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2009 Human Rights Report: Slovenia

BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR

2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

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Slovenia is a parliamentary democracy and constitutional republic with a population of approximately two million. Power is shared between a directly elected president (head of state), a prime minister (head of government), and a bicameral parliament composed of the National Assembly (lower house) and the National Council (upper house). In September 2008 the country held free and fair multiparty parliamentary elections. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control of the security forces.

The government generally respected the human rights of its citizens; however, there were problems in some areas. There were reports of trial delays and cursory procedures for review of asylum applications. Societal violence against women, trafficking in women and girls, discrimination against Roma, violence against gays and lesbians, and discrimination against former Yugoslav residents without legal status were also problems.

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:

a. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

There were no reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings.

b. Disappearance

There were no reports of politically motivated disappearances.

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The constitution and law prohibit such practices, and there were no reports that government officials employed them.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions generally met international standards. The government permitted monitoring visits by independent human rights observers, and such visits occurred during the year.

In August an inmate committed suicide; the coroner's report indicated that both clinical depression and a heroin addiction played a part.

In February 2008 the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture released a report on its 2006 visits to the country's prisons and detention facilities. The report noted that some detainees alleged that they had been subjected to physical mistreatment, threats, excessive psychological pressure, and verbal abuse during interrogations. The report also concluded that juvenile detainees were not properly informed of their rights while in police custody and that overcrowding continued to be a problem in some prison facilities.

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During the year the government began work to increase the capacity of a prison located in Dob. In the first six months of the year, the government hired 60 additional prison guards to improve security among the increased prison population.

d. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, and the government generally observed these prohibitions.

Role of the Police and Security Apparatus

Police are centrally organized under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior. The ministry oversees the drafting of basic guidelines, security policy, and regulations governing the work of the police. It monitors police performance, with an emphasis on protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The police provided effective law enforcement.

During the year the Independent Commission for the Prevention of Corruption referred eight credible reports of police corruption or corruption-related criminal acts to police and the state prosecutor for further investigation. There were allegations of prosecutorial corruption relating to the investigation into bribery on an arms procurement case.

The law provides for the review of alleged police abuse by a three-person government committee that includes two representatives of civil society organizations. The committee does not have authority to conduct independent investigations, and it relies on information provided by the Ministry of Interior or police investigators. The committee usually forwarded its findings to the State Prosecutor's Office.

During the year the police internal investigation division, which began operations in 2007, investigated 55 allegations of misconduct by police, prosecutors, and judges.

Arrest Procedures and Treatment While in Detention

Police generally apprehended persons taken into custody openly with evidential warrants issued by either a prosecutor or judge. Authorities can detain persons for 48 hours before charging them. Authorities must also advise detainees in writing within 48 hours of the reasons for their arrest. Upon arrest, detainees have the right to contact legal counsel of their choice, and authorities generally respected this right in practice. The government provided indigent detainees with free counsel and generally allowed them prompt access to family members. The law also provides safeguards against self-incrimination.

Once authorities charge a suspect, pretrial detention may last for up to four months, depending on the severity of the criminal act. An investigative judge must certify the charges. Once trial procedures have begun, authorities may extend the total period of detention for up to two years. Authorities must release persons detained more than two years while awaiting trial or while their trial is ongoing pending conclusion of their trial. Lengthy pretrial detention was not a widespread problem, and authorities generally released defendants on bail except in the most serious criminal cases.

e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary, and the government generally respected judicial independence in practice. The law provides the right to a trial without undue delay; however court backlogs continued at times to result in lengthy trial delays. As of October the backlog totaled 273,247 cases.

Trial Procedures

The constitution and law provide for the right to a fair trial, and an independent judiciary generally enforced this right. The judicial system was overburdened and lacked administrative support; as a result the judicial process was frequently protracted. In many cases ongoing criminal trials took from two to five years.

During 2008 the European Court on Human Rights issued judgments that found against the country for seven violations of Article 6 (length of proceedings) and eight violations of Article 13 (right to an effective remedy) of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Political Prisoners and Detainees

There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.

Civil Judicial Procedures and Remedies

The constitution and law provide for an independent and impartial judiciary in civil matters, including damages for, or cessation of, human rights. As with criminal matters, court backlogs sometimes resulted in lengthy or delayed trials.

Property Restitution

By the end of 2008, the government had resolved 38,824, or 98 percent, of the 39,635 property restitution claims that individuals filed with authorities. Unresolved cases included those in which the courts had not reached a final decision and those pending appeal. Court backlogs, a lack of trained judicial and administrative personnel, amendments to the Denationalization Act, and inadequate land ownership records slowed claims processing. Some claimants alleged a general lack of transparency, bias, and potential conflicts of interest on the part of adjudicators and that restitution procedures were inconsistent with the law.

The government has not started resolving claims for restitution of Jewish communal property.

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The constitution and law prohibit such actions, and the government generally respected these prohibitions in practice.

Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

a. Freedom of Speech and Press

The constitution and law provide for freedom of speech and of the press, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. Reports of indirect government influence on the media decreased during the year.

The penal code criminalizes the promotion of "national, race, or religious discord or intolerance or the promotion of superiority of one race over others." There were no reports that authorities charged any individuals or publications under this provision during the year.

Individuals could criticize the government publicly or privately without reprisal, and the government did not attempt to impede criticism.

The independent media were active and expressed a variety of views, and international media operated freely. Private investment and advertising supported the major print media; however, the government owned substantial stock in many companies that were shareholders in the major media houses.

The government operated a "media pluralization" fund intended to ensure that media reflected a diversity of viewpoints.

The law provides criminal penalties for defamation that harms a person's honor or name; there were no reports of any prosecutions for defamation during the year.

Internet Freedom

There were no government restrictions on access to the Internet or reports that the government monitored e-mail or Internet chat rooms. Individuals and groups could engage in the peaceful expression of views via the Internet, including by electronic mail. Internet access was widely available. According to International Telecommunication Union statistics for 2008, approximately 49 percent of the country's inhabitants used the Internet.

Academic Freedom and Cultural Events

There were no government restrictions on academic freedom or cultural events.

b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The constitution and law provide for freedom of assembly and association, and the government generally respected these rights in practice.

c. Freedom of Religion

The law provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respected this right in practice.

While there are no governmental restrictions on the Muslim community's freedom of worship, services were commonly held in private homes for lack of a larger venue. In December 2008 the Islamic community's representative and Ljubljana's mayor signed a contract for purchase of land for the country's first mosque. Construction had not begun by year's end.

Societal Abuses and Discrimination

There are approximately 300 Jews in the country. Jewish community representatives reported some prejudice, ignorance, and false stereotypes of Jews propagated within society, largely through public discourse. There were no reports of anti-Semitic violence or overt discrimination.

The government promoted antibias and tolerance education in the primary and secondary schools, and the Holocaust is a mandatory topic in the contemporary history curriculum. On September 6, the Jewish community, supported by local government officials, held the fourth annual European Day of Jewish Culture festival. President Turk was the honorary patron for the celebrations held in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Lendava.

For a more detailed discussion, see the *2009 International Religious Freedom Report* at www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf.

d. Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons

The constitution and law provide for freedom of movement within the country, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights in practice. The government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern.

The law prohibits forced exile, and the government did not employ it.

Protection of Refugees

The country is party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol. Its laws provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees.

Border police can perform an initial screen of asylum seekers and reject applications they deem to be "manifestly unfounded." This procedure could prevent the applications of some asylum seekers from receiving a thorough review. The law permits asylum seekers to change their asylum applications if there are considerable changes in their circumstances; however, as of year's end, this provision had not been implemented.

The law provides asylum seekers with the right to appeal decisions on their applications, but authorities did not inform many asylum seekers of this right. The independent ombudsman for human rights, the UNHCR, and several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) reported that the government put excessive restrictions on refugees' freedom of movement by requiring asylum seekers to sign a statement renouncing their claim to asylum if they left the premises of the asylum center. The government received some complaints about living conditions but few complaints about the asylum process itself.

The parliament drafted the country's asylum law to comply with EU asylum directives. However, Amnesty International (AI) and the UNHCR expressed concern that the law provides for accelerated asylum procedures with few safeguards and that its exclusion clauses and broad detention powers could lower the country's asylum standards.

The country adheres to the EU's Asylum Policy Directive and Treaty of Amsterdam requirements. In practice the government provided some protection against the expulsion or return of refugees to countries where their lives or freedom would be threatened on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

During the year the government did not provide temporary protection to persons who did not qualify as refugees.

Stateless Persons

Citizenship is derived from either birth in the country or from the parents. Naturalization is also possible. There were no reports of problems with immediate birth registration. In January the government began implementing elements of a 2003 Constitutional Court ruling that provides a way to apply for permanent residency, and in November the government adopted changes to the law intended to provide retroactive resident status to the estimated 4,000 to 6,000 citizens of the former Yugoslavia whose Slovenian permanent residency status was erased in 1992.

Section 3 Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

The constitution and law provide citizens the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in practice through periodic, free, and fair elections based on universal suffrage.

Elections and Political Participation

In September 2008 the country held free and fair national parliamentary elections.

On June 7, the country held elections to the European Parliament that were considered free and fair.

Political parties operated without restriction or outside interference.

There were 13 women in the 90-seat National Assembly and one woman in the 40-seat National Council. There were four women in the 18-member cabinet.

There were two members of minority groups in the National Assembly and none in the National Council or in the cabinet. The constitution provides the indigenous Italian and Hungarian minorities the right, as communities, to have at least one representative in the National Assembly. However, the law does not provide such rights to any other minority group.

Twenty distinct Romani communities, each designated indigenous at the local level, are entitled to a seat on their local municipal council. As of year's end, one municipality--Grosuplje--remained in noncompliance with this law. This was its fourth year of noncompliance.

Section 4 Official Corruption and Government Transparency

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, and the government generally implemented these laws effectively; however, officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices.

The public perceived corruption to be a widespread problem. Only the highest-level government officials--approximately 5,000 of the country's 80,000 public servants--were subject to financial disclosure laws. During the year the Independent Commission for the Prevention of Corruption received 1,018 cases of suspected corruption and found 207 out of the 721 cases they reviewed during the year to be credible (some of the 721 will likely have been cases from earlier years). The investigation of several officials and private individuals in Finland and Slovenia for corruption related to the 2007 Ministry of Defense purchase of armored vehicles from a Finnish defense contractor was ongoing at year's end.

The commission played an active role in educating the public and civil servants about corruption; however, it claimed it had neither adequate staff nor funding to fulfill its mandate and assess all cases of suspected corruption that it received during the year. During the year the commission forwarded 213 suspected cases of corruption to police and prosecutors and 26 cases to other state institutions, including cases received in 2008 but not processed until the next year.

The law provides for free public access to all government information, and the government provided access for citizens and noncitizens alike, including foreign media. The government may deny public access only to classified information, personal data protected by privacy laws, and other narrowly defined exceptions.

The Office of the Government Information Commissioner reported that the number of complaints related to the nonresponsiveness of state institutions declined. During the year the office received 300 such complaints and 176 complaints under the Law on Access to Public Information.

Section 5 Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials generally were cooperative and responsive to their views.

The constitution provides for an independent human rights ombudsman to monitor violations of human rights, especially when perpetrated by persons in positions of public authority. The ombudsman prepares an annual report on the human rights situation and provides the government with recommendations. Individuals can file complaints with the ombudsman as a means of seeking nonjudicial aid in the case of a human rights violation. In July the ombudsman presented the 2008 report to the president and prime minister.

Section 6 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The constitution and law prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions effectively.

Women

Rape, including spousal rape, is illegal; however, it was a problem. During the year SOS Helpline, an NGO that provided anonymous emergency counseling and services to domestic violence victims, estimated that one in seven women was raped during her lifetime but that only 5 percent sought assistance or counseling. In particular, victims rarely reported spousal rape to authorities. Police actively investigated reports of rape and prosecuted offenders. The penalty for rape was one to 10 years in prison. There were 46 reported criminal acts of rape in the first half of the year, 64 reported criminal acts of sexual violence, 20 reported criminal acts of sexual abuse of the weak, and 201 criminal acts of sexual attack on a minor under the age of 15.

Although no accurate statistics were available, violence against women, including spousal abuse, occurred and was generally underreported. There were no laws specifically prohibiting domestic violence, however, authorities prosecuted the crime using assault statutes, which provide for penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment in the case of aggravated and grievous bodily harm. SOS Helpline estimated that 25 percent of women had experienced domestic violence. The NGOs SOS Helpline and Kljuc provided support hotlines, and SOS Helpline reported receiving 3,417 calls during the year. The government fully funded eight crisis centers for children and adolescents with a total of 68 beds, with one of those centers specializing in children six years old and under. The government also partially funded 29 shelters, safe houses, and maternity homes that offered 397 total beds. Shelters, safe houses, and crisis centers specifically for women and children provided 258 beds in 19 locations, and maternity homes provided 139 beds in 10 locations. The government worked with NGOs on domestic violence cases, including providing shelters and social work centers. When police received reports of spousal abuse or violence, they generally intervened and prosecuted offenders. The police academy offered training on domestic violence.

Prostitution is decriminalized but can be considered as a misdemeanor if its performance violates the Regulation on Public Order. Antitrafficking authorities and NGOs informally estimated that as many as 80 bars and clubs across the country could be engaged in facilitating or promoting prostitution.

The law prohibits sexual harassment in the entire workforce; however, it remained a widespread problem. During the year, 16 criminal acts of sexual harassment were reported.

Couples and individuals have the right to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing, and timing of their children. They also have the information and means to do so free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. There was free access to contraception and to skilled attendance during childbirth, including essential obstetric and postpartum care. Women were equally diagnosed and treated for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

The law provides for equal rights for women, and there is no official discrimination against women in family law, property law, or the judicial system. The Office of Equal Opportunities protected the legal rights of women. While the average

length of unemployment was the same for men and women, women frequently held lower paying jobs. Women's earnings averaged 93 percent of those of men.

Children

Citizenship is derived from either birth in the country or from the parents. Naturalization is also possible. There were no reports of problems with immediate birth registration.

While education for children is compulsory through grade nine, school attendance and completion rates by Romani children remained low. Poverty, discrimination, lack of parental and familial permission or support, and language problems continued to be the main barriers to the participation of Romani children in education programs. AI reported that the Romani literacy rate was 10 percent. A number of Roma reported that their children attended segregated classes and that authorities selected them in disproportionate numbers to attend classes for students with special needs. The European Social Fund, working through the Ministry of Education, continued a program to fund 26 Romani educators to work with teachers and parents.

During the year the government implemented a bilingual primary school curriculum developed in 2008. The government continued funding efforts to codify the Romani language.

Child abuse was a problem. During the year 201 criminal acts of sexual abuse of a child under the age of 15 were reported to authorities. Trafficking in children, mainly teenage girls transiting the country, was a problem. The law provides special protection for children from exploitation and mistreatment, and the government generally enforced the law in practice. The law penalizes the possession, sale, purchase, or propagation of child pornography.

The Center for Social Work Grosuplje, the Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Affairs, and the retail company Mercator operated the Palcica safe house, which provided shelter for children up to the age of six who were victims of domestic violence or whose parents had died suddenly.

Child marriage occurred within the Romani community; however, it was not a widespread problem.

Trafficking in Persons

The law prohibits all forms of trafficking in persons; however, the country continued to be a transit point and, to a lesser extent, a destination for men, primarily trafficked for labor exploitation and women trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. Trafficking in children, mainly teenage girls transiting the country, was a problem. There were also rare reports that the country was a point of origin for trafficking.

Countries of origin of persons trafficked to or through the country included Ukraine, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Turkey, Albania, and Montenegro. Although primarily a transit point, the country to a lesser extent experienced internal trafficking and was a source for persons trafficked to European countries such as Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Germany. A 2006 Peace Institute study reported that victims were trafficked primarily for sexual exploitation and that traffickers lured victims through advertisements promising high wages, marriage, employment as entertainers and dancers, and employment with no mention of the sex industry. Organized criminal groups, nightclub owners, and local pimps were primarily responsible for trafficking. Teenage girls and young women who lived in impoverished areas with high unemployment were at particular risk of being trafficked. Many of these women were unaware of the trafficking problem and the risk that they might become trafficking victims.

The law provides a maximum penalty for trafficking of 15 years' imprisonment. Authorities can also prosecute persons for rape, pimping, procurement of sexual acts, inducement to prostitution, sexual assault, slavery, and other related offenses.

Confiscation of passports and other documents is also penalized. Article 112 of the Penal Code prohibits all forms of trafficking for purposes of enslavement. During the year there was one investigation under this provision.

The government apprehended, investigated, and prosecuted traffickers; police investigated one instance of human trafficking and 27 instances of forced prostitution. During the year one criminal act of trafficking was reported to authorities. There were two trafficking convictions during the year for crimes committed in previous years. Regional police directorates had departments that investigated trafficking and organized crime. One prosecutor in each regional state prosecutor's office was dedicated to trafficking cases.

During the year the government continued to cooperate actively with NGOs and Interpol in project "Red Routes" by sharing information about traffickers and patterns of illegal migration. The Ministry of Interior's Border Police Division also actively participated in Plan ILAEIRA, a Greek-led international transborder police cooperation project to combat trafficking. The government did not extradite any persons who were accused of trafficking in other countries.

The government's national coordinator for trafficking in persons served as the head of an interagency working group on trafficking consisting of representatives of ministries, NGOs, international organizations, and the media. The coordinator is responsible for the government's long-term national strategy to combat trafficking. In October and November, the working group established a 2010-11 action plan against trafficking that included trafficking legislation, prevention, prosecution, victims' assistance, and antitrafficking projects.

During the year the Ministry of Interior funded public awareness campaigns conducted by the NGOs Karitas and Kljuc that targeted groups most vulnerable to trafficking. The national coordinator conducted radio interviews and appeared on television talk shows to highlight the problem. In October the working group facilitated programs in high schools throughout the country in connection with European Antitrafficking Day.

Karitas and Kljuc also provided shelter and assistance to trafficking victims under a contract with the Ministry of Labor.

The Ministry of Interior, the UNHCR, Kljuc, and the NGO Filantropia jointly administered a project that addressed trafficking and gender-based violence by providing information and assistance to asylum seekers at greatest risk of being trafficked, particularly single women and children separated from their parents. The government also continued the "Vijolica" and "CAP" programs, administered by Kljuc, to provide trafficking awareness classes for elementary and secondary school students.

Foreign victims who assisted law enforcement agencies could apply for a temporary residence permit and remain in the country while their traffickers were being tried and could choose to stay longer if they were employed or in school.

The State Department's *Trafficking in Persons Report* can be found at www.state.gov/q/tip.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of other government services, and the government generally enforced these provisions in practice. The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities. Modification of public and private structures to improve access continued at a slow pace, and many buildings were not accessible in practice. The Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Affairs has primary responsibility for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities

The law provides special rights and protections to indigenous Italian and Hungarian minorities, including the right to use their own national symbols and access to bilingual education. Each minority has the right for each to be represented as a community in parliament. Other minorities do not have comparable special rights and protections.

The government considered ethnic Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Kosovo Albanians, and Roma from Kosovo and Albania to be "new" minorities, and the special constitutional provisions for autochthonous minorities did not apply to them. The new minorities faced varying degrees of governmental and societal discrimination with respect to employment, housing, and education.

Many Roma lived apart from other communities in settlements that lacked such basic utilities as electricity, running water, sanitation, and access to transportation. According to Roma Association officials, 68 percent of Romani settlements were illegal. Organizations monitoring conditions in the Romani community have noted in recent years that Roma exclusion from the housing market was a problem and that the unemployment rate among Roma reached 98 percent.

Societal Abuses, Discrimination, and Acts of Violence Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

The law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation; however, societal discrimination was widespread, and isolated cases of violence against homosexual persons occurred. Recent data on the problem's scope was not available.

On June 27, the ninth annual gay pride parade in Ljubljana took place with the support of local government officials, although there were reports that bystanders shouted homophobic slurs at participants and antigay graffiti and stickers were seen in various locations around the city. Organizers reported satisfactory police presence during the parade. However, one individual was assaulted prior to the parade. Police arrested three individuals, whom they charged with assault and promoting hatred and intolerance.

Other Societal Violence or Discrimination

There were no reports of societal violence or discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS.

Section 7 Worker Rights

a. The Right of Association

The law allows workers to form and join unions of their choice without previous authorization or excessive requirements, and workers exercised this right in practice. All workers, including police and military personnel, are eligible to form and join labor organizations. Approximately 30 percent of the workforce was unionized.

The law provides for the right to strike without government interference, and workers exercised this right in practice. The law prohibits retaliation against strikers, and the government effectively enforced this provision in practice. The law restricts strikes by some public sector employees, primarily the police and members of the military services, and provides for arbitration to ensure due process and protection of these workers' rights.

b. The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively

The law allows unions and workers to conduct their activities without interference, and the government protected this right in practice. The law provides for the right to bargain collectively, and it was freely practiced; however, the law requires that 10 percent of the workers in an industry sector be union members before collective bargaining can be applied to the sector as a whole. Both general collective bargaining agreements and collective bargaining agreements that focused on a specific business segment covered all workers.

There were no reports of antiunion discrimination.

There are no special laws or exemptions from regular labor laws in the country's eight Export Economic Zones and the one Free Customs Zone at the port of Koper.

c. Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor; however, there were reports that such practices occurred. Women were trafficked for forced prostitution.

d. Prohibition of Child Labor and Minimum Age for Employment

There are laws to protect children from exploitation in the workplace; the government effectively enforced these laws.

The minimum age for employment is 15; however, younger rural children often worked during the harvest season and performed other farm chores. The law limits working hours and sets occupational health and safety standards for children; the government effectively enforced these provisions in practice. Urban employers generally respected the age limits.

The Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Affairs is responsible for monitoring labor practices and has inspection authority; police are responsible for investigating violations of the law. Enforcement practices were generally effective.

e. Acceptable Conditions of Work

The national monthly minimum wage of approximately 450 euros (\$652) provided a decent standard of living for a worker and family. The Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Affairs sets the minimum wage, which is adjusted each August based on consumer price estimates. The government established new public sector minimum wages in August 2008.

The law limits the workweek to 40 hours and provides for minimum annual leave of 20 days and a mandatory rest period of at least one day per week. Collective agreements regulated premium pay for overtime and were not standardized. The law limits maximum overtime to eight hours per week, 20 hours per month, and 170 hours per year. The Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Affairs is responsible for monitoring labor practices and has inspection authority; police are responsible for investigating violations of the law. Authorities enforced the laws effectively, except in some cases involving migrant workers.

According to a complaint filed by the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (AFTUS) to the International Labor Organization (ILO) Committee of Experts, migrant workers were often orally notified to perform forced and excessive overtime in violation of labor law provisions limiting overtime and specifying methods to formally request it. The AFTUS also noted that foreign nationals in the country on employment permits were made more vulnerable to exploitation in terms of overtime, wages, rest periods, and annual leave by virtue of being tied to the employer who provided the permit.

According to the ILO's 2009 Report, inspectors also found numerous violations of the Employment and Work of Aliens Act with respect to migrant workers, especially in the construction industry, which employed approximately 50 percent of such workers. These workers came primarily from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro. Violations included the practice of employers' illegally trading foreign workers who were in the country on the basis of employment permits. Additionally, the ILO and AFTUS raised concerns that some migrant workers, especially seasonal laborers, lived in substandard housing conditions segregated from the national population and lacking minimum standards, in violation of the 2007 Principle of Equal Treatment Act.

Special commissions under the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor, Family, and Social Affairs set standards for occupational health and safety for all workers. The ministry's Inspector General Department conducted over 17,000

inspections in 2008, with almost 9,000 enforcement actions, including fines, prosecutions, and resolution of conditions resulting from those inspections. Workers had the legal right to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without jeopardy to their continued employment, and authorities effectively enforced this right.