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Mr. Ambassador,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Conclusions and Recommendations of the United Nations Committee against Torture, I refer to the examination of the fourth periodic report of Finland (CAT/C/67/Add.1) by this Committee at its 34th session on 9 to 10 May 2005.

At the end of this session, the Committee's Conclusions and Recommendations (CAT/C/CR/34/FIN) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. In paragraph 7 of those Conclusions and Recommendations, pursuant to its rules of procedures, the Committee requested that Finland provide, within one year, information regarding areas of particular concern identified by the Committee in paragraphs 5 (c), (d), and (e).

The Committee has adopted a follow-up procedure to pursue issues that are serious, that can be accomplished by the State party in a one year period, and that are protective. Noting that a reply concerning the information sought by the Committee was provided on May 19, 2006 (CAT/C/CR/34/FIN), I am writing to express sincere appreciation for your responses on these matters and the detailed information and explanations provided.

Substantial information sought by the Committee has been provided in part on 5 (c), (d), and (f), and from the analysis of this information, I would be grateful for clarification as to the following concerns, where sufficient information has not been supplied with regard to the implementation of the Convention in Finland.

With regard to paragraph 5(c), we note with interest the report by the Ombudsman for Minorities on the application of the accelerated asylum procedure. We would appreciate information on measures that have been taken to address the problem of interpretation of the asylum procedure, mentioned in paragraph 12 of your response, particularly in terms of administrative instructions or legislative amendments. Also, information on procedures in place to assure the access of the asylum-seeker to legal assistance during the accelerated procedure would be helpful. We would also appreciate information on the training provided to police officers responsible for enforcing the decision relating to asylum, mentioned in paragraph 7 of your response, and specifically with regard to article 147 of the Aliens Act and article 3 of the Convention.

H.E. M. Vesa Himanen
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Additionally, are there any statistical data on the number of refusal of entry cases which are appealed to the Administrative Court and the results of such appeals, as well as information on the process required for an asylum-seeker to make such an appeal within the eight day period?

In paragraph 5(d), the Committee recommended completion of implementing the working group suggestions on the situation of Roma prisoners in Finland. We appreciate learning that the Prison Administration is preparing an equality plan for prisons. We would welcome information on the content of that plan and up to date information on its implementation. Added information on the initiative to be submitted by the Advisory Board and Roma Education Unit to the Criminal Sanctions Agency, including more details on the initiative and the time frame for its implementation, would be appreciated.

We note that basic and vocational education and training has been provided for Roma prisoners. Further information would be appreciated on the proposed steps to implement the designation of support persons for released Roma prisoners and a Roma contact persons for the prisons, as well as the timeline for this.

Finally, regarding recommendation 5(e) that Finland consider means to accelerate the prison renovation programme and interim solutions to the practice of "slopping out," the Committee would appreciate information on the methods used to determine that prisoners did not wish to have chemical lavatory alternatives in the prison cells, as you mention in paragraph 23. We would appreciate up to date information on the renovations to Riihimaki Prison that were scheduled to be completed in 2006, as well as information on the Prison of South-western Finland, scheduled to open in the second half of 2007, as stated in paragraph 24 of your response. Finally, what other alternatives are being considered to the chemical lavatories or "slopping out" for the prisons in which renovations will not occur prior to 2010?

Upon receipt of your replies to this request for additional information, the Committee will be able to assess whether further information or action is still needed. The Committee looks forward to pursuing the constructive dialogue it has started with the authorities of Finland on the implementation of the Convention and, in this context, to receiving clarification to the enquiries in this letter.

Accept, Mr. Ambassador, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Felice Gaer
Rapporteur for Follow-up on Conclusions and Recommendations
Committee Against Torture