



**Human Rights Council**

12<sup>th</sup> session

Item 6: UPR: Slovakia

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Speaker: Ms. Elin Martinez

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Mr. President,

Franciscans International appreciates Slovakia's extensive comments and views submitted in advance. We would recommend that a clear statement of acceptance of recommendations accompanies such comments in the future.

In relation to Slovakia's response to the Report of the Working Group, and its comments on the Medium-term concept of Development of the Roma Minority from 2008-2013 (A/HRC/12/17/Add.1 p. 25), we would like to emphasize that any assessment of the social and economic status of the Roma population—and Action Plan taken there upon—must be preceded by an accurate reflection of the situation faced by them. This can only be successful if up-to-date statistics are available. We encourage Slovakia to consider data gathering as a priority in its Action Plans.

Governmental policies for the development of Roma communities must take into account the extreme poverty most of them experience. The State housing policy focused on the provision of economic instruments (A/HRC/12/17/Add.1 p. 27) should go beyond the economic perspective and ensure that the Roma's particular cultural and social contexts, such as living in settlements—as most do—are taken into account.

Following Finland's recommendation (Recommendation 65) to ensure effective participation of Roma communities in the process of implementing their right to adequate housing, Slovakia must also ensure effective participation in matters related to the right to education and health.

Franciscans International welcomes Slovakia's explanation with regards to children with special educational needs (A/HRC/12/17/Add.1 p. 28). However, and in line with New Zealand's recommendation (Recommendation 75) to develop and implement a strategy to address the disproportionate enrolment of Roma children in 'special schools', we encourage Slovakia:

1. To identify why Roma children who are not in need of special education are enrolled in such schools, and;

2. To analyze the reason for the large presence of such schools in Roma communities and settlements.

FI believes that bringing an end to the marginalization of Roma children within the education system should be a priority for the government (Recommendation 72 and 73).

Finally, the parent's or guardian's choice of schooling for a child (A/HRC/12/17/Add.1 p. 28) is influenced by the discrimination faced by Roma children in mainstream education and by the lack of mainstream schools in Roma communities and settlements. Franciscans International urges Slovakia to address these issues in the Action Plan and to engage in campaigns for the promotion of an effective right to education.

Thank you Mr. President.