

*Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic
to the Council of Europe*

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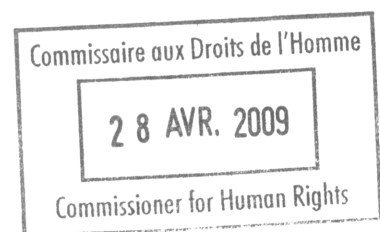
Dear Commissioner, *Dear Thomas,*

Referring to the information on unlawful police conduct towards six Roma minors on 21 March 2009 presented through various media, I would like to provide you with some details of this unfortunate case as well as measures adopted and envisaged in order to prevent similar cases in the future.

The case concerns six Roma youths who were detained on suspicion for robbery on 21 March 2009 (they stole an elderly woman's purse with EUR 6 and caused her injuries with expected recovery time of 4-6 weeks). After these boys had been detained and brought to the Košice police station (eastern Slovakia), the police officers forced six Roma boys to strip naked and to slap each other at the closed staircase of the police station. Otherwise, if the boys had not obeyed police officers' orders, they would have been physically assaulted by them.

Following the video footage showing unlawful conduct of the policemen towards six Roma boys in a Košice police station released by private Slovak TV channels on 7 April 2009, the Inspection Service of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic has launched its investigation on this very day. Moreover, the President of the Slovak Police Force held the press conference on 7 April 2009, in order to provide information about the case, measures adopted and envisaged in order to prevent abuse of power by policemen in the future.

**Mr Thomas Hammarberg
Commissioner for Human Rights
Council of Europe
Strasbourg**



On 8 April 2009, in accordance with the personal order of the Head of the Košice regional headquarters, nine policemen were temporarily suspended from their service since a reasonable suspicion has arisen that these police officers failed to comply with their duty in a particularly serious manner as it is stipulated in the Act No. 73/1998 Coll. on civil service of policemen as amended. In addition, proposal for dismissal of four senior officials (superior to nine policemen) were submitted to the respective authority on 8 April 2009. Subsequently, they were dismissed with effect from 14 April 2009.

On 14 April 2009, following the personal order of the Minister of Interior of the Slovak Republic, six policemen (from those temporarily suspended) were fired; a seventh officer is on sick leave so the process of her dismissal could not have been completed yet.

With regard to the criminal investigation of the police conduct, seven policemen have been charged with committing misconduct in public office and with crime of intimidation pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Slovak Criminal Code. Criminal investigation of policemen is currently under way.

In addition, several measures are envisaged to be applied by national authorities with a view to prevent such incidents in the future, in particular:

- 1. Generalisation of the unlawful conduct by the police officers based on the analysis of police conduct and results of investigation of police officers will be prepared and distributed within the police forces;*
- 2. Psychological testing of police applicants will be reviewed in order to obtain more in-depth research of aggressive behaviour and sensibility;*
- 3. Psychological evaluation of police officers will be carried out on a regular basis (every fifth year);*
- 4. Psychological training of police officers will be enhanced with special emphasize on minorities and minority communities;*
- 5. Police academy curricula will be updated with a view to improve and extend human rights education, teaching about rule of law, minorities, minority communities and ethics in the work of police;*
- 6. Internal regulations related to police operation will be examined and amended if necessary;*
- 7. Within the framework of the control competence carried out by senior police officials, particular attention will be paid to the police behaviour during police interventions. Shortcomings will be addressed and strict measures will be adopted in this regard.*

Finally, let me point out that Slovak highest-level officials including Mr Dušan Čaplovič, Deputy Prime Minister whose portfolio is composed of, inter alia, human rights and minorities, have condemned this unlawful and unacceptable incident carried out by several individual members of the police force having used inhuman and degrading methods of investigation. I do assure you that the case will be properly investigated and its perpetrators duly sanctioned according to the criminal law.

Should you have more inquiries concerning this case, the Slovak Permanent Representation remains at your disposal. Please accept, Commissioner, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emil Kuchár', with a stylized flourish at the end.

*Emil Kuchár
Ambassador
Permanent Representative*