**Shadow report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation to the 23rd and 24th periodic reports of the Russian Federation to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

Nowadays, all democratic States are aimed at fighting against racial discrimination. The limitation of human rights and freedoms is contrary to the values of a modern society, manifestations of racism are a crime against human dignity.

Par.2, art.19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms of man and citizen, regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, property and official status, place of residence, religion, convictions, membership of public associations, and also of other circumstances. All forms of limitations of human rights on social, racial, national, linguistic or religious grounds shall be banned.

The High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation (hereinafter – the High Commissioner) continually monitors manifestations of racial discrimination in any area of public life, since they affect the fundamental principle of equality which is enshrined in art.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The High Commissioner takes firm and public stand against expressions of racism and xenophobia, monitors, inter alia, inter-ethnic relations.

Within the framework of the mandate established by the Federal Constitutional Law No.1-FKZ as of 26 February, 1991 “On the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation”, the High Commissioner investigates the complaints of citizens, inter alia, against racial discrimination, and takes all possible measures, within his sphere of competence, to restore violated rights.

For the period from January 2012 to July 2017 the High Commissioner together with the staff of his Office have examined more than 140,000 complaints. However, the number of received appeals against discrimination is very small, what is less than 0.2% from the total number (only 200). All applications are checked. Violations of rights, in most cases, are not being confirmed. Staff of the Office monitors constantly the information about possible manifestations of racial discrimination.

It is important to note that the number of these appeals is decreasing year by year. This fact demonstrates that such phenomena as chauvinism, islamophobia and antisemitism have virtually outlived.

In 2016, following the request of the High Commissioner the Foundation “Public Opinion” carried out several researches, which revealed public perception of the observance and the protection of human rights and freedoms. A sociological survey demonstrated a ranking of rights and freedoms of man and citizen, due to which rights and freedoms in social sphere were prioritized by the Russian citizens. A similar situation was found in 2015 and 2014. This attests to the fact that the Russians are primarily interested in ensuring the right to have a decent quality of life.

Information received from regional commissioners for human rights (hereinafter – regional commissioners) also confirms this statistics.

In 2016, the cooperation between the High Commissioner with regional ones reached a new level since the establishment of comprehensive state human rights system had been completed, regional commissioners in all constituent entities of the Russian Federation had been appointed, and laws on regional commissioners had been adopted. Within this cooperation, activities related to the questions of combatting racism and different forms of discrimination in sport throughout the preparations to the 2018 FIFA World Cup in the Russian Federation are carried out.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup, as it is known, will be held in the following 11 cities of the Russian Federation: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Sochi, Rostov-on-Don, Volgograd, Samara, Nizhny Novgorod, Saransk, Ekaterinburg, and Kazan.

Under the aegis of the High Commissioner, regional commissioners and the OHCHR the following activities took place:

* On 28 October, 2015 seminar “The role of commissioners for human rights in combatting racism and discrimination in football” was held in St. Petersburg;
* On 21 March, 2016 round-table “The promotion of diversity and the creation of an environment free from discrimination in the cities hosting 2018 FIFA World Cup – the role of St. Petersburg” was held in St. Petersburg.

During the event football experts informed participants about discrimination in sport, heads of footballs fans associations reported on their efforts to curb the manifestations of discrimination. The participants made the following suggestions:

* to involve regional commissioners in the discussion of issues related to discrimination in all spheres of social life, to reflect the issue in their annual reports;
* to include regional commissioners in those constituent entities, where the 2018 FIFA World Cup is going to be held, into regional organizing committees on coordination of the preparatory work for the 2018 FIFA World Cup;
* to create a coordination mechanism, supported by the relevant authorities, in response to the occurrences of racial discrimination aimed at combatting it at regional level;
* to develop cooperation with international organizations, including UN, to consider and to share best practices (for instance, of fan embassies).

Following the request of the High Commissioner to the Governors of the aforementioned cities, regional commissioners were, in one way or another, included into the 2018 FIFA World Cup Organizing Committees.

Moreover, in the majority of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation there are different social organizations, aimed at succession planning, dealing with inter-ethnic issues, sharing vast experience of ethno cultural activities through cooperation between national cultures, and preserving people’s traditions (for instance, Youth Assembly of Tatarstan Peoples).

In a number of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, inter alia, the project “Strengthening of the unity of the Russian nation and harmonization of inter-ethnic relations” is being realized (the Republic of Khakassia, the Arkhangelsk Region, the Kurgan Region etc.). There are advisory bodies in inter-ethnic and interfaith areas (the Council for inter-ethnic relations, which was established by Order of the Governor of the Arkhangelsk Region No.393-p as of 21 May, 2015 “On Establishment of the Council for inter-ethnic relations”, the Council for inter-ethnic and interfaith relations under the Administration of the region, which was established by Decision of the Administration No.109 as of 29 March, 2011, and other).

Social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrant workers in the Russian Federation is a part of the activities for combatting racial and other forms of discrimination. Therefore, in the Moscow Region workshops on the Russian legislation, the history and the culture of the Russian Federation and the Russian language are held for migrant workers. The Moscow Region Spiritual Council of Muslims developed a plan of work for migrant workers, including coreligionists, who arrived in the Russian Federation from the Central Asian Republics. Meetings with migrants are regularly organized, during which imams explain the rules of conduct in the Russian modern society, customs and culture of peoples living in the Moscow Region.

Nowadays, a package of measures to promote ethnocultural development of the Finno-Ugric peoples of the Russian Federation is being implemented on the territory of the Moscow Region. In other Russian regions many activities have taken place to strengthen inter-ethnic harmony, people celebrate memorable dates.

Thus, the festival of national and non-Olympic sports of the countries of CIS will be held from 11 to 15 August 2017 in the Ulyanovsk Region. It is the first ever games, which unite national, cultural and sport traditions, as well as values of peoples around the globe. More than 70,000 persons are going to participate in the festival.

In the city of federal importance Sevastopol, the Day of sorrow and remembrance for victims of deportation of Crimean Tatars is commemorated every year on 18 May. Memorial march is held, people lay flowers to the monument “Victims of the deportation”.

Inter-ethnic relations in the Crimea, in general, are inextricably linked with confessional issues, since representatives of various peoples may profess Christianity, Islam and other religions. It is obvious, that any conflicts involving representatives of different nationalities and religions may become public, including through mass media and Internet. Therefore, the existing peace and harmony in the Republic, as well as in Russia are destructively influenced.

In 2016, the High Commissioner visited the Republic of Crimea in order to check alleged violations of the rights of Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians in the Crimea, including those being in detention facilities. However, no breaches of the current law were found.

It must be noted, that the establishment of the requisite number of educational institutions, classes, groups and the creation of environment for their activities ensure the rights of minor citizens of the Republic of Crimea to receive preschool, primary and basic general education in their mother tongue, and the right to study their native languages.

The Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages teaching and learning are possible upon an application of parents. According to the needs of the population, in educational institutions there are classes, where the instruction is conducted in one of the aforementioned languages.

During the current school year (2017), 16 general education institutions provide instruction in Crimean Tatar and 1 school provides instruction in Ukrainian. Moreover, classes with Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian instructions are currently functioning under general education institutions with Russian instruction. In general education facilities in the Republic of Crimea pupils study the following languages: Crimean Tatar (10,402 pupils), Ukrainian (9,316 pupils), modern Greek (62 pupils), German (50 pupils).

Different activities with a similar focus are going on in other regions of the Russian Federation, information on which you can find on the respective page of “Human rights map of the Russian Federation”.

“Human rights map of the Russian Federation” is the information and awareness-raising project, which was launched in 2016. It contains statistics, results of sociological researches, information about efforts of the federal and the regional commissioners for human rights, texts and lists of the federal and the regional legislation regulating their activities. In this section, which is an annex to the 2016 Annual Report of the High Commissioner and which is available on the official web-site of the High Commissioner (<http://ombudsmanrf.org/>), it is possible to find full and detailed information about the efforts of the commissioners, aimed at, inter alia, combatting racial discrimination.

Within the framework of the Moscow component of the OHCHR Minorities Fellowship Program, the High Commissioner has been receiving trainees to carry out training workshops, focusing on the situation of indigenous peoples of the Russian Federation, for three years. In a number of the constituent entities, there are commissioners for indigenous peoples protecting rights of the aforementioned category of citizens, with whom video link is set up during workshops.

The High Commissioner is very active in the awareness-raising activities, one of the aims of which is to provide vulnerable categories of citizens with legal assistance. At the same time, the emphasis is placed on the possibility to put knowledge gained into practice. On the one hand, awareness-raising projects provide legal information for a wide range of persons, and, on the other hand, provide free legal aid for individuals.

The Russian Federation holds one of the leading roles among the states in terms of the extent of migration flows. In 2016, more than 16.3 million migrants were registered. It is obvious that such large-scale migration flows, comparable to the population of some European countries, go hand in hand with serious social and economic problems, which affect many areas of public life. This is also reflected in the applicants' appeals.

Lately, the problems of labor migration, in particular, the acquisition of patents became less censorious due to the establishment of Centers on migrants, which allow going through all the statutory steps in one place in order to obtain a work permit. One of such Centers is located on the territory of Moscow.

Within the framework of the Coordinating Council of Commissioners for Human Rights in Central Federal District, the commissioners visited the aforementioned Center and noted positive trends in guaranteeing human rights in the migration sphere and in implementing the High Commissioner's proposals through the efforts of the Moscow Government.

The "Multifunctional Migration Center" renders the whole complex of services for obtaining a work permit in the capital. Foreign citizens can pass a test on the Russian language, the history of the Russian Federation, legal foundation, to take medical tests, to obtain a VHI policy, to get other services, such as notarial and banking ones.

It seems that this system and organization of work could become a model for regulating migration, optimal for everyone - for the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, for residents, and for migrants themselves.

In 2016, the High Commissioner received 1,828 individual and collective citizens’ complaints against violations of rights and freedoms in the area of migration. The complains are received not only from the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, but also from the CIS countries, Israel, Turkey, the United States, Latvia and others.

In addition to measures taken, in 2015 the High Commissioner presented his Commentary on the Report of the Russian Federation to the Council of Europe Commission against Racism and Intolerance. In May 2017, the representative of the High Commissioner’s Office took part in the Commission annual seminar, during which a presentation on the mandate of the High Commissioner was given.

Nowadays, inter-ethnic and interfaith environment remains stable in the Russian Federation. There are no tensions, national or religious conflicts.

The Russian national legislation is set up on the sectorial basis, which means that anti-discrimination principles, enshrined in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, appear in all branches of law.

Therefore, the effective tool is not the adoption of laws of general application, but the correct practice of implementation of the current legislation, in which improvement the High Commissioner, as well as regional ones are actively involved.

For more information on measures to prevent and to avoid manifestations of racial discrimination, please refer to annual reports of the High Commissioner.