

Fifty-seventh session (2000)

General recommendation XXVII on discrimination against Roma

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,

Having in mind the submissions from States parties to the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, their periodic reports submitted under article 9 of the Convention, as well as the concluding observations adopted by the Committee in connection with the consideration of States parties' periodic reports,

Having organized a thematic discussion on the issue of discrimination against Roma and received the contributions of members of the Committee, as well as contributions by experts from United Nations bodies and other treaty bodies and from regional organizations,

Having also received the contributions of interested non-governmental organizations, both orally during the informal meeting organized with them and through written information,

Taking into account the provisions of the Convention,

Recommends that the States parties to the Convention, taking into account their specific situations, adopt for the benefit of members of the Roma communities, inter alia, all or part of the following measures, as appropriate.

1. Measures of a general nature

1. To review and enact or amend legislation, as appropriate, in order to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination against Roma as against other persons or groups, in accordance with the Convention.
2. To adopt and implement national strategies and programmes and express determined political will and moral leadership, with a view to improving the situation of Roma and their protection against discrimination by State bodies, as well as by any person or organization.
3. To respect the wishes of Roma as to the designation they want to be given and the group to which they want to belong.
4. To ensure that legislation regarding citizenship and naturalization does not discriminate against members of Roma communities.
5. To take all necessary measures in order to avoid any form of discrimination against immigrants or asylum-seekers of Roma origin.
6. To take into account, in all programmes and projects planned and implemented and in all measures adopted, the situation of Roma women, who are often victims of double discrimination.
7. To take appropriate measures to secure for members of Roma communities effective remedies and to ensure that justice is fully and promptly done in cases concerning violations of their fundamental rights and freedoms.
8. To develop and encourage appropriate modalities of communication and dialogue between Roma communities and central and local authorities.

9. To endeavour, by encouraging a genuine dialogue, consultations or other appropriate means, to improve the relations between Roma communities and non-Roma communities, in particular at local levels, with a view to promoting tolerance and overcoming prejudices and negative stereotypes on both sides, to promoting efforts for adjustment and adaptation and to avoiding discrimination and ensuring that all persons fully enjoy their human rights and freedoms.

10. To acknowledge wrongs done during the Second World War to Roma communities by deportation and extermination and consider ways of compensating for them.

11. To take the necessary measures, in cooperation with civil society, and initiate projects to develop the political culture and educate the population as a whole in a spirit of non-discrimination, respect for others and tolerance, in particular concerning Roma.

2. Measures for protection against racial violence

12. To ensure protection of the security and integrity of Roma, without any discrimination, by adopting measures for preventing racially motivated acts of violence against them; to ensure prompt action by the police, the prosecutors and the judiciary for investigating and punishing such acts; and to ensure that perpetrators, be they public officials or other persons, do not enjoy any degree of impunity.

13. To take measures to prevent the use of illegal force by the police against Roma, in particular in connection with arrest and detention.

14. To encourage appropriate arrangements for communication and dialogue between the police and Roma communities and associations, with a view to preventing conflicts based on racial prejudice and combating acts of racially motivated violence against members of these communities, as well as against other persons.

15. To encourage recruitment of members of Roma communities into the police and other law enforcement agencies.

16. To promote action in post-conflict areas, by States parties and from other responsible States or authorities in order to prevent violence against and forced displacement of members of the Roma communities.

3. Measures in the field of education

17. To support the inclusion in the school system of all children of Roma origin and to act to reduce drop-out rates, in particular among Roma girls, and, for these purposes, to cooperate actively with Roma parents, associations and local communities.

18. To prevent and avoid as much as possible the segregation of Roma students, while keeping open the possibility for bilingual or mother-tongue tuition; to this end, to endeavour to raise the quality of education in all schools and the level of achievement in schools by the minority community, to recruit school personnel from among members of Roma communities and to promote intercultural education.

19. To consider adopting measures in favour of Roma children, in cooperation with their parents, in the field of education.

20. To act with determination to eliminate any discrimination or racial harassment of Roma students.

21. To take the necessary measures to ensure a process of basic education for Roma children of travelling communities, including by admitting them temporarily to local schools, by temporary classes in their places of encampment, or by using new technologies for distance education.
22. To ensure that their programmes, projects and campaigns in the field of education take into account the disadvantaged situation of Roma girls and women.
23. To take urgent and sustained measures in training teachers, educators and assistants from among Roma students.
24. To act to improve dialogue and communication between the teaching personnel and Roma children, Roma communities and parents, using more often assistants chosen from among the Roma.
25. To ensure adequate forms and schemes of education for members of Roma communities beyond school age, in order to improve adult literacy among them.
26. To include in textbooks, at all appropriate levels, chapters about the history and culture of Roma, and encourage and support the publication and distribution of books and other print materials as well as the broadcasting of television and radio programmes, as appropriate, about their history and culture, including in languages spoken by them.

4. Measures to improve living conditions

27. To adopt or make more effective legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment and all discriminatory practices in the labour market affecting members of Roma communities, and to protect them against such practices.
28. To take special measures to promote the employment of Roma in the public administration and institutions, as well as in private companies.
29. To adopt and implement, whenever possible, at the central or local level, special measures in favour of Roma in public employment such as public contracting and other activities undertaken or funded by the Government, or training Roma in various skills and professions.
30. To develop and implement policies and projects aimed at avoiding segregation of Roma communities in housing; to involve Roma communities and associations as partners together with other persons in housing project construction, rehabilitation and maintenance.
31. To act firmly against any discriminatory practices affecting Roma, mainly by local authorities and private owners, with regard to taking up residence and access to housing; to act firmly against local measures denying residence to and unlawful expulsion of Roma, and to refrain from placing Roma in camps outside populated areas that are isolated and without access to health care and other facilities.
32. To take the necessary measures, as appropriate, for offering Roma nomadic groups or Travellers camping places for their caravans, with all necessary facilities.
33. To ensure Roma equal access to health care and social security services and to eliminate any discriminatory practices against them in this field.
34. To initiate and implement programmes and projects in the field of health for Roma, mainly women and children, having in mind their disadvantaged situation due to extreme poverty and low

level of education, as well as to cultural differences; to involve Roma associations and communities and their representatives, mainly women, in designing and implementing health programmes and projects concerning Roma groups.

35. To prevent, eliminate and adequately punish any discriminatory practices concerning the access of members of the Roma communities to all places and services intended for the use of the general public, including restaurants, hotels, theatres and music halls, discotheques and others.

5. Measures in the field of the media

36. To act as appropriate for the elimination of any ideas of racial or ethnic superiority, of racial hatred and incitement to discrimination and violence against Roma in the media, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

37. To encourage awareness among professionals of all media of the particular responsibility to not disseminate prejudices and to avoid reporting incidents involving individual members of Roma communities in a way which blames such communities as a whole.

38. To develop educational and media campaigns to educate the public about Roma life, society and culture and the importance of building an inclusive society while respecting the human rights and the identity of the Roma.

39. To encourage and facilitate access by Roma to the media, including newspapers and television and radio programmes, the establishment of their own media, as well as the training of Roma journalists.

40. To encourage methods of self-monitoring by the media, through a code of conduct for media organizations, in order to avoid racial, discriminatory or biased language.

6. Measures concerning participation in public life

41. To take the necessary steps, including special measures, to secure equal opportunities for the participation of Roma minorities or groups in all central and local governmental bodies.

42. To develop modalities and structures of consultation with Roma political parties, associations and representatives, both at central and local levels, when considering issues and adopting decisions on matters of concern to Roma communities.

43. To involve Roma communities and associations and their representatives at the earliest stages in the development and implementation of policies and programmes affecting them and to ensure sufficient transparency about such policies and programmes.

44. To promote more awareness among members of Roma communities of the need for their more active participation in public and social life and in promoting their own interests, for instance the education of their children and their participation in professional training.

45. To organize training programmes for Roma public officials and representatives, as well as for prospective candidates to such responsibilities, aimed at improving their political, policy-making and public administration skills.

The Committee *also recommends* that:

46. States parties include in their periodic reports, in an appropriate form, data about the Roma communities within their jurisdiction, including statistical data about Roma participation in political life and about their economic, social and cultural situation, including from a gender perspective, and information about the implementation of this general recommendation.

47. Intergovernmental organizations, in their projects of cooperation and assistance to the various States parties, as appropriate, address the situation of Roma communities and favour their economic, social and cultural advancement.

48. The High Commissioner for Human Rights consider establishing a focal point for Roma issues within the Office of the High Commissioner.

The Committee *further recommends* that:

49. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance give due consideration to the above recommendations, taking into account the place of the Roma communities among those most disadvantaged and most subject to discrimination in the contemporary world.

*1424th meeting,
16 August 2000*