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НАРОДЕН ПРАВОБРАНИТЕЛ

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AVOKATI I POPULLIT

O M B U D S M A N
Republic of Macedonia

The Ombudsman-National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) on **18.06.2014** carried out unannounced visit to the **Psychiatric hospital “Skopje”-Bardovci**, accompanied by external collaborators from the Association of psychiatrists, Association of social workers and the Association of nurses, technicians and midwives, on the basis of previously signed Memorandum of Cooperation.

The aim of the visit is monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations from the separate report of the NPM from 2012 and identifying risks with aim of prevention of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The visit of the **Psychiatric hospital “Skopje”** was carried out in several steps. The NPM team met with the management of the hospital, and then split in two teams and inspected the acute department, the judicial department, the department for urgent psychiatry, the alcoholic department, the department for continued treatment, rehabilitation and re-socialization, the department for continued treatment and care (male and female unit), the department for psycho-geriatrics, the department for psychiatric rehabilitation (Hostel), and the department for occupational therapy, the kitchen, the dining room and the storage for nutrition and other products. During the visit there was also an inspection of the medical files of the visited departments and the documentation for fixation.

The NPM carried out a targeted visit which was focused on several negative conclusions from the separate report of 2012 and inspected the implementation of the given recommendations for improvement of the conditions and elimination of the shortcoming and risks that may lead to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Since there were new conditions detected, aside of the recommendations given in 2012, additional recommendations were given for the purpose of undertaking appropriate measures.

During this follow up visit the NPM concluded that the recommendations given from the visit of November 2012 are partially implemented. Only few recommendations are fully implemented, several of them have not been implemented at all.

During the visit the NPM did not receive a complaint about the treatment of the medical personnel, nor about a use of excessive force. Some of the patients were satisfied with the food (the quality and the quantity), but there were patients who were only partially satisfied since they need more meat and vegetables. In some of the visited departments old mattresses and linen were noticed. There is a need of their regular replacement as well as disinfection due to prevention of spreading diseases or transmitting pests.

During the first visit it was concluded that the hospital has a personnel who does not fully satisfy the needs of this facility. The NPM concluded that although additional employments took place in the meantime, the hospital still lacks adequate expert staff for implementation of its planned activities.

The NPM was also informed about the ongoing process of renovation and construction of new departments as part of this facility. Since the construction activities continue, a mix of several categories of patients was detected, in particular in the chronic department.

During this follow up visit the NPM concluded that the hospital continues to use the old form of consent which requires a doctors' consent for a voluntary leave of a patient, contrary to the article 27 of the Law on protection of the rights of the patients, where a procedure for voluntary leave without prior notice is envisaged.

During the interview the NPM had with several nurses, it was informed that in several departments the showering is individual but there is still a small group of patients who are in a bad condition (they are not capable of having a shower by themselves), and are being assisted by the nurses. In the internal department the NPM received an information that the patients in this department are having a shower individually and always in presence of a nurse.

The NPM concluded that the team of the department for occupational therapy organizes all its activities on a daily basis for all departments and centers for mental health of the community. Still, this department is limited due to the need of additional human resources and a separate budget for this important process of treatment and social rehabilitation of persons with mental illnesses. The NPM concluded that the patients are involved in the occupational therapy but not on a satisfactory level and there is still a need to be stimulated and included in this kind of therapy.

As a result of this visit, the National Preventive Mechanism prepared a report where it concluded the conditions and gave appropriate recommendations to the Ministry of Health and the Psychiatric hospital "Skopje" with aim to eliminate the identified shortcomings.