

2016 Portuguese National Human Rights Committee Annual Report Executive Summary

The 2016 Portuguese National Human Rights Committee's (PNHRC) Annual Report presents the Committee's work and that of its members throughout the year.

The first part of the Report briefly describes the activities of the Committee, including the plenary and working groups meetings, cooperation with civil society and the promotion of PNHRC's work on social media networks.

The second part of the Report includes best practices in the field of human rights by the PNHRC members (Foreign Affairs; Finance; National Defense Internal Administration; Justice; Labour, Solidarity and Social Security; Health; Economy; Agriculture Forestry and Rural Development; Gender Equality; Education).

2016 marked the second year of **Portugal's** mandate as a **member of the Human Rights Council (HRC)**. This membership required that all PNHRC members enhanced their efforts to ensure the necessary coordination on the different human rights areas subject of debate within the Council.

Portugal tabled, with Brazil, a resolution **on Mental Health and Human Rights** at the 32nd HRC session (June 2016), adopted by consensus and with a high number of cosponsors. It was the first time that issue was the subject of a HRC resolution, highlighting the importance of a human rights approach in the field of mental health.

As in previous years, Portugal tabled its traditional resolutions on **Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and on the Right to Education** in the 31st and 32nd HRC sessions. Both were adopted by consensus.

In 2016 there were **three PNHRC plenary meetings**, as well as **six working group meetings**. The 18th PNHRC plenary meeting, open to civil society, was on the issue of mental health and human rights. More than 100 people attended, including representatives from civil society, academia and the members of PNHRC. His Excellency the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs Ministry, Mr Augusto Santos Silva, participated in the meeting. It was the first time a Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs took part in a PNHRC. In his speech, HE Minister Santos Silva underlined Portugal's unwavering commitment to human rights, both at national and international level.

In accordance with Portugal's Human Rights Treaty Body obligations, in the course of 2016 the PNHRC continued to coordinate the preparation and consideration of **national reports on the implementation of the Human Rights Conventions**.

Portuguese reports were discussed with the relevant Treaty Bodies, namely the **First Portuguese report on the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** in March and the **15th and the 17th reports on the United Nations Convention for the Implementation of all forms of Racial Discrimination** in October.

In June, Portugal submitted the **First report on the implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearances**.

In line with Portugal's **standing invitation to the Human Rights Council's special procedures**, from the 5th to 13th of December, the **Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation, Mr. Léo Heller**, and the **Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Ms. Leilani Farha**, visited our country.

In accordance with **the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment**

or Punishment, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture visited Portugal from the 27th of September to the 7th of October.

Lastly, the following **good practices** by **PNHRC members' Human Rights** should be highlighted:

- Ministry of Finance: implementation of the Gender-Equality Ministry of Finance Plan;
- Ministry of Defence: training of armed forces in the field of human rights gender equality;
- Ministry of Internal Administration: promotion of the right to security of the most vulnerable citizens (elderly, children, women, crime victims, the blind, and physically and mentally impaired persons);
- Ministry of Justice: in articulation with the Ministry of Education, edition of a "friendly version" of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection Of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention);
- Ministry of Environment: preparation of a study on mechanisms used to suspend water supply due to non-payment of invoices in order to find better options bearing in mind the human right to water and sanitation and the need to guarantee the financial sustainability of the water supply entities;
- Ministry of Culture: organisation of initiatives aimed at making Portuguese cinema available to disadvantaged populations (4th edition of the "Cinema Português em Movimento" initiative);
- Ministry of Labour, Solidarity ad Social Security: support to Poverty Reduction Projects in third countries, with a special focus on the protection of children in vulnerable situations, thus contributing to compliance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Ministry of Health: implementation of awareness-raising actions to promote the elimination of female genital mutilation;

- Ministry of Economy: implementation of an assessment study on the needs of migrants in order to have effective access to economic activities in Portugal;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry: continuing the actions carried out in order to promote the right to food within the framework of the "School Fruit" and "School Milk" programs;
- Gender equality and citizenship: dissemination of the "Gender and Citizenship Education" Guidelines for Pre-school Education, First, Second and Third cycles of Basic Education;
- Ministry of Education: development of Portuguese language courses aimed at those for whom Portuguese is not their mother tongue.