



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

Distr.: General
29 April 2024

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
112th session

Summary record of the 3065th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 18 April 2024, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Balcerzak

Contents

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined twelfth to fourteenth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of the present record to the Documents Management Section (DMS-DCM@un.org).

Any corrected records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be reissued for technical reasons after the end of the session.



The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports, comments and information submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined twelfth to fourteenth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova
([CERD/C/MDA/12-14](#); [CERD/C/MDA/Q/12-14](#))

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of the Republic of Moldova joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair**, welcoming the delegation of the Republic of Moldova to the meeting, explained that additional members of the delegation would be participating via video link.
3. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova**, introducing her country's combined twelfth to fourteenth periodic reports ([CERD/C/MDA/12-14](#)), said that the statistical data on the composition of the population of the Republic of Moldova contained in the combined reports dated back to 2014, when the last population and housing census had been carried out. A new population and housing census would be conducted in July 2024. The census questionnaire, which would be translated into the languages of ethnic minorities, would collect data on ethnic self-identification, with the possibility for respondents to self-identify as belonging to more than one ethnic group, and also on mother tongue, religion and disability.
4. A national programme to promote the learning of the Romanian language by persons belonging to national minorities had been launched in 2023. To date, some 6,500 adults, including refugees from Ukraine, had received instruction in Romanian.
5. According to the most recent statistics, around 3,400 local Roma students and 50 Roma students who were refugees from Ukraine were benefiting from government-sponsored educational support initiatives. The measures taken to integrate more Roma children into the education system included the adoption in 2023 of a government decision awarding bursaries to eligible Roma students who wished to pursue secondary, vocational or higher education. Those bursaries were funded from the State budget and would go some way towards narrowing the education gap between Roma students and others. In January 2024, some 50 Roma students had received a bursary. The Programme to Support the Ethnic Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova 2022–2025 likewise included measures to promote the access of Roma youths to the education system.
6. A new plan of action for the implementation of the Strategy on Strengthening Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for the period 2017–2027 had been adopted in April 2023. The plan emphasized the need to develop policies to protect the rights of ethnic minorities, including the Roma, Ukrainian, Gagauz and Bulgarian communities, and included measures to facilitate their social integration and full participation in public life.
7. The Parliament had adopted several laws aimed at eradicating incitement to racial hatred and discrimination. For example, Act No. 78 of 23 April 2021 had supplemented the Criminal Code with provisions aimed at combating racism, fascism and xenophobia and had criminalized the promotion of discriminatory ideologies and the denial of the Holocaust. Under Act No. 111 of 21 April 2022, the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences had been modified to strengthen protections against discrimination and prejudice. Act No. 2 of 2 February 2023 had, for its part, broadened the anti-discrimination provisions of the Equality Act to introduce new concepts such as “continued discrimination” and “prolonged discrimination”. The penalties for non-compliance with the decisions of the Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality (the Equality Council) had likewise been increased.
8. Over the period from 2004 to 2022, the Government had implemented three national action plans on human rights. A new national action plan for the period from 2024 to 2027 had been adopted in March 2024.
9. To better manage the growing number of refugees arriving from Ukraine and neighbouring countries, the Moldovan authorities, by Government Decision No. 21/2023,

had introduced a temporary protection regime. Under that regime, refugees were not obliged to apply for asylum immediately and were able to gain access to various State-run services.

10. Despite the progress achieved to date, more still needed to be done to integrate minority groups such as the Roma community and refugees more fully into the socioeconomic life of the country and to ensure the protection of their rights and interests, including through the stronger enforcement of national anti-discrimination laws and related international provisions.

11. **Ms. Stavrinaki** (Country Rapporteur) said that the Committee would welcome updated information on the current composition of the population, especially the number of non-nationals residing in the country, including migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, disaggregated by residence status, gender and age. Up-to-date statistical data on the enjoyment of economic and social rights, including the rights to water and sanitation, by ethnic minority groups and non-nationals, disaggregated by ethnic origin, migratory status, gender, age and geographical location would also be appreciated. She would also be grateful to receive updated information on the number of native languages habitually spoken and religions regularly practised in the country, and to know whether the upcoming 2024 population and housing census would contain open-ended questions that would allow respondents to self-identify freely. The delegation might also describe the measures taken to act on the recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women that called on the State party to facilitate the birth registration of children born in Transnistria and Gagauzia and to facilitate the registration of Roma children born in the State party.

12. One of the greatest obstacles to the effective implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in the State party was apparently the lack of cohesion between the prohibited grounds of discrimination established in laws such as the Equality Act and the Employment Promotion and Unemployment Insurance Act and the scope of the related prohibition in practice. She wondered whether the anti-discrimination legislation prohibited discrimination based on national origin and descent as a matter of course. It would also be useful to receive an explanation of the concepts of “continued discrimination” and “prolonged discrimination” and to learn more about the specific acts covered by the concept of “support for discriminatory conduct”, which appeared in the definition of discrimination set out in article 2 of the Equality Act.

13. It was her understanding that, while the Equality Council was competent to find violations of anti-discrimination legislation, it was still the prerogative of the courts to impose penalties for such violations, and that the protocols initiated by the Equality Council were often annulled due to procedural inconsistencies. She wished to know whether the Government might consider empowering the Equality Council to impose proportionate and effective sanctions for discrimination.

14. The Committee would be interested to know whether Moldovan anti-discrimination legislation included a provision requiring the public authorities to promote equality in the performance of their duties, as recommended by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, and whether the legislation prohibited racial profiling, in accordance with the Committee’s general recommendation No. 36 on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials. If that was not the case, did the authorities plan to take legislative measures along those lines?

15. The delegation might provide further details of the content and scope of Act No. 111 of 21 April 2022, indicating whether it prohibited and punished hate speech or only incitement to hatred, whether it included all the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in article 1 of the Convention and whether it provided for the dissolution of organizations or political parties that promoted racism and for the suspension of their public funding. It would be helpful to know whether article 176 of the Criminal Code, which proscribed and punished the violation of the equality of citizens’ rights, applied to all public officials, regardless of their status or hierarchical position. Clarification as to whether the Audiovisual Media Services Code punished both hate speech and incitement to hatred would also be appreciated.

16. The Committee had learned that concerns had been raised that the newly introduced crime of separatism could hamper the enjoyment of freedom of expression and freedom of

association and the enjoyment by national minorities of their rights. She wondered which acts might be considered to amount to separatism in practice and what was being done to support police and prosecuting authorities in identifying and investigating crimes aggravated by social, national, racial, or religious hatred within the meaning of article 77 (d) of the Criminal Code.

17. While the Committee welcomed the adoption of the 2023–2025 plan of action for the implementation of the Strategy on Strengthening Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for the period 2017–2027, it noted with concern that, according to the report evaluating the implementation of the related plan up to 2020, just a little over half of the objectives and targets set for that period had been met in full. The low cost-effectiveness and quality-price ratios reported in connection with that plan of action could apparently be attributed to the failure to allocate a separate budget for its implementation. She wished to know whether the State party might consider remedying that shortcoming and creating a funding mechanism to ensure that sufficient funds were earmarked for the achievement of individual objectives and targets in the plan for the period from 2023 to 2025. It would also be useful to hear more about how the implementation of the new plan of action would be monitored and how relevant stakeholders were being involved in the implementation of the Strategy on Strengthening Inter-Ethnic Relations in general. The delegation might also indicate whether the shortcomings identified in previous national action plans on human rights had been addressed in the national action plan covering the period from 2024 to 2027 and whether it included combating racial discrimination as a specific objective.

18. The Committee was concerned about reports of a lack of coordination among the Office of the People’s Advocate (Ombudsman), the Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations and the Equality Council. She would like to know what measures were taken to ensure that those institutions cooperated effectively and whether the Government planned to empower the Equality Council to submit complaints to the Constitutional Court and whether it intended to provide the Council with sufficient financial resources to fully perform its mandate. She would also be interested to know why so few of the decisions issued by the Equality Council had been implemented by the authorities, whether the Government planned to increase the budget of the Office of the People’s Advocate so that it could attract and retain sufficient qualified staff and whether it intended to restore the functional immunity enjoyed by the People’s Advocate. It was her understanding that the Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations did not have the mandate or the resources to implement strategies to promote and protect the rights of the Roma community. Might the Government consider establishing a separate body with specific responsibility for that population group?

19. Lastly, the delegation might provide additional information on the six specialized commissions responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Committee’s recommendations, including their membership, their expertise, how their independence was guaranteed and the resources allocated to them.

20. **Mr. Kut** (Follow-up Coordinator) said that the State party was to be commended for the timely submission of its interim report on the follow-up given to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 19 and 23 of the Committee’s 2017 concluding observations ([CERD/C/MDA/CO/10-11](#)), respectively on the linguistic rights of ethnic minorities and the situation of non-citizens. Although the State party had, in its periodic report, duly described the measures taken to act on the recommendations, some four years had elapsed since its submission. The Committee would therefore welcome a further update on the action taken by the authorities to, firstly, ensure access by ethnic minority children to mother-tongue education at schools and to quality instruction in the State language, particularly in Gagauzia and Taraclia, and to prevent discrimination on the basis of language against such students in higher education and employment and, secondly, to ensure that non-citizens had access to education, housing, health care and employment on an equal footing with citizens.

21. **Ms. Tlakula** said that the Committee had learned that proposed amendments to Act No. 52 of 3 April 2014 on the People’s Advocate (Ombudsman), which would have granted the People’s Advocate immunity from prosecution for official acts performed in good faith, had not been approved by the Parliament. She wondered whether the State party might consider adopting further legislative measures to ensure that the mandate of the People’s Advocate could be fulfilled without fear of prosecution.

22. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that statistical data on the percentage of the population that had access to running water, sanitary facilities and a sewage system could be submitted to the Committee in writing. The Employment Promotion and Unemployment Insurance Act explicitly prohibited discrimination on the basis of national origin, ethnicity, race and political affiliation. Relatively few cases of discrimination in employment had been brought before the Equality Council. While members of the Roma community had equal access to the labour market and employment services, they often struggled to find work because they did not have the necessary level of education or qualifications. Members of the Roma community currently accounted for 4.5 per cent of the total number of persons registered as unemployed in the country. Almost 60 per cent of unemployed Roma persons were women. Around 90 per cent of Roma persons registered as unemployed were first-time jobseekers; 75 per cent of Roma jobseekers had only a basic education. A range of services and programmes were in place to help all citizens, including members of ethnic minorities, to enter the labour market. Jobseekers could benefit from programmes to help them to retrain, vocational training courses and information sessions on the country's labour market.

23. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, pursuant to Act No. 111 of 21 April 2022, the Criminal Code had been supplemented with a separate provision defining prejudice as a factor motivating crimes. In that provision, prejudice was understood as the preconceived ideas of the perpetrator based on considerations of race, colour, ethnic, national or social origin, citizenship, sex, gender, language, religion or religious beliefs, political opinions, disability, sexual orientation, identity of gender, state of health, age or marital status, regardless of whether the act was committed against persons who possessed such protected characteristics, or in relation to their property or associated with it, or in relation to a person who provided support to such persons. Such association could be either real, or perceived as such. Actions or public calls, including calls issued through the mass media, aimed at inciting hatred or violence against a certain group of people based on prejudice were punishable under the revised Criminal Code. Article 176 of the revised Criminal Code did not currently apply to public officials. Consideration would, however, be given to the possibility of amending the Criminal Code further in the future.

24. The Code of Administrative Offences too had been amended, and the Contravention Code had been supplemented with a separate provision punishing incitement to discrimination against specific groups through deliberate actions or public calls. By Act No. 1 of 2 February 2023, the regulatory framework governing the activities of the Office of the People's Advocate had been amended and the People's Advocate had been granted immunity from prosecution. The People's Advocate could thus not be detained or searched without the consent of the Parliament, except in cases of flagrante delicto. The deputies of the People's Advocate could not be the subject of a criminal investigation without the prior authorization of the Parliament.

25. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the Strategy on Strengthening Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Republic of Moldova for the period 2017–2027 was being implemented in phases. During the first phase, from 2017 to 2020, the focus had been on, inter alia, setting up forums for ethnic minorities, developing tailored school curricula, developing and launching a public communication strategy on inter-ethnic relations and organizing training courses for multilingual education. The second phase, which covered the period from 2021 to 2024, was centred on strengthening inter-ethnic relations and promoting greater participation by national minorities in various spheres of life and their inclusion in Moldovan society. The Strategy included special measures aimed at increasing the representation of members of national minority groups, especially young people and women, in public life and decision-making processes, and at promoting gender equality. Campaigns to encourage more women from national minority backgrounds to take up jobs in public bodies were being conducted, and training programmes and internships were being offered at different government ministries, in the Parliament and with local public authorities.

26. The Coordinating Council of Ethnocultural Organizations, acting under the Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations, was a public advisory body that served as a forum for dialogue between the authorities and national minorities. Over 75 ethnocultural organizations representing 16 national minorities were registered with the Agency. The leaders of those

organizations took an active part in decision-making processes affecting national minorities. The members of the Coordinating Council met on a regular basis to review the impact of its activities and to identify priorities. The Coordinating Council monitored the implementation of relevant public policies, ran training sessions for leaders of ethnocultural organizations and organized educational events.

27. **Ms. Tlakula** asked whether the proposed amendments to Act No. 52 of 3 April 2014 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman), which, had they been accepted, would have granted the People's Advocate immunity from prosecution, had been superseded by Act No. 1 of 2 February 2023.

28. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that Act No. 1 of 2 February 2023 had amended Act No. 52 of 3 April 2014 on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman) to grant the People's Advocate immunity from prosecution.

29. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, under Government Decision No. 593 of 25 June 2018, the Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations was responsible for the implementation of policies concerning such relations and minority languages, and it played a role in developing intercultural dialogue, strengthening civic identity and promoting linguistic diversity. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research too played an important role in coordinating the implementation of policies concerning national minorities. The implementation of individual action plans was monitored by a special interministerial committee. The Agency for Inter-Ethnic Relations had an annual budget of around 5.6 million Moldovan lei, nearly 10 per cent of which was earmarked for cultural activities for national minorities.

30. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the questionnaire for the upcoming population and housing census would contain open-ended questions to allow respondents to specify their ethnicity and languages.

31. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that a new standard operating procedure for classifying and investigating crimes motivated by prejudice had been drafted and adopted for use by police criminal investigation officers.

32. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** (Country Rapporteur) said that, as acknowledged in the State party's common core document ([HRI/CORE/MDA/2011](#), para. 156), despite the progress made in strengthening the national normative framework for human rights, effective enforcement of human rights remained a challenge. The delegation might inform the Committee what measures had been taken to overcome that challenge and to ensure that human rights were fully protected. He would also welcome an update on any plans to amend Act No. 123 of 25 May 2023 on paid internships in public bodies, in line with the proposal of the Equality Council, to include local public administrative authorities and courts in the list of bodies authorized to host paid internships, so that persons belonging to national minorities could be given more opportunities to interact with the public administration.

33. In the report on her mission to the Republic of Moldova in 2016 ([A/HRC/34/53/Add.2](#)), the Special Rapporteur on minority issues had drawn attention to the underrepresentation of minorities in political institutions, particularly in the central Government, and the marginalization and exclusion of regions with significant minority populations from national decision-making processes. People living in densely populated minority regions, including Gagauzia and Taraclia, had likewise complained about the central Government's failure to hold consultations and to inform them about important processes or reforms affecting them. It would be useful to receive statistical data on the number of representatives from a national minority background who had been elected during the 2019 and 2021 parliamentary elections.

34. The Committee had been informed that, during the November 2023 local elections, voters had been able to use only the Romanian language and that the use by members of ethnic minorities of the Russian language as a lingua franca had effectively been banned. Moreover, he understood that, despite the recommendations of the Equality Council, official government websites were still not available in Russian, which impeded the enjoyment of the right to information of minority groups who were proficient only in that language. The

delegation was invited to describe the measures taken or envisaged to address the lack of availability of minority languages during electoral processes and on government websites.

35. The right to use the Russian language was enshrined in the Constitution. Under the Act on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and the Legal Status of their Organizations, persons could submit complaints to public institutions in Romanian or Russian and were entitled to receive a reply in the same language. However, the public authorities reportedly tended to respond to Russian-language complaints in Romanian, in violation of that right. He wondered what measures the State party intended to take to enforce the right to submit complaints in Russian and whether it planned to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

36. Although there were schools where lessons were delivered in languages other than Romanian, namely in Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Polish and Hebrew, he understood that many children belonging to ethnic minorities still faced barriers in gaining access to education in their mother tongue. Furthermore, the Committee had received reports that resources were not distributed evenly among schools, which led to disparities in the quality of the education delivered. Information on the measures taken to ensure that children belonging to ethnic minority groups enjoyed access to education in their mother tongue and to improve their proficiency in Romanian would be appreciated.

37. According to information in the Committee's possession, the country's legislation did not make sufficient provision for the use of minority languages, including Russian, and many new laws effectively restricted access to public information for minorities. Under the amended Code of Civil Procedure, for instance, courts could refuse to examine complaints submitted in Russian. Complaints of discrimination submitted to the Equality Council on that subject had been upheld and recommendations had been made to the Government. He wished to know whether the State party might consider holding consultations with all minority groups with a view to devising ways and means of protecting the Russian language, in view of its widespread use among minority groups, and other minority languages. It would be helpful to learn whether the State party recognized the primacy of the Constitution and the obligation to strike down any law deemed to be unconstitutional, and whether international treaties prevailed over national legislation. He would also be grateful to receive information on the measures taken or envisaged to ensure access to justice for ethnic minority groups that did not generally speak Romanian, including by providing interpretation services and legal assistance in their languages.

38. Lastly, the delegation might provide details of the measures taken to counter the difficulties faced by members of minorities who were practising Muslims or Jews. Such difficulties included profiling and arbitrary identity checks by law enforcement officers, a refusal of authorization to build a mosque, stereotyping, negative portrayal in the media, hate speech and harassment. Additional information on the national and local mechanisms in place for consulting religious minorities, which were reported to be largely ineffective, would also be appreciated. It would be of interest to the Committee to find out whether there were mosques in the country.

39. **Mr. Guan**, noting that minority groups tended to concentrate in particular areas, said that he would like to know whether civil servants or judges from one ethnic group were ever posted to an area where the majority of the population was from a different minority. If so, was that an occasional occurrence or an institutional arrangement?

40. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know whether the representation of ethnic minorities in the prison population reflected their representation in the general population. He also wondered whether there had been any improvement in prison conditions, and particularly in the conditions of prisoners belonging to minorities. It would be useful to know whether the State party had established a mechanism for indemnification of victims of racial discrimination. Lastly, with regard to human rights education, he enquired whether awareness-raising activities had been carried out in schools and with law-enforcement officials, particularly on the provisions of the Convention.

41. **Ms. Tlakula** said that she would appreciate an explanation of the reasons why political parties and candidates belonging to the Gagauz ethnic group had been excluded from participation in the 2023 elections.

42. **Mr. Gwalawala Sibande** said that he would be interested to hear about court rulings that had referred to the Convention. He would appreciate receiving disaggregated figures showing the countries of origin of refugees. He would also like to hear the delegation's comments on reports alleging discrimination against refugees in the area of housing.

43. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that Gagauz election candidates had not been excluded on ethnic grounds. Certain specific representatives of the party in question had been excluded because the party's status had been found to be illegal.

44. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the concept of prolonged discrimination was defined in the Equality Act. There was no specific plan of action to combat discrimination. However, the State budget included a special funding line for the Equality Council. The Council was also the body that dealt with complaints of violations of the Act.

45. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the census questions covering cultural characteristics included items on respondents' main language of communication and religion. Respondents were also able to declare multiple ethnic and linguistic affiliations. The census questionnaire had been translated into Ukrainian and Bulgarian.

46. A study on minorities' participation in decision-making processes and public life had been conducted in November 2020. There were obvious gaps in the representation of national minorities generally, but there were now 18 parliamentarians from 5 minority groups in the national legislature, namely from the Ukrainian, Gagauz, Russian, Bulgarian and Roma communities, and minorities were also represented in the public administration, in the executive and in judicial structures. Participation in elections was open to all equally, regardless of ethnic identity. Moreover, special legislation provided for the Gagauz and Bulgarian minorities to participate in elections in their own territories. The question of increasing participation for all citizens was addressed by the Strategy for Strengthening Inter-Ethnic Relations, which included measures such as training programmes and paid internships in ministries, government agencies and local administrations.

47. The Criminal Code penalized incitement of national, ethnic, racial or religious division through the mass media and direct or indirect restriction of individuals' rights on the basis of religious affiliation. According to the United States Department of State Report on International Religious Freedom, minority religious groups in the Republic of Moldova had reported an improvement in the attitude of the authorities towards them, and also in the degree of social acceptance, notably in respect of Muslims. The country had several mosques at the disposal of the Muslim population.

48. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research had prepared special curricula for minority groups that covered their history and culture and made provision for mother-tongue teaching. The use of Russian as a language of communication between ethnic minorities was regulated under a law that was now outdated and needed improving, although Russian still enjoyed unofficial status as a language of communication between minorities. The Republic of Moldova had signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, but the question of which languages to protect still needed to be resolved before the Charter could be ratified.

49. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that refugees came from some 30 countries. The asylum procedure was administered by the National Refugee Centre, which had a capacity of 200; currently there were 54 people seeking asylum. There were more than 100,000 Ukrainians in the country, 45,000 of whom had received temporary protection status. Others had received temporary residence permits or work permits.

50. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that, in 2023, out of the 1,218 primary and secondary schools in the country, 244 had provided minority mother tongue teaching in addition to teaching in the national language. Textbooks were published in the languages of national minorities. In the 2024/25 school year a new approach known as multilingual tuition was to be introduced, whereby teaching could be carried out in the mother tongue or in other languages, and the number of hours of mother-tongue tuition would be increased by one hour at all grades, from year 1 to year 12. Specialized mother-tongue curricula and individualized programmes would also be developed.

51. The questions about the Ombudsman would be answered in writing.
52. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that it would be helpful to have a breakdown of the figures for the parliamentarians who were from the ethnic minorities. The Committee would like to find out how many representatives came from each minority. In addition, he would welcome clarification of the term “outdated” that the delegation had used in respect of the law on the use of Russian as a language of communication among minorities.
53. **Ms. Stavrinaki** said that she would appreciate it if the delegation could break the figures for the minority representatives in the Parliament down by gender as well. She would appreciate it if the delegation could comment on reports that the Equality Council was understaffed and underfunded and that very few of its decisions were implemented.
54. **Ms. Tlakula** said that she would appreciate further clarification on the exclusion of the Gagauz candidates in the elections. In what respect could the political party in question be said to have been illegal?
55. **Mr. Yeung Sik Yuen** said that he would like to know whether refugees granted temporary protection status were provided with information on the advantages of that status on entry into the country. He would appreciate an explanation of why so few Roma refugees benefited from that status.
56. **Mr. Diaby** said that he would like to know about the status of minority groups that had no members in the Parliament and to find out whether they received the same treatment as other citizens. Was there a code providing for equal access for all minorities to all rights on an equal footing with Moldovan citizens?
57. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the information about the Russian language was not outdated. Russian was a language of communication between national minorities, and tuition in Russian as a mother tongue was given in those schools that provided mother-tongue teaching.
58. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the Equality Council had received 6.5 million lei from the State budget in 2024. It was difficult to say whether that was sufficient. Other State institutions also suffered from a lack of funding. Refugees who were granted temporary protection status were provided with information on their rights and their entitlements to assistance. The delegation as yet had no figures on the number of Roma persons who had requested temporary protection status.
59. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that the overall representation of women in the Parliament had reached 40 per cent for the first time. Six of the parliamentarians from national minorities were Russian, three were Gagauz, one was Bulgarian, one was Roma and one was Jewish; there were also parliamentarians from other minorities. As to decisions of the Equality Council, any individuals could assert their rights by challenging such decisions in court if they so desired.
60. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that certain members of a political party had been excluded from the elections for having violated the law on financing of elections, as they had received funding from abroad.
61. **A representative of the Republic of Moldova** said that legislative amendments had been made in February 2023 to extend immunity to the People’s Advocate. The People’s Advocate could not be detained, arrested or searched without the consent of the Parliament, except in cases of flagrante delicto. Provision had also been made for the establishment of a special parliamentary committee to oversee the selection procedure for the position of People’s Advocate. Due attention was paid to the principle of proportional representation and to representation of the parliamentary opposition in the committee, and selection for the position was made following a public competition. Lastly, additional guarantees had been established in the procedure for removal of the People’s Advocate, notably a requirement for a hearing by the plenary of the Parliament.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.