



No 1191

Geneva, November 30, 2011

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and referring to the High Commissioner's letter with regard to Human Rights Council resolution 15/11, concerning the World Programme for Human Rights Education, dated 6 September 2011, has the honour to transmit the information provided by the Bulgarian authorities about the initiatives and activities undertaken to implement the Action Plan to the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration

Annex: in accordance with the text – 5 pages.



**Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

OHCHR REGISTRY

30 NOV. 2011

INFORMATION

about

the initiatives and activities undertaken by the ministries to implement the Action Plan to the World Programme for Human Rights Education of the United Nations, adopted by Resolution 15/11 of the UN Human Rights Council

In accordance with Resolution 15/11, the Human Rights Council adopted an Action Plan for the period 2010-2014. The Plan offers a specific strategy and practical ideas for implementing the Human Rights education on a national level. Generalized information about the ministries in the Republic of Bulgaria assigned with the initiatives and activities that have to be undertaken to implement the plan can be found below in this document.

1. Human Rights Education at the Ministry of Interior

Human Rights education for staff of the Ministry of Interior is carried out both within the framework of the initial professional training performed at the Ministry of Interior Academy (MoIA) and during the additional vocational training with or without discontinuing work.

Human Right Education at the MoIA employs two approach schemes. On the one hand, they teach subjects and units directly related to the protection of human rights. On the other hand, separate human rights aspects are considered within the framework of the remaining subjects.

The Bachelor and Master's courses of the Police Department at the MoIA include the following units whose contents is related to human rights protection: Human Rights Protection; Constitutional Law; Organization of law enforcement institutions; Professional Ethics and Schengen Legislation.

The initial professional training courses include the subjects: Police Protection of Human Rights and Professional Ethics. The core part of the Schengen Legislation unit are human right aspects related to European citizenship and the right to free movement according to Common European Law.

Human rights issues are also part of the distance courses at the Academy of the Ministry of Interior. A separate distance education course has been developed for staff of the Ministry of Interior called Police close to Society. The content of this course is devoted to central issues of human rights and professional ethics in the Ministry of Interior.

With focus on present day interest and practical orientation of the education at the MoIA, the content of subjects and units studied there is regularly updated. Special attention is paid to forbidding all forms of violence – torture, ill-treatment and bad or humiliating attitude or punishment. Education in Human Rights Protection for the academic year 2010/2011 has been expanded by adding the following topics: Providing Assistance and Financial Compensation to People Having Suffered from Crime; Protection from Domestic Violence; Human Rights in EU Law; Legal Status of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Police Ethics at the Ministry of Interior and Protection against Discrimination.

The course outline is also updated with regard to the monitoring mechanisms for the protection of human rights on behalf of law enforcement bodies performed by a number of international organizations. The judgments of the European Court of Human Rights are part of the course outline.

The reports of international institutions with human rights functions are also included in the program of study of respective units.

The faculty and staff of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior take active participation in national and international conferences on human rights issues and relations with the police. In 2010 a representative of MoIA participated in an international conference organized by the European Police College on Human Rights and Police Ethics. The Academy of the Ministry of Interior contributed to the development of a manual for training border police staff on human rights within the framework of the EU Agency Frontex by the participation of one of its experts. In this way MoIA is actively involved in the harmonization of human rights education of police officers in EU Member States.

Human rights subject-matter is part of the infantry training. This subject is mandatory for all staff of the Ministry of Interior who are officially enlisted to wear a firearm. This subject supports and improves the skills and knowledge about applying the norms established by law for using firearms by police officers as an extreme measure and is an integral part of professional training and education.

In 2011 the Minister of Interior approved Methodical Guidelines for Using Various Technical Devices, Technical Features and Safety Rules in Using and Safe-keeping Firearms by Police Bodies. These guidelines meet international human rights standards. The introduction of this internal statutory act is fully devoted to the human rights protection.

In February 2011 a meeting of trainees was held with the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria. During the discussion some problems related to police violence were also considered.

On May 12, 2011 the Ministry of Interior held a public discussion on the issues of police violence and the results are being used in the educational process.

In February 2011 a Co-operation Memorandum was signed between the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Ministry of Interior. The Memorandum highlights the education and training of MoI staff, the judiciary and NGOs about crimes provoked by hatred. A one-day seminar was held for MoI officials (September 13, 2011). A Training for Trainers course will be organized on the issues related to crimes provoked by hatred.

The Standing Committee on Human Rights and Police Ethics (SCHRPE) in the Ministry of Interior also includes activities for training MoI staff on specific topics in its annual plans.

The members of SCHRPE participate in training MoI staff as lectures on human rights and police ethics issues. In 2010 SCHRPE representatives took part in seminars devoted to the Protection against Discrimination. The seminars were organized by the Committee for Protection against Discrimination and were targeted to training MoI staff – the Project entitled Progress to Equality: National effective mechanisms and innovative practices for prevention and fight with discrimination in Bulgarian society and the role of the MoI system, funded by the European Commission.

In training and education of MoI staff, SCHRPE works together with state agencies and non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights protection.

2. Human Rights Education at the Ministry of Education

Civic education at the Bulgarian school is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Reference Framework

for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and on the State Educational Requirements (SER) for the preparation of teaching curricula and programmes and learning outcomes. The structure of the new course outlines developed on the basis of SER for the separate subjects and civic education allows considering and studying human rights topics both across different learning content and through various activities of students, thus providing comprehensive, consistent and efficient educational process.

In 2007 a National Olympiad in Civic Education was established and gained popularity. It is an annual event held among students from 1st grade to 12th grade. Every year the number of participants is growing, and in the academic year 2010-2011 more than 300 student projects from all over the country competed.

Through the joint activities of the Bulgarian Youth Red Cross and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, the subject Introduction to Humanitarian Law (IHL) was added to the school curriculum and training content as part of the optional courses for the academic year 2008/2009. It provides opportunities to acquaint young people with the principles of international humanitarian law as part of the awareness and human rights protection culture and building up attitudes promoting tolerance, solidarity and mutual aid.

With regard to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights (1995-2005), in 2003 a National Teacher Competition for good teaching practices in civic education was initiated, held every two years and resulting in publishing a collection of the best papers on the topic.

Since 2006 National Conferences entitled The School – a desired territory for the students, have been regularly held. The conference framework includes three topical directions, and the second and third directions have direct bearing to UNESCO Recommendations of 1974 (Self-Governance and Civic Education and Reducing high drop-out rates at school).

3. Human Rights Education at the Ministry of Justice

Officials from the Chief Directorate Execution of Judgments are primarily trained on human rights issues (the Ministry of Justice has provided information about education and training of that department only). The total number of classes during the initial training related to human rights, prevention of torture and use of physical force, together with practical sessions, is 42 study hours.

The Training Center in the town of Pleven, where all the personnel working in the Chief Directorate Execution of Judgments is trained, has lately accommodated courses for the initial training of newly recruited public servants from different areas of the penitentiary system.

Topics on human rights and use of physical force by penitentiary establishment staff have been included in four of the major subjects comprising initial training – legal training, penitentiary pedagogy, penitentiary psychology and supervisory and guard operations.

Legal training incorporates topics allowing trainees to get acquainted and study major international statutory acts related to human rights, both on European level and adopted by the United Nations. In particular, they study the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; the European Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the European Prison Rules; the minimum standards for treatment of convicted persons required by the European Prison Rules; the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the field of penitentiary pedagogy and penitentiary psychology the training features topics specifying the ways, methods and tools to observe these international acts by all staff, as well as questions related to the ethic code of conduct with officials in the penitentiary system. Trainees are informed about the status and authority vested in the committee against torture, definite parts of reports on inspections performed are considered and findings and conclusions are analyzed thoroughly.

As far as supervisory and guard operations are concerned, officials study in detail the events allowing the use of physical force, the action that should be undertaken accordingly, including providing first aid. Training includes practical role-playing where every person has to make a decision about using physical force, special devices and firearms as a last resort option.

4. Human Rights Education at the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria

The Ombudsman actively promotes fundamental human rights as well as the prerogatives of the Ombudsman institution. Human rights education is primarily targeted to children of young people (higher education students) and aims at informing them about fundamental human rights and means of their protection, building up a culture of tolerance, understanding and respecting diversity and difference, and honouring the rights of other people.

The instruments and activities to achieve these objectives within the prerogatives of the Ombudsman institution are, as follows:

The institution has been engaged in supporting internship programmes since 2006. Every year students studying Public Administration, Law, European Studies, Political Sciences and International Relations at the University of Sofia Kliment Ohridski, the University of National and World Economy and New Bulgarian University are trained. The Internship Programme will soon be joined by students at the Academy of the Ministry of Interior. The internship takes 2 weeks. Training includes the following major topics: the Institution of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria (Genesis of the Ombudsman Institution; Major activities of the Ombudsman Institution in Bulgaria; Human Rights Protection Standards); Ecology, Education, Public Health (Environmental issues, Policies in Education, Public Health); Discrimination (Standards in the field of discrimination, Policy of the Ombudsman in the field of discrimination); Social Policy (Social Assistance, Integration of people with disabilities, Housing Policy – municipal and departmental housing); Protection of the Rights of the Child (The case of Bulgaria – major concerns, Policy of the Ombudsman, International Standards, Co-operation of the Ombudsman with the non-governmental sector); International Standards (International Standards on protecting human rights, Practice of the Human Rights European Court in Strasbourg); Labour Legal Issues (Labour legal relations; Employment issues, Control on the market and labour; labour disputes); Ownership issues (Unauthorized building and construction; Control bodies in construction, Eviction).

The Ombudsman institution has started a project to promote children's rights and the functions and prerogatives of the national ombudsman. The aim is to raise children's awareness about the institution, to teach them how to address the institution and lodge complaints, to make them learn how complaints are considered and what recommendations can be made. Within the framework of this initiative the Ombudsman institution presented the booklet *The Rights of the Child*, which is published by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria. The initiative has started in Sofia and has embraced 10% of the schools in the capital. After that, experts of the Ombudsman acquainted school kids in Vratsa, Troyan and

Bourgas with their rights and the Ombudsman's activity. The project focuses primarily pupils from 4th to 7th grade.

The Ombudsman, in co-operation with the Commission for Protection against Discrimination, published guidelines entitled Equal in Diversity containing recommendations and advice about preventing discrimination acts by administration, educational institutions, employers and media. The guidelines provide detailed information on the civil structures and on the specific prerogatives of bodies and agencies responsible for the extrajudicial protection of citizens' rights.

5. Human Rights Education at the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD)

In 2011 the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) developed four specialized training modules: Antidiscrimination Law – civil law aspects, Antidiscrimination Law – penal law aspects intended for legal professionals, and Antidiscrimination Law for police officers and investigating magistrates, as well as a training module for teachers.

In December 2011 CPD is planning to hold a training course for 250 inspectors from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Division on human rights issues, discrimination and working with children having extremist or radical ideas.

The Action Plan of the World Programme for Human Rights Education of the United Nations intends to hold pilot 10-day and one-week training sessions for 100 legal professionals and 5 police officials. The Commission also expects the approval of funds requested from the European Commission under the Progress Programme. Seminars for legal professionals and teachers will be organized within this framework.

This information has been prepared taking into consideration the consolidated answers of the ministries in the Republic of Bulgaria related to the implementation of the Action Plan for 2010-2014 of the Human Rights Council.

Prepared by: Petya Georgieva, Junior Expert at the Human Rights Directorate

25/11/11