

## THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The Republic of Macedonia ratified **Protocol 12** to the European Convention on Human Rights on 13 July 2004.

The Republic of Macedonia ratified **the European Social Charter** on 31 March 2005 and the **revised European Social Charter**, which entered into force on 1 March 2012, on 6 January 2012 (not bound by Article 23).

The Republic of Macedonia ratified the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: **Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine** on 3 September 2011.

The Republic of Macedonia also ratified **the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol** on 29 December 2011.

**The Law on Prevention of and Protection against Discrimination** was adopted in 2010. The Law prevents and protects against discrimination in exercising the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the law and the ratified international treaties. The Law prohibits any direct or indirect discrimination, inciting and stirring up discrimination and assisting in discriminatory treatment on the grounds of sex, race, colour of skin, gender, affiliation to a marginalized group, ethnic affiliation, language, nationality, social background, religion or religious belief, education, political affiliation, personal or social status, mental or physical disability, age, family or marital status, property status, health condition or any other grounds as envisaged by law or a ratified international treaty. The Law also defines the procedure for prevention of and protection against discrimination before the

**Commission for Protection against Discrimination.** The Commission is competent to process complaints; to give opinions and recommendations on specific cases of discrimination; to provide the person who has lodged the complaint with information about their rights and the opportunities to institute court or other proceedings for protection; to launch initiatives for starting procedures for violations of this Law before the relevant authorities; to submit an annual report to the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia; to inform the public about cases of discrimination and undertake activities for promotion of and education about equality, human rights and non-discrimination; to follow the implementation of the Law; to initiate the amending of the legislation for purposes of implementing and advancing the protection against discrimination; to offer recommendations to state bodies for taking measures for ensuring equality; to give opinions on draft laws related to protection against discrimination etc. The Law on Protection against Discrimination stipulates that the Commission produces an opinion on the alleged discrimination within 90 days from the day of filing the complaint and informs thereof the person who has filed the complaint and the person against whom the complaint has been brought. Upon finding discrimination, the Commission recommends, by a written opinion, a manner of remedying the violations against the right to non-discrimination. The person to whom the recommendation is made is obliged to act thereon, remedy the violation of the right within 30 days from the day of receiving the recommendation and inform the Commission thereof. Under Article 29 of the Law, if the person to whom the recommendation is made does not follow the recommendation, i.e. does not remedy the violation of the right, the Commission may launch an initiative for starting a procedure before a competent body for establishing their responsibility.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia has also adopted a **National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination on the Grounds of Ethnic Affiliation, Age, Mental or Physical Disability and Gender 2012–2015**. The National Equality and Non-Discrimination Strategy is a national document

which is primarily designed to improve the status of the most vulnerable categories of citizens in society and ensure continuous development in enjoying equality and non-discrimination.

At the same time, an **Operational Action Plan** has also been adopted. It is a document of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia that defines the goals, measures, activities, implementing bodies and indicators for the implementation of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination on the Grounds of Gender, Age, Ethnic Affiliation and Mental or Physical Disability. The Action Plan contains measures and activities for the period 2012–2013, as well as projections for measures and activities for the period 2014–2015. The basic goal of this document is to ensure operative and continuous development in exercising the right to equality and creating equal opportunities related to the issue of discrimination on the various grounds specified by the strategy: ethnic affiliation, age, mental or physical disability and gender.

On 13 July 2010, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the **National Strategy for Senior Citizens 2010–2020**, which is designed to create a comprehensive and coordinated policy on protection of senior citizens aimed at improving quality of their lives and their social and economic status, strengthening social cohesion, promoting and maintaining their independence, preventing their marginalization and developing and strengthening the system of social and health protection. Its goals will be attained by carrying out the Operative Plan for implementation of the measures envisaged in the text of the Strategy by all entities involved in its implementation. At the same time, a National Coordination Body has been formed to follow and assess the implementation of the Strategy. It is composed of representatives of all relevant institutions.

The Republic of Macedonia has also adopted a **Strategy for Demographic Development of the Republic of Macedonia 2008–2015**, which is a basic document that identifies the priority areas and tasks in formulating the population policy. These priorities and tasks are aimed at developing a long-term trend towards stabilization of population growth, increasing birth rate and reducing mortality rate and the accelerated aging of the population by enabling a high quality of the human capital, better quality of life of every Macedonian citizen and family and creating conditions for progress towards a socially cohesive community of citizens.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has called upon all Senior Citizens' Homes, which have previously been registered as companies, to license themselves as institutions for social protection of the elderly, this being the only legal ground for their establishment. Thus, in addition to the four facilities for institutional accommodation of the elderly, the national capacities have now been increased by another 13 private licensed institutions for social protection of the elderly. Most of the rest of the senior citizens' homes are now pursuing the licensing procedure.

In recent years, there have been intensive activities for developing non-institutional forms of care and assistance to the **elderly** under the legally prescribed forms: day care and provisional accommodation for the elderly, home care and provision of financial assistance to persons older than 65 years of age who are unfit for work, have no livelihood or property or property right that can provide them with income and cannot be provided with assistance under the Law on the Family but are entitled to permanent pecuniary assistance in accordance with the Law on Social Protection. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy provides support to all NGOs and municipalities that are prepared to develop this type of non-institutional protection of the elderly.

Pensions will be increased by 5 % in 2013. This pension increase is part of the 2013 Budget calculations. In addition to the 5% pension increase, there will be indexation which, depending on the costs of living and salary trends, will amount to about 2 % for the next year. Thus, the cumulative pension increase will be about 7 %.

The project for spa recreation and treatment of pensioners, which covered over 15,000 pensioners, has been carried out in the past several years. As a result of the great satisfaction of the pensioners with the services under this project, the project will continue in the next four years and is planned to cover about 40,000 pensioners.

In addition, in cooperation with the Public Transportation Company, the City of Skopje provides free transport to pensioners (women over the age of 62 and men over the age of 64) on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.