



**Economic and Social  
Council**

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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL  
AND CULTURAL RIGHTS  
Pre-sessional working group  
21-24 May 2002

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON  
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

**List of issues to be taken up in connection with the consideration  
of the third periodic report of ICELAND concerning the rights  
referred to in articles 1-15 of the International Covenant on  
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1994/104/Add.25)**

## **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. In paragraph 3 of its concluding observations to the second periodic report of the State party, the Committee welcomed the establishment of a Human Rights Centre in Iceland. Please describe the legal status and the actual work done by the Centre in its effort to protect human rights, and specifically those enshrined in the ICESCR.

## **II. ISSUES RELATING TO THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT (arts. 1-5)**

2. In the third periodic report, reference is made to article 65 of the Constitution of Iceland with regard to the principles of equality in the enjoyment of human rights, without any discrimination concerning race, colour, sex and religion. Please indicate the legal application of these provisions.

3. Please indicate in detail the measures being effectively applied in order to combat xenophobia and related forms of discrimination.

## **III. ISSUES RELATING TO SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT (arts. 6-15)**

### **Article 7 - Right to just and favourable conditions of work**

4. It is stated in paragraph 48 of the third periodic report that the net income of women from employment in 1999 amounted to 54.2 per cent of that of men. Please provide information on the effective measures being taken by the State party to reduce, and eventually eradicate, this significant disparity, which is contrary to the spirit of the Covenant.

5. Please provide information on how the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers to equal treatment in employment, particularly their rights to equal pay and to equal unemployment, sickness and retirement benefits, are respected.

6. Please provide information on how the minimum salary is determined and how it evolved relative to the cost of living during the past five years.

### **Article 8 - Trade union rights**

7. According to ILO reports the State party could terminate certain collective agreements incorporating wage increases if price-level changes in Iceland differ substantially from those in its main trading partners countries. Please explain how such interference by the State party can be reconciled with the right to collective bargaining.

### **Article 9 - Right to social security**

8. Given the relatively high percentage of retired people in Iceland and the progressive increase in the number of older persons, please indicate how the social security system is being financed and whether the increase in expenditure for social security is affecting other essential social and cultural programmes, notably education and health.

9. Please provide more information on the judgement of the Supreme Court of 19 December 2000, referred to in paragraph 73 of the report.

### **Article 10 - Protection of the family, mothers and children**

10. In paragraph 8 of its concluding observations on the second periodic report, the Committee welcomed the establishment by the State party of a programme to alleviate the situation of battered women and to prevent acts of violence (E/C.12/1/Add.32, para. 8). Please indicate the effective contribution of this programme to the prevention of violence against women. Please provide information also on the outcome of the anti-alcohol, anti-drugs and anti-smoking campaigns mentioned in the same paragraph.

11. Please provide statistical information relating to the problems mentioned in paragraphs 131 and 132 of the State party's report, which discuss the treatment of children with alcohol and drug problems.

12. Please indicate how the State party intends to reconcile the aims of the new Housing Act No. 44/1998 (para. 140) with the financial difficulties facing the State Housing Fund pointed out in paragraph 144.

### **Article 12 - Right to physical and mental health**

13. No specific reference is made in the report to the incidence of HIV/AIDS in Iceland. Please provide information on the incidence of HIV/AIDS during the past five years.

14. Please provide more information on the work and objectives of Biobanks and the Health Sector Database mentioned in paragraphs 163 and 164.

15. Please provide more detailed information on how the State party will implement the objectives on the National Health Policy outlined in paragraphs 165-167.

### **Articles 13 and 14**

16. Please provide more information on how the Municipalities Equalization Fund (para. 177) operates to reduce disparities in educational expenditure between the richer and poorer municipalities.

17. Please provide statistical information on school drop-outs, disaggregated by age, sex and area of residence (rural and urban).

18. Please provide further information on the circumstances which led to the Supreme Court judgement of 4 February 1999 mentioned in paragraph 195 of the report and the final outcome of this judgement.

19. Please provide information on how foreign students, particularly refugees and asylum-seekers or their children, are treated in relation to access to higher education, scholarships, or other forms of financial assistance.

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