



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Republic of North Macedonia and welcome the constructive engagement of your Government during the 32nd session of the UPR Working Group in January 2019.

As the final outcome report on the review of North Macedonia has been recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 41st session, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of North Macedonia – the Compilation of United Nations information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years, until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have considered the statements and/or recommendations made by 57 delegations and the presentation made and responses provided by the delegation of North Macedonia. I have also considered the actions taken by the Government to implement the 96 recommendations supported during the second cycle of the UPR. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues, which appear in the annex to this letter.

I welcome the adoption of the Law on the Prevention and Protection against Discrimination by Parliament on May 2019 as well as the establishment of the national mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018.

I encourage North Macedonia to continue implementing the recommendations received from human rights mechanisms effectively in order to achieve concrete results in the areas highlighted in the annex to this letter and to facilitate the preparations for North Macedonia's fourth cycle of the UPR. My advice to all Member States is to implement national action plans in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the national human rights institution and civil society organizations and, where necessary, with the support of international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other United Nations entities, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

I also encourage North Macedonia to pursue efforts to strengthen the Government's Inter-sectoral Body on Human Rights for comprehensive reporting and follow-up in relation to recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and to treaty obligations, linking this to the Sustainable Development Goals. I strongly recommend the use of the OHCHR practical guide on this topic, which is available at:
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf.

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H.E. Mr. Nikola Dimitrov
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of North Macedonia



Please, kindly note that I am sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting them with the implementation of the recommendations, following the review. An important measure that can contribute positively to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I encourage North Macedonia to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the third cycle of the review, by 2021.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *"The Human Rights Council's universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council's recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals."*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist North Macedonia in relation to the areas identified in this letter and its annex.

Please, accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: H.E. Mr. Andrej Zhernovski
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of North Macedonia



Annex

Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies

- Ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.
- Ratifying the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.
- Ratifying the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

A. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination

- Taking steps to eradicate discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- Addressing discrimination against women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, including by removing discriminatory references to gender and gender identity in high school and university textbooks.
- Providing training for judicial authorities, based on international human rights standards and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, on the right to equality and the prohibition of discrimination.

B. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person

- Reforming the penitentiary system, particularly strengthening the oversight mechanisms, in line with the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Ensuring prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into allegations of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials leading to the prosecution and punishment of those responsible with penalties that are consistent with the gravity of the act committed.

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

- Protecting the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary, by ensuring that judiciaries operate without pressure and interference from the executive power.

Fundamental freedoms

- Ensuring the full enjoyment by all of freedom of expression and association, and protecting journalists and others who exercise these rights from harassment, intimidation and violence.
- Protecting freedom of expression, by ensuring a successful implementation of the new Media Law.



- Ensuring respect for freedom of expression and the right to privacy, including online.

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to health

- Ensuring universal coverage by the State health insurance of all costs related to sexual and reproductive health and modern contraceptive methods.
- Developing a primary health-care system that guarantees high-quality medical care for pregnant women and children.

Right to education

- Taking all necessary measures to promote inclusive education, making sure that minority groups are not neglected and that persons from vulnerable groups are fully integrated in the educational system.

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

Persons with disabilities

- Strengthening measures to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities.

Minorities

- Intensifying its efforts to eradicate structural discrimination against Roma and to improve their socioeconomic status.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- Ensuring the protection of the rights of migrants and combating their trafficking.
- Intensifying efforts to effectively implement the Strategy on the Integration of Refugees and Foreign Nationals 2015–2025, in order to enhance local integration programmes.
- Ending the detention, refoulement and abusive expulsions of migrants and asylum seekers, and ensuring their proper and due registration.