



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

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Information received from Croatia on follow-up to the
concluding observations on its combined ninth to fourteenth
periodic reports***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. Croatia thanks the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for its consideration of the report submitted by Republic of Croatia at its 2987th and 2988th meetings, held on 9 and 10 August 2023. during its 110th session. Croatia reminds the Committee of the priority that it attaches to protecting people in Croatia against racism, hate speech and hate crime. It draws the Committee's attention in this regard to its equality legislation and efforts to strengthen protections in terms of offline and online safety and against hate crime and hate speech and to the initiatives in train to address racism.
2. In paragraph 41 of its Concluding Observations, in accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 of its rules of procedure, the Committee requested the State party, Republic of Croatia to provide, within one year of the adoption of the Concluding observations, information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 16 (racism in sports), 22 (c) and (d) (situation of Roma) and 28 (stateless persons) above.
3. The State is aware of the urgency of these themes which is an absolute priority for the Government. The requested information is provided in the text below. The information is correct as of 24 October 2024. Paragraph numbers refer to the paragraphs in the Committee's Concluding Observations.

II. Follow-up information to the concluding observations (CERD/C/HRV/CO/9-14)

A. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 16 of the concluding observations

4. Croatia is taking action to strengthen provisions to address racism in sport.

Measures (Activities) for Combating Racial Discrimination and Hate Speech in Sport

5. The Ministry of Tourism and Sport, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, the General Police Directorate, the Education and Teacher Training Agency, and the Croatian School Sports Federation, for many years has been implementing various educational measures to combat violence in sports, tailored to different age groups of students.
6. In cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, the General Police Directorate, the Croatian Football Federation, the Croatian School Sports Federation, and the Education and Teacher Training Agency, Action Plan for implementing an educational programme to combat violence in sports, both during sports competitions and outside of them has been prepared and implemented since 2008.
7. Along with the book "Sport and Violence in Europe," several other publications were translated, such as "Racism, Football, and the Internet," "What? Racist? Me?" and "All Different – All Equal." This made the best European practices available in Croatia. These publications, adapted to different age groups, were distributed to all educational institutions and national sports federations. Additionally, posters addressing violence, racism, and discrimination were printed and distributed.
8. In collaboration with the Education and Teacher Training Agency as a partner, 10 expert conferences were held with leaders of county councils for preventive programs and physical and health education, and a bilingual (Croatian/English) brochure titled "Living Fair Play" was created in cooperation with the Croatian Fair Play Committee. This brochure was distributed at expert conferences and to all educational institutions in Croatia.
9. In cooperation with the Croatian Fair Play Committee, bilingual postcards on fair play in sports (Croatian/English) were created in a series of five, as well as bilingual brochures, "The Sports code of conduct for school children" and "The Sports code of conduct for

preschool children”. These were distributed to educational institutions in Croatia and introduced during demonstration sessions for children in schools and kindergartens.

10. In October 2018, as part of the joint Council of Europe and European Commission project “ALL IN: Towards Gender Balance in Sport,” which included meetings, workshops, etc., the Ministry of Tourism and Sport organized a conference attended by leaders of county councils for school preventive programs and physical and health education. The knowledge gained at the conference was passed on to teachers of physical education to apply in their teaching.

11. Aware of the importance of implementing violence prevention programs among children and youth, the Ministry of Tourism and Sport encourages associations applying for co-financing of sports programs under local sports promotion and swimming training programs (Hrvatska pliva) to include educational activities (violence prevention in sports, fair play) within their programs, which are given extra weight in evaluations.

12. In 2018, regarding the prevention of all unacceptable behaviour in sports, the Ministry developed a visual identity for a campaign to prevent violence in sports. The campaign aimed to be visible and accepted by the public to achieve its goals (slogan, logo, mascot, fan song, promotional materials, design and layout for printing, branding, radio spots, interactive web banners, etc.).

13. In 2019, as part of European Week of Sport, an initiative of the European Commission to promote sports and physical activity across Europe, the Ministry organized a “School Day” on Petar Preradović Square in Zagreb, involving children from first to fourth grades from Zagreb and Osijek. The event promoted physical activities as a means of violence prevention in schools, with a focus on positive cheering without aggression.

14. In 2020, a promotional video targeting preschool children and first- to fourth-grade students was produced, promoting the importance of physical activity in daily life and violence prevention in sports, with an emphasis on positive, non-aggressive cheering and fair play. The video, along with promotional materials, was distributed to all county school sports associations, which in turn shared them with their member school sports societies.

15. In 2022, The Croatian Football Federation has organized a promotional campaign “We are all one family” which aims to send a strong and unified message from the football family that all forms of discrimination are unacceptable. As part of this campaign, the Federation committed to assigning all funds obtained from fines imposed on sport clubs for manifestations of racism to the implementation of projects aimed at preventing racist behaviour.

16. A public call for co-financing major international sports competitions was issued, while some organizers of international sports competitions implement educational and preventive programs aimed at combating racial discrimination and hate speech in sports (preventing disorder at sports events). Through this public call, organizers should submit a report on the sporting, social, and economic justification of organizing such events. A common theme in these reports is the promotion of non-violence. Sports competitions and teamwork foster values such as respect, tolerance, and sportsmanship. Notably, the “Youth Sports Games” highlight the importance of educational activities in 2025, 2026, and 2027, including preventive campaigns in cooperation with the policy to promote healthy lifestyles, positive fan culture, and the rejection of hooliganism, violence, discrimination, and hate speech, while encouraging fair play and respect.

Substantive criminal legislation

17. In relation to the recommendation contained in paragraph 16.: “The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to combat racial discrimination and hate speech in sports, particularly in football, and to investigate, prosecute and sanction perpetrators in accordance with the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act and the Criminal Code”, we would point out that the General Provisions of the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No: 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22, 114/23, 36/24; hereinafter: CC), which apply to all criminal offences from the incriminations catalogue prescribed by the Special Part of the Criminal Code, include the definition of hate

crime. Article 87(21) CC defines hate crime as a criminal offence committed on the grounds of race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, language, disability, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity of another person. Such action must be taken by the court as an aggravating circumstance if the Criminal Code does not expressly provide for more severe punishment.

18. In the context of hate crime, we draw attention to the fact that the Criminal Code contains in its Special Part a number of criminal offences with a hate element included as a qualifying circumstance of the criminal offences and hence with a more severe sanction prescribed. This is the case with Article 122 – ‘Participation in an affray’, which stipulates that a person who participates in an affray or attack involving several persons shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of up to three years for the participation alone if the affray or attack has resulted in the death or serious bodily injury of one or more persons, while paragraph (2) provides for a qualifying circumstance of committing the said crime out of hatred, envisaging up to five years’ imprisonment. Furthermore, Article 323a CC provides for the criminal offence of ‘Violent behaviour’, under which a person who puts another person in a degrading position by violence, abuse, bullying or other particularly brazen conduct in a public place, without committing a more serious criminal offence, is to be punished by imprisonment for a term of up to three years, while paragraph (2) provides for a qualifying circumstance of committing the said crime out of hatred, envisaging up to five years’ imprisonment. Finally, Article 324 CC provides for the criminal offence of ‘Causing disorder’, under which a person who participates in a crowd that threatens public order by violence against other persons or property or by threatening to commit violence, or incites a crowd to violence shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of up to three years, while paragraph (2) provides for a qualifying circumstance of committing the said crime out of hatred, envisaging up to five years’ imprisonment.

19. As mentioned above, under Article 87(21) CC, in other cases, the fact that the crime was committed out of hatred should be taken by the court as an aggravating factor in the sentencing. The reason for more severe punishment is the discriminatory motive that manifests itself in violence against a member of a certain group, which can have serious social consequences (escalation of violence towards a certain group, etc.).

20. In Article 325, the Criminal Code provides for the offence of ‘Public incitement to violence and hatred’, which criminalises public incitement to violence and hatred.

21. With regard to the circle of possible perpetrators, this criminal offence is prescribed as a general offence (*delicta communia*), i.e. paragraph (1) stipulates that it is committed by whoever, through press, radio, television, computer system or network, at a public gathering or in other ways publicly incites violence or hatred directed against a group of people or a member of such a group on account of their race, religion, national or ethnic origin, descent, skin colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or any other characteristics, or whoever makes available to the public leaflets, pictures or other material instigating such violence or hatred. A sentence of up to three years’ imprisonment is envisaged for the offence.

22. Paragraph (2) of that Article criminalises the organisation or running of a group of three or more persons inciting to violence and hatred, which is punishable by a term of imprisonment between six months and five years. Furthermore, paragraph (3) also provides for the sanctioning of mere participation in an association that incites violence and hatred with up to one year’s imprisonment.

23. Paragraph (4) of the same Article criminalises the public condoning, denial or substantial diminution of the criminal offence of genocide, the crime of aggression, a crime against humanity or a war crime, directed against a group of people or a member of a group on account of their racial, religious, national or ethnic origin, descent or colour, in a manner likely to incite violence or hatred against such a group or members of that group, and envisages a penalty equivalent to that referred to in paragraph (1), namely imprisonment for a term of up to three years.

24. It is important to note that paragraph (5) also provides for the criminal liability of anyone who attempts to commit the offences referred to in paragraphs (1) and (4).

Procedural criminal legislation

25. The Criminal Procedure Act (NN Nos 152/08, 76/09, 80/11, 121/11, 91/12, 143/12, 56/13, 145/13, 152/14, 70/17, 126/19, 126/19, 130/20, 80/22, 36/24; hereinafter: CPA) prohibits in Article 6(1) discrimination on a number of grounds, such as race, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, as one of the principles of criminal procedure.

26. Particular attention is paid to crime victims, which certainly includes victims of hate crime. Under Article 43(4) CPA all bodies involved in the procedure are obliged to inform the victim in an understandable manner about his/her rights already when taking the first action, while acting with due care and making sure that the victim has understood the given notice of rights.

27. The Victims' Rights Catalogue, as required by Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, lays down the rights of victims. Under Article 43(1) CPA, Every crime victim, including victims of hate crimes, is entitled, inter alia, to the following: access to crime victim support services, to effective psychological and professional support, to protection from intimidation and retaliation, to protection of dignity, to be heard without undue delay after filing a criminal complaint, to participate in criminal proceedings as an injured party, to be informed of the dismissal of a criminal complaint and the abandonment of prosecution, and to take over the prosecution, to be informed of any actions taken following the criminal complaint and to lodge a complaint with a higher-ranking state attorney, and to be notified of any final decision terminating the criminal proceedings. Those rights are enjoyed, under Article 202(2)(11), by both direct and indirect victims, including spouses and relatives of a person whose death was directly caused by the criminal offence.

28. The introduction of the institute of individual victim assessment in the procedural criminal legislation of the Republic of Croatia, specifically, in Article 43a of the Criminal Procedure Act, has ensured an individual approach by the competent authorities, in particular to victims of hate crime. The aim of the individual victim assessment is to determine whether there is a risk of secondary and repeat victimisation of the victim and a risk of intimidation and retaliation during the criminal proceedings, and if so, what specific measures should be applied (special interviewing method, use of communication technologies to avoid visual contact with the offender and other measures prescribed by law).

Protocol for procedures in cases of hate crimes

29. Within the framework of the data monitored in accordance with the Protocol for Procedures in Cases of Hate Crimes, in the period from August 2023 until today, there were no legally concluded criminal proceedings related to Article 87 and Article 325 of the Criminal Code, as well as proceedings conducted in accordance with the Anti-Discrimination Act, in which acts were committed on a racial basis at a sports competition. There was only one legally concluded court proceeding due to a misdemeanour on a racial basis related to the Law on the Prevention of Disorders at Sports Competitions, in which an acquittal was rendered (inappropriate behaviour in the way that the perpetrator chanted, that is, "hooted" at a dark-skinned player of FC "Istra 1961").

Procedures of state attorney's offices

30. In the period from 23rd August 2023 to 15th October 2024, the competent state attorneys' offices acted against several persons in criminal cases related to racial discrimination or hate speech in sports, namely:

(a) On 10th May 2024, the state attorney's office issued a decision on the dismissal of the crime report — the special report of the Zadar Police Station against one person, due to the lack of reasonable suspicion that the person committed the crime of violent behaviour motivated by hatred from Art. 323a paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code, that is, that he/she participated in a group that on the street physically attacked fans who had arrived from another country for a basketball match in Zadar.

(b) In the criminal case against six persons, for the crime of violent behaviour motivated by hatred, from Art. 323a in connection with Art. 87, paragraph 21 of the Criminal Code, the state attorney's office conducts actions or investigations due to the existence of a well-founded suspicion that they committed a crime of violent behaviour motivated by hatred from Art. 323a paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code, that is, that they participated in a group that on 11th November 2023, on the street physically attacked fans who had arrived from another country for a basketball game in Zadar.

31. In relation to the Anti-Discrimination Act and the Law on the Prevention of Disorders at Sports Competitions, there were no state attorney's procedures in the requested period.

32. Analysis of misdemeanour court proceedings according to the data submitted by the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation on the application of the Law on the Prevention of Disorders at Sports Competitions in 2023:

33. Article 4 of the Law on Prevention of Disorders at Sports Competitions prohibits, among other things:

- Inserting and highlighting banners, flags or other things with text, pictures, signs or other features that express or incite hatred or violence based on racial, national or religious affiliation or some other special feature;
- Singing songs or sending messages whose content expresses or incites hatred or violence based on racial, national or religious affiliation or some other particularity;
- Misdemeanour proceedings were initiated against 43 adults, all male defendants, mostly young, under 30 years of age. The discriminatory basis of the aforementioned misdemeanours was hatred based on racial, national and religious affiliation, while 5 defendants were charged with glorifying the Ustasha and NDH ideology by displaying the flag;
- Competent misdemeanour courts passed first-instance verdicts against 27 defendants, of which 26 defendants were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 15 to 60 days, while only one defendant was acquitted.

Procedures of police

34. In relation to the recommendation contained in paragraph 16, it should be pointed out that the police conduct criminal investigations of crimes motivated by hatred committed in sports or at sports competitions.

35. Likewise, the police, in cooperation with partners (media, well-known public figures, educational institutions, local community) as well as representatives of sports and fan associations and associations in football, handball and hockey, continuously carry out preventive activities as part of the well-known preventive programs "Together against speech hate", "Be a supporter, not a breaker" intended primarily for children and young people. The mentioned activities and programs are aimed at preventing all forms of hate speech and promoting a culture of dialogue, tolerance, non-violence and non-discrimination. During the year 2023, 42 public events and 441 educations were held throughout Croatia, and about 9,075 people were involved in the mentioned activities.

36. The education for police officers on the topic of anti-discrimination, human rights, hate speech and hate crimes is carried out continuously throughout the entire teaching and academic year at all levels of police education; within existing programs for occupation – police officer at the Police School "Josip Jović", at the Faculty of Criminology and Public Security as well as at various specialist courses. As part of the police school programs "Josip Jović" topics of anti-discrimination, human rights, hate crimes, hate speech are integrated in the courses: Basics of police work and work organization, Fundamental human rights, integrity and communication, Crime prevention in practice, and as well as in extra-curricular activities: Peculiarities of application of police powers towards special categories of persons, Fundamentals of criminal law, Fundamentals of misdemeanour law, Criminal psychology and communication, Constitution, human rights and EU law. The Faculty of Criminology and Public Security, integrated the mentioned topics within the framework of the regular study and master's degree in Criminology through courses: Introduction to the legal system

and the Constitution regulation of the Republic of Croatia, Criminal law, Introduction to criminalistics, Police powers, Criminal tactics, Criminology, Criminalistics psychology, criminological methods of investigating the organized of crime, Security of European borders and migration, Security system and national security of the Republic of Croatia, Criminal methodology investigation of juvenile delinquency and criminality against children, Criminalistics methodology of investigating family violence, Misdemeanour law and Criminological methods of investigating complex forms of organized crime, Migration and crime, Supervision of police work, Victimology, Criminological methodology of investigating complex crime against children.

37. It should be emphasized that since the introduction of the hate crime in the criminal legislation of the Republic of Croatia, on January 1, 2007, there is not recorded racially motivated hate crime offence committed by police officer.

B. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 22 (c) of the concluding observations

38. The most important goals in the field of education of members of the Roma national minority relate to the inclusion of children and students in the education system, from the earliest age through elementary school education and retention in the system until high school and higher education.

39. Numerous relevant activities are conducted by regional and local authorities and institutions, ranging from those directly relevant for segregation to activities improving social cohesion on the local level and improving and equalising living conditions. Thus, in Međimurje County, almost all relevant municipalities in 2023–2024 have been expanding their kindergarten/preschool infrastructure, while further investments are being made in local social and communal infrastructure. In Međimurje County, in the period from 2022 to 2024, from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, an amount of 11,843,124.00 EUR has been allocated for the construction and extension of kindergartens in the municipalities of Goričan, Mala Subotica, Nedelišće (with Dunjkovac), Pribislavec, Strahoninec, Sveta Marija, Lopatinec, Vratišinec, Orehovica, Podturen, Hodošan, and towns Čakovec and Mursko Središće, almost all of them with a significant Roma population. Some of the kindergartens have already been completed, while the completion of work on the unfinished ones is expected in the spring of 2025. The above will satisfy the capacities for more than 1,000 children.

40. The Međimurje County has also applied for the extension of the Prelog High School, Mursko Središće Primary School, and applications for 12 more schools are being prepared.

41. In addition, continuing “soft” activities are implemented by the County, municipalities and schools, as well as Croatian Social Work Institute. Newly established (since early 2024) Centre for Children and Family with intersectoral teams working directly in 6 Roma settlements is also providing help in many aspects, from dropout prevention to access to gender and age sensitive services.

42. At the same time increased employment opportunities are leading to Roma families, particularly young families with children, buying houses in neighbouring villages and cities, successfully integrating and further decreasing pressure on 6 schools which are closest to segregated Roma settlements.

43. The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth is responsible for as many as 18 implementation activities in the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027, thus ensuring a continuous support at all levels of the educational system.¹ Strategic documents on which almost all activities in the field of education are based are the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027 and Operational Programmes for National Minorities 2024–2028.

¹ Earlier strategic documents include National Program for Roma 2003–2012, Action Plan for the Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013–2020, as well as Operational Programs for National Minorities 2017–2020, and Operational Programs of National Minorities 2021–2024.

All the activities undertaken are based on the policy of social inclusion, which means ensuring the conditions for the full integration of children, young people and adults in accordance with their needs and abilities. Children belonging to the Roma national minority, like all other children, have the right to education, health, life in a family environment and conditions that stimulate their development and progress, the right to language and the right to cultural identity. The vulnerability of children and families belonging to the Roma national minority is also recognized in recent national plans and recommendations of international documents. Various stakeholders, especially the Education Agency and the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth, have continuously invested efforts in ensuring the quality of education, which includes the professional development of teachers, professional associates and Roma helpers in primary schools with the aim of increasing the quality and efficiency of children's education members of the Roma national minority and ensuring the acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills for the personal development of students.

44. The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth updates the database on the education of members of the Roma national minority once a year, taking into account the data at the end of the previous school/pedagogical year and at the beginning of the current school/pedagogical year obtained from all state administration offices in counties and the City Office for Education of the City of Zagreb. The purpose of data collection is to ensure that as many children as possible receive adequate and necessary support during their education and provision of funds in the state budget.

45. As for the numerical indicators, there is a visible increase in the number of children enrolled in preschool programs and students who continue their education at universities, while the low number of students enrolled in secondary school programs is still noticeable. At the beginning of 2023/2024, there are a total of 7,055 Roma children/students in the education system, namely: 1,081 children in kindergartens, 5,230 in primary school, while only 744 students attend secondary school education. For Roma students, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth provides scholarships and accommodation in a student dormitory and provision of one-time financial assistance for the completion of secondary education. In higher education, an increase in the number of students is visible. So, in 2023/2024 academic year 55 students were entitled to a state scholarship from the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth.

46. The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth implements the following measures/activities to achieve the defined goals:

- Co-financing of the parents' share in the economic price of preschool education/kindergarten;
- Co -financing of preschool programs;
- ensuring the learning of the Croatian language for students who do not know or know the Croatian language insufficiently;
- Provision of extended stay, school in nature/extracurricular classes, school excursions, summer schools;
- Provision of one-time financial assistance for the completion of secondary education;
- Provision of secondary and higher education scholarships for Roma pupils and students;
- Providing accommodation in school and student dormitories;
- Co-financing of literacy and training for Roma adults.

47. With the aim of further support, from 2020, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth provides funds for the allocation of one-time financial aid for Roma students for the completion of secondary school education. Also, from academic year 2022/2023 the monthly amount of student scholarships was increased to EUR 360,00 and high school student scholarships to EUR 133,00. The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth annually provides funds in the amount of approx. EUR 2,9 million. The measures are sustainable and the implementation of the planned further activities is extremely important in preventing the

dropout of students belonging to the Roma national minority, but also in raising the level of awareness of the importance of education.

48. Since 2013, there has been a significant increase in funds for the realization and implementation of national policy measures for the education of Roma at all levels of the educational system.

National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013–2020 (MSEY)

<i>Year</i>	<i>EUR</i>
2013	1 191 555.95
2014	1 253 069.55
2015	1 313 926.51
2016	1 471 792.87
2017	1 467 771.05
2018	1 675 191.32
2019	1 579 334.66
2020	1 849 706.15
<i>National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027 (MSEY)</i>	
2021	2 175 228.08
2022	2 310 594.73
2023	2 980 829.14

Annually spent funds of the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth for the realization and implementation of measures and activities of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013–2020 and the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027.

49. It is important to note that from 2015 evaluations of the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2013–2020 consistently show that the greatest progress has been achieved in the strategic area of education, primarily in the inclusion of Roma children and students in the educational system. Ensuring the continuous implementation of all the above-mentioned activities is important since they are both a prerequisite for integration and contribute to a more successful completion of primary education.

50. In April 2020, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth adopted the Curriculum for the subject Language and Culture of the Roma National Minority in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia (Model C). The introduction of the curriculum of the language and culture of the Roma national minority is a significant step forward for the members of the Roma national minority in the preservation of language, tradition and cultural identity. Also, in order to encourage the implementation of various programs of national minorities, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth publishes a Public Call for co-financing of various special programs of national minorities (professional training of educators and teachers who teach in the language and script of national minorities in primary and secondary schools, holding literary, drama and other extracurricular activities and other forms of schooling students in the language and script of national minorities in primary and secondary schools, competitions for students belonging to national minorities in primary and secondary schools (writing, visual arts, etc.), events marking significant dates for national minorities, printing magazines, brochures and books that help promote the language of the national minority and are used for the purpose of educating primary and secondary school students. Following the above, the implementation of special programs of the Roma national minority is co-financed – World Roma Day, World Roma Language Day, International Day of Remembrance of Roma Victims of Genocide in the Second World War/Samudaripen, as well as other educational programs organized by associations/alliances.

51. In the coming period, the implementation of the project Support for the Education of Children and Students of the Roma National Minority within the Programme Efficient Human Resources 2021–2027 is planned (approx. EUR 1,9 million).

52. Also, the new National Education System Development Plan 2021–2027, in the special goal related to the upbringing and education of national minorities, envisages implementation of activities for additional support for students and schools with a larger number of members of the Roma national minority (the mentioned support includes help in learning/mentoring, education of teachers/teachers and professional associates who work in multicultural environment and the establishment of legal prerequisites for engaging Roma assistants.). All the activities undertaken are based on the policy of social inclusion, which means ensuring the conditions for the full integration of children, young people and adults in accordance with their needs and abilities.

53. The Teacher Training Agency in cooperation with the Ministry conducts expert meetings: for teachers of the Croatian language, whose goal is to acquire fundamental intercultural competences, on the topic of preventing early school leaving using inclusive strategies, for teachers who work with a large number of students belonging to the Roma national minority and for Roma helpers with the aim of raising the quality and efficiency of education of children belonging to the Roma national minority. Also, 24 Roma assistants are employed in primary schools and their work is financed from the state budget. The professional training of Roma helpers and professional associates in primary schools with the aim of raising the quality and efficiency of the education of children belonging to the Roma national minority continued in the reporting period as well. According to the report of the Education Agency, the professional training of teachers, professional associates and Roma assistants continued. Teachers, professional assistants, pedagogues, and Roma assistants in primary schools are equipped with the knowledge and methods through professional training to more successfully manage diversity in the classroom, become familiar with different anti-discrimination approaches to teaching, and will be able to plan measures within the school curriculum to support students who are in at the risk of early school leaving, they will master the strategies of using inclusive methods for the prevention of early school leaving, they will recognize and analyse the functioning of the dynamics of relationships in different types of families with an emphasis on the specifics of the cooperation of the professional associate pedagogue with dysfunctional families, develop the partnership between parents and schools and define the forms of cooperation with employees of the Center for Social Welfare.

54. The Curriculum for the cross-curricular subject Civic education is a cross-curricular subject whose purpose is to train and empower students to actively and effectively perform their civic role. Through domain A – human rights, students observe the problems faced by members of national minorities. The contents are connected with the contents of the teaching subjects: History, Geography, Religious Studies, Ethics and with the cross-curricular topic Personal and Social Development.

55. The National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027 recognizes the problem of Roma segregation in primary schools. The Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2023–2025, contains measures to reduce segregation such as creating an analysis and a plan to reduce the share of Roma children who attend primary school education in groups where most or all children are Roma. Quality education must be provided to all students and is provided to all students. For Roma students, additional learning of the Croatian language is ensured in primary school. In addition, extended stay and extracurricular activities are also provided. The most important measures refer to the earliest possible inclusion in kindergartens. The Ministry of Science, Education and Youth provides funds for Roma children for attending kindergarten and preschool.

56. Roma children participate in the educational process on an equal basis with others and are included in regular educational groups. The National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027 aims to secure that every child of early and preschool age of Roma nationality is able to attend kindergarten free of charge. Furthermore, given that the organization of early and preschool education in the Republic of Croatia is under the authority of local/regional self-government units and is financed from decentralized state budget funds, in addition to allocated funds from the state budget that local/regional self-government allocates independently, the Republic of Croatia allocates additional funds for the upbringing and education of children belonging to national minorities. Also, the educational group attended by a child of the Roma national minority may include a Roma helper whose role is to

overcome the language barrier between the child of the Roma national minority and other children and educators, as well as provide comprehensive support. All children in the year before starting elementary school are required to attend the preschool program, which currently amounts to 250 hours per year.

57. From the annual reports on the implementation of measures and related activities, it is evident that the activities carried out correspond to the need to ensure access to a quality and inclusive education system in early childhood, which aims to reduce initial inequalities, eliminate discrimination, and reduce the challenges faced by children from vulnerable social groups. Also, they contribute to the promotion of emotional, social, psychological and physical development of all children, and significant positive developments in the field of upbringing and education of members of the Roma national minority can be seen.

58. The police carry out continuous preventive and educational activities independently or within the framework of interdepartmental cooperation with members of the Roma minority in counselling centres and centres for providing services to children and families in Roma settlements in the area of Medimurje, the construction of which was initiated as part of the UNICEF project, "EU Guarantee for every child". In the aforementioned Centers, the police conduct education and workshops for young people outside the school system on the topic of prevention of risky behaviour (under the influence of drugs and alcohol) as well as behavioural addictions, i.e. internet abuse. All activities are carried out as part of the Addiction Prevention Pilot Project aimed at children and young Roma in Medimurska County, in cooperation with the other participants involved in the project, of which the Public Health Institute and Medimurska County stand out.

59. In addition to the above, national prevention projects "Less weapons, fewer tragedies", "Healthy for 5", "I live a life without violence", "I have a choice" are implemented in Roma settlements in cooperation with educational institutions in the area of Medimurje County. national preventive action "Together", "Respect our signs", "Lily" and many other projects united as part of the Implementation Program of preventive measures aimed at increasing the safety and social inclusion of Roma in the area of the Police Administration Medimurska.

60. The police, as part of the national campaign "Become a policeman/policewoman", whose goal is the enrolment of new candidates to the Police Academy, training for the profession of policeman/policewoman, the same campaign is intensively implemented and promoted precisely in local communities with a larger number of members of the Roma national minority, encouraging them to study and be employed in the police. The aforementioned activities resulted in the employment of a total of 8 members of the Roma minority in the police system.

C. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 22 (d) of the concluding observations

61. The Republic of Croatia is dedicated to protecting the rights of all national minorities, including the rights of Roma communities, especially when it comes to the right to safe enjoyment of property and the provision of adequate housing.

62. The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, after extensive consultations with stakeholders, including local Roma representatives and the Office of the Ombudswoman, is aware of two cases of evictions: Novi Vinodolski and Zagreb. In Novi Vinodolski 4 Roma families were provided compensation by the City of Novi Vinodolski, with simultaneous attempts to provide an accommodation in Rijeka, while in Zagreb, approximately 20 families have been accommodated by the City of Zagreb, mostly temporarily, while a permanent housing solution is sought by the City, with the involvement of local NGOs and the Office of the Ombudsman.

63. In general, since 2011 Croatian Government has provided special support to the process of legalisation of houses (almost 1,000 houses were involved, i.e. approximately 20 % of all Roma houses as registered in a baseline data research in 2017/8)), also as a precondition for access to services. The Ministry of Construction, Physical Planning, and State Assets

regularly provides funds for local and regional authorities for design or redesign of local physical and urban plans as a precondition for further improvements of settlements.

64. As an activity of the Operational Program for Roma National Minority, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets brings Annual Programs for the improvement of living conditions and housing for members of the Roma national minority. From 2019 onwards, the Annual Programs are drawn up and implemented in cooperation with representatives of Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, a member of the Parliament from the ranks of the Roma, the Association of Roma in the Republic of Croatia “Kali Sara”, other Roma associations, as well as other interested parties. In the period 2019 to 2023, 2880 Roma households were allocated appliances (refrigerators, washing machines, stoves, etc.), furniture and/or construction materials for decorating bathrooms and sanitary facilities, floor coverings and exterior carpentry. The financial resources for this purpose increase over the years, so for example, in 2019 the available funds amounted to EUR 199,084.21, which increased to EUR 1,327,228.08 in 2023, and EUR 1,327,228.08 in 2024.

65. For the year 2024, together with the representatives of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, the Association of Roma in the Republic of Croatia “Kali Sara”, representatives of the Council of the Roma National Minority and representatives of the Municipality of Petlovac, and with the consent of the Committee for the Monitoring the Implementation of the National Plan for the Inclusion of Roma for the Period 2021–2027, the Annual Program was drawn up improving the living conditions of members of the Roma national minority in the Roma settlement Torjanci (Petlovac Municipality, Osijek-Baranja County), which envisages the construction of 6 family houses for the housing of Roma families and the urbanization of the settlement. The same dynamic is intended to continue through the future Annual Programs for the improvement of living conditions and housing for members of the Roma national minority. The construction of 6 replacement family houses is planned for 2024. The above mentioned proves the evolution of the program.

66. Relevant are also activities conducted within the framework of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on the establishment of a European Guarantee for Children, through multisectoral cooperation, Croatia implements numerous measures aimed at ensuring access to adequate housing for children and families at risk of poverty and social exclusion, including Roma families. The Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets plans to conduct an analysis of the situation and needs in the area of social housing for families and children at risk of poverty and social exclusion and is also working on the development of new social housing programs. These measures also include special attention to vulnerable groups such as the Roma and are foreseen under General Goal 5: “Ensure access to adequate housing for children at risk of poverty and social exclusion”, with the aim of reducing the social exclusion of the Roma, as a vulnerable group, which include, among other things, measures for their housing care.

D. Follow-up information relating to paragraph 28 of the concluding observations

67. Children without citizenship, children without personal identification documents, and children without a personal identification number (OIB) are entitled to benefits and services from the social welfare system based on the provisions of the Social Welfare Act (Official Gazette, no. 18/22, 46/22, 119/22, 71/23, and 156/23). Under the conditions stipulated by the Social Welfare Act, benefits and services can be granted to foreigners with permanent residence and long-term residence in the Republic of Croatia, as well as stateless persons with temporary and permanent residence and long-term residence in the Republic of Croatia. Foreigners under subsidiary protection, asylum seekers, and foreigners under temporary protection, along with their family members legally residing in the Republic of Croatia, as well as foreigners recognized as victims of human trafficking, can also access benefits and services within the social welfare system.

68. If the circumstances require it, a financial aid (one-off benefit) and accommodation may also be granted to other foreigners and stateless persons who do not fall under the previous categories. The purpose of one-off benefit is meeting basic needs and other extraordinary expenses in current life circumstances that are not satisfied by the accommodation service. The procedure for recognizing rights from the social welfare system is conducted by the Croatian Institute of Social Work based on the request of the party or ex officio, based on notifications from family members, citizens, institutions, associations, religious communities, companies, and other legal entities, as well as state and other bodies, and based on facts established by professional workers of the Croatian Institute of Social Work in other procedures.

69. For a foreign citizen child and a stateless child found on the territory of the Republic of Croatia without the supervision of a parent or another responsible adult, the Croatian Institute of Social Work recognizes the accommodation service and, if necessary, a one-time benefit. A special guardian is appointed for the child based on the Family Act (Official Gazette, no. 103/15, 98/19, 47/20, 49/23, and 156/23), in order to protect the individual personal and property rights and interests of the foreign citizen child or the stateless child.

70. According to the statistical data Croatia has a relatively small number of stateless persons and persons of undetermined citizenship, and compared to the previous years, the number of these people decreases significantly. Therefore, the Ministry of the Interior considers that there is no need to establish a special procedure for determining statelessness. The statelessness status is determined in the previous procedure during the application for residence or acquisition for Croatian citizenship, as well as during the application for subsidiary or temporary protection or asylum.

71. At the same time, it should be noted that statelessness situations mostly do not refer to de jure stateless persons, but to persons of undetermined citizenship, who have acquired citizenship of one of the republics of the former SFRY according to previously valid regulations, but have not yet formally registered it in their home country due to their own omission or to the administrative obstacles of foreign administrative bodies.

72. The current legislative framework enables the authorities to determinate during the procedures for regulating the residence of foreigners (decisions on the request for approval of temporary or permanent residence or long-term residence) as a preliminary question whether the applicants are stateless persons (stateless persons) or persons with unrecognized citizenship status. For this purpose, taking into account the specifics of each individual case, the Ministry of the Interior, with that in mind, instructs a person of unknown/undetermined citizenship when he/she initiates proceedings to regulate the status of a foreigner in Croatia to first check through the competent diplomatic mission/consular office of the country of origin and the country of his/her last residence abroad whether he/she is considered their citizen according to the applicable regulations. The applicants should also check whether there is a possibility of determining his/her citizenship and subsequent entry in the foreign body's citizenship records. A status check can also be requested ex officio from the competent authorities of the countries with which these persons have interconnections (country of birth, country of last residence, country of parent's origin). There is no special procedure regarding children and determination of their status of a stateless person (statelessness).

73. The Law on Croatian Citizenship (Official Gazette 53/91, 28/92, 113/93, 130/11, 110/15 and 102/19) contains several provisions aimed at preventing statelessness. Children born in Croatia are protected from the possibility of statelessness in Art. 7 of the Act, which stipulates that Croatian citizenship is acquired by a child who was born or raised on the territory of Croatia, if both parents are unknown or of unknown citizenship or stateless. Croatia will continue to deal with possible cases of statelessness through the national legislature. In addition to legislation and practice, special attention is paid to the further education of civil servants who deal with the matter of statelessness, and they will contribute by sharing experiences with other countries on efforts to solve this issue, as well as further cooperation with civil society organizations.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Temporary residence</i>		<i>Permanent residence</i>		<i>Long-term residence</i>	
	<i>Unknown citizenship</i>	<i>Without citizenship</i>	<i>Unknown citizenship</i>	<i>Without citizenship</i>	<i>Unknown citizenship</i>	<i>Without citizenship</i>
31.12.2007	6	78	23	7	0	0
31.12.2008	7	75	15	14	0	0
31.12.2009	12	72	9	16	0	4
31.12.2010	16	69	9	16	0	5
31.12.2011	10	52	7	19	0	12
31.12.2012	10	41	7	23	1	20
31.12.2013	8	15	7	25	1	27
31.12.2014	7	18	6	22	1	28
31.12.2015	6	10	7	21	1	33
31.12.2016	8	8	7	17	1	22
31.12.2017	7	9	8	11	0	6
31.12.2018	19	9	8	9	0	4
30.6.2023	3	3	5	7	0	2

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of issued passports</i>
2013	8
2014	11
2015	5
2016	22
2017	20
2018	2
2019	5
2020	1
2021	3
2022	2
2023	1

74. In relation to the Recommendation of the CERD Committee paragraph 28 “Stateless persons”, the Ministry of Science, Education and Youth response as follows:

75. The Recommendation indicates, among other things, that the Committee recommends taking the measures in order to ensure that children without identity documents can achieve their economic and social rights without discrimination, especially when it comes to access to health services and education, including assignment of the personal identification number.

76. In respect of the matter mentioned above, the pupils are enrolled in the e-Matica system after the assignment of the personal identification number, since the personal identification number is one of the precondition for the measures mentioned above. However, it is important to emphasize that getting the assignation of the personal identification number is not an obstacle to attend school classes.