



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

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Summary record of the 2029th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Friday, 13 August 2010, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Kemal

Contents

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

Sixth and seventh periodic reports of Slovenia (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

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

Sixth and seventh periodic reports of Slovenia (continued) (CERD/C/SVN/7; CERD/C/SVN/Q/7; HRI/CORE/1/Add.35/Rev.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Slovenia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that her country had signed the Council of Europe's Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level in 2006, but had yet to ratify it. Under domestic legislation introduced in 2005, foreigners had active and passive voting rights in local elections and the right to set up societies and convene public gatherings, assemblies and events. Slovenia had ratified the Council's Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems in 2004.
3. In answer to the Committee's comments on religious freedom, she said that article 41 of the Constitution guaranteed freedom of conscience, which had been confirmed by the adoption of the Religious Freedom Act in 2007. Slovenia had an agreement with the Islamic community, which had filed its first application for a plot of land on which to build a mosque in 1969. The contract of sale of the plot had been signed in December 2008; the next steps were for the Islamic community to publish its tender for the design of the mosque, choose the architects it wished to engage, and obtain building permits. The Islamic community currently performed religious rites in prayer houses and hired large sports or community halls for major religious celebrations.
4. Based on the European Union Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, article 297 had been introduced into the Criminal Code Slovenia had adopted in 2008.
5. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) added that article 297 of the new Criminal Code dealt with public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance, including attempts to stir up ethnic, racial or religious or other hatred, strife or intolerance or to provoke any other inequality. Any public dissemination of ideas on racial supremacy, provision for any manner of racist activity, attempts to deny or diminish the significance of the Holocaust or advocate genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, aggression or other criminal offences against humanity were punishable by up to two years' imprisonment. Any such acts carried out by public officials were punishable by up to five years' imprisonment.
6. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia), addressing the question of Europe-wide solutions for the Roma, said that her country was one of the European States that advocated progressive policies to improve the situation of the Roma. Slovenia stood ready to share its good practice in that regard with other European countries.
7. **Mr. Baluh** (Slovenia) said that, at both national and European levels, the Roma community was recognized to be facing major challenges, and thus enjoyed a special status. The Roma frequently faced social exclusion, discrimination, segregation and poverty. Its particular status also derived from the fact that it did not have a "mother state" to protect its rights, as was the case of the Italian and Hungarian communities in Slovenia, and the Slovenian communities abroad. Official census data did not distinguish between permanent Roma residents in Slovenia and those who stayed only temporarily. In the 2002 census, some 3,246 persons had claimed to belong to the Roma community and 3,834 had stated that the Roma language was their mother tongue. However, estimates placed the real

number of Roma living in Slovenia between 7,000 and 10,000. Most Roma lived in the regions of Prekmurje, Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, Posavje and the cities of Ljubljana, Velenje and Maribor. In compliance with the legislation in force on the protection of personal data, ministries and government bodies could not keep records based on national or ethnic affiliation. The only data available were therefore those gathered in official censuses by the Statistical Office.

8. Historical background and other circumstances had led to significant differences within the Roma community in Slovenia, which were reflected in different traditions, specific ways of life, and their degree of socialization and integration. Given the difficulties many Roma faced, they were the social group that was most exposed to discrimination on the grounds of national and ethnic origin. Research had revealed that the Roma had the worst living conditions, education, employment and health care of all the countries' communities. The Government therefore placed particular emphasis on short- and long-term improvements in those four priority areas.

9. The 2010–2015 National Programme for Roma included measures to preserve and develop different versions of the Roma language, culture, information and publishing activity, integrate the Roma into society and raise awareness among both majority and minority populations of the existence of discrimination. The Programme also comprised steps to combat discrimination, particularly targeting public servants who came into contact with members of the Roma community in their work. It had been drawn up by a government-appointed working group, including representatives of ministries and government bodies, local communities and the Roma community.

10. In 2009, some 6 million euros had been allocated to improving the situation of the Roma community in Slovenia; in 2010, that figure had increased to 15 million euros. The Government had launched an awareness-raising campaign entitled "Dosta! [Enough!] Go beyond prejudice, discover the Roma!". Slovenia had been the first country to adopt the campaign under the joint Council of Europe and European Commission programme. The Office for National Minorities had translated and printed all the relevant campaign material.

11. As the umbrella organization of the Roma community, the Roma Community Council submitted initiatives and opinions to public and local authorities. Likewise, those authorities were bound to obtain the Council's opinion prior to making decisions that affected the Roma community in Slovenia. In some 20 municipalities where the Roma had traditionally been present, members of the community had the right to elect representatives to their municipal councils.

12. The Government was aware that the Roma lived in settlements that were isolated from the rest of the population, mostly on the outskirts of inhabited areas, in conditions that were far below any minimum living standard. The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning had appointed an expert group to address the issue of Roma settlements. Its first task had been to update records on the settlements and it had concluded that there were 105 purely Roma settlements in the country and between 20 and 25 smaller settlements with a sizeable Roma population. In total, it had estimated that there were some 130 Roma settlements with about 9,000 inhabitants. Only a quarter of those settlements had the conditions in place for relatively rapid integration, about a third had realistic possibilities for further development and approximately a third of the settlements would face considerable difficulties in solving housing issues. There was a clear need to relocate the residents of about one tenth of the settlements.

13. The police force had plans in place to encourage more members of the Roma community to become police officers. Many Roma in Slovenia worked as musicians, school assistants or office workers or engaged in more traditional forms of employment such as fruit and vegetable picking.

14. Recent data had revealed that the health of the Roma population reflected their living conditions and economic situation. The most frequent health complications among that community were respiratory disease, urinary infections and injuries, and smoking and unhealthy dietary habits were common. In order to address the health of its Roma population, in 2001, the region of Prekmurje had launched a programme to promote a healthy lifestyle; the programme would be extended to all areas where the Roma community lived under the 2010–2015 National Programme for Roma.

15. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) added that programmes produced by Roma journalists for the Roma community were broadcast on the national television channel every week in the Slovene and Roma languages. National radio also broadcast bilingual programmes produced by Roma journalists. In addition, several local radio stations in regions with a significant Roma population broadcast bilingual programmes. The Union of Roma of Slovenia had a cultural centre with its own radio station that also broadcast in the two languages.

16. Under the Personal Data Protection Act, information on racial, national and ethnic origin could only be collected with the consent of the person concerned. During the 2002 census, those who had been absent from their homes had been sent a questionnaire, 75 per cent of which had been completed and returned. The remaining 25 per cent had been categorized as “unknown”, as indicated in table 1 in paragraph 18 of the periodic report. The right not to declare national affiliation was particularly important for persons from mixed marriages.

17. Responding to questions about fluctuations in the population data in that table, she explained that developments in the region had had a significant effect on the national affiliations declared by residents of Slovenia. For example, in accordance with current legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the category “Bosniaks” referred to Bosnian Muslims. Prior to 2002, it had not been possible for people to declare themselves as Bosniaks, but when that had changed in the 2002 census, 21,542 people had classified themselves as Bosniaks, hence the significant drop in the number of declared Muslims between 1991 and 2002. Likewise, when the category of “Russinians” had been introduced in the 1971 census, the number of people declaring themselves to be Ukrainians had dropped. In addition, most of the people who had declared themselves to be Yugoslavs prior to the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had registered as having an “undeclared” national affiliation in the 2002 census.

18. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that the Constitution guaranteed the members of all national minorities and ethnic communities the full exercise of their rights, including the right to develop their culture and the same voting rights as Slovenes. Positive discrimination was applied to members of the Hungarian and Italian minorities, who had double voting rights, which was also the case in local elections for the Roma population in 20 municipalities. Several measures had been introduced to assist persons who belonged to ethnic communities that maintained their national, linguistic and cultural identity, and to foster intercultural dialogue and tolerance.

19. **Mr. Baluh** (Slovenia) said that the term “autochthonous” had been introduced into the Constitution in 1988, with reference to the Hungarian and Italian national communities, who had lived for centuries in parts of modern-day Slovenia. Since then, the Government’s approach had developed in line with the relevant international instruments. The rights of national minorities were now respected as individual rights, thus guaranteeing national minorities the maintenance of their national, linguistic and cultural characteristics. In addition, the Hungarian and Italian national communities were guaranteed collective rights, such as representation in the National Assembly and recognition of the official status of their language. Minorities, ethnic communities and immigrants could bid for State tenders for their cultural projects. Examples included a cultural diversity programme financed by

the Public Fund for Cultural Activities and a human resources development project for the period 2007–2013 to promote social integration of minorities and ethnic communities.

20. Slovenia had concluded a number of bilateral agreements with Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, consistent with the Bolzano/Bozen Recommendations on National Minorities in Inter-State Relations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for education and preservation of the language and culture of the so-called “new minorities”.

21. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) said that links between the Government and associations representing non-official minorities, such as the Union of Serbian Cultural Associations of Slovenia, were gradually increasing. The Ministries of Culture, Education and Sport, and Labour, Family and Social Affairs made no distinction between indigenous and non-indigenous minorities: for instance, anyone with permanent residence rights was entitled to social benefits.

22. **Ms. Rustja** (Slovenia) said that both citizens and non-citizens had the same rights to education. Under bilateral agreements with a number of countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and the Russian Federation, mother-tongue education in minority languages was provided in Slovene schools. In the school year 2009/10, tuition in five languages had been provided for 205 pupils. The Ministry of Education and Sport also provided tuition in minority languages as an optional subject: 19,000 pupils had learned an additional foreign language in the school year 2009/10, and the curricula were freely available on the Ministry’s website. Schools had provided 8,000 hours of extra tuition in the Slovene language in primary schools, and tuition for 600 pupils in secondary schools.

23. Pupils in Slovene schools were taught tolerance, respect for the differences of others and cooperation skills, and learned about gender inequality, human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the new curriculum, intercultural dialogue was a cross-curricular theme taught through subjects such as history, sociology, ethics and religion. New teaching tools, educational materials and examples of best practice had been developed and were available free of charge on the website of the Ministry of Education and Sport.

24. **Mr. Janc** (Slovenia) said, with reference to the situation of citizens of other republics of the former Yugoslavia, known as the “erased persons”, that the Constitutional Court had introduced the concept of a “supplementary decision” in 2003, under which an “erased person” could be granted permanent residence status in Slovenia with retroactive effect from the date of “erasure” in 1992. To date, over 6,400 people had taken advantage of that opportunity. The new Government elected in 2008 had proposed amendments to the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of former Yugoslavia Living in the Republic of Slovenia since 2003, which would completely regularize the situation of the “erased persons”. The opposition’s call for a referendum on the issue had been rejected by the Constitutional Court in June 2010, and the amendment had entered into force in July 2010. In the next phase of the regularization measures, all persons fulfilling the relevant legal requirements would be granted permanent residence status, which would also apply retroactively. Administration systems had been updated to reflect the new system, public employees had received special training, and 10,000 forms had been distributed to administrative units and the consulates of the successor States of the other republics of the former Yugoslavia. An information campaign had been launched, with a special brochure being distributed to consulates and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and information in six languages was available on the website of the Ministry of the Interior.

25. Thus the former “erased persons” now had either Slovene citizenship or permanent residence status, and their human rights situation was the same as that of other citizens or

foreigners, respectively. The Government believed that the measures it had taken were sufficient to regularize their situation.

26. The Citizenship Act stated that a person could obtain Slovene citizenship by naturalization if he or she was aged over 18, had lived legally in Slovenia for 10 years (5 years for a refugee or stateless person), was financially self-supporting, had obtained a certificate of proficiency in the Slovene language and did not have a criminal record.

27. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) said that, pursuant to the Human Rights Ombudsman Act of 1993, the Ombudsman, who must be a Slovene citizen, was elected by a two-thirds majority of the National Assembly for a six-year term, which was renewable. He or she investigated human rights complaints and also issued opinions on the conduct of the authorities. The rights and duties of the Ombudsman were laid down in the Human Rights Ombudsman Act and mentioned in other legislation, including the Constitutional Court Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure and consumer and environmental legislation. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman had been the first institution to address the situation of “erased persons”, back in the mid-1990s.

28. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that the community of persons of African descent included 23 people who had been granted asylum since 1995, as well as former students who had stayed on in Slovenia after finishing their studies. The community had established two NGOs, which organized anti-discrimination campaigns and a week of African culture, as well as conducting regular consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

29. The follow-up of the recommendations of the recent universal periodic review exercise for Slovenia was the responsibility of the Inter-ministerial Commission on Human Rights, a body which brought together various ministries, academia, NGOs and the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman and was also responsible for the preparation of reports to the United Nations and Council of Europe human rights bodies. There was an ongoing debate in Slovenia about ways of improving the institutional protection of human rights, and in June 2010 the Government had appointed a special inter-ministerial group to seek further ways of combating discrimination.

30. **Ms. Rustja** (Slovenia) said that International Holocaust Remembrance Day had been observed in schools on 27 January every year since 2008. The issue formed part of the history, civics and homeland and ethics curricula in schools. In October 2009, the Ministry of Education and Sport had been one of the organizers of an international teacher-training programme entitled “From Crimes against Humanity in European History to the European Idea”. Practical ideas for teaching and teacher training had been tested in schools in 2009, and the tests would be repeated in 2010.

31. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that policies to counter trafficking in human beings were included in the 2010–2011 Action Plan of the Interdepartmental Working Group for the fight against trafficking in persons, which focused on communications and awareness-raising for the public and vulnerable target groups, assistance to victims in collaboration with NGOs and better detection and investigation of human trafficking offences by the police.

32. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** asked for more information about the double vote accorded to the Italian, Hungarian and Roma minorities and the effects of that unusual system, particularly since the Italian and Hungarian communities were very small. With reference to the African community in Slovenia, the Government might wish to address the activities planned for the International Year for People of African Descent in 2011.

33. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that the Government would consult the African community in Slovenia about the best way to celebrate the International Year.

34. **Mr. Baluh** (Slovenia) said that the Italian and Hungarian communities enjoyed special privileges at national and local level, comprising both individual rights and collective rights, such as the right to an extra vote, which were not dependent on the size of the community concerned.

35. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) explained that, under article 80 of the Constitution, Slovenia's Hungarian and Italian minorities were each guaranteed one seat in the national parliament. The "dual vote" system referred to the fact that members of those minorities voted for local representatives, in the usual way, and for a separate representative of their collective rights. The rights of the Hungarian and Italian minorities were protected in a different manner from those of other minorities for geographical and historical reasons. At independence, Slovenia had undertaken to respect the relevant rights enshrined in the Constitution of the former Yugoslavia and bilateral treaties between Yugoslavia and Italy, and Yugoslavia and Hungary. In 1999, a nationalist party in Slovenia had submitted a complaint asking for a constitutional review of the special rights of the Hungarian and Italian minorities; the Constitutional Court had ruled that those rights must be upheld. The Roma also occupied a specific position. All Roma in Slovenia were guaranteed protection, whether they lived in traditional settlements or elsewhere. Many Roma from other former Yugoslav republics resided in industrial centres. The current trend was to find a balance between geographical and individual approaches to the protection of minority rights. Although the situation presented a challenge, progress was being made.

36. **Mr. Avtonomov**, commending the State party's educational materials on the promotion of intercultural understanding, requested further information on how the Roma lived and on plans to resettle communities. Would new settlements be built? Would communities be consulted? How soon would measures be taken, and were any problems foreseen?

37. **Mr. Baluh** (Slovenia), emphasizing the sensitive nature of the issue, said that, under new legislation, local communities must take account of Roma settlements in their planning. The thrust of the current initiative was to find acceptable common solutions to the problem of Roma living in conditions that were inappropriate, for whatever reason. Relocation was not the only option, and Roma communities must be consulted in any event.

38. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) added that the focus was on legalizing existing Roma settlements, rather than relocating them.

39. **Mr. de Gouttes**, welcoming Slovenia's acceptance of many recommendations made by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/14/15), said that the frequent references to Roma in various national contexts during the Committee's current session clearly demonstrated that the issue affected European and non-European countries alike. Of the 11 million Roma in Europe, some had citizenship in their country of residence; some were stateless. Some were nomadic, while others lived in settled communities. Their socio-economic situation was often precarious and they frequently bore the burden of double or multiple discrimination. An issue of particular delicacy for the authorities was to reconcile Roma culture with the need for integration and acceptance of the laws of the country of residence. The matter must be addressed not only by individual countries, but bilaterally, multilaterally and at European level. In addition to the Committee, other international bodies, such as the Council of Europe and the European Union, were active in that area.

40. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) endorsed Mr. de Gouttes' views. The main focus of the Slovene Government was to improve conditions for Roma living within its territory, but it also strove for stronger language and action in international forums, particularly OSCE. Slovenia stood ready and willing to share its good practices with other interested countries, including through the direct involvement of representatives of the Roma community.

41. **Mr. Diaconu** asked, with regard to the State party's retroactive reinstatement of the residence rights of "erased" persons, whether reparations could be sought through the courts for rights or property lost in the intervening period. Referring to the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, he asked whether Slovenia had accepted recommendations Nos. 89, 90 and 93, concerning various aspects of ethnic minority culture and rights. He stressed that the Convention did not recognize the concept of a "mother country" having any authority over or right to protect ethnic minority citizens of other States, although that did not preclude issues from being raised in international forums, if appropriate.

42. Turning to the issue of collective rights, which were not recognized by the Council of Europe, he stressed that the Committee's interest was solely in exclusions, distinctions, restrictions or preferences applied against any person or group on grounds of race, colour, descent or ethnic origin, not the nature of the rights thereby curtailed. In Slovenia, such preferences were accorded to two minorities in the granting of collective rights, despite the fact that other minorities were of similar size. While he acknowledged that the status of the Hungarian and Italian minorities had in part been inherited from legislation in force before the break-up of Yugoslavia, when Croats and Serbians would not have been considered national minorities, the situation had since changed. Did Croats and Serbs have specific parliamentary representation of their interests? In the long term, history could not be used to justify failure to respect human rights, and national constitutions could and should be amended where necessary to ensure that human rights were guaranteed.

43. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that Slovenia had accepted recommendations Nos. 89, 90, 91 and 92 of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, but not No. 93, as the rights of the German-speaking community in Slovenia, to which it referred, were adequately regulated by a bilateral agreement and a programme on cooperation in culture, education and science between Slovenia and Austria for 2008–2012. Members of the German-speaking community enjoyed full exercise of their individual rights to maintain their national, linguistic and cultural characteristics under the Slovene Constitution. The Government would continue to implement measures to promote, develop and preserve the ethnic and national identities of the German-speaking minority.

44. **Mr. Janc** (Slovenia) explained that the "fictional" residence permits issued retroactively to "erased" persons could be used as the basis for any legal proceedings to seek reparations for losses incurred during the period in question.

45. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** reiterated his query regarding the use of the phrase "declared as Bosnians" in the ethnic composition table provided in paragraph 18 of the periodic report. Similar demographic situations pertained in Bosnia and in Montenegro, for instance, but the table referred simply to "Montenegrins". Why was a different approach followed with Bosnians?

46. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) said that the 2002 census had been based on methodology used in the former Yugoslavia. Previously, "Bosnian" as a regional identity had been included in the category "undeclared". Until 1968, there had been no specific category for Muslims. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the term "Bosniak" was currently understood to refer to Bosnian Muslims; the issue had also been raised in other international forums, particularly with reference to the situation of the Roma. Ethnic data collection prompted much discussion, not only in Slovenia but across Europe. In preparing for the 2002 census, a proposal to differentiate only between "Slovenes" and "others" had been rejected in favour of the existing methodology. Similar issues arose in relation to information on mother tongue: many respondents had declared their mother tongue to be Serbo-Croat, despite the fact that Montenegrin, Serbian and others had been offered as possible answers. The problem was common to the States of the former Yugoslavia.

47. **Mr. Amir** (Country Rapporteur) asked the delegation to clarify the Slovene definition of “Bosniaks”. Were they deemed to be Muslims and as such affiliated to the “Muslim group”? The Convention did not envisage affiliations of that nature, especially if they encompassed several different communities.

48. He wished to know how families had been classified in ethnic terms after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the case of marriages contracted between ethnically mixed couples. What influence would the classification have, for instance, on their participation in elections?

49. He assumed that the “erased people” were entitled to benefit from public services such as the education system, health-care facilities and other social and cultural services.

50. He had cited percentage figures in his introductory statement for the Bosniak, Croat, Macedonian and other minorities from the former Yugoslavia living in Slovenia. He asked whether the delegation considered the figures to be reliable.

51. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) drew attention to the tables concerning national affiliation in the periodic report, which showed that the “Bosniak” category had been introduced in the 2002 census because it was the terminology used for the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The term “Bosnian”, on the other hand, designated all nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

52. Everyone was free to declare or not to declare his or her national affiliation. In the case of mixed marriages, the parents frequently decided not to declare their children because they were unwilling to link them with a particular branch of the family. The Personal Data Protection Act stipulated that sensitive personal data should be collected only with the consent of the persons concerned.

53. Table 2 of the periodic report showed that more than 10 per cent of the population of Slovenia came from other parts of the former Yugoslavia. It was a positive sign that they had decided to remain in the country after independence and to share a common future.

54. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia), replying to the question concerning the access of “erased people” to social services, said that when persons in that category obtained a permanent residence permit, they were entitled to enter the labour market under the Employment and Work of Aliens Act and hence to be treated equally in terms of employment and unemployment benefit. Under the amendment to the Employment and Work of Aliens Act, which was scheduled for adoption before the end of 2010, aliens would not require a work permit.

55. The State was under an obligation to provide free basic education for everybody of compulsory school age. All pupils were also entitled to enrol in upper secondary school and schools were required to act in the best interests of their pupils. There was no information available on any case of denial of enrolment in or completion of upper secondary education.

56. Citizens with permanent residence status and aliens with a permanent residence permit received benefits under the Social Assistance and Social Services Act. Slovene citizens without permanent residence status and aliens who had not acquired a permanent residence permit were entitled to individual services and financial social assistance. Such assistance could also be claimed on the basis of international instruments that were binding in Slovenia.

57. Emergency health-care services were provided for non-insured persons pursuant to the Health Care and Health Insurance Act. Two medical centres, in Ljubljana and Maribor, provided regular health care for persons who were not insured.

58. **Mr. Thornberry** asked whether the second vote for the Hungarian and Italian minorities depended on both residence in a particular area and self-identification.

59. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) said that residence in a particular area was one prerequisite. Acceptance by the Hungarian or Italian community was a further requirement and self-identification by an applicant was not sufficient for inclusion in the electoral list. A complaint in that regard had been filed with the Constitutional Court, which had ruled that certain criteria must be met in order to preclude any abuse of the right to a second vote.

60. **Mr. Amir** (Country Rapporteur) commended the delegation on its detailed replies to the questions raised by the Committee. The establishment of a new legal system after an era of turbulence was no mean achievement and the State party was to be complimented on its continuous enactment of new legislation.

61. The Committee was concerned about the situation of the Roma minority in many European countries. He was therefore grateful to the delegation for providing the Committee with details of the new integrated National Programme of Measures for Roma for the period 2010–2015. He hoped that financial assistance would be made available from European Union sources for its implementation.

62. Now that special programmes had been adopted on behalf of the Italian, Hungarian and Roma minorities, he wondered whether other minorities, for instance those from the former Yugoslavia, might feel that they were being treated as second-class citizens in the country in which they were born or in which they had spent most of their lives.

63. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) assured the Committee that the Slovene authorities would carefully read its concluding observations and prepare its next report in the light of its recommendations.

64. While she agreed with many of the Committee's comments, she wished to stress that no distinction whatsoever was made in the area of economic, social, cultural, civil or political rights between Slovene nationals and persons belonging to other ethnic communities. Ethnic Slovenes did not resent not being entitled to a second vote. Substantial funds were allocated to cultural and educational projects. Special monitoring bodies had been established to ensure compliance with the principle of non-discrimination in employment. Two national minorities benefited from affirmative action owing to historical circumstances, but that did not mean that other groups were subjected to discrimination.

65. She agreed with Mr. Amir that the National Programme of Measures for Roma was particularly important. An impact assessment mechanism would be established and she hoped to be able to report concrete results.

66. Slovenia's next periodic report would again be prepared in close cooperation with experts from governmental bodies, representatives of civil society organizations and the Human Rights Ombudsman.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.