

CERD. Intervention by the Norwegian NHRI.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to address the Committee and provide input to the dialogue with Norway.

I will use this opportunity to highlight some of the issues raised in our written submission. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud monitors the Norwegian government's follow up of ICERD, and I will therefore also mention a few concerns from their report.

The first issue I would like to mention is the need for a coordinated follow up of Concluding Observations from all the treaty bodies. Most Concluding Observations concern several ministries and Governmental agencies. A mechanism for coordinated follow up would make it easier for the Government as well as for other stakeholders to be informed about the status for follow up and thus facilitate the preparations of the upcoming periodic reports.

The State Party should therefore be given the recommendation to put in place a mechanism to map and assess the recommendations from international human rights monitoring mechanisms with a view to ensuring that ministries and other relevant governmental agencies respond on an informed and coordinated basis.

Hate speech and hate crime

Second, I would like to **address hate speech and hate crime**.

It is stated in the periodic report that combatting hate crime, including hate speech, will be prioritized in all of the country's police districts. The State Party has also launched a strategy against hate speech, which we welcome. Some of the measures in the strategy have already been implemented. We note, however, that for several measures, this is still not the case.

The Ombud for Discrimination and Equality calls, in her report, for targeted and efficient efforts to combat hate speech, and underlines the responsibility of leading politicians to set a standard for the tone in public debate, as well as to themselves refrain from stigmatizing speech. The Ombud's proposals are contained in chapter 3 of her report.

We have suggested that the following recommendations be made:

- The State Party should ensure that police districts give high priority to investigation of hate speech and hate crimes, as provided for by the Government's strategy.
- The State Party should ensure comprehensive, reliable and standardized statistical data on hate speech and hate crimes, which not only include the number of reports (as today), but also the outcome of these reports (investigations, prosecutions, convictions, etc).
- The State Party should strengthen coordination and further clarify responsibility among different justice sector institutions, e.g. the police, the Police Directorate, the prosecutor's office and the courts, to ensure the follow-up of the two abovementioned recommendations.

Sami rights

Third, we would like to address Sami rights. In para 30 b in the Concluding Observations to the combined 21 and 22 reports of Norway, the Committee recommended that the State Party should **"Follow up on the proposals of the Sami Rights Committee, including by establishing an appropriate mechanism and legal framework, and identify and recognize Sami land and resource rights outside Finnmark"**.

The work to identify and recognise ownership and usage rights in Finnmark is underway. Little has, however, been achieved in clarifying and securing Sami land and resource rights outside Finnmark. We therefore suggest that the Committee recommend that the State Party give priority to follow up the report of the Sami Rights Committee.

Furthermore, we suggest that the Committee follow up its previous concluding observations, recommending that the State Party increase its efforts to protect and develop the Eastern Sami language and culture. Reference is made to para 177 in the periodic report, where the Government acknowledges that their language and culture are in a very vulnerable position.

Both we and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud have raised the issue of violence in Sami communities. Research indicates that Sami bear a higher

risk for being exposed to violence to a larger extent than the majority population. According to research, abused individuals from Sami communities experience special challenges and barriers in their interaction with the police and social and health services. With support from The Sami Parliament and several Sami organisations, we are advocating for an action plan on violence in Sami communities.

I will also draw the Committee`s attention to other issues concerning Sami rights, that we have raised in our written submission.

National Minorities

Forth, we want to address some issues regarding national minorities. In a recent meeting between the Government and representatives of national minorities, where the we also participated, it was emphasised that there is little knowledge in the Norwegian society about the national minorities and the challenges they face. The Government should strengthen its efforts to enhance such knowledge.

The need for enhanced dialogue between the Government and representatives of national minorities was also stressed. I refer to the suggested recommendations on national minorities in our written submission, which i.a. also include follow up to the Tater/Romani Commission`s report, a comprehensive plan for strengthening the Kven language, as well as measures to prevent early school drop-outs among Roma children. As concerns the latter, we suggest that the State Party is encouraged to include the educational situation of Roma children in the forthcoming White Paper to Parliament on national minorities. The report from the Ombud on Discrimination and Equality to the Committee also mentions several measures concerning the educational situation of Roma children that are relevant for the State Party to implement.

Furthermore, we suggest that the Committee recommends to the State Party that they, in dialogue with the national minorities concerned, should increase knowledge of the living conditions of the national minorities, i.a. by drawing on good practices in terms of data gathering methods used in relation to Sami living conditions.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers

The fifth issue we would like to raise is unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. The periodic report, para 209-210, describes the framework for the care of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers under the age of 15 as well as for those

aged 15 to 18. The report does not, however, mention that unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors aged 15-18 receive less care than what is offered to other children in Norway under the responsibility of the Child Welfare Service. We have issued a report which concludes that unaccompanied minors aged 15 - 18, are subject to differential treatment contrary to their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Lack of equal treatment in recruitment processes

Sixth, we would like to point to lack of equal treatment in recruitment processes. The unemployment rate among immigrants has for the last twenty years been three times as high as in the population as a whole. It is not known to what degree unemployment among immigrants is due to discrimination or what is due to factors such as differences in language skills, formal qualifications, length of residence, etc. However, research shows that discrimination is part of the problem. A visible minority background can often be a disadvantage in the labor market. This applies to both the public and private sector, and also to well qualified candidates.

The Ombud's report recommends that the State Party should ensure that public and private employers give equal treatment to candidates with a minority background in recruitment processes. It is also recommended that resources are allocated for guidance and monitoring of the "Activity and Reporting Duty" in the law. The State Party may consider adding a sanction for non-compliance with the duty, as CERD suggested in 2015 in para. 22 in its concluding observations.

Mr. Chair,

Time does not permit me to explain the background for all our suggested recommendations. Allow me therefore to refer to the suggestions made in the written submissions to which I have referred.