



Téléfax: (41-22) 917 90 08
Télégrammes: UNATIONS, GENEVE
Téléx: 41 29 62
Téléphone: (41-22) 9179193
Internet www.ohchr.org
E-mail: ghabtom@ohchr.org



Address:
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 GENEVE 10

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Excellency,

I wish to inform you that the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, in the course of its 78th session, considered the follow-up report submitted by the Government of Greece, pursuant to Rule 65(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.

The Committee welcomes the timely submission of the report, in response to its request to receive information within one year on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs of the Concluding Observations (CERD/C/GRC/CO/16-19), adopted following the consideration of the State party's 16th to 19th periodic reports in August 2009. The Committee appreciates the opportunity provided to continue its dialogue with the State party, and would like to draw the State party's attention to the observations mentioned below. The Committee requests that comments and responses on actions taken by the State party on these issues be included in its 20th and 21st periodic reports to be submitted in a single document by 18 July 2013.

Paragraph 12 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee thanks the State party for the information provided and commends its collaboration with National Human Rights Institutions, which gave the Committee a frank and more complete response.

The Committee recognizes the complexities of the situation regarding the large influx of third party nationals into the State party. It acknowledges the will of the State party to address this challenge shown in its efforts to treat asylum seekers more humanely and to reduce the period of detention of asylum-seekers, in particular unaccompanied children. The Committee, however, reiterates its concern over the situation of migrants, including unaccompanied children, particularly regarding their detention in inadequate facilities, the continued allegations of ill-treatment by Greek law enforcement officials, and the heightened vulnerability of persons in need of international protection.

The Committee reminds the State party of its responsibility to adhere to international standards of protection and especially to end the detention of vulnerable populations such as unaccompanied children, asylum-seekers, and trafficking victims. It urges the State party to end the subjection of migrants to poor conditions in detention and encourages it to consider alternatives to detention. It recalls that not all entries of undocumented persons into the State party are "illegal" and that the international protection and assistance to eligible persons must be ensured. The Committee encourages the State party in its creation of an independent asylum administration to oversee first reception centers across the country.

H.E. Mr. Georges J. Kaklikis
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Greece to UNOG
Rue du Léman 4
1201 Geneva
Fax: +41 22 732 21 50

The Committee remains concerned by allegations of Greece's failure to protect unaccompanied minors and encourages the State party to strengthen the operation of existing institutions appointed to serve and protect this group, and to increase the number of care centers. The Committee also expresses its encouragement to the State party to strengthen its cooperation with NGOs.

The Committee shares the view of the State party that effective and fair procedures for examining applications for international protection and suitable facilities for receiving and accommodating persons in need of international protection are necessary. In that regard, the Committee welcomes recent legislative changes which, if implemented as foreseen, could aid the State party address the challenges posed by irregular immigration as well as enable it to abide by its international obligations. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the adequate human and financial resources for the implementation of new legislation on the reform of the asylum system.

The Committee notes with interest information from the State party stating that officials dealing with issues related to foreign citizens, migrants and asylum seekers act in full respect for human rights, human dignity, and diversity, and respectfully requests that the State party submit additional information of how this is ensured in practice in its next periodic report.

Paragraph 13 of Concluding Observations. While thanking the State party for the information provided, the Committee respectfully requests the State party to provide further clarification on how it ensures the socially sensitive and fair treatment by law enforcement officials of all citizens, without discrimination in practice, when handling issues relating to Roma citizens. It also requests statistics and examples of investigations, prosecution and sanctioning of ill-treatment and abuse of authority by Greek police against persons belonging to vulnerable groups, in particular the Roma.

The Committee notes with interest the draft provisions on the establishment of an Office responsible for handling alleged instances of abuse under the Ministry of Citizens' Protection and encourages the State party in this regard.

The Committee recommends that the State party continue its awareness-raising programmes for law-enforcement officials, including the police, prosecutors and judges on what constitute racial discrimination and racially-motivated crimes and to promote respect for human rights. The Committee reiterates that it encourages the State party to recruit more Roma into police forces, and that it consider the adoption of special measures or affirmative actions to promote the recruitment of members of the Roma community. The Committee recommends that equal opportunity be guaranteed to applicants from different ethnic backgrounds and encourages the State party to take into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 31 on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system.

Rest assured, Excellency, that the Committee looks forward to continuing its constructive dialogue with the Government of Greece, with a view to providing it with assistance in its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention.

Yours sincerely,



Anwar Kemal
Chairperson of the Committee
on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination