

acute shortage of housing, the relatively high number of families living below the poverty line; the deterioration in health indicators as seen in declining levels of nutrition, rising alcoholism, and increasing cardiovascular disease and cancers; and the inadequate enforcement of occupational safety laws resulting in a relatively high number of accidents in the workplace, both in the private and the public sectors.

The Committee recommended that the government, *inter alia*:

- ♦ take special care to ensure full respect for the rights of all religious groups, particularly concerning issues of national policy such as education, gender equality and health care;
- ♦ fully respect the rights of all minority groups with regard to their right to participate in national political and economic life and the right to practise and teach their culture;
- ♦ make every effort to ensure women's right to health, in particular reproductive health, make available family planning services to all persons, including counselling on safe alternatives to contraception and reliable and informative sex education for school-age children;
- ♦ prohibit by law sexual harassment against women, provide in all voivodships (provinces) shelters for women and children who are victims of family violence, with all necessary support facilities, including counselling and other assistance;
- ♦ include, in its next periodic report, detailed information on the problem of domestic violence and the results of the recently adopted Action Programme for Women;
- ♦ abolish the 1962 citizenship law, which discriminates against women by not granting them the same right as men to transmit citizenship to their foreign-born spouses;
- ♦ fully protect the right to work for women as well as for men on the basis of equal pay for equal work; undertake a study on the subject and include information on measures taken in this regard in the next periodic report;
- ♦ take appropriate measures, especially increasing the number of state labour inspectors and strengthening their powers, in order to ensure that occupational safety legislation is properly implemented;
- ♦ specify in law the conditions for permissible forced evictions, with provisions that address the need for alternative lodging for those evicted;
- ♦ take all appropriate measures in addressing the problems of the acute housing shortage and homelessness; determine the basis for setting rental rates in a way that protects the rights of both property owners and tenants, especially those among the most vulnerable groups of society;

- ♦ provide to all consumers, in particular tenants, information on rights and responsibilities and the public and private avenues of assistance available in a market economy; ensure that respect for the right to housing includes, when appropriate, measures to assist those whose homes are put in jeopardy or who are rendered homeless by dramatic rent increases due to the elimination of rental subsidies; and
- ♦ engage in a large-scale public information campaign to promote healthy lifestyles in order to improve the quality of nutrition, combat alcoholism and smoking, and reduce the risks of cardiovascular diseases and cancers; and extend the campaign to schools and incorporate such information into the regular curricula.

## THEMATIC REPORTS

### Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

**Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1998/68, Section V; E/CN.4/1998/68/Add.1, para. 339)

The reports note that on 3 July 1997 the President signed into law a new Penal Code, which came into effect on 1 January 1998, abolishing the death penalty for all crimes.

**Freedom of opinion and expression, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1998/40, Sections II, III and IV)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) visited Poland from 24 to 28 May 1997. The report of the visit (E/CN.4/1998/40/Add.2) contains information on the transition in Poland to a parliamentary democracy and social market economy, the legal framework related to human rights generally, and expression and information specifically, and principal considerations and concerns. The report also includes concluding observations and recommendations.

The report sets the context by noting that an important element in the transformation of the political order in Poland has been the removal of restrictions on freedom of expression and the media, particularly as regards the lifting of censorship and the abolition of the one-party monopoly over the mass media. The SR observed that, following events in 1989, the government established a liquidation commission charged with the redistribution of property in the media sector and, in 1992, adopted the Broadcasting Act which introduced a legal framework for regulating the broadcasting landscape. The report notes that today the media market is flourishing with a large number of national and foreign newspapers and magazines, as well as private television and radio services.

The report notes that the Constitution that was approved in a national referendum in May 1997, *inter alia*: guarantees the right of citizens to freely express their opinions; prohibits preventive censorship and the licensing of the