



General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 October 2024

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Forty-eighth session
Geneva, 20–31 January 2025

National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21*

Slovenia

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. In March 2022, the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter: Slovenia) submitted to the UN OHCHR¹ a voluntary mid-term report on the implementation of the UPR 3rd cycle recommendations. The Inter-Ministerial Commission on Human Rights and NGOs were regularly informed about the implementation of the recommendations.
2. Slovenia's preparations for the UPR 4th cycle started in autumn 2023. The report was drafted in cooperation with the relevant ministries and government departments under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and endorsed by the Inter-Ministerial Commission on Human Rights. The Government adopted it on 17 July 2024.
3. During the drafting of the report, the NGOs, the Ombudsman and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality were briefed and consulted.

II. Implementation of recommendations from previous cycles

A. International obligations (Recommendations 1, 5, 7–9, 11–12, 158–160)

4. Since the previous review, Slovenia has ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (in 2021) and made a declaration recognising the competence of the Committee under Articles 31 and 32 of the Convention. First report on the implementation of the Convention is being prepared.
5. At the Global Refugee Forum in 2023, Slovenia announced its ratification of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Slovenia is in favour of the UNHCR² IBelong Campaign, aiming to eradicate statelessness by 2024.
6. Procedures are under way to examine the lessons learnt and the impact of the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 2014 Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention.
7. Slovenia has an open, merit-based process for the selection of national candidates for UN treaty body elections. Line ministries issue a public call for expressions of interest in applying for nomination to UN treaty bodies. The selection panel interviews the candidates, and assesses their professional qualifications, on the basis of which the Government makes the final appointment.

B. Institutional framework of human rights protection (Recommendations 14–17, 161)

8. Slovenia considers that Recommendation 15 on a national human rights institution is fulfilled through the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Advocate for the Principle of Equality, who ensures the protection of the right to non-discrimination, and the Constitutional Court as the highest judicial body for the protection of constitutionality, legality, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Constitutional Court decides on constitutional complaints stemming from the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms by individual acts.
9. In 2021, the Human Rights Ombudsman received "A" status accreditation according to the Paris Principles. The Ombudsman's work is funded by the Slovenian budget, and the funding was systematically regulated by the 2023 amendment to the Public Finance Act. In recent years, the allocated funds have increased significantly.
10. A proposed amendment of the Human Rights Ombudsman Act envisages the office of a Child Rights Ombudsman – Deputy Human Rights Ombudsman to deal exclusively with children's rights, enjoying support from a special department for children's rights.
11. With the adoption of the Family Code in 2017, the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Family³ was established as a permanent consultative body of the Government.

12. Slovenia will continue efforts to strengthen its equality bodies. With the Protection against Discrimination Act, the Advocate of the Principle of Equality became an autonomous and independent body with increased funding and staff capacity (from 19 public employees in 2021 to 24 in 2024).

**C. Non-discrimination and elimination of hate speech
(Recommendations 22, 27–28, 30–41, 43–53, 56–57, 60, 163, 165–169)**

13. The Constitution stipulates that everyone in Slovenia is guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of personal circumstances (Article 14). The Protection against Discrimination Act defines the protection of every individual against discrimination, irrespective of their gender, nationality, race or ethnic origin, language, religion or beliefs, disability, age, sexual orientation, sexual identity or sexual expression, social position, property status, education or any other personal circumstance in social life when enforcing human rights and fundamental freedoms, exercising rights and obligations and in other legal relationships in political, economic, social, cultural, civil or other fields. A violation of the right to equality can constitute a criminal offence (Article 131 of the Criminal Code). Furthermore, the Constitution stipulates that any incitement to national, racial, religious, or other discrimination, and the inflaming of national, racial, religious, or other hatred and intolerance are unconstitutional (Article 63). Hate speech is criminalised under the Criminal Code (Article 297). Discrimination through public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance is criminalised with a consistent transposition of international legal standards.

14. The amendment to the Criminal Code adopted in 2023 introduces hate crime as a mandatory aggravating circumstance to be taken into account in sentencing when the motive for committing the offence was any personal circumstance of the victim.⁴ An offence committed out of hatred or prejudice based on the personal circumstances of the victim makes for more severe punishment.

15. In an important precedent-setting decision I Ips 65803/2012 of 2019, the Supreme Court confirmed that the elements of the offence of public incitement to hatred, violence or intolerance (Article 297 of the Criminal Code) exist not only when the act is committed "in a manner likely to jeopardise or disturb public order", but also when it is committed "by the use of threat, verbal abuse or insult".

16. Under the Protection of Public Order Act, incitement to intolerance is a minor offence (Article 20). Hate speech as a priority area is comprehensively defined in the Resolution on the National Programme of Crime Prevention and Suppression for the 2019–2023 and 2024–2028 periods.

17. The fight against discrimination is also included in the Government Migration Strategy.

18. Furthermore, the Media Act and the Audiovisual Media Services Act prohibit incitement to inequality and intolerance, including dissemination of programme content that incites national, racial, religious, sexual or any other inequality, violence and war, or provokes national, racial, religious, sexual or any other hatred and intolerance.

19. With regard to online media, publishers allowing public comments must establish and publish a comments policy. Comments in breach of the published policy must be withdrawn as soon as possible after they are reported as a way of effective self-regulation and reduction of online hate speech. This is also one of the objectives of the Resolution on the National Programme of Crime Prevention and Suppression for the 2019–2023.

20. The public national broadcaster RTV Slovenija plays a special role in awareness-raising and warning against illegal hate speech in the media. The RTV Slovenija Act stipulates that its programme must support the spread of knowledge about other cultures represented in Slovenia and their representatives, promote the culture of public dialogue and provide a wide platform for public debate on issues in society.

21. In March 2023, the Strategic Council for the Prevention of Hate Speech was established to monitor hate speech in Slovenia and at EU level and to propose activities to prevent it; to advise on policy development, regulatory changes and other measures to prevent hate speech more effectively; and to participate in preparing proposals for systemic changes and a network model for campaigns and training at regional and national levels. In 2023, the Strategy on Combating Antisemitism for the 2023–2033 period was adopted following the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021–2030). Its main areas of focus are: preventing and combating all forms of antisemitism; protecting and preserving Jewish culture; Holocaust education, research and remembrance.

22. The promotion of tolerance, diversity and equal opportunities in the learning process is laid down in the Organisation and Financing of Education Act. The elimination of racism and xenophobia and the prevention of all forms of discrimination is part of the curricula. In the National School of Leadership in Education, practitioners are systematically trained to identify violations of children's and human rights, treat children in a non-discriminatory manner, promote the principles of equal opportunities and respect the human dignity of all participants in the educational process (children, teachers, parents).⁵ Another project that is being implemented is “Hand in hand: EmPOWERing teachers across Europe to deal with social, emotional and diversity related career challenges”.⁶

23. The education system in Slovenia also includes activities to ensure a safe and stimulating learning environment for optimal individual development. Experts deal with activities in the areas of violence prevention and promotion of social emotional learning, education of children with special needs, gifted children, migrants, Roma, inclusive education, mental health, psychosocial support and assistance, curriculum, sport, physical activity and healthy lifestyle, primary school extended programme, music education and cooperation with parents.

24. Through various projects, Slovenia aims to enhance mutual knowledge and intercultural dialogue, understanding and acceptance of differences.⁷

25. The active implementation of the UDHR⁸ continues through cultural and arts education, where children and young people learn about the different art forms and the social impact of cultural arts (cultural diversity, intercultural awareness and dialogue, social and civic competences).

26. The state gives special consideration to the education of Roma pupils and provides schools with benefits: additional funding, more favourable norms for classes with Roma pupils, funding for meals, textbooks, excursions, funding for research and development tasks for better integration of Roma pupils, and language standardisation as a basis for teaching Romani.

27. Primary schools provide elective classes in Roma culture about history, lifestyle and cultural creativity. Pupils also develop the ability to understand the lifestyle of different national/ethnic groups coexisting in the same area. In this context, teacher training is paramount, and teaching materials and manuals are being produced in Romani. Every year, the state co-finances supplementary home language and culture classes for children of other national communities.

28. In line with international best practice, an update of the safe and enabling environment protocols began in early 2024, aiming to ensure greater visibility of marginalised groups – the socially vulnerable, LGBTI, children with special needs, migrants, Roma girls and people with disabilities.

29. To raise awareness, the Ministry of Education informs educational institutions through circular letters about the commemoration of important (international) human rights days and anniversaries. The issues raised in the Recommendation are addressed in primary and secondary schools, e.g. in the scope of Civic and Homeland Education and Ethics.

30. In 2022 and 2023, a training programme entitled “Recognising Stereotypes, Overcoming Prejudice and Eliminating Discrimination in a Multicultural Society” was organised for police officers and other police staff. The aim was to impart knowledge on how to identify and understand different forms of discrimination and to learn about the specificities of individual multicultural communities, models of good practice and how to

successfully tackle problematic situations. Equal treatment, specificities of multicultural communities and prevention of discrimination in relation to the Roma community are an integral part of the police officers training programmes at the Police College.

31. More information on activities for the inclusion of members of the Roma community is provided in the chapter on Roma. Programmes and projects to combat discrimination against children, people with disabilities and older persons are also detailed in individual chapters.

32. Slovenia continues to raise awareness of hate speech, conducts targeted research projects to analyse online hate speech, co-funds training to strengthen digital and media literacy for all citizens, organises campaigns on online peer violence and participates in the European Commission's call for proposals for funding the Safer Internet Centre project. In 2022, the "Bite Your Hateful Tongue!" short videos campaign was launched featuring Slovenian athletes to raise awareness of the unacceptability of hate speech and offensive language. In 2024, the "Don't Roast When You Post" campaign about online violence and hate speech was launched.

LGBTI

33. Slovenia will continue to implement anti-discrimination measures in the framework of public tenders and at the level of state bodies, local authorities, holders of public authority and legal and natural persons.

34. In 2023, a decision was taken to develop a national LGBTI equality strategy by the end of 2024.⁹

35. An inter-ministerial working group on legal gender recognition was set up to examine the adequacy of the legal framework in Slovenia. A report with findings and recommendations was issued in 2021.

36. The police implemented the TRUST CO(O)P project, which established and improved cooperation with the LGBTI community and introduced a police liaison officer between the police and the LGBTI community.

D. Political and civil rights (Recommendations 73–76)

37. Court backlogs are no longer a systemic problem in Slovenia.¹⁰ The 2023 EU Justice Scoreboard has again recognised the improved efficiency of the Slovenian justice system. It also shows that general government total expenditure on courts in EUR per capita is increasing.

38. Under the Criminal Procedure Act, suspects have the right to a defence counsel from the moment they are deprived of liberty. In 2020, the amended Criminal Procedure Act¹¹ introduced new provisions on the rights of a minor during deprivation of liberty and the right of a minor to a defence counsel. Upon deprivation of liberty, a minor is informed that deprivation of liberty may only be imposed as a measure of last resort, is limited to the shortest appropriate period of time and is subject to periodic judicial review. When deprived of liberty, a minor has the right to a medical examination, have parents or guardians informed, maintain contact with them and exercise effectively and regularly the right to family life. A minor must be detained separately from adults. Only exceptionally can he be detained with adults if it is in the child's best interests. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure and preserve a minor's health and physical and mental development, and in the event of prolonged deprivation of liberty (detention), ensure their right to education and access to programmes that foster their development and reintegration into society. A minor has the right to be assisted by a defence counsel at any stage of the proceedings. In cases of deprivation of liberty or in other cases where mandatory defence is envisaged the defence counsel is appointed ex officio by the competent authority if a minor or their legal representatives or relatives do not engage a defence counsel themselves. The proposed Act Amending the Criminal Procedure Act in legislative procedure establishes a list of rights of which a minor must be notified in writing upon deprivation of liberty. The notification must

be given in simple and accessible language and in the minor's mother tongue or in a language the minor understands.

39. Slovenia constantly strives to improve the living conditions in Slovenian prisons. The construction of a new Ljubljana Prison began in 2022 and is expected to be completed in 2025, alleviating the spatial constraints of the existing main prison in Ljubljana by providing functional, modern, secure and energy-efficient premises. To ease the consequences of overcrowding and understaffing in prisons, an amendment to the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions Act is currently in the legislative procedure.

E. Economic, social and cultural rights (Recommendations 20, 62–66, 88–92, 94–97, 125–126, 162, 183–184)

40. The implementation of the SDGs¹² and the monitoring of progress are linked to the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 adopted by the Government in 2017, the goal of which is to ensure quality life for all.¹³

41. Member States joining the EU after 2002 are committed to “gradually increase ODA¹⁴ to 0.33% of gross national income (GNI) by 2030”. This commitment was endorsed by the National Assembly, which called on the Government to draw up an Action Plan on the gradual increase of GNI for ODA.

42. As an EU Member State, Slovenia is subject to the EU NDC¹⁵ and thus to a minimum 55% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 compared to 1990. Slovenia is drafting a Climate Change Act to set a national long-term climate target to reduce GHG emissions, increase carbon sinks and adapt to climate change. It is also updating its Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan and remains active in climate negotiations.

43. In Slovenia, public participation in the regulatory process is mandatory under the Resolution on Legislative Regulation.¹⁶ The preparation of the Climate Change Act has involved the widest possible range of stakeholders. Prior to drafting, the public was invited to make suggestions on its content and the first draft was subject to public consultation. Suggestions from different stakeholders have been incorporated in the new draft, which is currently undergoing inter-ministerial coordination.

44. Slovenia has adopted the Resolution on the National Housing Programme 2015–2025. The Resolution pays particular attention to the housing needs of the young, older persons and vulnerable groups. In 2023, EUR 25,500,000.00 of budget funds have been allocated for the recapitalisation of the Slovenian Housing Fund. In Slovenia, one of the rights from public funds is the right to rent subsidy, which is a way of addressing housing problems of socially disadvantaged people.¹⁷ Currently, Slovenia is developing a housing reform to increase the number of affordable public rental housing.

45. In 2023, the Long-Term Care Act was adopted as an important step towards building a robust and accessible public long-term care system. The Act puts the person in need of long-term care at the centre of the system allowing them to decide how they want to exercise their right to long-term care. It introduces two further rights, the right to services to promote and maintain independence and the right to e-care services. The Dementia Management Strategy until 2030 was also adopted in 2023, which is the cornerstone for a coordinated and integrated approach by all stakeholders to tackle dementia and related conditions.

46. Slovenia continues to improve access to healthcare for all, including in rural areas, for people with disabilities and older persons, in particular the availability and accessibility of palliative care. In 2023, the Act Amending the Mental Health Act was adopted as per the decisions of the Constitutional Court. Based on the Resolution on the National Mental Health Programme 2018–2028, a network of mental health centres is being set up at the primary healthcare level.

47. In Slovenia, the education system is a public service provided by public and private institutions and private providers with a concession.¹⁸ As per the Constitution, primary education is compulsory and publicly funded.

48. To eliminate regional disparities in access to education, Slovenia is equalising the share of funding for education projects in the eastern and western regions.

49. The 2021 amendment to the Kindergarten Act provides, among other things, for the reintroduction of free kindergarten for certain categories of children. The amended act details the status of a home-based childminder and distinguishes between pre-school education and childminding and other services provided to pre-school children. In 2019, new Rules on the management of textbook funds were published, providing a legal basis for the distribution of free school materials from 1st to 3rd year pupils from the 2019/20 school year on. Slovenia also undertook other measures to ease the financial burden on parents.¹⁹

50. Measures and education projects for Roma children are detailed in the chapter on Roma.

51. Basic School Act stipulates that children who are foreign citizens or stateless persons and reside in Slovenia have the right to compulsory basic school education under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens. Children of compulsory school age are entitled to enrol in school even if the family is still in the process of settling its residence status and has not yet acquired formal permanent or temporary residence. Foreigners may enrol in Slovenian secondary schools under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens, also under the International Protection Act.²⁰

52. In 2020, Slovenia adopted the Act on the Intervention for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioural disorders in Education.²¹ In 2021, an amendment to the Rules on additional professional and physical assistance for children with special needs was adopted.

53. The amendments to the Rules on the organisation, operation and financing of state-funded short programme pre-school groups were adopted in 2020 to remove barriers to access to free, shorter pre-school education for all children not enrolled in kindergarten one year before they qualify for primary school.

54. Slovenia has upgraded ICT²² equipment in schools and earmarked funds for the development and acquisition of digital skills in education. In 2023, digital literacy projects were implemented for children and young people, for people aged 30+ and specifically tailored for people aged 55+.

55. A major reform is also under way to modernise curricula by integrating all aspects of financial literacy into the education system and beyond. Programmes focus on awareness, knowledge and skills, attitudes and behaviours enabling good financial decisions and financial well-being, thereby contributing to resilience, social responsibility and a more efficient functioning of the financial system in general.

56. The higher education programme “Police Officer” enables police officers to hone their knowledge and skills related to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in police procedures. Key training topics include equal treatment and the particularities of a multicultural community, including prevention of discrimination with specificities of the Roma community. The Police provide training for senior officers to familiarise them with the specificities of police work in the Roma community. The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in police procedures is a compulsory subject in the regular training of police officers. In 2022 and 2023, a training programme entitled “Recognising stereotypes, overcoming prejudice and eliminating discrimination in a multicultural society” was organised for police officers and other police staff, with the aim of providing them with the necessary knowledge to recognise and understand different forms of discrimination.

57. Among the 39 rich EU and OECD countries, Slovenia has progressed the most over the past decade in reducing the number of children living below the poverty line, and is the world's best performer in UNICEF child poverty index. Regarding children's rights, the Child Guarantee National Action Plan 2022-2030 was adopted in 2023. One of its aims is to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The reduction of poverty is the main objective of the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2022-2030. Slovenia will continue its efforts to reduce poverty and increase the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including older persons.

58. The Resolution sets out guidelines for the functioning and development of the social assistance system which, along with social policies, makes an important contribution to long-term, sustainable and inclusive growth in society by reducing social inequalities and exclusion. To activate long-term unemployed recipients of social assistance and integrate them into the labour market, Slovenia will continue the social activation project integrating it into the social assistance system as a service.²³

59. A special working group for sustainable dialogue with representatives of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia was established in 2020 and expanded in 2022. It addresses outstanding issues in the work areas of the participating ministries. In addition to representatives of the relevant ministries and the Government Office for National Minorities, it includes representatives of the three umbrella organisations of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia. Annual calls for proposals are issued for the selection of cultural projects under the programme for members of the German-speaking ethnic group.

F. Good governance and business and human rights (Recommendations 68–69)

60. The fight against corruption is one of priorities of Slovenian Government. The detection, investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption offences are the responsibility of the Police, State Prosecutor's Office and courts. In 2020, an amendment to the Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act was adopted.²⁴

61. In 2023, the Whistleblowers Protection Act was adopted. It introduces important measures to protect whistleblowers in their working environment and sets out additional obligations to establish reporting channels for public and private sector entities. The Act assigns additional tasks to the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (monitoring the implementation of the Act, assistance to entities and annual reporting). In 2023, the Government adopted the Programme for Strengthening Integrity and Transparency in the Public Sector 2023-2026 to ensure greater transparency in public administration. The envisaged measures are largely preventive in nature, cover several areas and include measures to increase the integrity and transparency of state and local self-government officials. The second six-monthly interim report on the implementation of the programme was adopted in 2024. A proposal for a revised Resolution on the Prevention of Corruption was drafted in 2023. Strengthening activities to detect corruption-related crimes and their perpetrators at all levels, including economic crime, is also a priority for the Police, as set out in the Guidelines for the Mid-term Police Plan 2023-2027.

62. According to statistical data trade with conflict areas is minimal, including with occupied territories with an increased risk of human rights violations. This is part of the EU's common trade policy.

G. National communities and the Roma community (Recommendations 121–123, 128–131, 133–143, 200–205)

63. Measures to exercise the rights of minorities and improve the situation of members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community are regulated by law and part of comprehensive national plans. The Programme of Measures for the exercising of special rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities 2021-2025 was adopted in 2021, and the National Programme of Measures for Roma 2021-2030 (NPUR) in 2021. The Government regularly reports to the National Assembly on the implementation of the NPUR, which is evaluated through various mechanisms.²⁵

64. NPUR's implementation is regularly monitored by the Government working group, composed of representatives of ministries and government bodies, municipalities with Roma settlements and representatives of the Roma Community Council. Slovenia will continue its efforts to improve the situation of the Roma community and their inclusion in society.

65. Recommendations for educational institutions with Roma children, pupils and young people are set out in the Strategy for the Education of Roma, updated in 2021.

66. Members of the Roma community are offered specific social security programmes that facilitate their integration and the exercise of their human rights. The implementation of social activation programmes for Roma women's entry into the labour market ended in 2022.

67. Multi-purpose Roma centres carry out activities to promote the integration of Roma children and their enrolment in primary school and kindergarten.²⁶

68. In activities aimed at Roma families, parents learn about the importance of education, the inclusion of children in pre-school and school, a healthy lifestyle and systematic medical check-ups for children's health and development.

69. Roma families enjoy several benefits (e.g. reduced kindergarten fees, pre-school programmes for children not enrolled in kindergarten). Through multi-annual projects of multi-purpose Roma centres, workshops are offered for the social activation, social integration and empowerment of Roma, bringing them closer to the labour market. One of the main purposes of these programmes is to prepare children for school, strengthen their skills in their mother tongue and in the language of instruction, and establish routines.

70. The by-laws provide for more favourable standards for a second first grade teacher in classes with at least three Roma pupils, a specialist working with Roma pupils and a Roma assistant. In cases with special working conditions, a derogation from the standards may be granted. In the Dolenjska region, where the Roma situation is particularly acute, specific measures were granted to primary schools in the 2023/24 school year and even before, such as classes with smaller numbers of pupils, when they include Roma children, and the employment of a Roma assistant and a specialist teacher.

71. In 2023, the project Multi-purpose Roma Centres as Innovative Learning Environments ran at the Centre for School and Outdoor Education, aimed at strengthening the general and vocational competences, skills and knowledge of Roma children to promote their inclusion in the education system and society.

72. In 2023, the Centre for School and Outdoor Education also held its third consecutive training for Roma assistants to empower candidates and provide them with the relevant knowledge, skills and competences to work more successfully with Roma children and their parents.

73. Also, the next edition of the project Together for Knowledge: Activities of Multi-purpose Roma Centres was launched in 2023 and will run until 2028. The project focuses on strengthening and improving language skills, especially among pre-school and primary school children.

74. Teaching materials on Roma for Roma children were published in the form of trilingual – Slovene, Prekmurje Romani and English – flashcards and books. Supplementary classes in Roma language and culture, testing of approaches to promote the use of Romani, learning about Roma cultural heritage and other language learning activities are also being implemented for Roma children. Innovative teaching practices have been developed for those who work with Roma children.

75. In 2022, the Police launched a prevention project School – Path to Success to improve the safety situation associated with Roma and their integration.

76. In 2022, a court interpreter for Romani was appointed.

77. Cultural projects aimed at the preservation, promotion and development of Roma culture, language and identity are co-funded through annual calls for proposals.²⁷ Programmes on Roma culture, language and identity aimed at raising public awareness of the existence of the Roma community and their cultural diversity are also funded through an annual public call for applications for NGOs for co-financing media programmes, for instance in 2017–2023, the Bridge of Coexistence programme on Radio Romic which aims to eliminate prejudice against Roma and to present Roma issues, life, customs and culture. The RTV Slovenia Act stipulates that the programmes of the public national broadcaster RTV Slovenia must support the spread of knowledge about other cultures represented in Slovenia and their representatives, promote the culture of public dialogue and provide a wide platform for public debate on social issues. The radio programme Our Paths – Amare Droma is

broadcast once a week, and What are you saying? – So vakeres? bi-weekly; both are produced by Roma.

78. The Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2021-2025 provides expert guidelines on language policy decisions and measures. In addition to measures relating to the Slovene language, it includes measures relating to Italian, Hungarian, Romani and the languages of other communities and immigrants.²⁸

79. Minority ethnic communities (Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community) are adequately represented in the elected bodies of the municipalities in which they live. In municipalities that elect a representative of the Roma community to the city or municipal council under the Local Self-Government Act, a special working body is established within the municipal council to monitor the situation of the Roma community. The elected representative of the Roma community on the municipal council is a member of this working body by virtue of their function.

80. According to the State Administration Act, the official language of the administration is Slovene. In municipalities with Hungarian or Italian national communities, the official languages of the administration are also Hungarian and Italian, respectively, and the administrative units in these areas are obliged to provide bilingual administrative services.

81. Administrative units must ensure that their staff have adequate knowledge of the language of the national community and appropriate skills. Their internal organisation and systematisation acts must provide for posts requiring a certain level of knowledge of the language of the national community.

82. To ensure the effective implementation of legislation on the use of minority languages, annual consultations on the implementation of bilingualism are held in the nine municipalities with members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities. In 2023, the eighth consultation focused on the exchange of experience on the translation of legal acts from Italian into Slovene and vice versa, the monitoring of the implementation of bilingualism provisions and the financing of self-governing national communities.

83. Bilingualism in traffic signalling is regulated by the Rules on traffic signalling and traffic equipment on roads. In bilingual areas, the Hungarian or Italian language is used in the Inspectorate for Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fisheries and in the regional branch offices of the Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection. The Maritime Directorate also provides services in the language of the national community. The Judicial Training Centre regularly holds workshops on legal terminology in minority languages for judges, public prosecutors, state attorneys and judicial staff. The courts have new websites in Italian and Hungarian.

84. According to the latest report of the Inter-ministerial Working Group tasked to **resolve** housing problems in Roma settlements, in 2017, 6,631 people lived in 83 Roma settlements, all of them with access to drinking water. 5,398 inhabitants (81.4% of the Roma population compared to 88.6% of the general population) were supplied by the public water supply, and 1,201 by other sources. Some 32.2% of Roma were connected to the public sewage system (compared to 62% of the entire Slovenian population). A new spatial planning and construction legislation entered into force in 2018.²⁹ The possibility of legalisation will also apply to buildings in settlements with social groups such as the Roma. As part of the NPUR 2021–2030, a public call for applications was published for the co-financing of basic utility infrastructure projects in Roma settlements in 2023 and 2024; 13 projects were selected for co-financing in 2023, and 6 projects in 2024.

H. Gender equality (Recommendations 22–24, 99–108, 164, 186–195)

85. Slovenia will continue to promote gender equality, also by upgrading legislation, and will strive for continued progress in the implementation of strategies aimed at achieving gender equality in all areas of economic, political and social life, including in employment and equal pay. In 2023, the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023-2030 was adopted. The new programme includes measures to

ensure equal economic independence, eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, promote and ensure a balanced representation of women and men, eliminate gender stereotypes and sexism, as well as inequalities in women's and men's health, and measures to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women in foreign policy and development cooperation. The Resolution also provides for the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive health, with a special focus on adolescents and women in perinatal period. Measures include ensuring access to primary reproductive healthcare. A Periodic Plan 2024-2025 for the implementation of the Resolution is under preparation.

86. For a balanced representation of women and men in politics and public life, the project Empowering Women for Active Political Life was devised. In workshops, secondary school students learn about gender stereotypes that hinder women's participation in politics. The aim is to address and encourage young people to overcome these stereotypes and reject traditional gender roles at a formative age.

87. The Police continues to have an Equal Opportunities Coordinator and the Ministry of the Interior has an Advisory Board for Gender Mainstreaming with staff from different work areas. Together, they promote gender equality by raising awareness among staff about the importance of gender equality and conducting workshops for newly recruited police officers and senior management. In 2023, on the 50th anniversary of recruiting female uniformed police officers, the Police mounted the exhibition "Where are the Women?" with an accompanying brochure. A major study "Some aspects of police organisational life: gender differences" has been completed.

88. With 17% women, the Slovenian Armed Forces rank very high among NATO member armies and are in line with NATO's gender policy. Prior to deployment on international missions and operations, awareness training is provided by a network of gender advisers. With equal opportunities and conditions for promotion, women in the Slovenian Armed Forces occupy the most important decision-making positions and are involved in almost all areas of activity.

89. The number of women in senior positions in companies is gradually increasing. An amendment to the Companies Act is pending to achieve a more balanced gender representation in top management in listed companies.

90. In 2024, the Government adopted the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2024-2029, which includes a number of measures to combat domestic violence. Its objectives include zero tolerance of domestic violence and violence against women, a high level of public awareness and preventive action through general and specific measures. In 2023, the Police published an action plan on domestic violence, which focuses on prevention, professional treatment, cooperation with other institutions working in the field of domestic violence, raising awareness of this issue and its scope, and support for victims.

I. Persons with disabilities (Recommendations 113–117, 124, 196–199)

91. Slovenia pays particular attention to ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities, as provided for in the Constitution. The right to special protection for people with disabilities includes a range of different rights in the areas of parental care and family benefits, education, employment, health, disability insurance, social protection, culture, sport and recreation, tax relief and other forms of exemption, ICT, accessibility of the built environment and information, and all other areas that enable these people to live a life of dignity and equality. Slovenia has always drafted legislation in cooperation with people with disabilities and has always adhered to the principle: "Nothing about people with disabilities without people with disabilities".

92. Disability legislation in Slovenia does not specifically focus on specific groups of people with disabilities, but covers all types of disability and all sub-groups. In its chapter Eliminating gender inequalities in employment and ensuring equal economic independence

for women and men, the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023-2030 also includes targets for women with disabilities.

93. To combat discrimination on the grounds of disability, Slovenia adopted the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act, which defines discrimination as any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability with the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the equal recognition, enjoyment or exercise of all rights and obligations in all vital areas of life.³⁰ In 2021, in line with the Act, the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2020–2030 was adopted to promote, protect and guarantee the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights of persons with disabilities and respect for their dignity.³¹ The 13 objectives of the programme cover all areas of life of persons with disabilities. A special commission annually monitors the implementation.

94. In 2021, a constitutional act was adopted amending the Constitution to include the right to use and develop Slovene sign language, followed by the Action Plan for the Inclusion of Slovene Sign Language in Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 2021-2024. The use and development of the language of the deafblind will be regulated by a special act.

95. One of the objectives of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act is to provide the optimal development of an individual, irrespective of gender, social background or cultural identity, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or disability. Additional positive measures are implemented through a project-based and systemic approaches. A special section of the Catalogue of Further Education Programmes for Teachers in Educational Institutions is dedicated to the education of children with special needs, with the individual child and adolescent and their development at its core.³²

96. Students with hearing loss are included in education programmes with adapted implementation and additional expert assistance in regular schools, or in education programmes adapted to the needs of children with hearing loss implemented by educational institutions for children and young adults with special needs.³³

97. In 2024, the National Assembly Elections Act was amended to no longer allow courts to disenfranchise voters on the grounds of mental disability. Voters with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment may be assisted in voting by a person of their choice. These voters could already vote in the European Parliament elections in June 2024.

98. The Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2024-2029 includes measures to support victims of violence with specific personal circumstances.

J. Erased persons (Recommendations 156, 215)

99. In 2018, Slovenia adopted the Act amending the Act Regulating the Compensation for Damage Sustained as a Result of Erasure from the Register of Permanent Residents, which removes the limitation on the amount of monetary compensation that can be awarded to a beneficiary in court proceedings and limits the amount of interest on late payment to the principal amount.

K. Children and youth (Recommendations 19, 70, 72, 87, 109–112, 170–172)

100. On the basis of the Act on Public Interest in the Youth Sector, the adoption of the Resolution on the National Programme for Youth for the period 2024–2032 is planned for 2024. Carried out in close cooperation with youth organisations, the preparation of the document was based mainly on the national Youth 2020 survey, providing a scientific perspective on the changing situation of young people and the trends and circumstances they face (including the identification and prevention of violence and peer violence).

101. Measures for the promotion and enforcement of the human rights of young people are stipulated in the Organisation and Financing of Education Act. The educational objectives defined in the Act include those contributing to the realisation of the right of every person to education without discrimination or exclusion and to the promotion of equal opportunities in education.³⁴ As part of the curriculum renewal process, the Common Aims document was approved in 2023, providing guidance to embed active citizenship content in all subjects, as appropriate.

102. In 2020, the Programme for Children 2020-2025 (PO20-25) was adopted and the accompanying Action Plans for the Implementation of the Programme 2020-2025 in 2021 and 2024. The PO20-25 is an independent strategic document defining the main objectives and actions in the field of children's rights and children's well-being and quality of life. It is aligned with key international documents and the country's development documents on children, taking into account specific aspects of the needs and quality of life of children in Slovenia. Through the PO20-25, the country aims to raise the level of child well-being, ensure equal opportunities and rights for all children, strengthen protection and safeguarding, and improve opportunities for inclusion and participation of all children regardless of their personal circumstances, which is also a commitment of EU Member States. A special chapter is dedicated to children's participation at all levels of society.³⁵

103. In 2023, the Child Guarantee National Action Plan 2022-2030 was adopted, which aims to create equal opportunities for all children and to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

104. Two representatives of children were appointed to the Government Council for Children and Family, and children participated in the drafting of the Child Guarantee National Action Plan 2022-2030.

105. The Family Code defines a family as a living community of a child, regardless of the child's age, with both or one of the parents or with another adult, if that person is taking care for the child and has certain obligations and rights under the Code in relation to that child. In 2018, the Resolution on the Family Policy 2018-2028: "A Society Friendly to All Families" was adopted, which defines measures by areas. Two of the four action plans to implement the Resolution have been adopted, and an action plan for the period 2024-2026 is under preparation. From 2020 to 2022, the Action Dad project aimed to raise awareness among (prospective) parents, employers, professionals and the general public about the importance of actively involving men in childcare and a more equal distribution of parental care for the child from birth on. The amendment to the Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act introduced important changes in the area of childcare: 160 days of parental leave for both parents, the right to work part-time to care for a child until the child's eighth birthday, the possibility for both parents to work part-time at the same time, and a higher compensation for loss of income.

106. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act prohibits all forms of domestic violence and corporal punishment and all other forms of violence and discrimination in all educational institutions. One of the objectives of the Draft Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2024-2029 is to achieve zero tolerance of domestic violence and violence against children. Among the proposed measures is also a survey on the physical punishment of children in the family. In 2023, the police issued a Domestic Violence Action Plan 2023-2024, which covers the prevention of physical punishment of children. The Action Plan aims to raise awareness among the (wider) public about the unacceptability of violence. (Media) campaigns and prevention activities spread the message of the unacceptability of violence and child neglect. Public calls for social assistance programmes include violence prevention programmes. The Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2022-2030 foresees further growth of the network of social assistance programmes aimed at preventing violence. Educators have a duty to respond to all forms of violence in educational settings and in cases of domestic violence against children. Guidelines have been developed to deal with violence in schools and domestic violence. In addition, education and training are provided for staff in educational institutions.

107. According to the Criminal Code, violence within the family or any other permanent community is a criminal offence. The prosecution policy of the State Prosecutor of the Republic of Slovenia gives priority to the prosecution of crimes against vulnerable persons (e.g. children, persons with physical or mental disabilities, persons in a subordinate relationship). In these cases, the procedures must be quick and provide comprehensive support to victims. This area is also regulated by the Police Tasks and Powers Act, the Criminal Procedure Act and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, while measures for the protection of victims of domestic violence are a priority area in the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention and Suppression of Crime 2019–2023 and 2024–2028 and the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2024–2029. The Resolution's biennial action plans also include targeted activities and awareness-raising projects on violence against vulnerable groups. The police are working to ensure that victims from vulnerable groups are treated with special care; police officers and criminal investigators who come into contact with victims of domestic violence in the course of their work receive special training.

108. The protection of child victims of exploitation and sexual abuse is addressed in the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention and Suppression of Crime 2019–2023 and 2024–2028. The 2021 Act on the Protection of Children in Criminal Procedure and their Comprehensive Treatment in Children's House introduces the Barnahus model of treatment for child victims of sexual abuse and other crimes into the Slovenian legal system.³⁶ The 2021 Action Plan on Investigating Child Sexual Abuse provides for more training for police officers and criminal investigators to identify and deal with child sexual abuse more effectively, quickly and professionally, and to obtain evidence for court proceedings more effectively. The Action Plan also requires police officers and criminal investigators to raise awareness of physical and online child sexual abuse through prevention activities.

109. The 2019 amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act strengthened the position of victims in criminal proceedings, including by informing them of their rights, providing individual assessment and ensuring protective measures. Furthermore, the 2021 amendment to the Criminal Code replaced the coercion model in relation to the crimes of rape, sexual violence and sexual abuse of a vulnerable person with an affirmative consent model. Two largest courts of first instance have established a Victim Support Service to assist in communicating with victims and developing measures to protect them. Since 2019, Social Work Centres have had a free support network for victims of crime, regardless of whether the victim has reported the crime or not. The support includes professional help and expert advice for the person directly affected by the crime.

110. Pursuant to the International Protection Act, child applicants for international protection and children under international or temporary protection have the same rights as Slovenian citizens in terms of access to education and healthcare, and conditions at reception (accommodation and food) are adapted to their needs.

L. Older persons (Recommendations 18, 71, 93, 173, 185)

111. Changing demographics have placed the issues of older persons at the centre of social and healthcare systems. With the growing proportion of older persons in Slovenia, special attention is being paid to increasing the scope of long-term care and other services tailored to older persons to improve their daily lives and inclusion. The two Resolutions on the National Social Assistance Programme (2013–2020 and 2020–2030) focus on this aspect of social change.

112. The 2017 Active Ageing Strategy defines guidelines for the prevention of violence against older persons, including the systematic collection of data and inter-ministerial cooperation; awareness-raising among the older population and the general public about violence and other unlawful acts targeting older persons; systematic training of healthcare and social workers, police and others that come into contact with violence to recognise, prevent and report abuse and violence against older persons; strengthened inter-institutional cooperation in tackling abuse, violence and other illicit acts against older persons; and

creating favourable conditions to assist victims. Older persons are also defined as a particularly vulnerable group in the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women 2024–2029. In addition to linking actions across different sectors, the purpose is to identify and ensure effective measures to reduce violence against older persons.

113. In 2023, the Dementia Management Strategy until 2030 was adopted to facilitate a coordinated and integrated approach by all stakeholders to tackle dementia and related conditions.

114. In 2023, the Mobile Heroes project was implemented, with two field teams providing digital literacy training to people aged 55+ in rural areas. The project continues in 2024.

M. Human trafficking (Recommendations 78–86, 174–181)

115. Slovenia will continue its activities on the prevention of human trafficking and the fight against it as per the 2021–2022 Action Plan for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.³⁷ Victims of human trafficking will continue to enjoy the protection and assistance in accordance with the Act ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Manual on identification, assistance and protection of victims.

116. In 2023, an amendment to the Compensation to Crime Victims Act came into force, extending the right to compensation to third-country nationals. In addition, it introduces the possibility for beneficiaries to waive their right to legal recourse and thus obtain compensation more quickly.

117. The amended Criminal Code of 2023 transposed the provisions of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. Begging and slavery-like relationships are added as forms of exploitation.

118. The Government funds assistance programmes for human trafficking victims implemented by NGOs selected through public calls for applications. The Crisis Accommodation Programme provides a 30-day period of recovery and reflection. During the crisis accommodation period, victims are offered longer-term assistance and accommodation through the Safe Accommodation Programme. From 2022, victims of the crime of exploitation through prostitution also have the right to safe accommodation. The project (Re)integration of Human Trafficking Victims was launched in 2019.

119. Slovenia is committed to raising awareness among migrants and vulnerable groups by informing applicants for international protection about the dangers of trafficking and exploitation, and preventive and protective measures (PATS project).

120. In 2021, a systematic and long-term awareness-raising campaign on the dangers of human trafficking was launched for children in all primary and secondary schools. Every year on European Day Against Human Trafficking, projects are launched to raise awareness among the general public and vulnerable groups, with a focus on identifying different forms of exploitation.

121. In cooperation with the UNHCR, the Ministry of the Interior, the Council of Europe and the Ključ Society organised the “Preventing, Fighting and Responding to Human Trafficking in the Context of Asylum and Migration” conference in 2023. As part of the National Roma Platform, Slovenia participates in the SIFOROMA5 and SIFOROMA6 training projects for officials and others on addressing early and forced marriage in the Roma community.

122. Slovenia will continue its efforts to promote training with a gender and children’s rights perspective for officials and professionals who will come into contact with victims, and raise awareness among local professionals in areas with a high risk of exploitation of trafficked persons. Professional training has been provided to registrars in administrative units, as they may encounter forced marriage in the course of their work.

123. Guidelines for Labour Inspectors on the Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings were published in 2022. The guidelines are designed to help inspectors detect and identify victims of human trafficking exploited for labour.

124. Slovenia continues to strive for a coordinated collection of statistical information by law enforcement authorities, ministries and NGOs. In 2018, the Ministry of the Interior strengthened its institutional structure to combat human trafficking by establishing a special Anti-Trafficking Service. It provides expert support to the national coordinator for combating human trafficking and is responsible for inter-ministerial coordination.

125. The 2019 Act Amending the Social Assistance Act stipulates that anyone who is a victim of a crime committed in Slovenia, regardless of whether they reported the crime or not, may be eligible for this support service.³⁸

126. To strengthen cooperation with the countries of origin of victims of human trafficking, protocols on cooperation in the fight against human trafficking and child abuse were signed with North Macedonia and Montenegro in 2021 and 2022 respectively. The protocols cover areas related to the prevention of human trafficking, the identification, referral, protection and voluntary return of victims of human trafficking, and the protection of children who are victims of all forms of abuse.

N. Migration and international protection (Recommendations 98, 144–146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 206–214)

127. The new Government Strategy on Immigration, adopted in 2024, follows the community-based approach like the 2023 Integration Strategy. One of its strategic objectives is to protect the life and dignity of migrants, including the protection of all vulnerable categories of migrants. The key objective of the integration strategy is to create conditions that enable individuals to function with dignity, autonomy and independence and to feel part of the Slovenian society.

128. In times of increased migration flows, the work of the relevant services is also coordinated according to the contingency plans. The new immigration strategy also provides for a contingency plan for persons under temporary protection. In the new financial perspective, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund programmes will support vulnerable persons.

129. Staff training on asylum issues is provided on a needs-based approach. Regarding training, inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination is essential, as well as cooperation with international organisations. In 2022 and 2023, a training programme entitled "Recognising stereotypes, overcoming prejudice and eliminating discrimination in a multicultural society" was organised for police officers and staff, with the aim of providing the knowledge to identify and understand different forms of discrimination and specific traits of different multicultural communities. The training also shares models of good practice and successful problem solving. Specific topics are also included in the Police College courses Ethics and human rights and Police in society.

130. As for the Slovenian Armed Forces, topics on respect for human rights are included in training programmes, especially before deployment on international missions and other tasks involving contact with the civilian population. The Slovenian Armed Forces are committed to including education on the human rights of migrants and refugees in their training programmes, which are often tailored to the current situation.

131. According to the International Protection Act, officials whose tasks fall under the Act must receive regular training. In this context, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund provides for supervision and the EUAA³⁹ offers ongoing training (e.g. on communication, conflict resolution, vulnerability). The Judicial Training Centre conducts free training and testing for refugee counsellors following their appointment. It also provides training to judiciary and judicial staff on refugee, asylum and migration law. In addition, training is available for interpreters involved in international protection procedures and for legal representatives of unaccompanied minors.

132. International protection procedures always take into account the principle of the best interests of the child. Slovenia provides access to healthcare, social protection and education under the International Protection Act, which is compliant with the EU asylum legislation. The family reunification procedures governed by the Foreigners Act are also in line with EU legislation.

133. In Slovenia, migrant integration is regulated by the International Protection Act, the Foreigners Act and the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act. Under the International Protection Act, applicants for international protection have access to all levels of education, are provided with accommodation and have access to essential healthcare services; additional health services are available to women and, following a decision by a special commission, to other applicants.

134. Children are entitled to the same health services as children who are Slovenian citizens. In 2023, the Decree on providing appropriate accommodation, care and treatment of unaccompanied minors was adopted, which establishes three accommodation facilities, namely a reception centre, a housing unit and a youth residence. The first two facilities provide a 24-hour service.

135. The Foreigners Act, amended in 2023, and its by-laws provide for free Slovenian language classes and courses on Slovenian society for all third-country nationals.⁴⁰ The amended Employment, Self-employment and Work of Foreigners Act of 2023 gives applicants for international protection the right to access the labour market three months after submitting the application. In Asylum Centre branches, counselling groups offer applicants for international protection the space and opportunity to present their problems and receive advice and support.

136. In accordance with the Rules on the procedure for foreigners who wish to apply for international protection in the Republic of Slovenia and on the procedure for accepting applications for international protection, any person wishing to apply for international protection is informed about the further course of the preliminary procedure and other matters before the application is accepted.⁴¹

137. Slovenia respects the principle of non-refoulement as stipulated in the Foreigners Act. Furthermore, it ensures that asylum-seekers have access to fair asylum procedures in accordance with the International Protection Act and international law, taking into account all guaranteed services (information, translation and interpretation, access to UNHCR) and by examining each case on its own merits, including its subjective and objective elements. The International Protection Act provides for free legal aid in court proceedings, thereby ensuring access to legal representation to all asylum seekers.

138. The conditions for the expulsion of foreigners are laid down in the Criminal Code, the Minor Offences Act and the Foreigners Act. Under the Foreigners Act, any expulsion or removal of a foreigner must be based on an administrative act against which an appeal is possible. Under the same act, victims of illegal employment may be granted a temporary residence permit if they are willing to cooperate as witnesses in criminal proceedings or they have brought an action against their employer to enforce their employment rights. At a later stage, a victim of illegal employment may also be granted a further temporary residence permit with a different purpose, if the conditions for this permit are met.

139. Social activation projects include a specific strand to improve the social and work skills of immigrant women from other cultural backgrounds.

III. Challenges in the field of human rights

140. The human rights challenges facing Slovenia include migration-related issues (international protection procedures, asylum issues, prison overcrowding) and hate speech.

141. Efforts to address migration and international protection issues are described in Chapter II.N, hate speech in Chapter II.C and prison overcrowding in Chapter II.D.

142. Slovenia supports the establishment of regular, safe and orderly migration and the comprehensive and effective management of migration flows along migration routes. It

remains committed to respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants and the principle of solidarity. It advocates speedy and efficient international protection procedures, taking full account of all procedural safeguards. Special attention is paid to protecting and safeguarding vulnerable groups. The principle of the best interests of the child is always taken into account in procedures involving children.

143. Slovenia recognises the social harm and unacceptability of hate speech. In this context, the key challenges remain: identifying new forms of hate speech, raising awareness in society and connecting stakeholders responsible for preventing hate speech. In addition to regular training for police officers, new measures are drafted by the Police to adapt their work based on an analysis of violations.

IV. Achievements in the sphere of human rights

144. In 2024, Slovenia adopted an amendment to the National Assembly Election Act abolishing the disenfranchisement of persons under guardianship due to mental and psychosocial impairment.

145. In 2023, an amendment to the Family Code came into force, defining marriage as a life union of two persons and no longer as a life union of husband and wife. The same applies to the definition of cohabitation as a life union of two persons. The amendment places all partners in these unions (including same-sex partners) on an equal footing regarding all the legal consequences, including in relation to conditions for adoption.

146. The fight against impunity for the most serious international crimes, including genocide, has long been a priority of Slovenian foreign policy. For over a decade, Slovenia was part of the core group of MLA Initiative states (together with Argentina, Belgium, Mongolia, the Netherlands and Senegal) and organised the diplomatic conference for the adoption of the Convention on mutual legal assistance in Ljubljana in 2023. The Ljubljana-The Hague Convention is a landmark treaty designed to help bring justice to the victims of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Convention is expected to significantly reduce impunity for perpetrators of international crimes.

147. Another priority is the nexus between human rights and the environment. On the initiative of Slovenia, Costa Rica, Maldives, Morocco and Switzerland, Resolution 48/13 on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment (HR2HE) was adopted at the 48th session of the UNHRC in 2021 and Resolution (A/76/L.75) at the UNGA⁴² in 2022.

148. In 2023, on the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Slovenia participated in the Human Rights 75 Initiative with three national voluntary pledges: respect and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in police procedures; deinstitutionalisation in the field of mental health; promotion of human rights of older persons and prevention of ageism.

149. Slovenia, together with the above-mentioned countries, presented a collective pledge in the field of HR2HE to strengthen efforts for the effective implementation of this right at both national and global levels by mainstreaming HR2HE in international forums and intergovernmental processes by 2030.

V. Voluntary pledges and commitments

150. In the 3rd cycle of the UPR, Slovenia committed to submit a voluntary mid-term report on the implementation of the accepted recommendations. The Voluntary Mid-term Report was approved by the Government on 17 March 2022 and submitted to the UN OHCHR.

VI. Conclusion

151. Slovenia remains committed to the UPR and will continue to participate constructively in this mechanism, including in the reviews of Slovenia and other countries, with the aim of improving the human rights situation.

Notes

- ¹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- ² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- ³ More information on the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Children and Family is included in the voluntary mid-term report (Recommendation 16).
- ⁴ The offence committed because of the victim's national, racial, religious or ethnic origin, sex, colour, background, financial situation, education, social status, political or other opinion, disability, sexual orientation or any other personal circumstance.
- ⁵ More information is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 28).
- ⁶ More information is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 28).
- ⁷ More information is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 35).
- ⁸ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- ⁹ The national LGBTIQ equality strategy is to be modelled on the European Commission's Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025.
- ¹⁰ More information on the elimination of backlogs is included in the voluntary mid-term report (Recommendation 73).
- ¹¹ The amended Criminal Procedure Act transposed Directive (EU) 2016/800.
- ¹² Sustainable Development Goals.
- ¹³ More information on the implementation of SDGs is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 62).
- ¹⁴ Official Development Aid.
- ¹⁵ Nationally Determined Contribution.
- ¹⁶ More information on public participation in the drafting process is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 66).
- ¹⁷ More information on addressing housing issues is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 89).
- ¹⁸ More information on the organisation of the education system is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 94).
- ¹⁹ More information on the measures to ease the burden on parents is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendations 95 and 96).
- ²⁰ More information on the organisation of the education system for foreigners is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 97).
- ²¹ More information on the treatment of children with special needs is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 97).
- ²² Information and communications technology.
- ²³ More information on the social assistance system is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 183).
- ²⁴ More information on the fight against corruption is included in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendations 68 and 69).
- ²⁵ More information on the implementation of the NPUR is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendations 128, 130, 133 and 201).
- ²⁶ More information on the rights of Roma children in education is provided in the chapter on economic, social and cultural rights.
- ²⁷ Further information on promoting the development of Roma culture is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 129).
- ²⁸ Further information on the implementation of the Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 129).
- ²⁹ Further information on drinking water is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 130).
- ³⁰ Further information on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 196).
- ³¹ Further information on the Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 42).
- ³² Further information on the implementation of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 116).
- ³³ Further information on the education of children with hearing loss is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 116).
- ³⁴ The education goals defined in the Organisation and Financing of Education Act: provide the optimal development of the individual, irrespective of gender, social background or cultural identity, religion, racial, ethnic or national origin, and regardless of their physical and mental constitution or disability; educate for mutual tolerance, promote gender equality awareness, respect for human diversity and mutual cooperation, respect for children's and human rights and fundamental freedoms, foster equal

opportunities for women and men, and thereby develop competences to live in a democratic society; promote awareness of the individual's integrity; educate for sustainable development and active participation in a democratic society, including in-depth knowledge of, and a responsible attitude to oneself, one's health, other people, one's own and other cultures, natural and social environments, and to future generations.

- ³⁵ This topic was also the focus of the CP4Europe project. CP4 Europe - Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe was European Commission and Council of Europe joint project, carried out from April 2021 to June 2023. Professionals, working with children, applied and tested Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation for professionals. Specific child safeguarding policy were developed. Checklists for improving the participation of deprived children in various contexts were developed. Policy guidelines were prepared for decision-makers. National conference on child participation was organised in 2023.
- ³⁶ More information about the Barnahus model is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendations 110 and 111).
- ³⁷ Additional activities under the Action Plan are listed in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendations 78, 79 and 176).
- ³⁸ Further information on the amended Social Assistance Act is provided in the Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 86).
- ³⁹ European Union Agency for Asylum.
- ⁴⁰ The Decree on providing support for the integration of third-country nationals into the cultural, economic and social life of Slovenia identifies six areas: language integration, integration in education, integration in the labour market and local environment, optimisation of administrative procedures, removal of administrative barriers and cooperation with the diaspora.
- ⁴¹ For more information on providing information to applicants for international protection see Voluntary Mid-term Report (Recommendation 154).
- ⁴² United Nations General Assembly.
-