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COMMISSION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME  
Cinquante-troisième session  
Point 10 de l'ordre du jour

QUESTION DE LA VIOLATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES LIBERTES  
FONDAMENTALES, OU QU'ELLE SE PRODUISE DANS LE MONDE, EN PARTICULIER  
DANS LES PAYS ET TERRITOIRES COLONIAUX ET DEPENDANTS

Lettre datée du 11 avril 1997, adressée au Président de la Commission  
des droits de l'homme par le Chargé d'affaires par intérim  
de la Mission permanente de la Bulgarie auprès de  
de l'Office des Nations Unies à Genève

La Mission permanente de la République de Bulgarie auprès de l'Office  
des Nations Unies à Genève demande que le document ci-joint soit distribué  
comme document officiel de la cinquante-troisième session de la Commission  
des droits de l'homme au titre du point 10 de son ordre du jour.

Le Chargé d'affaires par intérim

(Signé) Konstantin ANDREEV

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\*/ Le document joint en annexe est reproduit tel quel, dans la langue  
originale.

**Comments on the letter of Mr. Miroslav Milosevic - Chargé  
d'affaires, a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Federal  
Republic of Yugoslavia dated 18 March 1997  
(doc.E/CN.4/1997/125)**

These comments are in response to the letter of the Charge d'affaires, a.i. of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) at Geneva, which was circulated as an official document of the 53rd session of the Commission on Human Rights under reference E/CN.4/1997/125.

We would not have referred to the above letter, if its Annex did not contain certain curious interpretations aimed at diverting the attention of the Commission on Human Rights away from existing human rights violations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

We were quite amazed at the "revelation" that one third of Bulgaria's population is of non-Bulgarian origin. In addition to really existing ethnic groups in my country, this one-third supposedly includes also groups which could not be found even in the most exotic ethnographic studies. Among them, for instance, is the newly-invented "Yugoslav minority" which presumably exists also in other neighbouring countries of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). It is quite obvious that "Yugoslav" is not an ethnic, religious or linguistic feature, but only and uniquely a definition for citizenship. Furthermore, prior to enlisting the Moslems among the non-Bulgarians, the Yugoslav charge d'affaires, a.i. should have been better advised that Moslem is a religious but not an ethnic identity. In fact, in accordance with the latest population census in Bulgaria, carried out in 1992, 86% of the Bulgarian citizens are Bulgarians. Obviously, the remaining 14% are far below the claimed one-third of the population. The remaining part includes Turks (9.4%), Gypsies (3.7%), Armenians (0.16%), Tatars (0.05%), Jews (0.04%), Gagauses (0.017%), and others.

It would be quite difficult to solve the existing open minority issue in the relations between Bulgaria and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) on a "reciprocal basis" since it is related solely and only to the situation of the Bulgarian national minority in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The Yugoslav side is well aware that it was from Bulgaria, and not from Serbia, that following World War I a sizeable territory was cut off together with its compact 120 000 strong

Bulgarian population. A population which has been since then subjected to a systematic pressure of assimilation.

In his letter the Yugoslav charge d'affaires a.i. demonstrates an enviable "knowledge" of Bulgarian foreign policy, particularly as far as Bulgarian minorities abroad are concerned. He alleges that Bulgaria is not interested in the situation of its larger minorities abroad, that it does not maintain a dialogue with the countries where they live - such as Ukraine, Russia and Moldova. However, attempts to incite minority problems in Bulgaria's bilateral relations with these countries, are doomed to failure. As a matter-of-fact Bulgaria follows closely the situation of the Bulgarian minorities in the above-mentioned countries. Mainly as a result of this interest and concern we are aware that Bulgarian communities in these countries enjoy rights and opportunities to preserve their ethnic self-identification and to promote their traditions and culture. It is to be regretted that the same cannot be said about the Bulgarian national minority in Serbia, in spite of the numerous steps initiated by the Bulgarian side within the framework of bilateral relations. The facts about the situation of this minority are contained in detail in document 49/455, as well as in a number of reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights in Former Yugoslavia. Concerns over this situation have been reflected in resolution 51/116 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, as well as in resolutions 1995/89 and 1996/71 of the Commission on Human Rights.

We consider it unacceptable to substitute internationally recognized really existing problems, for instance the one of the practical implementation of the rights of the Bulgarian national minority in the Republic of Serbia, with non-existing issues.

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