



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF  
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN  
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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION  
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS SIXTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

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Addendum

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES  
PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

B. Consideration of reports

1. Initial reports of States parties

Slovenia

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Slovenia (CEDAW/C/SVN/1) at its 314th, 315th and 321st meetings, on 15 and 20 January 1997.

2. The report was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, who emphasized the importance his Government attaches to the international human rights treaties and in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and expressed its support for an early adoption of the Optional Protocol to the Convention.

3. The Director of the Office for Women's Policy of Slovenia then proceeded to provide an update of Slovenia's initial report, submitted to the Secretariat in 1993 in accordance with article 18 of the Convention. She noted that the report was prepared during the period of economic and political restructuring by her Office and in cooperation with the responsible ministries and other institutions, including non-governmental organizations. The impact of the

transition on women could not yet be fully assessed, but Slovenia had prepared an updated report as an appendix to the initial report, which it had submitted to the Committee early in 1997. The information provided in this document allows some initial assessment in this regard.

4. The Committee was informed that the Office for Women's Policy had been created during the early stage of transition from socialism to parliamentary democracy. It had been established by the Government in July 1992, as the central policy coordinating unit of the Government, responsible for implementing the rights of women guaranteed by the Constitution, laws and international agreements. The Office is an important step forward in the integration of the principle of gender equality into the government policies.

5. The representative of Slovenia outlined the political, economic and legal situation in Slovenia and their impact on the de facto status of women. Slovenia is a country in transition, which has preserved a relatively high degree of social protection in an environment of economic stability and growth. Unemployment and other problems of transition have affected women but to a lesser degree than men. The Committee took note of the general circumstances and focused on the specific issues pertaining to the questions of the rights of women. The Committee also took note of how the rights of women were guaranteed and protected by the Constitution, to what extent Slovenian women were involved in political decision-making and how they had been participating in ongoing democratization.

6. The Government of Slovenia is particularly concerned about the prevalence of the traditional gender stereotypes and certain forms of de facto discrimination against women. With regard to education, it was reported that while women enjoyed a high level of education in general, there were clear differences in what women and men preferred to study, with women concentrated in traditionally female subjects. Women, especially the young and educated, were facing difficulties in getting employment. The Slovenian pension system benefited women and men differentially. Women's generally lower pensions were a reflection of the lower paid sectors in which women were employed and the frequent leave women took in order to care for their children. Despite the law that guarantees the right of both father and mother to take parental leave, fathers still failed to play an equal role in the care of children and in their education. With regard to women's reproductive health, it was noted that the right to abortion was guaranteed by the Constitution, however, the Committee was alerted to the high rate of abortion, despite the wide and legal availability of contraception and contraceptive advice.

7. In concluding the presentation, the representative of Slovenia recognized that much remained to be done to achieve full equality between women and men, and assured the Committee of the willingness of her Government to undertake all the necessary measures to achieve the principles established in the Convention.

### Introduction

8. The Committee welcomed the high-level representation of the Government of Slovenia and applauded the fact that, after gaining its independence, the Government had quickly accepted the international human rights obligations assumed by the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It commended the Government for its timely submission of a well-structured, informative and honest report, which followed the reporting guidelines of the Committee and gave a frank picture of the situation of women in Slovenia. It also welcomed the additional collection of statistical data, which were comprehensive in certain areas and were disaggregated by sex, as well as the extensive answers to the Committee's questions, which were given both in oral and written form. The Committee also took note of the support of the Government of Slovenia to the formulation of an Optional Protocol to the Convention and applauded the fact that an action plan was being prepared to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

### Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

9. The Committee was aware of the difficulties Slovenia was facing as a result of the transition towards democracy and a social-market economy and the need to build a different civil society. Many of these difficulties can, and do, have a negative impact on the situation of women in Slovenia and thus impede the legal and practical implementation of the Convention. The Committee was also aware that sex-role stereotypes relating to the nature of women and men and the "appropriate" work for the sexes were pervasive in Slovenian society. Those stereotypes had not been questioned under the former political system, despite its adherence to formal equality between women and men.

### Positive aspects

10. The Committee welcomed the sensitivity towards gender issues expressed by the Government of Slovenia and by certain sectors of the newly emerging civil society, in particular in the number of non-governmental organizations for women.

11. It applauded the extensive human rights guarantees in the Slovenian Constitution, in particular those guarantees relating to the human rights of women. It welcomed the fact that the Convention took precedence over national legislation. The immediate effect of the Convention in the Slovenian legal system and legislation providing women with de jure equality was welcomed by the Committee, as was the integration of human rights principles into its ongoing process of legislative reform and into its newly formulated policies.

12. The Committee commended the active women's machinery, the Office for Women Policy, founded in 1992, which operates as an independent government advisory service, advising the Government on legislation, policies and programmes and which, through campaigns and programmes, seeks to improve gender sensitivity in the population.

13. The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Government to eliminate stereotyped images of women in the media and in advertising, as well as the National Programme for Households, which aims at helping young women and men to share work and family responsibilities in a non-stereotyped way.

14. The Committee noted that the Government of Slovenia was aware of the widespread violence against women in the private sphere, and that it was developing, through its national machinery and by supporting non-governmental organizations that act on behalf of women, measures to combat that violence and to assist victims. It also commended the steps towards new legislation to protect prostitutes.

15. The Committee applauded the temporary special efforts of the Office for Women's Policies to raise awareness and to introduce measures to increase women's representation in parliament. It noted the high number of women in the judiciary and the promising figures of women's enrolment in the faculties of law at Slovenian universities with satisfaction. It also noted the significant representation of women in high-level administrative jobs. It applauded the fact that a large number of non-governmental organizations for women had been formed in a relatively short time and the cooperation fostered by the Office for Women's Policies with non-governmental organizations, in particular during the preparation of the report and in the formulation of the National Platform of Action, which seeks to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

16. The Committee commended the Government on the high level of women's education in Slovenia, on envisioned educational reforms and on the efforts that had been made to include human rights education at various levels of the school curriculum. It noted with satisfaction that courses in women's studies were offered at some universities and that research on the impact of the depiction of women in textbooks was being carried out.

17. The Committee took note of the existence of a formal day-care system that provides day-care to slightly more than 50 per cent of children up to the age of 7. The Committee welcomed the revision of the existing labour legislation and the formulation of new equality provisions in this legislative area. It also welcomed the fact that in this legislation, the principle of "equal pay for equal work" and for "work of equal value" would be considered. It noted with satisfaction that a high percentage of women were employed. It welcomed the envisioned provisions against sexist language in job classifications and advertisements and noted with satisfaction the discussion of a legislative proposal on parental leave that would give a greater share of responsibility to fathers.

#### Areas of concern

18. The Committee was concerned that the Office for Women's Policies had an advisory role only and was, therefore, dependent on the political will of the Government. It was concerned that the human and financial resources of the Office might be too small considering the tasks it had to tackle.

19. The Committee also noted with concern the pervasiveness and entrenched nature of sex-role stereotypes and pointed to the risk that such stereotypes might be strengthened because of the difficult economic, social and cultural changes the population of Slovenia was facing. The Committee was of the view that one of the results of sex-role stereotyping was that women performed most of the household work and thus had a double burden of work.

20. Concern was also expressed whether the real extent of violence against women was being discovered and whether the current measures were sufficient not only to combat it, but also to assist its victims of the various stages of dealing with incidents of violence after its occurrence, that is, finding support by police and judges, getting counselling, getting placements in shelters, rebuilding new lives and so on.

21. The Committee noted with great concern that the numbers of women represented in politics were falling despite the various measures that had been undertaken in that sphere.

22. The Committee was concerned about the clustering of female students in certain disciplines, both at schools and universities, which did not provide optimum employment opportunities. The Committee was also concerned that a gender-neutral educational framework might not be sufficient to counteract hidden sex-stereotypical educational messages and practices or to provide gender-related educational experiences.

23. The Committee was concerned that less than 30 per cent of children under 3 years and slightly more than half of all children between 3 and 6 years were in formal day care, and that the remaining number of children, although lovingly cared for by grandmothers, might miss out on educational and social opportunities that were offered in formal day-care institutions.

24. The Committee noted with concern that women were clustered in certain jobs and professions and at certain job levels. It noted the feminization of the medical profession and the low wages in that sector. It was alarmed by the high number of young unemployed women who were looking for a first job and was aware that failure to find such employment might confine women to the role of homemaker. In that context, the Committee took account of the unfortunate fact that market economies tended to favour male employees who, by virtue of traditional roles and work allocation, were deemed unencumbered by family responsibilities.

25. The Committee was concerned that temporary work for women might be institutionalized and that women would thus be marginalized in the labour market and become victims of indirect discrimination. It was also concerned that occupational health standards for women might result in discrimination against women in employment.

26. The Committee noted with concern the very high number of abortions and the corresponding low use of contraception. Concern was also voiced with respect to the large numbers of single parent families, usually headed by women.

Suggestions and recommendations

27. The Committee recommended that the ongoing revision of laws should take account of hidden, indirect and structural discrimination and that sufficient attention should be paid to the formulation of temporary special measures in the fields of politics, education, employment and the implementation of de jure and de facto equality for women. It recommended that the judiciary should be made aware of the meaning of indirect and structural discrimination, de facto equality and the concept of temporary special measures.

28. The Committee suggested that the Government of Slovenia, as well as the non-governmental organizations for women, should be aware that the concept of privacy of family life and the reproductive role of women can be utilized to hide violence against women and reinforce sex-role stereotypes.

29. The Committee recommended the establishment of the proposed gender equality ombudsperson.

30. It recommended the establishment of a formal complaint procedure and a formal evaluation board outside the Chamber of Commerce, which includes all sectors of society, to address sexist advertisements. This procedure should incorporate sanctions against offending advertising agents.

31. The Committee recommended new efforts directed at the political education of women and men and of political parties in order to ensure more effective temporary measures that would increase the representation of women at all levels of political life.

32. The Committee suggested that the Government of Slovenia make structured efforts to overcome the clustering of female students in certain disciplines at schools and at universities. Such measures could include special counselling and gender-specific temporary measures with numerical goals and timetables. It also recommended that women's studies be formally established at universities and become part of the school curriculum.

33. The Committee recommended the creation of more formal and institutionalized child-care places for children under 3 years as well as for those of 3 to 6 years.

34. The Committee strongly recommended that revised labour legislation should contain equality and anti-discrimination provisions and strong sanctions for non-compliance. It also recommended temporary special measures with concrete numerical goals and timetables in order to overcome employment segregation. The Committee strongly recommended the adoption of parental leave legislation in which part of the leave was mandatory for the father.

35. The Committee encouraged the Government to create assistance programmes for women who wished to start their own businesses and to educate banks and other relevant institutions about women's capacities in that area. It also encouraged the creation of specific government-subsidized employment opportunities for young women and to address their unemployment with specific measures, including quotas related to their percentage of the unemployed population.

36. The Committee also recommended measures to expedite the collection of data in the health sector so as to provide the basis for legislation, policies and programmes.

37. The Committee suggested concentrated efforts towards family planning education including an emphasis that abortion is not a method of contraception. It suggested that when couples decided to have no further children, men should be encouraged to consider sterilization.

38. The Committee urged the wide dissemination of these concluding comments in Slovenia to make Slovenians aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps that were required in this regard.

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