



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

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## Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Slovakia\*

1. The Committee considered the seventh periodic report of Slovakia (CEDAW/C/SVK/7) at its 1983rd and 1984th meetings (see CEDAW/C/SR.1983 and CEDAW/C/SR.1984), held on 17 May 2023.

#### A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its seventh periodic report, which was prepared in response to the list of issues prior to reporting (CEDAW/C/SVK/QPR/7). It also appreciates the State party's follow-up report to the previous concluding observations of the Committee (CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6/Add.1). It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Dušan Matulay, and included representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities and the Permanent Mission of Slovakia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

#### B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2015 of the State party's fifth and sixth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/SVK/5-6) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) The amendment to the Police Force Act, which entered into force in 2021 and enhanced emergency barring orders in situations of domestic violence;

\* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-fifth session (8–26 May 2023).



(b) The amendment to Labour Code No. 376/2018, which entered into force in 2019 and prohibited pay secrecy clauses and improved access to justice in cases of unequal treatment in the workplace;

(c) The Victims of Crime Act, which entered into force in 2019, and the amendment thereto, which entered into force in 2021, which simplified access for victims of crime, including victims of domestic abuse, to compensation from the State;

(d) Amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act in 2015 and 2016 and the revised definition of the principle of equal treatment.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption of the following:

(a) National action plan for the employment of women for the period 2022–2030;

(b) Action plan for the prevention and elimination of violence against women for the period 2022–2027;

(c) National strategy for Roma equality, inclusion and participation 2021–2030 and its action plans for the period 2022–2024;

(d) National strategy for an inclusive approach in education and training 2021–2030 and its first action plan for the period 2022–2024;

(e) National strategy and action plan for equality between women and men and equal opportunities for the period 2021–2027;

(f) National action plan for the period 2021–2025 for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security;

(g) National programme for combating trafficking in human beings for the period 2019–2023;

(h) National strategy and action plan on gender equality for the period 2014–2019.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goals**

6. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.**

### **D. Parliament (National Council)**

7. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

## **E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

### **Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic and recovery efforts**

8. The Committee welcomes the measures and practices adopted during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to mitigate its impact on women's enjoyment of their rights, including measures to combat gender-based violence against women, guarantee continuing financial support to parents during crises and extend the payment of nursing services during school and preschool closures. However, the Committee wishes to draw the attention of the State party to the importance of COVID-19 recovery strategies to women's enjoyment of their rights.

9. **The Committee, in line with its guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of COVID-19, issued on 22 April 2020, recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Implement institutional, legislative and policy measures to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give renewed impetus to the achievement of gender equality by placing women at the centre of COVID-19 recovery strategies as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals;**

(b) **Ensure that, in the context of post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles;**

(c) **Ensure that women and girls benefit from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care work, aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic;**

(d) **Ensure that gender equality and non-discrimination are primary considerations in the allocation of funds under the Next Generation EU recovery plan.**

### **Definition of gender discrimination and gender equality**

10. The Committee welcomes the amendment of the Anti-Discrimination Act to broaden the definition of the principle of equal treatment. The Committee remains concerned, however, that the amendment did not revise the definition of discrimination, as recommended in the previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6, para. 9). The current definition of discrimination as "any action or omission where one person is treated less favourably than another person" is not consistent with the principle of substantive gender equality and the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of awareness and application of the Convention in the national judicial system.

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Revise the Anti-Discrimination Act to eliminate any form of discrimination against women in all areas covered by article 2 of the Convention, in line with its general recommendation No. 28, as recommended in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6, para. 9);**

(b) **Provide systematic capacity-building and training for government officials, judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, as well as lawyers, on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations.**

**Access to justice and remedies**

12. The Committee welcomes the information provided during the dialogue about the measures being adopted to improve the administration of justice and quality of judicial decisions, including those concerning gender discrimination, and the amendment to the Labour Code to facilitate access to justice in cases of violations of the principle of equality in the workplace. The Committee also notes the efforts made to consolidate data collection and analysis on anti-discrimination cases. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The judicial hold outs and lengthy judicial proceedings in cases of sex-based and gender-based discrimination and the lack of information on measures taken to implement the shift in the burden of proof by the courts, provide adequate judicial remedies, including financial compensation, and combat the fear of potential stigmatization and victimization for affected women;

(b) The lack of information on targeted measures to address intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination against women;

(c) The few references to the Convention in national court decisions and insufficient provision of capacity-building to judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials on the rights enshrined in the Convention.

**13. Recalling general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Take all necessary measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of judicial proceedings, ensure the implementation of the shift in the burden of proof in cases of sex-based and gender-based discrimination, provide adequate and timely judicial remedies, including financial compensation, and combat the fear of potential stigmatization and victimization for affected women;**

**(b) Take all necessary measures to eliminate obstacles in obtaining access to justice encountered by women and girls who face intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination, in particular Roma women and other vulnerable groups of women;**

**(c) Provide capacity-building to judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials on sex-based and gender-discrimination and the rights enshrined in the Convention, and ensure that all complaints are adequately registered by police officers, victims are referred to specialized services and crimes are prosecuted and punished.**

**National machinery for the advancement of women**

14. The Committee notes the lack of political authority and coordination capacity of the Department of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities to carry out its mandate, in particular to implement the national strategy and action plan for equality between women and men and equal opportunities 2021–2027. It also notes that, according to the report of the European Institute for Gender Equality, only pro-family and pro-life organizations have received financial support from the Ministry of Justice subsidy scheme to promote human rights, which consequently excludes feminist non-governmental organizations.

**15. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Ensure that the Department has the decision-making capacity and authority needed to coordinate and fully implement the national strategy and**

**action plan for equality between women and men and equal opportunities 2021–2027, including by allocating sufficient technical, human and financial resources;**

(b) **Set clear and transparent eligibility criteria based on international human rights standards, including the Convention, for the funding of non-governmental organizations and monitor the impact of their activities on the promotion of gender equality and the enjoyment of women’s rights, as recommended in the previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6, para. 15).**

#### **National human rights institution**

16. The Committee notes the measures adopted by the State party to increase the capacity of the National Centre for Human Rights to offer free legal services and assistance and notes that the Centre currently has “B” status accreditation under the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). The Committee is concerned, however, about the Centre’s insufficient availability of technical, human and financial resources, as well as the clarity of its mandate and its budgetary resources to perform its mandate independently.

**17. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to allocate sufficient technical, human and financial resources to the Centre and ensure full compliance with the Paris Principles, in particular by taking measures to guarantee the political and budgetary independence of the Centre.**

#### **Temporary special measures**

18. The Committee welcomes the implementation of the national projects “Support for the pre-primary education of children from marginalized Roma communities” and “You have a chance too!”, the aim of which is to accelerate the achievement of Roma women’s de facto or substantive equality and improve women’s work-family life balance. The Committee notes with concern, however, that actions taken under the “Family and work” project reflect the limited application of the concept of temporary special measures, with the focus placed on women’s well-being, but not necessarily on the promotion of substantive equality. The Committee is also concerned that, according to the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report, the gender gap index of the State party for economic participation and opportunity is significantly low.

**19. Recalling article 4 (1) of the Convention and its general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, the Committee recommends that the State party adopt temporary special measures to achieve the substantive equality of women and men in areas where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, in particular in decision-making and leadership positions in political and economic life, and to redress the gender pay gap, with time-bound targets and benchmarks, and sanctions in the event of non-compliance.**

#### **Gender stereotypes**

20. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The patriarchal stereotypes of the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and in the family and the fact that women continue to bear a disproportionate share of family and household responsibilities;

(b) The considerable rise in campaigns, in particular via social media, advocating patriarchal family values that overemphasize the roles of women as mothers and caretakers and undermine gender equality measures by labelling them as “gender ideology”;

(c) The high incidence of gender-related hate speech particularly directed against Roma women, transgender women and women politicians.

**21. The Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To design and implement a comprehensive strategy, with a dedicated budget and time-bound targets and objectives, aimed at eliminating discriminatory stereotypes of the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, including awareness-raising campaigns and education initiatives;**

(b) **To take effective measures to promote the understanding of gender equality in line with international human rights standards, including the Convention, and counter attitudes that downplay or degrade the pursuit of gender equality, and to adopt legislation to strengthen national standards to prevent hate speech and gender-based discrimination in social media;**

(c) **To take steps to criminalize sexist, misogynist and other forms of gender-related hate speech, including against Roma women, transgender women and women politicians.**

**Gender-based violence against women**

**22. The Committee is concerned about:**

(a) The lack of a specific definition of domestic violence as a crime in the Criminal Code, as well as the insufficient punishment of perpetrators of intimate partner violence and femicide;

(b) The reported cases of failure to remove the abuser from the household, with incidents downplayed as minor offences rather than crimes or the perpetrators of violence given only a verbal warning;

(c) The unequal distribution of shelters across the national territory, especially in rural areas, the lack of affordable public housing or rent-controlled housing, which forces victims of domestic violence to return to abusive households, and the lack of affordable and accessible health services and rehabilitation programmes for surviving victims of physical and sexual violence;

(d) The exposure of women who are victims of domestic violence to further violence and secondary victimization in child custody and visitation rights proceedings by requesting their engagement to achieve reconciliatory solutions and to improve communication with the ex-partner.

**23. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, the Committee urges the State party:**

(a) **To expedite the enactment of comprehensive legislation on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and the amendment of the Criminal Code to include domestic violence as a category of violent crime and raise the punishment for intimate partner violence and femicide;**

(b) **To ensure, through mandatory and continuous capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, that gender-based violence, including sexual violence against women, is effectively investigated and prosecuted, that perpetrators are adequately punished and that victim protection orders are adequately enforced;**

(c) **To ensure the availability and adequate funding of shelters for women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence throughout the territory of**

**the State party, to unify the registration procedure for shelters and to provide legal, medical and psychological assistance to all victims of physical and sexual violence, as well as skills training and education;**

**(d) To ensure that domestic violence is adequately taken into account in child custody and visitation rights proceedings in order to prevent further exposure of the victims.**

#### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

24. The Committee notes the continuity of the programme to support and protect victims of trafficking in persons and the Information Centre for Combating Human Trafficking and Crime Prevention. The Committee, however, notes with concern:

(a) The lack of information on the status of the draft amendment of the law that proposes an increase in penalties for human trafficking and criminalizes the purchase of sex services from a victim of trafficking;

(b) The lack of measures in place to identify victims of trafficking among women in prostitution and to ensure victims are able to report such cases to law enforcement authorities without fear of reprisal;

(c) The lack of information on the measures adopted to improve investigation techniques in cases of trafficking, so that they do not rely exclusively on testimonies, and to ensure the prosecution and adequate punishment of perpetrators of trafficking-related crimes;

(d) The fact that forced marriages of Roma women and girls have been acknowledged but not prosecuted as a trafficking crime.

25. **Recalling general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Expedite the amendment of the Criminal Code in order to increase the penalties for human trafficking and criminalize the purchase of sex services from a victim of trafficking;**

**(b) Provide capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, border control personnel, health-care providers and other first responders in order to ensure the identification of victims of trafficking, including those among women in prostitution, and their referral to appropriate protection and rehabilitation services and the effective investigation and prosecution of all cases and the punishment of the perpetrators;**

**(c) Take targeted measures to prevent trafficking in women and girls in Roma communities, including systematic public awareness campaigns, and ensure all cases are prosecuted as trafficking crimes.**

#### **Equal participation in political and public life**

26. The Committee welcomes the high level of representation of women in the judiciary system. It remains concerned, nevertheless, about the low level of representation of women in the parliament and in the Government, as well as the underrepresentation of women in high-ranking positions in the diplomatic service and in high-level and managerial positions and on boards of State-owned and private enterprises.

27. **The Committee reiterates the recommendations in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6, para. 25) that the State party:**

(a) **Take measures, including temporary special measures, such as increased quotas, zipper systems for electoral lists of political parties and targeted campaign financing for women candidates, to achieve equal representation of women and men in elected positions in the federal, regional and community parliaments and political parties;**

(b) **Adopt targeted measures, including temporary special measures, such as preferential recruitment and promotion of women applicants, to achieve gender parity in appointed public positions, including positions in the public administration and diplomatic service, in particular at the decision-making level;**

(c) **Adopt measures to ensure compliance with Directive (EU) No. 2022/2381 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies, especially in State-owned enterprises.**

#### **Women and peace and security**

28. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the first national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security for the 2021–2025 period. The Committee, however, is concerned about the lack of information on the participation of civil society in the development process and the framework for the implementation, monitoring and assessment of the national action plan.

29. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure the effective participation of women’s organizations in the elaboration and implementation of the second national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security for the period 2026–2030, and that it take into consideration the full spectrum of the women and peace and security agenda of the Security Council, as reflected in its resolutions [1325 \(2000\)](#), [1820 \(2008\)](#), [1888 \(2009\)](#), [1889 \(2009\)](#), [1960 \(2010\)](#), [2106 \(2013\)](#), [2122 \(2013\)](#), [2242 \(2015\)](#), [2467 \(2019\)](#) and [2493 \(2019\)](#).**

30. The Committee welcomes the adoption of three packages of laws aimed at facilitating the integration of Ukrainian refugees, in particular women, and which cover residence and temporary protection, access to the labour market, education, transportation, accommodation, social protection and health care. The Committee is concerned, however, about the degree of implementation of these laws, especially with respect to the access that women refugees have to accommodation, food, childcare facilities and employment. The Committee is also concerned about:

(a) The lack of information about the implementation of the packages of laws and their impact on the integration of Ukrainian refugee women, who represent about 86 per cent of the refugees arriving in the country, and notably with respect to women’s material and food needs and the availability and accessibility of childcare facilities and employment;

(b) Reports about the lack of identification and referral procedures for vulnerable persons, including women with disabilities, in response to gender-based violence against women who are refugees and asylum-seekers.

31. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt targeted measures, including temporary special measures, to enable the full implementation of the packages of laws and ensure Ukrainian**



**refugee women have access to employment, accommodation, childcare facilities and food;**

**(b) Adopt targeted measures to protect refugee women and girls and asylum-seekers at particular risk of gender-based violence and ensure acts of violence are investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned.**

### **Education**

32. The Committee notes the measures adopted under the national strategy for an inclusive approach in education and training and the corresponding first action plan for the 2022–2024 period, aimed at promoting inclusiveness in education and training at all levels. It also notes the State party's efforts to improve the education infrastructure, with a view to eliminating the segregation of Roma children, and to facilitate the implementation of the national project to support pre-primary education within Roma communities through the provision of temporary compensation for those affected. However, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) The delays in introducing comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education in the school curricula and in developing specialized capacity-building programmes for teaching professionals;

(b) The low level of participation of women and girls in mathematics, science and technology studies and the low level of representation of women in teaching positions in higher education;

(c) The persistent segregation of Roma children in special schools and/or in special classes in mainstream schools and the segregation of children with disabilities, including girls, in special schools and/or in special classes.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

**(a) Provide education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, which is age-appropriate and based on scientific evidence and international human rights standards, to girls and boys, as part of the regular school curricula, including with the use of digital technologies, and include information on responsible sexual behaviour and the prevention of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections in such curricula and build the capacity of teaching staff to deliver such education;**

**(b) Adopt measures, including temporary special measures, to eliminate gender segregation in education and promote non-traditional educational choices of women and girls in fields such as mathematics, science and technology and to consider introducing temporary special measures, such as statutory quotas, to ensure the equal representation of women and men in high-level academic positions;**

**(c) Strengthen its efforts to eliminate the segregation of Roma girls in the education system, provide them with equal access to high-quality education at all levels and take effective measures to increase their attendance at the primary and secondary levels through temporary special measures and support.**

### **Employment**

34. The Committee welcomes the introduction of the two-week paternity leave and notes the State party's efforts to increase the capacity to provide care for children under 3 years of age by 10 per cent and to accelerate mothers' access to employment after maternity leave. It also notes the development of materials to promote gender equality in the workplace as well as of the measures adopted to eliminate gender

segregation in the labour market and to reduce the gender pay gap. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The persistent gender pay gap in the State party and the vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market, women's high levels of education notwithstanding;

(b) The lack of suitable and affordable childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements and mechanisms to ensure the equal sharing of parental responsibilities, which constitute a significant barrier to women's access to employment, in particular after maternity leave;

(c) The difficulties faced by Roma women, women with disabilities and migrant women, including refugees and asylum-seekers, in gaining access to secure and full-time work;

(d) The fact that the State party has not ratified the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) of the International Labour Organization.

**35. Recalling its general recommendation No. 13 (1989) on equal remuneration for work of equal value and target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to achieve by 2030 full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Strengthen its efforts to eliminate horizontal and vertical segregation between women and men in the labour market and close the gender pay gap, including by reviewing wages in all sectors, applying gender sensitive analytical job classification and evaluation methods, conducting regular pay surveys and encouraging employers to publish a narrative with their gender pay gap data, with a view to better understanding the reasons behind the gender wage gap, and strictly enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;**

(b) **Adopt measures, including the revision of labour and social security laws, to promote the equal sharing of parental responsibilities between women and men and to encourage public and private companies to offer flexible work arrangements to parents and to increase the availability of suitable and affordable childcare facilities throughout the territory of the State party;**

(c) **Take all necessary measures, including temporary special measures, to combat the structural barriers faced by women from disadvantaged groups, in particular Roma women, women with disabilities and migrant women, including refugees and asylum-seekers, to secure full and productive employment, decent work and equal pay for work of equal value;**

(d) **Ratify the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).**

## **Health**

36. The Committee notes the project "Healthy communities: implementation of health support assistants in the hospital environment" to improve access to regular health services for vulnerable groups within the Roma population, including women. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The long delay in adopting a comprehensive programme on sexual and reproductive health and rights, despite the high rates of adolescent pregnancy and infant mortality and the increase in sexually transmitted infections;

(b) The fact that modern forms of contraception and abortion on request are still not covered by public health insurance and the emergency contraceptive pill is still prohibited;

(c) The obstacles that women and girls face in gaining access to legal and safe abortion, such as the requirement for mandatory counselling, medically unnecessary waiting periods and parental consent in the case of girls under 18 years of age, including vulnerable and disadvantage groups of women.

**37. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Expedite the adoption of a comprehensive programme on sexual and reproductive health and rights, in line with international human rights standards, including the Convention, as well as the Committee's general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and the World Health Organization standards;**

(b) **Ensure legal abortion, including abortion on request, and modern contraceptives are covered by public health insurance;**

(c) **Remove the restrictions to access to safe abortion services, such as the requirement for mandatory counselling, medically unnecessary waiting periods and third-party authorization, in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization.**

**Economic empowerment of women**

38. The Committee notes the information provided during the dialogue that the State party has introduced a pregnancy allowance to financially support women during pregnancy. However, it remains concerned that:

(a) Vulnerable women are at high risk of poverty, owing to the lack of access to adequate social benefits, allowances and pensions and information on how to obtain them;

(b) There is not enough information on loan schemes, mortgages and other forms of financial credit for women or specific training on entrepreneurship.

**39. The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Review its pension and social benefits schemes to ensure that the amount and duration of pensions and other benefits are adequate for the effective protection of all women against poverty and, as recommended in its previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6, para. 35), adopt specific measures to improve the economic status of vulnerable groups of women;**

(b) **Take measures to ensure women's equality with men with respect to access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit and provide detailed information about the impact of these measures in its next periodic report.**

**Rural women**

40. The Committee is concerned about the lack of inclusion of rural women in climate change and biodiversity and cultural heritage preservation initiatives.

**41. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the participation of rural women in the design and implementation of national policies, programmes and initiatives concerning climate change, as well as the preservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage.**

## **Disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women**

### *Roma women*

42. The Committee welcomes the State party's statements of June 2021 and November 2021, in which it offers apologies to the Roma population for the intervention of the national police force in Moldava nad Bodvou in 2013 and for the cases of illegal sterilization of Roma women in the 1966–2004 period, respectively. It notes the adoption of Act No. 153/2017, amending Act No. 330/1991, on land conversion, land ownership settlement, land register offices, the national land fund and land communities, which has simplified land conversions in Roma dwellings. It also notes the adoption of the national strategy for Roma equality, inclusion and participation by 2030 and the implementation of various projects to support and empower marginalized Roma women and their communities in the areas of public health, social assistance and inclusion, land settlement and pre-primary education. The Committee also notes the legislative initiative to offer a €5,000 compensation to Roma women who were victims of illegal sterilization in the 1966–2004 period. However, the Committee notes with concern:

(a) The poverty rate among the Roma population, which is six times higher than that of the non-Roma population, as measured by the Gini coefficient, as well as the lack of measures to reduce poverty rates and to include Roma women in designing schemes in this respect;

(b) The persistent segregation of Roma women in hospital maternity wards, the disrespectful treatment of Roma women by medical staff and the lack of adequate health-care services throughout pregnancy and childbirth;

(c) The recent cases of involuntary sterilization of Roma women under coerced consent or absence of informed consent and the lack of access to medical records, pretrial evidence disclosure and effective mechanisms to facilitate access to justice and fair compensation.

43. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Adopt effective and targeted measures to reduce poverty among the Roma population;**

(b) **Strengthen efforts to eliminate and sanction the segregation of Roma women in hospital maternity wards, as well as verbal and physical abuse by medical staff, and to ensure Roma women have access to adequate health-care services;**

(c) **Ensure that Roma women are not subject to involuntary sterilization and facilitate victims' access to justice, including by raising awareness, removing financial barriers, extending the time to lodge complaints and facilitating their access to medical records and the disclosure of pretrial evidence to support their claims.**

### *Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and intersex women*

44. The Committee notes with concern the impact of intersecting forms of discrimination on lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women. In particular, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) Information provided by civil society on the involuntary sterilization of transgender women as a precondition for legal gender recognition;

(b) The increasingly hostile environment for transgender women.

45. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that transgender women can continue to obtain legal recognition of their gender and change their names in civil registries without undergoing involuntary sterilization and commit not to adopt legislation on compulsory sterilization;

(b) Publicly condemn homophobic discourse and violence against lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and ensure, through mandatory and continuous capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, that the legal prohibition of hate crimes and hate speech is enforced.

#### **Marriage and family relations**

46. The Committee is concerned about the lack of legislative measures in place to protect the rights of women in de facto unions, particularly upon their dissolution.

47. Reiterating its previous recommendation ([CEDAW/C/SVK/CO/5-6](#), para. 42), the Committee recommends that the State party provide for the civil registration of all marriages and undertake legislative reforms aimed at protecting the rights of women in unregistered marriages and de facto unions and of the children resulting from such unions, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution.

#### **Amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention**

48. The Committee encourages the State party to accept, as soon as possible, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

#### **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

49. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the implementation of the Convention in the context of the 25-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to achieve substantive equality of women and men.

#### **Dissemination**

50. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official language of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional, local), in particular to the Government, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

#### **Technical Assistance**

51. The Committee recommends that the State party link the implementation of the Convention to its development efforts and that it avail itself of regional or international technical assistance in this respect.

**Ratification of other treaties**

52. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments<sup>1</sup> would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to consider ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which it is not yet a party.

**Follow-up to concluding observations**

53. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years (exceptionally one year), written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17, 21 (c), 23 (a) and 37 (c) above.

**Preparation of the next report**

54. The Committee requests the State party to submit its eighth periodic report, which is due in May 2027. The report should be submitted on time and cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

55. The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (see [HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).

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<sup>1</sup> The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.