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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA  
TO THE UN, WTO AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AT GENEVA

N° 16-01-409/4

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honor to enclose the information by the Government of North Macedonia on the questions raised by the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of North Macedonia to the United Nations Office and Other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights at Geneva the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 30 December, 2019



OFFICE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
GENEVA

**Information provided by the Government of North Macedonia on the questions raised by the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance**

In reply to the joint letter of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance of 24 September 2019, the Government of North Macedonia provides the following information:

With regard to concerns about difficulties that about 600 Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia face relating to civil registration issues, including registration of birth related issues leading to problems with their access to health protection, the Law on persons not entered in the Birth Register is in parliamentary procedure.

This Law regulates the procedure for collection and recording of personal data of persons whose birth has not been entered in the Birth Register, regulating as well the type of data recorded, the conditions for entering the birth in a special birth register, the conditions for entering data about persons in a special death register, the issuance of certificates from the special birth register, issuance of death certificates from the special Death Register, identification documents and additional entering of such persons in the main Birth Register, in accordance with the law.

The purpose of the Law is to enable the entry of data of persons whose birth has not been registered in a special Birth Register, with a view to issuing a birth certificate of the said special Birth Register and identification documents that would enable such persons to exercise their rights in areas of education, health care, social protection, employment and obligatory social insurance, in accordance with the law until their birth will have been additionally entered in the main Birth Register, upon which they will be issued their first birth certificate in accordance with the law.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice-the Directorate for Registries, Roma NGOs, Roma Information Centers, UNHCR and UNICEF, are actively involved in the records of persons not listed in the birth register.

Primary health care in the Republic of North Macedonia is free of charge for all persons covered by health insurance and is provided by family doctors, preventive health care teams at Healthcare Institutes, the emergency health care service, home visiting health care teams, visiting nurses and doctors working in rural areas. The Ministry of Health, under a special annual Program, provides funds for medical insurance coverage of persons who do not have medical insurance enabling thus persons not medically insured to use health care services at all levels without any impediments.

In pursuance with the Law on Health Care, each year, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia adopts an annual *Program of active health care for mothers and children*, the general objective of which is to continually advance the health of children and women in the reproductive period with a view to reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, while focusing on vulnerable groups of the population, fully respecting the principle of equal access to health care services for all. The specific goals of this Program are the following:

- Raising the level of information and education of the population about healthy life styles and proper health care habits in the preconception, antenatal, postnatal and in the infant period, focusing on vulnerable groups of women (Roma women, women in rural areas, adolescents); as well as
- Advancing the quality and equality in access to health care services for mothers and children, while focusing on vulnerable groups of women.

Under the annual *Program for participation in the costs for utilization of health care services for specific illnesses among citizens and healthcare for parturient women and infants in the Republic of North Macedonia* funds are provided, *inter alia*, to cover the costs for pregnancy health care services for pregnant women, basic healthcare services for parturient women and infants until reaching 1 year of age, intrapartum protection of parturient women (surgical and non-surgical delivery), as well as costs for specialist examinations of infants, orthopedic medical echography examinations of infants, hospital medical treatment of infants of up to 1 year of age).

Under the *Program providing funds for hospital treatment without participation in the costs by retired persons and providing funds for specialist consultative and hospital treatment for beneficiaries of the right to social pecuniary benefit and for members of their families in the Republic of North Macedonia* funds are provided for hospital medical treatment of retired persons whose pension is lower than MKD 14,000, as well as funds for specialist and consultative medical examination of persons receiving social pecuniary benefits and of members of their families.

*Under the Program for immunization*, vaccines are provided according to the immunization calendar, covering all children in the Republic of North Macedonia. The Program is especially focused on attaining as large child immunization coverage as possible, especially in rural areas, which are difficult to be reached, then among the Roma population and persons who often change their residence and stay (mobile groups).

*The Program for regular check-ups of pupils and students* envisages activities for early detection of health problems, as well as of psychosocial, development and behavioral risks among school-aged children and among the young, regular check-ups, preventive dental protection of pupils.

*The Program of early detection of malignant diseases in the Republic of North Macedonia*, envisages activities for early detection and prevention of diseases of reproductive organs among women in the country (cervical cancer among women) and breast cancer opportunistic screening,

Public Health Centers offer free of charge counseling services for sexual and reproductive health, where all young people can get advice about reproductive health and about contraception.

Furthermore, as of 2011 the Ministry of Health has been implementing the project called *Roma Health Mediators (RHM)*. The Project is aimed to improve the health of Roma and their access to health care services, by recruiting Roma health mediators, who work as a link within the system of establishing better communication between the Roma community and health care system representatives. The Mediators contribute to:

- Facilitating the access to health care services;
- Establishing doctor-patient relationship of trust, and
- Building the culture of taking due care for one's health and for the health of others among the Roma population.

In the Law on Foreigners (Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 97/18 and the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia no. 108/19), stateless persons are covered by Article 2 paragraph 1 subparagraph 1, which defines a "foreigner", stating that "a foreigner is a person who is not a national of the Republic of North Macedonia and a stateless person, that is, a person whom no state by virtue of its law considers to be own national."

Article 120 of this Law provides for the granting of temporary stay for humanitarian reasons, including to the stateless persons as well. Temporary stay for humanitarian reasons shall be granted to a stateless person for a period of up to one year and may be extended if it is found that humanitarian reasons remain. In cases when a foreigner is granted a temporary stay for humanitarian reasons, the provisions on return under this Law shall not apply as long as the humanitarian reasons exist, i.e., the provisions on the return of the person provided by the Law shall not be applied as long as the humanitarian reasons do exist.

Article 132 of this Law provides for: special conditions for granting permanent residence for persons who by the entry into force of the Law on Foreigners would be considered foreigners in the Republic of North Macedonia who until 8 September 1991 were nationals of the then Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and had legal residence in the territory of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and continued after 8 September 1991 to stay in the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as their children over the age of five, if they apply for permanent residence within three years of the entry into force of the Law. For these persons, the general conditions for a permanent residence permit provided for other foreigners applying for permanent residence in the Republic of North Macedonia, do not apply. The introduction of this category of persons into the Law on Foreigners enables the solution of the problem of a large number of persons who continued to reside in the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia after the break-up of former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and who are originally from one of the former Yugoslav republics, but in the meantime have not acquired any other citizenship and are actually stateless persons as such.

Article 174 says the Ministry of the Interior should issue a travel document for stateless persons according to the 1954 UN Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons. The travel document for stateless persons is issued for a period of up to one year and may be extended in accordance with the 1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons.

The Republic of North Macedonia ratified the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019.