

2017 Portuguese National Human Rights Committee Annual Report Executive Summary

The 2017 Annual Report of the Portuguese National Human Rights Committee (PNHRC) presents information related to the work carried out by the Committee and by its members throughout the year.

The first part describes the activities of the Committee, namely the plenary meetings as well as other relevant activities, including cooperation with the civil society and the promotion of the PNHCR's work on the social media networks.

The second part lists the human rights best practices of the PNHCR members in the scope of their respective competences in the areas of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Defense, Internal Administration, Justice, Culture, Education, Labor, Solidarity and Social Security, Health, Economy, Environment, Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Gender Equality and Migration.

Portugal completed, during 2017, the third and final year of its mandate as a member of the **United Nations Human Rights Council** (HRC). It required enhanced efforts from all its members to ensure all necessary coordination on the various human rights areas debated by the HRC.

Within the HRC, the following national initiatives should be highlighted:

- At the 34th session of the HRC (27th February to 24th March), Portugal tabled once again a resolution on economic, social and cultural rights adopted, once again by consensus, with a high number of co-sponsors from countries of all regional groups;
- At the 35th session of the HRC (6th to 23rd June), Portugal tabled anew a resolution on the Right to Education adopted,

once again by consensus, with a very high number of co-sponsors from countries of all regional groups; Portugal tabled yet, together with Brazil, Mozambique, Thailand and Paraguay, a resolution on the Right to Health in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by consensus; and a resolution on Human Rights and Youth was tabled together with Italy, Greece, France, Morocco, the Philippines, Moldova, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt and El Salvador, adopted by consensus.

- At the 36th Session of the HRC (11th to 29th September, 2017), Portugal tabled, once more with Brazil, a resolution on Mental Health and Human Rights, adopted by consensus, with co-sponsorship of 62 countries from all regional groups; Portugal tabled, for the first time together with the CPLP countries, a resolution on the Human Rights of All Women and the Transversal Approach to the Gender Perspective in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Still during the 36th Session, the HRC President appointed the first UN Special Rapporteur on Discrimination Against Persons Affected by Leprosy, a Portuguese citizen, Dr. Raquel Cruz, a sociologist and university professor, with a very relevant work developed in this area.

At the **Third Committee of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly** (UNGA) held in New York during November 2017 Portugal tabled, together with Senegal and Moldova, a resolution on Youth Policies and Programs (this resolution is tabled every two years). The resolution was adopted by consensus with high co-sponsorship.

Within the framework of the **Council of Europe**, took place, on the 14th July, the first national meeting of Portuguese representatives and experts on the Council of Europe various bodies, committees and working groups, with the participation of the Minister of Foreign

Affairs, Professor Augusto Santos Silva. The meeting debated the theme: "Reinforcing National Participation in the Council of Europe: streamlining coordination among the various areas of activity". It is also worth mentioning the visit of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe (ECRI) to Portugal, which took place between the 13th and 17th November 2017, with a view to preparing for the fifth report on our country.

In line with the policy of exchanging experiences with international counterparts, it is worth mentioning the visit to Portugal, on the 5th June, of the **Commission for Human Rights of Cape Verde**.

At the PNHCR headquarters in Lisbon, **three plenary meetings** were held during the year, to continue the drafting work in the following **National Reports on the application of the United Nations and of the Council of Europe Conventions**:

- Follow-up to the 8th and 9th Reports of the United Nations Monitoring Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - CEDAW (additional information on recommendations, paragraphs 23 (a), 25 (b) and 37 of final conclusions);
- Specific recommendations concerning the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (information on implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 and 65 of the Concluding Observations)
- Follow-up to the 15th and 17th Reports of the United Nations Monitoring Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (additional information on recommendations, paragraphs 13 (ced), 15 (a) and 21 (a));
- 5th and 6th Report of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- 7th Report of the Convention Against Torture (CAT);
- Common Core Document; and

- Reply to the Group of Experts on Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) Questionnaire on the implementation by Portugal of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combat of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

In terms of **best practices of the various members of the PNHCR**, indicating the efforts done to advance human rights, the following should be highlighted:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Tabling of national initiative resolutions at the United Nations Human Rights Council; preparation of human rights bodies visits to Portugal; international diffusion of the PNHCR; ratification, implementation and reporting of International Human Rights Conventions, including within the Council of Europe and the United Nations.
- Ministry of Finance: Implementation of the Plan for Gender Equality for the period 2014-2017; collection, treatment and dissemination of statistical data related to the Public Administration human resources, disaggregated by sex; and financial support for education expenses, or severe social situations to the beneficiaries of the Public Administration Social Services, in accordance with the legislation.
- Ministry of Defense: Training of the armed forces in the field of human rights; implementation of measures to protect military parenthood and promotion of gender equality.
- Ministry of Internal Affairs: Activities with the school community to raise awareness of the children's rights and to prevent sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children; training activities in fundamental rights; and statistics on child trafficking in Portugal.
- Ministry of Justice: Draft of a questionnaire on the hearing and participation conditions of children in judicial processes and training actions on gender equality.

- Ministry of Culture: Development of cultural actions to promote human rights.
- Ministry of Education: Diffusion and implementation of the National Strategy "Education for Citizenship" as well as educational directives of the European Agenda for Migration, education and memory of the Holocaust; and launching of a wide public discussion on the School Curriculum. In the field of youth and sport, campaigns and programs to raise awareness and promote human rights issues among young people.
- Ministry of Labor, Solidarity and Social Security: Within the framework of the National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and Protection of Children and Young People; implementation of coordination and structures at a regional level, to ensure a holistic, transversal and systemic intervention to prevent and protect the rights of children and young people; and draft of the National Strategy for the Rights of the Child.
- Ministry of Health: training courses on the theme of trauma of vulnerable populations (refugees) and in Dramatic Activity directed to professionals who provide mental health care; data collection on organs trafficking; signalization of citizens at risk; development and implementation of measures to protect living organs donors.
- Ministry of the Economy: Diffusion of a brochure addressed to migrants, related to the access to and exercise of economic activity; promotion of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the Guiding Principles for Business; and donations of seized assets to several beneficiary entities, especially to those of a social nature.
- Ministry of the Environment: Carry out a study, by the Water and Waste Services Regulatory Agency (ERSAR), on mechanisms to suspend water service to consumers due to non-payment of invoices, with a view to identifying best practices and respect for human rights principles, and publication in Portuguese of the "Handbook on the Human Rights to Drinking Water and Sanitation for Professionals".

- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development: Upkeep of actions related to the right to food and food education, in the framework of the "School Fruit" and "School Milk" programs.
- Gender Equality and Citizenship: Implementation of the National Strategy "Education for Citizenship" and the agenda for Equality in the Labor Market and in Companies; prevention and combating domestic and gender-based violence through awareness-raising campaigns with the civil society involvement; and development of new national plans to integrate multiple discrimination.
- Migration: Strengthening of measures and mechanisms to combat multiple discrimination; continue the consideration on the promotion of religious diversity and the deepening of interreligious dialogue; and continue funding civil society projects to combat discrimination against Roma communities.