

# Protection of Human Rights in the UN from a Central European and Certain Eastern European States' Perspective

Bartłomiej OREŻIAK

## ABSTRACT

This chapter will conduct a comparative analysis of the protection of human rights within the framework of the United Nations (UN) for 16 countries. The primary aim of the study is to identify similarities and differences in the approaches of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine to the UN human rights protection system, including the implementation of international obligations arising from it. This overarching goal determines the subsidiary objectives of the study. First, the study will explore the historical development of human rights in the analysed countries. Second, it will examine the relationship or stance of the selected countries toward the UN from a human rights perspective. Third, it will analyse the scope of international obligations undertaken by the selected countries, identifying which UN human rights conventions each country is a State Party to. Fourth, the study will focus on the process and timeline of ratification, accession, or succession to the key UN human rights conventions. Fifth, it will assess the impact of these international legal acts on the domestic legal systems of the analysed countries. Sixth and finally, the study will review cases involving the analysed countries brought before UN treaty bodies concerning these key UN human rights conventions. The chapter will conclude with a consolidated presentation of all 16 countries in a single summary, finalising the study's primary objective.

## KEYWORDS

Human Rights, United Nations, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Comparative Law

## 1. Introduction

This chapter will provide a comparative analysis of human rights protection within the framework of the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as the UN) from the perspective of Central European and selected Eastern European countries. Sixteen countries were chosen for the analysis: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria,

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Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. This constitutes a significant dataset for a comparative study, where it is scientifically and cognitively compelling to determine how human rights protections established under the UN system are reflected in these countries. The rationale for this comparative analysis is primarily based on the following factors: first, the selected countries are all UN member states; second, they are European countries that often share a common or similar historical background; third, many of the challenges stemming from international regulations are globally shared by all states; and fourth, the approaches of these countries to fulfilling their international obligations under specific UN treaties may vary significantly. It is therefore reasonable to determine, through comparison, how the countries selected for this analysis address the standards and requirements of human rights protection within the framework of their membership in the UN.

Nevertheless, the outlined objective of the study necessitates identifying subsidiary goals, the achievement of which will gradually bring the attainment of the main objective closer. In a sense, it involves structuring a comparative analysis that should effectively lead to achieving the primary goal of the study. The main objective of the study is to demonstrate the similarities and differences in the approaches of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine to the UN human rights protection system, including the implementation of the resulting international obligations. This approach pertains to the relationship between subjects of international law, specifically the relationship between the State or States and the United Nations. The primary objective of the study determines the need to define subsidiary goals that support its achievement, thereby shaping the structure of the comparative analysis, which will focus on several key issues. These same issues will apply to each analysed country. The first issue will involve examining the historical development of human rights in the analysed states. The second issue will address the relationship or stance between the analysed states and the United Nations from the perspective of human rights. The third issue will concern the scope of international obligations of the analysed states, identifying the UN human rights conventions to which each state is a party. The fourth issue will involve the process and timeline of ratification, accession, or succession regarding the following UN conventions: The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (hereinafter: CSR);<sup>1</sup> The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (hereinafter: ICCPR);<sup>2</sup> The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter: ICESCR);<sup>3</sup> The 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter: ICERD);<sup>4</sup> The 1979

1 United Nations, 1954, p. 137.

2 United Nations, 1983b, p. 171.

3 United Nations, 1983a, p. 3.

4 United Nations, 1971, p. 195.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter: CEDAW);<sup>5</sup> The 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereinafter: CAT);<sup>6</sup> The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter: CRC);<sup>7</sup> The 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (hereinafter: ICMW);<sup>8</sup> The 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter: CRPD).<sup>9</sup> The fifth issue will examine the influence of these international legal acts on the domestic laws of the analysed states. The sixth and final issue will address cases involving the analysed states brought before UN treaty bodies concerning the aforementioned international legal acts. It seems that the subsidiary goals defined in this manner, which simultaneously form the structure of the comparative analysis, will be sufficient to determine the similarities and differences in the approaches of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine to the UN human rights protection system, including the implementation of the resulting international obligations.

When conducting comparative analyses, an appropriate research approach is of critical importance, particularly with attention to the substantive and methodological premises of legal comparative studies. Regarding the substantive premises, the first is the diversity of the research subject. The second is the openness to elements external to national laws and legal doctrines. The third is objectivity and academic rigor. As for the methodological premises, the first is the identification of the subject of comparison (standardisation). The second is the selection of comparative criteria. The third is the description of the comparison (similarities and differences). The fourth is the evaluation of the results of the comparison. This study will employ theoretical comparative analysis with elements of legal comparative studies. Depending on the need, both substantive and formal comparative methods will be applied, which can be framed as employing a global comparative analysis. Deductive reasoning will take precedence in this chapter, although the use of inductive reasoning is not excluded. In addition to the comparative method, typical methods used in legal scholarship, such as the linguistic-logical method and the theoretical-dogmatic method, will also be employed.

Additionally, for the purposes of such a broadly outlined comparative analysis, the selection of appropriate sources is of critical importance. These sources should enable the proper and thorough comparison described above, thereby facilitating the achievement of the primary objective of the chapter. This study will be based, though not exclusively, on information contained in academic articles that analyse issues identical to the subject matter of this research, but framed within the perspective of

5 United Nations, 1979, p. 13.

6 United Nations, 1984, p. 85.

7 United Nations, 1999, p. 3.

8 United Nations, 2004b, p. 3.

9 United Nations, 2008a, p. 3.

national law in the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The Historical Development of Human Rights

The purpose of employing the historical method is to demonstrate the path taken by the selected countries from the perspective of human rights protection. It is relatively uncontroversial to assert that this path has undoubtedly differed in its specific characteristics. This is after all, a matter of state entities that have independently worked towards their current and uniquely national levels of human rights protection. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify certain historical similarities that may help to explain the present perspective on human rights protections within independent structures. This primarily refers to the shared history of some of the countries selected for comparative analysis.

The historical development of human rights in Central and Eastern Europe reflects a diverse array of trajectories shaped by geopolitical changes, cultural influences, and specific institutional frameworks. The countries included in the analysis – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine – can be categorised into four groups, each characterised by its unique context in the evolution of human rights. The first group consists of the former Yugoslav states, the second includes the post-communist countries of Central Europe, the third encompasses the post-Soviet states, and the fourth represents the unique case of Albania.

The first group – the former Yugoslav states – includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. These countries shared the common experience of operating within the framework of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), where the legal system was predominantly subordinated to communist ideology.<sup>11</sup> Although the legal system of the SFRY formally provided for numerous social, economic, and political rights, it is undeniable that their practical significance was fundamentally constrained by the overarching ideology of the communist party's interests, as well as by state and systemic control over both public and private life.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, it is worth emphasizing that the SFRY differed from typically Soviet states due to its relative autonomy from the Union of

10 Milinković, 2025, pp. 333–360; Marcheua, 2025, pp. 263–300; Konjević, 2025, pp. 191–228; Matiaško, 2025, pp. 301–332; Bakhtadze, 2025, pp. 41–89; Kovács, 2025, pp. 229–262; Cazacu, 2025, pp. 9–48; Etinski, 2025, pp. 91–126; Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, 2025, pp. 145–190; Czepek, 2025, pp. 49–80; Nagy, 2025, pp. 361–395; Tubić, 2025, pp. 367–396; Hassanová, 2025, pp. 81–105; Ivaniuk, 2025, pp. 107–144.

11 Pejić, 1995, pp. 1–18.

12 Jambrek, 2020, pp. 177–201.

Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This distinction influenced the development of a somewhat more open model of socialism, though it did not significantly impact the actual implementation of human rights. The dissolution of the SFRY, which began in 1991, triggered a series of armed conflicts in the region, effectively suspending the application of an already limited system of human rights protection. Furthermore, this period was generally not marked by an adherence to the relevant norms of international humanitarian law.<sup>13</sup> Over time, the newly formed states resulting from the dissolution of the SFRY faced the consequences of widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. In this context, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (hereinafter referred to as the ICTY) played a significant role, striving to hold perpetrators accountable for these violations.<sup>14</sup> Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia are striving to align with international legal standards, including those related to human rights. This pertains not only to the UN system but also to the Council of Europe (hereinafter referred to as the CoE) and the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the EU). Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a member of the UN since 1992, a member state of the CoE since 2002, and while not an EU member state, it holds candidate status for EU accession. Croatia has been a member of the UN since 1992, a CoE member state since 1996, and an EU member state since 2013.<sup>15</sup> Montenegro has been a member of the UN since 2006, a member state of the CoE since 2007, and is not an EU member state. North Macedonia has been a member of the UN since 1993, a member state of the CoE since 1995, and is not an EU member state but holds candidate status for the EU. Serbia has been a member of the UN since 2000, a member state of the CoE since 2003, and is not an EU member state but holds candidate status for the EU. Slovenia has been a member of the UN since 1992, a member state of the CoE

13 Orakhelashvili, 2008, pp. 161–182.

14 Aldrich, 1996, pp. 64–69.

15 Treaty between the Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Estonia, Ireland, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the French Republic, the Italian Republic, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Poland, the Portuguese Republic, Romania, the Republic of Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Member States of the European Union), and the Republic of Croatia concerning the accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, 2012. See more: *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2012/55, pp. 10–110 [Online]. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ%3AL%3A2012%3A112%3ATOC> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

since 1993, and an EU member state since 2004.<sup>16</sup> Although the states of the former SFRY have faced a challenging history in terms of the development of human rights protection, they are currently (at times successfully) striving to align their practices and legal systems with international standards, including not only those of the UN system but also those of the CoE and the EU. It is worth emphasising however, that these states are characterised by their unique specifics today, and grouping them together is justified by their shared history, including the history of the development of their human rights protection systems.

The post-communist countries of Central Europe, which include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary, were under the USSR's strong influence for many years.<sup>17</sup> This shaped their political and legal systems, including their human rights protection systems, which were significantly restricted by such influences. The level of Soviet oversight and control varied among these countries and changed over time, with these states gradually gaining broader autonomy. Nonetheless, during this period, human rights – though prominently enshrined in key legal acts, particularly social and civil rights – were treated as mere formal declarations. In practice, they were subordinated to national interests, socialism, and the preservation of the communist party's authority.<sup>18</sup> Widespread political repression, restrictions on civil and political freedoms, suppression of free speech, censorship, and the lack of an independent judiciary were characteristic features of the post-communist countries of Central Europe. As noted, the influence of the USSR on these states varied over time, with 1989 marking a pivotal turning point. In 1989, a systemic transformation occurred in this group of countries, which should be regarded as a key moment in the development of human rights in the region. This transformation gradually began opening their systems to international human rights protection standards, including not only those of the UN but also the CoE and the EU. Democratic and modern constitutions or fundamental laws were introduced, providing not only a catalogue of human rights' safeguards but also the mechanisms for their practical enforcement. After 1989, these countries initiated processes to address the legacy of the previous era and began implementing reforms, such as ensuring

16 Treaty between the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the French Republic, Ireland, the Italian Republic, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Austria, the Portuguese Republic, the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Member States of the European Union) and the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic concerning the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia, and the Slovak Republic to the European Union, 2003. See more: *Official Journal of the European Union*, 2003/46, pp. 17–930 [Online]. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ%3AL%3A2003%3A236%3ATOC> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

17 Hassner, 1986, pp. 17–35.

18 Thomas, 2005, pp. 110–141.

judicial independence, protecting freedom of speech, and safeguarding minority rights.<sup>19</sup> As might be expected, there were certain differences among these countries in this regard, with systemic changes occurring relatively efficiently and peacefully in some cases, while in others, these processes were tumultuous and problematic. The latter primarily applies to Romania and Bulgaria, which had more authoritarian regimes during the socialist era.<sup>20</sup> Currently, all countries classified as post-communist states of Central Europe are actively striving to participate in the international cooperation on human rights protection, often making significant and independent contributions.<sup>21</sup> Bulgaria has been a member of the UN since 1955, a member state of the RE since 1992, and a member state of the EU since 2007.<sup>22</sup> The Czech Republic has been a member of the UN since 1993, a member state of the RE since 1993, and a member state of the EU since 2004. Poland has been a member of the UN since 1945, a member state of the RE since 1991, and a member state of the EU since 2004. Romania has been a member of the UN since 1955, a member state of the RE since 1993, and a member state of the EU since 2007. Slovakia has been a member of the UN since 1993, a member state of the RE since 1993, and a member state of the EU since 2004. Hungary has been a member of the UN since 1955, a member state of the RE since 1990, and a member state of the EU since 2004.

Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine are classified as post-Soviet states, since they emerged following the collapse of the USSR, which began in 1988 in Estonia and concluded with the adoption of the declaration of the self-dissolution of the USSR in 1991.<sup>23</sup> The history of these states is marked by a challenging path of democratic transformation. During their time making up a part of the USSR, they experienced a loss of sovereignty and the inability to make autonomous decisions. Human rights during this period were largely formal provisions enshrined in legal acts, with little or no impact on practical realities or daily life in these regions.<sup>24</sup> Even when such legal norms were formally invoked, their implementation was drastically subordinated to state interests, the ideology of socialism, and the preservation of communist

19 Malfliet, 2002, pp. 163–186.

20 Verdery, 1993, pp. 179–203; Georgescu, 1987, pp. 69–93; Brunnbauer and Taylor, 2004, pp. 283–312; Creed, 1995, pp. 843–868.

21 Molloy, 2019, pp. 783–784.

22 Treaty between the Kingdom of Belgium, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Estonia, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the French Republic, Ireland, the Italian Republic, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Poland, the Portuguese Republic, the Republic of Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Member States of the European Union) and the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania, concerning the accession of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union, 2005. See more: *Official Journal of the European Union*, 157/11, pp. 11–395 [Online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=celex:12005S/TXT> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

23 Dallin, 1992, pp. 279–302.

24 Osakwe, 1981, p. 249.

power, while any political opposition was harshly suppressed.<sup>25</sup> The democratisation process in the post-Soviet states was further hindered by numerous ethnic conflicts and the weakness of their relatively young public institutions. Prominent examples of this include the armed conflicts between Russia and Georgia in 2008,<sup>26</sup> and between Russia and Ukraine in 2014<sup>27</sup> and 2022.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless from the moment they achieved sovereign status, states such as Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine have moved toward participation in the international human rights protection system. This path has often been challenging and not always straightforward. It is a fact however, that Georgia has been a member of the UN since 1992, a member state of the RE since 1999, and is not an EU member state but holds candidate status for the EU. Moldova has been a member of the UN since 1992, a member state of the RE since 1995, and is not an EU member state but also holds candidate status. Ukraine has been a member of the UN since 1945, a member state of the RE since 1995, and is not an EU member state but holds candidate status. In the case of Ukraine, it is important to note that the ongoing armed conflict with Russia significantly and negatively impacts the implementation of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The fourth and final group consists of the unique case of Albania, which was one of the most isolated countries in Europe during the communist era. This isolation resulted from the extreme isolationist policies pursued by Enver Hoxha. Hoxha's rule of over 40 years was marked by isolation, aggressive state atheism, and a strict adherence to Stalinism.<sup>29</sup> The Albanian regime was characterised by the brutal suppression of political opposition, widespread surveillance, and an effective severance from international institutions. Human rights existed primarily in a formal sense, accompanied by the establishment of labour camps and the widespread repression of citizens.<sup>30</sup> As a result, Albania's actual systemic transformation began later than in other analysed countries. In 1991, during the first multiparty elections in socialist Albania, the Communist Party secured a majority in the interim government. The transformation process generally lasted until 1998, culminating in the adoption of a new constitution. This democratisation process and Albania's opening up to international institutions have improved the country's human rights protection framework, though many challenges remain. In this context, it is worth noting that Albania has been a member of the UN since 1955, a member state of the CoE since 1995, and, while not an EU member state, holds candidate status for EU accession.

A comparative analysis of the development of human rights in Central and Eastern Europe highlights the complexity of transformational processes and the diversity of historical experiences. The former Yugoslav states have grappled with the legacy of ethnic conflicts and war crimes, necessitating intensive reconciliation efforts and

25 Ersene, 2023, pp. 41–54.

26 Deibert, Rohozinsk and Crete-Nishihata, 2012, pp. 3–24.

27 Goldthau and Boersma, 2014, pp. 13–15.

28 Mbah and Wasum, 2022, pp. 144–153.

29 Reichman, 1988, pp. 57–89.

30 Dushnyck, 1975, pp. 377–443.

institutional reforms. Central European countries have focused on democratisation and EU integration, although they currently face challenges related to the weakening of democratic institutions. The post-Soviet states are contending with the Soviet legacy and ongoing conflicts, which are hindering a full implementation of reforms. Albania, due to its isolation and delayed start to transformation, represents a unique case that underscores the diversity of human rights development trajectories in the region. A shared goal across all these countries remains the pursuit of harmonisation with international standards and the implementation of effective human rights protection mechanisms.

### **3. The Relationship to the UN from a Human Rights Perspective**

The relationships of the sixteen Central and Eastern European and Balkan states with the UN in the field of human rights protection often stem from their diverse histories, differing social contexts, and institutional conditions. In this regard, it is difficult to identify a fixed reference point that would easily indicate the level of a specific country's relationship with the UN. Such a fixed point cannot be the date of accession to the UN, including having the status of a founding member state, since practical evidence shows that, regardless of variations in these dates, they do not have a decisive influence on national relations with the UN in the area of human rights. Therefore, an analysis of these relationships requires a detailed examination of their engagement with international mechanisms, the implementation of standards, and their capacity to address key challenges. Based primarily on official UN<sup>31</sup> data and previously cited national academic studies, it is possible to propose a classification of all analysed states into four fundamental groups. Firstly, there are states that are actively and effectively cooperating with the UN, viewing the mechanisms of the universal system as an opportunity to strengthen their human rights protection model. Secondly, there are states that actively cooperate with the UN but with limited effectiveness, facing specific implementation challenges. Thirdly, there are states with an active yet standardised approach to cooperation with the UN, placing a greater emphasis on collaboration within regional human rights protection systems and improving their domestic legal frameworks in this area. Fourthly, there are states that are actively cooperating with the UN yet face significant challenges in implementing universal mechanisms in the practical application of law.

The group of states that are actively and effectively cooperating with the UN in terms of implementation includes the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, and Slovakia. These countries are striving to actively participate in UN mechanisms, particularly within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (hereinafter referred to as

31 See: 'Documentation by country' [Online]. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/documentation> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

the UPR),<sup>32</sup> as well as in the United Nations Human Rights Council<sup>33</sup> and other treaty-based monitoring bodies. States in this group can be characterised by their systematic reporting and undertaking of initiatives related to human rights protection under UN oversight. They adopt numerous recommendations resulting from the UPR, generally without challenging their validity, assuming that such validity is affirmed by the authority of the UN. These recommendations often concern the general nature of political and social rights but sometimes take a more specific form, addressing reparative actions or legal norms concerning issues such as violence against women, minority protection, social integration, social protection, judicial reform, or environmental protection. It is worth emphasising that the conclusions and recommendations arising from the UPR for each state in this group are characterised by their specificity, influenced by national histories and the problems or challenges individual states face as a legacy of their past. However, what unites states in this group is their broad acceptance of UN recommendations, aimed at the fullest possible integration of their domestic legal systems with UN international standards. This acceptance is generally granted without raising significant defensive arguments.

The group of states that actively cooperate with the UN but face specific implementation challenges includes Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Efforts by these states to integrate domestic law with international UN standards are constrained by internal systemic and political issues. On the one hand, there is a strong desire to participate in the international legal framework of human rights protection. This is evidenced by the content of constitutional norms that grant human rights treaties a significant position in the hierarchy of legal sources, and also by active participation in UN agency bodies, as well as by the utilisation of expert and institutional support, particularly for strengthening democratic legal frameworks, for example, through mechanisms such as the UPR. On the other hand, these states continue to face ongoing challenges rooted in their historical legacies. Firstly, issues related to discrimination against national minorities and domestic violence. Secondly, detention conditions and the marginalisation of ethnic groups remain significant concerns. Thirdly, challenges persist regarding human trafficking, corruption, and limited actual access to justice. Finally, a further set of problems includes limited institutional resources and political conflicts.

The group of states with an active but standardised approach to cooperation with the UN includes Poland and Hungary. These states place a significantly greater emphasis on collaboration within regional human rights protection systems, such as the EU and the RE. They do not adopt an uncritical stance toward UN recommendations, including those made within the framework of the UPR, citing the importance of maintaining a sovereign contribution to sensitive areas of national law, such as issues related to LGBT rights or child protection. These states engage in an active

32 Carraro, 2019, pp. 1079–1093.

33 Alston, 2006, pp. 185–224.

dialogue with the UN, where an analysis of its content suggests that not every human rights issue is suitable for the application of universal standards. In some cases, it is necessary to consider national history and heritage.<sup>34</sup> These relationships appear to reflect a balanced attempt to maintain equilibrium between respecting international obligations and protecting national interests.

Finally, there are states that actively cooperate with the UN but face significant challenges in implementing universal mechanisms in the practical application of law. This group includes Ukraine and Georgia. This situation has arisen because the difficult histories of these states remain unresolved. Armed conflicts on their territories severely hinder, or even prevent, the implementation of UN standards in the field of human rights. The application of international humanitarian law norms can also be called into question. Despite these states formally committing to numerous UN legal instruments, practice reveals significant difficulties in realising these commitments. During these times of armed conflict, Ukraine has been focussing its cooperation with the UN primarily on documenting violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly in protecting civilian populations. Meanwhile, Georgia is actively collaborating with the UN, mainly in monitoring the situation in its occupied regions.

The comparison indicates that the relationships of the analysed states with the UN from a human rights perspective depend on their historical experiences, political priorities, and ability to integrate international standards into their domestic legal systems. Countries such as the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovenia, and Slovakia maintain relationships with the UN based on active acceptance (a high level of acceptance of UN recommendations and active participation in its mechanisms and bodies). Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina maintain relationships with the UN based on internally burdened acceptance (a high level of acceptance of UN recommendations coupled with implementation challenges). Poland and Hungary maintain relationships with the UN based on active balancing (a measured acceptance of UN recommendations while advancing CoE and EU standards). Ukraine and Georgia maintain relationships with the UN based on limited intervention (armed conflicts and challenging internal conditions). The relationships of the analysed states with the UN in the area of human rights protection are therefore diverse, and their nature is closely tied to internal circumstances, political priorities, and historical burdens. Cooperation with the UN reflects both international aspirations and the constraints imposed by local realities.

34 As part of UPR, states submit national reports.

#### **4. The Scope of International Obligations from the perspective of UN Human Rights Treaties**

Each of the analysed states is a member of the UN, which grants them the opportunity to become a State Party to specific human rights treaties issued within this international organisation. However, the scope of international obligations undertaken by the analysed states as UN members may differ. This is because being a UN member does not automatically entail a commitment to adhere to the entire body of UN legal instruments. Moreover, UN membership does not oblige states to gradually adopt all UN treaties, including those related to human rights protection. National states, as sovereign entities under public international law, independently decide whether and when to become bound by specific UN legal instruments. For this reason, it is natural to observe both differences and similarities in this regard when conducting a comparative analysis of the 16 states. After presenting the historical development of human rights and the relationship to the UN from a human rights perspective, it is now appropriate to examine the scope of international obligations undertaken by the analysed states in the field of human rights protection within the UN system. This will reveal the extent of these states' engagement. In other words, whether these states would actively utilise the UN's legal framework to position themselves as proactive actors or beneficiaries in the arena of universal human rights standards, or whether the opposite is true.

The analysis in this regard encounters a preliminary issue, in that it is challenging to identify which UN treaties qualify as human rights treaties. Certainly, treaties listed in Chapter IV of the United Nations Treaty Collection (hereinafter referred to as the UNTC),<sup>35</sup> can be considered such, as the chapter is titled 'Human Rights'. However, the question arises, as to whether these are the only ones. It seems that the answer to this question should be negative. This is because at least one other chapter of the UNTC contains treaties that are crucial for human rights but have been categorised under a different topic. This primarily refers to Chapter V: 'Refugees and Stateless Persons'. As a result, the following section will present information regarding the catalogue of analysed states in comparison with the UN treaties listed in Chapter IV and Chapter V of the UNTC. The aim is to show which of the examined states have formally committed to adhering to specific UN treaties in the field of human rights.

Within Chapter IV – Human Rights, the following international treaties are listed along with their respective Treaty References:

35 United Nations, n.d.b.

**Table 1.** Chapter IV ‘Human Rights’ of United Nations Treaty Collection<sup>36</sup>

Treaty	Treaty Reference
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Paris, 9th December 1948 (dalej: CPPCG) <sup>37</sup>	IV-1
ICERD	IV-2
Amendment to article 8 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, New York, 15th January 1992 (dalej: AICERD) <sup>38</sup>	IV-2-a
ICESCR	IV-3
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, New York, 10th December 2008 (dalej: OPICESCR) <sup>39</sup>	IV-3-a
ICCPR	IV-4
Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, New York, 16th December 1966 (OP11CCPR) <sup>40</sup>	IV-5
Convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations to war crimes and crimes against humanity, New York, 26th November 1968 (CWCCA) <sup>41</sup>	IV-6
International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (ICSPCA) <sup>42</sup>	IV-7
CEDAW	IV-8
Amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, New York, 22nd December 1995 (dalej: ACEDAW) <sup>43</sup>	IV-8-a
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, New York, 6th October 1999 (dalej: OPCEDAW) <sup>44</sup>	IV-8-b
CAT	IV-9
Amendments to articles 17 (7) and 18 (5) of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, New York, 8th September 1992 (ACAT) <sup>45</sup>	IV-9-a
Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, New York, 18th December 2002 (OPCAT) <sup>46</sup>	IV-9-b
International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, New York, 10th December 1985 (dalej: ICAS) <sup>47</sup>	IV-10
CRC	IV-11

36 Źródło: opracowanie własne.

37 United Nations, 1951, p. 277.

38 See: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Chapter IV. [Online]. Available at: [https://treaties.un.org/pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&clang=_en) (Accessed: 26 November 2024).

39 United Nations, 2013b, p. 29.

40 United Nations, 1976, p. 171.

41 United Nations, 1974, p. 73.

42 United Nations, 1976, p. 243.

43 United Nations, n.d.c.

44 United Nations, 2003, p. 83.

45 United Nations, n.d.d.

46 United Nations, 2006c, p. 237.

47 United Nations, 1953, p. 161.

Treaty	Treaty Reference
Amendment to article 43 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, New York, 12th December 1995 (dalej: ACRC) <sup>48</sup>	IV-11-a
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, New York, 25th May 2000 (dalej: OPCRCco) <sup>49</sup>	IV-11-b
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, New York, 25th May 2000 (OPCRCpo) <sup>50</sup>	IV-11-c
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, New York, 19th December 2011 (OPCRCpr)	IV-11-d
Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, New York, 15th December 1989 (dalej: OP2ICCPR) <sup>51</sup>	IV-12
ICMW	IV-13
Agreement establishing the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean Madrid, 24th July 1992 (dalej: AFDIPLACM) <sup>52</sup>	IV-14
CRPD	IV-15
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York, 13th December 2006 (dalej: OPCRPD) <sup>53</sup>	IV-15-a
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, New York, 20th December 2006 (dalej: ICPAPED) <sup>54</sup>	IV-16

Within Chapter V – Refugees and Stateless Persons, the following international treaties are listed along with their respective Treaty References:

48 United Nations, 2002c, p. 210.

49 United Nations, 2004a, p. 222.

50 United Nations, 2000b, p. 227.

51 United Nations, 1991, p. 414.

52 United Nations, 2000a, p. 380.

53 United Nations, 2008b, p. 283.

54 United Nations, 2010b, p. 3.

**Table 2.** Chapter V ‘Refugees and Stateless Persons’ of United Nations Treaty Collection<sup>55</sup>

Treaty	Treaty Reference
Constitution of the International Refugee Organisation, New York, 15th December 1946 (terminated) <sup>56</sup>	V-1
CSR	V-2
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, New York, 28th September 1954 (dalej: CSSP) <sup>57</sup>	V-3
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, New York, 30th August 1961 (dalej: CRS) <sup>58</sup>	V-4
Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, New York, 31st January 1967 (dalej: PSR) <sup>59</sup>	V-5

An analysis of subjects of public international law that have formally committed to participating in the above-mentioned UN human rights treaties, based on access to the ‘Depositary Notifications (CNs) by the Secretary-General’,<sup>60</sup> leads to the following observations regarding the catalogue of analysed states: Albania has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, OPIC-ESCR, ICSPCA, ACAT, ICAS, ACRC, AFDIPLACM and OPCRPD. This results in eight UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, ACAT, ACRC, and AFDIPLACM. This results in four UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Bulgaria has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: OPICESCR, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, OPCRPD and ICPAPED. This results in six UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Croatia has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, OPICESCR, ACAT, ICMW and AFDIPLACM. This results in five UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Czech Republic has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: OPICESCR, ACAT, ICMW and AFDIPLACM. This results in four UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Georgia has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: OPICESCR, ACAT, ICAS, ICMW, AFDIPLACM and ICPAPED. This results in six UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Hungary has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, OPICESCR, ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, ACRC, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM and ICPAPED. This results in ten UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

55 Author’s own work.

56 United Nations, 1948, p. 3.

57 United Nations, 1960, p. 117.

58 United Nations, 1975, p. 175.

59 United Nations, 1967, p. 267.

60 United Nations, n.d.

Moldova has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, OPICESCR, ACAT, ICAS, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and ICPAPED. This results in seven UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Montenegro has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, ACAT, ICMW and AFDIPLACM. This results in four UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

North Macedonia has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM and ICPAPED. This results in eight UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Poland has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: OPICESCR, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, OPCRPD, ICPAPED, CSSP and CRS. This results in eight UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Romania has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, OPICESCR, ICSPCA, ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, OPCRPD and ICPAPED. This results in 11 UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Serbia has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, ACAT, OPCRCpr, ICMW and AFDIPLACM. This results in four UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Slovakia has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM. This results in five UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Slovenia has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: AICERD, OPICESCR, ACAT, ICAS, ACRC, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and CRS. This results in eight UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

Ukraine has not committed to the international obligations arising from the following treaties: OPICESCR, ACEDAW, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM.<sup>61</sup> This results in four UN human rights treaties that do not apply to this country.

## **5. The Process and Time of Accession, Succession or Ratification of Certain UN Human Rights Treaties**

In the above-presented comparative analysis of the scope of international obligations undertaken by the analysed states, a specific set of UN human rights treaties can be

61 A problematic issue is the ratification of the ICCPR by Ukraine. The search results in the Depository Notifications by the Secretary-General indicate that Ukraine has not completed the act of ratification of the ICCPR. However, access through the United Nations Treaty Series Online reveals that Ukraine ratified the ICCPR on November 12, 1973. In this chapter, it has been considered appropriate to recognize that Ukraine has ratified the ICCPR. This is the only piece of data that has been adjusted compared to the information obtained from the Depository Notifications by the Secretary-General.

identified, which can be considered the essence of human rights protection within the UN framework. This observation is further supported by positions frequently presented in the literature, which often attribute significant importance and influence on these treaties, based on the perception and implementation of human rights worldwide.<sup>62</sup> These treaties include CSR, ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW, and CRPD. Each of these treaties has introduced new and progressively transformative human rights standards, often serving as a basis for significant changes in national law. The CSR established key rules and principles for the protection of refugees, laying the foundation for most contemporary asylum law regulations.<sup>63</sup> The ICCPR and ICESCR jointly introduced an unprecedentedly broad catalogue of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, reflections of which can be found in the modern legislation of contemporary states.<sup>64</sup> The ICERD and CEDAW, addressing the issues of racial discrimination and prejudice against women, significantly enriched the universal human rights protection system while simultaneously influencing anti-discrimination reforms in their State Parties.<sup>65</sup> The CAT strengthened the effective observance of the international prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, which has resulted in the overwhelming majority of modern states including such regulations in their normative frameworks.<sup>66</sup> The CRC is regarded as a groundbreaking achievement in the field of human rights and children's rights, particularly because it guarantees and establishes minimum standards for the protection of children's rights in all areas.<sup>67</sup> The ICMW established important standards for migrant workers and their families, influencing immigration and labour law provisions in many national legal systems.<sup>68</sup> The CRPD, addressing the issues of persons with disabilities, has promoted their integration into social life, which is realised through national law.<sup>69</sup> It therefore appears, in light of the arguments presented, that the selection of such a catalogue of human rights treaties for further comparative analysis may be justified. Such an analysis will reveal differences and similarities in the process and time of the accession, succession, or ratification of the CSR, ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW and CRPD. Each of these instruments of international human rights law establishes fundamental and universal legal standards that are subject to implementation into national legal systems worldwide, ensuring that the law becomes more just.

62 Heyns and Viljoen, 2001, pp. 483–535; Gaer, 2003, pp. 339–357; Hill Jr., 2010, pp. 1161–1174; Egan, 2013, pp. 209–243; Kedzia, 2009, pp. 231–238; Alston and Mégret, 2020, pp. 1–39; Mingst, Karns, Lyon, 2022, pp. 1–63.

63 Fontaine, 2007, pp. 149–182.

64 Schrijver, 2016, pp. 457–464.

65 Diaconu, 2017, pp. 269–279; Englehart and Miller, 2014, pp. 22–47.

66 Baldinger, 2015, pp. 137–229.

67 Detrick, Doek and Cantwell, 1992, pp. 19–30; Reynaert, Bouverne-de-Bie and Vandevelde, 2009, pp. 518–534.

68 Venturi, 2018, pp. 17–43.

69 Steinert et al., 2016, pp. 1–14; Waddington and Priestley, 2021, pp. 1–15.

In light of the above, it is necessary to analyse which of the examined states have undertaken international obligations arising from the CSR, ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW and CRPD. To achieve this goal, it would be appropriate to examine each UN human rights treaty individually and indicate whether Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Ukraine are among the States Parties.

The ICERD has been adopted by all the analysed states. Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Ukraine acceded to it through ratification, while Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Albania, and Georgia acceded to it through accession.<sup>70</sup> Slovenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro became parties to the ICERD through succession. The state that committed to the ICERD the earliest was Bulgaria, while the most recent was Montenegro.

**Table 3. ICERD<sup>71</sup>**

Time	Participant	Process
18/08/1966	Bulgaria	Ratification
23/05/1967	Hungary	Ratification
13/12/1968	Poland	Ratification
21/03/1969	Ukraine	Ratification
05/02/1971	Romania	Accession
28/10/1992	Slovenia	Succession
01/03/1993	Croatia	Succession
05/04/1993	Republic of Moldova	Accession
20/07/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
18/10/1993	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
01/11/1993	Slovakia	Succession
29/06/1994	North Macedonia	Succession
21/07/1994	Albania	Accession
04/06/1999	Georgia	Accession
19/03/2001	Serbia	Succession
03/11/2006	Montenegro	Succession

70 Explanation: Succession is when a state takes over the rights and obligations of international treaties previously held by another state, such as after the dissolution of a state or regime change. Accession is the act by which a state joins an existing treaty without the need for prior signature, and it has the same legal force as ratification. Ratification involves a two-step process: first, the treaty is signed, and then it is formally approved to give it legal force domestically.

71 Author's own work.

The ICESCR has been adopted by all the analysed states. Albania, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova acceded to it through accession. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia became parties to it through succession. Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Romania adopted it through ratification. The state that committed to the ICESCR the earliest was Bulgaria, while the most recent was Montenegro.

**Table 4.** ICESCR<sup>72</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
15/10/1970	Bulgaria	Ratification
03/01/1974	Ukraine	Ratification
11/03/1974	Hungary	Ratification
20/01/1975	Romania	Ratification
13/04/1977	Poland	Ratification
27/11/1991	Albania	Accession
28/10/1992	Slovenia	Succession
04/03/1993	Croatia	Succession
05/04/1993	Republic of Moldova	Accession
28/07/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
01/11/1993	Slovakia	Succession
18/01/1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
29/06/1994	North Macedonia	Succession
26/07/1994	Georgia	Accession
19/03/2001	Serbia	Succession
31/10/2006	Montenegro	Succession

The ICCPR has been adopted by all the analysed states. Albania, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova acceded to it through accession. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia became parties to it through succession. Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Ukraine adopted it through ratification. The state that committed to the ICCPR the earliest was Bulgaria, while the most recent was Montenegro.

72 Author's own work.

**Table 5.** ICCPR<sup>73</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
15/10/1970	Bulgaria	Ratification
12/11/1973	Ukraine	Ratification
11/03/1974	Hungary	Ratification
20/01/1975	Romania	Ratification
13/04/1977	Poland	Ratification
27/11/1991	Albania	Accession
28/10/1992	Slovenia	Succession
04/03/1993	Croatia	Succession
05/04/1993	Republic of Moldova	Accession
28/07/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
01/11/1993	Slovakia	Succession
18/01/1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
29/06/1994	North Macedonia	Succession
26/07/1994	Georgia	Accession
26/03/2001	Serbia	Succession
31/10/2006	Montenegro	Succession

The CEDAW has been adopted by all the analysed states. Albania, the Republic of Moldova, and Georgia acceded to it through accession. Slovenia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro became parties to it through succession. Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Romania, and Bulgaria adopted it through ratification. The state that committed to the CEDAW the earliest was Poland, while the most recent was Montenegro.

**Table 6.** CEDAW<sup>74</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
05/09/1980	Poland	Ratification
13/01/1981	Hungary	Ratification
27/04/1981	Ukraine	Ratification
04/02/1982	Romania	Ratification
19/02/1982	Bulgaria	Ratification
28/10/1992	Slovenia	Succession

73 Author's own work.

74 Author's own work.

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Time	Participant	Process
18/12/1992	Croatia	Succession
06/05/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
01/11/1993	Slovakia	Succession
18/01/1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
29/06/1994	North Macedonia	Succession
15/07/1994	Albania	Accession
02/09/1994	Republic of Moldova	Accession
30/03/1995	Georgia	Accession
16/03/2001	Serbia	Succession
02/11/2006	Montenegro	Succession

The CAT has been adopted by all the analysed states. Romania, Slovenia, Albania, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova acceded to it through accession. Croatia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Serbia became parties to it through succession. Bulgaria, Ukraine, Hungary, and Poland adopted it through ratification. The state that committed to the CAT the earliest was Bulgaria, while the most recent was Montenegro.

**Table 7. CAT<sup>75</sup>**

Time	Participant	Process
24/02/1987	Bulgaria	Ratification
16/04/1987	Ukraine	Ratification
19/06/1987	Hungary	Ratification
28/08/1989	Poland	Ratification
28/02/1991	Romania	Accession
22/03/1993	Croatia	Succession
07/07/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
20/09/1993	Slovenia	Accession
01/11/1993	Slovakia	Succession
18/01/1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
26/07/1994	Albania	Accession
27/02/1995	Georgia	Accession
27/02/1995	North Macedonia	Succession
26/12/1995	Republic of Moldova	Accession

75 Author's own work.

Time	Participant	Process
04/04/2001	Serbia	Succession
06/11/2006	Montenegro	Succession

The CRC has been adopted by all the analysed states. Georgia and the Republic of Moldova acceded to it through accession. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia became parties to it through succession. Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, and Albania adopted it through ratification. The state that committed to the CRC the earliest was Romania, while the most recent was Montenegro.

**Table 8.** CRC<sup>76</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
28/09/1990	Romania	Ratification
29/07/1991	Bulgaria	Ratification
29/07/1991	Poland	Ratification
07/10/1991	Ukraine	Ratification
29/11/1991	Hungary	Ratification
13/05/1992	Albania	Ratification
28/10/1992	Slovenia	Succession
18/02/1993	Croatia	Succession
23/03/1993	Republic of Moldova	Accession
07/07/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
01/11/1993	Slovakia	Succession
18/01/1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
15/03/1994	North Macedonia	Succession
05/09/1994	Georgia	Accession
19/03/2001	Serbia	Succession
06/11/2006	Montenegro	Succession

The ICMW has been adopted by only two states among those analysed. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina acceded to it through accession. The ICMW remains an example of a UN human rights treaty that the analysed states are reluctant to adopt. This may be due to differing national priorities regarding migration policies.

76 Author's own work.

**Table 9.** ICMW<sup>77</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
06/02/1997	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Accession
05/06/2007	Albania	Accession

The CRPD has been adopted by all the analysed states, and they all did so through ratification. The state that committed to the CRPD the earliest was Hungary, while the most recent was Georgia.

**Table 10.** CRPD<sup>78</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
20/07/2007	Hungary	Ratification
15/08/2007	Croatia	Ratification
30/04/2008	Slovenia	Ratification
07/08/2009	Serbia	Ratification
28/09/2009	Czech Republic	Ratification
01/12/2009	Montenegro	Ratification
05/02/2010	Ukraine	Ratification
19/03/2010	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ratification
02/06/2010	Slovakia	Ratification
27/09/2010	Republic of Moldova	Ratification
02/02/2011	Romania	Ratification
29/12/2011	North Macedonia	Ratification
23/03/2012	Bulgaria	Ratification
26/09/2012	Poland	Ratification
11/02/2013	Albania	Ratification
13/03/2014	Georgia	Ratification

The CSR has been adopted by all the analysed states. Hungary, Romania, Poland, Albania, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine acceded to it through accession. Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro became parties to it through succession. The state that committed to the CSR the earliest was Hungary, while the most recent was Montenegro.

77 Author's own work.

78 Author's own work.

**Table 11.** CSR<sup>79</sup>

Time	Participant	Process
18/04/1989	Hungary	Accession
15/11/1991	Romania	Accession
29/11/1991	Poland	Accession
28/10/1992	Slovenia	Succession
09/11/1992	Albania	Accession
01/03/1993	Croatia	Succession
25/06/1993	Slovakia	Succession
23/08/1993	Bulgaria	Accession
23/08/1993	Czech Republic	Succession
18/01/1994	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Succession
29/06/1994	North Macedonia	Succession
28/09/1999	Georgia	Accession
04/04/2001	Serbia	Succession
20/02/2002	Republic of Moldova	Accession
12/07/2002	Ukraine	Accession
11/10/2006	Montenegro	Succession

The above analysis demonstrated that all the analysed states have ratified or acceded to most of the core UN human rights treaties, such as the ICERD, ICESCR, ICCPR, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, CRPD, and CSR. An exception is the ICMW, which has been adopted only by Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, highlighting a lower willingness among states to commit to treaties focused on the protection of migrant workers' rights. Differences in the processes of ratification, succession, and accession reflect historical circumstances and the political priorities of individual states, particularly in the context of the systemic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe. States that bind themselves to treaties earlier have tended to enjoy relatively stable legal and political situations, while later commitments to international obligations often originated from statehood processes following the dissolution of the former ICTY and the USSR.

79 Author's own work.

## 6. The Impact of Certain UN Human Rights Treaties on National Law

International human rights law, particularly within the UN system, often requires States Parties to undertake appropriate legislative actions to ensure its effectiveness and practical application. This necessity is closely related to the doctrine of self-executing and non-self-executing treaties.<sup>80</sup> It is important to highlight three relevant observations in this context. The first is that the classification of treaties as self-executing or non-self-executing cannot be mechanical and does not always apply to the entirety of a legal instrument. The appropriate approach is to analyse each provision individually to determine its normative character in the context of human rights protection. In other words, it involves establishing whether a specific provision creates a concrete and directly applicable legal norm. A preferred interpretation should lean toward attributing a self-executing character to treaties or their broader parts in the field of human rights, enabling them to have real and direct effects on individuals within national jurisdictions. The second is that there is no entity that globally and pre-emptively determines whether a treaty or its specific provision is self-executing or non-self-executing. Such determinations may occur in court cases within national jurisdictions, with domestic implications, or in international cases, such as those before UN treaty bodies, where such determinations should be interpreted as global but retrospective. The third is that there is a positive trend wherein States Parties, regardless of whether treaties or their provisions are classified as self-executing or non-self-executing, or not classified at all, often decide to incorporate international human rights standards into their domestic legal systems. This ensures not only the effectiveness and enforceability of such regulations but also their accessibility and prompt implementation for individuals. In such cases, treaty bodies, where they have jurisdiction, operate as secondary watchdogs. In light of these observations, it seems appropriate to examine the impact that the UN human rights treaties ratified by the analysed states have had on their domestic laws. As in the previous section, attention will focus on the CSR, ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW, and CRPD. There are at least two reasons for supporting this approach. Firstly, that the arguments previously presented continue to justify the selection of this particular legislative core forming the UN human rights protection system for this comparative analysis. Secondly, that maintaining consistency and uniformity in the comparative analysis necessitates using the same set of UN treaties throughout this study. This uniformity and consistency in more advanced comparative matters requires not only analysing the same set of states but also examining the same international human rights instruments adopted within the UN framework. Therefore, this subsection will conduct a comparative analysis aimed at determining and assessing the impact of the CSR, ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW, and CRPD on the domestic

80 Vazquez, 1995, pp. 695–723; Yoo, 1999, pp. 1955–2094; Henry, 1929, pp. 776–785; Enabulele and Okojie, 2016, pp. 1–37.

laws of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. This analysis will be based on the latest data derived from the UPR.

The ratification of key UN treaties such as the ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, CRPD, CSR, and the partial acceptance of the ICMW has significantly influenced the development of legislation and institutions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. The ICCPR and ICESCR have provided a robust foundation for constitutional reforms and strengthened mechanisms for human rights protection, including institutional advancements such as the establishment of ombudsman offices and anti-discrimination commissions. The CEDAW and ICERD have contributed towards the improvement of legislation on gender equality and the elimination of ethnic discrimination, particularly notable in regions with significant national minorities, such as the Roma. The CAT has bolstered systems to prevent torture, including the establishment of National Preventive Mechanisms and enhanced standards for monitoring prison conditions. The CRC has driven reforms in the protection of children's rights, including legislation addressing domestic violence and education. Meanwhile, the CRPD has inspired legislative changes to support persons with disabilities, focusing on accessibility in infrastructure and social support systems. Countries such as Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina are actively taking measures to protect migrants in alignment with the ICMW. Common trends indicate a gradual alignment of national legal systems with international standards. However, the implementation of these standards varies depending on local socio-political challenges and institutional resources. In this context, it is possible to delineate regional specificities, dividing the analysed countries into four groups: The Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia), Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary), Southeastern Europe (Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia), and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Romania).

The countries of the Western Balkans<sup>81</sup> stand out for their implementation of UN treaties in the context of post-war reconstruction, ethnic tensions, and aspirations for EU membership. The ICERD has played a pivotal role in combating ethnic discrimination, which is particularly evident in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where

81 See: National reports of this group of states under the latest Universal Periodic Review: Albania (2024) 'A/HRC/WG.6/43/SRB/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4061288?v=pdf#files> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); North Macedonia (2024) 'A/HRC/WG.6/46/MKD/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4041616?v=pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Montenegro (2023) 'A/HRC/WG.6/43/MNE/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4007485?v=pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019) 'A/HRC/WG.6/34/BIH/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/310/04/pdf/g1931004.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Albania (2024) 'A/HRC/WG.6/47/ALB/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4061288?v=pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

anti-discrimination policies focus on ensuring equality for all national groups. The CEDAW has inspired legislation addressing violence against women, especially in Albania and North Macedonia, which have taken steps to protect victims of domestic violence. The CRC has influenced reforms aimed at protecting children in crisis situations, developing childcare systems, and mechanisms to combat violence. Montenegro and Serbia have introduced social integration strategies aligned with the CRPD, improving access to education and employment for persons with disabilities. However, the lack of a full implementation of the ICMW remains a challenge across the region, particularly concerning the protection of migrant workers, despite some progress in refugee protection under the CSR. The Western Balkans continue to face institutional and social barriers that delay the full implementation of international human rights standards.

Central Europe<sup>82</sup> is characterised by advanced harmonisation of national laws with UN treaties, largely driven by EU membership and the associated legal obligations. The CEDAW and ICERD have significantly influenced the development of anti-discrimination policies. Poland and the Czech Republic, inspired by the CRC, have reformed child protection systems by establishing institutions such as the Commissioner for Children's Rights, and implementing programs to combat domestic violence. The CAT has strengthened protections for detainees within penitentiary systems across the region, leading to improved prison conditions and the establishment of independent monitoring mechanisms. The CRPD has inspired extensive reforms supporting persons with disabilities, particularly in Slovakia and Hungary, which have implemented strategies for their inclusion in the education and the labour markets. However, challenges remain in effectively implementing CRPD standards, particularly regarding infrastructure accessibility across the region.

The countries of Southeastern Europe<sup>83</sup> are strongly focused on eliminating discrimination and protecting women's rights. The CEDAW and ICERD have contributed to the development of integration policies targeting national minorities, such as the Roma in Bulgaria. Croatia and Slovenia have taken significant steps towards gender equality by enhancing legislation against domestic violence and establishing

82 See: National reports of this group of states under the latest Universal Periodic Review: Slovakia (2024) 'A/HRC/WG.6/46/SVK/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4052669?v=pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Hungary (2021) 'A/HRC/WG.6/39/HUN/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g21/225/62/pdf/g2122562.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Poland (2022) 'A/HRC/WG.6/41/POL/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g22/461/68/pdf/g2246168.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Czechia (2022) 'A/HRC/WG.6/42/CZE/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g22/577/43/pdf/g2257743.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

83 See: National reports of this group of states under the latest Universal Periodic Review: Bulgaria (2020) 'A/HRC/WG.6/36/BGR/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3863344?v=pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Croatia (2020) 'A/HRC/WG.6/36/HRV/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3863348?v=pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Slovenia (2019) 'A/HRC/WG.6/34/SVN/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/234/44/pdf/g1923444.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

mechanisms to support its victims. The CRPD has influenced the development of support systems for persons with disabilities, including programs aimed at public infrastructure accessibility and social integration. Croatia, inspired by the CSR, has implemented effective mechanisms for the protection of refugees and migrants, integrating these actions in EU policies. Slovenia has advanced anti-discrimination systems and strategies promoting gender equality. Challenges for the whole region include the uneven implementation of CRPD standards, particularly with regard to the access to education and employment for persons with disabilities, and limited protection for migrants in Bulgaria.

Eastern Europe<sup>84</sup> is characterised by a varied level of implementation of UN standards, shaped by challenges related to political transformation and economic constraints. Ukraine and Georgia have conducted penitentiary reforms in line with the CAT, improving prison conditions and establishing mechanisms to monitor cases of torture. The CRC has inspired the development of educational programs and child protection mechanisms in Moldova and Romania, focusing on combating violence and human trafficking. The implementation of the CRPD in Georgia and Moldova has resulted in policies supporting persons with disabilities, although the accessibility of public infrastructure remains limited. The CSR has influenced refugee protection efforts, particularly in the context of the territorial conflicts in Ukraine and Georgia. The region faces challenges such as a lack of the full harmonisation of anti-discrimination laws in line with the ICERD and CEDAW, as well as uneven implementation of CRPD standards.

UN treaties have had a significant impact on the development of legal systems in the analysed states; however, their implementation depends on local political, social, and economic conditions. In economically more advanced regions, such as Central and Southeastern Europe, the adoption of UN standards is more comprehensive and addresses a wide range of human rights, from combating discrimination to integrating persons with disabilities. Membership in the EU and active participation in the CoE system also play a crucial role in this context. In regions such as the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe, UN treaties serve as tools to support political transformation, although their implementation often encounters barriers related to resource shortages and social tensions. Globally, UN treaties appear to act as catalysts for legislative change, strengthening human rights protection in countries at various levels of development. However, the effectiveness of their implementation depends on

84 See: National reports of this group of states under the latest Universal Periodic Review: Republic of Moldova (2021) 'A/HRC/WG.6/40/MDA/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g21/341/43/pdf/g2134143.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Ukraine (2017) 'A/HRC/WG.6/28/UKR/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/sites/default/files/attachments/5a2a7ad64.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Georgia (2020) 'A/HRC/WG.6/37/GEO/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g20/342/24/pdf/g2034224.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024); Romania (2023) 'A/HRC/WG.6/43/ROU/1' [Online]. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g23/028/12/pdf/g2302812.pdf> (Accessed: 26 December 2024).

international cooperation and local political will. To standardise the level of human rights protection across the region, it is recommended to increase financial and expert support for countries facing the greatest implementation challenges.

## 7. Cases before UN Treaty Bodies

The protection of human rights, whether at a national or international level, without a control mechanism based on the principle of complaint procedures, can be compared to a *lex imperfecta*.<sup>85</sup> Of course this would not mean that human rights would be violated in every case, but it would imply that in instances where human rights were violated, it would not be legally possible to seek protection or reparative claims. Additionally, there would be no pressure from international entities on states to adequately fulfil their positive and negative obligations, which would not contribute to eliminating systemic errors. This is presented in hypothetical terms because contemporary human rights protection systems for the most part, include control mechanisms often based on individual complaints. These significantly enhance the practical realisation and effectiveness of human rights. Building on the arguments presented earlier regarding the justification for selecting representative UN human rights treaties for analysis and the arguments related to maintaining uniformity and consistency in comparative analysis, this subsection will examine whether Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine have had cases brought before the UN treaty bodies established under the ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW, and CRPD. Specifically, for the ICCPR: Human Rights Committee (hereinafter referred to as the HRC);<sup>86</sup> for ICESCR – Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter referred to as the CESCR);<sup>87</sup> for ICERD – Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter referred to as the CERD);<sup>88</sup> for CEDAW – Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the ComEDAW);<sup>89</sup> for CAT – Committee against Torture (hereinafter referred to as the ComAT);<sup>90</sup> for CRC – Committee on the Rights of the Child (hereinafter referred to as the ComRC);<sup>91</sup> for ICMW – Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (hereinafter referred to as the CMW);<sup>92</sup> for CRPD – Committee on the Rights of Persons

85 Wessel, 2016, pp. 439–468; Kania, 2017, pp. 49–63.

86 Buergenthal, 2001, pp. 341–398.

87 Viveros-Uehara, 2022, pp. 904–927.

88 Thornberry, 2005, pp. 239–269.

89 Englehart and Miller, 2014, pp. 22–47.

90 McQuigg, 2011, pp. 813–828.

91 Karp, 2000, pp. 35–44.

92 Chetail, 2020, pp. 601–644.

with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the ComRPD).<sup>93</sup> In this context, it should be noted that with regard to the CSR, there is no treaty-specific body established for this human rights treaty that can handle individual complaints against States Parties. For this reason, the CSR cannot be included in the comparative analysis concerning cases before UN treaty bodies. Additionally, it is important to highlight another significant aspect that serves as a limitation to this analysis. Within the scope of this study, primarily due to text volume constraints, no preliminary assessment was made regarding whether the identified UN treaty bodies possess jurisdiction to examine cases related to the analysed states. The relevant and sufficient criterion was whether a specific UN treaty establishes a control mechanism by creating a treaty body dedicated to handling cases under that treaty, without verifying whether the body has the actual ability to act in relation to the analysed states.<sup>94</sup>

This is because the purpose of this subsection is to examine which UN treaties have been invoked and how many cases have been brought against Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine. This analysis should provide the latest information – already derived from the practical application of UN human rights standards – for the final demonstration of similarities and differences in the approaches of the analysed states to the UN human rights protection system, including the fulfilment of their resulting international obligations. Information regarding cases before treaty bodies can act as a barometer of international oversight, reflecting, on the one hand, the popularity of UN monitoring mechanisms in a given region (as indicated by the numbers presented below) and, on the other hand, the effectiveness and efficiency of the analysed states in implementing or respecting their obligations under the universal human rights protection system (as illustrated by the examples of specific cases described below).

To date, 4 finalised complaints have been registered against Albania, all within the framework of the HRC. All these complaints were deemed inadmissible.

A total of 21 finalised complaints have been registered against Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which 15 resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *S.H. v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*,<sup>95</sup> the ComEDAW found violations of Articles 2(a)–(f), 3, 12, 13(a) and (b), and 15(1) of the CEDAW. In its recommendations, it emphasised the necessity of

93 Guernsey, 2018, pp. 1012–1037.

94 The issue of jurisdiction holds significant importance, as it can be determined in advance that none of the analyzed states could have a case before the CMW. This is because the CMW, as stipulated in the ICMW, currently lacks jurisdiction over any State Party. According to Articles 76(2) and 77(8) of the ICMW, the CMW only acquires jurisdiction when at least 10 State Parties have made the necessary declarations accepting its competence for individual or inter-state complaints. In practice, however, only a small number of states have ratified the protocols granting the committee such jurisdiction, which significantly limits the effectiveness of this mechanism. To date, only six states—Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Turkey, Uruguay, and Guinea-Bissau—have recognized the jurisdiction of the CMW. As a result, this institution is not operational at present. United Nations, n.d.a.

95 United Nations, 2017b.

thoroughly prosecuting violence against women, particularly war crimes, and ensuring the fair punishment of perpetrators. In the case of *A. v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*,<sup>96</sup> the ComAT found a violation of Article 14(1) in connection with Article 1(1) of CAT. It recommended, among other measures, the payment of adequate compensation, the provision of free medical and psychological care, an official apology, and the establishment of an effective reparations system for victims of war crimes, including sexual violence, along with legal frameworks defining victims' rights.

In the case of *Ičić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*,<sup>97</sup> the HRC found violations of Articles 6, 7, and 9 in connection with Article 2(3) of the ICCPR. It obliged the state to provide families of missing persons with access to investigations and to amend laws requiring the recognition of victims' deaths as a condition for obtaining social benefits and reparations. These cases highlight the challenges related to addressing war crimes and protecting human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A total of 15 finalised complaints have been registered against Bulgaria, of which nine resulted in substantive decisions. The lack of Bulgaria's ratification of the optional protocols to the ICESCR, CRC, and CRPD has led to the majority of cases before UN treaty bodies focusing on issues related to the HRC and the ComEDAW. An example is the case of *Assenova Naidenova et al. v. Bulgaria*,<sup>98</sup> in which the HRC examined the forced eviction of a Roma community without providing them alternative housing, emphasising Bulgaria's obligation to ensure an effective remedy. Despite interim recommendations, the authorities proceeded to cut off water supplies, prompting the HRC to demand appropriate housing be secured before carrying out the evictions.

In the case of *V.K. v. Bulgaria*,<sup>99</sup> a victim of domestic violence was denied a long-term protection order due to procedural limitations; the ComEDAW recommended reforms to expand access to protection, legal assistance, and shelters.

Another case, of *Isatou Jallow v. Bulgaria*,<sup>100</sup> involved a migrant woman experiencing domestic violence, where the state failed to provide adequate support; the ComEDAW called for compensation, improved services for victims, and specialised training for the relevant authorities.

The case of *S.V.P. v. Bulgaria*<sup>101</sup> concerned the assault of a young girl, exposing shortcomings in Bulgaria's approach to sexual violence, which led to the ComEDAW recommending strengthened legal protections and enhanced support for victims of such crimes.

A total of 6 finalised complaints have been registered against Croatia, of which two resulted in substantive decisions. The first case, *Paraga v. Croatia*,<sup>102</sup> involved the HRC, which found a violation of Article 14, Paragraph 3(c) of the ICCPR and expressed the

96 United Nations, 2017a.

97 United Nations, 2015.

98 United Nations, 2012b.

99 United Nations, 2011.

100 Ibid.

101 United Nations, 2012a.

102 Human Rights Committee, 2001.

expectation that Croatia would take appropriate measures to eliminate and prevent similar violations in the future.

The second case, of *Vojnovic v. Croatia*,<sup>103</sup> also brought before the HRC, found violations of Article 14, Paragraph 1 in conjunction with Article 2, Paragraph 1, and Article 17 in conjunction with Article 2, Paragraph 1 of the ICCPR. In this context, which was similar to the former case, the HRC referred to Croatia's obligation under Article 2 of the ICCPR, to ensure that all individuals within its territory or under its jurisdiction enjoyed the rights recognised in the ICCPR, and to provide an effective and enforceable remedy in cases where a violation had been established.

A total of 61 finalised complaints have been registered against the Czech Republic, of which 31 resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *B.J. and P.J. v. Czech Republic*,<sup>104</sup> the ComCR found violations of Articles 3(1), 9(1–3), 12, and 37(b) of the CRC in the case of *B.J. and P.J. v. Czech Republic*. In this regard, the ComCR obliged the Czech Republic, among other measures, to ensure that all proceedings aimed at removing children from their parents, including decisions on interim measures, comply with the CRC. This includes the importance of conducting a best-interests assessment, considering and giving due weight to children's views, particularly regarding the type of placement under consideration, medical treatments, access to education, and contact with their parents during placement. Furthermore, procedural safeguards must be established to ensure the protection of children's rights under the CRC. The case of *B.J. and P.J. v. Czech Republic* represents the latest example of a UN treaty body finding a violation of the CRC. Other notable cases include *Preiss v. Czech Republic*<sup>105</sup> and *Fábryová v. Czech Republic*,<sup>106</sup> in which the HRC found a violation of Article 26 of the ICCPR, the principle of equality before the law.

A total of 16 finalised complaints have been registered against Georgia, of which ten have resulted in substantive decisions. Most of the cases involved allegations of violations of the ICCPR and CAT, including instances of torture, arbitrary detention, and discrimination against minorities and persons with disabilities. One such case was *M.L., L.Ko., V.K., L.Ku., Z.J., M.B., G.L., G.Ko. v. Georgia*,<sup>107</sup> in which the ComRC found that Georgia violated the CRC due to physical and psychological violence and discrimination against children with disabilities in a Georgian orphanage.

Another significant case was *Domukovsky et al. v. Georgia*,<sup>108</sup> which raised issues of arbitrary detention, torture, and unfair trials, pointing to potential systemic deficiencies in Georgia's legal procedures. Cases reviewed by the HRC and other treaty bodies have highlighted Georgia's challenges in adhering to international human rights standards and underscore the role of bodies such as the ComRC and ComAT in monitoring compliance with these norms.

103 United Nations, 2006.

104 Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2021.

105 Human Rights Committee, 2008.

106 Comité de Derechos Humanos, 2001.

107 United Nations, 2024.

108 Human Rights Committee, 1998.

A total of 20 finalised complaints have been registered against Hungary, of which ten have resulted in substantive decisions. One example is the case of *Borisenko v. Hungary*,<sup>109</sup> where the HRC found violations of Articles 9(3) and 14(3)(d) of the ICCPR. Regarding the violation of Article 9(3) ICCPR, two individual opinions were issued by HRC members as separate opinions (*votum separatum*). Following this case, the HRC obligated Hungary to provide the complainant with an effective remedy, including compensation, and to take measures to prevent similar violations in the future.

Another case is *Nyusti and Takács v. Hungary*,<sup>110</sup> in which the ComRPD found a violation of Article 9(2)(b) CRPD. In response, the ComRPD recommended that Hungary take measures to prevent similar violations in the future, which, according to the ComRPD, should include: establishing minimum standards for the accessibility of banking services provided by private financial institutions for persons with visual and other impairments; creating a legislative framework with concrete, enforceable, and time-bound benchmarks for monitoring and assessing the gradual modification and adjustment of previously inaccessible banking services by private financial institutions into accessible ones; ensuring that all newly procured ATMs and other banking services are fully accessible to persons with disabilities; providing regular and appropriate training on the scope of the CRPD to judges and other judicial officials to adjudicate cases in a disability-sensitive manner; ensuring that its legislation and application by domestic courts are consistent with the state party's obligations to prevent legislation from impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of any right for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

A total of ten finalised complaints have been registered against Moldova, of which seven resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *Natalia Ciobanu v. Republic of Moldova*,<sup>111</sup> the ComEDAW found violations of Article 3 and Article 11(1)(e) and (2) (c) of the CEDAW. Following this, the ComEDAW issued recommendations stating that Moldova should, among other actions, fulfil its obligations to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of women, including the right to be free from all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, intimidation, and threats of violence.

Another case, *Belemvire v. Republic of Moldova*,<sup>112</sup> involved the CERD, which found a violation of Article 6 of the ICERD concerning the right to effective protection and remedies, through competent national tribunals and other state institutions, against any acts of racial discrimination that violate human rights and fundamental freedoms as outlined in the ICERD. It also affirmed the right to seek just and adequate reparation or satisfaction from such tribunals for any damage suffered due to such discrimination.

109 United Nations, 2002.

110 United Nations, 2013a.

111 United Nations, 2019.

112 United Nations, 2018.

A total of two finalised complaints have been registered against Montenegro, of which one has resulted in a substantive decision. In the case of *Durmic v. Montenegro, Serbia, The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)*,<sup>113</sup> the CERD found a violation of Article 6 of the ICERD, similar to the case described above against Moldova. In this case, the CERD recommended that Montenegro provide the petitioner with just and adequate compensation commensurate with the moral damage he had suffered. It also recommended that Montenegro take measures to ensure that the police, public prosecutors, and the Court of Serbia and Montenegro properly investigate accusations and complaints related to acts of racial discrimination, which should be punishable by law under Article 4 of the ICERD.

A total of three finalised complaints have been registered against North Macedonia, all of which resulted in substantive decisions. These cases – *S.N., E.R. v. North Macedonia*,<sup>114</sup> *L.A. et al. v. North Macedonia*<sup>115</sup> and *S.B. and M.B. v. North Macedonia*<sup>116</sup> – were all reviewed by the ComEDAW. In the first case, the ComEDAW found violations of Articles 2(d) and (f), 4(1) and (2), 12(1) and (2), and 14(2)(b) and (h) of the CEDAW. In the second, it found violations of Articles 2(d) and (f), 12(1) and (2), and 14(2)(b) and (h) of the CEDAW, and in the third, violations of Articles 1, 2(a), (c) and (e), and 12 of the CEDAW. These cases primarily addressed intersectional discrimination faced by Roma women. The first case concerned the forced eviction of young Roma women, with the ComEDAW considering the complexity of their situation, as some complainants were pregnant or had small children. The second case involved allegations of discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, highlighting violations of Article 2 CEDAW. The third case focused on the denial of access to basic gynaecological care for Roma women due to ethnic discrimination, exposing systemic inequalities in healthcare access. The ComEDAW recommended strengthening protections for marginalised communities, particularly Roma women, emphasising the need for anti-discrimination reforms and improved access to social services.

A total of 12 finalised complaints have been registered against Poland, of which four have resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *Fijałkowska v. Poland*,<sup>117</sup> the HRC found that the complainant's forced placement in a psychiatric institution violated Articles 9(1) and 9(4) of the ICCPR, highlighting the arbitrariness of the decision and the lack of adequate representation.

The case of *Tatyana v. Poland*<sup>118</sup> concerned a detention at the Polish-Belarusian border. The HRC did not find a violation, emphasising that access to a lawyer and the procedure met the requirements of justice. In *A.B. and B.D. v. Poland*,<sup>119</sup> the HRC found

113 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2006.

114 United Nations, 2020a.

115 United Nations, 2020.

116 United Nations, 2020c.

117 United Nations, 2005.

118 Human Rights Committee, 2011.

119 Human Rights Committee, 2023.

violations of Articles 7 and 13 of the ICCPR, as the complainants' asylum applications were arbitrarily dismissed, exposing them to the risk of refoulement to Russia.

A total of three finalised complaints have been registered against Romania, of which two have resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *Blaga and Blaga v. Portugal, Romania*,<sup>120</sup> the complainants alleged violations of Articles 12 and 26 of the ICCPR concerning the expropriation of their apartment due to emigration. The HRC found a violation of Article 26 of the ICCPR, emphasising the obligation to ensure equality before the law. The HRC stated that Romania is under an obligation to provide the complainants with an effective remedy, including prompt restitution of their property or compensation therefor. The case of *Blaga and Blaga v. Portugal, Romania* remains the only case in which Romania was found to have violated binding provisions of UN human rights treaties.

A total of 12 finalised complaints have been registered against Serbia, of which ten have resulted in substantive decisions. In one of the most recent cases, *Cubrilov et al. v. Serbia*,<sup>121</sup> found violations of Articles 2, 12, 13, and 14 of the CAT. In this case, the ComAT called on Serbia to, among other actions: launch a prompt, impartial and independent investigation into the torture and death of Mr. Cubrilov, including, where appropriate, the filing of specific torture charges against perpetrators, and the application of the corresponding penalties under domestic law; take the steps necessary to provide guarantees of non-repetition in connection with the facts in the present complaint; to review its criminal procedures in law and practice to ensure that cases of torture are promptly and adequately investigated ex officio by the authorities, even if victims or their relatives have not requested an investigation.

Another case, *Novakovic v. Serbia*,<sup>122</sup> involved the HRC, which found a violation of Article 2, Paragraph 3, in conjunction with Article 6 of the ICCPR. In this case, the HRC obligated Serbia to: ensure that the criminal proceedings against the persons responsible for the death of Mr. Novaković were speedily concluded and that, if convicted, they would be punished; provide the complainant with appropriate compensation.

A total of 18 finalised complaints have been registered against Slovakia, of which nine have resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *V.S. v. Slovakia*,<sup>123</sup> the CERD found violations of Articles 2(1)(a) and (c), 5(e)(i), and 6 of the ICERD. In this context, the CERD recommended that Slovakia fully enforce its Anti-discrimination Act by enhancing the available court proceedings for victims of racial discrimination. This includes ensuring, among other measures, that the principle of shifted burden of proof is applied in accordance with Article 11 of the Anti-discrimination Act, and providing clear information about available domestic remedies in cases of racial discrimination.

120 United Nations, 2006b.

121 United Nations, 2022.

122 United Nations, 2010a.

123 United Nations, 2016.

Another case, *Černáková v. Slovakia*,<sup>124</sup> involved the ComAT, which found violations of Article 2(1), read in conjunction with Article 16(1), and Articles 4(1), 11, 12, 14(1), and 16(1) of the CAT. In this case, the ComAT called on Slovakia to: to complete the investigation into the act in question with a view to sanctioning all persons who may have been responsible for the complainant's ill-treatment; to provide the complainant with appropriate redress, including compensation for material and non-material damages, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition; (c) to take measures to prevent the repetition of similar acts in the future, including by strictly regulating, in the context of CAT, the use of physical restraints in psychiatric and related institutions, by restricting the use of physical restraints in all establishments and preventing the use of unlawful or prohibited forms of restraints.

A total of one finalised complaint has been registered against Slovenia, but it was deemed inadmissible by the HRC.

A total of 24 finalised complaints have been registered against Ukraine, of which 13 have resulted in substantive decisions. In the case of *Viktor Taran v. Ukraine*,<sup>125</sup> the HRC found violations of Article 7, read alone and in conjunction with Article 2(3), Article 9, and Article 14(3)(b), (g), and (5) of the ICCPR. The HRC obliged Ukraine to take appropriate steps to: quash the author's conviction and, if necessary, conduct a new trial, in accordance with the principles of fair hearings and other procedural safeguards; conduct a thorough, prompt, and impartial investigation into the author's allegations of torture; provide the author with adequate compensation and other measures of satisfaction for the violations that occurred.

Another case, *O.M. v. Ukraine*,<sup>126</sup> involved the ComEDAW, which found violations of Article 2(a), (d) and (f), Article 3, and Article 5 of the CEDAW. The ComEDAW recommended that Ukraine take appropriate steps, including: ensuring that consular protection, in line with the CEDAW, and as enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, is effectively provided to Ukrainian women in vulnerable situations abroad; providing legal support to female nationals abroad in gaining access to justice and all legal guarantees of protection, including against gender-based discrimination and in child custody disputes; ensuring that consular staff are fully trained on matters pertaining to the conventions Ukraine has ratified or acceded to, including CEDAW.

The above analysis shows that there is considerable variation in the number of finalised complaints registered within the HRC, CESCRC, CERD, ComEDAW, ComAT, ComRC, CMW, and ComRPD. Among the countries analysed, the above criterion ranges from Slovenia, which has only one such complaint, to The Czech Republic, which has 61 complaints. It does not seem reasonable to draw conclusions about the level of human rights protection solely based on these numbers and assume that the greater the number of complaints, the greater the number of human rights violations in a given country. Such a conclusion is not only unfounded but also illogical. This is

124 Committee against Torture, n.d.

125 Human Rights Committee, 2020.

126 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2019.

primarily because the number of registered and finalised complaints does not necessarily reflect the number of complaints that have resulted in substantive decisions. Moreover, the number of complaints resulting in substantive decisions does not imply the number of cases in which a violation of UN human rights treaties was found. However, these numbers provide important information. This information concerns the accessibility and/or popularity of UN mechanisms in a given country, especially considering that some of the analysed countries are also EU member states, and all of them are members of the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, based on the data presented, it is possible to categorise all the analysed countries into five groups: 1. Countries with a very high number of complaints: this group includes only Czech Republic; 2. Countries with a high number of complaints: this group includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Hungary, and Slovakia; 3. Countries with a medium number of complaints: this group includes Bulgaria, Georgia, Poland and Serbia; 4. Countries with a low number of complaints: this group includes Moldova and Croatia; 5. Countries with a very low number of complaints: this group includes Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Albania and Slovenia.

As already noted, the above categorisation reflects only the number of registered and finalised complaints in the UN system. It does not indicate the level of human rights protection in a specific country, as demonstrated by the concrete examples from cases before UN committees provided above.

## 8. Conclusion

In this chapter, a comparative analysis of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine was conducted in terms of the protection of human rights provided under the UN system. This analysis is based on six key comparative points: historical development of human rights; relationship to the UN from a human rights perspective; the scope of international obligations from the perspective of UN human rights treaties; the process and time of accession, succession or ratification of certain UN human rights treaties; the impact of certain UN human rights treaties on national law; and cases before UN treaty bodies. The last three points focus on analysing selected UN treaties concerning human rights protection that form the core of the UN system (the CSR, ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CAT, CRC, ICMW, and CRPD). All of this was aimed at achieving the main goal of the study, which was to demonstrate the similarities and differences in the approaches of the analysed countries to the UN human rights protection system, including the implementation of the international obligations arising from it.

In conclusion, the entire analysis above provides information that allows for a collective presentation of all 16 countries in one summary table, finalising the goal of the study. The information presented in the table below provides its full picture only after reviewing the entire content of this chapter.

**Table 12.** Protection of Human Rights in the UN from a Central European and Certain Eastern European States' Perspective<sup>127</sup>

Country	Historical development of human rights	Relationship to the UN from a human rights perspective	The scope of international obligations from the perspective of UN human rights treaties	The process and time of accession (A), succession (S) or ratification (R) of certain UN human rights treaties	The impact of certain UN human rights treaties on national law	Cases before UN treaty bodies
Albania	Albania (as special case)	States actively cooperating with the UN but facing specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, OPICESCR, ICSPCA, ACAT, ICAS, ACRC, AFDIPLACM, and OPCRPD	ICERD – 1994 (A) ICESCR – 1991 (A) ICCPR – 1991 (A) CEDAW – 1994 (A) CAT – 1994 (A) CRC – 1992 (R) ICMW – 2007 (A) CRPD – 2013 (R) CSR – 1992 (A)	Western Balkans	A very low number of complaints
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Former Yugoslavia	States actively cooperating with the UN but encountering specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, ACAT, ACRC, and AFDIPLACM	ICERD – 1993 (S) ICESCR – 1994 (S) ICCPR – 1994 (S) CEDAW – 1994 (S) CAT – 1994 (S) CRC – 1994 (S) ICMW – 1997 (A) CRPD – 2010 (R) CSR – 1994 (S)	Western Balkans	A high number of complaints
Bulgaria	Post-communist countries of Central Europe	States actively cooperating with the UN but encountering specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to OPICESCR, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, OPCRPD, and ICPAPED	ICERD – 1966 (R) ICESCR – 1970 (R) ICCPR – 1970 (R) CEDAW – 1982 (R) CAT – 1987 (R) CRC – 1991 (R) CRPD – 2012 (R) CSR – 1993 (A)	Southeastern Europe	A medium number of complaints
Croatia	Former Yugoslavia	States actively and effectively cooperating with the UN in terms of implementation	Failure to accede to AICERD, OPICESCR, ACAT, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM	ICERD – 1993 (S) ICESCR – 1993 (S) ICCPR – 1993 (S) CEDAW – 1992 (S) CAT – 1993 (S) CRC – 1993 (S) CRPD – 2007 (R) CSR – 1993 (S)	Southeastern Europe	A low number of complaints

127 Author's own work.

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Country	Historical development of human rights	Relationship to the UN from a human rights perspective	The scope of international obligations from the perspective of UN human rights treaties	The process and time of accession (A), succession (S) or ratification (R) of certain UN human rights treaties	The impact of certain UN human rights treaties on national law	Cases before UN treaty bodies
Czech Republic	Post-communist countries of Central Europe	States actively and effectively cooperating with the UN in terms of implementation	Failure to accede to OPICESCR, ACAT, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM	ICERD – 1993 (S) ICESCR – 1993 (S) ICCPR – 1993 (S) CEDAW – 1993 (S) CAT – 1993 (S) CRC – 1993 (S) CRPD – 2009 (R) CSR – 1993 (S)	Central Europe	A very high number of complaints
Georgia	Post-Soviet countries	States actively cooperating with the UN but facing serious implementational challenges	Failure to accede to OPICESCR, ACAT, ICAS, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and ICPAPED	ICERD – 1999 (A) ICESCR – 1994 (A) ICCPR – 1994 (A) CEDAW – 1995 (A) CAT – 1995 (A) CRC – 1994 (A) CRPD – 2014 (R) CSR – 1999 (A)	Eastern Europe	A medium number of complaints
Hungary	Post-communist countries of Central Europe	States with an active but standardised approach to cooperation with the UN	Failure to accede to AICERD, OPICESCR, ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, ACRC, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and ICPAPED.	ICERD – 1967 (R) ICESCR – 1974 (R) ICCPR – 1974 (R) CEDAW – 1981 (R) CAT – 1987 (R) CRC – 1991 (R) CRPD – 2007 (R) CSR – 1989 (A)	Central Europe	A very high number of complaints
Moldova	Post-Soviet countries	States actively cooperating with the UN but encountering specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, OPICESCR, ACAT, ICAS, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and ICPAPED	ICERD – 1993 (A) ICESCR – 1993 (A) ICCPR – 1993 (A) CEDAW – 1994 (A) CAT – 1995 (A) CRC – 1993 (A) CRPD – 2010 (R) CSR – 2002 (A)	Eastern Europe	A low number of complaints
Montenegro	Former Yugoslavia	States actively cooperating with the UN but encountering specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, ACAT, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM	ICERD – 2006 (S) ICESCR – 2006 (S) ICCPR – 2006 (S) CEDAW – 2006 (S) CAT – 2006 (S) CRC – 2006 (S) CRPD – 2009 (R) CSR – 2006 (S)	Western Balkans	A very low number of complaints

Country	Historical development of human rights	Relationship to the UN from a human rights perspective	The scope of international obligations from the perspective of UN human rights treaties	The process and time of accession (A), succession (S) or ratification (R) of certain UN human rights treaties	The impact of certain UN human rights treaties on national law	Cases before UN treaty bodies
North Macedonia	Former Yugoslavia	States actively cooperating with the UN but facing specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and ICPAPED	ICERD – 1994 (S) ICESCR – 1994 (S) ICCPR – 1994 (S) CEDAW – 1994 (S) CAT – 1995 (S) CRC – 1994 (S) CRPD – 2011 (R) CSR – 1994 (S)	Western Balkans	A very low number of complaints
Poland	Post-communist countries of Central Europe	States with an active but standardised approach to cooperation with the UN	Failure to accede to OPICESCR, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, OPCRPD, ICPAPED, CSSP, and CRS	ICERD – 1968 (R) ICESCR – 1977 (R) ICCPR – 1977 (R) CEDAW – 1980 (R) CAT – 1989 (R) CRC – 1991 (R) CRPD – 2012 (R) CSR – 1991 (A)	Central Europe	A medium number of complaints
Romania	Post-communist countries of Central Europe	States actively cooperating with the UN but facing specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, OPICESCR, ICSPCA, ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, OPCRCpr, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, OPCRPD, and ICPAPED	ICERD – 1971 (A) ICESCR – 1975 (R) ICCPR – 1975 (R) CEDAW – 1982 (R) CAT – 1991 (A) CRC – 1990 (R) CRPD – 2011 (R) CSR – 1991 (A)	Eastern Europe	A very low number of complaints
Serbia	Former Yugoslavia	States actively cooperating with the UN but encountering specific implementational challenges	Failure to accede to AICERD, ACAT, OPCRCpr, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM	ICERD – 2001 (S) ICESCR – 2001 (S) ICCPR – 2001 (S) CEDAW – 2001 (S) CAT – 2001 (S) CRC – 2001 (S) CRPD – 2009 (R) CSR – 2001 (S)	Western Balkans	A medium number of complaints
Slovakia	Post-communist countries of Central Europe	States actively and effectively cooperating with the UN in terms of implementation	Failure to accede to ACEDAW, ACAT, ICAS, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM	ICERD – 1993 (S) ICESCR – 1993 (S) ICCPR – 1993 (S) CEDAW – 1993 (S) CAT – 1993 (S) CRC – 1993 (S) CRPD – 2010 (R) CSR – 1993 (S)	Central Europe	A high number of complaints

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Country	Historical development of human rights	Relationship to the UN from a human rights perspective	The scope of international obligations from the perspective of UN human rights treaties	The process and time of accession (A), succession (S) or ratification (R) of certain UN human rights treaties	The impact of certain UN human rights treaties on national law	Cases before UN treaty bodies
Slovenia	Former Yugoslavia	States actively and effectively cooperating with the UN in terms of implementation	Failure to accede to AICERD, OPICESCR, ACAT, ICAS, ACRC, ICMW, AFDIPLACM, and CRS	ICERD – 1992 (S) ICESCR – 1992 (S) ICCPR – 1992 (S) CEDAW – 1992 (S) CAT – 1993 (A) CRC – 1992 (S) CRPD – 2008 (R) CSR – 1992 (S)	Southeastern Europe	A very low number of complaints
Ukraine	Post-Soviet countries	States actively cooperating with the UN but facing serious implementational challenges.	Failure to accede to OPICESCR, ACEDAW, ICMW, and AFDIPLACM.	ICERD – 1969 (R) ICESCR – 1974 (R) ICCPR – 1973 (R) CEDAW – 1981 (R) CAT – 1987 (R) CRC – 1991 (R) CRPD – 2010 (R) CSR – 2002 (A)	Eastern Europe	A high number of complaints

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