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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 Bulgaria, 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/BGR/CO/19), adopted following the consideration of the State party's 15th to 19th periodic reports in March 2009. The Committee thus appreciates the opportunity provided to continue the 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 13 January 2012.

Paragraph 13 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee thanks the State party for the information submitted and applauds the ongoing efforts by the State party to integrate Roma children into mixed schools. Nevertheless, the Committee urges the State party to take all measures possible to end the practice of placing Roma children in special schools reserved for children with disabilities. It also recommends that the State party conduct meaningful awareness-raising campaigns, including for Roma parents and the personnel of the concerned institutions, and that it take steps to ensure that alternative accommodation is provided for the affected children. The Committee further encourages the State party to continue its efforts in this regard and that it seek to address the root causes of this practice.

H.E. Mr. Gancho Ganev
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Paragraph 15 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee is grateful for the information provided and in particular with regard to the new Framework Programme for Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society, 2010-2020 and other measures taken to improve access to work, health care, housing and education for Roma. The Committee requests further clarification and examples of the implementation of the Programme, its results and the impact it has had on addressing the social isolation of Roma. The Committee encourages the State party in all its efforts to enhance the impact and effectiveness of all such programmes and requests the State party to provide this information in its next periodic report.

Paragraph 16 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee thanks the State party for the information provided on its efforts to objectively deal with complaints directed against the police, including the work of the Permanent Commission on Human Rights and Police Ethics as well as awareness-raising activities for both the police and ethnic minorities.

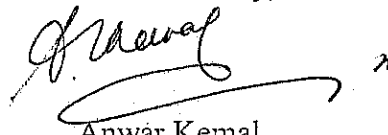
The Committee reiterates its concern and regrets that information on more effective and tangible measures has not been provided. It regrets the absence of information on efforts by the State party to integrate Roma into the police service. The Committee respectfully requests additional information on this issue in the next periodic report of the State party. The Committee reiterates the fact that equal opportunities must be granted to applicants from all 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.

The Committee also requests further information from the State party, to be contained in the next periodic report, on the situation of victims of police misconduct, including on possible reparation measures taken for victims while prosecuting the perpetrators, as well as statistics and examples of investigations, prosecution and sanctioning of ill-treatment and abuse of authority by Bulgarian police against persons belonging to minority groups, in particular the Roma.

Paragraph 18 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee notes the detailed information provided by the State party and is thankful to the State party for its efforts at complying with the recommendations in paragraph 18 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee encourages the State party to continue with its ongoing efforts to ensure that acts of hatred and racist stereotypes are penalized and prosecuted; that reparation is provided to victims of such acts and tolerance is promoted through training and awareness-raising activities.

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

Yours sincerely,



Anwār Kemal

Chairperson of the Committee
on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination