



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

19 January 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Montenegro by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 43rd session in May 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of Montenegro was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 54th session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/me-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'V' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that ends in a small upward curve.

Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. Filip Ivanović
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Montenegro



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The adoption of the 2020 Law on Same-sex Civil Partnership and the Strategy for Improving the Quality of Life of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex persons 2019–2023 are welcome developments.

The Strategy for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from Discrimination and Promotion of Equality 2022-2027 is promising for the operationalization of the legal framework in support of the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities. Its meaningful implementation should be supported.

While efforts on institutional strengthening are commendable, Montenegro is encouraged to accelerate judicial reform and ensure the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, strengthen access to justice for victims of rights violations, and to strengthen the independence and capacities of its national human rights institution, the Protector for Human Rights and Freedoms, in line with the Paris Principles.

Concerns remain regarding reports of hate speech, including by politicians and public figures, against some ethnic or ethno-religious groups, women, and negative attitudes towards Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and persons with disabilities. Montenegro is strongly encouraged to actively combat hate speech and discrimination, through preventive measures and adequate sanctioning, and to intensify efforts to implement legal and strategic frameworks to strengthen the protection of groups that face discrimination, hate speech and violence.

Montenegro is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the Parliament, the judiciary, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix referred to in the letter of the High Commissioner for Human Rights may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).



Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Montenegro may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
19 January 2024