

NATIONALE STELLE ZUR VERHÜTUNG VON FOLTER

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PRESS RELEASE

UN Committee concerned about resources of National Agency

Wiesbaden – After a support visit to the National Agency for the Prevention of Torture, the United Nations, through their Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), express their concern about the Agency's resources. The Subcommittee invites the Federal and State (*Länder*) Governments to address "in particular, the issue of adequate budgetary and personnel resources". It recommends different measures to the National Agency in order to secure maximum protection from mistreatments in Germany despite its limited resources. According to the SPT, apart from an increase in personnel, broader specific knowledge from areas such as medicine and psychology is required within the Agency.

Improved resources for the National Agency have to be adopted by the Federal State and the *Länder*. With the nomination of a vice-chairperson, the Federal Government has already doubled the number of members of the Federal Agency. The *Länder* declared on the spring session of the Justice Ministers' Conference in June 2013 that they aim to double the number of members of the Joint Commission to a total of eight. The new members should contribute to the Commission further knowledge from non-judicial areas. The Ministry of Justice of the Saarland was asked to discuss the financing of the increase with the Conferences of the Ministers of Home Affairs and of Labour- and Social Affairs. Many facilities to be visited by the Joint Commission are under the responsibility of these ministries.

The SPT, as well as the National Agency, was established under the Optional Protocol to the UN Anti-Torture Convention. It shall visit places of detention in the Member States to the Protocol. The SPT can also support the national preventive mechanisms in fulfilling their mandate. Upon a visit to a preventive mechanism it issues a report to the mechanism and the Member State's Government. Both are invited to submit comments.

The National Agency for the Prevention of Torture

The National Agency for the Prevention of Torture, consisting of the Federal Agency and the Joint Commission of the States (Länder), took up its work in May 2009 after the Federal Republic of Germany had ratified the UN Anti-Torture Convention, as have done a total of 69 states until now. It shall prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by regular visits to the almost 13,000 places of detention in Germany. To this end, it verifies the treatment of the persons in detention and issues recommendations.

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