



**SLOVENIAN
CANDIDACY**
for the
**UN HUMAN
RIGHTS
COUNCIL**
2016—2018

**SLOVENIA IS A CANDIDATE
FOR THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
FOR 2016 - 2018**

INTRODUCTION

Slovenia has been contributing actively to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council. We see the role of the HRC as essential in strengthening the international human rights architecture, shedding light on persistent and pressing human rights violations, and assisting States in improving their human rights records.

We participate proactively in the Council's sessions and in the Universal Periodic Review. In line with the universality and indivisibility of human rights, we have prepared recommendations for practically all States assessed in the Universal Periodic Review, and have constructively implemented the ones addressed to us. We were fully engaged in the second cycle of Slovenia's Review. Our country has issued invitations to and cooperated fully with all the Council's special procedures and mandate holders.

Slovenia proudly served as a Human Rights Council member in the period between 2007 and 2010. We would like to contribute again to the work of the Council as its member in the 2016–2018 term.

We pledge to further increase our focus on the advancement of human rights in international



Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

human rights forums, on gender equality, and the protection of the most vulnerable groups – children, ethnic and other minorities, disabled persons, and the elderly. Furthermore, we also pledge to strengthen our efforts in promoting a human rights perspective in the developmental agenda, in environmental protection, in the conduct of business, and in education. Slovenia will continue to cooperate constructively with all Human Rights Council members and observer states.

I, therefore, kindly seek your support for Slovenia's membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2016–2018 at the elections to be held in November 2015 in the UN General Assembly in New York.

*Karl Erjavec
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Slovenia*

VOLUNTARY PLEDGES AND COMMITMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH UN GA RESOLUTION A/RES/60/251

Respect for human rights is a pivotal founding principle of the Slovenian state. Its constitution, in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, defines strong guarantees for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Slovenia decided to present its candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council for the 2016–2018 term based on its deep commitment to human rights at home and in the conduct of its international relations. Slovenia is a party to practically all major UN and regional human rights treaties and instruments, which are transposed directly into Slovenian law. Their implementation is also monitored by an independent national human rights institution, the office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson.

We seek to contribute to international peace and security that we see as attainable only through a wide promotion and protection of human rights. Thus in accordance with the UN GA Resolution A/RES/60/251, we put forward the following Voluntary Pledges and Commitments:



Photo: Tone Stojko; National Museum of Contemporary History

1

Slovenia will work for the advancement of human rights in international human rights forums.

Slovenia has been actively supporting and promoting human rights in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) as well as within the wider United Nations System, including in the UN General Assembly, the Third Committee and the UN Security Council. Human rights have also been a particular focus in our regional cooperation.

We are proud to have served as a member of the HRC in the 2007-10 period. Slovenia is committed to the universality of the Universal Periodic Review, and has been preparing questions and recommendations in a non-selective manner for all States under review. We have also been constructively addressing all recommendations of our own Reviews and have in this been fully committed to engaging with other Member States, NGOs, the wider civil society and UN actors.

The pledges and commitments we put forward for our first Council's membership were fulfilled in full, both with respect

to our contribution to the functioning of human rights institutions, as well as in regards to the national implementation of international human rights instruments. We have fulfilled our pledges to ratify and/or sign Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

Slovenia attaches the outmost importance to the role of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and actively participates with the human rights Special Procedures, all of which have standing invitations to visit Slovenia.

As a Council member, we will continue our efforts to promote human rights in a fair and objective manner and will work towards an effective HRC. We will continue to pursue our commitment to cooperate with all Member States of the United Nations and the UN System as a whole. We will pay particular attention to helping to ensure the universality and impartiality of its mechanisms, and will maintain a regular dialogue with NGOs and the civil society.

Slovenia will continue to fulfill its obligations under the international human rights conventions and to submit reports to the relevant treaty bodies. We prepared and duly cooperated in our second Universal Periodic Review, which was due in 2014.



Photos:

- 1 - Caritas Slovenia
- 2, 3 - Edirisa Society Slovenia
- 4, 5 - Zavod KROG



Photo: Caritas Slovenia

2

Slovenia will work for gender equality and for the protection of the most vulnerable.

Slovenia's traditional human rights priorities include the rights of women and of the most vulnerable groups: children, ethnic and other minorities, disabled persons, etc. We also wish to participate actively in furthering and strengthening the rights of older persons. As a Council member, Slovenia will further increase its focus on these priorities, both internationally and internally.

- Gender equality in Slovenia is promoted through a number of legislative mechanisms, including the paramount Equal Opportunities Act, which helped secure a steep increase in the representation of women in political life. Internationally, we have been supporting the inclusion of gender perspective into the work of the UN, and in particular of the HRC – while paying particular attention to fighting discrimination in law and practice as well as focusing on women, peace and security.

Slovenia will work further to efficiently implement its National Action Plan for the SC resolutions on Women, Peace and Security 1325 and 1820. We will focus on the integration of gender equality, empowerment of women and promotion of their rights throughout international organizations, and particularly in the UN System, and the HRC.

- Children's rights are in Slovenia protected and promoted through a plethora of laws and programs, which take fully into account the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We pay particular attention to the participation of children and to their human rights education and learning. In this view, we have been educating children not only in Slovenia, but also in a number of other countries through a project 'Our Rights.' Slovenia has been fully supporting the work of all special representatives and progressive approaches within the UN, while putting special focus on children and armed conflict and on violence against children.

As a Council member, we pledge to strengthen our efforts to promote children's rights within Slovenia and in the international community, and in particular within the UN System. Our particular focus will be on human rights education and learning for children and on fighting all forms of violence and abuse against them.

● Slovenia strives to protect *the rights of its minorities and ethnic communities* and groups through a number of legislative and institutional provisions by which it also enacts the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. In its international activities, Slovenia is engaged in efforts to ensure the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and functioning of the CERD Committee. We are committed to fighting discrimination and violence based upon religion, race or ethnicity. Furthermore, we are also committed to ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by all, regardless of any other personal circumstance.

As a Council member, we pledge to pursue the agenda for protecting and promoting the human rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, and for ensuring the full enjoyment of human rights by all, regardless of their sexual orientation or any other personal circumstance – and will strive for their due consideration at the UN.

● To ensure the active participation of *older persons* in all walks of life and effectively promote their human rights, Slovenia passed the strategy titled Solidarity, Good Intergenerational Relations and Quality Aging. Numerous initiatives are also in place for the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, many of them carried out in cooperation with civil society. Slovenia participates in the work of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Aging for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons and has co-sponsored an initiative for a new Independent Expert in the HRC.

As a Council member, we will work to bring due attention in international human rights forums, and in particular at the UN, to the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, and to ensure their active and effective participation in the fullest spectrum of societal life.

3

Slovenia will promote a human rights perspective in the developmental agenda, in environmental protection, in the conduct of business and in education.

● Slovenia's overall *developmental strategy* and related legislation are rooted in the principle of sustainable development, and include the perspective of social sustainability aimed at ensuring equitable human development, reducing social risks and improving the social inclusion of all individuals. Slovenia has also been supporting a human rights-based approach to development internationally. It is a member of the Blue Group, a group of countries devoted to promoting the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

As a Council member, Slovenia will continue to work towards including a human-rights perspective in the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, we will pay particular attention to gender equality, the empowerment of women, children's rights and the rights of older persons. We will also strive to ensure that the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation is included in the post-2015 development agenda.



Photo: Edirisa Society Slovenia

- Slovenia sees a safe, healthy and secure environment as fundamentally important to the implementation of all other human rights, and the right to a healthy environment is guaranteed by the Constitution and enacted through the paramount Environment Protection Act and related legislation. In the international context, Slovenia is among the cosponsors of the Independent Expert on human rights and the environment.

As a Council member, we pledge to further promote the nexus of environmental issues in the enjoyment and the realization of all human rights, and continue to support the work of the Independent Expert.



Photo: Tijana Jovanović Dimitrijević; Slovene Philanthropy

- Slovenia ascribes the utmost importance to including the human rights perspective in *business activities*, and is undertaking steps towards implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and Business internally. It has also developed a number of socially responsible and inclusive entrepreneurial projects.

Slovenia will strive to further develop the necessary framework for putting these principles into practice nationally, and actively promote the issue within the UN Protect, Respect and Remedy framework.

- Slovenia has been an active promoter of *human rights education* and learning, which has been its consistent policy both at home and internationally. We have been implementing the first phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education, and launched the activities for the second phase.

As a Council member, we will continue actively to promote the World Programme internationally, and strive to contribute to its further implementation and the development of its third phase.

Slovenia is looking forward to further strengthening its work in the Human Rights Council and its cooperation with Council's members as well as with all UN Member States, NGOs and civil society in order to continue contributing to the fulfillment of the important mandate entrusted to the Council – to better protect and promote all human rights for all people everywhere in the world.



*"All human beings
are born free and
equal in dignity
and rights."*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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