings had been initiated against certain politicians who had exceeded the limits of the law.

9. At present, France, in close cooperation with the other Schengen countries, was pursuing a selective immigration policy, which was generous towards political asylum-seekers, once it had been ascertained that they did not pose a terrorist threat, and towards students and persons arriving for purposes of family reunification. It was more selective with regard to economic migrants, generosity in that respect being expressed in terms of high levels of development aid. Nonetheless, illegal immigration continued, fuelling the hatred of xenophobes, and the French authorities had to be careful not to leave themselves too exposed to their criticism.

10. Recent measures relating to the right of asylum and residence permits were aimed at striking the right balance and fitting into the European framework. They included increasing the resources of the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, extending the concept of persecution to include non-State persecution, improving retention conditions, adopting the “safe country” concept, and signing reintegration agreements with countries of origin. There continued to be disturbing problems, particularly in a number of overseas departments, and because of the considerable disparities in living standards vis-à-vis neighbouring countries and the difficulties involved in controlling land or maritime borders, migratory pressure was considerable.

11. Within the context of the European framework decision she had mentioned, her Government would press for the criminalization of historical negationism beyond the crimes against humanity committed during the Second World War, unparalleled though they had been.

12. Finally, the fourth cause of increasing racism had been identified as the transitional difficulties faced by the French integration model in fully accepting new French citizens. The French concept of human rights was contained in the first article of the French Constitution, which provided that all citizens were equal before the law, irrespective of origin, race or religion, and that all beliefs were respected. As a result, the legal concept of “minority rights” was alien to French law, although that did not imply that specific identity characteristics were not recognized. All of France’s institutions had been created with the aim of giving the individual citizen the broadest use of his freedom, which could not be curtailed by membership of a particular community, religion or culture. All the integration mechanisms put in place had taken care to address realistically the difficulties faced by certain groups. The French political, social, economic and cultural system still had a broad capacity for adaptation. Since the period 1945-1974, a policy of migrant support had manifested itself in the form of a specific housing policy and specific social and cultural benefits. The key to that policy had been dynamic reception procedures aimed at enabling immigrants to benefit from official policies as quickly as possible. In subsequent years, policy had been increasingly targeted at the problems of certain categories of the population.

13. Although the French integration model had its problems, according to a report by Mr. Jean-Christophe Rufin, the Republic had kept pace with the radical transformation of the French population over the past 50 years. In the face of the multiplication of communities, the extreme diversity of ethnic origins and far-reaching social changes brought about by the development of economic activity, violent manifestations of racism, although still numerous, remained very marginal, and the State stood firm in its determination to combat them. The model was often misunderstood, as evidenced by the reactions to the vote on the law on religious symbols in schools, but the results in terms of the coexistence of communities were fully acceptable.

14. Regarding reforms undertaken in recent years, the first step had been to improve statistical information; that had been a complex task, as it involved ethical, legal and technical difficulties. The compilation of statistics should not provide grounds for discrimination, and for that reason, the French data protection commission had not authorized the inclusion of a question on nationality in the survey on occupancy of public housing. However, in 2003, the National Observatory for Sensitive Urban Areas had been created, with the task of evaluating social inequalities and development gaps in those areas. In addition, the Observatory for Immigration and Integration Statistics had been established in 2004 to improve demographic, social and cultural information.

15. The enforcement authorities had been invited to cooperate in defining a coherent framework that would provide a more precise understanding of racist acts and their respective penalties. It was now known that of the 57 cases of desecration of cemeteries committed in 2004, only 27 had been of a racist character; 13 cases had been cleared up. Among the perpetrators of racist acts that year, 15 per cent had belonged to neo-Nazi groups, and 15 per cent had been French citizens of immigrant descent.

16. Improvements had also been made with regard to the tools necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of France's enforcement legislation. The aggravating circumstance of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic conduct, a concept which had been expanded in 2004, meant that more precise information on crimes motivated by racism, xenophobia or anti-Semitism would be available in future. In addition, the Government had requested that public prosecutors' offices transmit each month a document detailing racist and anti-religious offences.

17. An Inter-Ministerial Committee to Fight Racism and Anti-Semitism had been established in 2003 with the aim of improving coordination in that area. It had thus far held seven meetings to discuss legislative and regulatory measures and awareness-raising campaigns, the positive results of which were beginning to be seen. As a result of foreign interest in that Committee's work, her Government intended to promote inter-ministerial coordination at the European level.

18. The Government, drawing on examples of independent authorities in other European countries, had set up a High Authority to Fight Racism and Promote Equality in December 2004. That body would deal with cases of direct and indirect discrimination, as defined under national law and by international instruments which France had ratified. The High Authority would have a total of 60 staff members, a board of high-level officials appointed by the President and a consultative committee. It could be accessed directly by victims of discrimination, intermediaries, members of parliament or French representatives in the European Parliament, or jointly by a victim and an association. It would also have the capacity to act on its own initiative with victims' consent, carry out investigations and act as a mediator. It would carry out research and programmes for promoting equality, and make recommendations for any legislative changes it deemed necessary, in consultation with the Government.

19. Several measures had been taken in the sphere of employment, including the introduction of job creation schemes and work placement for underprivileged young people, and the drafting by a group of company directors of a charter on cultural diversity in business. Programmes had also been developed at the regional level to combat discrimination in the workplace, which included research, awareness-raising and educational activities. Differentiated housing prices had led to covert segregation, and efforts were being made to reduce the stigma attached to living in the large complexes built in the 1960s. An inter-ministerial commission had been established to draft policies on housing for immigrant populations and other vulnerable members of society, and to compile an annual report on the situation of housing for immigrants; a programme for the renovation of urban areas had also been launched. A law had been passed obliging communes over a certain size to provide sites where travelling communities could camp; 3,000 had already been established.

20. France had no register of the ethnic backgrounds of its schoolchildren, but sociological studies had shown that there were approximately 700,000 foreign pupils, and that 15 to 20 per cent of children attending French schools had at least one parent of foreign origin. A number of measures had been taken to assist the children of immigrants, including partnerships between schools and scientific, cultural and business institutions. Educational support and tailor-made teaching programmes were also provided, with scholarships and bursaries for higher education. A national agency had been established to combat illiteracy, and

also provided language classes for foreigners. School history curricula had been modified in a move to combat racism and anti-Semitism, and an annual national anti-racism week had been instituted in schools. A law had been passed to prohibit the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in schools, since that had been a proven cause of verbal and physical abuse against some pupils.

21. Several organizations existed for the protection of women members of vulnerable social groups, and many of them received government subsidies. Programmes had also been developed in some regions to promote the economic, social and cultural integration of female immigrants, inform them of their rights and publish reports on progress made.

22. The integration of new migrants had been established by the President as a government priority in 2002, and a wide-ranging programme of action had been launched in 2003 to promote employment and education, and to combat discrimination. Integration contracts had been established, under which newcomers to France could take courses, including language classes.

23. The number of asylum-seekers had increased considerably since 2000, and efforts had been made to improve their accommodation. On being granted refugee status, they were guaranteed the same economic and social rights as French citizens. A national commission had been established in 2003 to monitor centres for asylum-seekers, and all such facilities were open to inspection by members of parliament. Training had been increased for all personnel coming into contact with foreigners, in particular law enforcement officials.

24. Efforts were being made to promote tolerance and respect for different cultures through the media. *France Télévision* had initiated a plan of action for integration and tolerance, which included broadcasts of cultural awareness programmes and seminars on racial tolerance in schools for journalists. A law had been passed prohibiting incitement to racial hatred on the Internet, and European cooperation on eliminating web-based racism would be the next stage in that action.

25. On the subject of compensation, she said that a State Secretariat for Victims' Rights had been established and alternative penalties could be imposed on perpetrators of racist acts. Sanctions for police officers and public officials found to have committed racial discrimination had also been increased. A draft decision addressing the denial of crimes against humanity in addition to those committed during the Second World War, and the public denial or gross minimization of crimes of genocide or war crimes committed on grounds of race, colour, religion or national origin, would be discussed by the EU Council of Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs in Brussels in two days' time. Her Government's efforts to promote racial equality and integration would continue to be stepped up in the future.

26. Mr. SICILIANOS (Country Rapporteur), thanking the delegation for its presentation of the State party's fifteenth and sixteenth periodic reports, listed the large number of regional and global human rights instruments that France had ratified. That fact demonstrated the French Government's commitment to guaranteeing human rights. The Committee had received information from a wide range of governmental, non-governmental, international and local sources, which it had used in the preparation of its questions.

27. The lack of statistical information on the ethnic composition of the population had limited the effectiveness of integration policies, and the Committee therefore welcomed the establishment, in July 2004, of the Observatory for Immigration and Integration Statistics. The Committee had been informed that the recommendations of CNCDH were not always followed up, and he wished to know what action was being taken to address that problem. The Committee commended the establishment of the High Authority to Fight Discrimination and Promote Equality, which would coordinate the implementation of anti-discrimination programmes and policies. It would appreciate further information on the means and resources that the High Authority had at its disposal to enable it to fulfil its mandate.

28. Progress made in the area of legislation included the Act of 17 January 2002 concerning social modernization, which introduced the concept of indirect discrimination in employment. He enquired whether it might be extended to other areas too. Also welcome was new anti-discrimination legislation passed on 30 December 2004, which shifted the burden of proof in favour of the victim of discrimination.

29. A variety of policies had been adopted to combat discrimination, primarily against immigrants. The Court of Audit had been fairly critical of such policies, which seemed to focus too much on illegal immigration rather than catering for the needs of the immigrant population. The Court had issued a number of recommendations in that connection and he enquired whether they had been followed up.

30. With regard to article 3 of the Convention, he asked for more information on the apparent segregation of immigrants in certain areas and types of housing, as mentioned by the delegation in its presentation, in the written report and in the Court of Audit report.

31. Positive developments in connection with article 4 included Act No. 2003-98 of 3 February 2003 (“Lellouche Act”), which had established racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism as new aggravating circumstances, followed by the Act of 19 March 2004, which had extended the application of the Lellouche Act to cover the offences of theft and extortion. Perhaps France might consider further extending the scope of the legislation to cover all offences under ordinary law. The new legislation had also introduced a wider range of penalties and he would welcome information on specific cases where it had been applied.

32. Other noteworthy developments were the circulars addressed to prosecutors’ offices by the Ministry of Justice with a view to raising their awareness of racial discrimination issues and the introduction of discrimination testing as a form of evidence. He sought information on the practical application of the latter. He also asked whether the legal aid system referred to in paragraph 398 of the report did indeed work effectively for the victims of racist and xenophobic acts.

33. In connection with article 5, he invited the delegation to respond to the report submitted to the Committee by CIMADE (Service oecuménique d’entraide) criticizing current expulsion procedures and the detention conditions of persons awaiting expulsion or the processing of asylum applications. He welcomed the fact that under the new law on

asylum of 10 December 2003, refugee status could now be granted even if the threat of persecution was from a source other than a State institution or employee. However, there were difficulties with the implementation of the new law, in particular since applications from asylum-seekers must be drafted in French. What of asylum-seekers who did not speak French? Furthermore, the shortage of accommodation for asylum-seekers remained a problem, despite the Government's recent allocation of funds for that purpose. According to CNCDH, a decree of 14 August 2004 would jeopardize the applications currently under consideration of thousands of asylum-seekers who were unable to prove that they lived at any fixed address. He would welcome more information in that connection.

34. The two Besson Acts should have improved the situation of the Roma people, inter alia, by ensuring that communes provided areas where they could park their vehicles. Nonetheless, according to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance and the European Roma Rights Centre, the areas made available for them were inadequate, and they still had problems with access to health and social security services. It was also reported that Roma immigrants from Eastern Europe had been victims of collective evictions. The International Federation for Human Rights reported that the local population in French Polynesia and New Caledonia were subjected to ethnic discrimination in terms of social security and access to justice. He invited the delegation to comment on those matters.

35. Referring to article 6, he said that under the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Press Act, associations were allowed to exercise the rights of a party bringing a civil action relating to racial discrimination. Such provisions were uncommon in international law and particularly useful at a time when there was a noticeable rise in both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. He did not doubt the Government's determination to combat the phenomena, but wondered what role such associations had to play. He also wished to know what form of redress the victims of such discrimination received.

36. With regard to article 7 he asked whether there was any specific training for professionals who had dealings with foreigners, such as law enforcement officers, judges and immigration officials. He would also welcome more information on follow-up to the Stasi Commission's recommendations relating, inter alia, to school textbooks and the teaching of Berber, Kurdish and Arabic.

37. Ms. GUEDJ (France) said that since the drafting of the sixteenth periodic report there had been many developments in policy and legislation that rendered much of the information contained in the report obsolete. An updated version would therefore shortly be posted on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site. Due note had been taken of the Committee's questions and comments and detailed replies would be prepared. She welcomed the references to the considerable progress made by her Government vis-à-vis implementation of the Convention.

38. Mr. VALENCIA RODRÍGUEZ said that significant measures adopted at the national level included the publication of a guide to anti-racist legislation and the fresh impetus given to the commissions on access to citizenship. At the European level, participation in the European Conference against Racism, the signing of the Convention on Cybercrime and the drafting of a protocol to harmonize criminal legislation against racism and xenophobia on the Internet were worthy of note. He asked whether the latter had already entered into force.

39. He took note of the 2003 Act relating to immigration control, alien sojourn in France and nationality aimed at regulating the expulsion of aliens and combating illegal immigration. He also welcomed the new law on asylum, which provided protection against persecution from sources other than the State, and recommended the objective application of criteria relating to safe home countries. He asked how successfully the new law was being implemented in view of the considerable recent increase in asylum applications. The efforts to combat exclusion were laudable and he enquired whether they had yielded any results.

40. It was reported that the accommodation provided for immigrant families tended to be in deprived areas where discrimination was such a problem that it often forced the families to move elsewhere. In that connection, he drew attention to the Committee's General Recommendation XIX on article 3 of the Convention concerning racial segregation.

41. The new French Penal Code had introduced important elements, including a broader definition of genocide and the establishment of racism, xenophobia or anti-Semitism as an aggravating circumstance. He hoped that the code of professional ethics of the national police force was in line with the Convention in the light of the rise in racist acts between 1988 and 2002.

42. He sought clarification concerning the activities and training of "femmes-relais" who undertook mediation in immigrant communities. While welcoming the efforts to ensure the integration of immigrants, he stressed that that should entail their effective participation in society and not their assimilation into the dominant culture.

43. According to the Court of Cassation, only explicit incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence on grounds of racial or religious origin was a punishable offence; statements that were liable to provoke hatred did not count. That was not in keeping with article 4 (a) of the Convention. The information contained in paragraphs 295 et seq. highlighted the need to strike a balance between action to combat racist propaganda and the protection of freedom of opinion and expression.

44. In conclusion, he asked whether illegal immigrants enjoyed equal access to emergency health services.

45. Mr. HERNDL said that the report was indeed impressive and gave a full picture of the situation in France vis-à-vis the implementation of the rights in the Convention, inter alia, by providing relevant statistics.

46. The State party had made the declaration under article 14 in 1982, and he welcomed the news of efforts to disseminate information on the complaints mechanism thereunder, in line with the Committee's concluding observations concerning France's fifteenth periodic report.

47. Positive developments relating to article 4 included the Lellouche Act, the introduction of discrimination-testing and the Internal Security Act No. 2003-239 allowing the victim's sexual orientation as a further aggravating circumstance. Perhaps the existence of such provisions explained why so few complaints had been received from the State party to date under article 14.

48. With regard to article 7, it seemed that considerable efforts were being made to ensure the integration of foreigners through various forms of tuition in French. However, he was particularly interested in the teaching of other languages. More information was provided on the subject in the sixteenth report than in previous ones. According to paragraph 438, 15 modern languages could be studied in secondary schools, yet only 8 of them were listed. What were the others? Berber was a language spoken by many people in France but was mentioned in paragraph 440 along with many other languages in connection with the baccalaureate examination. He would welcome clarification in that regard.

49. Mr. KJAERUM suggested that the Government should consider tackling Islamophobia as a separate issue, as it did anti-Semitism, and not just under the umbrella of racism and xenophobia. The law on religious symbols in schools, although intended to reinforce the secular nature of education, raised issues regarding individual rights and freedoms, in particular the right to freedom of religion and expression and the right to education. The rights of individuals to religious freedom did not per se undermine secularism in schools; restrictions on religious freedom should only be imposed where the exercise of such freedom posed a threat to public safety or mores or impinged on the rights of others.

50. He requested more information about the plight of the 40 girls who had not complied with the law on religious symbols; about the situation of Sikhs, who were also affected by that law; and about any training or guidelines that had been given to teachers and school heads concerning dialogue with pupils who refused to comply with the law. He noted that it was permissible in one region of France to teach pupils about religious issues, and supported the suggestion that such religious education should be expanded to schools nationwide. He wished to know whether there had been any legal basis for refusing to allow a group of women to attend a naturalization ceremony unless they removed their hijab scarf, and whether the case was representative of general policy on such matters.

51. He requested further information on the work, mandate and targets of CNCDH with regard to travellers, and asked what steps were being taken to ensure that local authorities provided adequate areas where travellers could park. He enquired whether anything was being done to combat the experience of hatred against travellers and what attempts had been made to enter into dialogue with Roma communities. How would the roles of the new dedicated anti-discrimination body and the existing National Consultative Commission on Human Rights interact?

52. Mr. AVTONOMOV asked about NGO involvement in the drafting of the report, and in particular the contribution of human rights organizations or associations representing certain ethnic groups. He requested more detailed demographic information about the Roma communities, and asked what proportion of travellers were Roma. Referring the delegation to the Committee's General Recommendation XXVII on discrimination against Roma, he asked what was being done to ensure that migrant children received an adequate education, and that Roma children were taught about the history and culture of the Roma.

53. Mr. THORNBERRY stressing the importance of disaggregated statistics, noted that the Committee had in the past encouraged States parties to take a creative approach to problems in collecting sensitive data on ethnicity, such as by measuring language or other indirect indicators that might reveal the demographic complexities of the population. He echoed Mr. Avtonomov's request for more detailed information about education for Roma children. He wished to know how the extension of the law on holocaust denial to cover other crimes against humanity would work in practice; in particular, he was interested in how it would be determined which events could be considered as undeniable truths.

54. He noted the arguments adduced by the representative of France concerning the republican tradition, but wished to know whether it was capable of new detailed applications, as the application of general principle to detailed circumstance might produce a variety of legal results. For example, it had come to be understood under international human rights law that equality meant uniform treatment in uniform circumstances, but where circumstances were different, different treatment was also a manifestation of the principle of equality. He wondered whether an anti-racist strategy could succeed if the State did not address the particular features of a community in addition to the universality of citizenship.

55. Mr. AMIR asked whether consideration would be given to a re-evaluation of the war pensions received by African soldiers who had fought in the Second World War, which were much less than those received by their French counterparts.

56. He welcomed the measures that had been taken in response to racist crimes that had been committed in France and to combat Islamophobia, Arabophobia and anti-Semitism. With reference to article 4 of the Convention relating to freedom of opinion, he asked whether that freedom allowed racist insignia and fascist ideas to be displayed or expressed in the name of local democracy. He enquired whether a French proposal at the European level was envisaged with a view to determining a common European position on the elimination of all forms of racism, including at the local level.

57. Mr. LINDGREN ALVES observed that the State was not obliged to provide teaching in every minority language and expressed support for the French Government's position regarding secularism in schools. He requested further information about follow-up to the Durban Conference. He asked whether there had been any cases of corporate entities being held criminally liable for crimes against humanity (report, para. 162). He asked how, in the light of the legislation on holocaust denial, certain politicians were allowed to continue to freely express improper ideas about the holocaust. He wondered whether it was possible to effectively tackle racism without also taking steps to remedy the international socio-economic situation.

58. Mr. TANG Chengyuan, noting the observation in the report that freedom of expression and opinion must not jeopardize public order, asked the delegation to provide examples of how that principle was applied in practice. He enquired how the Government's stated objectives of equality and integration could be achieved with respect to politically and economically marginalized groups such as the Roma. He requested further information about the living conditions of asylum-seekers while they were being held for up to 500 days in reception centres, and asked what provision was made for their access to health and education services during that time.

59. The CHAIRMAN said that, as the Committee had run out of time, members could ask further questions at the following meeting.

60. Mr. DOUCIN (France) expressed concern that his delegation would find itself unable to answer the Committee's questions satisfactorily if it was not given time to consult with the capital. He therefore invited members of the Committee to inform his delegation of their questions in private, after the meeting rose.

61. The CHAIRMAN said that although members were free to accept the French delegation's invitation, the Committee held its discussions with States parties in public, in the interests of transparency. He reassured the delegation that it was not under any obligation to reply to all the Committee's questions immediately, but could instead respond to any outstanding concerns in future reports.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.