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UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
STATE UNDER REVIEW: THE NETHERLANDS
Intervention by Turkey

This year we are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands. We consider the presence of an increasingly integrated Dutch-Turkish community in the Netherlands as a valuable asset for furthering our relations.

However, some measures which have been implemented by the Dutch government aimed at further restricting the acquired rights of migrants living in the Netherlands are a matter of concern.

In the 8th periodical report of 12 December 2011 on the application of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, it was stated that "the current practice in the Netherlands conditioning the family reunion for nationals of other States Parties upon additional requirements such as age limit of 21 years for spouses before the family reunion is allowed is not in conformity with the Convention".

We recommend the Dutch authorities to undertake necessary steps in order to harmonize the Dutch law and practice with the said Convention.

We welcome the abolishment of the precondition of passing the Dutch language and culture test enforced on Turkish migrants before their admittance to the Netherlands as part of the integration policy of the Dutch government. This was indeed in violation of the rights acquired by Turkish citizens through the Turkey-EU Association Agreement and other international agreements.

On the other hand, Turkish mother tongue courses offered during primary education in the Netherlands were discontinued in 2004.

In the 8th periodical report on the application of the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers, it was also stated that "cutting the financial means for teaching the migrant worker's mother tongue is not in line with the Convention and might affect their relations with their countries of origin".

We attribute great importance to the Turkish mother tongue education of the Turkish migrants' children. We recommend the Dutch government to consider reinstituting the Turkish mother tongue lessons as part of the primary and secondary school curricula.

Furthermore, the Turkish singer and virtuoso Mr. Arif Sağ, who was supposed to perform at a concert given in the context of the 400th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands, was treated unforgivably and interrogated unfairly for hours to be admitted into the country. In the end, although he was given admittance, Mr. Sağ left the Netherlands without entering the country. We recommend the Netherlands to follow up on the CESCR recommendation to combat racism and xenophobia; and to enforce effectively the legal prohibitions against discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.