



# Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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## Committee against Torture Seventy-eighth session

### Summary record of the 2061st meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 16 November 2023, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Heller

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(*continued*)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 19 of the Convention** *(continued)*

*Fourth periodic report of Slovenia (continued)* (CAT/C/SVN/4; CAT/C/SVN/QPR/4)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Slovenia joined the meeting.*
2. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that the Government intended to ratify the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and would attend the Global Refugee Forum in 2023 as part of its commitment to help eradicate statelessness around the world.
3. Slovenia had assumed full political and moral responsibility for the unconstitutional mass erasure of the names of citizens of the former Yugoslavia from the country's register of permanent residents and for the resulting human rights violations. The 2010 Act amending the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of the Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Living in Slovenia and the 2013 Act Regulating Compensation for Damage Sustained as a Result of Erasure from the Register of Permanent Residents provided for legal redress for so-called "erased" persons. The Constitutional Court was currently reviewing both of those laws and had informed the Government that challenges remained at a bureaucratic level, as victims continued to face administrative barriers to their effective exercise of the right to redress. The issue of "erased" persons remained a prominent issue. In 2022, the President had offered a public apology to them, and a park with a memorial to "the erased" had been opened in Ljubljana in 2023.
4. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the three-year window during which, under the amended 2010 Act, "erased" persons had been able to apply for permanent resident status had been available to persons residing both inside and outside the country. Under that legislation, justifiable reasons for a person's absence from the country included health conditions, failure to fulfil the conditions for residency, an inability to return to Slovenia because of war and forcible removal from or denial of entry to the country. The European Court of Human Rights had indicated in the case of *Kurić and Others v. Slovenia* that the wish to live in Slovenia and obtain permanent resident status was an important legal circumstance in that connection.
5. Steps taken to ensure that all such persons were made aware of their right to apply for permanent resident status included media information campaigns, the distribution of brochures in all four languages of the former Yugoslavia and the issuance of guidelines explaining how officials were to help applicants fill in the appropriate forms. A broad and flexible interpretation had been applied where the burden of proof was concerned, enabling all claimants to seek compensation on the basis of documentary evidence and statements made by themselves and witnesses, all of which could be submitted to the authorities in Slovenia or its diplomatic and consular missions abroad.
6. A user-friendly administrative compensation procedure was open to "erased" persons, who could also apply to the courts for an increase in the standard 50-euro monthly compensation payment to which they were entitled. They could also gain access to benefits relating to health and social care, scholarships, housing, education and integration programmes involving language lessons and social and cultural activities. Of 8,015 applications for administrative compensation that had been processed, 5,777 had been approved, and total compensation of €26.7 million had been paid out.
7. It remained possible for "erased" persons to obtain permanent residence status, and their special status was taken into account in the 2011 Aliens Act. The Ministry of the Interior had met twice with non-governmental organizations representing "erased" persons and had invited persons claiming that they had still not been granted permanent resident status to come forward so that their situations could be resolved.
8. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that the Government had established a transparent, constructive relationship with the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, which was one of the country's highest-ranking independent constitutional authorities. The Ministry of Justice had drawn up proposed legislation in cooperation with the Ombudsman to help further strengthen the latter's position and powers and with a view to the establishment of a special

ombudsman for the rights of the child and a system to better protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

9. **A representative of Slovenia** said that, in the past, the Ministry of Finance had proposed the budget of the Human Rights Ombudsman, but a Constitutional Court decision in 2020 had given the Office of the Ombudsman the right to propose its budget independently and submit that proposal to the National Assembly for approval. The staff of the Human Rights Ombudsman had increased from 40 in 2017 to 51 in 2022, and its budget has risen from €2.8 million to €4 million between 2019 and 2023. Since the Office of the Ombudsman had been granted the authority to submit its own budget proposals, the associated administrative procedures were no longer an issue. Three conventions had been adopted on the Ombudsman's recommendation in 2023.

10. Centres where children and minors with emotional and behavioural disorders were placed were working with the Human Rights Ombudsman to draw up new protocols. A special monitoring and complaints system had been introduced in those centres in 2020.

11. The national preventive mechanism visited two or three of the country's six psychiatric hospitals each year. The oversight it conducted included inspections and occasional thematic visits. Based on its reports, the Ministry of Health and the hospital directors in question discussed what steps needed to be taken. As a result of that process, special units for child and adolescent drug addicts had been set up. The national preventive mechanism worked to improve the implementation of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Istanbul Protocol).

12. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that there had been a police presence at some 850 protests against government measures aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in 2021. Coercive measures had been used in response to the few instances of violence, and tear gas and water cannons had been used at three events. Suspicions as to whether the police had exercised their powers lawfully at all times were being looked into by specialized departments of the State Prosecutor's Office.

13. Slovenia had a mixed system of criminal procedure that adhered to the judicial rather than the prosecutorial model of investigation. Therefore, evidence was primarily gathered during questioning before the investigative judge or the criminal courts; information obtained during police interrogations was inadmissible.

14. **A representative of Slovenia** said that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms was one of the basic duties of the police, as detailed in the Police Tasks and Powers Act. When persons were taken into custody at a police station, they were provided with a brochure available in 21 different languages that explained their rights under article 4 of the Criminal Procedure Act, which was modelled on the Miranda rights, along with the right to communicate with the competent authorities and international human rights organizations, the right to special food for health or religious reasons and the right to continuous access to drinking water. They were also informed of those rights orally within three or six hours of being detained, depending on the circumstances. If they were minors, they were also informed of other special rights.

15. Persons deprived of their liberty were provided with access to a lawyer upon arrival at the police station. The Criminal Procedure Act and the Manual for Police Interrogation both stipulated that, if such persons were unable to afford a lawyer, the cost of legal counsel could be shouldered by the State. A list of Bar Association lawyers was provided in police interview rooms and updated every three months. Lawyers provided on an ex officio basis were also selected from that list or with the assistance of the investigating judge. Interrogation and any related activities involving the detainee, apart from security checks, were suspended until the arrival of the lawyer or for the time period defined by the police. Necessary medical assistance could be provided in the meantime. Detainees could, at their own expense, select the doctor who treated them. Persons close to the detainee were immediately notified of the detention except under certain circumstances, such as, for example, if a house search was to be conducted.

16. At the initiative of the Human Rights Ombudsman, the police now compiled an official note detailing all actions taken in relation to detainees. As well as confirming that detainees had been informed of their rights, including their rights to an interpreter and legal counsel, the time at which deprivation of liberty had begun, the identity of the arresting officer and details about detainees' health and any medical conditions were logged. The note was an important resource for the Human Rights Ombudsman's oversight of police stations because it provided greater traceability. The note was considered valid only if signed by the detainee. It was therefore surprising to be informed that individuals sometimes claimed not to have been informed of their rights, since they had signed a document attesting to the contrary.

17. Slovenia had two types of police premises: those designed for detention periods of up to 12 hours and those designed for longer detention periods. Although the infrastructure of some of the older premises used for short periods of detention did have shortcomings, improvements were being made. Detainees were provided with water and artificial lighting, along with the possibility of physical exercise when security considerations permitted. Premises used for longer periods of detention offered better conditions. Police officers could consult a computer application to obtain an overview of the occupancy rates of the different detention premises across Slovenia, and detainees could be taken to premises elsewhere if local facilities were not suitable.

18. Seven detainees had attempted suicide in 2018 and eight in 2019; all those attempted suicides had been prevented. A police training course had been set up to help officers recognize warning signs and give first aid to persons who had attempted suicide.

19. The police used coercive means approximately 7,000 times per year. Since police use of Tasers had been legalized in 2017, they had been discharged only twice. In order to foster responsible police use of the weapon, officers were required to personally experience the effect of a Taser discharge as part of their training before they were authorized to use a Taser themselves. That training included elements of the Istanbul Protocol. Once authorized, officers were permitted to use the Taser if threatened. However, in order for its use against minors, persons with health conditions and persons with disabilities to be permitted, conditions justifying the use of firearms needed to be met. All police Tasers were equipped with a camera which automatically recorded any incident in which they were used for subsequent legal scrutiny by a panel of trained experts.

20. **A representative of Slovenia** said that police interrogations were not always recorded because such recordings were inadmissible as evidence in court proceedings. In 2017 the National Assembly had held a debate on whether or not to require the recording of interrogations but had decided against the idea.

21. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that the Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, despite having been established only five years previously, was held in high esteem internationally for its promotion of alternative sentencing. Under its aegis, the number of conditional releases had doubled in three years. It was currently studying the technical and financial feasibility of introducing electronic monitoring as an alternative sentence.

22. **A representative of Slovenia** said that prisons were required to provide basic health and dental care for inmates. Since 2009 they had relied on the public health service to provide such care, having previously employed in-house medical and psychiatric staff. Health care could be provided in facilities outside prisons upon referral by a physician. Injuries sustained by prisoners were documented by prison officers and attending medical personnel.

23. The new prison in Ljubljana was being built primarily to address the issue of overcrowding, as the prison system was currently operating at 119 per cent capacity. Around a third of the total prison population was accounted for by pretrial detainees. The Government was aware of understaffing issues in prisons and was taking steps to promote careers in the prison service.

24. Disciplinary measures against inmates were imposed in accordance with the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions Act and only where de-escalation and other measures had proven ineffective. Disciplinary measures included the reassignment of inmates to different posts if their offences related to work, placement in solitary confinement with the

right to work and placement in solitary confinement without the right to work. The duration of solitary confinement depended on the seriousness of the offence. Inmates in solitary confinement were visited daily by health-care professionals and a staff member designated by the prison director. Solitary confinement had been imposed a total of 15 times in the past year and had been suspended in 10 of those cases. Disciplinary measures could be imposed upon pretrial detainees by the examining judge or the Director-General of the Prison Administration in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Act. Juvenile detainees who committed offences were issued written warnings and could have restrictions placed on their leisure time, among other measures.

25. Convicted prisoners could lodge complaints with the Director-General of the Prison Administration concerning disciplinary measures imposed upon them; pretrial detainees must submit such complaints to the Prison Administration within a 24-hour window. The measures were suspended pending review. Prisoners who did not receive a response to their complaint within 30 days, or who were unsatisfied with the response that they had received, could escalate their complaint to the Ministry of Justice, which had the final say on the matter and could revoke disciplinary decisions with which it disagreed. In 2021, of the 81 complaints received, 52 had been made by convicted prisoners, 27 by pretrial detainees and 2 by groups of prisoners; in 2020, of the 101 complaints received, 80 had been made by convicted prisoners, 15 by pretrial detainees and 6 by groups of prisoners.

26. Prison staff received instruction on human rights as part of their basic and ongoing training, and the Human Rights Ombudsman was involved in the provision of that training. All staff members were provided with a copy of a handbook on combating ill-treatment. There was no special regime for prisoners serving life sentences. At any rate, no life sentences had been handed down since they had first been provided for by law in 2008. Older prisoners were placed in facilities that were suited to their needs, with infrastructure such as ramps and elevators. Prisoners who were unable to carry out basic tasks on their own were provided with the necessary assistance by prison staff who had been trained to provide such services. For older inmates requiring long-term care, the prison worked with local care providers. Inmates who were deemed likely to escape or considered a danger to others could be placed under reinforced security regimes. However, placement under those regimes was limited to three months, and every effort was made to allow those inmates to return to a regular regime as soon as possible. In the past year, there had been approximately 200 such placements, of which 50 were ongoing. The conduct of prison staff and the protection of prisoners' rights were monitored by the Ministry of Justice and the district courts.

27. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that the public health service was accessible to the entire population of Slovenia and, therefore, prisoners' medical care was covered by the State. The measures taken by the Government to combat domestic and gender-based violence included strengthening legislation on rape, which had led to an increase in the reporting of that offence. The State was obligated to investigate all such reports, including those of marital rape. The decision as to whether or not to prosecute perpetrators of rape resided with the victim. The Ministry of Justice was considering amending the Criminal Code to provide for the recognition of femicide as a specific offence but had reservations about the utility of doing so. First, the Criminal Code already provided for more severe punishments for crimes that were motivated by discrimination, including prison sentences of 15 to 30 years for murder motivated by gender discrimination; and second, in order to obtain a femicide conviction, the prosecution must establish a pattern of gender-based violence to which the murder victim might have been the only witness.

28. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2024–2029, which was shortly due to be adopted, provided for the establishment of a body bringing together all stakeholders and non-governmental organizations involved in combating domestic and gender-based violence. That body would be modelled on the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. The police, the judiciary and social workers all compiled data on violence against women; however, as different compilation methodologies were used, comparing and contrasting those data were difficult. The aforementioned resolution set out commitments to harmonize data on domestic and gender-based violence, including those collected by medical personnel, and to identify patterns in

the commission of such violence. Regular training on domestic and gender-based violence was provided to officials from a range of different ministries and departments. All officials who came into contact with victims of such violence received expert assistance to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. The Government planned to provide training to medical personnel to enable them to recognize the signs of domestic and gender-based violence and to civil servants more broadly on the specific topics of stalking and female genital mutilation. It also planned to hold briefings with the media concerning appropriate approaches to reporting on incidents involving domestic and gender-based violence.

29. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Judicial Training Centre had delivered a number of courses on domestic and gender-based violence. It also held annual conferences on a range of different topics. For example, in 2022, a conference on the involvement of children in criminal offences, as victims and perpetrators, had been attended by over 300 participants and, in 2023, a conference on the provision of evidence by children in criminal proceedings had been attended by members of the police and the judiciary. In May 2022, the Government had established the House for Children, a multidisciplinary, inter-agency model for dealing with child victims and witnesses of violence. In line with that model, children who gave evidence in criminal proceedings were interviewed only once. The Government planned to draw on elements of the House for Children concept to improve the treatment of domestic violence victims. Work was under way to establish family and children's units in the district courts to help to provide the necessary support to those vulnerable groups during court proceedings. The Criminal Procedure Act, as amended in 2020, provided procedural guarantees for minors who were suspects in criminal cases. That law stipulated that minors must be informed in their mother tongue, or in a language that they understood, of their right to legal counsel and legal aid. Minors must be provided with legal counsel whenever they faced charges that carried a sentence of three or more years' imprisonment. Police officers, prosecutors, judges and lawyers received obligatory training on dealing with minors who were suspected of committing a criminal offence.

30. Under the amended Criminal Procedure Act, minors could not be held in the same facilities as adults.

31. **A representative of Slovenia** said that, in response to the growing demand for elder care, the Government had adopted the Long-term Care Act, which introduced new services, such as e-services, and facilitated the provision of community-based care. In addition, a group had been set up to identify ways to boost the recruitment of social care workers. As a result, the Government had increased the salaries for such workers and had amended the rules to allow for the recruitment of an additional 2,200 social workers by the end of 2030. Scholarships for persons wishing to obtain professional qualifications had been introduced, funding was available to support the development of technology to alleviate the care burden, and measures had been introduced to promote care work as a profession among foreign workers and to support the integration of new employees.

32. Expert consultations on addressing the problem of violence against older persons were held on a regular basis with key stakeholders, including representatives of homes for older adults, non-governmental organizations and the Human Rights Ombudsman. The Government was working on a strategy for tackling the issue which it would present at the next consultation in December 2023. The Government was prioritizing the provision of training on the prevention of violence for all employees who had contact with older persons, and rules to govern the provision of such training were being developed. All institutions had an obligation to develop reporting protocols and to prominently display information about complaints procedures throughout their facilities. Complaints could also be submitted directly to the Ministry of a Solidarity-based Future and the Labour Inspectorate. Persons who detected abuse were required to file a report with the police.

33. **A representative of Slovenia** said that, by law, only trained staff members of psychiatric hospitals could use special safety and protection measures, such as restraints, and then only as a last resort. Staff members received regular training on the use of such measures and on de-escalation techniques, and the Ministry of Health was working to increase the scope of that training. All instances of the use of restraints must be recorded, and the director of the facility must be notified of any such incident within 12 hours. The director was then required to notify the facility's mental health advocate and the patient's family. The Office

of the Human Rights Ombudsman, which served as the country's national preventive mechanism, monitored the use of special safety and protection measures and had issued recommendations concerning their use. While no complaints had been lodged regarding the use of such measures at psychiatric hospitals, feedback had been received concerning approaches for upholding the dignity of patients who were subjected to such measures.

34. In 2022, special safety and protection measures had been applied at psychiatric hospitals in 835 cases. Data were not gathered on the average duration for which such measures were applied. Between November 2020 and November 2023, the courts had considered 8,042 involuntary hospitalization petitions, of which 7,410 had been approved. As of 2022, there had been 10,065 persons in psychiatric hospitals in Slovenia.

35. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that the statute of limitations for crimes punishable by imprisonment of between 1 and 10 years became applicable 20 years from the date of the commission of the offence or 30 years from that date if the crime had been committed by a public official. There was no statute of limitations for war crimes or crimes against humanity. The Government would take the possibility of removing the statute of limitations for crimes of torture under consideration.

36. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Constitution accorded the same rights to the Roma people as to the rest of the population. The country's successful approach to the integration of Roma settlements had been recognized by the European Parliament. Individual settlements fell under the purview of the local authorities, however, which were not all equally accepting of Roma communities. Following consultation with local authorities and Roma representatives, the Government had decided to promote a model based on the Pušča settlement, where the Roma community had been successfully integrated into schools and the workforce. Strategy documents were being drawn up to that end. While the Government had a current budget of more than €6 million to support the development of Roma settlements, funding was distributed unequally, and further resources were required.

37. **Mr. Buchwald** (Country Rapporteur) said that he would be grateful to learn whether persons undergoing police questioning were free to leave at any time. While he understood that anything said by interviewees during police questioning could not be used against them in a court of law, he wondered whether their words could be used to incriminate or exonerate other persons or to uncover evidence that could subsequently be used to incriminate the persons being questioned. It would also be interesting to know whether interviewees could use the recording of an interview in their own defence. Furthermore, the Committee would be curious to learn whether the police transmitted reports of suspected abuse of prisoners to the Specialized State Prosecutor's Office or whether prison staff were responsible for submitting such reports to the Office directly.

38. He would welcome additional information about the Pušča settlement and why it had been chosen as a model for Roma integration. In addition, he wished to know what was being done in response to reports that police officers did not always follow the rules regarding same-gender body searches. He also wondered how article 10 (a) and (b) of the Aliens Act, on the declaration of a complex migration crisis, was applied in practice; in particular, he would be interested to learn how the police decided whether a migrant faced an "individual, plausible and weighty" risk of torture and how the State party upheld migrants' right to appeal against such decisions, given that the right of appeal had no suspensive effect.

39. It would be interesting to learn whether the State party had assessed the impact of measures to combat trafficking in persons and the effectiveness of the training provided to border control and police officers in the detection and prevention of human trafficking. The Committee would also welcome information on the number of cases of trafficking in persons that had been investigated and prosecuted and the number of convictions in trafficking cases.

40. The definition of torture in the English translation of the State party's domestic law was slightly different from that set out in the Convention. The former appeared to be more restrictive regarding the reasons for which acts classified as torture were committed, since the Convention referred to the same reasons but only as examples. He wondered whether the difference was intentional and, if so, what the reasons for it were.

41. While the Convention did not set out any minimum penalties for crimes of torture, it did require that they should be treated in the same way as other serious crimes. In that context, the penalties applicable to torture in the State party's legislation seemed lenient. It would be interesting to know what the reasoning had been for establishing those penalties and how they compared to those for other serious crimes.

42. The legal restrictions on the collection of disaggregated data established as privacy safeguards appeared to be statutory in nature and could therefore potentially be changed. Given the importance of disaggregated data for problem-solving and decision-making, he would like to know whether the State party was open to considering amending its laws to facilitate data collection.

43. **Ms. Pūce** (County Rapporteur) said that she wished to know whether cases of suspected abuse or ill-treatment of detainees by staff members or police officers were investigated by an independent body. She was also curious to know how many investigations had been conducted in such cases and what the outcomes of those investigations had been.

44. It would be useful to know how many victims of violent crimes, including trafficking in persons, gender-based violence and domestic violence, had benefited from the Crime Victim Compensation Act and what other measures were in place to support their rehabilitation. She also wondered whether the State party provided rehabilitation programmes for juvenile detainees who were experiencing drug or alcohol addiction.

45. The Committee would be interested to learn what the protocol was for recording instances of the use of restraint mechanisms in psychiatric hospitals and whether any follow-up was provided. She also wished to know whether the State party had investigated the allegations of violence against patients at the psychiatric clinic at Ljubljana University Medical Centre and what steps it was taking to address systemic overcrowding at the forensic psychiatry unit of Maribor University Medical Centre.

46. **Mr. Touzé** said that he was pleased that the State party was open to considering the possible removal of the statute of limitations for the crime of torture and would appreciate further clarification about the ability of persons interviewed by the police to leave the police station immediately following their questioning.

*The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.*

47. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that the Government would review the definition of torture set out in the Criminal Code – which it had thus far believed to be fully consistent with the definition in the Convention – to ensure that it had not been unintentionally narrowed. Further reflection would be given to the suitability of having a longer minimum sentence for the offence of torture. In general, however, the maximum sentence under the Criminal Code for the most serious crimes, including torture and genocide, was 30 years' imprisonment. The exceptions under which life sentences were allowed were very rare.

48. **A representative of Slovenia** said that, in the absence of specific grounds warranting detention, a person being interrogated could leave the place of interrogation at any time and did not have to answer any of the questions asked. The Government would consider whether the recording of interrogations should be made mandatory as a safeguard against ill-treatment. The Criminal Procedure Act and the Police Tasks and Powers Act set out the requirements for the performance of body searches, which must be conducted by an officer of the same gender as the person being searched unless the officer at the scene determined that, for security reasons, the search must be performed immediately.

49. Specially trained officers of the Criminal Police Directorate led the investigations into cases of trafficking in persons. Seventy-one cases of trafficking in persons had been handled in 2018, 12 in 2019, 29 in 2020, 40 in 2021 and 8 in 2022. The investigations into the eight cases dealt with in 2022 had revealed no basis for a criminal complaint.

50. Injuries sustained by detainees that were suspected to have been caused by police officers' unlawful use of coercive measures were investigated by a special unit of the State Prosecutor's Office that had been established to impartially investigate offences allegedly committed by the police.



51. **A representative of Slovenia** said that, if the Government declared a complex migration emergency or crisis, nationwide measures would be adopted, and civil protection units could be used if necessary. If further action was needed, the Government could submit a reasoned, substantiated proposal to the National Assembly for the activation of article 10 (b) of the Aliens Act. That provision had never been applied to date, however. Under the relevant procedures, the situation in a foreign national's country of departure would be assessed in connection with his or her case. The Government's list of safe countries included all the countries that bordered Slovenia, which were also all States members of the European Union. The foreign national must be allowed to participate in the proceedings concerning him or her and have an interpreter and a representative of a non-governmental organization present. Decisions were to be taken as soon as possible. Any police officers involved were trained in the recognition of signs of torture and inhuman treatment.

52. **A representative of Slovenia** said that all stakeholders, including the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, involved in discussions on the topic of data collection and privacy safeguards in 2021 and 2022 had agreed that data on ethnicity should be collected only in connection with assistance programmes for specific minorities, in accordance with the relevant legislation. Data on national affiliation were no longer collected owing to legislative amendments introduced in 2017 in response to the concerns of the Human Rights Ombudsman that such data could be used for discriminatory purposes. The Constitutional Court allowed data on ethnicity and religious beliefs to be collected through the population census only if the data were provided willingly by the persons concerned and were destroyed immediately following their compilation for statistical disaggregation purposes.

53. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that Slovenia had one of the strongest legislative frameworks for the protection of personal data in the world.

54. **A representative of Slovenia** said that decisions on the 50 claims submitted, on average, every year under the Crime Victim Compensation Act were made by a special government-appointed commission whose members included doctors, a judge and a prosecutor. Roughly half of the claims were approved. Compensation could be provided for physical or psychological harm, loss of earnings and, in the event of death, funeral expenses. No decisions had yet been made on the two claims filed by third-country nationals after the removal of the citizenship requirement in July 2023.

55. **A representative of Slovenia** said that substance abuse programmes and programmes to counter violence were run in all prisons and in the correctional facility for minors. In some cases, they were administered in cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

56. **A representative of Slovenia** said that article 99 of the Mental Health Act required certain information to be recorded whenever a special restraint measure was applied, including the type of measure and the reason for its use. Psychiatric hospitals collated the information, in an anonymized form, annually. Relevant information was also recorded by the national preventive mechanism. Issues arising in psychiatric hospitals that could not be resolved under the Patient Rights Act could be taken up by a 75-member ministerial commission. Psychiatric patients in closed wards were represented by a mental health advocate and received brochures detailing their rights. Posters listing their rights were also displayed in the corridors of the facilities.

57. Earlier efforts, concluded in February 2023, to shed light on the problems noted at the psychiatric hospital in Ljubljana had been inconclusive. Subsequently, the Ministry of Health had called on the hospital's board to take action. After the hospital's director had stated that there were no grounds for any complaints, the board members had been replaced. The new board had held its first meeting in early November, and a complaint concerning the situation had been filed with the police. The Ministry wished to increase the number of psychiatrists at the Forensic Psychiatry Unit at the Maribor University Medical Centre but recruitment was proving difficult.

58. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the Office for National Minorities would organize an excursion for stakeholders to the Roma settlement of Pušča, a settlement that had been so successful that non-Roma families had bought nearby land and sent their children to the same schools as the children from the settlement. Roma children from other settlements

had less knowledge of Slovene and faced greater obstacles in the education system than children from the Pušča settlement. In Beltinci, the Government was working with the local community to improve the conditions at the Roma settlement there. The municipalities responsible for Roma settlements required more funding.

59. There were 64 staff members known as “Roma assistants” working in the country’s schools. The Government had increased the resources allocated to employers who hired Roma men and women for public works projects, and it was planning to launch a social entrepreneurship programme that would benefit the Roma community.

60. **A representative of Slovenia** said that, in 2022, 40 police officers had been charged with criminal offences and 16 of them had been convicted.

61. **A representative of Slovenia** said that the police notified the special unit of the State Prosecutor’s Office that was responsible for investigating police misconduct whenever there was a suspicion that a criminal offence had been committed by an officer, regardless of whether that officer had been on or off duty at the time.

62. **Ms. Švarc Pipan** (Slovenia) said that her Government looked forward to receiving the Committee’s concluding observations and continuing to work constructively with it to protect human rights.

*The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.*