



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**
Forty-first session

Summary record of the 847th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 14 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Šimonović (Croatia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined second, third and fourth periodic reports of Slovakia (CEDAW/C/SVK/4, CEDAW/C/SVK/Q/4 and Add. 1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Slovakia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Štrofová** (Slovakia), introducing the periodic report of Slovakia, said that the status of women in Slovak society was based on the law and on international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which were binding on the country and took precedence over domestic law. Slovakia hoped to submit the instrument ratifying Article 20 of the Convention before the end of the year.

3. Since submitting its current periodic report in May 2007, the country had expanded its international activities and commitments. Slovakia's membership in the United Nations Security Council and its chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe had placed it among the States that were most active in the area of human rights at the international level, and had led to its election to the United Nations Human Rights Council.

4. At the national level, in its 2006 Manifesto, the Government had explicitly pledged for the first time to promote equality between women and men as an important factor in the development of democracy and the realization of human rights, and in order to comply with its commitments under domestic law and international treaties.

5. The basic national documents in the Committee's sphere of interest were the 2001 Concept of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, and the 2005-2008 National Strategy on Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and in Families. In addition, the Measures for the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life had been adopted in 2006, and the 2009-2013 National Gender Equality Strategy was being prepared to replace the National Action Plan for Women that had expired in 2007. Implementation of the commitments made in those documents was

monitored and evaluated and, unfortunately, the results were sometimes more formal than substantial.

6. National mechanisms for equal opportunities and gender equality had been established at several levels. The Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities and the Status of Women, and also the Permanent Commission for Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities existed at the parliamentary level while, at the governmental level, the Gender Equality Council had been set up at the beginning of 2008, as an advisory, coordination and expert body to implement the principle of gender equality; it was chaired by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family. The Council was composed of senior representatives of the Administration, scientific institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Government allowed NGOs to prioritize certain topics and facilitated dialogue with them through a consultative committee of the Council. The Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities filled the role of Secretariat for the Council. The Department was directly supervised by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family, and that had enabled it to mainstream gender equality into the relevant ministerial documents.

7. Since the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family coordinated equal opportunities, an Equal Opportunities Assistance Centre had been established within the Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities. Also, public servants at different levels of the State administration received training to strengthen administrative capacities relating to gender mainstreaming, with a special focus on implementation of the gender approach, and creating focal points for gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the ministries and in the regions.

8. The 2008-2010 National Programme for Combating Trafficking in Persons had been adopted recently to provide a comprehensive national strategy. The Programme focused on the cooperation and coordination of all stakeholders to prevent trafficking, and created conditions for providing help to victims. The strategy would be implemented with the Government's political and financial support, and civil society would be required to play an active role. Specifically, the Ministry of the Interior collaborated with five NGOs that provided confidential shelters, health care and psychological counselling, together with other social services.

9. Slovakia had adopted the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women (2005-2008), emphasizing that such violence was gender-based. Unfortunately, the Plan had been adopted without the necessary financial resources, and the entities responsible for implementing its commitments had been required to fund them from their own budgets, which had proved to be unsatisfactory for achieving the Plan's goals. Consequently, a budget allocation would be requested for the 2009-2012 Action Plan, and new activities would also be covered by a contribution from the European Social Fund. The Government had funded an initial campaign to stop domestic violence against women by raising public awareness about gender-based violence. Furthermore, in recent years, legislation had made significant progress with regard to the protection of victims of violence.

10. The Ministry of Health had prepared a National Programme for the Protection of Sexual and Reproductive Health based on the World Health Organization (Euro) guidelines and other international documents. Its goals were to enhance the quality of the relevant medical services and improve access; to prevent domestic violence and sexual abuse, and to intervene in the programme to prevent trafficking in women from a medical perspective. Unfortunately, the Government had not yet approved the programme.

11. The issue of reproductive health was closely linked to the alleged forced sterilization of Roma women. Forced sterilization had never been an official State policy of Slovakia, or an officially endorsed practice. Consequently, the Government took no political responsibility for those sterilizations and had adopted several measures to prevent such accusations in the future. The Penal Code recognized a new criminal act of illegal sterilization, and a compulsory 30-day period between the patient's informed consent and the sterilization procedure had been introduced.

12. Despite significant improvements in equality between women and men in the labour market, some inequalities remained. The numbers of women and men were relatively balanced; however, there was evident gender segregation in the area of remuneration. The pay gap between women and men had tended to increase in recent years; as a result women also had lower pensions than men. The most recent amendment of the Labour Code had introduced equal pay for equal work, as well as for work of equal value.

13. Although quotas could not be used, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family was implementing alternative mechanisms to overcome the barriers limiting the access of women to top management positions in politics and the economy; they included mentoring and coaching, creating networks, helping to reconcile work and family life, and promoting corporate responsibility.

14. Gender stereotypes in education and employment were quite strong. Women predominated in the social sciences and that translated into segregation to the labour market. Slovakia was planning to introduce further measures to interest women in the new technologies and in careers that were previously considered a male domain in order to eliminate segregation, first in education and then in the labour market. Attention would be paid to training teachers on gender policy issues.

Articles 1 to 6

15. **Mr. Flinterman** said that while he appreciated that Slovakia had ratified the Optional Protocol in 2001, more should be done to publicize the Convention, the Optional Protocol and the Committee's concluding observations. He asked what the Government would do to give those documents wider publicity.

16. In its responses to question 2 of the Committee's list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/SVK/Q/4, and Add.1) Slovakia had said that a significant proportion of the population had insufficient knowledge about their rights and how to exercise them. It would therefore be useful to have more specific information on the groups targeted by the awareness-raising activities of the Ombudsman and the National Centre for Human Rights and about the budget allocated to them for that purpose.

17. In its response to question 3, Slovakia had stated that all international human rights treaties ratified by Slovakia had precedence over national laws. The delegation should explain how it was determined whether a provision of a human rights treaty conferred rights on natural persons: whether an ordinary judge could make the decision or whether it involved a special procedure before the Constitutional Court. Also, should a particular domestic law conflict with the provisions of the Convention, it would be interesting to know whether a judge could disregard domestic law

and apply the Convention. Lastly, he wondered whether the Convention was seen as the framework for all Government policies, programmes and legislation in the field of gender, because the presentation had referred only to the Beijing Platform for Action.

18. According to information provided by the State (CEDAW/C/SVK/4, para. 75), a female doctor had submitted a case on discrimination to the courts based on an expert opinion in her favour issued by the National Centre for Human Rights. He had been surprised to read that the case had been dismissed and the plaintiff ordered to pay the costs of the procedure and wondered whether the Centre could have helped plead the case. The delegation should provide further information on the obstacles that women had to overcome in order to access the courts, whether legal aid was available to women, and whether the Government was trying to make it easier for women to access the courts to enforce their rights.

19. **Ms. Hyashi**, referring to the three cases under the anti-discrimination act described in the report (paras. 75 and 76), asked why, in the case mentioned by Mr. Flinterman, the female doctor had had to resort to the courts if the Human Rights Centre had issued an expert opinion in her favour. Did it mean that her employer did not abide by the expert opinion and rectify the discrimination? Second, in the Žilina District Court case, it was unclear whether the plaintiff had gone directly to the judicial process without first filing a complaint before the Human Rights Centre. In the third case, if the woman was informed about the possibilities of seeking redress through the legal system, it was unclear why she had decided not to do so.

20. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that it would be useful to have information on the results of the assessment of the first 10-year period of the Action Plan for Gender Equality, which had ended in 2007. She wished to know whether the Concept on Equal Opportunities adopted in 2001 was merely a theoretical background document, or an action plan. Moreover, the connection between the two documents should be clarified.

21. Government mechanisms had been changed repeatedly and she would appreciate an explanation about the mechanisms in place and the philosophy behind the fluctuations. Gender equality was linked to the family but it also related to work, education, health and political parties. Additional information should be

provided on the significance of the association between gender equality and the family and the relationship between the complex institutional network; also, with regard to who played the leading role in gender mainstreaming.

22. The Committee had heard from other sources that no significant progress had been made in the situation of Roma women in such areas as education, health, housing and inclusion in the labour market. The State had provided insufficient information in its response to question 18 of the Committee's list of issues and questions; therefore additional information was required on how the specific difficulties faced by Roma women and children were being addressed.

23. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** requested clarification of the difference between the Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities and the Status of Women and the Commission for Equal Opportunities and the Status of Women. She wondered if they were both within the Parliament or had merely been established by the Parliament.

24. States parties were obliged to respect, protect and fulfil the rights set out in the Convention. Those obligations applied not only to the Government's actions or endorsement but also to its protection of women against human rights violations by private persons and organizations. She could not accept the fact that, as mentioned in the introductory statement, the Government took "no political responsibility" for alleged forced sterilizations because it had never endorsed such a policy. Quite apart from the administrative or other violations that had occurred, there had been a failure to take protective action.

25. Article 4.1 of the Convention allowed for temporary special measures for the purpose of achieving substantive equality of women and men and General Recommendation 25 clearly stated that the application of such measures was not discriminatory action. Yet there seemed to be a lack of understanding of the concepts of substantive equality and temporary special measures in Slovakia. It was a matter of great concern that the latest amendment of the Anti-discrimination Act included only a watered-down version of the proposed formulation of article 8a. She asked how the Government intended to utilize that weak formulation to implement temporary special measures, the Committee's General Recommendation

and relevant court rulings by the European Court of Justice.

26. She asked whether the Committee's General Recommendations had been translated into all languages used in the country and whether the Government provided extensive training for political party members and parliamentarians with regard to the country's obligations under the Convention, the concepts of formal and substantive equality and temporary special measures.

27. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, said that although it was not a formal requirement, the Committee had for several years been recommending that States parties should submit their periodic reports to Parliament in order to enhance the visibility of the reporting process. Perhaps the Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities and the Status of Women and the Commission for Equal Opportunities and the Status of Women could be included in that process. She wondered whether specific training was provided for the judiciary and for law students on the Convention and the Optional Protocol and whether the Convention had been referred to in any court cases.

28. **Ms. Jančulová** (Slovak Republic) said that the Ombudsman and the National Centre for Human Rights published regularly updated information on their web pages, including information on the amendments to the Anti-discrimination Act. Anyone who believed that they had suffered discrimination could contact the National Centre directly. Its rulings were not legally binding but usually efforts were made to resolve problems through mediation.

29. **Ms. Muriňová** (Slovakia) said that in 2005 the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had held a seminar for experts from the State administration and NGOs to inform them about the Convention and the Optional Protocol. Such seminars would be continued in the future. The Ministry's website contained information on the Committee and the texts of the periodic reports and the Committee's recommendations. The conclusions of the current meeting would also be added. The Committee's General Recommendations were to be translated and would also be published on the website. The report to the Committee would be submitted to the Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities and the Status of Women.

30. International human rights treaties took precedence over the Slovak domestic legal system and therefore no special implementation was required. Judges could apply the provisions of the Convention directly and any person who felt that their rights were not being observed could file a complaint to the Constitutional Court.

31. **Ms. Jančulová** (Slovakia) said that the judicial system was independent. The courts carried out their own investigation and could take into account the recommendations of National Centre for Human Rights but were not obliged to follow them. The Anti-discrimination Act had been amended to provide the National Centre with additional tools. The idea was to eliminate court proceedings by resolving conflicts through mediation before they went to court.

32. **Ms. Hanuláková** (Slovakia) said that the National Centre for Human Rights provided consultancy services free of charge for persons who felt that their rights had been violated. The rulings of the National Centre were only recommendations and it was up to the courts to decide if they wished to make use of them. Training was provided every year for judges and law students and they were well aware of the functions of the National Centre.

33. **Ms. Muriňová** (Slovakia) said that training courses at the justice academy provided training in anti-discrimination for judges and prosecutors. The General Prosecutor's Office and the Police Force Presidium provided seminars on violence against women, and the Ministry of Health had several training courses focused in that area. The National Centre for Human Rights had conducted awareness-raising activities and an anti-discrimination campaign, while various ministries had their own additional activities.

34. **Ms. Hanuláková** (Slovakia) said that the Commission for Equal Opportunities and the Status of Women had been established by the Committee for Human Rights, Nationalities and the Status of Women. The members of the Commission were members of Parliament, experts in gender policies, stereotypes in education, trafficking in human beings and other areas and representatives of the academic sector. The task of the Commission was to coordinate the views of experts in order to give advice on amending draft laws in a gender-neutral way.

35. The Council for Gender Issues had been established as a coordination mechanism at the

Governmental level. It was chaired by the Minister of Social Affairs and included members of the State administration and a few NGO representatives. It was also important to include regional and municipal representatives in its activities.

36. As gender policy issues tended to be regarded as the domain of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, efforts were being made to mainstream them through the national strategy for gender equality which was being prepared by the Government. Several hundred State officials had received training in a one-year course on implementation of the gender policy and the gender perspective. The Government had also created a consultation commission as a platform for NGOs to express their views and make recommendations.

37. The Department of Family Policies and Gender Policies had changed its name, as gender policy was separate from family policy, which was mainly concerned with family benefits and incentives. The Department had been expanded to include 14 staff members and reported directly to the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family so that it could be directly engaged in the creation of the national plan, pension reform and the social agenda.

38. **Ms. Botšová** (Slovakia) said that Roma people had begun to accept their identity as Romas for the first time, which meant they could begin to work to change their way of life. Her first task in her position as the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma issues had been to visit Roma settlements in order to get to know the needs of the people so that the solutions to their problems could be worked out from the bottom up. A total of about 300 million dollars had been allocated to cover various areas relating to the Roma people, including gender, health, social and housing issues. Indicators for monitoring implementation were now being introduced and the results should be available by the time of the submission of Slovakia's next periodic report.

39. Roma had become the majority population in some settlements and municipalities. Efforts were being made to promote multicultural education in schools, which was the only way to ensure that Roma had equal rights as citizens. They did not yet have equal opportunities as many Romas did not have sufficient qualifications to be employed. Efforts were being made to develop their skills and crafts at

vocational schools and to integrate them with the rest of the population. The Roma language had been codified in order to support a sense of identity as the population of Romas was known to be much higher than the 90,000 recorded in the national census. Codification was a vital tool to encourage the Roma to integrate themselves into the general population and participate in policymaking.

40. **Ms. Jančulová** (Slovakia) said that when Slovakia had been admitted to the European Union, the title and function of the Deputy Prime Minister had been altered to Deputy Prime Minister for the Knowledge-Based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities. The Deputy Prime Minister was therefore responsible, inter alia, for implementing the human rights of minority groups.

41. **Ms. Muríňová** (Slovakia) said that when an international convention was ratified, it was the relevant Ministry that defined whether it had legal precedence over the domestic legal system.

42. **Ms. Hanuláková** (Slovakia) said that the Gender Equality Council had held several training workshops in gender issues for members of the judiciary and State officials, with the assistance of a German expert. The Government was fully aware of the need to ensure that State institutions complied with their obligations under the Convention, which was also covered by university courses in international law. Judges were regularly briefed on the Optional Protocol, particularly with regard to the meaning of gender-based violence.

43. Forced sterilization had never been an official policy of the Government, which had responded by allegations to that effect by initiating prosecution proceedings against unidentified perpetrators. Investigations had been conducted in departments of obstetrics and gynaecology in hospitals, where no evidence of any such criminal act had been found. It was true that sterilization could be recommended as a means of birth control, but doctors were required to inform patients of the consequences and to secure their informed consent. In any case, it was more commonly practised in the majority group than among the Roma. There was a legal requirement that 30 days should elapse between the performance of a caesarean section and sterilization.

44. **Ms. Jančulová** (Slovakia) said that special temporary measures were taken in a number of fields, under articles 2.1 and 8 of the Anti-discrimination Act,

in particular in cases of disability or low socio-economic status.

45. **Ms. Gabr** said that the basic problem remaining was that of stereotypes and of prejudice. There were several European Union models that could be drawn on for their elimination, but none seemed to have been adopted, nor did there appear to be any clear vision of the importance of women's issues. Stressing the need for an independent mechanism for women, she asked what action was planned to counter occupational stereotyping, particularly through media campaigns, and to achieve equal pay. Information would also be appreciated about efforts to combat the treatment of women as a merchandise, especially with reference to trafficking.

46. **Ms. Shin** wondered about the practical thrust of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women (2005-2008) and whether it included a focus on training for the police and judiciary or on general awareness-raising. The Committee would welcome details of any evaluation made so far, particularly in regard to any shortcomings identified. It was not clear whether funding had already been obtained or must still be requested from the Government for the next round of action and whether it came from the Government's regular budget or from the European Social Fund. She enquired about the time frame for enactment of the new draft law on the police force and whether it was currently being examined by ministries. It was essential to provide training for prosecutors and judges in respect of violence against women, and particularly to bring to their attention the Committee's General Recommendation No. 19 and the Secretary-General's study on the subject. A separate law on domestic violence, which was inadequately covered by the notion of bodily harm, would be desirable. She wondered what services were provided for victims and whether they had access to a national telephone hotline. Were such services provided free of charge, including for Roma women, and were they equipped to accommodate women with disabilities or women accompanied by children? She remained unsatisfied by the delegation's responses to questions about sterilization, considering that the State party had an obligation under article 2 (d) to eradicate discriminatory practices.

47. **Ms. Begum** expressed appreciation of the legislative and policy initiatives undertaken against

domestic violence and asked whether any monitoring mechanism was in place that was open to public scrutiny. The Committee would also appreciate any information about gender-based human rights training for State officials and concrete measures to combat gender stereotyping. She was concerned about the funding problems in respect of specialized services for women and wished to know how much financial support was provided from the State budget, particularly for action to combat violence against women. It would be useful to know whether offenders were punished; and also whether compensation was provided for the victims of unlawful sterilization.

48. **Ms. Coker-Appiah** said that all the activities reported in respect of violence against women seemed to focus on support for victims and very little on prevention. She asked what awareness-raising measures were in place, particularly for the Roma population, and whether any programmes were planned with the media. The nature of the phenomenon needed to be understood and studies must be carried out with a view to developing effective strategies.

49. **Ms. Chutikul** raised the specific question of violence against girl children, not touched on by the State party. According to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, all forms of violence were linked to entrenched roles and, especially, to the inferior status of women. It would be useful if the next periodic report could include an analysis of violence against girls, including details of types and treatment offered. She wondered if the new action plan for 2009-2012 would be based on an evaluation of the previous one and include lessons learned.

50. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, recalled that, in the Committee's previous concluding observations, high rates of violence against women, including murder, had been noted. The data provided by the State party indicated the Government's concern, but she wondered whether that was also reflected in the establishment of a specific task force and analytical studies.

51. **Ms. Hanuláková** (Slovakia) said that, while gender mainstreaming and awareness-raising on gender issues were actively promoted, stereotypes could not be changed in a day. Seminars and meetings continued to be planned accordingly, particularly in order to combat gender stereotypes on the labour market. Teachers were trained, with the help of foreign experts,

to encourage girls to seek non-traditional occupations; the problem of job placement nevertheless remained.

52. **Ms. Vranová** (Slovakia) agreed that the labour market was marked by gender segregation. The challenge lay not only in education but also in family roles; boys and girls were motivated to follow different paths. Efforts to break the mould were beginning to yield results. However, a survey of four European countries, including Slovakia, conducted in 2005 had shown an increase in the number of girls studying general science, mathematics and physics; similarly, technical training levels were on the rise for women. Within the new gender mainstreaming strategy, efforts would continue to be made in that direction, bearing in mind also that gender segregation was reflected in the gender pay gap.

53. **Mr. Hlinka** (Slovakia) said that the Ministry of the Interior was fully aware of the traumatic effects of trafficking in women, who were treated as a merchandise, and had put in place measures to provide relief to victims. Under the National Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, efforts were made to isolate victims from criminal environments, provide shelter together with financial, social and psychological support, and offer permanent residency or help with repatriation.

54. **Ms. Hanuláková** (Slovakia) said that the aim of the first National Action Plan for Women was to implement the Convention, while the next Plan, in the draft stages, would include such issues as the prevention of violence against women, gender-based training, and awareness-raising campaigns on stereotyping and gender-based violence. The budget was under Government consideration. National funding was separate from European Structural Funds, which would be used to address gaps in the national funding and to implement demand-driven programmes.

55. Based on evaluations of educational activities included in the first plan, future plans would enhance processes to select and train judges and law enforcement officers. The zero tolerance policy and the campaign to stop domestic violence against women were initiatives in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), designed to raise awareness of the secondary victims of violence, children and youth. The campaign created workshops to train police to properly document violence, and involved regional politicians in eliminating violence. The Internet was

used to provide information on all assistance services to enhance victim access to justice.

56. **Ms. Vranová** (Slovakia) said that the National Action Plan for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women included legislation, relief to victims, awareness-raising and research. Each institute was responsible for addressing particular goals and assessing its programmes. The action plan was evaluated in stages in the national council and Parliament.

57. **Ms. Botošová** (Slovakia) said that the department of the Plenipotentiary was divided into sections; the media section comprised four journalists who focused on combating stereotyping and improving general attitudes about the Roma people. There was a Roma news agency and other forms of media that were funded by the Government to address Roma issues. Her department would work to increase awareness-raising funding, as the task was ongoing.

58. A number of levels had to be taken into account in addressing the difficulties facing Roma communities. One example was the stereotype that Roma women liked to be hurt. While some Roma women did contact crisis centres, it caused problems as centre directors questioned their admission since they would soon return to their husbands. The directors had been instructed to accept all women, including the Roma, regardless of their choices. The Plenipotentiary hoped to find pragmatic solutions to the issue.

59. **Mr. Hlinka** (Slovakia) said that the Ministry of the Interior and the Government would approve an act on the police force by the end of 2008, which addressed violence against women. Furthermore, the Government was monitoring such violence, and while there was no specific definition of domestic violence it was included in encompassing language. Statistics on victims of gender-based violence by category were available; in addition, a study on the elimination of violence analysed all of the criminal offences committed against women. Based on the study, experts drafted a methodology to investigate offences, to be used by the police and as part of mandatory police training. Finally, the Government performed annual evaluations of every case of domestic-violence-based homicide, and was adopting measures accordingly. Training manuals for the police had been created to speed the investigation process.

60. **Ms. Vranová** (Slovakia) said that there were six hotlines and a number of crisis centres available. Some included shelters and single-parent homes while others functioned solely as crisis centres. All were partially or fully funded by regional governments, and all provided medical and social services. The few centres with specific gender-based violence expertise benefited from the technical support of Germany and Austria. While some centres were not free of charge, payments were symbolic and scaled according to ability to pay. Lastly, the national action plan for children, under consideration for approval, incorporated issues related to violence against the girl child.

61. **Ms. Hanuláková** (Slovakia) said that combating violence against children was incorporated in the strategy for combating violence against women. An amendment to eliminate corporal punishment in the home was under consideration.

62. **Ms. Chutikul** said that she would welcome information on whether there was a law dedicated to and defining trafficking according to the Palermo Protocol. If so, she would like to know whether it provided for assistance to the victim. It was unclear how efforts were funded as there was no mention of the use of European Structural Funds and she was unsure whether national funding alone sufficed. She would also welcome more information on NGOs funded by the Ministry of Interior, as they did not seem to be independent. Finally, she wondered whether immigrant women were covered under the provisions of the law, and what work was being done with countries of destination for Slovak women, including repatriation and reintegration services.

63. **Mr. Hlinka** (Slovakia) said that there was no separate act on trafficking but there was a national programme and action plan to assist the victims of trafficking. Slovakia had ratified the Palermo Protocol and the Government had fully implemented it in national legislation, so there was no need to define the term further. The Government offered victim services through NGOs selected by the Ministry of the Interior, which allocated Government and European Structural Funds to them for the implementation of national programmes. The Government partnered with international NGOs, INTERPOL and EUROPOL to address the needs of Slovak women outside the country.

64. **Mr. Flinterman** said that he would like to know more about the difficulties women faced in accessing justice. He noted the recruitment discrimination case of a woman physician who, on recommendation of the National Centre which had adopted an expert opinion based on the Convention, took her case to court, where it was dismissed and she was ordered to pay court costs. Such an outcome signalled to women that it was not in their best interest to access justice, and he wondered what measures the Government was taking to facilitate their access to justice. While mediation procedures were available, they could not fully substitute for court proceedings.

65. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** said that she would like clarification about temporary special measures and the basis on which they could be taken in application of article 4.1. There had been no reference to any temporary special measures adopted for gender-based discrimination.

66. **Ms. Simms** said that it was not the duty of the Plenipotentiary to show the Roma their identity, but rather to educate non-Roma Slovaks that the Roma were people. She would like more information on how non-Roma Slovaks were educated on the intersection of race and gender and related discrimination.

67. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said that she would welcome information on what temporary special measures for women had been applied and in what areas, as the new amended anti-discrimination act was insufficient. It was unclear whether it was possible to apply temporary special measures directly and whether the Government was considering any such measures.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.