



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

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**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**  
Seventy-sixth session

**Summary record of the 1975th meeting**

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 16 February 2010, at 3 p.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Kemal

**Contents**

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

*Sixth to eighth periodic reports of Slovakia*

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention** *(continued)*

*Sixth to eighth periodic reports of Slovakia* (CERD/C/SVK/8; CERD/C/SVK/Q/6-8 and Add.1; HRI/CORE/1/Add.120)

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

2. **Mr. Rosocha** (Slovakia), introducing his country's sixth to eighth periodic reports (CERD/C/SVK/8), said that it was a sovereign and democratic country governed by the rule of law; it had ratified all core human rights instruments and its human rights legislation met the highest internationally recognized standards. Discrimination was prohibited by the Constitution and international treaties took precedence over domestic legislation. Slovakia had acceded by succession to the Convention in 1993.

3. A new Criminal Code and a new Code of Criminal Procedure had been adopted in 2005. The new Criminal Code created the offence of racial discrimination. The general part of the Code defined what was termed a "special motive", namely an aggravating circumstance that entailed a heavier penalty for the offence. Such a circumstance would exist where an offence based on national, ethnic or racial hatred or skin colour or a sexually motivated offence was committed by a hired offender, as an act of revenge or to cover up or facilitate another offence. Title XII of the Criminal Code recognized as crimes against humanity the offences of support and propaganda for groups aiming at the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms, defamation of a nation, race or belief, and incitement to national, racial or ethnic hatred. Heavier penalties were prescribed where such offences were committed in public, in a particularly serious manner or in a crisis situation. Torture or other cruel or inhuman treatment was recognized as a crime against humanity and also carried an aggravated penalty.

4. An amendment to the Criminal Code adopted in autumn 2009 addressed so-called extremist criminal offences, which included "incitement, defamation and threats against persons identifiable by race, skin colour, birth or family status, national origin, nationality, ethnic group" and the production, dissemination or possession of extremist materials.

5. Slovakia had ratified the European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes (Council of Europe) in March 2009 and had adopted an Act in 2006 providing for the compensation of persons injured by violent crimes. With a view to strengthening civil society and local democracy, the Ministry of Justice cooperated closely with NGOs, primarily to protect, support and compensate victims of crime, including racially-motivated violent crime.

6. As computer networks and electronic information could be used to commit racially-motivated criminal offences and as the evidence concerning such offences could be stored and transmitted through computer networks, Slovakia had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, which had entered into force in May 2008.

7. The key statute guaranteeing non-discrimination was the Anti-discrimination Act (No. 365/2004) on equal treatment in certain areas and protection against discrimination, which amended and supplemented certain other laws. The Act had been amended on several occasions in order to create a comprehensive legal framework for protection against discrimination in the areas falling within its scope. It prohibited discrimination based on an open-ended list of grounds, including race, membership of a national or ethnic group, religious belief or faith, disability, age and sexual orientation. The Act was applicable to the

labour market, social security and health care, social benefits, education, and access to and provision of publicly available goods and services, including housing.

8. The April 2008 amendment introduced temporary compensatory positive measures, for instance with a view to eliminating social and economic disadvantages or disadvantages due to age or disability. Such measures would remain in force until the inequality that had led to their adoption was eliminated. The amendment also introduced a legal definition of sexual harassment and more detailed procedural safeguards against discrimination, such as the use of mediation as an extrajudicial means of protection against discrimination. With a view to enhancing the procedural status of victims of discrimination, it replaced the plaintiff's obligation to submit evidence in judicial proceedings with the obligation to inform the court of the facts on the basis of which it could reasonably be assumed that a violation of the principle of equal treatment had occurred.

9. A further amendment to the Anti-discrimination Act adopted in October 2008 introduced the right of legal persons to protection against discrimination. Public action could be taken against potential infringements of the rights, legally protected interests or freedoms of a large or indeterminate number of persons, or in the event of serious endangerment of the public interest. Such legal persons, which were mostly NGOs working in the field of protection against discrimination but which also included national human rights institutions such as the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, could demand that parties failing to respect the principle of equal treatment be ordered to refrain from such conduct and, where possible, to rectify the unlawful situation.

10. In addition, an amendment to the Act on Court Fees and Fees for Criminal Record Extracts reduced the fees for filing complaints concerning violations of the equal treatment principle.

11. Programme documents in support of the implementation of the Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Expressions of Intolerance had been regularly prepared since 2000. Priority had been given in the 2006–2008 Action Plan to increasing Slovak citizens' awareness of non-discrimination, ensuring effective implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, addressing the status of migrants in Slovakia, and identifying other activities designed to prevent intolerance, discrimination, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism. The priorities had been expanded in 2008 to include activities aimed at preventing extremism, mainly in the form of training for professional groups.

12. The Action Plan for the period 2009–2011 focused on improving legislation and its application on the basis of defined objectives and tasks. It also served as a tool for the development of effective mechanisms, particularly preventive measures, for the elimination of expressions of hatred and intolerance in different settings. The long-term goal was to build a tolerant and democratic State and to foster its multicultural character. An important component of the current Action Plan was the organization of systematic training courses for members of professional groups who had an impact, in the exercise of their professions, on the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other expressions of intolerance. For instance, members of the police corps, the corps of prison and court guards, and the armed forces attended regular training courses on the application of the principle of equal treatment.

13. One objective of the Action Plan was to ensure the effective integration into society of persons belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups, persons from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and foreigners. Particular attention was paid to the situation of the Roma national minority, the second largest minority in the country. The process of inclusion of the Roma in all areas of social activity was facilitated by targeted programmes and projects such as the field social work programme, the health promotion programme for

disadvantaged communities, and the project involving police specialists working with Roma communities.

14. Major changes in the Slovak education system had had a positive impact on the problems of placement of Roma children in special schools and discrimination against, and segregation of, Roma children in education. A new Act on Education and Instruction, the “School Act”, adopted in late 2008, prohibited all forms of discrimination and segregation. Children were enrolled in special primary schools for pupils with mental disabilities or with a combination of mental and other disabilities only if their need for special education had been demonstrated by diagnostic tests conducted by educational prevention and counselling facilities. The enrolment decision was taken by the principal of the school concerned, based on a written application from the child’s legal guardian and a written opinion of the educational counselling and prevention facility. Before admitting a child, the principal advised the child’s legal guardian of all available educational options. Special schools accepted children or pupils who were manifestly disadvantaged in terms of health and were therefore unable to achieve an adequate level of education at kindergartens or primary schools. Compulsory school attendance was always initiated through enrolment in the first grade of a regular primary school rather than a special school.

15. New legislative provisions concerning Roma children prohibited all forms of discrimination and, in particular, segregation by schools and other educational facilities. Adequate conditions were to be created for their education in the same classes as children belonging to the majority population.

16. In the context of Slovakia’s presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2005–2015, the Ministry of Education had organized an international seminar on creativity and innovation in the education of children from socially disadvantaged environments in November 2009. The seminar had focused on equal access to education and the entry of children into primary education. The issue of placing Roma children in special primary schools had been extensively discussed.

17. In 2006, the Roma Education Fund had supported a two-year national pilot project of the Ministry of Education entitled: “Let’s go to school together – Supporting implementation of the concept of integrated education of Roma pupils in Slovakia.” The project had focused on five key objectives: improving the integration of Roma children in preschool education in the Prešov region, where the ratio of Roma to the total population was highest; motivational meetings of Roma and non-Roma parents, mayors, teachers and community workers; educational activities for teachers; publicity and awareness-building; and monitoring of activities. The Ministry of Education had achieved the objective of increasing the kindergarten attendance rate of Roma children and preventing segregation, not only in kindergartens but also in primary schools. In 2009, the Roma Education Fund had approved continuation of the project, the benefits of which had been confirmed by an independent external assessment.

18. Another important activity aimed at combating racism, intolerance, discrimination and segregation was the implementation of the National Plan for Human Rights Education during the period 2005–2014. The Plan focused on promoting tolerance and eliminating prejudice and on shaping the attitudes of members of national minorities to the majority population. It provided for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes conducive to the strengthening of human dignity, and promoted informed and independent participation in the development of a democratic society. The key components of the Plan were: further education for teaching staff; publication of methodological material and teaching aids; and monitoring and evaluation of the scope and quality of human rights education.

19. Importance was also attached to multicultural education and information about the history, culture and rights of persons belonging to national minorities living in Slovakia.

The inculcation of civic values was viewed as a prerequisite for multiculturalism and for the shaping of positive multicultural attitudes while cultivating one's own national and ethnic identity.

20. In its concluding observations on Slovakia's previous periodic report (CERD/C/65/CO/7) the Committee had recommended that additional measures should be adopted to reduce unemployment in the Roma community. Projects under the "Employment and social inclusion operational programme", supported by the European Social Fund, sought to eliminate prejudice among employers and provided incentives aimed at upgrading Roma skills. Support was provided for social inclusion and equality of access to the labour market. Other activities were aimed at sensitizing the majority population to the situation of the marginalized Roma community.

21. The Government provided support and assistance through the "Active labour market measures project" for labour-market integration, mainly for disadvantaged job-seekers and the long-term unemployed. The measures included initial training for disadvantaged job-seekers, support for the continued employment of low wage earners, and employment of disadvantaged job-seekers in social enterprises and smaller-scale local services for municipalities.

22. The Roma population benefited from the "national projects" implemented under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family within the European Union funding system. The projects contained innovative elements aimed at counteracting the negative impact of the global economic and financial crisis. They focused on activation of job-seekers and support for persons at risk of collective redundancies due to the crisis. A total of 1,250 jobs would be created for disadvantaged job-seekers, employment for 2,650 low wage earners would be maintained, and support would be provided for the creation and maintenance of 870 jobs in social enterprises for disadvantaged job-seekers.

23. He resolutely rejected the allegations made by the Civil and Human Rights Counselling Centre regarding forced sterilizations of Roma women. The claim that his Government had been inefficient in ensuring effective, prompt and impartial investigation into the practice of forced and coercive sterilization of Roma women was inadmissible on a number of grounds. Immediately after the publication of such allegations, the Human Rights Division of the Office of the Government had filed a complaint, and criminal proceedings regarding the offence of genocide had begun in January 2003. The prosecution had been suspended in October 2003 since it had been proved that no crime of genocide or any other crime had been committed. On the other hand, medical personnel or health-care facilities had been found guilty of procedural shortcomings in obtaining informed consent from patients, mainly on account of loopholes in the legislation. However, the medical indication for sterilization had always been respected, in accordance with the then applicable legislation, which treated it as a life-saving intervention. Pursuant to a decision of the Constitutional Court, the criminal proceedings had continued from May 2007 until December 2007 and had finally been closed in February 2008.

24. In addition to the police investigation, the prestigious Faculty of Medicine of the Comenius University of Bratislava had been invited to submit an expert opinion in early 2003, and a team of experts from the Ministry of Health and experts in the field of gynaecology and obstetrics had been instructed by the Minister of Health to conduct an expert review of hospitals. None of those measures had brought to light any segregation or discriminatory practices in health establishments.

25. A new Health Care Act adopted in 2004 addressed the shortcomings of the legislation concerning sterilization. It regulated, inter alia, non-discriminatory access to health care, the requirements for obtaining a patient's informed consent, performance of sterilization and access to medical documentation. Pursuant to the Act, sterilization could

be performed only on the basis of a written request and written informed consent. The advice on which such consent was based must include information on alternative methods of contraception and planned parenthood, possible changes in life circumstances resulting from sterilization, the medical consequences of sterilization and possible failure of sterilization. Provision was also made for a compulsory 30-day interval between the patient's statement of consent and actual sterilization. The Criminal Code now recognized illegal sterilization as a criminal act.

26. He assured the Committee that the sterilization of Roma women had never been official State policy or a practice supported by his Government or the Ministry of Health. In the light of the investigation and expert reviews, the Government had instructed particular governmental institutions to address identified shortcomings. The Minister of Health was required to hold responsible medical personnel and health-care facilities that failed to comply fully with the prescribed procedure for obtaining informed consent. He had ordered in-depth monitoring of health-care facilities to identify discriminatory practices against Roma and to review how informed consent was obtained in practice. Other measures required by the Government had included a review of the access of marginalized groups to health care and improvements in human rights education for the police, health-care personnel and public service officials in general.

27. **Mr. Avtonomov**, Country Rapporteur, said that, while the State party had clearly made significant progress in introducing legislation to implement the provisions of the Convention, the periodic report contained little practical information on the application of that legislation. He asked whether the relevant legislation was enforced and, if so, whether pertinent data could be made available to the Committee. It would be particularly useful to learn about the conviction rate, the recidivism rate, and the type of punishments imposed in cases involving racial discrimination.

28. While welcoming the apparently high level of integration of the Hungarian community, the Committee remained concerned at the situation of the Roma minority in the State party. He asked what criteria the Government had employed to arrive at the figure of 89,920 persons of Roma origin within the population, given that other sources had placed the figure at over 300,000. The Committee would also appreciate updated information on measures being taken to improve access to housing for the Roma community, particularly given the discrimination against that group in the past. Additional details should be provided on the policy of sterilization of Roma women, especially on the repercussions of the 2006 Constitutional Court decision on the issue.

29. He commended the State party for establishing a transit centre for refugees and asylum-seekers, in cooperation with UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration, and for improving the procedures for granting refugee and asylum status.

30. Lastly, it would be interesting to learn whether any NGOs had participated in the preparation of the periodic report.

31. **Mr. Thornberry** asked what procedure was used when deciding to place children in special schools or special classes. It would be useful to know what role school psychologists and head teachers played in that procedure. He would welcome the delegation's comments on the level of cultural sensitivity of the code of practice applied in reaching those decisions, particularly concerning Roma children. He asked what oversight mechanism was in place to ensure that the decisions were correct, and whether the Government took effective measures in the event of any abuse.

32. Given the admission in paragraph 221 of the periodic report that Roma children did not like to attend primary school, he asked whether measures could be taken to make the school environment more welcoming for those children. Likewise, he suggested that the State party might follow the example of some other States that took a flexible approach to

school enrolment for migrants in order to facilitate access to education for migrant children. It would be interesting to learn whether Roma communities and parents took a consensus position on approaches to education, and how the Roma community participated in decisions affecting their children's education at the institutional and individual level.

33. The Committee welcomed the information on the policy on sterilization. Clearly, any accusations of forced sterilization should be addressed with extreme diligence, as they were redolent of certain eugenics policies employed in the past. Particular emphasis should be placed on monitoring results, investigations, transparency and providing remedies when mistakes occurred.

34. Given the rise in racist political discourse by some politicians primarily targeting Hungarians, as reported by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, it would be useful to learn whether there was continuing tension between the authorities and that minority. If not, he would welcome an indication of the solutions the State party had found to improve that situation.

35. **Mr. Diaconu** asked how the State party planned to address the issue of its 149 segregated Roma settlements in line with article 3 of the Convention, which provided that States parties undertook to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices involving racial segregation. He noted the Government's efforts to avoid segregating Roma children in schools and asked how it was achieving that in the settlements.

36. It would be useful to learn whether the State party's domestic legislation contained a prohibition against associations that promoted or incited racial discrimination, in accordance with article 4 (b) of the Convention.

37. The Committee would appreciate details of the achievements of the "Action plan for the prevention of all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and other expressions of intolerance" that had been implemented from 2006 to 2008.

38. Given that some 100 complaints registered with the Ombudsman since 2002 had concerned discrimination, including on the grounds of belonging to a national minority, and given the overall increase in sentencing rates for aggravated criminal offences characterized by the expression of national, ethnic or racial hatred or hatred relating to skin colour or other particular ground, he failed to understand why the Ombudsman had not found any violations of fundamental rights or freedoms based on racial discrimination.

39. In view of the particularly disadvantaged situation of the Roma community in the State party, he wished to know what special measures were being taken to raise the level of education within that community. In particular, he asked whether the Government planned to offer suitably qualified Roma students places at secondary school and university without requiring them to enter the competitive selection process.

40. While welcoming the initiative establishing the commission on coordinating actions aimed at eliminating racially-motivated crime and extremism, he asked why it had failed to fulfil its coordination mandate. It would be interesting to learn why racially-motivated crime was being addressed together with extremism; the two had different, specific causes and required separate solutions.

41. The Committee agreed that it was difficult to prove discrimination in practice. However, many European States had introduced systems in which, if alleged victims could prove they had been treated differently, the burden was on the accused to prove that there had been no racial motivation in applying the different treatment. He asked whether the State party would consider introducing such a system.

42. In 2005, the Committee had found that members of the Roma community had been prevented from living in the town of Dobšiná. In the light of that decision, he asked how the

State party could maintain that the notion of racial discrimination in housing did not exist in Slovakia.

43. **Mr. de Gouttes** asked whether Slovak legislation contained an adequate definition of racial discrimination, in line with that contained in the Convention. He asked what measures had been taken to prevent and overcome the trend of racially-motivated attacks by skinhead groups, and to eliminate incitement to discrimination, particularly against the Roma population, through political discourse. How did the Government plan to address the problem of ill-treatment of Roma minors by police officers?

44. Turning to the issue of the provisional positive measures implemented under the April 2008 amendment to the Anti-discrimination Act, he pointed out that the Committee's general recommendation No. 32, adopted in August 2009, set the conditions necessary for the justification of special measures, stipulating that such measures must be appropriate to the situation to be remedied, be legitimate, be necessary in a democratic society, respect the principles of fairness and proportionality, and be temporary. Special measures must be distinguished from permanent measures affecting the inherent rights of minorities and women. He asked which minorities were targeted by Slovakia's positive measures.

45. Regarding the new conditions governing enrolment in special schools for children with disabilities, he asked whether Roma children were likely to be at risk of being placed in those schools as a result of their underprivileged background and special educational needs. While forced sterilization was prohibited by law, sterilization could be conducted if there was written consent and a medical examination had been carried out. He asked what measures were taken to ensure that vulnerable women, such as Roma women, were not coerced into consenting to sterilization.

46. **Mr. Lahiri** said that while Governments were not obliged to consult NGOs or national human rights institutions when drafting their periodic reports, the Committee welcomed such consultations and encouraged the State party to bear that in mind when drafting further reports for submission to the treaty bodies.

47. Although Slovakia had a small population, its complex demographics and history had created challenges in the implementation of the Convention. National minorities accounted for 15 per cent of the population, and there was a history of ethnic tension. Although the State party had a comprehensive constitutional, legal and administrative infrastructure for the prevention of racial discrimination, there were considerable gaps between the provisions in place and their implementation. Those gaps were particularly evident in the case of the treatment of the Roma population, who were victims of discrimination in respect of access to housing, health care and other public services, and were victims of hostility and racially-motivated violence. He expressed particular concern about the culture of impunity surrounding comments on the Roma in public discourse at high political levels and in the media.

48. While he welcomed the improvements in the regulations on admission to special schools, he wondered why children with special educational needs could not be integrated into the mainstream education system. A particularly high number of Roma children were educated in special schools, and he asked the State party to prove that it was not using those schools as a means of segregating Roma children. Racially-motivated crimes were underreported and given insufficient police attention. He urged the State party to examine its practices in that regard.

49. He requested statistics on the use of sterilization for medical reasons, and particularly wished to know how many sterilization cases had involved Roma women and whether the practice of sterilization was equally widespread among women of other ethnic backgrounds.



50. Efforts should be made to enforce the Criminal Code against law enforcement officials, politicians and others who, in the course of public duty, used their positions to incite discrimination against the Roma population. Results-based special measures were required in favour of the Roma population in education and employment. He was particularly concerned about reports of the segregation of pregnant Roma women in hospitals. Efforts should be made to ensure that disciplinary action was taken against medical staff who had been involved in the use of coercive measures to perform sterilization.

51. **Mr. Huang Yong'an** said that in 2005 the Committee had considered a petition submitted by members of the Roma community regarding the refusal of the Dobšiná town council to approve the construction of low-cost housing for the Roma community, and had found Slovakia to be in violation of article 6 of the Convention. He asked what progress had been made in addressing the situation of low-cost housing for the Roma population of that town since the Committee had issued its decision.

52. **Mr. Amir** said that it would be useful if a distinction was made between national minorities and indigenous peoples in the information provided to the Committee in future. He expressed particular concern about discrimination against the Roma population, and the gaps between anti-discrimination legislation and its implementation. While legislative and judicial measures were commendable, they were meaningless when not translated into action. The Roma community had suffered numerous injustices that were reminiscent of the Jewish question. Although considerable progress had been made in terms of legislation, definitive solutions to the difficulties faced by Roma would require further effective measures.

53. Prison overcrowding was a common problem in Slovakia, as in other countries, for a number of reasons; one solution was to build new prisons. However, doing so created new social problems, as former inmates often had difficulties finding their way in society. It remained to be established whether building new prisons was the optimum solution.

54. Table 1 of the report included the category "Jewish" as a national minority group. Properly speaking, however, Judaism was a religion; as membership of a religious group did not exclude membership of other ethnic or national groups, the use of a religious label to describe a national minority should be clarified.

55. **Mr. Saidou** asked what the Slovak Government had done or could do to ensure that the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights was accredited as an independent national human rights institution, as that could contribute to preventing overlapping in view of the large number of organizations dealing with human rights and discrimination.

56. **Mr. Avtonomov** said that the Committee's general recommendation No. 27 on discrimination against Roma contained a number of suggestions and proposals that were relevant and potentially useful to the Roma community in Slovakia. He proposed that the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights should work with the national police and the Roma community to build confidence. Roma could be encouraged to become police officers, which would promote mutual understanding and trust and strengthen the police force as an institution.

57. He asked whether any NGOs were engaged in protecting Roma and, if so, whether they cooperated with the Government. He also wished to know whether there were any Roma NGOs, as such groups could be instrumental in encouraging school attendance among Roma children and building ties between Roma and mainstream society. It might be helpful to adopt a cooperative approach that included Roma in attempts to find solutions to identified problems.

58. **Ms. Jančulová** (Slovakia) said that the Action Plan for 2006–2008 had focused on raising general awareness of human rights and aimed, inter-alia, to develop an anti-discrimination policy and improve the situation of migrants in Slovakia. The main priorities of that Plan had been education, human rights and the prevention of discrimination; the relevant entities had undertaken numerous activities in order to reach the designated goals and had focused on resolving the difficulties faced by disadvantaged groups and supporting cultural and social activities.

59. The Action Plan had been updated annually to reflect current realities and respond effectively to society's needs. An inter-ministerial working group, composed of representatives from central and local government and from NGOs, met on a biannual basis and was responsible for the preparation, implementation and assessment of the Plan.

60. The Action Plan for 2009–2011 aimed to prevent all forms of discrimination and focused on preventive measures that would promote tolerance, democracy and a multicultural society. Its major goals included: the implementation of commitments under international agreements, specifically in the area of human rights; effective protection from discrimination; the creation of instruments for the collection and analysis of a range of personal data, including racial data, while respecting privacy; the effective integration of national minorities; public education on human rights and multicultural education for children; systematic awareness-raising among minority groups; Holocaust memorial activities; support for cultural and social activities; increasing public awareness of non-discrimination issues; and creating the conditions for the successful integration of asylum-seekers and migrants into society.

61. A report on implementation of the Action Plan for 2006–2008 was currently being drafted, while the tasks ahead for the current year were under review.

62. **Mr. Galbavý** (Slovakia) said that the considerable discrepancy between estimates of the size of the Roma community was due to the fact that under the Constitution citizens were allowed to identify themselves with any group. The initial analysis conducted by the multidisciplinary working group on data collection, established under the Action Plan for 2009–2011, had found that 89,920 of the 300,000 Roma in Slovakia had reported themselves as Roma for various reasons, but that there was a tendency for Roma to describe themselves as Slovak or Hungarian. The working group had concluded that the only way of identifying the actual number of Roma accurately was by conducting an awareness campaign among the Roma community.

63. **Mr. Poláček** (Slovakia) said that the Slovak authorities had adopted specific measures to reduce the ill-treatment of Roma children by police officers. Applicants to join the police force were screened, as were serving police officers. Officers also received specialized training on working with minorities and the police academy curriculum had been expanded to include human rights protection. In addition, internal police guidelines had been reviewed and amended. The conduct of police officers during operations was subject to regular monitoring and stringent measures were imposed to remedy shortcomings.

64. **Ms. Jančulová** (Slovakia) said that the Jewish community was considered a national minority in Slovakia and that her Government had recently officially recognized a thirteenth national minority, namely, Serbian. It was important to note that membership of national minorities was based on the principle of self-identification. The most recent census had been conducted in 2001; the possibility of including other national minorities on the census form was being discussed in the context of preparations for the upcoming 2011 census.

65. Her Government was working on a number of significant Holocaust remembrance projects, the most important of which included a project at Sobibor, the former

extermination camp, and a Ministry of Culture project to create a Holocaust museum and educational centre at Sered.

*The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.*