



**Convention against Torture
and Other Cruel, Inhuman
or Degrading Treatment
or Punishment**

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Committee against Torture

**Information received from Slovenia on follow-up
to the concluding observations on its fourth
periodic report***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Information on the implementation of the CAT priority recommendations on juvenile justice, migrant children, sexual and gender-based violence and the treatment of persons in psychiatric institutions

A. Follow-up information related to paragraph 17 of the concluding observations (CAT/C/SVN/CO/4)

1. As a preliminary point, it should be noted that the objective delimitation between cases in which a defence is always mandatory and cases in which the juvenile court judge decides whether the minor must be assisted by a defence counsel depends on the punishment prescribed by the Criminal Code for an adult perpetrator. Thus, the fact that a case is pending for an offence carrying a sentence of up to three years' imprisonment for an adult perpetrator does not mean that a minor may also face imprisonment for the same offence. Juvenile prison sentences may only be imposed on minors for offences punishable by five years' imprisonment or more for an adult perpetrator.
2. For offences punishable by less than three years' imprisonment for an adult perpetrator, a minor may only be sentenced to corrective measures or, under certain prescribed conditions, to a fine. Only in such cases does the court decide whether a minor needs a defence counsel, taking into account the minor's level of mental development, ability to understand and personal characteristics, the complexity of the case, and the gravity of possible sanctions or other measures that may be imposed on the minor in the specific proceedings. If these circumstances require that the minor needs to be represented by a lawyer, the juvenile court judge must appoint a lawyer ex officio. However, a minor may always be represented by a lawyer of their own choice or by their statutory representative or relatives. If a minor has no financial means, the State pays for their defence counsel within the framework of free legal aid.
3. In view of the above, we consider that the recommendation on the right of minors to defence counsel has been implemented.

Information on the Minors deprived of their liberty

4. In Slovenia, the two main institutions within the Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia that work with juvenile offenders are the Radeče Correctional Home and the Celje Juvenile and Adult Prison.
5. The Radeče Correctional Home is the only institution in Slovenia that carries out the correctional measure of placing minors in a correctional facility. Minors sentenced to imprisonment serve their sentences in the Celje Juvenile and Adult Prison. Special attention is paid to the treatment of juvenile offenders, focusing on an integrated approach combining education, upbringing and social integration and basic security. Central to this work is building a quality relationship between the juvenile and professional staff, with goals tailored to the needs, preferences and abilities of each young person. In exceptional cases, a judge may order a juvenile to be detained during criminal proceedings, which may take place in one of the competent prisons or a section thereof.
6. In dealing with minors, correctional facilities and prisons work closely with various external institutions – social work centres, courts and the police. Parents play an essential role in the therapy process, while the local community and the wider social environment are also actively involved in supporting young people.

Information on the Radeče Correctional Home

7. In 2023, 18 minors, including one female minor, were detained at the Radeče Correctional Home. These young people often come from backgrounds characterised by broken family relationships, unsuccessful previous institutional treatment and socially unstimulating environments without positive role models. They often have a sense of aimlessness, poor work and study habits, problems with illegal drug use, and various psychosocial developmental deficits. The aim of the correctional measure is not only to remove these young people from a harmful environment, but and more importantly to protect

and support young offenders dealing with emotional and behavioural problems, academic failure, and problematic patterns of behaviour.

8. At the Radeče Correctional Home, young people follow a structured daily routine that includes education, vocational training and educational activities, with each individual receiving support from professional staff. In addition to the focus on education, the programme encourages pro-social behaviour and effective use of leisure time. Specialised therapies (educational, social, psychological and specialist) are combined with a variety of leisure activities, including sports, creative projects and cultural activities. These activities help minors to learn how to use their free time productively, build social skills and gain a variety of empowering experiences. All work is highly structured and based on filling the whole day with quality, combining work-education processes, vocational-educational activities and leisure planning on a daily basis. Programmes and activities are set out in a personalised plan that is tailored to the needs and characteristics of the individual. This holistic approach not only helps minors to deal with their personal problems, but also builds the skills and confidence they need to successfully reintegrate into society once they have completed their correctional measure.

9. Educational work with minors follows a newly updated educational programme, introduced in March 2023, which is structured in a three-level, *step-by-step* approach:

- Level 1 – Initial Group: basic objective – introducing and helping minors to adjust to a new way of life;
- Level 2 – Drug-free Unit: basic objective – changing lifestyle actively and maintaining abstinence;
- Level 3 – Open Unit: basic objective – maintaining change and preparing for social reintegration into the community.

10. Young offenders are worked with individually and in groups. In group settings (educational groups), they learn about living together, building tolerant relationships, effective communication and healthy group dynamics. Continuous therapy is provided on an individual basis (i.e. therapies tailored to specific needs, such as those relating to drug and alcohol abuse, mental health issues, or sex offender therapy). Minors also receive regular medical care and religious and spiritual support during holidays.

11. REGULAR AND INTENSIVE MONITORING is provided by educational counsellors, who are on-site throughout the day (working in two shifts) from Monday to Friday. Each educational counsellor spends at least four hours a day with the minors, remaining closely involved in their daily routines and social interactions. They actively observe and assess the minors' moods, progress, behavioural deviations, relationships and group dynamics.

12. SOCIAL WORK is led by a social worker, who works with parents, social work centres and other external partners. The tasks include the process of admission of minors to the correctional facility (management of the admission unit) and the intensified support to minors (and their families) during the rehabilitation process until their release.

13. PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY is provided by an external psychologist from the Community Health Centre Radeče, who visits the correctional home on a weekly basis to provide psychological support to minors, carry out assessments and monitor progress. The psychologist also regularly participates in the professional team meetings. Despite ongoing efforts to recruit an in-house psychologist, the institution has faced challenges in filling this position, with no applicants responding to calls for applications.

14. SPECIALISED THERAPY: specialised therapy for perpetrators of criminal offences with elements of violence is provided to all minors in the Radeče Correctional Home, who are divided into two groups. This therapy is given through social skills training in a group format, with workshops usually held monthly for each group. The groups are led by an educational counsellor and a social worker who have received additional training in this subject.

15. Addiction treatment for minors with alcohol or drug problems is integrated into the overall therapy of minors and is implemented at all levels (initial group, drug-free unit and

open unit). Treatment for psychoactive substance abuse (PAS) is part of the programme at all levels – the initial group, drug-free unit and open unit – and involves all minors, both those with and those without such problems. Work is carried out on an individual basis and focuses mainly on education and motivation, with the aim of achieving and maintaining abstinence, active living and a healthy lifestyle.

16. For minors at risk of suicide, a suicide risk assessment questionnaire is completed by the social worker at the time of the minor's admission. If the admission takes place outside the social worker's working hours, the interview is conducted by the police officer of the correctional facility – the operational manager. Individuals identified as being at risk are then closely monitored with regular follow-up interviews and reviewed weekly by a team of experts at scheduled expert group meetings.

17. In the absence of an in-house psychologist, sex offenders are treated by psychologists from Dob Prison, depending on their availability.

Information on Healthcare

18. Healthcare for the minors is provided by the Community Health Centre Radeče. Since 15 January 2024, a registered nurse has been employed in the correctional home to support outpatient services and to actively engage in preventive health initiatives (e.g. workshops on preventing the spread of infectious diseases). The nurse also organises regular supervised physical exercises for minors and staff.

19. Professional staff routinely check the cleanliness and tidiness of the minors' living and common quarters. With consistent supervision and additional encouragement, the overall condition of the facility is well maintained.

Information on Organised activities for Minors

20. In addition to structured daily activities within the correctional facility, including sports, arts and social programmes, minors are offered a range of activities outside the facility, subject to individual safety risk assessments. These external activities aim to provide new experiences, develop social skills and promote healthy habits for constructive leisure time.

21. This year, various events have been organised for all major holidays, as well as cultural, sporting and educational activities outside the correctional facility. Minors are actively involved in the planning and organisation of these events. In order to enrich the daily experience, the correctional facility seeks to regularly invite external partners from different fields to collaborate on activities. Programmes are tailored to the correctional facility's resources and the specific needs of the young people involved. In response to the growing number of Roma young people who were imposed a correctional measure, workshops focusing on Roma culture have also been introduced.

22. Events organised this year:

- 11 January 2024 – Swimming at Thermana Laško;
- 23 January 2024 – Sledding at Magolnik;
- 24 January 2024 – Clothes shopping in a Celje shopping centre;
- 6 February 2024 – Watching a film at a cinema in Celje;
- 7 February 2024 – Attendance at a cultural event in Radeče;
- 20 February 2024 – Watching a film at a cinema in Celje;
- 21 February 2024 – Attendance at a handball match in Celje;
- 5 March 2024 – Attendance at a jazz concert in Radeče;
- 7 March 2024 – Attendance at a handball match in Celje;
- 8 March 2024 – Hike to the Svinjski Rt mountain;
- 26 March 2024 – Visit to the Pivka Military Museum;

- 27 March 2024 – Table tennis tournament;
 - 9 April 2024 – Hiking in Komna and visiting the Savica Waterfall and Lake Bohinj;
 - 23 April 2024 – Tour of the Pekel Cave;
 - 14 May 2024 – Watching a film at a cinema in Celje;
 - 28.5.2024 – Visit to the exhibition entitled “Celeia – A Town Beneath Today’s Town”;
 - 10 July 2024 – Hiking on Rogla and swimming in Lake Velenje;
 - 11 July 2024 – Bowling in Sevnica;
 - 28 August 2024 – Day trip to the sea and swimming in Strunjan.
23. The correctional facility also organised and held the following events and workshops:
- 8 February 2024 – Prešeren Day cultural event;
 - 13 February 2024 – Masquerade;
 - 18 March 2024 – Events marking Women’s Day and Mother’s Day;
 - 29 March 2024 – Easter creative workshop;
 - 6 September 2024 – Cooking workshop (biscuit baking);
 - 19 September 2024 – Cooking workshop (biscuit baking);
 - 20 September 2024 – Open house;
 - 10 October 2024 – Chestnut picking event.
24. In order to add variety to the daily experience, the facility seeks to regularly invite external partners from various fields to collaborate on activities. This year, the Radeče Correctional Home hosted the following events:
- 19 April 2024 – Workshop organised by VOZIM, Institute for Innovative Education;
 - 10 May 2024 – Motivational lecture and workshop with Sandi Horvat, “Being Roma – Being Human”.
25. Upcoming activities:
- 16 October 2024 – Chestnut picnic;
 - 27–30 October 2024 – Presentation workshop by the Al-Anon Society;
 - 8 November 2024 – Addiction prevention workshop led by Toni Kočevar from the Srečanje Association.
26. Daily schedules, posted on the notice board, are adapted as needed based on the current situation in the facility, staff availability and weather conditions.

Information on Education

27. Education at the Radeče Correctional Home includes various programmes (upper secondary vocational, short upper secondary vocational and upper secondary technical education, primary education, national vocational qualification programmes, literacy and functional education, in-house courses, etc.) and vocational training. Each minor participates in education and vocational training, which are core components of their individual development plan. This plan is tailored to align with each minor’s educational background, vocational interests, preferences and motivation, making use of all available resources both within and outside the correctional facility. Lessons are provided according to the school calendar in force and in accordance with the prescribed subjects and curricula. Refusal to take part in education constitutes non-compliance with the individual education programme.
28. Vocational training is tailored to provide practical work skills. Workshop activities – such as carpentry, metalwork, painting and construction, car painting, kitchen work, and landscaping and horticulture – are neither standardised nor designed for production, but for

skill development. With the emphasis on learning, the work schedule is adapted to support this objective; sessions last 6 hours and 45 minutes with two 15-minute breaks. The work is provided by the Rinka Public Utility Institute. Each young person can obtain a vocational qualification certificate when they leave the correctional facility. These workshops aim to cultivate practical skills that are crucial for reintegration into society and to provide minors with quality learning support while gaining practical experience. Work instructors guide participants through the basics of various trades, introducing them to safe working practices and safety standards, processing techniques, and manufacturing processes. This approach allows young people to gradually engage in meaningful work, gain practical experience and build skills that can support future employment. It focuses not only on technical training, but also on personal growth and development.

Information on the Celje Juvenile and Adult Prison

29. In 2023, two minors were placed in the Celje Juvenile and Adult Prison (hereafter: the Celje prison), one serving a juvenile sentence and one held in juvenile detention. The Celje prison recognises the particular vulnerability of minors, both convicted and detained. Following the Ombudsman's recommendation after a thematic visit on 14 May 2024 concerning the issue of prison overcrowding and the Ombudsman's subsequent letter received by the Celje prison on 29 May, an educational counsellor was appointed on the same day at a meeting of an expert group. The counsellor was appointed specifically to deal with the issues of juvenile detainees. The educational counsellor meets with juvenile detainees at least once a month, as well as whenever behavioural or placement issues arise. Other members of staff, including the prison psychologist, social worker and head of detention, also meet with the juvenile detainees on a regular basis.

30. In an effort to improve cooperation and relations between detainees and staff, weekly morning rounds were added to the duties of the detention unit in July 2024, consisting of the prison's head of detention unit and the social worker. These rounds take place every Monday and provide an opportunity for all detainees to voice their concerns, requests and needs. Juvenile detainees are normally housed in single rooms. However, if it is deemed to be in their best interests, they may be placed in a shared room with adult detainees with the written consent of the competent judge. In such cases, only well-behaved detainees are selected, with careful consideration given to the nature of the offence committed. A psychologist provides regular psychological support to detainees, with special attention and care being given to juvenile detainees.

31. Juvenile detainees may also participate in various prison activities, including sports tournaments, courses, workshops, poster-making, individual addiction therapy and work assignments.

32. Due to space limitations in the prison, they are housed in the juvenile unit with selected adult inmates, with care taken to ensure that these adults have stable personalities and no history of substance abuse problems. They receive regular check-ins from the assigned educational counsellor, social worker and education coordinator. Depending on their needs and the focus of their personal plan, convicted juveniles are involved in various specialised therapies:

- A therapeutic programme for perpetrators of violence (social skills training);
- A therapeutic programme for persons with alcohol or illicit substance abuse problems: individual counselling in the prison is provided once a week by the Projekt Človek (Project Man) Association; convicted juveniles are also referred for external therapy to the Inštitut VIR (SOURCE – institute for social rehabilitation, research and development) while using the out-of-prison privileges. Group therapy to address addiction to illicit substances is also provided in the prison if there are enough suitable candidates for the group. Once a year, the prison also hosts a prevention workshop organised by the DrogArt Association, which informs convicted persons, especially young people, about the dangers of illegal substances and of new psychoactive substances;
- A therapy for sex offenders, provided by the prison psychologist;

- A therapy for convicted juveniles at risk of suicide, provided by the prison psychologist.

33. Convicted juveniles are encouraged to pursue their education, whether by completing primary school or advancing to a higher education degree. In cooperation with the external provider (Celje Adult Education Centre), classes are held within the prison, and additional support is provided by the prison educational counsellor as needed.

34. Convicted juveniles can choose from three upper secondary education programmes and from various courses and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes. These options help them gain skills and internationally recognised certificates that can help them secure employment after their sentence. While work placement is available to help these juveniles develop work habits and practical skills, education remains the main focus and priority. In addition, juvenile detainees and convicted juveniles are encouraged to participate in a number of prison activities, including spiritual guidance, occupational therapy (e.g. a mosaic course, World Day workshops, poster-making and brochure production), book night, floristry courses, sports tournaments (football and 3x3 basketball) and a Slovenian language course for foreigners.

Information on the Ljubljana Prison

35. In 2023, Ljubljana Prison housed four juvenile detainees. Due to their minor age, they were provided with additional support in terms of prison accommodation and regular psychosocial care. As in the Celje prison, juvenile detainees are housed with adults to avoid isolation. Juvenile detainees receive special attention to ensure their involvement in various prison activities, with regular weekly individual meetings and the possibility of individual therapy for addiction if they are interested. They also receive an extra snack meal and an extra hour of outdoor exercise every day. They have access to the individual therapy for addiction within the prison and may also engage with various NGOs if they wish.

36. In conclusion, and also in the light of the response to paragraph 19 of the concluding observations, it should be noted that with the entry into force of the Act Amending the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions Act (ZIKS-11; Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia (*Uradni list RS*), No 83/2024, 27 September 2024), the possibility of imposing the disciplinary sanction of solitary confinement for disciplinary offences committed by minors was removed and the Act now prohibits its imposition (amendment to Article 118 of the ZIKS-1). The Act also removed the possibility of imposing the disciplinary sanction of accommodation in a special room during free time for up to seven days and of accommodation in a special room with no right to work for up to three days (amendment to Article 191 of the ZIKS-1).

B. Follow-up information related to paragraph 29 of the concluding observations

37. Regarding international protection, the International Protection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], Nos 16/17 – official consolidated version, 54/21 and 42/23 – ZZSDT-D) ensures the rights and protection of children in accordance with the standards of international law. In particular, the International Protection Act (ZMZ-1) provides that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in the treatment of minors. Minors must be guaranteed a standard of living appropriate to their psychological, mental, spiritual, ethical and social development. In assessing the best interests of the child, due account is therefore taken, in particular, of the following factors: the minor's well-being and social development, taking into account in particular the environment from which the minor comes; safety and security considerations, in particular where the minor is at risk of being a victim of trafficking in human beings; and the views of the minor in accordance with their age and maturity. Minors are given access to leisure activities. Minors who have been identified as victims of abuse of any kind, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruelty, or inhuman or degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflict are to be provided with access to rehabilitation and, where necessary, appropriate psychological treatment and qualified counselling. Additional protection safeguards are provided for unaccompanied minors (including separated children). In procedures involving an applicant who is an unaccompanied minor, the minor's identity must be established and the procedure for finding

their parents or other relatives must be initiated as soon as possible. In addition, a statutory representative is appointed for the unaccompanied minor before the initiation of the procedure to represent them in the procedure for granting international protection, in the areas of health protection, education, protection of property rights and benefits, and in relation to the exercise of reception rights.

38. The International Protection Act (ZMZ-1) includes provisions for adapting international protection and reception procedures on an individual basis for vulnerable persons with special needs, including children and single-parent families.

39. With regard to detention in the international protection procedure, the International Protection Act (ZMZ-1) prohibits the detention of minors seeking international protection.

40. In 2024, Slovenia introduced a new systemic approach to the accommodation of unaccompanied minors who are third-country nationals or stateless persons, regardless of their status. In accordance with the Decree on providing appropriate accommodation, care and treatment to unaccompanied minors (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], Nos 106/23 and 8/24), these minors receive care and are initially placed in specially designated temporary reception centres, with long-term accommodation provided in dedicated accommodation units or in youth apartments. An individual plan is drawn up for each unaccompanied minor, including an assessment of their best interests, vulnerabilities, special needs and risks, which guides their treatment and sets objectives. In the initial two accommodation facilities, unaccompanied minors receive 24-hour care.

41. In accordance with the Decree on providing appropriate accommodation, care and treatment to unaccompanied minors, the unaccompanied minors were placed in a new location as of 3 June 2024. The placement is coordinated with the Social Work Centres (SWCs) employees responsible for unaccompanied minors under the Protocol on Cooperation between the Police and the SWCs. The protocol will be amended in the future and its amendments are currently being drafted in order to provide assistance to unaccompanied minors in accordance with the Foreigners Act and the International Protection Act.

42. In addition, new guidelines, protocols and standards are being developed to guide operational procedures for the identification, support, care and protection of children, including vulnerability indicators that partly address the needs of potential victims of trafficking.

C. Follow-up information related to paragraph 37 (a) of the concluding observations

Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2024–2029

43. Slovenia attaches great importance to combating domestic violence and violence against women.

44. In April 2024, the Resolution on the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2024–2029 (hereafter: the Resolution) was adopted. For the first time, the Resolution addresses both domestic violence and violence against women within a unified framework. Its main objective is to strengthen the areas where gaps and underperformance have been identified. The Resolution was drafted through a broad inter-ministerial working group that included all relevant ministries, representatives of the judiciary, prosecution offices, NGOs and SWCs, and other relevant experts.

45. Key changes/objectives:

- To strengthen and improve the quality of programmes to combat domestic violence and violence against women;
- To improve the treatment, status and protection of victims of such violence;
- To further improve the expertise of staff dealing with the issue of domestic violence and violence against women;

- To increase social awareness and a zero-tolerance attitude towards domestic violence and violence against women;
- To improve legislation on the prevention of domestic violence and violence against women;
- To improve monitoring mechanisms for domestic violence and violence against women;
- To improve the organisation of the field, the participation of stakeholders and the sustainability of the system.

46. Key measures outlined in the Resolution include:

- Improving the level of professional treatment of victims of domestic violence and violence against women at all levels and in all institutions (SWCs, police, justice, healthcare, social assistance programmes, etc.). This includes ensuring that victims are supported by professionals with specialised expertise, following established guidelines on domestic violence and violence against women;
- Improving comprehensive treatment practices for victims of sexual violence, sexual abuse and forced marriage for adult victims;
- Improving the response of first responders to severe cases of domestic violence (guided by the findings of the IMPRODOVA project);
- Carrying out a comparative international analysis of the compensation system and compensation amount for victims of domestic violence crimes. Implementing appropriate measures as needed, based on the results of the analysis;
- Improving access to free legal aid and raising awareness of free legal aid for victims of domestic violence and violence against women;
- Launching the first free legal advice service for victims of domestic violence and violence against women;
- Providing support to victims of domestic violence (who have had a risk assessment) through the SWC to access free legal aid (assistance in completing the application for free legal aid and submitting the application to the legal aid office);
- Examining the need to amend Article 27 of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act to broaden the scope of free legal aid and ensure that it covers all procedures deemed necessary by the SWC and not only those under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the Act governing family relationships (such procedures include criminal proceedings, division of joint property, other property-related disputes, compensation proceedings and enforcement proceedings).

47. A comprehensive inter-ministerial working group has already been set up to develop action plans and has already started work on the 2024–2025 Action Plan.

Information on the police work in combating domestic violence and supervision of their work

48. According to current legislation, the police are obligated to respond to every report of domestic violence or violence in general. In cases of domestic violence, the first priority of the police is to protect the victim, followed by gathering information and evidence about the crime, including details about the victim and the suspect, in order to ensure the long-term safety of the victim.

49. Police officers initially determine the elements of a criminal offence by collecting reports in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], Nos 176/21 – official consolidated version, 96/22 – Constitutional Court Decision, 2/23 – Constitutional Court Decision, 89/23 – Constitutional Court Decision and 53/24; hereinafter: the ZKP). In case of isolated incidents, which do not meet the legal conditions of a criminal offence, the incident is classified as a minor offence, if the criteria for such an offence are met.

50. If the legal conditions prescribed by the Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) for the arrest of the suspect are met, the police officers bring the suspect before an investigating judge according to the instructions of the state prosecutor. In addition, if the conditions are met for issuing a restraining order in accordance with the Police Tasks and Powers Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [Uradni list RS], Nos 15/13, 23/15 – corrigendum, 10/17, 46/19 – Constitutional Court Decision, 47/19 and 153/21 – Constitutional Court Decision; hereinafter: the ZNPPol), this measure is also imposed.

51. The police officers receive regular training in the investigation of domestic violence. Training is provided through a multiplier system, where experienced police officers acquire advanced knowledge, which they pass on to or use to train other police officers. Annual training sessions are held for police officers and criminal investigators, with a particular focus on training first responders. Representatives from the state prosecutor's offices, courts, social work centres, schools, health services, NGOs and researchers are invited to participate in the annual training sessions. Special attention is given to expert consultations between the police, social work centres, prosecutors' offices and courts, which are held regularly.

52. The police recognise that the investigation of domestic violence is extremely challenging and complex, as it requires an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of violence and the victim's situation. Considerable attention is dedicated within the police to monitoring how cases of violence are handled and how victims are protected. Procedures are regularly reviewed and, where necessary, additional instructions and guidance are issued to improve the effectiveness of the response.

53. The police also place a strong emphasis on prevention and public awareness to promote social responsibility, raise awareness among victims and encourage prompt report of violence. Efforts also focus on raising the awareness of those who witness violence and on encouraging them to report incidents on behalf of victims who may be unable or unwilling to do so themselves. For this purpose, the police constantly raise public awareness of the importance of reporting signs of violence and responding appropriately. Recognising that effective action against domestic violence requires coordinated efforts, the police work closely with other authorities and organisations.

54. The Police Complaints Division within the Police and Security Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior deals independently, impartially and professionally with complaints against the work of police officers, in particular those alleging police officer's acts or omissions in the performance of the police duties has violated the human rights or fundamental freedoms of persons concerned. Such complaints are an important oversight measure over police conduct, particularly where acts or omissions of a police officer in the performance of police duties may constitute a violation of human rights or fundamental freedoms. Complaints against conduct are therefore regulated and governed by the Police Duties and Powers Act (ZNPPol).

55. The possibility of complaints against the work of police officers and their handling contribute to improvement of professional and legal work of the police as well as strengthen people's trust in the work of police officers. In the complaint procedure, the circumstances of the alleged improper conduct of the police procedure and the exercise of police powers are determined.

56. This ensures professional, high quality and transparent supervision of police work and strengthens the operational autonomy and integrity of the police.

57. The Police Complaints Division within the Police and Security Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior has produced a leaflet entitled "Complaints Against the Work of Police Officers", with a translation in Italian and Hungarian for the Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia.

58. In order to raise awareness and inform citizens about the complaint procedure and the possibility of filing complaints against police officers, printed copies of the leaflet were distributed to individual police units where victims most frequently come into contact with police officers.

59. The leaflets are also available on the website of the Ministry of the Interior at the following link: <https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/ministrstva/ministrstvo-za-notranje->

[zadeve/o-ministrstvu/direktorat-za-policijo-in-druge-varnostne-naloge/sektor-za-pritozbe-zoper-policijo/](https://zadeve.o-ministrstvu/direktorat-za-policijo-in-druge-varnostne-naloge/sektor-za-pritozbe-zoper-policijo/).

60. In 2024 the Ministry of the Interior's Police and Security Directorate continuously provided regular training and education on the handling of complaints against the police, with the aim to improve the handling of complaint procedure and on the Ministry of the Interior's supervision of police activities. This training is intended for relevant police staff, including chiefs, authorised deputy chiefs, rapporteurs and proxies of the directors-general of police. The current training sessions will end in November 2024, but the training will continue in 2025.

Information on the Treatment of victims of crime

61. Slovenia notes that significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the situation of victims of crime, including victims of gender-based and domestic violence. This progress has involved both legislative changes and adjustments to working practices, as well as a review of the actual performance of existing institutions in practice.

62. The amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP-N)¹ has regulated the situation of the victims of crime at a systemic level, with special attention to vulnerable groups of victims. The main objective was to implement the Victims' Rights Directive² and, in part, to meet the high standards set by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia (hereafter: the Constitutional Court) regarding victims' procedural rights, as well as to improve the practice of dealing with victims of crime. The key changes introduced, which focus on preventing secondary and repeat victimisation and on improving the position of victims in criminal proceedings, are summarised below:

- The Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) explicitly provides that victims of crime are to be treated with special care and due consideration where necessary because of their vulnerability, such as age, health condition, disability or other similar circumstances;
- The right to be accompanied by a trusted person during proceedings, previously limited to minors, has been extended to all victims;
- The competent authorities must ensure that the victim's contact with the perpetrator is avoided, unless it is strictly necessary for the successful conduct of the proceedings:
 - This principle applies *mutatis mutandis* to experts who conduct the interview with the victim in the course of their expert duties;
- At the first contact with the police, the victims are fully informed of their rights;
- Upon request, the victim is informed of the status of (pre-)criminal proceedings, final judgments, and any release or escape of the suspect or accused person from pre-trial house detention or from detention;
- A victim who lodges a criminal complaint receives an acknowledgement of receipt of the criminal complaint;
- The time limit for the victim to decide on a subsidiary prosecution (taking up a prosecution dismissed by the state prosecutor) has been extended from eight to 30 days, with the victim being effectively informed of the possibility of initiating or taking up a subsidiary prosecution:
 - The time limit for the victim to file a motion for prosecution has also been extended from three to six months (applicable in cases where the offence is prosecuted ex officio but the victim's motion is still required);

¹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 22/19.

² To a large extent, this was the effect of the implementation of Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012.

- A victim who files a criminal complaint for an offence punishable by more than eight years' imprisonment must be informed in advance of the reasons for any dismissal of the complaint and be given the opportunity to comment on them;
- In the case of settlement procedures and deferred prosecution (alternative resolutions in pre-trial proceedings), the state prosecutor has an obligation to inform the victim adequately of the purpose and consequences of the proceedings and of their rights;
- The examination of the victim by an expert is regulated to ensure that it is carried out only when necessary and with the minimum interference with the victim's physical and mental integrity;
- Two courts of first instance (Ljubljana District Court and Maribor District Court) have set up support services to provide practical advice to victims of crime and to propose to the judge various protection measures (e.g. separate summonses for the victim and the perpetrator or conducting the victim's hearing by videoconference);
- An individual threat assessment has become a standard practice. This is primarily carried out by the police and, if necessary, supplemented by the prosecutor (amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP-P) also allow this assessment to be supplemented by the victim support service, if such a service is established at the district court). The assessment evaluates:
 - The degree to which the victim is exposed to secondary and repeated victimisation, intimidation or retaliation;
 - On the basis of this assessment, decisions are taken on the relevance and extent of the following protection measures:
 - Audiovisual recording (mandatory when hearing witnesses under the age of 15 who are victims of crimes against sexual integrity etc.);
 - Hearing of the victim with the assistance of an expert or in specially adapted rooms;
 - Protection of the witness (anonymity etc.);
 - The use of videoconferencing;
 - Exclusion of the public from the main hearing;
 - In 2023, the threat assessment tool (questionnaire) was refined and improved on the basis of practical experience;
- A legal basis has been established for conducting hearings in specially adapted premises – safe rooms (usually mandatory when hearing witnesses under the age of 15 who are victims of crimes against sexual integrity etc.):
 - This arrangement also applies to the interviews conducted by the expert with the victim;
- As a general rule, the same person, or a person of the same sex, depending on the nature of the criminal offence, conducts the victim's interview before both the police and the state prosecutor;
- The age for excluding the public during the hearing of a witness has been raised from 14 to 18 years;
- A presumption has been introduced that the victim is a minor if their age is uncertain and there are grounds to believe that they are a minor.

63. The amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP-O)³ introduced the possibility of concealing the victim's address from the case file or at the hearing (i.e. by withholding this information from the accused person).

³ Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 200/20.

64. A leaflet, produced in cooperation with NGOs, presents all the rights granted to victims of crime under the current legislation. The publication is available in several languages and is accessible online.⁴

65. It is worth noting that the Constitutional Court has granted victims of crime the right to file a constitutional complaint (i.e. a legal remedy for violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms). It has also granted victims the right to appeal against judgments, thereby strengthening their position in the legal system.⁵ According to the Constitutional Court, a criminal court judgment not only decides on the criminal charge, but also addresses the victim's interests, which include property claims arising from the crime committed and the victim's interest in ensuring that their personal dignity as a victim of crime is duly respected throughout the criminal proceedings. As a result, the Criminal Procedure Act has been amended.

66. It should also be noted that an independent scientific study by the Institute of Criminology has found that a restraining order to keep the perpetrator away from the victim is an effective measure in Slovenian law and practice.⁶

Information on the Prosecution of criminal offences of domestic violence

67. In prosecuting crimes of domestic violence or other crimes with an element of violence committed within the family or partnership, it is essential to note that the State Prosecutor's Office frequently encounters situations specific to the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. In most cases, the evidence largely relies on the victim's testimony. Due to their personal circumstances, these victims have the status of privileged witnesses (Article 236 of the Criminal Procedure Act), which means that they are not obliged to testify in criminal proceedings. Victims have the right to decide voluntarily, on the basis of their relationship, whether to testify against the perpetrator in the proceedings, without having to justify their decision to the court. While this decision rests solely with the victim and is beyond the control of the prosecutor, the victim's willingness to participate is a critical factor in the effectiveness and success of the prosecution. In cases where there is no additional material evidence, the reasonable grounds for suspicion cannot be established. As a result, despite the activities already undertaken by the prosecuting authorities, the case may end either in the withdrawal of the prosecution or in an acquittal, depending on the stage of the criminal proceedings.

68. Regarding further efforts to encourage and support victims to file complaints, it should be noted that in cases prosecuted ex officio, the prosecutor already takes into account the interests of a successful prosecution, including the victim's position, when seeking appropriate punishment for the perpetrator. Victims are explicitly allowed to challenge a judgment of rejection or a judgment of conviction on any grounds of appeal. In the complaint procedure, victims may also appeal against the conviction to the extent that the court has ruled on their financial claim and the costs associated with the proceedings. However, if the state prosecutor has assumed prosecution from the victim acting as prosecutor, the victim may appeal on all available grounds for which the judgment may be challenged (paragraph four of Article 376 of the Criminal Procedure Act). The applicable regulatory framework thus provides victims with extensive legitimacy to pursue their interests during the complaint procedure. Although the Criminal Procedure Act (ZKP) does not mandate the appointment of a representative for victims (except for minor victims in cases of exhaustively specified criminal offences) for the exercise of rights in the proceedings, victims are entitled to free legal aid for legal advice and representation in the proceedings as provided for in the Legal Aid Act.

69. The State Prosecutor's Office also aims to provide regular training on gender-based violence and domestic violence and to address the specificities and challenges posed by these issues in annual training events for state prosecutors and senior judicial advisers. For

⁴ <https://www.gov.si/teme/pravice-zrtev-kaznivih-dejanj/>.

⁵ Constitutional Court Decision No Up-320/14, U-I-5/17 of 14 September 2017, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia [*Uradni list RS*], No 59/2017, and Constitutional Court Decision XXII, 9.

⁶ Katja Filipčič & Eva Bertok: Restraining Orders and Intimate Partner Violence, *Journal of Criminal Investigation and Criminology*, No 1, Ljubljana, 2024, pp. 44–59.

example, during the Education Prosecutors' Days in November 2023, sessions included lectures on violence against women and the psychological factors that contribute to victims staying in abusive relationships. In addition, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office has established a Working Group on Sexual Crimes and Trafficking in Human Beings, which is composed of state prosecutors and senior judicial advisers from all district state prosecutor's offices. The group regularly addresses current issues, case-law and prosecution practices related to these crimes.

Information on the possibility of claiming damages

70. Victims of violent acts who suffer damage as a consequence of a criminal offence and who are unable to obtain compensation from the perpetrator are entitled to compensation provided by the State. Special priority in claiming compensation is given to minors, victims of domestic violence and disabled persons, as well as to victims of unidentified perpetrators and of perpetrators who cannot be prosecuted. Under certain conditions, compensation can also be claimed by the relatives of victims who have lost their lives as a result of a crime. With the entry into force of the Act Amending the Crime Victim Compensation Act (ZOZKD-B) on 27 July 2023, Article 5 of the ZOZKD was deleted, thereby removing the formal condition that victims of crime must be citizens of the Republic of Slovenia or another EU Member State in order to be eligible for compensation. This amendment broadens the eligibility for compensation, which is no longer dependent on the nationality of the victim.

D. Follow-up information related to paragraph 39 (d) of the concluding observations

71. There are four psychiatric hospitals in Slovenia, plus the Department of Psychiatry with its Unit for Forensic Psychiatry at the University Medical Centre Maribor and the University Psychiatric Clinic Ljubljana. Typically, healthcare teams in these institutions consist of psychiatrists, registered nurses/healthcare professionals and assistants, qualified occupational therapists, clinical psychologists, and social workers. Patients receiving mental health treatment in these facilities have access to outdoor activities, occupational therapy, social activities and rehabilitation programmes. For example, all patients undergoing the most restrictive psychiatric treatment in the Unit for Forensic Psychiatry are able to exercise outdoors for one hour a day and, with the doctor's approval, use the gym for one hour twice a week. They also take part in regular occupational therapy and other therapeutic activities. The aim of these activities is psychosocial rehabilitation, which supports the patient's reintegration into their home environment after discharge from hospital.

72. Prior to discharge from a psychiatric hospital, an individualised community psychiatric treatment plan is drawn up for each patient who needs ongoing support.

73. Community psychiatric treatment is provided by psychiatric hospital teams.

74. In line with the Resolution on the National Mental Health Programme 2018–2028, adult mental health centres with mobile teams were established at the primary healthcare level in 2019 and have since provided treatment for people with mental health problems in their home environment.

75. Slovenia has accepted Recommendation 39 (d) of the UN Committee against Torture and is actively implementing measures to enhance access to the outdoors, rehabilitation programmes, social activities and other meaningful activities in psychiatric hospitals.

76. The aim is to minimise the length of hospitalisation and return people with mental health problems to their home environment as soon as possible. The main challenge in achieving these improvements is the lack of suitably qualified staff. Both psychiatric hospitals and mental health centres are facing staff shortages. In response, Slovenia has already started to implement various measures, including increasing the number of specialisations for in-demand health professionals, such as clinical psychologists, clinical speech therapists and occupational therapists.

E. Follow-up information related to paragraph 47 of the concluding observations

77. Slovenia also reports on its implementation of paragraph 47, stating that the Concluding Observations have been translated into Slovene and published on the government portal.⁷ The Concluding Observations were submitted to the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, followed by a press release issued after the government session. In addition, the Concluding Observations were submitted directly to the Ombudsman and to the two NGOs involved in the drafting of the shadow report. The Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs, as the umbrella network of Slovenian NGOs, was informed and a link to the Concluding Observations was published on its website⁸ as well.

78. Republic of Slovenia will provide responses to the remaining recommendations of the Concluding Observations in its next period report under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

⁷ <https://www.gov.si teme/mednarodnopravni-dokumenti-s-podrocja-clovekovih-pravic-in-porocanja-slovenije/>.

⁸ <https://www.cnvos.si/aktualno/9957/>.