



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

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Summary record of the 3121st meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 3 December 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention *(continued)*

Combined twenty-third and twenty-fourth periodic reports of Greece (CERD/C/GRC/23-24; CERD/C/GRC/Q/23-24)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Greece joined the meeting.*
2. **A representative of Greece** said that since the Committee's previous review of its implementation of the Convention, and despite the fact that it was still recovering from a decade-long economic crisis during which populist forces had attempted to prevail through racist and discriminatory rhetoric, his country had undertaken significant initiatives to combat racial discrimination and hate speech. Those initiatives included the strengthening of the legal framework and the establishment of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance. Educational programmes for young people and training programmes for law enforcement and judicial officials had been put in place to foster tolerance and combat stereotypes, and a national action plan had been adopted to tackle antisemitism. Importantly, Golden Dawn had been banned from participating in local and national elections, and its leaders had been jailed. Civil society continued to underpin the Government's efforts to counter racism and discrimination. While much remained to be done and financial resources were limited, the authorities were committed to making further progress, in a spirit of accountability and cooperation.
3. **A representative of Greece** said that the judicial system had dealt with the threat posed by organizations that, under the guise of a political party, had sought to exploit the economic crisis to commit racist acts. The police authorities had developed standards and guidance to improve the recording of data on hate crimes and address underreporting. The authorities were continuing their work with relevant stakeholders, including a non-governmental organization (NGO), the Racist Violence Recording Network.
4. The National Council against Racism and Intolerance was designing its second action plan, for 2025–2028. The 2021–2030 national strategy for the Roma community was being implemented, and all available funding from the European Union was being used to enhance opportunities for that community.
5. Modernized reception facilities ensured dignified conditions for migrants, and a robust system was in place to support unaccompanied minors. Steps had been taken to promote access to employment, and enhanced international cooperation provided pathways for legal migration. Border protection activities were conducted in line with domestic, European and international law. Allegations of violations of the principle of non-refoulement were not consistent with the operational activities of the competent agencies. The preservation of life, without any form of discrimination, was the highest duty of the Hellenic Coastguard, which had saved thousands of lives at sea.
6. Greece had ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). The authorities protected all victims of trafficking in persons, without discrimination. Efforts to ensure inclusive education were continuing, and a media ethics committee had been established to counter discrimination, hate speech and incitement to hatred in the media.
7. **Mr. Diaby** (Country Rapporteur) said that he wished to receive statistics pertaining to the demographic composition of the general population that had been compiled on the basis of self-identification and disaggregated by ethnic origin, as well as information on migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. It would be interesting to hear about any measures the authorities planned to take to ensure the systematic collection of statistical data that would inform the design of public policies, in application of the Convention and of the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).
8. The delegation might comment on allegations of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers and whether any such cases had been investigated and brought before the courts.

9. He would welcome information on any measures aimed at ensuring that the legal framework governing racist hate speech and incitement to racial hatred was in line with article 4 of the Convention, as well as on the application of article 82A of the Criminal Code, which governed racist offences, including any gaps in that application. It would be useful to know what measures were taken to combat racist hate speech in the media and online and how Law No. 4779/2021 and the Code of Ethics for Members of the Greek Parliament were applied. He would be grateful for the delegation's comments on reports that Law No. 4285/2014, which combated racism, did not define incitement to racial hatred as a criminal offence, and on what was being done to improve the capacity of the police to recognize racially motivated offences. He wished to know how the State party had addressed the racist hate crimes committed by Golden Dawn. It would be interesting to hear about the implementation of measures aimed at strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and other judicial authorities to combat racist violence.

10. The Committee had received reports that the majority of victims of racist violence did not file complaints, owing to a lack of confidence in the authorities. The delegation might provide an update on the establishment of a robust victim support system that focused on assessing the needs of victims and directing them to the appropriate services.

11. He wished to receive information on any violations of the provisions of the Criminal Code concerning discrimination that had been committed by journalists and on the measures that had been taken to address those violations, as well as on any efforts to prevent and punish online hate speech, including on social media platforms. It was unclear whether a media regulatory authority existed in the State party.

12. The Committee would welcome an account of the results of the first National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance, as well as information on efforts to draft a new plan. It would be helpful to receive details of the activities of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance, of the resources allocated to it and of any evaluation of its work that had been conducted.

13. He would like to know more about the reasons for the delays in the registration process for associations of minority groups. The delegation might comment on reports that associations formed by the Turkish and Macedonian minorities had been refused registration or had been dissolved shortly after their establishment. It would be interesting to know whether the State party planned to enshrine the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders in law. He wondered how the executive, legislative and judicial branches ensured that human rights defenders were protected and that their actions were not criminalized.

14. **A representative of Greece** said that, for reasons of privacy and data protection, her country did not collect statistical information on the race or ethnic origin of persons residing in its territory. Alternative methods were used to gather or infer data, for example in the context of the beneficiaries of policies designed for specific groups or in the recording by police of the skin colour or race of victims of hate crimes.

15. **A representative of Greece** said that the Roma population in her country was one of the largest in the European Union proportionate to the general population. The authorities used data estimates from European and international organizations such as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. A national mapping exercise conducted in 2021 had found that the Roma population stood at approximately 120,000. The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Social Inclusion of Roma included an indicator system based on the exercise, making it the country's first evidence-based policy framework on Roma-related issues.

16. **A representative of Greece** said that Eurostat and the Hellenic Statistical Authority provided data on a range of indicators, including country of birth and country of citizenship. A labour force survey had provided data disaggregated inter alia by migrant background, reason for migrating to Greece and level of Greek language skills. Information from the fostering and adoption authorities provided details of the nationality and country of origin of children in residential care.

17. **A representative of Greece** said that the data collected on persons in the penitentiary system, which was used in the drafting of prison policies, included nationality details.

18. **A representative of Greece** said that the Ministry of Migration and Asylum collected data on legal migration flows and on reception and asylum procedures, disaggregated among other things by nationality and migration status. There were plans to combine the data to enhance the quality and quantity of statistical outputs to support policy objectives.

19. **A representative of Greece** said that all persons living in Greece, including Roma persons, were able to register their civil status.

20. **A representative of Greece** said that article 82A of the Criminal Code had been amended to remove references to the notion of hatred, which had proved difficult for prosecutors to substantiate, and to instead include a list of 10 characteristics that constituted grounds for hate crimes. Since the introduction of the amendments, there had been an increase in the number of prosecutions brought and convictions handed down under that article. Article 1 of Law No. 927/1979 was considered to encompass the notion of racial superiority and to apply to situations where incitement to violence or hatred was committed by a group.

21. **A representative of Greece** said that Golden Dawn was banned from participating in elections and prohibited from receiving public funds. New legislation had been introduced enabling the Supreme Court to exclude from elections any political party whose leaders had been convicted of racist offences or hate crimes. That legislation had been used to exclude two parties from the 2024 European Parliament elections. If members of the Greek Parliament were identified as having used racist language or engaged in hate speech, they were immediately excluded by the Special Permanent Committee on Parliamentary Ethics.

22. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would be interested to hear the delegation's comments on reports that large numbers of cases concerning the systematic pushback of migrants and refugees had been dismissed, while around 40 such cases were pending before the European Court of Human Rights. In particular, he was curious to know whether border police received training on the proper assessment and treatment of persons who might be at risk of ill-treatment if returned to their country of origin or a third country. He wished to know whether cases of police violence, in particular in reception centres on the island of Samos, had been investigated and whether the persons responsible had been identified and prosecuted and the victims provided with support.

23. **Ms. Esseneme** said that, despite the assertion in the State party's periodic report that 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 had been incorporated into national legislation, the Committee had received reports that the Directive was not being applied. The delegation might comment on claims that victims received no support and that judges did not recognize the inherent subjectivity of acts of discrimination, which sometimes led to impunity.

24. She wished to know how the authorities determined the number and nationality of non-Greek detainees in the prison system in order to ensure that prison policies were shaped appropriately. It would be useful to receive an update on the follow-up action the authorities had taken in response to the recommendations contained in the 2021 report of the Racist Violence Recording Network. It would be interesting to understand why the majority of racist offences occurred in the Attica region. Was there any specific policy in place aimed at protecting foreign nationals from racism and racist offences?

25. **Ms. Shepherd** said that she wished to encourage the State party to consult the Committee's general recommendation No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials.

26. **A representative of Greece** said that delays in the registration process for associations of minority groups were due to the fact that decisions about the registration or dissolution of associations were taken by courts on the basis of the Civil Code. There was no specific legislation on minority groups, which left the administrative authorities with few avenues for follow-up. In 2017, following rulings by the European Court of Human Rights, permission had been given for proceedings to be reopened, and three Muslim associations had taken the opportunity to have their cases reviewed. However, the cases in question were yet to be fully resolved, since the Greek courts had upheld their previous decisions. In 2023, a delegation from the Council of Europe had visited Greece, and a committee of independent

experts had subsequently been formed to advise the authorities on how to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights. The committee had begun its work, and its recommendations were awaited. In the case of the association bearing the name “Home of Macedonian Civilization”, the claimants had chosen not to have the related proceedings reopened. In Thrace, which was home to a significant Muslim minority, more than 200 associations had been established in the previous 10 years.

27. **A representative of Greece** said that, pursuant to the relevant Code of Conduct, police officers were obliged to uphold the rights of all individuals and observe the principles of legality, equal treatment and respect for diversity in the exercise of their duties. Efforts were made to instil a culture of human rights protection and to take account of the recommendations of international bodies for robust action in preventing and handling acts of ill-treatment. The Ombudsman had been tasked with investigating arbitrary acts, including torture, unlawful use of firearms and racist or discriminatory behaviour, committed by law enforcement officers. Since 2017, 1,397 cases involving such acts had been referred to the Ombudsman. Following a presidential decision issued in 2024, the disciplinary regulations had been amended to mandate the removal from active service of uniformed officers who had committed serious disciplinary or criminal offences.

28. **A representative of Greece** said that the courts had recently confirmed that the National Council for Radio and Television was competent to handle cases of hate speech or incitement to violence that occurred on online and offline platforms other than traditional media. Pursuant to Law No. 5005/2022, in order to be eligible for State advertising, print and electronic media outlets must register with the Secretariat General for Communication and Media and agree to be bound by the Code of Ethics for Journalists, which banned all expressions or incitement of violence, hatred or discrimination. An independent committee was in place to review complaints of violations of the Code of Ethics.

29. **Ms. McDougall** said that she would be interested to know how many of the 1,397 cases of arbitrary acts committed by law enforcement officers that had been referred to the Ombudsman had resulted in dismissal. She would welcome more details on how the Code of Ethics for Journalists was enforced and on the impact of the committee responsible for reviewing complaints of violations of the Code. It would be useful to know how many, and what proportion, of the members of the committee were from racial or other minority groups.

30. **A representative of Greece** said that persons with low incomes could apply for free legal aid, while victims of certain crimes, including trafficking in persons and sexual offences against minors, were provided with free legal aid irrespective of their income. The authorities were in the process of concluding agreements with bar associations to provide free legal aid for women victims of violence, also regardless of their income.

31. **A representative of Greece** said that the Ministry of Justice and the National Council against Racism and Intolerance had produced a guide to the rights of hate crime victims, which was available online in several languages. All victims had access to the guide, which clearly informed them of their rights, including the right to compensation from the State, and explained which organizations they could contact for assistance.

32. **A representative of Greece** said that Greece did not have a specific law for the protection of human rights defenders. However, it did have laws that protected the rights of refugees and migrants and the LGBTIQI+ community. Crimes with racist characteristics were dealt with under article 82A of the Criminal Code, which established an aggravating circumstance when offences were motivated by hatred. That article could be applied in cases relating to attacks on individuals from the aforementioned categories.

33. Of the 1,397 arbitrary incidents for which the police had collected data since 2017, 205 were still at the investigation stage, 365 had been processed and sent for review, 62 were pending before the competent disciplinary bodies and 87 had resulted in disciplinary sanctions of greater or lesser severity. In 322 of the cases, it had been alleged that police officers had acted with a racist motive.

34. **A representative of Greece** said that the Supreme Court was competent to decide which political parties could participate in elections, taking into account legislative

provisions, constitutional principles and the European Convention on Human Rights. The Hellenes and Greeks for the Fatherland parties had been barred from standing in the 2023 legislative elections and the Spartans party had been excluded from the 2024 European elections. Private funding of politicians and political parties was strictly forbidden, and the withdrawal of State funding had effectively prevented the activities of Golden Dawn and other groups with similar agendas.

35. **A representative of Greece** said that the consequences of banning Golden Dawn had been significant. Indeed, the measure had changed the whole political discourse and made clear to all citizens that engaging in hate crimes, hate speech and racist discourse could result in imprisonment.

36. **A representative of Greece** said that the members of the media ethics committee were not appointed on the basis of race, ethnic origin or sex. Most of the members, who were elected for a two-year term, were representatives of journalists' and press unions; some others represented academic institutions.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.50 p.m.

37. **Ms. Tebie** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee had been informed that the State party did not maintain adequate records of racist incidents, that it failed to prosecute perpetrators and that racist incidents went unreported because the victims did not trust the authorities. Few perpetrators had thus been convicted. She would be interested to know what steps the State party intended to take to build trust between citizens and the justice system and what mechanisms it had put in place to improve the effective enforcement of the law, including through the systematic application of the penalties established for crimes with racist characteristics. It would also be useful to know whether the Government's system for recording racist violence took account of the figures maintained by the National Commission for Human Rights and other institutions and whether the State party planned to introduce an official system for the collection of data on racist violence.

38. As the procedure for requesting legal aid was reportedly lengthy and complex, she wondered what steps had been taken to streamline and shorten the procedure so as to improve access to justice for victims of racial discrimination. Statistics on the number of victims of racial discrimination, and the number who had been provided with legal aid, would be welcome. Furthermore, she was curious to know what steps had been taken to follow up on the recommendations made by the Racist Violence Recording Network in its report of 2021. She would be glad to receive information and statistics on complaints of racial discrimination, hate speech and racist hate crimes that had been lodged with the courts and other institutions and on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, if any.

39. The Committee noted that, under article 28 (1) of the Constitution, the Convention formed an integral part of the domestic legal order. It would therefore appreciate examples of specific cases in which the provisions of the Convention had been invoked or directly applied by the courts. The delegation might indicate whether the State party intended to make the declaration under article 14 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual communications. It would be useful to know more about the role of civil society organizations in implementing the Convention, for example, by participating in consultations or by representing minorities and ethnic groups. What steps had been taken to encourage civil society to participate in the implementation of the Convention?

40. The Committee noted with concern the rise in the number of racially motivated incidents reported to the police authorities, notwithstanding a reported fall in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It would be interested to know what mechanisms that State party could put in place to put an end to racist crimes, particularly in the worst affected areas, such as Attica and the islands of the Eastern Aegean, where reception and identification centres were located.

41. According to reports, minorities and foreign nationals continued to experience prejudice and stereotypes perpetuated by various actors, including political, administrative and religious authorities. The Committee would therefore be grateful for information on recent training initiatives to combat prejudice, increase tolerance and raise awareness of

racial discrimination and the rights enshrined in the Convention. It would be useful to know what measures had been taken in the area of multilingual and intercultural education, how measures to promote intercultural dialogue had been implemented and what their impact had been. The Committee noted that the State party had received a Global Education Award for the compulsory education module known as “Skills Labs”, and it wished to know whether the module had been rolled out nationwide and at all levels of the education system.

42. The Committee commended the State party for the measures it had taken to combat antisemitism and preserve the memory of the Holocaust. It would be interested to know what framework had been developed to provide redress for the victims. It was concerned about reports of attacks perpetrated on religious grounds. In 2023, for example, there had been 89 recorded incidents in which migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers had been targeted due to their national origin, religion or colour. The Committee would like to know whether those incidents had been effectively investigated and what steps had been taken to protect the victims.

43. She wished to know why there had been an increase in cases of vandalism and desecration of cultural sites, and what measures had been taken to address the problem. She wondered how many such cases had been recorded and how many prosecutions had been brought.

44. **A representative of Greece** said that the Government had a comprehensive framework for recording and collecting data on hate crimes and hate speech. The Hellenic Police had improved the electronic identification and registration of offences involving racist violence, including the relevant bias motivations. A standardized method for recording racially motivated crimes had been defined. Statistical data recorded by the police were forwarded regularly to the Ministry of Justice to update the relevant database.

45. **A representative of Greece** said that the authorities collected data on the prison population disaggregated by nationality. Foreign prisoners accounted for about half of the total prison population, and there were prisoners of 101 nationalities.

46. **A representative of Greece** said that the most recent report of the Office of the Ombudsman on equal treatment included data on complaints of discrimination. In 2023, as in previous years, complaints relating to gender discrimination in the workplace accounted for half of the total, while disability was cited as the reason for discrimination in 22 per cent of cases. The number of complaints had remained stable in 2023, with minor fluctuations in the proportion of complaints related to each type of discrimination. One exception was that racial discrimination accounted for 7 per cent of complaints in 2023, compared with 2 per cent in 2022. The proportion of cases of discrimination based on national origin had risen from 2 per cent to 4 per cent of the total. Intervention by the Office of the Ombudsman had contributed to a positive outcome in 67 per cent of substantiated cases.

47. **A representative of Greece** said that, between 2020 and 2023, the Office of the Ombudsman had investigated 970 cases related to arbitrary incidents, 118 of which (12 per cent) involved issues of racial bias or discriminatory behaviour.

48. **A representative of Greece** said that the Labour Inspectorate, exercising its legal mandate for the application of the principle of equal opportunity and treatment in work and employment, examined complaints submitted in the context of labour disputes. In such cases, the Office of the Ombudsman was notified and was requested to participate in discussions. Most disputes were settled before they reached the courts. The services of the Labour Inspectorate were free of charge for Greek and foreign nationals. In equal treatment cases, the Labour Inspectorate was empowered to impose administrative penalties. Between 2021 and 2023, the Inspectorate had received 211 complaints, mainly in relation to gender discrimination, and had resolved 112 cases. Twenty-one fines, amounting to €40,000, had been imposed. Of the three cases received by the Inspectorate that related to discrimination on the grounds of nationality, one had been resolved, one had been closed by the Ombudsman and one had been referred to the courts.

49. **Ms. McDougall** said that she was surprised to hear that foreign nationals accounted for as much as 50 per cent of the Greek prison population. She wondered whether that statistic

related solely to persons who had been tried and convicted, or if it included persons who were detained pending the determination of their migration status.

50. **A representative of Greece** said that the figure pertained to persons who had been convicted and were serving their sentence in prison.

51. **A representative of Greece** said that the Greek courts administered justice without prejudice to the defendant's nationality or other characteristics. The individuals in question had been imprisoned solely because they had been convicted of an offence defined in the Criminal Code.

52. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that the Committee would be grateful if the delegation could give an indication of how many foreigners were living in Greece, which would help the Committee understand whether foreign nationals accounted for a disproportionately large share of the prison population.

53. **A representative of Greece** said that one reason for the large population of foreign inmates was that the country's geographic position, at the crossroads of various routes, made it susceptible to cross-border criminal activity. Greece had a sizeable foreign-born population. Before the economic crisis, it had been estimated that regular migrants made up 15 per cent of the resident population.

54. **A representative of Greece** said that data from registry records since 2013 indicated that 500,000 foreign nationals had participated in civil acts such as the registration of births, marriages and divorces.

55. **A representative of Greece** said that specialized departments and offices had been established throughout the country to combat racist violence and hate crimes, provide holistic support for victims and prevent revictimization. The Department for Combating Racist Violence in the densely populated Attica region, where most cases of racism were recorded, had a specialized psychologist, and psychological support was also available in other services if needed. At the headquarters of the Hellenic Police, racist violence and hate crimes were handled by the Department for Social Issues and Combating Racism, of the State Security Directorate, which also dealt with hate crime at the strategic policy-making level. To improve victims' trust in police services, a hotline and an anonymous reporting form on the police's website had been launched. The Cyber Crime Unit had implemented initiatives to raise awareness of hate speech and racism online. National action plans for combating racism and intolerance and improving Roma inclusion had been developed, encompassing bilateral actions, training programmes and guides to ensure respectful treatment of victims. Regarding cooperation with civil society, the Racist Violence Recording Network had been established through a partnership between the National Commission for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Greece and various NGOs. The police worked closely with the Network on the reporting of racist incidents and training for personnel working with vulnerable groups, particularly in refugee-populated areas. Extensive training programmes, funded by the Hellenic Police, NGOs and international organizations, had been implemented in 2022 and 2023 to enhance police expertise and improve the services provided to citizens.

56. **A representative of Greece** said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs collaborated with the National Commission for Human Rights, which met the criteria established in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). Unlike the Office of the Ombudsman, the Commission did not handle individual complaints or requests. It had a broad advisory role, providing opinions on various matters and providing advice on the drafting of reports intended for the human rights treaty bodies.

57. **A representative of Greece** said that a recent update to article 82A of the Criminal Code provided for the appointment of special prosecutors for racist crimes and the classification of cases involving such offences with a specific label for easier identification. Changes to the Criminal Code and the new Code of Criminal Procedure had made the criminal justice system more victim-centred. The Greek Parliament had approved a reform of the organization of the civil and criminal courts, focusing on optimizing institutions, renovating infrastructure, relocating courts, streamlining procedures and expediting case

resolution, in order to provide more accessible, cost-effective justice for citizens and significantly reduce first-instance decision times. The Ministry of Justice had also initiated legislative measures with the aim of improving access to justice for persons with disabilities. In 2021, the State had amended the provisions of its Civil Code regarding family law by adopting Act No. 4080/2021 and modernizing its domestic violence legislation. Persons with a low income could apply for legal aid, which was also available for the victims of certain crimes such as trafficking and sexual offences. The national judicial training institute provided relevant initial and in-service training to judges and prosecutors. The Judicial Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Justice, established in mid-2022, had developed a digital platform for collecting judicial statistics and had successfully trained all judicial and prosecutorial authorities in the use of the platform.

58. **Ms. Tebie** said that it would be useful to receive statistical data on the beneficiaries of legal aid. There were discrepancies in the recording of racist incidents. For example, the 2023 report of the Racist Violence Recording Network documented 158 incidents, while the authorities had officially recorded 129 incidents. She wondered whether that discrepancy reflected underreporting by the Government. She would appreciate information on the evaluation of the National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance and the development of a second plan, as well as the delegation's comments on rising reports of the vandalism of cultural sites. She also wished to know how the State party was addressing the recurrent racist incidents in the Attica region and the Eastern Aegean islands, especially at reception centres in those areas.

59. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that the State party's criteria for legal aid eligibility, such as those relating to the type, seriousness and nature of the case, could make the system restrictive and limit the number of eligible people. In other countries, the criteria for legal aid included income thresholds, and there were systems to optimize legal aid spending.

60. **Ms. Esseneme** said that she would be interested to learn more about the sanctioning power of the Labour Inspectorate, in particular with regard to the imposition of fines. She wondered why non-nationals in the region of Attica were particularly badly affected by racist crime and whether a specific strategy had been implemented to address that issue. She also wished to know how the State implemented the recommendations of the Racist Violence Recording Network. The Committee would like to find out whether the guide on the rights of victims of racist crimes was easily accessible to the victims of racism and persons who might be targeted by racism, including persons who did not speak Greek.

61. **A representative of Greece** said that the State's efforts to strengthen the role of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance, including through relevant legislation, were ongoing. The Council was responsible for overseeing the implementation of laws to ensure compliance with international and European standards, promoting and coordinating actions to effectively address racism and fostering cooperation with civil society on those issues.

62. **A representative of Greece** said that the National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance, adopted in 2020, had spanned a three-year period and had focused on five key areas: combating discrimination, stereotypes, and prejudice; addressing hate crimes; raising awareness and disseminating information; promoting inclusion and empowerment; and implementing cross-sectoral initiatives. It had addressed various forms of racism, including xenophobia and Islamophobia, with the aim of eliminating discrimination based on race, colour, religion, disability, belief, chronic illness, sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristics. Among the key initiatives implemented under the Action Plan was the 2021 publication of the guide for victims of hate crime, which outlined victims' rights, explained legal procedures and presented available services. The guide had been translated into nine languages and distributed to civil society organizations, the police, public prosecutors, hospitals and migrant reception centres. It was also used in training sessions, and accessible versions had been created, including a Braille version and a digital format for individuals with visual impairments, which had been shared online and with organizations of persons with disabilities. Several training and capacity-building activities had been organized to improve the response to hate crimes and awareness of the phenomenon. Public prosecutors had received specialized training to enhance their ability to prosecute such crimes effectively. The Centre for Political Research at Panteion University had hosted three workshops in 2021

to raise awareness among NGOs, civil servants and community leaders committed to human rights.

63. **A representative of Greece** said that the National Council against Racism and Intolerance had been brought under the responsibility of the newly established Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family in 2024. The Council's primary responsibilities included drafting national action plans, developing policies to combat racism and intolerance and fostering cooperation with civil society to protect individuals and groups targeted by discrimination. The Council had held three meetings in 2024 and would hold an open consultation before the end of the year to engage with civil society in shaping the second National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance. The Council aimed to develop a comprehensive guide for the public administration on addressing racist crimes and to reprint the guide on victims' rights, which the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance had recognized as a best practice. Additionally, the Council had secured funding for a two-year capacity-building project focused on three pillars: improving victims' access to services through a multilingual platform; enhancing the skills of public officials and stakeholders involved in drafting the second action plan; and raising public awareness through a national campaign targeting 100,000 people. The Committee's concluding observations and recommendations would be reviewed by the National Council against Racism and Intolerance and incorporated into the development of the second action plan.

64. **A representative of Greece** said that the Government was planning targeted actions for the new action plan, including improving the interoperability of police and judicial data collection systems as part of the digitalization of judicial registers, strengthening the victim-centred approach by providing more services through a dedicated platform and intensifying public awareness campaigns and human rights education and training.

65. **A representative of Greece** said that her country was the first to have aligned its national educational curriculum with the Sustainable Development Goals, fostering responsible and active citizenship. The nationwide "Skills Lab" initiative integrated human rights, intercultural education and anti-discrimination themes into teaching, and new teaching materials placed a strong emphasis on inclusion and diversity. Teachers received training in human rights and inclusion, and health education programmes annually promoted active citizenship and human rights awareness. A new law on school bullying and violence had provided for the establishment of a digital platform for reporting incidents, managing cases and raising awareness, with 740 reports filed by April 2024, 10 per cent of which related to racism. On antisemitism, the Ministry of Education collaborated with Jewish cultural institutions, organized Holocaust education programmes and offered relevant teacher training. Regarding the vandalism of religious sites, the General Secretariat for Religious Affairs had recorded 147 incidents, with the majority targeting Orthodox Christian sites, alongside smaller numbers targeting the sites of other religious communities. The recording of such incidents was a first step to preventing them, in that it fostered a relationship of trust between the police, the State and religious communities.

66. **A representative of Greece** said that the State had taken wide-ranging measures to address the legacy of the Holocaust. Greece had been among the first countries to return properties of Holocaust victims through a special fund, ensuring that the properties of victims without descendants were appropriately managed. Additionally, descendants of Greek citizens who were victims of the Holocaust had the right to claim Greek citizenship and return to Greece by following a straightforward procedure. The country had built a Holocaust museum and had developed a national action plan against antisemitism.

67. **A representative of Greece** said that the application process for legal aid was straightforward: victims submitted an application with documentation proving that they had low or no income. Specifically, they must have income below €6,000 annually for an individual, increasing by €1,000 for each child. The application was reviewed by a judge, who appointed a lawyer to assist the victim in criminal proceedings. Legal aid covered most crimes, including those with a maximum penalty of 2 years, which encompassed the majority of offences. For defendants in serious cases with penalties ranging from 5 years to life imprisonment, a lawyer was appointed directly by the investigating judge or court, without following the legal aid application process. Discrepancies between the statistics held by the Racist Violence Recording Network and those of the authorities were to be expected. To

open a police case or prosecution proceedings, sufficient evidence and victim cooperation were required, and some victims might report incidents to the network but not to law enforcement. The differences in reported numbers were minimal: in 2023, public prosecutors had opened 115 cases and the police had recorded 122 cases. The high number of racist incidents in the Attica region could be explained by population density, as approximately half of the country's population resided there.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.