

Republic of Bulgaria

United Nations Human Rights Council

**INTERIM REPORT**

on the Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Third Universal Periodic Review

2021-2023

December 2023

# **Introduction**

The protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights in the Republic of Bulgaria was subject to a review at the thirty-six session of the Human Rights Council’s Working Group on Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which took place on 6 November 2020. At its 14th meeting, held on 10 November 2020, the Working Group on the UPR adopted a report on the Republic of Bulgaria[[1]](#footnote-1).

During the review process, the Republic of Bulgaria received 233 recommendations to advance human rights promotion and protection in the country. After careful consideration, the Bulgarian Government prepared an addendum to the Working Group’s Report[[2]](#footnote-2), containing the State’s views on the conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies. The Government’s overall approach, when considering the received recommendations, was to accept those where measures are foreseeable before the next UPR cycle, and/or where measures has already been or are being implemented.

The Republic of Bulgaria has decided to accept 193 of the recommendations received (*around 82%*) and mark 24 as noted. There are another 16 recommendations, whose wording or intention the Republic of Bulgaria generally approves and supports, but the State can only commit to their implementation partially, because constitutional or legal obstacles prevent the State to do so completely. Those recommendations are marked as accepted/noted.

In May 2021, Bulgaria accepted an additional recommendation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), addressed to all states undergoing the Third cycle of the UPR, to submit a voluntary interim report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report[[3]](#footnote-3), hence by 2023. Bulgaria has also accepted the OHCHR’s recommendation to develop a comprehensive national human rights action plan to ensure the timely implementation of the received recommendations.

# **Methodology**

On 20 May 2022, by a Decision No. 324, the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria adopted an Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations, received and accepted during the Third Cycle of the UPR of the Human Rights Council (2022-2025). All relevant ministries, the Ombudsman, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination and stakeholders were engaged in the development of the National Action Plan.

The present interim report focuses on the implementation of the accepted recommendations in the period May 2021 – December 2023, which are included in the abovementioned National Action Plan. Progress on the accepted recommendations’ implementation is presented in table format. The numeration follows paragraph 134 of the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Bulgaria[[4]](#footnote-4).

The preparation of the interim report was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All ministries, state bodies and institutions included in the National Action Plan submitted information on progress achieved in the implementation of the foreseen measures. The interim report was approved by the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights.

It should be noted that Bulgaria has been working on the implementation of the received recommendations in the particular context and circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, which inevitably increased the challenges faced. As well as that, since the adoption of the Working Group on the UPR report on Bulgaria in February 2021, the State has been through one parliamentary election and subsequent four early parliamentary elections, and two rounds of presidential elections, which also should be taken into account when considering the level of implementation of the accepted recommendations. However, the compilation of this report has enabled the Bulgarian authorities to identify areas where progress has been registered or work is ongoing and/or more action is needed and to focus country’s efforts in advance implementation in light of the upcoming Forth Cycle of the UPR.

The Republic of Bulgaria is and will remain committed to the Universal Periodic Review as main human rights monitoring mechanism and will work to further strengthen its role being an effective and unique peer review tool. The Republic of Bulgaria will encourage sharing of good practices in the field of human rights and addressing the remaining challenges.

# **Table – Implementation of the recommendations received during the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review**

December 2023

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| **UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW – THIRD CYCLE****Interim Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations** **by the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria**  |
| Fully implemented | In implementation | No measures taken |
| **Accepted Recommendations** |
| **Recommendations[[5]](#footnote-5)**  | **Implementation measures** | **Status** |
| **134.7** Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities *(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (Honduras)*; | The ratification of the Optional Protocol is included as a measure in the National Action Plan for the implementation of the final recommendations to the Republic of Bulgaria made by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2026), adopted with Decision No. 110 of the Council of Ministers of 12.02.2021, as well as in the National Strategy for People with Disabilities (2021-2030). Currently, interim reports on the implementation of the two documents are being prepared. Based on the information received, the responsible institutions are to prepare an objective assessment of the newly adopted and amended legislation, on sectoral policies, as well as for conducting follow-up consultations on necessary additional legislative changes to regulate the application of the Optional Protocol after its ratification.The Law on Persons with Disabilities established a monitoring body regarding the rights of persons with disabilities, namely a Monitoring Council. The Council's annual program for 2022 includes monitoring the process of ratification of the Optional Protocol, making recommendations to the responsible parties to finalise the process, which is in the interest of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in their best interest. | In implementation |
| **134.8** Consider ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities *(Costa Rica)*; Expedite the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities *(Thailand)*; | See rec. 134.7 | In implementation |
| **134.9** Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure *(Maldives)*; Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure *(Switzerland)*; | The Council of Ministers adopted a Decision No. 324 of 20.05.2022 which approves a National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations adopted by the Republic of Bulgaria within the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. The NAP envisages the preparation of a new detailed study on the readiness of Bulgaria to ratify the OP. The study is to be accomplished by 2025. | In implementation |
| **134.10** Maintain efforts towards the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communication procedure *(Chile);* | See rec. 134.9 | In implementation |
| **134.11** Foresee the signing and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights *(Senegal);* | An analysis of the country's readiness to sign the OP is being conducted at present. | In implementation |
| **134.12** Finalize the procedure of full accession to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons *(Ukraine);* | Bulgaria has ratified the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Stateless Persons with a law promulgated in SG No. 11 of 07.02.2012. With State Gazette, no. 97 of 06.12.2016, the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria was promulgated. It states that the status of a stateless person can be granted to a foreigner who is not considered a citizen of any country in accordance with the respective legislation. The procedure for granting the status of a stateless person is determined by the same act and the rules for its implementation.The Ministry of the Interior imposed reservations under Art. 27, Art. 28 and Art. 31 of the Convention. After an analysis of the said reservations imposed, the reservation under Article 31 was withdrawn in 2020. | Fully implemented |
| **134.14** Ratify the amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the crime of aggression *(Liechtenstein);* | An interinstitutional Working party has been formed at the Ministry of Justice, with the aim to carry out an analysis on Chapter XIV "Crimes against peace and humanity" of the Criminal Code and to prepare legislative amendments for the introduction of the crime of "aggression" and the war crimes in the Criminal Code. | In implementation |
| **134.15** Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for United Nations treaty body elections *(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);* | The National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights discussed the recommendation in February 2022. It was decided to prepare Rules of Procedure on the selection of candidates to the United Nations’ treaty bodies. The draft is to be adopted. | In implementation |
| **134.16** Continue its efforts in bringing its national legislation into line with its international obligations *(Kyrgyzstan);* | Political and legal discourse on further advancing the national legislation related to human rights is ongoing to date.  | In implementation |
| **134.17** Strengthen the national human rights institution and ensure its compliance with the Paris Principles *(Egypt);* Strengthen the capacity and financial resources of the Ombudsman and bring it into full compliance with the Paris Principles *(Germany);* Take the necessary measures to ensure that the country’s national institutions for human rights are in accordance with the Paris Principles *(Kazakhstan);* | In 2019, the Ombudsman was officially accredited by the GANHRI’s Sub-Committee on Accreditation with the highest “A” status, in accordance with the Paris Principles, as a National Human Rights Institution. The activities of the Ombudsman are financed by the state budget and other public sources. Efforts are constantly made to provide sufficient funding for all its activities.The Bulgarian government updates on an annual basis the budget of the Ombudsman and the Commission for Protection against Discrimination in accordance with the adequate needs for effective performance of duties. | Fully implemented |
| **134.18** Continue its efforts to combat discrimination and xenophobia, including by introducing legislative measures to prohibit hate speech *(Liechtenstein);* | In July 2023, the Bulgarian National Assembly adopted the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Criminal Code. The changes provide for the introduction of racist and xenophobic motives as constituent elements in other criminal provisions of the Special Part of the Criminal Code, similar to the existing ones. In this regard, the provisions, qualifying the above-mentioned crimes have been supplemented with new points providing for a heavier punishment when the act is committed *"based on racist or xenophobic motives"*. Throughout the changes, the Bulgarian government fully implemented into the national legislation the Framework Decision of the Council of the EU 2008/913 on combating certain forms of racism and xenophobia through criminal law. In chapter fourteen "Crimes against peace and humanity" of the Criminal Code, the proposed amendments to Article 419a establish criminal liability for publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising such crimes, committed in a way that could create a risk of violence or create hatred against individuals or groups of people united by race, colour, religion, national or ethnic origin.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.19** Ensure that any call to incite ethnic or racial discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited in law, and that those responsible for such calls are held accountable for their actions *(Luxembourg);* | The Protection against Discrimination Act has a special provision related to incitement to discrimination. Art. 4 prohibits any practice or indirect discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, ethnic belonging, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or belief, education, convictions, political affiliation, personal or public status, disability, age, sexual orientation, family status, property status or any other characteristics established by an Act or by an international agreement party to which is the Republic of Bulgaria. In addition, art. 5 stipulates that harassment on the grounds of the characteristics of art. 4, as well as the construction and maintenance of an architectural environment impeding the access of disabled persons to public places shall be considered discrimination.In 2022, the Directive on information activities in the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria was supplemented to include crimes with a discriminatory element, hence hate crimes, based on list of 22 characteristics, including sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, xenophobic motives, race and other.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.21** Raise public awareness on respect for diversity and undertake legislative reforms to further address intolerance and hate speech *(Malaysia);* | The Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) organises on an annual basis a national campaign to increase public awareness regarding protection against discrimination. The campaign covers 480 broadcasts on central and regional radio stations throughout the country. Regional representatives of the CPD also hold informational meetings all year round with representatives of municipal directors of schools, kindergartens and social homes, representatives of community centers, children's pedagogical rooms, regional education departments and NGOs. A total of 90 information events have been organised for 2022-2023, with the aim of making the target groups aware of examples of both discrimination and tolerance in public relations and the importance of prevention from discrimination and hate speech. The Council for Electronic Media regularly participates in events aimed at raising public awareness of issues of tolerance, publicly condemns any attacks (verbal or physical) on the work of journalists and also refers to the Commission for Protection against Discrimination when necessary.*Additional targeted measures:* The Supreme Judicial Council and the Ministry of Education jointly run a program which aims to explain the importance of protecting human rights. In the academic year 2022-2023, more than 15,000 students from grades 5-11 were included. There is a National Student Competition being organised every year, which is directly aimed at overcoming negative stereotypes and hate speech.Civic education is present in all stages of school education, as it is the most prevalent in high school. Civics and human rights training is also provided at pre-school level.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.23** Intensify the fight against racism, intolerance and hate crimes by organizing training workshops on topics related to police actions in multi-ethnic circles, human rights and minority issues *(Morocco);* | Specialised trainings and seminars with regard to capacity building are being held annually. According to the schedule for police training of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoI), two distance courses and one-day online trainings on the topic of reducing human rights violations among Roma have been held in 2022. In May-June 2023, there were trainings for police officers for the prevention and detection of radicalisation, violent extremism and hate speech, in particular towards the Roma. In October 4, 2023 additional courses for professionals were held. The Academy of MoI is also conducting a course on human rights and police practices.All newly appointed police inspectors undergo structured training for the application special methodology to combat racism and intolerance. Psychologists of the Ministry of the Interior conduct the training. | Fully implemented |
| **134.24** Scale up efforts in combating racism, racial discrimination and hate crimes *(Nigeria)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.19](#Discrimination) and [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness)  | Fully implemented |
| **134.25** Actively denounce and increase action to prevent racist, homophobic and xenophobic rhetoric in the public sphere, including against Roma and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons *(Norway);* | The National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of the Roma (2021-2030) and the National Action Plan 2022-2023 have been adopted in 2022 by a Decision No. 278 of the Council of Ministers. The Commission on Protection against Discrimination cooperates closely with Roma non-governmental organizations on a regular basis to conduct joint initiatives and campaigns.The MFA regularly made public statements, actively denounce actions motivated and calls the relevant institutions for taking all the necessary actions, within the legal framework, to prevent hatred inspired actions and demonstrations.As for homophobic rhetoric, the Bulgarian Government as well as local authorities aim to publicly denounce homophobic acts. For instance, when the Rainbow hub accident occurred – representatives of the MFA[[6]](#footnote-6) held a special meeting with the affected organisations. For further information, see also rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.19](#Discrimination) and [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) | Fully implemented |
| **134.26** Continue to take steps to counter racial discrimination both through awareness-raising and other preventive measures *(Pakistan)*; | See rec [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) | Fully implemented |
| **134.27** Intensify efforts in human rights education and training to address racism, intolerance and hate crimes against minority groups and other vulnerable groups *(Philippines*); | See rec. [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) and rec. [134.23](#FightRacism)Under the Equal Opportunities Initiative in 2023 trainings and internships were held for lawyers and law students from the Legal Incubator Program.The CPD conducts trainings in the educational system related to the protection of human rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination. In 2023, over 300 principals and teachers took part. The purpose is to examine and analyse the system for ensuring education without discrimination in accordance with the Protection against Discrimination Act, to identify the positive sides and gaps in the system for ensuring non-discrimination in the field of education, as well as and to raise the awareness of the teaching staff about non-discrimination and tolerance. | Fully implemented |
| **134.29** Take concrete measures to combat incidents of ethnic or racially motivated violence and hatred, including against migrants and refugees, and ensure that advocacy or incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited by law and that breaches are investigated and perpetrators held accountable *(Portugal)*; | See [134.18](#HateSpeech) | Fully implemented |
| **134.31** Continue to strengthen the efforts aimed at improving access to employment, education, social and health services and at overcoming negative stereotypes, hate speech and discrimination *(Romania)*; | Тhe National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Equality, Inclusion and Participation of the Roma (2021-2030) establishes three horizontal goals – equality, inclusion and participation within the four spheres of action: education, health, housing and employment. The fight against discrimination is a cross-cutting priority in all four spheres. | Fully implemented |
| **134.32** Introduce amendments to the national legislation to include a definition of hate speech *(Russian Federation);* | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) | Fully implemented |
| **134.33** Investigate cases of violence and crime based on race, and bring those responsible to justice *(Russian Federation)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) | Fully implemented |
| **134.34** Amend national legislation related to the elimination of racial discrimination and hate speech in line with international standards and bring perpetrators to justice *(Slovakia)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and rec. [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.35** Raise public awareness on respect for diversity *(Slovakia)*; | See rec. [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) and rec. [134.23](#FightRacism) | Fully implemented |
| **134.36** Amend national legislation to include a definition of hate speech in line with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, investigate racially motivated violent acts and crimes, prosecute and punish perpetrators and raise public awareness on respect for diversity *(Slovenia)*; | Pursuant to Constitutional Court’s Decision 13/27.07.2018, the Republic of Bulgaria is not in a position to ratify the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which does not include a definition of “hate speech”. This does not undermine the State’s commitment to combat all forms of violence, including domestic violence.Although it does not contain the concept of "hate speech", the Law on Radio and Television contains several provisions, which stipulates the explicit prohibition of inciting hatred or inciting various types of intolerance. When carrying out regular monitoring of linear and non-linear media services, the Council monitors the implementation of the specified provisions and, in the event of violations, imposes the administrative penalties provided for in the law (property sanctions).See also rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) | Fully implemented |
| **134.38** Take measures to prevent racist attacks, combat hate speech and crimes of extremism, especially against minorities, and ensure that all incidents are investigated, prosecuted and that perpetrators are punished *(State of Palestine)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) and [134.23](#FightRacism) | Fully implemented |
| **134.39** Strengthen the legislative and policy measures, and all other necessary measures, to fight intolerance and hate speech targeting minority, ethnic and religious groups *(Sudan)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) and [134.23](#FightRacism) | Fully implemented |
| **134.40** Address hate crimes, prohibit hate speech in the media and on social media platforms, prosecute those responsible and combat racism in all forms *(Jordan)*; | In 2020, amendments to the Law on Radio and Television were adopted to implement the EU Audio-visual Media Services Directive. The amendments provide for strengthening the powers of the media regulator – the Council for Electronic Media, stricter measures against the use of hate speech, prohibiting incitement to violence, hatred or terrorist acts in audio-visual media services. The rules also apply to video-sharing platforms. The General Directorate "Fighting Organized Crime" to the Ministry of Interior also actively monitors the observance of human rights online. Among the activities is regular monitoring, as well as work on received signals from non-governmental organizations and individuals.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.41** Take effective measures to prevent racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance as well as to prevent and eradicate trafficking in human beings *(Togo);* | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.19](#Discrimination) and [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) | Fully Implemented |
| **134.42** Continue efforts to combat intolerance, racism, and hate speech against foreigners, immigrants and minorities *(Tunisia)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and [134.29](#MigrantDiscrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.43** Commit to the principles of non-discrimination while ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens in implementing the announced social reforms *(United Arab Emirates)*; | See [134.31](#NegativeStereotypes) | Fully implemented |
| **134.45** Take effective measures to eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance *(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)*; | See [134.18](#HateSpeech) and [134.31](#NegativeStereotypes) | Fully implemented |
| **134.46** Strengthen measures aimed at combating discrimination in all its forms and guarantee the investigation and punishment of expressions of hatred against minority groups, including those made by members of some groups and political parties *(Argentina)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.47** Strengthen education on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex rights and legislate to protect against hate crimes against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons *(Australia)*; | On an annual basis there is a training on the topic: "*Investigation of hate crimes with homophobic and transphobic motives*", organized by the youth LGBT organization "Deystvie”. In 2022 the training was divided into two stages with two target groups of participants, respectively: in the period 15-17 March 2022 – investigative police officers from various Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the country and in the period 18-20 March 2022 – cadets from the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 2023 38 police officers from across the country, who are expected to act as 'points of contact' when dealing with reports of hate crimes took part.See rec. [134.66](#Torture) | Fully implemented |
| **134.49** Take more effective measures to reduce inequalities and discrimination against minorities, migrants and refugees *(Bahrain)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.29](#MigrantDiscrimination), [134.31](#NegativeStereotypes), [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare) | Fully implemented |
| **134.50** Improve the accessibility of effective remedies against any form of discrimination and take the necessary measures to protect vulnerable groups from hate speech and other hate crimes *(Bahrain);* | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.51** Implement the recommendations from the concluding observations of treaty bodies regarding the prohibition in law and in practice of any advocacy of ethnic or racial hatred and on prosecuting persons responsible for such behaviour towards minority groups *(Belarus);* | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.53** Ensure the investigation, prosecution and punishment of offences related to racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, including the excessive use of force by law enforcement officials, against minority groups such as Roma, Muslims, Jews, people of African descent, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and members of sexual minorities *(Brazil)*; | For 2022, a total of 229 reports of police violence were registered. There has been a decrease of 36 reports compared to 2021. In addition, the "Inspectorate" Directorate (MoI) carried out a thematic inspection in the Metropolitan and Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the created organization and the work on received signals with data on the illegal use of weapons and physical force. The "Internal Security" Directorate (MoI) also monitors inspections in the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in connection with reports of illegal use of physical force, aids or weapons by police authorities. All employees undergo training on topics related to the Code of Conduct for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and increasing the qualifications of employees related to the detention of persons, preparation of orders for the detention of persons and related issues. See also rec. [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare) | Fully implemented |
| **134.55** Ensure that all cases of hate speech and hate crime are promptly and effectively investigated, sanctioned and prosecuted *(Czechia);* | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and rec. [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.57** Systematically condemn hate crimes and hate speech and ensure that all racially motivated offences are effectively investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned *(Germany)*; | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) and rec. [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.60** Step up efforts to tackle hate crime, hate speech and discriminatory conduct targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons through amending the Criminal Code to explicitly include hate crime on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity *(Finland);* | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.19](#Discrimination) and [134.47](#LGBTI)In July 2023, the National Assembly adopted important amendments to the Criminal code in order to envisage more severely punishable components of the crimes of murder; bodily harm; kidnapping; unlawful imprisonment; unlawful destruction or damage of another's movable or immovable property; and manifest incitement to commit a crime, when they are committed for reasons related to the sexual orientation of the victim. Sexual orientation is added as a discriminatory motive/bias in the composition of crimes against the equality of citizens under Art. 162 and 163 of the Criminal Code. | Fully implemented |
| **134.63** Intensify efforts to develop and strengthen the necessary legislative frameworks that address cross-sectoral environmental challenges, including climate change adaptation and mitigation frameworks *(Fiji*); | The Long-term Climate Change Mitigation Strategy 2050 was officially adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2022. It aims to achieve transition to a low-carbon economy and climate neutrality by 2050. The strategy indicates the different ways for achieving Bulgaria's climate goals. In addition, an Ordinance on the energy efficiency, certification and evaluation of energy savings of buildings and on technical requirements for the energy performance of buildings was adopted in the same year.Under the "Environmental Protection and Climate Change" Program, a number of projects are being implemented to increase the ability of local communities to reduce emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The projects aim at conducting educational and informational campaigns by educational institutions to raise awareness regarding the reduction of climate change at national and local level. Moreover, the National Trust Eco-Fund implements a Climate Micro-Projects Program, which finances projects both to reduce energy consumption of public buildings and greenhouse gas emissions and to prepare strategies and analyses to tackle climate change.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.64** Ensure that women, children, persons with disabilities, and indigenous and local communities are meaningfully engaged in the development and implementation of climate change and disaster risk reduction policies *(Fiji);* | See rec. [134.63](#Environment) | Fully implemented |
| **134.65** Continue its efforts to strengthen the protection of journalists against harassment, attack or excessive use of force, and to ensure accountability in that regard *(Greece);* | On 28 July 2023, amendments to the Criminal Code were adopted in relation with the judgments of the ECtHR in *Bozhkov group of cases*. The cases in this group concern the disproportionate interference with the freedom of expression of journalists due to their convictions for defamation of public officials committed through their articles.The amendments revoked the qualified offence of insult and defamation, committed in respect of a public official or a public representative upon or with regard of the performance of their functions. In addition, the lower limit of the fine in the qualified offence of insult and defamation (committed in public or through the mass media) was reduced, thus giving the courts wider discretion in determining the punishment. The amendments also stipulated that exemption from criminal liability and imposition of an administrative punishment can also be done in cases where the insult or defamation is directed to bodies of power (e.g. ministers and other persons at higher state positions).During the past decade, there has been a major change in the jurisprudence of the national courts with regard to the examination and resolution of defamation cases brought against journalists. In the vast majority of analysed cases, journalists are usually acquitted either because their materials were based on diligently verified information, or because they based their value judgments on sufficient facts.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.66** Amend the legislation by adopting a definition of torture, and criminalize torture in a manner fully compliant with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights *(Maldives);* | Important amendments to the Criminal Code related to the need to criminalize the act of "torture" in accordance with the requirements of the Convention against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment have been also adopted in 2023. They provide for the creation of Art. 144b of the Criminal Code, which is distinguished as an independent offence and includes elements specified in Art. 1 of the Convention.The draft law was adopted by the National Assembly on July 28, 2023. | Fully implemented |
| **134.67** Combat prison overcrowding and strengthen health services for inmates *(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);* | By order of the Minister of Justice of February 20, 2023, a working group was established to discuss the received proposals for amendments and supplements to the Law on Execution of Sentences and Detention in Custody, which, if necessary, would prepare legislative changes. At the moment, a proposal has been prepared for consideration by the working group, where changes are also foreseen in the part about medical care in places of deprivation of liberty.Possibilities for the renovation of the material base and the construction of new prisons have been identified. In result, two new detention centers were built in North-East and South-West Bulgaria. By 2024, 1 prison should be built in Western Bulgaria, 3 prison dormitories should be renovated, and 2 buildings in the country should be remodelled. | In implementation |
| **134.68** Align the legal framework for juvenile justice with international standards as recommended by the United Nations Children’s Fund *(Poland);* | A draft Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) is prepared to grant juvenile offenders accused in criminal proceedings a number of additional rights in addition to those provided for in Art. 55 of the Criminal Procedure Code. It provides special measures to ensure that this category of accused children participate more effectively in the criminal proceedings and fully enjoy their right to a fair trial. The changes include that cases in which the accused is a juvenile will be investigated and tried with priority over others. The information about the rights of a juvenile defendant in criminal proceedings will be provided in writing to a parent, guardian, or other person legally responsible for the juvenile's care. The minor accused should be accompanied in the court sessions in which he participates by a parent, guardian or a person who legally takes care of him. The terms of detention of a minor accused are reduced. The bill was adopted by the National Assembly on second reading on May 26, 2023 and promulgated in the State Gazette No. 48 of June 2, 2023. They officially went into force on September 1, 2023.The development of the professional competence of Bulgarian magistrates to respect the rights and interests of the child in the handling of cases is a leading priority in the training activities of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The NIJ regularly conducts specialized trainings on topical issues related to juvenile justice. In connection with the above-mentioned amendments to the CPC, in August 2023 the Institute developed an e-learning self-study course on the rights of minors involved in criminal proceedings (with a particular focus on juvenile offenders), which provided effective access to basic specialized training for all magistrates working on criminal cases. By the end of October 2023 the training was completed by 392 judges, prosecutors and investigating magistrates.In order to ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach to judicial training in the field of juvenile justice, in 2022, under the project "Modern Learning Environment for Legal Professionals" NFM 2014-2021, the NIJ established a multiprofessional community “Justice for Children”, composed of magistrates, employees of the competent institutions, experts of NGOs working with children and other experienced professionals to support the planning and implementation of the training activities of the Institute. Towards the end of October the community consists of 49 magistrates and experts.The Academy of MoI together with UNICEF has developed materials of a new one-week course for the professional qualification "Children's rights". Its preparation and realization of this course is a joint activity of the Academy and UNICEF in implementation of a signed Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation. The main focus is the rights of children as victims of crimes and various types of violence, those of offenders /in their participation in court and other legal procedures/ and the rights of unaccompanied children seeking protection in Bulgaria. | Fully implemented |
| **134.69** Pursue efforts to combat corruption and organized crime *(Qatar);* | In 2022, the General Directorate "Fighting Organized Crime" at MoI conducted 264 specialized police operations. Additionally, since the beginning of 2023, the Directorate of Internal Security (DIS) has received 107 signals containing data on acts of corruption, the work on 45 of them has been completed, and 5 pre-trial proceedings have been initiated in various prosecutor's offices in the country. There is constant analysis of the activity, including on the basis of the signals received from citizens, and areas with high and constant corruption pressure are identified, among which it is appropriate to conduct integrity tests. The tests are conducted by DIS employees, and in 2023 there were 7 in total, with sufficient information on 3 specific violations. With the participation of the directorate, a project "Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption" is being implemented. The project will provide additional training of the staff.Furthermore, in full-time and part-time undergraduate police courses, there are trainings in the disciplines "Combating corruption", "Combating organized crime" and "Combating economic crime offered to both full-time and part-time police undergraduates. Trainings are also held on the topics "Current problems of combating corruption", "Combating drug trafficking", "Combating money laundering".Issues related to preventing and countering corruption and strengthening the integrity of magistrates are addressed in a number of training modules of the mandatory initial training programme for candidates for junior judges, junior prosecutors and junior investigators.In the framework of the ongoing qualification of magistrates, during the reporting period, the NIJ conducted a series of trainings aimed at strengthening the capacity of judges, prosecutors and investigating magistrates to effectively prosecute corruption and organised crime, in which a total of 341 representatives of the target groups were trained. | In implementation |
| **134.70** Improve juvenile justice legislation and practice, and continue efforts for the reintegration of former child offenders into society in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child *(Republic of Moldova);* | See [134.68](#JuvenileJustice) | Fully implemented |
| **134.71** Continue to align the legal framework for juvenile justice to the existing international standards and implement restorative justice approaches *(Romania);* | See [134.68](#JuvenileJustice) | Fully implemented |
| **134.72** Continue to work on the reform of the juvenile justice system to align it with the main European and international standards on the issue *(Spain);* | See [134.68](#JuvenileJustice) | Fully implemented |
| **134.73** Strengthen the rule of law by undertaking all necessary reforms in order to ensure a mechanism for accountability for the Office of the Prosecutor General *(Sweden);* | The Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Criminal Procedure Code was adopted by the 49th National Assembly on May 26, 2023 and was promulgated in State Gazette No. 48 of June 2, 2023. It introduces judicial control over the prosecutor's rulings on refusal to initiate pre-trial proceedings for a serious crime within the meaning of Art. 93 item 7 of the Criminal Code (for which the law provides for more than five years of imprisonment, life imprisonment or life imprisonment without parole), as well as for crimes under multiple other provisions of the Criminal Code.In addition to all serious crimes, the law also specifies crimes that are not serious, but are directed against the person of the victim and result in causing death or bodily harm, as well as some crimes against the sexual integrity of persons, against the rights of citizens, against marriage, family and youth, against order and public peace and generally dangerous crimes.In the transitional and final provisions of the adopted Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Code of Civil Procedure, a new provision of Art. 230a of the Law on the Judiciary, according to which when the chief prosecutor is brought as a defendant for a crime committed, the prosecutor for the investigation of crimes committed by the chief prosecutor makes a reasoned request to the Plenum of the Supreme Judicial Council for his temporary removal from office until the completion of the criminal proceedings, to which he applies sufficient data. The Plenum of the Supreme Court pronounces within 14 days of receiving the request with a reasoned decision, with a majority of not less than 13 votes. The mentioned provisions also apply to the deputies of the chief prosecutor. | Fully implemented |
| **134.74** Continue its judicial reform, in accordance with targets 16.3 and 16.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals and in respect of the recommendations of the Venice Commission, by guaranteeing the independence of judges and prosecutors and by establishing effective control mechanisms *(Switzerland);* | The National Recovery and Resilience Plan provides for measures to continue efforts to reform the judicial system. The plan envisages the implementation of measures grouped into four reforms aimed at promoting the principles of the rule of law and ensuring equal access to justice (Sustainable Development Goal 16.3 of the United Nations), as well as the development of efficient, accountable and transparent institutions (UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.6). The envisaged reforms concern ensuring accessible, efficient and predictable justice, combating corruption, expanding the use of alternative dispute resolution methods and introducing mandatory mediation in certain types of cases, as well as strengthening the bankruptcy procedure. Nine of the stages are planned to be implemented through legislative amendments, five of which have been implemented and the rest are in the process of implementation. In terms of legislative action, on 28 July 2023 a draft Law amending and supplementing the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria was submitted to the National Assembly with the aim to guarantee an independent and fair judiciary. On 4 August 2023, the draft constitutional amendments were sent to the Venice Commission for an urgent opinion on it at the earliest stage. Curently, the amendments are discussed in the Parliament with a view to be adopted by the end of 2023. See also rec. [134.73](#ProsecutorGeneral) | In implementation |
| **134.75** Step up its efforts to ensure that the unlawful use of force by law enforcement officials is investigated *(Timor-Leste);* | See rec. [134.53](#LawEnforcement) | Fully implemented |
| **134.76** Establish an independent oversight mechanism for police abuse *(Russian Federation);* | See rec. [134.53](#LawEnforcement) | Fully implemented |
| **134.77** Complete alignment of the juvenile justice system with international standards *(Ukraine);* | See rec. [134.68](#JuvenileJustice)  | Fully implemented |
| **134.78** Enact reforms to promote the independence of the judiciary and to eliminate corruption in the judicial system *(United States of America);* | See rec. [134.69](#Corruption) and rec. [134.74](#JudicialReform) | In implementation |
| **134.79** Introduce the legal framework necessary to effectively investigate and prosecute persons engaged in high-level corruption *(Denmark);* | See rec. [134.69](#Corruption) and rec. [134.74](#JudicialReform) | In implementation |
| **134.80** Provide the necessary training for law enforcement officials on protecting and promoting human rights *(Egypt);* | See rec. [134.53](#LawEnforcement) | Fully implemented |
| **134.81** Pursue reform of the judiciary, including by strengthening efforts to combat corruption *(France);* | See rec. [134.69](#Corruption) and rec. [134.74](#JudicialReform) | In implementation |
| **134.83** Strengthen its efforts to promote good governance and transparency in line with national legislation, including the Anti-Corruption and Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property Act *(Indonesia);* | See rec. [134.74](#JudicialReform) | In implementation |
| **134.85** Ensure full and effective freedom of the media and protection of journalists and media operators *(Italy);* | The Law on Radio and Television requires the establishment of a Public Registry of Council for Electronic Media to include data on the legal entities and individuals exercising control over the management of on-demand media service providers. The register should include information on the ownership structure and on the actual owners of the respective suppliers, provided to the Commercial Register and the Register of the National Register of the National Insurance Company in accordance with the Law on Measures Against Money Laundering.See also rec. [134.65](#Journalists) | Fully implemented |
| **134.86** Investigate all forms of attacks, threats and violence against journalists and ensure full accountability *(Netherlands);* | See also rec. [134.65](#Journalists) | Fully implemented |
| **134.87** Implement measures to ensure a safe and independent working environment for journalists and media workers, and intensify efforts to diversity ownership of the media and promote public media independence *(Norway);* | See rec. [134.85](#MediaFreedom) | Fully implemented |
| **134.88** Foster the development of diverse, vibrant and engaged civil society organizations *(Norway);* | Bulgaria has established a Council for Development of Civil Society, which is an advisory body to the Council of Ministers with CSOs’ participation. The Council consists of civil organizations, which have been nominated by other civil organizations. The aim is to provide platform for dialogue between CSOs and public institutions. For 2022, more than 35 meetings, discussions and round tables were held with more than 20 non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights protection with the participation of the Commission for Protection against Discrimination.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.89** Ensure freedom of expression and assembly and media pluralism, and take the necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of journalists *(Republic of Moldova);* | See rec. [134.85](#MediaFreedom) | Fully implemented |
| **134.90** Adopt policies that encourage religious harmony and allow freedom of exercise of religious rights *(Jordan);* | The Religious Affairs Directorate of the Council of Ministers organizes dedicated activities aimed at promoting interreligious dialogue and tolerance, such as the "Festival of Religions" (2022), a Scientific Conference on "Harmony in Difference" (2022) and international conference on "Spiritual and psychological help in post-pandemic situation" (2023). | Fully implemented |
| **134.91** Promote freedom of expression and media independence by requiring media ownership and transparency *(United States of America);*  | See rec. [134.85](#MediaFreedom)Media ownership is reviewed on an annual basis through a requirement in the Law on the Compulsory Deposit. Media entities are required to declare their owner, meaning the natural person who exercises control over the entity.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.92** Protect journalists against any form of harassment, attack or excessive use of force, promptly investigate such acts and bring those responsible to justice *(Austria);*  | See also rec. [134.65](#Journalists) | Fully implemented |
| **134.93** Investigate and hold to account those who threaten, intimidate and harm journalists, civil society and peaceful protesters, including the reporters who were injured in the protests in August 2020 in Sofia *(Canada);*  | In 2022, an interministerial working group was established to examine EU's recommendations on media pluralism and media freedom, with a focus on the protection of journalists. An Action Plan has been drawn up based on the EU’s specific recommendation for ensuring the security of journalists and other media professionals in the EU, in which specific measures are outlined for the relevant structures within MoI.In August 2021, the Inspectorate under MoI carried out an assessment of data on the unlawful use of physical force against protestors and journalists during the protests in the capital Sofia in 2020. It was established that the physical force and means used by the police officers were unlawful. Data on violations of discipline by senior officials and other employees of the police were also established.See also rec. [134.65](#Journalists) | Fully implemented |
| **134.95** Continue efforts aimed at enhancing freedom of religion and belief and curbing hate speech *(Lebanon);*  | See rec. [131.90](#ReligiousHarmony) | Fully implemented |
| **134.96** Ensure that all discrimination against religious groups is duly investigated and sanctioned, adopting all the necessary measures to protect fully places of worship and defend the exercise of religious freedom *(Holy See);*  | Upon receiving information about organized religious events or at the organiser's written request, the National Police takes all necessary measures to fully protect places of worship and protect the right to religious freedom. The Metropolitan Directorate of Internal Affairs or the relevant Regional Directorate of Internal Affairs, on whose territory the events are held, are notified in a timely manner.In 2022, by a Decision No. 874 of the Council of Ministers, the position of a National Coordinator on Combating Antisemitism was institutionalised into a permanent one, at the level of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs designated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.In February 2023, the Deputy Foreign Minister accepted a declaration "*Against Hatred that Divides Us*", signed by 20 non-governmental organizations in Bulgaria. The declaration is an example of the joint efforts of Bulgarian state institutions and the nongovernmental sector to effectively countering intolerance, hatred and extremism.In October 2023, the Bulgarian Government adopted its **first National Action Plan on Combating Antisemitism 2023-2027.** See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech) The recent amendments in the Criminal Code foresees a new para. 3 in Art. 164 i.e. *"when the act under para. 2 was committed for racist or xenophobic motives'*. The act in question is expressed in the desecration, destruction or damage of a religious temple, house of worship, shrine or adjacent building, their symbols, graves or tombstones. The new qualified composition of the crime aims at enhanced protection against discriminatory acts against religious communities in our country, protection of places of worship and guarantees for the exercise of citizens' religious rights and freedoms.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.97** Ensure compliance with laws requiring public disclosure of media ownership to improve transparency *(Ireland);*  | See rec. [134.85](#MediaFreedom) and rec. [134.91](#mediaownership) | Fully implemented |
| **134.98** Continue its efforts to combat trafficking in human beings and protect victims of trafficking *(Liechtenstein);*  | During the reported period, the National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings in cooperation with the relevant institutions, international and non-governmental organisations has developed and implemented annual national programs devised in seven sections: 1) Institutional and organisational measures; 2) Prevention; 3) Trainings and capacity building; 4) Protection, recovery and re-integration of the victims of human trafficking; 5) Research, analysis and statistical reporting on data on human trafficking; 6) International cooperation; and 7) Legislative amendments.Matters related to the prosecution of human trafficking and the protection of the rights of victims of trafficking in criminal proceedings (including the procedures for granting special protection to victims of trafficking and their questioning as witnesses) are represented in three modules of the curriculum for compulsory initial training of the candidates for junior magistrates. At the same time, the country conducts training aimed at maintaining and enhancement the continuing qualification of magistrates in the field of prevention and prosecution of human trafficking and the investigation of financial crimes related to trafficking. Some of these trainings also include issues related to the protection of victims of trafficking, including other vulnerable groups, which contributes to increasing the competence of magistrates in this area.Police officers in Bulgaria are introduced to the specifics of the subject in their bachelor and master's programs, as well as two professional courses.See rec. [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking) | In implementation |
| **134.99** Ensure the implementation of the national strategy to combat trafficking for the period 2017–2021 *(Luxembourg);*  | In 2021, an independent evaluation of the Strategy was effectuated by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences including recommendations for the next strategic document. In 2022 the report was officially presented and distributed among all the relevant stakeholders. Further steps in view of the next strategic document were outlined. Currently, the process is at the stage of consultation with the relevant national structures. | Fully Implemented |
| **134.100** Enhance its ongoing measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and address its root causes *(Myanmar);*  | The domestic efforts were focused mainly on targeted awareness-raising activities with vulnerable and marginalized groups and especially in terms of safe migration, including labour migration and seasonal work, in order to empower and inform them how to prevent and escape risky situations and human rights violations.Moreover, in partnership with Germany were organised three workshops and a seminar for Bulgarian-speaking social workers on how to improve first-level identification and develop a low-threshold network for assistance in the country of destination.  See rec. [134.98](#THB) | Fully Implemented |
| **134.101** Continue to implement measures to combat human trafficking and enhance protection for victims *(Nepal);*  | See rec. [134.98](#THB) | In implementation |
| **134.102** Step up efforts to combat human trafficking, guarantee victims rights and provide them protection and assistance *(Qatar);*  | Since January 2020, a new Crisis Center has been operating in Sofia, which primarily accommodates children who are victims of trafficking. Victims of trafficking also benefit from social services, including Crisis Centers for Victims of Violence and Human Trafficking throughout the country. As of 31.10.2023 the total number of crisis centers is 31 (20 for children and 11 for adults). In 2023, 3 new centers were opened. See also rec. [134.98](#THB) | In implementation |
| **134.103** Take effective measures to prevent and eradicate human trafficking, investigate all allegations of trafficking, and prosecute and punish perpetrators *(Sri Lanka);*  | During the reported period, the specialised Trafficking in Human Beings Sector to the General Directorate Combating Organised Crime to the Ministry of Interior actively implemented the available tools for international cooperation with foreign partnering authorities in different EU countries. In the framework of this cooperation, joint police operations were conducted during which several Bulgarian organised criminal groups engaged in cross-border trafficking in human beings for sexual and labour exploitation were neutralised.The Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Bulgaria elaborated a new organisation of the work on cases and pre-trial proceedings for trafficking in human beings established with the *Instructions for the organisation of the work of the Prosecutor’s Office on cases and pre-trial proceedings initiated for human trafficking* approved by the Prosecutor General in 2022 in order to create a unified mechanism in relation to the management and supervision of human trafficking cases, effective protection of victims, overcoming difficulties in prosecutorial practice and strengthening the working capacity on human trafficking cases, the inter-agency and international cooperation.In order to sensitise prosecutors and judges to the rights of victims of THB under the *Instructions* an organisation for the specialisation of prosecutors in cases of human trafficking is created. A National Network of Prosecutors is established, designated to work on human trafficking cases giving a platform for opinions and discussions on specific topics related to the investigation and prosecution to be exchanged.See rec. [134.98](#THB) | Fully Implemented |
| **134.104** Improve the support available to victims of modern slavery, facilitating their reintegration into society through provision of appropriate health care and legal and financial support, and paying particular attention to support for child victims, including children in care institutions, Roma children and unaccompanied foreign minors *(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);*  | In 2021 a total of 42 persons were accommodated and in 2022 a total of 51 persons received accommodation and support in the specialised services. In some cases, the accommodation of women and their children was undertaken, in view of the need for protection. A total of 35 persons received accommodation and support in the specialised services as of March 2023. For the first quarter of 2023 almost, all of the accommodated victims of human trafficking in the specialised services are witnesses in criminal proceedings.Clients’ reintegration support during the reported period includes a complex of activities related to their empowerment, inclusion in educational programmes, qualification, increasing of the social competences, improvement of the practical life, social and communication skills, supporting parental capacity etc. For victims’ children measures related to the enrolment in schools and support in the educational process, enrolment in kindergarten or nursery school were undertaken. In 2021, 5 contracts were concluded with NGOs providing support to victims of crimes in accordance with the Law on Assistance and Financial Compensation to Victims of Crime, namely for the provision of free psychological and practical assistance and for the provision of shelter or other appropriate temporary accommodation for crime victims. The contracts have a duration of 24 months. Their reporting is due in 2023. At the moment, a public tender has been launched to provide assistance to victims of crimes, by financing organizations to support victims in five regions of the Republic of Bulgaria.Furthermore, in 2022 a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between MoI, "Association Demetra" and 6 health facilities in the capital, which aims to increase trust in public institutions and encourage the reporting of acts of domestic violence and gender violence, as well as improving the effectiveness of police activity and of victim services through a unified institutional response to these attacks on the person. See rec. [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking) and [134.227](#Unaccompaniedminors) | Fully implemented |
| **134.105** Strengthen its efforts directed at preventing and eradicating human trafficking *(Azerbaijan);*  | In order to improve law enforcement practices in terms of identification and victims’ sensitive approach as well as to improve the effectiveness of investigation of THB cases, including at interdisciplinary level, in 2021 the Bulgarian authorities along with local anti-trafficking coordinators in 10 municipalities throughout the country, organised a total of 20 capacity building events. In 2022, a total of 22 capacity building events were organised and in the period January – May a total of 5 events were conducted.See rec. [134.98](#THB), [134.100](#THBRootCauses) | Fully implemented |
| **134.106** Continue its efforts in strengthening its mechanisms in protecting all persons, including children, from human trafficking *(Kyrgyzstan);*  | See rec. [134.98](#THB), [134.104](#ModernSlavery) | In implementation |
| **134.107** Increase further efforts to combat trafficking in persons, including by addressing the root causes and origins of trafficking, improving law enforcement practices as well as providing victims of trafficking with comprehensive protection and rehabilitation *(Belarus);*  | See rec. [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking), [134.98](#THB), [134.100](#THBRootCauses) | Fully implemented |
| **134.108** Initiate, in view of the standing invitation, a visit to the country by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children *(Belarus);*  | Bulgaria has an open standing invitation to all Special procedures, which could avail themselves of this invitation[[7]](#footnote-7). | Fully implemented |
| **134.109** Continue to strengthen the legal framework and implement policies to adequately protect victims of trafficking, sexual exploitation and domestic violence, especially women and children *(Brazil);*  | In 2023, Bulgaria adopted key legislative amendments to prevent and combat gender-based violence and domestic violence as well as to protect and support victims. The main amendments expand the range of victims that are granted protection as well as increase the range of protection measures against domestic violence. They facilitate the access to justice and optimize court proceedings, incl. by expanding local jurisdiction on cases of domestic violence. In addition, National Council for Prevention and Protection of Domestic Violence under the Council of Ministers is created and a coordination mechanism between all competent authorities, municipalities and the judiciary are regulated. There will be a national information system for cases of domestic violence established. The circle of victims of domestic violence is being expanded, and the measures for their protection are being increased significantly. In addition, there will be a single register of cases of domestic violence.In July 2023, the National Assembly adopted important amendments to the Criminal code. The definition of "offence committed in the context of domestic violence" was changed thus enabling victims to benefit from criminal protection from the first time the act of violence was committed. On 7 August 2023, the National Assembly adopted additional amendments to the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. The range of victims who can seek protection under the law was once again expand by including persons who are or have been in an intimate relationship and removing the cohabitation requirement. Annually by the Law on the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria for the respective year funds shall be foreseen in the budget of the Ministry of Justice to finance projects of non-profit legal entities, which carry out activities concerning protection of victims of domestic violence.Based on the National Program for Prevention and Protection from Domestic Violence for 2023 the priority funding goals for 2023 are: (1) Ensuring protection, recovery and reintegration of victims of domestic violence through timely provision of quality services; (2) Providing services, concerning perpetrators of domestic violence, with a view to preventing recurrence of domestic violence; (3) Raising awareness of the problem of "domestic violence" through prevention and protection programs in educational institutions for persons studying from the 9th to the 12th grade, as well as in higher schools up to the age of 25. Given the defined goals, 17 non-governmental organizations received funding in the total amount of BGN 337,882.Since February 2020, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has been implementing the project "Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" NFM 2014-2021, within the scope of which a series of trainings aimed at increasing the professional competence of magistrates to implement a victim-centered approach and to prevent secondary victimization in these cases have been carried out. In order to improve institutional cooperation and interaction in cases of domestic violence and violence against women, a large part of the trainings under the project have been organised for mixed groups of magistrates and experts of law enforcement agencies and administration with competences in the field institutions (a total of 222 being trained under the project within the reporting period). In March 2023, the National Institute of Justice NIJ developed a Case management guide on Guide to the Management of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence Issues Cases for Magistrates. This training resource which integrates the relevant European standards in this area and provides guidelines for effective case management with a view to consistency and consistency of case law. guidance on the efficient handling of cases, thus ensuring uniformity and consistency of the case law in this field.From mid-2023, a new sector "Domestic Violence" is functioning under the National Police General Directorate. The aim is to optimize the activity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoI) in the field of domestic violence. With Decision no. 368 of the Council of Ministers, a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation was signed between the MoI and UNICEF. The purpose of the cooperation is, by developing and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Internal Affairs employees, to respect and guarantee the rights of children, victims of and witnesses to crimes and violence, children in conflict with the law and children on the move, victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence. On July 21, 2023 the National Assembly adopted the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. It introduces the concept of *"a crime committed in the context of domestic violence"* into the Criminal Code and provides for qualified panels to consider such cases. The amendments introduced include the creation of a National Council for the Prevention and Protection of Domestic Violence under the Council of Ministers. There will be a national information system for cases of domestic violence established. The circle of victims of domestic violence is being expanded, and the measures for their protection are being increased significantly. In addition, there will be a single register of cases of domestic violence.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.110** Intensify cooperation and efforts to continue addressing human trafficking and smuggling with an emphasis on preventive and protective approaches *(Cambodia);*  | See rec. [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking), [134.98](#THB), [134.100](#THBRootCauses) | Fully implemented |
| **134.111** Take effective measures to prevent and eradicate human trafficking by prosecuting and punishing perpetrators promptly *(Cyprus);*  | See rec. [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking), [134.98](#THB), [134.100](#THBRootCauses) Conducting information campaigns, according to current analyses and trends, including among vulnerable groups and work with students and young people, as well as among foreigners accommodated in a special home for temporary accommodation, on issues of human trafficking and support opportunities are ongoing to date. A seminar on the topic "Human trafficking - risks and prevention" was held with 70 school students. An expert meeting on "Commercial surrogacy and sale of babies" was organized under the European Multidisciplinary Platform for Cooperation against Criminal Threats.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.112** Create a mechanism to identify potential victims of human trafficking by strengthening collaboration with relevant NGOs *(Cyprus);*  | According to the Law for Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings, the National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings coordinates the work of the National mechanism for referral and support of victims of human trafficking. NGOs and IOs also have the possibility to take part in the sessions of the National Commission as observers. At the same time all relevant organisations working in the field participate in the Permanent Working Group. Thus, they are related to the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and more specifically to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy. Furthermore, NGOs and IOs play a crucial role in the overall implementation of the National Annual Programmes especially in the chapters related to prevention, capacity building, collection and analysis of data and support of victims.In addition, Directorate "Migration" at MoI interacts constantly with the National Commission for Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings in view of the high degree of risk of involvement in trafficking of migrants who illegally crossed the state border. The Commission periodically provides informational materials and conducts informational meetings with accommodated foreigners regarding the prevention of human trafficking and familiarization with activities to support victims of trafficking. The Commission distributed preventive video material on human trafficking in the special homes for temporary accommodation of foreigners, which emphasizes the risks of being involved in trafficking and the adverse consequences thereof. | Fully implemented |
| **134.113** Strengthen efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the national anti-trafficking strategy, and ensure that the National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings is provided with sufficient funds to carry out its functions *(Fiji);*  | The National Anti-Trafficking Strategy is operationally implemented through the National Annual Programmes for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protection of Victims. The implementation of the activities included in the National Programme are financed by the annual state budget as well as from external funding (mainly EU projects). National Programmes for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings are developed on an annual base. On 15 November 2023, the National Commission discussed the draft National Program for the Prevention and Counteraction of Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims for 2024. The new national program is to be adopted by the end of 2023. | Fully implemented |
| **134.114** Continue to support the protection of workers’ rights in the global supply chains, by strengthening the legal framework to address human trafficking, slavery and other related human rights abuses *(Indonesia);*  | The Bulgarian authorities through the Executive Agency "General Labor Inspectorate" continue to carry out commitments to counter manifestations of labour exploitation and/or human trafficking. The Labour Inspectorate is acting in accordance with its powers, in particular in the event of detected violations, including delayed or unpaid wages, lack of employment contracts, violations of working hours, poor working conditions, unlawful overtime, etc. In addition, the Labour Inspectorate carries out regular inspections of the activities of labour intermediaries and recruitment agencies, employers and local persons employing or recruiting third-country nationals. The Labour Inspectorate continues to conduct joint initiatives to counter undeclared work within the framework of bilateral international cooperation agreements. In the event of violations found which are beyond the competence of the Labour Inspectorate the matter is referred to the competent authority, including the Prosecutor's Office. | Fully implemented |
| **134.115** Continue efforts to prevent and eliminate human trafficking, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and provide support and protection for *victims (Iraq);*  | See rec. [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking), [134.98](#THB), [134.100](#THBRootCauses)  | In implementation |
| **134.116** Support, through appropriate economic and social policies, the institution of the family and the preservation of family values, including the protection and support of the family as a fundamental unit of society *(Haiti);*  | In June 2023, an inter-institutional working group was established by the chairman of the State Agency for the Protection of the Child (SACP) to develop a draft National Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2024-2030. The main goal is to achieve a higher level of care and guarantee for the rights of children. The focus of the strategy paper is intended to be on child welfare in the context of family policies. The set priorities are intended to meet the expectation of a number of interested parties, with a much clearer commitment of the state to support the family. | In implementation |
| **134.117** Continue its efforts to address economic inequalities and to ensure economic, social and cultural rights for all, including ethnic minority groups *(Thailand);*  | See rec. [134.31](#NegativeStereotypes) | Fully implemented |
| **134.118** Ensure that social benefits reach those in need, and adopt targeted measures to keep children out of poverty to advance the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 (*Afghanistan*); | The National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Promotion of Social Inclusion 2030 has been adopted in December 2020. By a Decision No. 879 of 09.11.2022 of the Council of Ministers is established the necessary framework covering the leading measures and interventions to reduce child poverty and promote their social inclusion. The plan is divided into six thematic areas of impact in accordance with the directions of the Child Guarantee – education and early childhood care; inclusive education and school activities; healthcare; healthy eating; appropriate housing and other tools to overcome social exclusion and reduce child poverty. | Fully implemented |
| **134.119** Extend beyond 2020 the national strategy for poverty reduction and the promotion of social inclusion, and include among its provisions the response to the health and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic *(Cuba);*  | On 30 December 2020, the Bulgarian government adopted a National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Promotion of Social Inclusion covering the period until 2030. The document outlines a strategic framework for developing policies related to overcoming poverty and promoting social inclusion over the next decade. The priority of the strategic document is to create affordable and quality social and integrated services and support, as well as an effective and targeted financial and material support for those in need. Among the most important objective is the improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable groups and the support of the homeless. | Fully implemented |
| **134.120** Ensure unhindered access to sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents *(Luxembourg);*  | All health insured persons in Bulgaria have guaranteed access to health services included in the package of health activities paid by the National Health Insurance Fund. Persons up to the age of 18, and if they are studying, until they reach the age of 26, are insured by the state. The package of health activities in outpatient medical care and hospital care also includes health information and health education activities, diagnosis and treatment in the field of sexual and reproductive health.Persons over the age of 16 have the right to access health counseling without parental consent; preventive examinations and tests; counseling on sexual and reproductive health issues that relate to physical development and puberty in adolescence; family planning; unwanted pregnancy and contraceptive options; sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS and personal hygiene. | Fully implemented |
| **134.121** Allocate adequate resources to ensure full implementation of the national programme for improving mother and child health care *(Malaysia);*  | On 9 April 2021, the National Program for the Improvement of Maternal and Child Health 2021-2030 was adopted and activities of 31 Health and Consultative Centres for Maternal and Child Health are being financed. The Centres have been opened on a functional basis in multi-profile hospitals for active treatment, in university and specialised hospitals. Furthermore, health-information, health-training, health-consultative, medico-social activities, diagnostic and treatment activities for pregnant women and children outside the scope of health insurance are implemented. Psychological counselling, coordinating and guiding services for young people, couples, families, pregnant women, mothers and children up to 18 years old are also provided. The mentioned health services are provided by specialised doctors and healthcare professionals. Respectively, non-medical services are being provided by social workers and psychologists. | Fully implemented |
| **134.122** Ensure equal access to affordable health care for all by reducing the disparity between regions *(Japan);*  | Under the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, all citizens have the right to health insurance guaranteeing them affordable medical care. The Law on Health guarantees the principles of equality in the use of health services, provision of affordable and quality healthcare, health promotion and integrated prevention of diseases, prevention and reduction of the risk to citizens' health from the adverse impact of environmental factors. In order to implement the measure, explanatory campaigns are being conducted on the importance of preventive examinations and raising awareness in the field of public health. There are campaigns for early diagnosis and preventive examinations for various diseases, incl. COVID-19, in 11 regions of the country. Health mediators and the Regional Health Inspections are involved in the campaigns, marking thematic days and the importance of preventive examinations among the Roma population.In 2023, as part of joint activities between the Regional Health Inspections (RHI) and health mediators in 15 regions of the country, information campaigns aimed at prevention, preventive examinations and early diagnosis of diseases were carried out. | Fully implemented |
| **134.123** Provide access to affordable health care for all, without discrimination *(Republic of Moldova);*  | Selective prevention programs are implemented for children and families from the Roma community. Such are the preventive program "Outreach work and preventive activities against the use of narcotic substances in risky communities and children from minority groups". The program aims to offer approaches to reach this group before drug use becomes a problem.Another activity is related to reducing the marginalization and isolation of risk groups. The final target group are children and young people aged 12-25 years old who live in a high-risk environment and/or with deviant behavior (criminal acts, use of narcotic substances, dropped out or do not attend educational institutions, etc.), or are in an unequal social situation, young people living in Roma communities. | Fully implemented  |
| **134.124** Allocate adequate resources to ensure full implementation of the national programme for improving mother and child health care (2014–2020) *(Sri Lanka);*  |  See rec. [134.121](#MotherChild) | Fully implemented |
| **134.125** Take further measures to ensure access to affordable health care for all without discrimination *(Azerbaijan);*  | See rec. [134.123](#AffordableHealthcare)  | Fully implemented |
| **134.126** Ensure safe motherhood for all women *(Burkina Faso);*  | See rec. [134.121](#MotherChild)In 2022, amendments were made to Ordinance No. 26 of 2007 on the provision of obstetric care to health uninsured women and for carrying out testing outside the scope of compulsory health insurance for children and pregnant women in the field of medical care for health uninsured pregnant women. These changes concern the extension of the scope of medical care by providing four preventive examinations, instead of one preventive examination, for the duration of pregnancy; perform additional medico-diagnostic tests to determine blood type, Rh factor, serological testing for HIV, as well as providing inpatient care in pregnancy with an increased risk up to twice during pregnancy. | Fully implemented |
| **134.127** Guarantee access for all women, including those who do not have health insurance, to health services during pregnancy and childbirth *(Burkina Faso);*  | See rec. [134.123](#AffordableHealthcare) To improve access to quality health care for socially vulnerable persons, in particular for uninsured pregnant women, the number of preventive examinations to monitor pregnancy, including the possibility of hospitalization for pregnant women with increased risk, was increased from one to four. Those measures are covered by the budget of the Ministry of Health. | Fully implemented |
| **134.128** Implement the commitment undertaken at the Nairobi conference, to guarantee safe motherhood for all women, including those who do not have health insurance, and access to health services during pregnancy and childbirth *(Costa Rica);*  | See rec. [134.121](#MotherChild) and 134.127 | Fully implemented |
| **134.129** Take steps to reduce the health-care gap between different regions of the country *(Dominican Republic);*  | See rec. [134.122](#Regions) | Fully implemented |
| **134.130** Invest in high-quality health-care services, including for sexual and reproductive health, as well as in health technologies for early diagnostics and prevention *(Iceland);*  | The package of health activities guaranteed by the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) budget includes health information and health education activities aimed at the promotion of health and disease prevention, as well as diagnostic and treatment activities, including highly specialized medical activities, within the scope of activity of all medical specialties.With the aim of early diagnosis and timely treatment of socially significant diseases, the Bulgarian authorities are working on a National Plan for the Development of Comprehensive Prenatal and Neonatal Screening and Screening of Socially Significant Diseases and towards the establishment of a National Interdisciplinary Screening Center, which is supposed to facilitate a regional network combining clinical expertise, the necessary screening and treatment programs, as well as well-equipped and accredited laboratories, covering the territory of the entire country.In addition to regulatory changes to improve access to quality and complex health services, the Ministry of Health annually finances from its budget investments in medical facilities related to improvements in the infrastructure, material and technical bases. | Fully implemented |
| **134.131** Support the social services and provide health care, especially for the most vulnerable people in society, within the framework of the national strategic plans *(Libya);*  | In order to improve the access of insured persons to quality and comprehensive health services, the package of health activities guaranteed by the NHIF budget is expanded annually through regulatory changes, including new medical and health activities and medical diagnostic tests for prevention and early diagnosis of diseases.The state finances diagnostics and treatment in hospital care facilities for persons who do not have income and/or personal assets that ensure their personal participation in the health insurance process. The compulsory health insurance guarantees the access of the insured persons to medical care within a certain type, scope and volume of the package of health activities, regulated by an act of the Minister of Health.Targeted preventive activities are carried out among the Roma population (conducting preventive examinations: ultrasound, fluorography, mammography, pediatric, gynecological and laboratory tests) according to the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for equality, inclusion and participation of the Roma (2021 - 2030). In addition, with the project “Healthcare for all” the needs to improve health status and more effective implementation of national health policies among marginalized communities that live in conditions of extreme poverty and social exclusion will be addressed. Outside the scope of health insurance, the Ministry of Health finances emergency medical care, psychiatric care, transplantation of organs, tissues and cells, assisted reproduction, provision of blood and blood products, compulsory immunizations and reimmunizations, etc. In order to improve access to medical care for uninsured pregnant women, the number of preventive check-ups available to them has been quadrupled and the possibility of hospitalizing pregnant women at increased risk has been provided, with the costs covered by the state budget.Moreover, the Bulgarian authorities were able to secure funds under the state-delegated budget for an additional number of health mediators (from 215 to 332). | Fully implemented |
| **134.132** Continue its efforts to improve equality in education, including for Roma children, and in rural areas *(Nepal);*  | See rec. [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness) and rec. [134.23](#FightRacism) | Fully implemented |
| **134.133** Ensure equal and quality education for all by continuing to address the issue of school dropout and improving access to quality education, regardless of a person’s ethnicity and region *(Japan);*  | A Mechanism for the joint work of institutions has been created to cover, include and prevent the dropping out of the education system of children and students of compulsory preschool and school age. It includes creation, updating and activity of teams for joint work of the institutions for coverage and inclusion in the education system of children and students of compulsory preschool and school age (coverage teams); interaction of the institutions on the implementation of a complex of measures for coverage and inclusion in the educational system and prevention of early dropout of children at risk. 1,222 teams work on the territory of the country during the reporting period.Measures for the prevention, intervention and compensation of early leaving the education system are also implemented, in parallel with the analysis of the reasons for dropping out and early leaving. As a result of the Mechanism's activities, at the beginning of the 2022/2023 school year, newly enrolled children who have never been enrolled in a kindergarten or school until now are 1,324 more than last school year. By amending and supplementing the Ordinance on Inclusive Education, it was possible to provide additional training to students in one or more subjects, which can also take place during non-school hours, incl. during summer vacation.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.134** Take corrective measures to combat school dropouts, considering that one of the root causes of human trafficking is extreme poverty *(Cyprus);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts) | Fully implemented |
| **134.135** Safeguard and promote the fundamental right to education, thus ensuring inclusive access to schools and effectively combating school dropout, particularly with regard to Roma and migrant children, and children in rural areas and within refugee centres *(Holy See);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts) | Fully implemented |
| **134.136** Take necessary measures to ensure access to good quality education for children and students, based on equality and non-discrimination *(Libya);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts) | Fully implemented |
| **134.137** Pursue efforts to reduce the gap in education levels between cities and small villages *(Albania);* | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts) | Fully implemented |
| **134.138** Promote the employment of women in fields where they remain underrepresented and continue efforts to address the wage gap between men and women *(Malaysia);*  | In 2020, the Bulgarian Government adopted the National Strategy for Promoting Equality between Women and Men (2021-2030). The goal is to achieve parity through an unified, consistent and sustainable state policy. The strategy is built around five priority areas related to achieving equality between women and men in the labour market; reducing the pay gap; encouraging equality in the decision-making process; overcoming the stereotypes and combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims. The Strategy is implemented through national action plans adopted on annual base. The current National Action Plan for Promoting the Equality of Women and Men (2023-2024) aims at the implementation of a consistent policy through the included measures of various institutions and organisations. They are structured in five priority areas, including equality in the labour market and an equal degree of economic independence; reducing the pay and income gap; promoting equality in decision-making processes and overcoming stereotypes in various spheres of public life and sexism. | Fully implemented |
| **134.139** Continue efforts to narrow the gender pay gap by encouraging equal pay for equal work *(Myanmar);*  | See rec. [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.140** Sustain steps to promote girls’ rights to education and women’s empowerment *(Pakistan);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.136](#GoodQualityEducation) and [134.138](#PayGap)  | Fully implemented |
| **134.141** Continue efforts to provide employment and training opportunities for women and empower them in accordance with the national action plan to promote equality between women and men *(United Arab Emirates);*  | See rec. [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.142** Continue with the implementation of the national action plan for the promotion of equality between women and men, including through measures aimed at empowering women in all spheres *(Azerbaijan);*  | See rec. [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.143** Continue taking additional steps to increase women’s representation in the parliament, government and municipalities *(Cambodia);* | See rec. [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.144** Continue to promote gender equality, including rural development policies *(Lao People’s Democratic Republic);* | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.136](#GoodQualityEducation) and [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.145** Adopt adequately coordinated and funded community awareness activities and programmes, targeting men and boys, and aimed at changing attitudes and promoting positive masculine norms, including through the use of social media *(Haiti);*  | See rec [134.40](#HS_13440), [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.146** Continue its ongoing efforts to combat all forms of discrimination against women and girls, address the phenomenon of domestic violence, and empower women and integrate them into economic life *(Libya);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence), [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.136](#GoodQualityEducation) and [134.138](#PayGap) | Fully implemented |
| **134.147** Step up the efforts in eliminating violence against women and girls *(Israel);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.148** Take effective measures to combat sexual and gender-based violence, including by explicitly prohibiting domestic violence and marital rape *(Liechtenstein);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.149** Continue to provide adequate funding for shelters, counselling, legal aid and other social services for victims of domestic violence and their children *(Malta);*  | The Law on Social Services, effective from 1 July 2020, regulates the planning of social services at the national level by developing a National Map of Social Services. A new order for financing social services is being introduced, in which only social services included in the National Map of Social Services are financed from the state budget, through the budgets of the municipalities. Support and shelter services are planned to be opened in all areas of the country where no such social services are available. The new order for funding social services is expected to be implemented from 2024 at the earliest.In fulfillment of one of the main priorities of the Ministry of Youth and Sports for the development and promotion of sport and sports-tourism activities, with priority development of children's sport, including children at risk in order to provide conditions for healthy physical activity, practice of sport, expression and realization of personal sports results in 2022 and 2023 are supported with financial resources and implemented 4 programs and 4 projects of sports organizations, namely:- "Sports for children during leisure time" for organizing and conducting free sports activities for children in leisure time;- "Sport for Children at Risk" to create conditions for physical exercise and sport activities for children at risk to overcome their isolation and for their full integration and adaptation in society;- "Learn to Swim" for organizing and conducting swimming training for children aged 7-11 years;- "Children and the Sports Club" to create conditions and opportunities to support sports clubs in their work to organize and conduct sports events for children- Project "Tennis - Sport for All" of the Bulgarian Tennis Federation for the implementation of initial sports training for children through free tennis lessons for children aged 6-12;-Learn to Ski Project of the Bulgarian Ski Federation for the provision of primary ski training for children in grades 1 to 4;- Project "Children and Badminton" of the Bulgarian Badminton Federation for creating appropriate conditions and opportunities for practicing the sport of badminton among children and selecting talented children for further sports development;-Athletics Academy for Children" project of the Bulgarian Athletics Federation for the development and promotion of athletics among children aged 7-12 years by organizing and conducting athletics classes led by professionally trained sports specialists.In 2023, 223 projects are being implemented under the abovementioned programmes with the participation of about 20,500 children involved in 52,629 sports activities and 46 sports events/competitions in various sports in over 60 localities of the country. | In implementation |
| **134.150** Criminalize all forms of domestic violence, not only systemic forms of violence, and include marital rape in the Criminal Code *(Germany);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.151** Criminalize domestic violence and marital rape *(Mexico);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.152** Continue deploying necessary efforts for the prevention and punishment of domestic violence, in particular the amendments adopted to the Criminal Code to regulate the protection of the rights of victims of violence, including within the family *(Morocco);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.155** Improve access to address violence against women, including domestic violence *(Philippines);* | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.157** Continue efforts to fight discrimination against women and put an end to all forms of violence against them *(Tunisia);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.158** Reinforce the State’s ability to combat gender-based violence and domestic violence *(Kazakhstan);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.159** Promote equal rights and protections for women and members of minority groups, especially Roma, by revising domestic violence legislation and eliminating discrimination in education and employment *(United States of America);*  | See also rec. [134.21](#DiscriminationAwareness), [134.23](#FightRacism) and [134.109](#DomesticViolence)In 2022, with special funds dedicated 78 Roma mediators on average per month will be employed in the labour offices throughout the country. The Roma mediators held 1,599 meetings with employers in order to motivate them to hire persons of Roma origin and 531 meetings with Roma leaders, non-governmental organizations and social partners to support Roma employment. In 2022, Roma mediators activated 7,183 inactive persons of Roma origin, i.e. persons motivated to register at the labour offices as unemployed in order to use free employment mediation services offered by the Employment Agency. In 2022, 26,235 unemployed persons who self-identified as Roma were included in motivation for active behaviour on the labour market, professional guidance, training and employment. Of these, 14,498 self-identified Roma are included in employment.As of the end of April 2023, 89 Roma mediators were working in the labour offices, who activated 4,287 inactive persons of Roma origin. For the period January-April 2023, Roma mediators held 672 meetings with employers and 176 meetings with Roma leaders, non-governmental organizations and social partners in support of Roma employment. For the period January-April 2023, 9,849 unemployed persons who self-identified as Roma were included in motivation for active behaviour on the labour market, vocational guidance, training and employment, and of these 5,017 persons were included in employment. | Fully implemented |
| **134.160** Take effective measures to combat gender-based violence, sexual harassment and rape, and guarantee a timely response to complaints, and security and access to justice for victims *(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.161** Create and implement a national system to collect verified statistical data on cases of domestic violence and ensure the accountability of perpetrators *(Albania);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.163** Remove the requirement related to article 93 of the Criminal Code that survivors have to prove three prior incidents of domestic violence before criminal charges are filed against perpetrators *(Austria);* | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.164** Increase State-funded shelters available to survivors of gender-based and domestic violence and their children, and provide support to NGOs offering shelter and other forms of support *(Austria);* | See rec. [134.149](#DVShelters) | In implementation |
| **134.165** Commence a widespread educational campaign on domestic violence *(Bahamas);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.166** Increase funding to provide shelter and support for victims of domestic violence *(Bahamas);*  | See rec. [134.149](#DVShelters) | In implementation |
| **134.167** Further strengthen mechanisms at the national level to prevent and protect all victims of domestic violence *(Kyrgyzstan);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.168** Amend its legislation to recognize all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, and facilitate access to justice to ensure that such violence can be prosecuted *(Belgium);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.169** Improve enforcement of laws criminalizing rape, including by conducting thorough investigations, compiling statistical data and prosecuting all acts of gender-based violence *(Canada);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.170** Introduce systematic capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police and other law enforcement officers on the application of criminal law provisions on gender-based violence against women *(Croatia);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.171** Further amend the Criminal Code to explicitly include marital rape *(Czechia);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.172** Strengthen State-funded crisis centres and effective protection orders by its next universal periodic review *(Czechia);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) and [134.149](#DVShelters) | In implementation |
| **134.173** Continue strengthening existing legislation in the area of combating violence against women *(Georgia);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.174** Refrain from demolishing Roma settlements without offering alternatives, such as providing adequate social housing to Roma families *(Germany);*  | Under the laws and regulations in force, the provision of alternative housing in cases of inevitable removal of illegal constructions is under the authority of the municipalities concerned. The local authorities provide an adequate social service by providing temporary accommodation to the occupants of the illegal constructions in close cooperation with the competent central government authorities. In all cases where an order is issued to remove an illegal building — a dwelling — before carrying out the enforcement of the order, it is examined whether the illegal construction constitutes a sole dwelling for its occupants. If so or when the municipality is unable to accommodate the person in an alternative dwelling, no enforcement shall take place.The municipalities can offer alternative housing only to citizens with proper address registration. There are no legal grounds to demand accommodation in municipal housing for persons who own real estate in other places of residence. | Fully implemented |
| **134.175** Continue developing policies to prevent cases of domestic violence *(Greece);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) and [134.149](#DVShelters) | In implementation |
| **134.176** Amend its Criminal Code to include marital rape and domestic violence as specific crimes, and ensure the definition of rape is fully in line with international standards *(Ireland);*  | See rec. [134.109](#DomesticViolence) | Fully implemented |
| **134.178** Take further steps to update the national strategy for the child that supports development and investment in community-based and family-based care for children *(Malta);*  | In June 2021, the State Agency for Child Protection presented a White Paper on Child, which compiled the main achievements in the area and aimed to streamline the discussion on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child in Bulgaria. In June 2023, an interinstitutional working group has been established to elaborate on draft National Strategy on the rights of the child 2024-2030 г. The Council of Europe Strategy on Rights of the Child 2022-2027 and the EU Strategy on the rights of the Child 2021-2024 will be taken into consideration when elaborating the draft of the Strategy.  | In implementation |
| **134.179** Strengthen efforts to reduce child-related offences *(Mauritius);*  | See rec. [134.68](#JuvenileJustice) | Fully implemented |
| **134.180** Hold targeted consultations with families, children and civil society organizations to strengthen measures for reducing child poverty *(Sri Lanka);*  | See rec. [134.118](#ChildPoverty)  | Fully implemented |
| **134.181** Redouble its efforts to reduce child poverty *(Timor-Leste);* | See rec. [134.118](#ChildPoverty) | Fully implemented |
| **134.183** Continue to improve the quality of life of children through the development of education, health and social services systems in accordance with the principle of guaranteeing equal access to all children, including children with disabilities *(Lao People’s Democratic Republic);*  | The National Strategy for Child and Adolescent Health and Pediatric Care 2030 was adopted with Decision No. 676 of the Council of Ministers of September 29, 2023. The strategy is the first separate national strategic document that focuses on child healthcare as an integral part of general care for public health and presents the long-term vision for the development of the sector, with the aim of creating optimal conditions for sustainable improvement of child and adolescent health and the quality of pediatric care. The strategy lays down policies and measures in four main directions - promoting a healthy lifestyle for children, effective prevention and prevention of diseases and disabilities in children, building an integrated system for complex pediatric care and the development of human resources for children's health care. An action plan for the implementation of the strategy for the period 2023-2026 was also adopted, in which specific activities for the implementation of the strategy's objectives are foreseen, addressing the possibilities of the health system to influence children's health - directly through the health services provided by its services and indirectly by influencing the behaviour of individuals and the policies of other public sectors.The Social Assistance Agency, through its territorial divisions - the "Social Assistance" Directorates (DSP) and the "Child Protection" departments functioning under them, has an important role in the policies aimed at improving the well-being and protecting the rights of children in the Republic of Bulgaria.The Law on the Bulgarian Sign Language envisages activities to be carried out to support people with hearing impairments and of blind-deaf persons, regarding the vocabulary and grammar of the Bulgarian sign language. In this regard, in 2022, the Ministry of Education and Culture commissioned an ongoing scientific study of the vocabulary and grammar of the Bulgarian sign language.See also rec. [134.135](#Dropouts), [134.136](#GoodQualityEducation) and [134.215](#ChildrenDisabilities) | Fully implemented |
| **134.184** Pursue efforts aimed at reducing child poverty in order to ensure a life of dignity for children *(Dominican Republic);*  | See rec. [134.118](#ChildPoverty) | Fully implemented |
| **134.185** Continue its efforts to guarantee the right of children to a family environment and access to quality care and services *(Ethiopia);*  | See rec. [134.135](#Dropouts), [134.136](#GoodQualityEducation), [134.215](#ChildrenDisabilities) and [134.180](#SocialSupport) | In implementation |
| **134.186** Strengthen efforts to prevent crimes against children and to protect the rights of children *(India);*  | See rec. [134.183](#RoC_Lao) | Fully implemented |
| **134.187** Take further steps for the inclusion of minorities, including by strengthening the provision of education and healthcare services to members of minorities *(Israel);*  | On July 5th, 2023, the Council of Ministers approved changes to the Ordinance on the Financing of Educational Institutions in the System of Preschool and School Education. Through these changes with immdediate effect the state will provide specific financial resources for the appointment of educational mediators, social workers and teacher's assistants to kindergartens and schools with a predominant number of children and students from vulnerable groups.Another change in the Ordinance stipulates that the financing of municipal kindergartens becomes a fully delegated activity to the state as a result of the abolition of attendance fees.Currently, Bulgaria aims to develop and introduce a pilot concept on the inclusion of health mediators in municipal and state hospitals as well as to create a pilot system for monitoring the activities and analysis of the health mediation policy. To date, such contracts with health mediators have been concluded in 7 Bulgarian cities. | Fully implemented |
| **134.188** Pursue efforts to address prejudice, intolerance and discrimination against the Roma population and to ensure its greater inclusion in society *(Montenegro);*  | See rec. [134.31](#NegativeStereotypes) | Fully implemented |
| **134.189** Strengthen the efforts to prevent any form of discrimination against persons belonging to minorities or vulnerable groups *(Italy);*  | Bulgaria has created effective legal and institutional mechanisms in connection with the guarantee and protection of basic human rights without discrimination on any ground described in a law or in an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.Particular measures addressing antidiscrimination are included under Rule of Law and Non-discrimination and under the other sectoral priorities of the National Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma (2021-2030) and the current National Action Plan 2022 ‒ 2023. | Fully implemented |
| **134.190** Ensure equal access of the Roma community to health-care, education and labour structures, in line with the national Roma integration strategy, and share visible results *(Netherlands);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma) and [134.159](#RomaLabour)  | Fully implemented |
| **134.191** Take further steps to ensure access to services by minority and vulnerable groups, especially in the areas of housing, education, health care and employment *(Philippines);*  | See rec. See [134.31](#NegativeStereotypes) and [134.159](#RomaLabour)Under the "Housing conditions" Direction, 545 social housing units have been built housing and 947 representatives of marginalized groups, including Roma, were covered.In 2022, 24 contracts were concluded for the provision of grants for social housing projects. As of 31.12.2022, there are 9 pcs. concluded contracts for grant financial assistance for social housing, with the implementation of which 545 housing units in urban areas were rehabilitated.The following procedures aimed at representatives of vulnerable groups, representatives of marginalized groups, including Roma, benefiting from modernized educational infrastructure have been initiated. These include concluded 42 contracts for projects to provide educational infrastructure, according to which achieved results are reported – 7,512 persons, representatives of marginalized groups, including Roma, using the modernized educational infrastructure.For 2022, 19 contracts have been concluded with beneficiaries. According to the procedure, there are 14 completed projects for the construction of a shelter with the beneficiary municipality of Gorna Oryahovitsa, construction of a Crisis Center for individuals with the beneficiary municipality of Veliko Tarnovo, Complex for social services for children and families with the beneficiary municipality of Ruse, construction of a Center for working with street children with beneficiary Kyustendil municipality, construction of a Crisis Center for women, victims of domestic violence and Center for temporary accommodation of individuals and families with beneficiary Plovdiv municipality and construction of a Center for work with street children with beneficiary Razgrad municipality, Center for temporary accommodation with beneficiary Dimitrovgrad Municipality, Construction of a Center for Working with Street Children and a Shelter for Persons in the City of Pazardzhik, Center for Working with Street Children in the City of Karlovo, a Shelter for Homeless Persons and Families in the City of Dobrich, Construction of Crisis Centers in the Metropolitan Municipality and the city of Burgas and a center for temporary accommodation in the city of Dupnitsa, under which 38,342 persons - representatives of marginalized groups, including Roma, are expected to benefit from the modernized social infrastructure. | Fully implemented |
| **134.192** In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, avoid any discrimination of the Roma population in the imposition of quarantines, and ensure that the Roma community has sufficient means of subsistence and access to health services *(Spain);*  | The emergency measures taken by the Bulgarian government related to limiting the spread of COVID-19 were taken with respect to the following principles: proportionality, non-discrimination, necessity and temporality. In the implementation of the emergency measure, the respect for human rights and fundamental values was foreseen.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.193** Strengthen the protection system for vulnerable groups, including racial and religious minorities *(Jordan);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma) and [134.159](#RomaLabour) | Fully implemented |
| **134.194** Implement its obligations under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities *(Switzerland);* | At the moment, the State is its in Fifth Monitoring Cycle under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The Fifth State report submitted by the Republic of Bulgaria pursuant art. 25, para. 2 of the Convention was submitted timely by the Bulgarian Government on 22 October 2021. | Fully implemented |
| **134.195** Implement targeted measures for the inclusion of Roma in society, in particular in the areas of housing, education and health *(Switzerland);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.196** Continue efforts to promote economic and social integration of minorities, especially the Roma *(Tunisia);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.198** Implement strategies and action plans for the integration of Roma people and initiatives to address their socioeconomic problems *(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing)In accordance with the National Roma Strategy 2021-2030 and under methodological guidance of the National Roma Contact Point , up to now, there are 28 regional strategies and over the half of municipalities have a local action plans; the process of the adoption of the municipal action plans is ongoing. The local authorities in cooperation with the relevant non-governmental organizations made a comprehensive analysis of their needs set up by priorities. The municipal plans are based on an adequate analysis of the needs and characteristics of the local communities.Through the project for National Roma Platform – a platform for dialog and consultation the National Roma Contact Point, in the period April 2021-March 2023, strengthened the capacity of the relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and local level: public institutions and organizations, the Roma community, Roma mediators, Roma and pro-Roma civil society organizations for inclusive policy-making, participation and commitment to the results of the integration process, as well as support for the implementation and monitoring of national and local Roma action plans. | Fully implemented |
| **134.199** Further increase preschool attendance among Roma and decrease dropout rates at all school levels *(Austria);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts) | Fully implemented |
| **134.200** Strengthen public policies designed to improve the social, cultural and economic situation, including the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the Roma population residing in the country *(Chile);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.201** Adopt effective legislative and administrative measures to combat racial discrimination and xenophobia against ethnic minority groups *(China);*  | See rec. [134.18](#DisxriminationXenophovbiaMeasures) | Fully implemented |
| **134.202** Adopt targeted measures to combat intersecting forms of discrimination against Roma women and girls, including with regard to access to education, employment, health care, housing and other social services *(Croatia);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.203** Continue to improve the legal framework and public policies to guarantee protection of the rights of vulnerable social groups, especially ethnic minorities *(Cuba);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.204** Ensure that the Roma are able to exercise their right to education, employment and housing *(France);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| 134.205 Continue efforts aimed at strengthening the rights of minorities, by facilitating their social inclusion (Lebanon);  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.206** Guarantee the non-discrimination of members and institutions of religious minorities, which includes the application of principle of equality before the law in legislation and regulations *(Holy See);*  | See rec. [134.18](#DisxriminationXenophovbiaMeasures), [134.53](#XenophobiaMeasures), [134.90](#FORB)The Religious Denominations Act does not have a restrictive or discriminatory nature and does not compel religious communities to merge. Worship and the performance of religion-specific ceremonies might be conducted in a language other than Bulgarian, in line with the religious community’s tradition.There is no discriminatory treatment in connection with the construction of places of worship of religious denominations in Bulgaria. Places of worship are constructed according to the standard procedure and are not subject to any special requirements. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church does not enjoy privileges compared to the rest of the religious denominations. | Fully implemented |
| **134.207** Promote and protect the rights of the Roma community from suffering marginalization and discrimination, especially in areas of housing, education, health care and employment *(Islamic Republic of Iran);* | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts), [134.135](#Roma), [134.159](#RomaLabour) and [134.191](#Housing) | Fully implemented |
| **134.208** Intensify efforts to ensure that Roma communities, particularly those affected by the mandatory COVID-19-related quarantines, have access to public health services and information, adequate water and sanitation, as well as provisions of food, medicines, hygiene products and health care, with specific consideration given to the needs of women and girls *(Finland);* | During the pandemic the Bulgarian Government made additional efforts regarding the most vulnerable Roma communities in the country, including health consultations for the prevention and symptoms of the disease, health care for persons without health insurance, distribution of sanitary products, food and water.The National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) had organized and facilitated the communication between state authorities at national level and local Roma communities immediately after the beginning of the State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 15 Roma NGOs, the National Network of Health Mediators, educational mediators, Roma activists got involved. Lists of persons in need were drawn up and immediately distributed to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy as well as to the Social Assistance Agency for additional inclusion of people in the initiative “Warm Lunch”. Moreover, with the support of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, the most vulnerable persons were provided with food assistance. The health mediators, part of the Roma community, provided invaluable assistance in this process by providing constant information about the situation. They distributed leaflets, information brochures and held discussions about the importance of quarantine and hygiene measures with the citizens of the Roma communities. Vaccination campaign has been conducted in all districts. With the cooperation of the municipal administration and health mediators, and with on-site immunization offices a significant part of the Roma population is immunized against Covid-19.The “Employment for you” project had been set up in order to assist overcoming the negative effects of the COVID-19 on the labour market. In 2020, 189 persons of Roma origin were involved in project activities.  | Fully implemented |
| **134.212** Promote the enrolment of children and young people with disabilities in mainstream education, and gather statistical data on this, to measure progress *(Mexico);*  | See rec. [134.215](#PersDisSports) | In implementation |
| **134.213** Continue improving the accessibility of services for women and girls with disabilities exposed to gender-based violence *(Montenegro);*  | The mission of social services in Bulgaria is to ensure that every person on its territory has the right to support in order to prevent or overcome social exclusion, to help realise rights and improve the quality of life without discrimination while respecting the wish and personal choice of each individual. It is explicitly regulated in the national legislation that the use of social services depends exclusively on the free will and desire of all persons in need of such support. | Fully implemented |
| **134.214** Develop alternative methods of support for persons with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities with respect to their rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including combating institutionalization, stigma, coercion and overmedication, and provide mental health services promoting inclusion in the community and respecting free and informed consent *(Portugal);*  | In 2022, the National Mental Health Council was established, which aims to coordinate the responsibilities of individual ministries, departments and organizations in the implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy for Mental Health of the Citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030. The methodology was adopted to carry out an assessment of the needs of the population for mental health services and their provision at the territorial level and to prepare an analysis of the number of adults and children in need of specialized social services.In the context of the reform in the field of deinstitutionalization of care for persons with disabilities, the Social Services Act provides that all homes for persons with disabilities, including mental disorders, will be closed by 2035, as in parallel, new forms of social services for residential care, supportive services in the community, as well as integrated health and social services are being created in accordance with the adopted strategic documents.For the period 2021 - October 2023, a total of 5 homes for adults with mental disorders were closed with funds from the state budget and operational programs, in particular under the project "New long-term care", implemented by ASP. Persons with mental disorders removed from closed homes are accommodated in newly created social services, namely 17 Family-type Accommodation Centers for adults with mental disorders and 15 Care Centers for persons with mental disorders, which function under the project "New long-term care'.A recent development in regard of the policy is a slight revision of the National Strategy for Mental Health of the Citizens of the Republic of Bulgaria 2021-2030, where the second sentence of the first paragraph is to be replaced with the following:*"The National Mental Health Council approved a methodology based on which an Assessment of the needs of the population for mental health services and their provision was carried out and an analysis of the number of adults and children in need of specialized social services was prepared for to determine the number and territorial distribution of services by municipalities, as well as the number of specialists to be engaged. Based on this, 18 treatment facilities have been identified to be funded through Investment 3: Modernization of Psychiatric Care from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.”* | In implementation |
| **134.215** Further promote the rights of persons with disabilities by improving access of children with disabilities to inclusive education and by accelerating care in the community *(Japan);*  | In fulfillment of the recommendation to promote the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in general education, the Student Games for students with impaired hearing, impaired vision, physical disabilities and disabilities of the central nervous system for the academic year 2022/2023 is underway. So far, the final competitions in cross-country skiing for students with impaired vision and the final competitions in table tennis, futsal, volleyball and badminton for students with impaired hearing have been held.The "Rules for organizing and conducting the School Games for students with impaired hearing, impaired vision, physical disabilities and disabilities of the central nervous system for the academic year 2023/2024" is to be updated and approved. The Student Games for students from V to XII grades for the academic year 2022/2023 are underway. | In implementation |
| **134.217** Adopt concrete measures to ensure all reasonable accommodations and respect for the human rights of persons with disabilities, as per the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities *(Chile);*  | The National Action Plan for the period 2022-2027 for the implementation of the National Long-Term Care Strategy was adopted by Decision No. 509 of July 21, 2022 of the Council of Ministers. It covers measures during the second stage of the implementation of the process of deinstitutionalization of care for the disabled and the elderly and increasing the efficiency of the long-term care system. A key place in the Plan is allocated to measures and activities aimed at providing support in a home environment to persons with disabilities and elderly people dependent on care, development of quality and accessible social and integrated health and social services, closure of 41 homes for adults persons with disabilities and reforming 82 existing homes for the elderly, increasing the efficiency of the long-term care system and building the necessary infrastructure to provide the services. In addition to the state budget, the reform is also supported through the Human Resources Development Program, the Regional Development Program and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.The first two-year plan for the implementation of the Strategy has been completed - a report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the period 2021-2022 has been prepared and, based on the proposals received from the responsible authorities, the second action plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for People with Disabilities has been prepared (2021-2030) with an implementation period of 2023-2024. | Fully implemented  |
| **134.218** Adopt the draft bill on abolishing restrictions on the legal capacity of persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities *(Costa Rica);*  | See rec. [134.214](#AlternativeMethodsPersDis) | In implementation |
| **134.219** Further strengthen the supportive environment for access to quality education for children and students with special needs *(Ethiopia);*  | See rec. [134.215](#PersDisSports) | In implementation |
| **134.220** Take further steps to ensure the enrolment of children and young people with disabilities in the mainstream education system *(Greece);*  | See rec. [134.215](#PersDisSports) | In implementation |
| **134.221** Improve access to services and provide greater incentives for employment for people with a disability *(Australia);*  | See rec. [134.214](#AlternativeMethodsPersDis), [134.217](#AccomodationPersDis) | In implementation |
| **134.222** Ensure that detention of asylum seekers is only used as a measure of last resort and that provisions for alternative care are established for the entire family *(Mexico);*  | The General Prosecutor's Office organized its own training for its employees on the topic of "Basic Human Rights". Other trainings and seminars on the rights of foreigners held in 2022 are for training on the review and analysis of the return policy of third-country nationals and on return and reintegration as an element of migration management, and on topics "Study of the needs of refugees", and on "Access to territory and procedure for granting international protection.Since the beginning of 2023, more trainings have been held on a humanitarian approach to the return of migrants to the countries of origin, conducted at the invitation of IOM, training on improving the capacity and interaction of institutions in working with unaccompanied minors and minors and identification of vulnerability.See rec. [134.227](#Unaccompaniedminors) | Fully implemented |
| **134.223** Adopt further measures in combating human trafficking and protecting the rights of victims as well as the rights of migrants *(Nigeria);*  | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.41](#DiscriminationTrafficking), [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare), [134.227](#Unaccompaniedminors) | Fully implemented |
| **134.224** Investigate, prosecute and punish hate crimes against migrants and other vulnerable groups, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons *(Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);*  | See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.19](#Discrimination) | Fully implemented |
| **134.225** Take measures to improve the conditions of reception centres for asylum seekers, including by providing adequate food and essential non-food items, with particular attention paid to the reception of children seeking international protection *(Afghanistan);*  | Pursuant to the contract concluded in May 2021 for the supply of ready-made food for breakfast, lunch and dinner for those accommodated in the Sofia Center for Children and Adults, the food for the foreigners housed in the Children's Center for Children and Adults Sofia is ensured for the following period. Both the quality and the quantity of the delivered food are checked by the staff on a daily basis. If necessary, special food is provided for diabetic foreigners and small children.Contracts have been concluded for the installation of vending machines for hot and non-alcoholic drinks, as well as for packaged food products. A contract has been concluded for the supply of personal protective equipment, disinfectants, protective equipment, masks, coveralls. The bedding inventory in the SDVNCH has been replaced. Refreshing repairs were carried out in the homes, in accordance with the available financial means under the budget of the DM. For the new program period under FUMI, activities are planned mainly to improve the material living conditions of the accommodated foreigners through the implementation of basic repair activities.A contract was concluded and a special treatment against insects was carried out by a company specialized in the field. 4 activities on disinfection and disinfection on the territory of the National Health Center were carried out by representatives of the State Health Control at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.See rec. [134.18](#HateSpeech), [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare), [134.227](#Unaccompaniedminors) | Fully implemented |
| **134.226** Develop standard operating procedures for asylum seekers and refugees to assist with correctly identifying asylum seekers in particularly vulnerable situations and provide them with safe accommodation and adequate support *(Bahamas);*  | See rec. [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare), [134.225](#AsylumSeekers), [134.227](#Unaccompaniedminors) | Fully implemented |
| **134.227** Ensure that all unaccompanied minors are provided with a qualified legal guardian, and strengthen adequate social services for all migrant children, including the capacity and coordination of the national child protection system *(Belgium);*  | Unaccompanied minors accommodated in the centers of the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) are children at risk within the meaning of the Child Protection Act, in this regard, a job is opened at the State Refugee Agency in the case of a child at risk, a social worker is appointed to provides support to the unaccompanied child and assists in guaranteeing his rights and interests during his stay and residence in the centers of the State Agency for Refugees. Children are informed about their rights and obligations as asylum seekers, as well as the obligation to attend school and comply with the center's rules. If necessary, specialists - psychologists are sought for the children to provide psycho-social support. Children are consulted about the risks they are exposed to if they decide to continue their journey to Western Europe in the wrong way (trafficking, abuse, channeling), as well as what to expect from their international protection procedure. The children are informed that every unaccompanied minor who is seeking asylum in Bulgaria is appointed a lawyer, who represents the child. The presence of a legal representative is extremely important for children because they take care of their legal interests before all administrative bodies until they reach the age of majority or until they are reunited with an adult family member on the territory of Bulgaria. | Fully implemented |
| **134.228** Continue taking actions towards the further advancement of migrant children’s rights to education *(Cambodia);*  | See rec. [134.133](#Dropouts) | Fully implemented |
| **134.230** Adopt the necessary measures to combat racism, discrimination and racial violence, especially against migrant and refugee populations *(Costa Rica);* | See also [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare) | Fully implemented |
| **134.231** Ensure access to the territory and the procedure for granting international protection, as well as full respect for the fundamental principle of non-refoulement, while promoting and facilitating alternatives to detention, and in this regard, devote special attention to children, making sure that no child is placed in detention *(Holy See);* | See rec. [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare), [134.227](#Unaccompaniedminors) | Fully implemented |
| **134.233** Reinforce measures aimed at preventing and responding to racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance against asylum seekers and refugees *(Islamic Republic of Iran).* | Through its regional representatives, the Commission for Protection against Discrimination regularly organizes and conducts awareness campaigns at the local level in order to promote tolerance towards asylum seekers and refugees and to ensure that the public understands the need for international protection. In addition, experts from the Commission for Protection against Discrimination regularly take part in thematic round tables, working groups, etc., concerning the topics related to the prevention of racial discrimination, xenophobia and hate speech. See also [134.222](#AsylumSeekersAltCare) | Fully implemented |

1. Document No A/HRC/46/13 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Document No A/HRC/46/13/Add.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Document No A/HRC/46/13 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Document No A/HRC/46/13 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Numerations follows A/HRC/46/13. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Information available here (in Bulgarian) <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/news/31709> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/StandingInvitations.aspx?lang=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)