

delays in the processing of applications for citizenship, in particular those of ethnic Serbs, which have resulted in applicants losing social and educational benefits; the lack of sufficient information on the steps taken to ensure the practical implementation of the right to equal treatment before the courts and effective remedies so that victims of racial discrimination can secure the punishment of discriminatory acts and reparation for injury; continuing reports about the failure of the criminal justice system to deal with all crimes of an ethnic nature adequately and the subsequent tendency to fail to prosecute alleged perpetrators of crimes directed at ethnic Serbs; reports indicating that Croatian Serbs have been unfairly prosecuted or excessively punished when allegations of illegal activity directed at non-Serbs have been brought; continuing reports indicating that strong control is exercised by the government of certain mass media, particularly television, and that some graphic media are allowed to use discriminatory speech; reports from UN bodies pointing to a lack of information and awareness among the Croat population of international human rights standards in general and of the Convention in particular.

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

- ♦ reinstate the provisions for the fair and proportionate representation of the Serbian ethnic community in the Parliament;
- ♦ take the necessary legislative measures in order to give full effect to the obligations in the Convention to declare illegal and prohibit organizations which promote and incite racial discrimination; take measures against the use of mass media for the incitement to ethnic hatred; prohibit and prosecute all acts of incitement to ethnic hatred;
- ♦ introduce adequate measures to ensure and monitor the implementation in practice of the newly introduced National Programme for Return, in particular with regard to the Serbs displaced in East Slavonia, Baranja, and West Srijem; as a matter of urgency, take steps to ensure the right to security of person and protection against violence or bodily harm of returnees;
- ♦ with respect to the acquisition of citizenship, take steps to ensure that all provisions of the Croatian Law on Citizenship are in conformity with article 5 of the Convention and that the law is implemented in a non-discriminatory manner;
- ♦ take measures to ensure the prosecution of persons allegedly responsible for committing racially motivated crimes, regardless of the racial, ethnic or religious origin of the perpetrator or the victim; include detailed information on such measures in the next periodic report, as well as information on racially motivated crimes including, for example, the number of complaints and judicial decisions with regard to compensation awarded to victims or criminal sanctions;
- ♦ use all effective measures to familiarize the public with the Convention as a means to change traditional prejudices against certain minorities and to convey messages of tolerance; continue to provide instruction on international human rights standards in schools and organize training programmes for persons engaged in the administration of justice, including judges, lawyers and law enforcement officials;
- ♦ take concrete measures in order to guarantee freedom of association without distinction as to ethnic origin; ensure that mass media – in all their forms, including electronic – are open to all ethnic groups without distinction; take effective measures in order to stop racist and discriminatory speech in some graphic media; and
- ♦ include detailed information in the next report on the independence of the judiciary, the reintegration of East Slavonia, the steps taken to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; provide in the next report a clarification of the legal definitions used for describing different minorities and up-dated information on the demographic composition of the Croatian population.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Croatia's initial report (CEDAW/C/CRO/1, February 1995) was considered by the Committee at its January 1998 session. The report prepared by the government covers the period up to 1994, and contains information on, *inter alia*: provisions in the Criminal Acts against Human Dignity and Morality law related to rape, sexual coercion, sexual misconduct; sex roles and stereotyping, the media and education; equality before the law; participation in public and political life; citizenship and nationality; education and access to education; employment, the Labour Relations Fundamental Rights Act and the Labour Relations Act; health and health care, reproductive health; social security and the Law on Social Welfare; equality before the courts in civil matters; and the Law on Marriage and Family Relations, property rights, inheritance.

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (A/53/38, paras. 80–119) noted developments since preparation of the report, including the establishment in 1996 of the Commission for Equality in Croatia and adoption, in 1997, of a national policy for the promotion of equality based on the Beijing Platform for Action. The report outlines measures to achieve particular goals in the areas of political decision-making, the economy and the economic position of women, health care, education, human rights of women and violence against women in war and peace. The Committee welcomed: incorporation of the Convention into domestic law and the fact that it may be invoked before the courts; the establishment of the Commission for Equality in Croatia; the national policy for the promotion of equality; and the cooperation between government and women's NGOs.