



Statement by
the Republic of Slovenia
at the

43rd Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Adoption of the report of Universal Periodic Review of Slovenia

Geneva, 12 March 2020

Madam President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address you today on behalf of the Republic of Slovenia. We welcome the outcome of the 3rd review of Slovenia in the UPR. I would like to thank all States that have participated in the review and submitted recommendations.

The UPR process is a principal peer review mechanism which has an important impact on human rights protection at the national level. It is a long-term process, but with small steps and commitments, we believe it has helped and can help to improve the human rights situation in countries across the globe.

The UPR recommendations are important tools for bringing change on the ground. On 12 November, Slovenia received 215 recommendations from the UN member states, of which 58 were immediately supported. 182 recommendations are now supported and 33 noted. Many of the supported recommendations have already been implemented or are in the process of implementation.

In Slovenia, members of an interministerial working group from all ministries have examined the recommendations received during the interactive dialogue. The working group has prepared a proposal of positions on all recommendations. The final decision was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and the response has been sent to the Office of the High Commissioner.

The Government has also informed National Human Rights Institution and civil society organisations about the UPR review and the recommendations received. For ensuring transparency, the documentation of the UPR of Slovenia is also available online (on the web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Follow-up to the recommendations will be ensured in full coordination with all ministries and governmental institutions and in dialogue with the Human Rights Ombudsman, Advocate of the Principle of Equality and human rights NGOs. As we mentioned during the review, the Interministerial Commission for Human Rights has placed the review of UPR recommendations implementation on its agenda as a standing item.

Secondly, I would like to offer some additional information on several topics covered by recommendations that my government received in the UPR and which are in the process of implementation:

Ratifications: The Ministry of Justice is currently conducting an analysis of the impact that the ratification of the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance might have on the Slovenian criminal law.

Gender equality and women's rights: Slovenia will continue to promote gender equality, including the upgrade of the legislation in 2019 when Slovenia introduced amendments to the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act with the aim to increase the share of the under-represented gender in the composition of the bodies of the Government and local authorities as well as in the management of bodies governed by public law. Slovenia will strive for continued progress in the implementation of strategies aimed at achieving gender equality in all spheres of economic, political, and social life, including in employment and granting equal pay.

Under the Criminal Code, violence in the family or any other permanent community is considered a criminal offence. In 2016 the Domestic Violence Prevention Act was amended in order to improve existing preventive and protection measures, defining stalking as a form of domestic violence and broadening definition of a family member. A new Resolution on the national programme for the prevention of domestic violence and violence against women 2020–2025 is being drafted. Moreover, the Ministry of Justice is currently conducting an analysis of possible changes of the definition of the criminal offence of rape based on consent.

Education: According to the Elementary School Act, children who are foreign citizens or stateless persons and reside in Slovenia have the right to compulsory elementary school education under the same conditions as citizens of Slovenia. Persons granted international protection enjoy the right to pre-school, primary, secondary, higher and university education, and adult education to the same degree as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia. Applicants for international protection have access to higher, university, and adult education under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia.

Health Care: In Slovenia, access to health services is universal. Emergency healthcare is universally accessible. The public primary health care system in Slovenia provides free preventive and curative health care to all children and adolescents up to the age of 19.

Non-discrimination: Slovenia already has sector specific legislation which constitutes an integrated approach against all forms of discrimination. The Protection Against Discrimination Act includes a definition of severe forms of discrimination, namely multiple discrimination, mass discrimination, continuous or repeated discrimination, and discrimination which has or might have consequences for the discriminated person that would be difficult to remedy in terms of damage caused to the person's legal status, rights, or obligations, particularly if it affects children or other vulnerable persons.

The Slovenian government is committed to non-discrimination of LGBTI persons. The Protection against Discrimination Act determines the protection of all persons against discrimination, irrespective of different personal circumstances. The Civil Union Act provides that a civil union between same-sex couples shall have same legal consequences as marriage in all legal spheres with the exception of adoption by both partners and the right to biomedically assisted procreation.

National Minorities: Concerning recommendations to strengthen protection of national minorities, the Government considers that the existing legislation adequately guarantees persons belonging to national minorities the right to non-discrimination, free expression of their national affiliation, the fostering and expression of their culture, and the right to use their language and script. The Government will, however, endeavour to enhance dialogue with members of all national minorities in order to facilitate full enjoyment of their rights.

Roma: The measures for amelioration of the situation of Roma, as well as achieving their higher social inclusion, were comprehensively integrated in the National Programme of Measures for Roma for the period 2017–2021. In cooperation with relevant ministries, the competent Government Office for National Minorities has already begun the activities to draft a new comprehensive national programme of measures for Roma for the period 2021–2030. A lot has been done for the improvement of living conditions of the Roma population, especially regarding their access to drinking water and sanitation. The right to drinking water has already been and will continue to be granted to all citizens and inhabitants under the same conditions.

Migrants: Slovenia attaches the utmost attention to rights of migrants. In 2019 the Government adopted a comprehensive Migration Strategy which addresses the integration of migrants as vulnerable categories of people. As stated above, all persons applying for international protection have access to all levels of education and healthcare services.

Hate speech: The Government advocates a zero-tolerance policy regarding hate speech. We expect every public institution to carry out its function with regard to preventing and sanctioning hate speech and hate crime. Priority, however, is given to prevention, which we consider essential. The ministries are implementing numerous programmes and training workshops in the form of education, promotion, and prevention activities aimed at preventing public incitement to hatred and intolerance. The Criminal Code of Slovenia already criminalises hate speech in Article 297 (public incitement to hatred, violence, and intolerance). The prohibition of incitement to inequality and intolerance is also stipulated in the Media Act and the Audiovisual Media Services Act.

Before I conclude, I wish to reiterate Slovenia's continued full support to the UPR process. We see this a unique peer-review mechanism which brings changes and delivers results at all levels. We will devote the utmost attention to the implementation of recommendations received and I am glad to report that the Government has already decided to submit its mid-term UPR report. As a candidate for the UN Human Rights Council for the period 2026–2028, Slovenia is pledging to work for the advancement

of human rights in international human rights forums, including through active engagement in the UPR process.

Thank you!

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Madam President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my Government, I would like to thank you for your comments and remarks. I will convey your messages to my Government. I'm certain that they will be taken and examined with due diligence.

Slovenia attaches great importance to the UPR process, including in the implementation of received recommendations. We believe that the UPR mechanism offers an excellent opportunity to advance the protection and promotion of human rights standards, both nationally and internationally.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia is committed to implementing the accepted recommendations. Some recommendations have already been implemented or are in the process of implementation. The government is also planning to adopt further measures that will contribute to the implementation of the UPR recommendations. In this process, the Government will continue to work closely with the other two branches of power – parliamentary and judicial – as well as with National Human Rights Institution and civil society.

We are looking forward to our next review in the 4th UPR cycle and hope for continued fruitful and constructive dialogue on promoting and protecting human rights in Slovenia.

Thank you!