

state administrations, as well as information on their situation in the fields of education, employment and health;

- ♦ provide more data on minorities' political, economic and cultural rights, and the proportions of ethnic minority groups and aliens residing in the country;
- ♦ give increased attention to introducing legal provisions aimed at safeguarding the enjoyment, on a non-discriminatory basis, by all segments of the population, of economic, social and cultural rights, notably, the rights to work, housing, education and access to services and places open to the general public;
- ♦ provide information on the effectiveness of teaching and public awareness campaigns intended to prevent racial discrimination and increase tolerance;
- ♦ provide, in its next report, comprehensive information on the results of the affirmative action measures that have been taken for the Roma community, in particular in the fields of education, employment and housing;
- ♦ resolve the remaining problems relating to the acquisition of Czech citizenship by all residents, including prisoners and children and adolescents in institutions, in particular members of the Roma minority; and
- ♦ consider providing increased education and training on racial tolerance and human rights issues to professional groups such as judges, lawyers, and civil servants, so as to eliminate any cases of harassment or improper conduct in relation to persons belonging to minorities.

### Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

The Czech Republic's initial report (CEDAW/C/CZE/1) was considered by the Committee at its January 1998 session. The report prepared by the government includes statistical and demographic data as well as information on, *inter alia*: constitutional provisions related to equality between women and men; safeguards set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms; the role and function of the Commission of the Parliament of the Czech Republic for the Family; sex roles and stereotypes and measures taken to modify social and cultural patterns; exploitation of women and protection under criminal law; equality and participation in public and political life; nationality and citizenship; education and equal access to education; equality in employment and economic rights; social security, pensions, insurance, occupational health and safety; the Labour Code and provisions related to the working conditions of women; health and equal access to health care, family planning and abortion; the situation of rural women; equality before the courts in civil matters; and equality in marriage and family matters.

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (A/53/38, paras. 167–207) noted developments that occurred after the government's report was prepared, including amendments to laws on employment, wages, salaries and pension insurance. The Committee welcomed, *inter alia*: the creation of an inter-ministerial coordinating body within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; the effort under way to draft a National Plan on the basis of the Beijing Platform for Action; significant gains in the status of women, particularly with regard to education and participation in economic life, as well as social support services, such as child care; and the high standards of health coverage in general, and for maternal health in particular.

Factors hindering the implementation of the Convention were noted as including an overarching tendency on the part of the government to perceive women as mothers and within the context of the family, rather than as individuals and independent actors in the public sphere. Reference was also made to the failure of the government to appreciate fully the structural and cultural causes of gender inequality, and the absence of special measures to elevate women's status other than those pertaining to the protection of pregnancy and motherhood.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee included, *inter alia*: the failure to provide in law a clear definition of discrimination and/or address *de facto* inequalities between women and men; women's inadequate and declining representation in decision-making positions in the political and economic spheres and at the government's apparent lack of attention to this phenomenon; the lack of any special temporary measures to remedy women's under-representation and the lack of government willingness to consider any such measures; the decline in the number of women's NGOs since the early days of the Republic's establishment; the absence of special legislation on violence against women and the government's perception that there is no need for such legislation; the absence of data on the extent and prevalence of violence against women; and the lack of information on any preventive measures and/or programmes to support victims of violence, raise public awareness of the issue, and sensitize health professionals and law-enforcement personnel on the topic.

The Committee expressed concern over: the lack of measures and programmes to promote a positive image of women as actors in all areas at all levels of public life and to encourage equal sharing of family responsibilities by men; the approach to prostitution and trafficking in women exclusively in the context of combatting organized crime, noting that these crimes are closely related to economic transition and socio-political changes; the policy of creating "household management" schools, which, although not formally sex segregated, cater mostly to female students and train them for traditional stereotypical roles; the practice of some schools admitting only boys because of their "different physical abilities"; the government's apparent reluctance to direct girls to scientific and technological fields of study; and the prevailing