



**International Convention on
the Elimination
of all Forms of
Racial Discrimination**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION
OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
Fifty-first session

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION

Concluding observations of the Committee on the
Elimination of Racial Discrimination

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

1. The Committee considered the initial, second and third periodic reports, consolidated in one document, of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (CERD/270/Add.2) at its 1226th and 1227th meetings (CERD/C/SR/1226 and 1227), held on 11 and 12 August 1997, and at its 1241st meeting, held on 21 August 1997, adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee commends the State party on the quality of its initial report prepared in accordance with the Committee's guidelines. The Committee notes with appreciation the high-level delegation which presented the report, indicating the importance attached by the State party to the Convention. It further notes the open and constructive dialogue with representatives of the State party. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the delegation of the State party for the additional information that it provided to the Committee orally and in writing.

B. Factors and difficulties impeding the implementation
of the Convention

3. It is recognized that the State party has experienced considerable economic difficulties, partly resulting from hostilities in the Balkan region, which have had a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights, including those protected by the Convention.

C. Positive aspects

4. The State party is commended for the many legislative acts which have been adopted in order to comply with the provisions of the Convention, including the Act on Public Information; the Act on Telecommunications, which prohibits the use of mass media to incite national, racial or religious hatred or intolerance; the Act on Political Parties, which prohibits the establishment of those parties whose aim is the incitement of national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance, and the Act on Social Organizations and Citizens' Associations, which prohibits activities which violate human freedoms and rights or encourage national, racial or religious hatred or intolerance.

5. The willingness affirmed by representatives of the State party during the dialogue with the Committee to make the declaration under article 14 of the Convention and to consider the ratification of the amendments to article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention adopted at the 14th meeting of States parties, is welcomed.

D. Principal subjects of concern

6. The lack of statistical information on the invocation of the various protections against racial discrimination, in particular those referred to in paragraph 4 above, is noted with concern.

7. It is noted that the representation of various ethnic groups in the judiciary, Parliament, and other public bodies and agencies of Government continues to be less than their respective percentages in the population.

8. With respect to article 5 of the Convention, the lack of sufficient information on the participation of ethnic minorities in public life and on their economic and social situation, especially with regard to access to employment, health, education and housing, is regretted.

9. Concern is expressed that it was impossible to conduct the census in the whole territory of the State party.

10. Concern is expressed at the low levels of participation, in particular in secondary and higher education, of certain minorities, notably of Roma children and Albanian girl children in rural areas.

11. With regard to article 7 of the Convention, concern is expressed that there is little or no reference to the Convention in human rights educational programmes.

E. Suggestions and recommendations

12. More information is requested in the next periodic report concerning the participation of the various minorities in public life and the implementation and enjoyment by them, on a non-discriminatory basis, of the human rights contained in the various laws.

13. The Committee encourages the State party to continue its programmes of affirmative action in order to increase the representation of the ethnic minorities in public life, including in the civil service, army and police.

14. Emphasizing the role of the justice system in eliminating racial discrimination, the Committee asks to be provided with additional information on whether the Convention is directly applicable before the domestic courts, on the effectiveness of remedies in cases of racial discrimination, on the number of complaints of racial or racially motivated offences, and on the judicial action taken on those complaints and the redress or compensation awarded to victims.

15. The Committee recommends that the State party continue its efforts to facilitate the participation of different ethnic minorities in the educational system, in particular at the secondary and higher educational levels, and to provide for the training of teachers for minority languages in public establishments.

16. The Committee suggests that the State party consider incorporating the Convention into its human rights programmes in school curricula with a view to promoting the prevention of racial discrimination.

17. While recommending to the State party to provide greater educational and cultural opportunities to the Albanian minority, it was also felt that this minority should truly see its future as lying within the State party.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party's next periodic report, due on 17 September 1998, be an updating report and that it address all the points raised in the present observations.
