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Meeting: 1514th meeting (December 2024) (DH)

Item reference: Addendum to an Action Plan (15/10/2024)

Communication from Bulgaria concerning the case of Paketova and Others v. Bulgaria (Application No. 17808/19) and the group of cases YORDANOVA AND OTHERS v. Bulgaria (Application No. 25446/06)

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Réunion : 1514^e réunion (décembre 2024) (DH)

Référence du point : Addendum au plan d'action (15/10/2024)

Communication de la Bulgarie concernant l'affaire Paketova et autres c. Bulgarie (requête n° 17808/19) et le groupe d'affaires YORDANOVA ET AUTRES c. Bulgarie (requête n° 25446/06) (**anglais uniquement**)

ADDENDUM TO THE ACTION PLAN***(Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria, Paketova and Others v. Bulgaria)******October 2024***

The following information is provided, based on a recent meeting between the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, and a new amendment in the Civil Registration Act.

1. Meeting between the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

On 30 September 2024 a meeting took place between the Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) Ms Yura Yordanova-Vitanova, other representatives of the Ministry, the Directorate of National Construction Control, the Ministry of Justice and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria and representatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Department for the Execution of Judgements of the ECHR with the Council of Europe. This was a second of a series of meetings of the Congress, the previous being with the Ministry of Justice in June 2024. The Deputy Minister recalled that an interinstitutional working group prepared amendments in the Spatial Development Act, the State Property Act and the Municipal Property Act and assured those amendments will be submitted for discussion and adoption in Parliament once it starts working after the upcoming pre-term elections. The Deputy Minister further stated that, despite the delayed adoption of the amendments, the Yordanova group of judgements are *de facto* executed in that authorities perform preliminary assessment of the situation of persons and refrain from demolition of illegal buildings if they are their sole place of living. In answer to a specific question by the representatives of the Council of Europe, the MRDPW representatives informed that during the previous programme period of the Regional Development Operative Programme 2014-2020, 46.5 mil BG Leva in grants were allocated for the construction of social housing in 20 municipalities. Funds have been allocated in the new programme period as well, with 40 bigger municipalities being eligible to apply, but municipalities do not seem to take interest in such projects. In spite of that, the Ministry is preparing a new grant procedure, which is expected to be opened in 2025. At the end of the meeting, the new amendments in the Civil Registration Act were commended (see below) and their future practical implementation was inquired into. The MRDPW is awaiting the action plan, planned to be prepared by the experts of the Congress.

2. Amendments in the Civil Registration Act

Long-awaited amendments in the Civil Registration Act were promulgated on 8 October 2024. They concern the so-called *ex officio* address, which was legally defined as a duly designated address of a municipal property for doing *ex officio* permanent and current address registrations. *Ex officio* registrations will be done of persons, who cannot supply property/use of property documentation, in the municipality of their last registration, if there is such. *Ex officio* registrations will also cover persons whose current address is abroad, or persons of refugee status, who cannot designate a permanent address in Bulgaria, and do not have property

documents. Such registrations will also be done if an address from the National Address Database is formally closed. Persons who, upon the entry into force of the amendments, do not have a valid identity document due to lack of a permanent address, can request an *ex officio* one identifying themselves with an expired identity document. Municipal authorities are obligated to designate an *ex officio* address within one month of the amendments' entry into force. Civil registration authorities, within 2 months of the amendments' entry into force, shall generate a list of citizens whose permanent address is deleted or closed and *ex officio* registrations will be done for them.

The amendments are expected to greatly facilitate the address registration of the above persons, many of whom belong to vulnerable groups and/or are/can come within the scope of the *Yordanova* group findings and their subsequent application for social housing and other support services.

Based on the above and information previously supplied, the Government would therefore respectfully request the transfer of the *Yordanova* group of judgements from enhanced to standard procedure of supervision. They will keep the Committee of Ministers duly informed of any further developments.