



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

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Summary record of the 2028th meeting

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Chairperson: Mr. Kemal

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

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

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

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Slovenia took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons in the territory of Slovenia, irrespective of national origin, were guaranteed under the Constitution without any discrimination. There was both a general law against discrimination and provisions ensuring equal treatment in laws regulating areas such as the labour market, social security, education and health.
3. Slovenia was strongly committed to international norms as codified by the United Nations and regional organizations. It had been one of the first States to sign the new Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and it had ratified Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights concerning discrimination in June 2010. In the same month the Human Rights Council had adopted the outcome report on Slovenia of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (A/HRC/14/15). Slovenia had issued an open invitation to special procedures mandate holders and had received a visit in May 2010 from the Independent Expert on the issue of human rights obligations related to access to safe drinking water and sanitation.
4. As in 2008, Slovenia planned to table a resolution in support of the Convention at the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly, together with Belgium.
5. The consolidated sixth and seventh periodic report of Slovenia had been drafted in the light of the Committee's previous concluding observations (CERD/C/62/CO/9). It had been prepared in cooperation with relevant government institutions, the Human Rights Ombudsman and representatives of civil society and had been published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry had also published a volume of Slovenia's reports to the United Nations concerning the protection and promotion of human rights under international treaties in 2008.
6. The Committee's concluding observations had greatly influenced the adoption of government strategies on the elimination of prejudice and discrimination. Provisions prohibiting incitement to national, racial, religious or any other form of inequality, hatred or intolerance were routinely included in positive legislation. Programmes and measures to promote the social inclusion of vulnerable communities were also adopted. Since joining the European Union in 2004, Slovenia had introduced qualitative changes to harmonize its legislation with the body of European Union law (*acquis communautaire*). Pursuant to the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act, the institution of the Advocate of the Principle of Equal Treatment had been established as a Government expert and counselling body, which also facilitated the processing of complaints in cases of discrimination or violations of the right to equal treatment on the ground of racial or ethnic origin.
7. The new Criminal Code adopted in 2008 established the legal basis for the prosecution of acts of ethnic and/or nationality-based discrimination. Laws had also been enacted to regulate the status of the Roma community, of persons without citizenship and of aliens. Article 297 of the Criminal Code prohibited public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a person or group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or

national or ethnic origin. In addition, a Slovene hotline (“Web eye”) enabled Internet users to report online hate speech anonymously.

8. Government ministries and offices had co-funded projects in support of multicultural dialogue and the integration of minorities in Slovenia. Representatives of all minority communities had participated in the seminars and workshops.

9. The Government had taken resolute action to regulate and improve the living conditions of the Roma, to promote their social integration and to preserve their culture and language. In 1995 it had adopted the Programme of Measures for Assisting Roma, on the basis of which the competent ministries had included relevant measures in their programmes.

10. In March 2010, the Government had adopted a new integrated National Programme of Measures for Roma for the period 2010–2015 based on the 2007 Roma Community Act. The main strategic goals of the Programme were: to improve the living conditions of the Roma community and to provide orderly arrangements for Roma settlements; to improve Roma education and to increase the enrolment of Roma children and young adults in preschool and compulsory educational programmes and in further education; to increase Roma employment; to improve health care, especially for Roma women and children; to promote Roma cultural, informational and publishing activities, and to preserve and develop different versions of the Romani language; to raise the awareness of the majority population of the existence, culture, customs and traditions of the Roma community; and to raise the awareness of the minority population of their rights and obligations as citizens of Slovenia.

11. Competent ministries and government offices were to adopt detailed action plans and to raise the funds earmarked in their financial plans within six months of the adoption of the Programme, i.e. by 11 September 2010. The implementation of the Programme would be monitored by the newly established Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Community on the basis of special indicators for each measure. Representatives of both the Roma community and the local communities in which Roma lived were also members of the Commission.

12. The Government was required under the Roma Community Act to report to the National Assembly on the implementation of the obligations laid down in the Act, which included the adoption of the National Programme. A progress report was already being prepared and would be submitted to the National Assembly in autumn 2010.

13. The 1991 Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act allowed all persons who possessed the citizenship of another republic of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to obtain Slovene citizenship under favourable conditions. More than 170,000 persons had obtained citizenship on such terms. Those who had not applied (around 18,000 persons) had been transferred from the register of permanent residents to the register of aliens.

14. With a view to settling the issue of the so-called “erased”, the Government had decided to implement the relevant decisions of the Constitutional Court in two phases. The Ministry of the Interior had resumed the process of issuing supplementary decisions on behalf of “erased people” who had settled their status. In addition to the 4,034 decisions issued in 2004, a further 2,358 supplementary decisions had been issued since February 2009.

15. A special law to remedy inconsistencies with the Constitution had been drafted on behalf of persons who did not fall into that category. The Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of the former Yugoslavia Living in the Republic of Slovenia had entered into force on 24 July 2010. Under the Act, persons who submitted an application and who

fulfilled the legal requirements would obtain a permit for permanent residence in Slovenia. Their residence would be legalized from the time of the “erasure” onwards. A permanent residence permit could also be issued to “erased people” living outside Slovenia if there were well-founded reasons for their absence, for instance if a person had left Slovenia owing to the consequences of the “erasure”. Such persons were given the option of moving to Slovenia within one year. If they failed to do so, the responsible authority would cancel the permit but the special decision would remain in force. Applications for a permanent residence permit and a special decision under the Act must be submitted to an administrative unit in Slovenia by 24 July 2013.

16. The Ministry of the Interior had published a brochure containing all relevant information. It had been distributed to all administrative units in the territory of Slovenia, to diplomatic and consular offices in States of the former Yugoslavia and to Slovene non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Such information was also available in six languages on the websites of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A training course for the officials who would conduct the administrative procedures had been held in July 2010.

17. The Government had developed comprehensive integration policy programmes on behalf of immigrants. Leaflets containing key data had been published in nine languages and a website was being developed to facilitate access to integration measures.

18. Pursuant to a Decree on the Integration of Aliens adopted in 2008, free courses were provided in the Slovene language, and classes in Slovene history and culture had been launched in autumn 2009. The Ministry of Education and Sport financed Slovene language courses for children whose first language was not Slovene. Pupils could choose language courses from the list of obligatory subjects for the last three-year cycle of the nine-year elementary school.

19. The fundamental principles of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination had been incorporated into all aspects of employment policy. Groups who were difficult to employ or vulnerable groups, such as migrant workers, people with disabilities, the Roma community and other population groups, enjoyed special treatment.

20. Migrant workers represented about 5 per cent of the active population in Slovenia. Most of them came from areas of the former Yugoslavia, mainly Bosnia and Herzegovina, and were employed in the construction industry. Non-Slovene nationals were employed in accordance with the Employment and Work of Aliens Act. The Slovene Labour Inspectorate monitored compliance in line with the Labour Inspection Act and the Employment and Work of Aliens Act. The labour inspectors undertook targeted oversight activities to prevent abuse. Since 2004, the established number of violations had been declining following amendments to the applicable legislation. Further improvements were envisaged in the amendment to the Employment and Work of Aliens Act which was scheduled for adoption by the Government in autumn 2010.

21. In 2010 a special project entitled “Promotion of the Employability, Education and Social Inclusion of Migrant Workers and Their Families” had been launched. Its main aim was to establish an “INFO Point” that would assist in preventing migrant exploitation, discrimination and potential unemployment, facilitate access to new jobs and improve the competitiveness of migrant workers in the labour market.

22. With a view to promoting social security rights for migrant workers, Slovenia was concluding bilateral agreements on social security with Serbia and Montenegro and supplementing the existing agreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

23. The amendment to the International Protection Act remedied non-compliance with the Slovene Constitution. Moreover, the quality of accommodation and care offered to

applicants for international protection had been gradually improved through strengthened cooperation with NGOs and the implementation of programmes that were financed jointly with the European Refugee Fund.

24. For a number of years the Ministry of Culture had been developing and upgrading its cultural rights protection model for ethnic communities. Various normative, organizational and financial measures created the conditions necessary for inclusion of minority communities in cultural life on a basis of parity, while maintaining their own identities. Three types of programmes had been implemented: the special programme; the integration programme; and the training and employment programme supported by European funding.

25. The Ministry of Culture provided advisory services and held workshops on behalf of artists from minority groups in order to develop their respective cultures. It made recommendations for improvements in minority societies. The Ministry of Education provided language lessons for ethnic communities in the context of optional subjects and extra-curricular activities at the primary education level.

26. Human rights courses had been introduced at all levels of the education and training system in Slovenia. In recent years, special attention had been paid to intercultural dialogue in curricula and in the education and training of expert staff.

27. Human rights, including detailed information on the Convention, had been incorporated in training courses for the Slovene armed forces, the police and the judiciary. The police attended special courses on interaction with the Roma community.

28. In 2008 Slovenia had become the first European Union member State to join the campaign known as “*Dosta!* [‘Enough’ in the Romani language] Go beyond prejudice, discover the Roma!” run by the Council of Europe and the European Commission to raise awareness of stereotyping and prejudice affecting the Roma.

29. The “Equal in Diversity” campaign, with a budget of almost 300,000 euros, had been launched in December 2009. It sought to raise awareness of the existence and consequences of multiple discrimination and to combat harmful practices that discriminated against people on grounds of race or ethnic origin, disability, age, religion or belief, gender and/or sexual orientation. The main activity was a national media campaign in the form of television and radio commercials, posters and billboards, t-shirts, a documentary for schools and a special website. Seminars would also be held for judges, equal opportunity coordinators, members of the business sector, representatives of trade unions and government officials in order to raise awareness and promote respect for the principle of non-discrimination. Current problems and future priorities would be identified at workshops with NGOs and a brochure containing basic information on the prohibition of discrimination was being prepared. It would be translated into Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Romani, Italian, Hungarian and other languages, published in Braille and distributed to all target groups. In 2011, the campaign would continue under the title “Equal in Diversity – Getting There”.

30. In June 2010 the Government had set up a working group to analyse the existing institutional arrangements for the promotion and protection of equal treatment and to define a possible new approach. The working group should finish its work by October 2010.

31. **Ms. Klopčič** (Slovenia) said that the Committee’s concluding observations on Slovenia’s previous report had been of great assistance in the fight against racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. They were frequently mentioned by NGOs and were also cited by members of the Government when new strategies and legislation were being discussed.

32. The Exercising of the Public Interest in Culture Act was based on the premise that fostering cultural diversity was in the public interest. The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman had implemented an important project entitled “Let’s Face Discrimination”. The Peace Institute had held training sessions for judges and prosecutors and the Institute for Ethnic and Regional Studies had organized the project “Training and Education for Combating Discrimination in Slovenia”. Other awareness-raising projects had targeted the police, teachers and members of minority groups.

33. The issue of the distinction between the “indigenous” and “new” Roma community had been resolved after the adoption of the Roma Community Act. A special representative body, entitled the Roma National Council, had been established and three Roma from the non-traditional communities had been elected as representatives. An ongoing project by the Roma Union of Slovenia aimed at the integration of Roma children had received a RegioStars Award from the European Union.

34. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) introduced a number of brochures containing additional information in many different languages on the integration of immigrants, intercultural diversity and dialogue, and the Roma Community Act.

35. **The Chairperson** said that the General Assembly resolution on the Committee’s work that Slovenia had co-sponsored in 2008 (A/RES/63/243) had facilitated the Committee’s work and had helped to clear part of the backlog of reports.

36. **Mr. Amir** (Country Rapporteur) commended the State party for its efforts to reply to the Committee’s follow-up questions and implement the Committee’s previous recommendations, contained in its concluding observations of 2003 (CERD/C/62/CO/9). He welcomed the State party’s declaration under article 14 of the Convention, recognizing the competence of the Committee to examine communications from individuals or groups of individuals. Article 63 of the Constitution and articles 141 and 300 of the Criminal Code clearly prohibited and criminalized racial discrimination in the State party.

37. He requested confirmation that 83.6 per cent of the population was composed of Slovenes, with 1.98 per cent Serbians, 1.81 per cent Croatians and 1.1 per cent Bosniaks. He wished to know why the 25 per cent of persons who had not returned the 2002 census questionnaires on national affiliation, mother tongue and religion had not been registered in that census. He also asked why minorities other than the Italian and Hungarian communities and the Roma did not have the right to vote and were not represented in Parliament.

38. Turning to paragraph 65 of the periodic report, he asked why the State party employed the term “war” in the context of the acts cited. He commended the action taken by the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman to put a stop to hate speech on the Internet, as described in paragraph 75 of the report.

39. He highlighted the problem of so-called “erased persons”, who were citizens of other republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the Register of Permanent Residents who had not applied for citizenship under article 40 of the Citizenship of the Republic of Slovenia Act and whose registration of permanent residence had terminated. The additional information the delegation had provided had been most welcome. Nonetheless, as the Independent Expert on safe drinking water and sanitation had reported after her visit to the State party in May 2010, with no identity documents or residence permit, those persons had only limited access to housing, work, basic services, health and education, resulting in serious violations of their social, economic and cultural rights. That situation also affected their ability to connect legally to water and sewage networks. She had called on the Government to regularize the situation of that part of the population. In that regard, he urged the State party to ratify the European Convention on Nationality and the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local

Level of the Council of Europe, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

40. The Committee had received reports concerning neo-Nazi and skinhead groups in the State party that did not respect the law or the measures taken by the authorities. In the light of that situation, he suggested that the Government should introduce legislation providing that racist motivation for a crime was a specific aggravating circumstance. He would welcome updated information on plans to build a mosque in Ljubljana, which had reportedly met with significant opposition over many years.

41. He commended the Government's initiative to organize a meeting in February 2008 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of NGOs, who had called for a national strategy to combat racial discrimination in the State party. It would be useful to learn what conclusions the participants had reached and what action the Government had taken as a result of the meeting.

42. While commending the State party for the legislation it had introduced to ensure implementation of the provisions of the Convention, he urged the Government to ensure that its next report included statistical information on the practical results of the new legislation. Without such data, the Committee was unable to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures the State party had taken to eliminate racial discrimination. He would also welcome additional details on how the financial support the Ministry of Culture had provided for the projects of immigrated Roma from 2003 to 2007 had been spent. It would be useful to have an explanation of the terms "autochthonous Roma" and "immigrated Roma", as used in the periodic report, or "indigenous" Roma and "new" Roma, terms used in other reports. In particular, he would welcome details on any differences between the treatment of the two groups in terms of housing, education and the attitude of the police.

43. He called upon the State party to take steps to improve the situation of the Roma in conjunction with other European States, rather than trying to find domestic solutions to what was essentially a regional problem. It would also be beneficial for the State party to enter into bilateral agreements with neighbouring States on measures to reduce the inequalities suffered by national and ethnic minorities.

44. **Mr. Avtonomov** welcomed the high-level delegation from the State party. While the data on the ethnic composition of the population provided in table 1 of the periodic report was useful, he would appreciate an explanation of the sudden decrease in the number of Russianians between the 1961 census and that of 1971. He would also be interested to hear the delegation's comment on the reasons for the significant fluctuations in the number of Roma indicated in the table.

45. Paragraph 62 of the periodic report described research into education of Roma children, and indicated that there was no standardized Roma language. He would like to know whether there was now a grammar and dictionary of the Roma language, which would enable textbooks to be developed. What literature and/or media products existed in the Roma language in Slovenia? Paragraph 60 of the report referred to an optional course in schools in Roma culture: was that course taught in the Roma language, and was it open to non-Roma students?

46. Paragraph 45 of the report stated that a female Roma officer was now employed by the police force. Was she the only Roma officer? He would like to know more about the jobs in which the Roma worked, whether they were nomadic or sedentary, and to have further details about their housing and education. He would also be interested to learn of any research showing their standard of living and how it compared with that of the Slovene majority, since statistics were more revealing than anecdotal evidence.

47. He was encouraged to see that a Roma Community Council, including representatives of the non-indigenous Roma, had been set up under the Roma Community Act 2007. Had Roma been consulted during the drafting of the Act? What other community organizations were recognized, and who were the community leaders?

48. Did the Government have any plans to recognize any more ethnic minorities, such as Croats, Serbs or Bosniaks? Those groups would surely benefit from the special measures accorded to the official minorities, such as mother-tongue education.

49. He noted that, in the first population table in paragraph 18 of the report, approximately 126,000 people were listed as being of “unknown” nationality and a further 48,000 had declined to state their nationality. That was almost 10 per cent of the population. Could the delegation suggest an explanation?

50. He asked whether the State party planned to ratify the amendment to article 8 (6) of the Convention, adopted on 15 January 1992 at the fourteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, and whether there had been any discussion of the issue within Slovenia.

51. **Mr. Murillo Martínez** noted with satisfaction the progress shown in Slovenia’s core report (HRI/CORE/1/Add.35/Rev.1), which provided data for the period up to 2002 showing that infant mortality had decreased by 50 per cent, maternal mortality had also declined, and life expectancy had increased. What further progress had been made since then? Were the indicators for ethnic groups other than the Slovene majority equally favourable?

52. He asked for more details about the “special rights” enjoyed by the officially recognized Italian and Hungarian communities, referred to in paragraph 7 of the report. Were the special measures employed consistent with the Durban Programme of Action against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and what progress had they achieved?

53. **Mr. Diaconu** said that Slovenia had undergone a double transformation: from a centralized to a market economy, and from the conflicts of former Yugoslavia to membership of the European Union and a position as one of the most prosperous countries in the Balkans.

54. He suggested that the Government should structure the next periodic report so as to show progress in implementing each of the articles of the Convention, instead of referring only to the Committee’s recommendations.

55. Slovene legislation appeared to be consistent with article 4 and many of the provisions of article 5 of the Convention. However, he was not convinced by the argument put forward in annex I of the report, namely that the designation of Italians and Hungarians as national minorities, but not the far more numerous Serbs and Croats, was justified because of the former’s long period of residence in specific areas of what was now Slovenia. Geographical factors were not the only element which defined a minority. The Committee had stated that special measures were intended to help vulnerable or disadvantaged minorities: however, that description hardly applied to the Italian and Hungarian communities, who had their own representatives in Parliament and local government and were encouraged to use their own languages. He asked for more statistics to be included in the next report about Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and other unrecognized minorities showing, for instance, whether they lived in many different areas of the country rather than being concentrated in one particular region. The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe, in an opinion on Slovenia dating from 2002, had stated that the concept of an indigenous (“autochthonous”) minority concentrated in a specified region was unjustified and should be reviewed.

56. It appeared that members of the Italian and Hungarian minorities had separate electoral registers, which was a situation which he had never before encountered. However, the powers given to the Roma Community Council to represent all Roma, not merely the indigenous population, were a good example which other States parties might wish to emulate. He asked whether the Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia also applied to all Roma children, not just the indigenous population. He also asked for further details of the education model developed by the Bršljin Elementary School (paragraphs 72–74 of the report), which might help other countries seeking to bring an end to segregated education.

57. He enquired whether there was a special court to deal with issues relating to the “erased persons”. What was the Government doing to eliminate the status of “erased person” once and for all? According to reports before the Committee, those persons were deprived of fundamental rights, including the right to work and access to health and welfare services. He also asked for more details of cooperation between the police and “Web eye”.

58. **Mr. Saidou** asked for more details of the responsibilities of the Human Rights Ombudsman and the qualifications required of the Ombudsman and his or her deputy. He further asked whether there was a community of African descent in Slovenia and, if so, what its relations with other ethnic groups were like.

59. **Mr. de Gouttes** said that Slovenia was a shining example of a country with a tragic history which had succeeded in transforming itself into a democratic State.

60. He asked for updated statistics for the various ethnic groups to be included in the next periodic report. He would also welcome details of the outcome of any prosecutions brought under the racial discrimination legislation described in paragraphs 64 et seq. of the report. How did the provisions of the new Criminal Code, especially article 297, strengthen Slovenia’s implementation of the Convention? He was particularly interested in the penalties imposed in cases of hate speech by politicians.

61. Finally, he asked what measures the Government intended to take to implement the Committee’s recommendations and those of the universal periodic review procedure of the Human Rights Council, which Slovenia had undergone in March 2010. Those recommendations included, for instance, measures to grant Slovene citizenship to the “erased” persons and take action against hate speech, stigmatization and trafficking in women and children, especially those from the most vulnerable groups.

62. **Mr. Lindgren Alves** sought clarification regarding the demographic data presented in the periodic report, particularly the phrases “declared as Bosnians” and “regionally declared”. He asked whether the European Union funds provided to benefit the Roma community were also used in the resettlement of other minorities returning to Slovenia – the “erased” people, one of the most important issues for the State party. He welcomed the fact that the situation of so many “erased” persons had been regularized, and sought further information regarding the rest. He requested clarification on the use of languages and national symbols, and asked why greater recognition was given to the Hungarian, Italian and Roma communities than to other minority groups. He welcomed the progress made by Slovenia, particularly the fact that the Convention was incorporated into training for the armed forces, police and others.

63. **Mr. Peter** commended the State party’s report, which described the very comprehensive domestic legal framework established to protect human rights and eliminate racial and other discrimination but acknowledged the problems that existed in practice. The State party had taken many positive steps since independence, and displayed a welcome commitment to its international obligations in the area of human rights. He enquired about the procedure and conditions for foreign citizens to acquire Slovene citizenship.

64. **Mr. Thornberry** requested more information about the phenomenon of online hate speech. Who were the usual perpetrators? Was Slovenia party to the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems? He asked what the State party's position was concerning Holocaust denial.

65. With regard to Roma language teaching, he enquired about the pedagogical models used. Drawing attention to the fact that the principle of non-discrimination applied not only between ethnic minorities and the majority, but also among ethnic minority groups, he echoed the concerns expressed about the singling out of the Hungarian, Italian and Roma minorities. Arbitrary or indefensible distinctions should not be made between ethnic groups, although he acknowledged that the numerical disparity among Slovenia's ethnic and national minorities meant that uniform treatment by the State party was an unreasonable expectation. Welcoming the country's recognition of minorities, he encouraged further work in that regard, based on consultation with potentially affected groups.

66. He requested more information on institutional review, specifically with reference to Slovenia's human rights institutions. Commenting on the statistics provided in the periodic report on the country's ethnic composition, he noted the significant drop in those identifying themselves as Yugoslav and the increase in those who did not declare any affiliation, and sought further information in that regard.

67. **Mr. Baluh** (Slovenia) said that the focus on Hungarian, Italian and Roma groups reflected the historical development of the country, but acknowledged that the situation required further clarification and discussion. He highlighted the progress made since independence with regard to the Roma, particularly the 2007 Roma Community Act and the subsequent strategic programme of measures prepared in 2010 to improve the status of Roma, recognized as the most vulnerable community within Slovenia. The programme focused on improving living conditions, education, employment rates and health care, along with preserving and developing Roma culture and raising awareness among the non-Roma majority.

68. **Ms. Rustja** (Slovenia) said that, in pursuit of the aim of equal treatment of all Roma children in schools, a Roma education strategy had been developed, in close collaboration with Roma organizations. Roma assistants had been introduced and trained with support from the European Social Fund. A network of schools with Roma pupils had been established for teachers to exchange experience and good practices and obtain additional training. Various intercultural activities were under way and materials were being developed for teaching Slovene as a foreign language, while a "Roma culture" syllabus had been adopted. As a basis for teaching, the Roma language had been standardized. Education was being provided for adult Roma, and young Roma intellectuals were promoting the value of knowledge and education within their communities. Other measures included a proper scholarship policy and additional learning and financial support. The strategy had been evaluated and various additional measures and improvements suggested. Particular attention was now being given to preschool education for Roma children.

69. In the case of the Bršljin Elementary School, the Government had provided additional funding for work with Roma children. Evaluation of the three-year project had revealed that Roma children were more successful, the school climate had improved, and children from many Roma families attended school regularly. Roma language teaching was included within the curriculum subject "Roma culture". Roma assistants working with Roma children in schools and at home used both the Roma language and Slovene. Government funding had allowed the Roma language to be codified in order to aid learning, but the position of the Roma community on the draft grammar and dictionary produced was inconsistent. The focus therefore remained on intensified learning of the Roma language.

70. **Ms. Knez** (Slovenia) said that annual meetings were held between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NGOs, which were also regularly invited to other Ministry events. Other interested ministries were kept informed of matters arising in areas within their purview, in order to ensure appropriate follow-up measures. With regard to the issue of Holocaust denial, she said that, although there had been few Jews in Slovenia since the sixteenth century, the Slovene and Roma populations had suffered many victims, and it was to be hoped that international Holocaust remembrance initiatives would continue to examine all aspects of the Holocaust, including the Roma genocide. Lastly, she said that a small Afro-descendant population lived in Slovenia, represented by at least two NGOs.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.