

Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities



**Ninth activity report
covering the period
from 1 June 2012
to 31 May 2014**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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French edition:
*Comité consultatif de la Convention-cadre
pour la protection des minorités nationales*

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Foreword by the President

The past two years have been intensive and demanding for the Advisory Committee. The third monitoring cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Council of Europe member states that have ratified the convention is reaching its end and the fourth monitoring cycle has begun. In many states parties, there are now sufficient institutional structures to allow for the effective guarantee of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The Advisory Committee devotes attention in its monitoring endeavours not only to structures and processes at central level, but over the years increasingly also to implementation as it is carried out at regional and local levels. Often the realities prevailing at regional or local level can be very different, positively or negatively, from the realities as understood and felt in capital cities. For this reason, follow-up activities are all the more important as they facilitate discussions and exchanges between all levels and actors concerned, including national minorities.

It has been the effort of the Advisory Committee and its bureau to bring the outcomes of its work to a wider audience through a range of different channels. More can still be done for instance through follow-up meetings in states parties across Europe, the website of the Framework Convention and Advisory Committee and wise use of media communication.

Still, the essence of the Advisory Committee's work is the time-consuming and well-prepared monitoring process and continuous communication with states parties. The opinions adopted by the Advisory Committee following thorough and extensive discussions by the plenary represent the most detailed, regular and independent international legal accounts of the situation of national minorities in states parties. At times when intolerance, hate speech and physical attacks against persons belonging to minorities are on the increase across Europe, as well as tolerance towards intolerance, it is all the more important that these accounts are used actively and resolutely, domestically as well as internationally, for the adoption of policies and adequate measures that effectively guarantee the human rights of persons belonging to national minorities. The diversity and history of Europe leave us no other choice.

*Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermark
President of the ACFC (2012-2014)*



Introduction

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (“Framework Convention”), which came into force on 1 February 1998, is the most comprehensive treaty designed to protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. States Parties to the Framework Convention assume a legal obligation to promote the full and effective equality of persons belonging to national minorities in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life together with the conditions that will allow them to express, preserve and develop their culture and identity.

Thirty-nine states are currently party to this treaty and a special monitoring agreement related to Kosovo¹ was signed with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in 2004. Four Council of Europe member states have not signed this treaty and four member states have signed but not yet ratified it.²

The implementation of the Framework Convention is monitored by the Committee of Ministers, with the assistance of the independent Advisory Committee. The monitoring procedure includes a series of stages – submission of the state report by the authorities concerned, country visit, adoption by the Advisory Committee of its opinion, transmission of government comments, publication of the opinion and comments and adoption by the Committee of Ministers of a politically binding resolution. Set up in 1998 and composed of 18 independent experts appointed by the Committee of Ministers, the Advisory Committee is specifically entrusted with ensuring that the rights contained in the Framework Convention in the various fields of relevance for persons belonging to national minorities are adequately implemented by all states parties.

This ninth activity report offers an overview of developments relating to the Framework Convention and the work of the Advisory Committee between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014. Coinciding with the beginning of the Advisory Committee’s fourth cycle of monitoring, it also provides a welcome opportunity to reflect on the major trends and challenges for minority protection in Europe today. All documents and information relevant to the two-year period covered by this report can be found at www.coe.int/minorities.

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1. All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.
 2. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1995 and entered into force in 1998. It has been ratified by Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. Four member states of the Council of Europe – Belgium, Greece, Iceland and Luxembourg – have also signed it but not yet ratified it. Andorra, France, Monaco and Turkey have not signed the convention.



Part I

Trends and challenges for minority protection in Europe

The past two years have seen the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities pass a series of milestones: 15 years since it came into force, 15 years since monitoring of its implementation began, the launch of its third thematic commentary and, most recently, the start of the fourth cycle of monitoring. These landmarks provide an occasion not just for celebration but also for assessing critically the state of minority protection in Europe today.

The Framework Convention was born in the 1990s out of the realisation that protecting and respecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities as part of the universally recognised human rights framework was vital to ensuring democratic development, peace and security in Europe. The convention was therefore designed as a legally binding, multilateral human rights mechanism through which this aim could be achieved.

Ratifying the Framework Convention is a welcome sign of states' commitment to the principles it lays out, as well as of their willingness to be subject to regular scrutiny in the process of ensuring that persons belonging to national minorities can fully enjoy their rights. Thirty-nine member states of the Council of Europe have made this commitment. However, eight member states are not parties to the Framework Convention, accentuating disparities in the protection to which persons belonging to national minorities are entitled across Europe. And for the 39 ratifying states, a daily challenge remains: that of consistently implementing the Framework Convention's provisions in practice, over long periods of time, beyond changes in government and fluctuations in political will or economic circumstances.

Since the Advisory Committee began its monitoring work, we have seen commendable activity by states parties to bring domestic legislation and policies into line with the principles enshrined in the Framework Convention. We have welcomed the enactment of numerous national minority laws and seen the creation by many states of mechanisms designed to create a forum for dialogue and facilitate consultations with national minorities on matters of concern to them. These developments constitute fundamental stepping stones in creating favourable conditions for the protection of minority rights.

Alongside this very positive trend, it has also become clear that legislating is not enough. Changes to the law to accommodate minority rights are not always implemented or applied equally throughout a state. Just as importantly, they also do not automatically lead to a change in political culture. The Advisory Committee's monitoring work shows that in order to change the daily reality of persons belonging to national minorities, improvements to the legal framework and the structures in place must go hand in hand with the introduction of more open practices at all levels of government. A firm commitment is also needed to taking an integrated approach to national minorities: taking account of their concerns and promoting full and effective equality including through positive measures. Ensuring inclusion and non-discrimination in all fields of daily life should become a reflex in all political processes. When this happens, not only are persons belonging to national minorities likely to feel more secure and able to participate fully in society without hiding their identity, but public perceptions of diversity also tend to be more positive.

As the Advisory Committee enters its 16th year, it is, however, acutely aware of certain worrying trends that may threaten the peaceful enjoyment of their rights by persons belonging to national minorities.³

As a starting point, it should be acknowledged that states face a constant challenge when seeking to promote an integrated society, in which all persons enjoy full and effective equality: how can states strengthen the process of integration and create a shared sense of belonging among all persons in society while at the same time protecting diversity and encouraging individuals to affirm their different ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identities? For the Advisory Committee, it is clear that in order to arrive at a fairer and more pluralistic society that is not only open to but that also promotes diversity, efforts are required from both the majority and minorities. Governments have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the adjustments required on all sides do not lead to mutual resentment but are based on the shared understanding that such efforts are preferable to a lack of contact between different groups or to allowing tensions to persist.

Unfortunately, there are still some places in Europe where persons expressing a minority identity are perceived or even portrayed as by definition disloyal to the state where they live. This is a lose-lose situation: first, denying their identity is in itself a violation of minorities' rights, thus inevitably leading to increased tensions; but in parallel, having engaged in such discourse, it is difficult for a state to grant greater recognition later to persons belonging to such minorities without running the risk that the majority population will perceive the authorities as weak or "selling out".

The Framework Convention is based on the premise that for cultural diversity to be a factor of enrichment of society, and not a source of tensions, states must actively promote and nurture a climate of tolerance and intercultural dialogue. Mutual respect and understanding, and the need to create conditions allowing minorities to preserve, express and develop their identity, form the central thread running through all of the convention's provisions. Against this background, the rise in racist,

3. The overall concerns set out below reflect roughly the order of the Framework Convention's provisions.

xenophobic and extremist discourse in Europe in recent years – including anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, anti-Gypsy, anti-migrant and anti-refugee discourse – as well as of political parties relying on such rhetoric, is of particularly deep concern. Not only does such discourse run counter to the fundamental principles of human rights and human dignity on which the Council of Europe is based, but it also poses a direct threat to persons belonging to national minorities, especially when it is combined with incidents of harassment or even physical attacks targeting persons belonging to national minorities in Europe.

The Advisory Committee has also expressed concern in cases where the media and/or political parties that are not in power peddle the view that minorities, especially those whose socio-economic situation is generally less favourable than that of the rest of the population, are mere obstacles to the realisation of greater prosperity for all or a burden on society. In such cases it is vital that the authorities engage actively in breaking down stereotypes and reframing debates: not only the symptoms but also the underlying causes of inequality must be addressed.

Issues around education in minority languages and their use remain challenging. Providing for the use of minority languages in public life, for teaching of and in minority languages and for training of future teachers is costly and may seem especially hard to justify in times of economic crisis. But the hidden, long-term costs to society of denying recognition to the identity of persons belonging to national minorities must also never be forgotten. Furthermore, multilingualism and cross-border contacts as facilitated and guaranteed by the Framework Convention are also valuable financial assets in times of rapid globalisation. For states, striking a balance in this field between what is feasible and forward-looking in economic terms and adequately responding to the needs and rights of persons belonging to national minorities is no easy task. The Framework Convention underlines that persons belonging to national minorities have a right to learn their language and have their identity affirmed and included in the educational system, while not precluding the need and right also to learn the official language of the state. Consultation with national minorities is thus vital to ensure that economic and other concerns do not result in them being deprived of their rights and that the solutions found take due account of their needs. Moreover, state policies need to be based on the recognition that fostering multilingualism is not only of cognitive benefit to the individuals concerned and a means for them of affirming their identity, but also contributes directly to promoting intercultural understanding and co-operation.

In some states, a deep polarisation of society can be observed along linguistic lines, to the extent that it prevents serene discussions not only of the degree to which minority languages should be visible in the public sphere and able to be used in contacts with the authorities, but also of minority issues more generally. Events in a number of countries over the last two years have highlighted both how sensitive such matters may be to political instrumentalisation and how vulnerable persons belonging to national minorities may be if tensions escalate. This again throws into relief the importance of addressing long-term, underlying sources of tension through dialogue and with a view to building and strengthening mutual trust.

In spite of a number of national, international and other initiatives in this field, the persisting situation of disadvantage of the Roma also remains a source of deep concern to the Advisory Committee, which has consistently highlighted the need for states to make determined efforts to ensure that Roma are able to participate fully in social and economic life, on the basis of full and effective quality. Roma are also increasingly – and legitimately – calling for their rights in the fields of culture and education to be more adequately addressed. But Roma are calling louder still for states and societies to cease to treat them as a “problem” to be resolved – the “other”, who must be made to conform to mainstream society’s vision of itself – and to come to grips with a more fundamental question: how to create societies that do not generate the exclusion of Roma. Combating discrimination and segregation in daily life is an essential part of such a process, and states must continue to invest considerable efforts to achieve this, in close consultation with Roma representatives. But far deeper change is also needed to overcome long- and widely held perceptions, built up over centuries, of the Roma as outsiders, and to create an environment of mutual trust and openness in which all Roma are able to fulfil their potential and participate fully in society. This is the underlying challenge to which both states parties and Europe as a whole must resoundingly respond in order to create lasting change, to the benefit of all.

A further key challenge for the authorities is the fact that national minorities are not homogeneous groups. On the contrary, they are diverse groups in themselves, on the basis of sex, age, religion, political convictions, access to economic resources and so on. Different minorities within a country may also be more or less numerous, and more or less dispersed throughout the territory. For the authorities, this may make communicating with and accommodating minorities seem a somewhat challenging process: there is rarely a single viewpoint to be taken into account or a one-size-fits-all solution. This complex reality makes it especially important to put in place effective long-term consultation mechanisms to ensure that issues affecting persons belonging to national minorities can be dealt with in a way that allows the full variety and complexity of situations to be adequately addressed. The lack of such an effective mechanism, in which minorities can participate satisfactorily and in which they have confidence and trust, is, however, still one of the most frequently recurring findings in the Advisory Committee’s monitoring work.

In a broader perspective, how can the Framework Convention and its Advisory Committee – whose core business is as a monitoring mechanism – respond to the trends and challenges outlined above, and how should they adapt to the realities of Europe today? A first answer is that transparency and dialogue at all levels are central tenets of the Framework Convention, as communication creates vectors for building understanding, mutual respect and trust, without which diversity becomes a source of friction instead of a cause for celebration. As Parties to the Framework Convention, states have a responsibility to ensure that national minorities not only have a voice, but that their voices are heard and their concerns acted upon. Moreover, monitoring itself is not a unilateral process whereby the Advisory Committee evaluates states, but rather a permanent dialogue, which extends far beyond the mere drafting of an opinion every five years by the Advisory Committee and involves the Council of Europe, states parties, non-governmental organisations and other

independent sources. While each of these actors plays a different role, their shared aim is to improve the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and thus the living conditions and the overall climate of mutual respect and understanding in the countries concerned.

At the same time, the multilateral nature of the Framework Convention is essential to its effectiveness. As part of the universally recognised human rights architecture, the rights of persons belonging to national minorities are a matter of collective concern to all states, taking them beyond the realm of matters to be addressed between two (sometimes opposing) parties. While free and peaceful cross-border contacts among persons sharing an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity or common cultural heritage are expressly envisaged under the Framework Convention and may in many cases play a positive role, they must never serve to undermine the integration of minorities in the states where they live. There is a particular need for “kin”-states to refrain from taking unilateral steps in favour of “kin”-minorities (such as conferring citizenship *en masse*) that may destabilise the situation in the country where the “kin”-minority lives, and also to refrain from using the monitoring process itself to heighten tensions around sensitive issues. In the latter respect, the Advisory Committee welcomes the rapid adoption by the Committee of Ministers of its resolution completing the monitoring cycle with respect to specific states parties in several recent cases. It hopes that this trend will continue, not least because it allows the states parties concerned to focus their efforts on pursuing constructive dialogue at domestic level, where it is most needed.

Overall, as we enter the fourth cycle of monitoring under the Framework Convention, it can be said that despite the considerable efforts made by states parties over the years, problems for persons belonging to national minorities have not disappeared. There is still a need not just to pursue but to reinvigorate our joint efforts to protect and promote minority rights. The particular strength of the Advisory Committee as part of this collective enterprise is that it aims at the thoroughness, coherence and consistency of its monitoring efforts.

The monitoring process as a whole, and especially the dialogue it necessarily brings with it, contributes to building the pluralist and genuinely democratic societies to which the Parties to the Framework Convention aspire. In such societies, the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority is respected, and each person belonging to a national minority is able to express, preserve and develop their identity. The Advisory Committee remains committed to playing a central role in ensuring that this vision is translated into reality, for the benefit of both persons belonging to national minorities and the societies to which they belong.



Part II

Country-specific monitoring by the Advisory Committee

The monitoring procedure set up under the Framework Convention requires each state party to submit a first report within one year of entry into force of the convention and, thereafter, a report every five years. Having examined the state report and visited the country in order to gather further information during meetings with government and minority representatives, the Advisory Committee adopts its opinion on the implementation of the convention in the country. The opinion is forwarded to the authorities concerned, who provide their comments on the Advisory Committee's findings. The opinion is published upon its receipt by the government or four months later together with the latter's comments. Based on the Advisory Committee's opinion, the Committee of Ministers adopts a politically binding resolution, containing conclusions and recommendations in respect of the state concerned (see flow chart in Appendix 4).

In the two years covered by the present report, the Advisory Committee received 16 reports and adopted 15 opinions at a total of six plenary meetings. Members of the Advisory Committee's working groups took part in 12 visits. In addition, five follow-up activities were also organised in close partnership with the authorities concerned.

Over the same period, the Committee of Ministers adopted its resolutions in respect of 20 Parties to the Framework Convention. These resolutions completed the monitoring cycles in respect of almost all the countries having submitted their state reports prior to 1 June 2012 as well as one country having submitted its state report during the present reference period.

In parallel to its country-by-country monitoring activities, the Advisory Committee has continued to pursue its thematic work through the ongoing elaboration of a commentary on the scope of application of the Framework Convention (see further below, Part IV). This text is intended to complement the thematic work already done in the 2006 commentary on education under the Framework Convention, the 2008 commentary on the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs and the 2012 commentary on the language rights of persons belonging to national minorities under the Framework Convention.

State reports

The start of a new cycle of monitoring is synonymous with a surge in activity under the Framework Convention. In March 2013 the Advisory Committee adopted proposals for the outline of fourth-cycle state reports, which the Committee of Ministers approved in April 2013. Eighteen states parties were due to submit their fourth-cycle state reports, based on this outline, between February and May 2014. States are encouraged to consult national minorities when preparing the report, to ensure that it is comprehensive and complete.

Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014, the Advisory Committee received a total of 15 state reports as well as the third progress report on Kosovo*, commencing a new monitoring cycle in each case:

Fourth monitoring cycle

- ▶ Denmark and the Slovak Republic in January 2014
- ▶ Germany, Italy and Spain in March 2014
- ▶ Liechtenstein and Cyprus in April 2014
- ▶ Estonia in May 2014
- ▶ 10 out of 18 fourth-cycle state reports due in this period are still awaited.

Third monitoring cycle

- ▶ Bulgaria in November 2012
- ▶ Poland in December 2012
- ▶ Serbia in March 2013
- ▶ Portugal in September 2013
- ▶ In addition, the third progress report on Kosovo* was received from UNMIK in September 2012.

Second monitoring cycle

- ▶ Latvia, Montenegro and the Netherlands in September 2012. The receipt of these state reports means that there are no longer any outstanding second-cycle state reports from states having ratified the Framework Convention.

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that many states parties follow an inclusive approach in the preparation of their reports, and involve civil society stakeholders – national minority organisations, human rights NGOs, etc. – in related discussions or in the drafting process itself. Nevertheless, these consultations are sometimes inadequate and views expressed by minority representatives are not systematically included in the final report. While the states parties are responsible for the submission of the reports, in line with Article 25 of the Framework Convention related to monitoring arrangements, the Advisory Committee hopes that the best practices of inclusiveness, now adopted by most states parties to the convention, will spread and serve as an example to those states parties that do not yet adhere to it.

The calendar for the submission of state reports is such that due dates for the submission of state reports are spread unevenly across the five-year monitoring cycle, with a glut of reports due in some periods and a scarcity in others. As the figures with respect to fourth-cycle state reports above also reveal, many states parties do not submit their state report within the time-frame expected under the Framework Convention. These two factors combined make it particularly difficult to plan the Advisory Committee's monitoring activities efficiently. Delays in the submission of state reports may, moreover, also delay the adoption of the respective opinions and, consequently, of the corresponding resolutions by the Committee of Ministers. This in turn affects subsequent monitoring cycles and hinders the exercise by the Advisory Committee of its role as "guardian" of the Framework Convention in all states parties. With these concerns in mind, the Advisory Committee has sought to simplify the task of states parties by emphasising, in the outline for fourth-cycle state reports, the importance of focusing on new developments, with the possibility of referring to specific information contained in previous state reports wherever it is still current.

Country visits

Country visits – now a well-established practice – form an indispensable part of the monitoring process. They allow the Advisory Committee to build up the fullest possible understanding of the situation in the country, by meeting with government officials at central and regional level, representatives of parliament and relevant institutions including ombudsmen, as well as civil society organisations, including minority representatives.

Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014, delegations of the Advisory Committee carried out 12 visits as part of its regular monitoring procedure:

Fourth monitoring cycle

- ▶ Denmark in March 2014

Third monitoring cycle

- ▶ Azerbaijan in July 2012
- ▶ Bosnia and Herzegovina and Switzerland in November 2012
- ▶ Kosovo* in December 2012
- ▶ Serbia in May 2013
- ▶ Poland in June 2013
- ▶ Lithuania in July 2013
- ▶ Bulgaria in November 2013 (joint visit with ECRI)

Second monitoring cycle

- ▶ Montenegro in January 2013
- ▶ Latvia and the Netherlands in March 2013

Considering that country visits are an important aspect of its monitoring work, the Advisory Committee continues to examine regularly how to improve the organisation of this activity, as well as the composition of the visiting delegations in order to maintain the high quality and efficiency of its work. The importance of careful advance planning and substantive preparation is underscored by the two-fold objective of each visit: to collect specific information from actors that are directly involved in or affected by the implementation of the Framework Convention to complement the state report, and to enhance the ongoing dialogue between the Advisory Committee and relevant national actors. In addition to meetings with government and civil society representatives living or working in capital cities, the Advisory Committee continues to visit minority-populated areas to evaluate the situation experienced by the national minorities on the ground.

Country-specific opinions

Having studied the state report and any other relevant documents, and following a country visit wherever possible, the Advisory Committee draws up its opinion, which is examined and adopted collegially at one of the Advisory Committee's plenary sessions. Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014, the Advisory Committee adopted a total of 15 opinions:

Fourth monitoring cycle

- ▶ Denmark and Liechtenstein in May 2014

Third monitoring cycle

- ▶ Azerbaijan, Ireland and Malta in October 2012
- ▶ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Switzerland in March 2013
- ▶ Lithuania, Poland and Serbia in November 2013
- ▶ Bulgaria in February 2014

Second monitoring cycle

- ▶ Latvia, Montenegro and the Netherlands in June 2013

Only one second-cycle opinion still remains to be adopted, on Georgia. Georgia submitted its second-cycle state report with only a slight delay, on 30 May 2012, even though the Committee of Ministers had not yet adopted its resolution with respect to the first cycle of monitoring. The Advisory Committee strongly hopes that the Committee of Ministers will shortly adopt its resolution, thus closing the first cycle of monitoring with respect to Georgia and allowing the second cycle to be carried out to completion.

As noted in the Advisory Committee's previous activity report, there has been a logical progression through its monitoring cycles in the contents of its opinions and of the recommendations it makes to states parties. An invitation to take certain steps in the first cycle may turn into a recommendation to do so in the second cycle, which then evolves into a recommendation for immediate action after the third cycle. At the same time, in its third-cycle monitoring, the Advisory Committee has reiterated

its previous concerns if the matters at issue have not been resolved and urged that they be addressed. It has also provided more detailed arguments for its recommendations, and, if no progress has been made regarding issues that have already been criticised before, the Advisory Committee has strengthened its language. The progression towards more specific recommendations in successive monitoring cycles lies in the very nature of monitoring. Third-cycle opinions also contain three to five main recommendations that are for immediate action. The aim is not to create distinctions between more or less important rights but rather to signal to states parties where the priority concerns lie and where attention is most needed within the specific context of each state.

In its fourth cycle, the Advisory Committee will maintain the practice of formulating a small number of recommendations for immediate action, accompanied by further recommendations.

Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers

The adoption of a resolution by the Committee of Ministers is the final step of the monitoring process *stricto sensu*. The resolution is the product of all the previous steps referred to above and is closely based on the opinion formulated by the Advisory Committee. For this reason, it is important that states take the full reasoning of the Advisory Committee into account when implementing the recommendations contained in the Committee of Ministers' resolution.

The Advisory Committee values its working relations with the Committee of Ministers in this context. Its findings continue to be endorsed by the Committee of Ministers. The Committee of Ministers also continues to encourage dialogue between the Advisory Committee and the states parties to the Framework Convention. The latter have, on many occasions, expressed their satisfaction with the fruitful co-operation developed with the Advisory Committee.

In February 2014, the Advisory Committee invited the Chair of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H) to an exchange of views during the Advisory Committee's plenary meeting. This occasion provided a welcome opportunity to discuss ways of improving mutual understanding and speeding up the monitoring process. In parallel, the GR-H has continued to invite the President of the Advisory Committee to its meetings to present country-specific opinions and express views and concerns on related developments. These meetings facilitate a direct assessment of how the opinions are perceived by states parties, and also provide an opportunity to exchange information regularly on non-country-specific issues of special importance to the Framework Convention and its monitoring mechanism.

Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014, the Committee of Ministers adopted a total of 20 resolutions:

Third monitoring cycle

- ▶ Austria, Denmark and Estonia in June 2012
- ▶ Italy, Norway, Slovenia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in July 2012

- ▶ Czech Republic and United Kingdom in December 2012
- ▶ Russian Federation in April 2013
- ▶ Sweden in June 2013
- ▶ Spain in July 2013
- ▶ Romania and Ukraine in December 2013
- ▶ Albania and Ireland in February 2014
- ▶ Switzerland in May 2014

Second monitoring cycle

- ▶ Lithuania and Poland in November 2012
- ▶ Netherlands in May 2014

The Advisory Committee welcomes the high number of resolutions adopted during the period covered by this report, including a number which had been outstanding for very long periods of time (in two cases, more than three or four years respectively). It also welcomes the Committee of Ministers' rapid adoption of its resolution in several recent cases. As noted above, the Advisory Committee strongly regrets, however, that the first-cycle resolution on Georgia has still not been adopted, while the Advisory Committee's opinion dates from 2009.

In the opinion of the Advisory Committee, the multilateral monitoring mechanism provided for in the Framework Convention is of particular importance for minority protection in Europe. The joint evaluation process, including at the level of the Committee of Ministers, ensures that the implementation of minority rights is assessed beyond the scope of bilateral or interstate relations, which resulted in insufficient protection of minority rights and increasing tensions in the past. In this context, the Advisory Committee finds it essential to identify ways of improving co-operation between all parties concerned at the GR-H level in order to expedite the adoption of resolutions as an important part of the monitoring procedure.

Ad hoc country-specific follow-up by the Advisory Committee

In accordance with paragraph 36 of Resolution (97) 10 of the Committee of Ministers on the monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention, the Advisory Committee shall be involved in the monitoring of the follow-up to the conclusions and recommendations on an ad hoc basis, as instructed by the Committee of Ministers. Until 2014, this possibility had, however, never been used.

In March 2014, at the request of the Ukrainian authorities, the Committee of Ministers instructed the Advisory Committee, in accordance with the above provisions, to review the situation of national minorities in Ukraine and to report on its findings as soon as possible.⁴ The Advisory Committee carried out an ad hoc visit to Ukraine from 21 to 26 March 2014, holding meetings in Odessa, Kharkiv and Kyiv. It adopted in plenary an ad hoc report on 1 April 2014 and immediately forwarded it to the

⁴. CM/Del/Dec(2014)1194/1.7.

Committee of Ministers. The Advisory Committee welcomes the Committee of Ministers' immediate publication of this report.

The Advisory Committee appreciates the conduct of ad hoc follow-up to monitoring in line with paragraph 36 of Resolution (97) 10 of the Committee of Ministers as one means of acting to better protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in crisis situations. It welcomes the decision of the Committee of Ministers to pursue this avenue in the case of Ukraine and observes that it highlights the importance attached by the Council of Europe to guaranteeing minority rights in all situations, including where there may be a use or threat of force. The Advisory Committee's analysis of the situation in Ukraine also provided an opportunity to examine and underline the importance of ensuring a wise sequencing between constitutional and electoral processes and processes aiming at promoting minority rights.

Nonetheless, the Advisory Committee emphasises that ad hoc follow-up activities remain the exception rather than the rule. The essence of the Advisory Committee's work remains its regular monitoring procedure, which enhances dialogue and facilitates the implementation at domestic level of the obligations contained in the Framework Convention. Through its ordinary work, the Advisory Committee thus strives to contribute continuously to promoting human rights, stability, democratic security and peace throughout Europe.



Part III

Transparency of the process and dialogue

Publicity of the Advisory Committee's opinions

As noted in previous activity reports, a major procedural improvement was adopted in 2009:⁵ the Advisory Committee's opinion can now automatically be published four months after it has been sent to the state party concerned, irrespective of whether the Committee of Ministers has adopted the respective resolution. States can also publish it immediately (and indeed are encouraged to do so). The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that over the last two years, several states parties have again chosen to publish the Advisory Committee's opinion immediately. This is an important means of promoting dialogue at domestic level on the implementation of minority rights.

Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014, a total of 16 Advisory Committee opinions were published:

Third monitoring cycle

- ▶ Albania in June 2012
- ▶ Russian Federation in July 2012
- ▶ Romania in October 2012
- ▶ Spain and Sweden in November 2012
- ▶ Ireland and Ukraine in April 2013
- ▶ Azerbaijan and Kosovo* in September 2013
- ▶ Switzerland in November 2013
- ▶ Malta in January 2014
- ▶ Poland in February 2014
- ▶ Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 2014

Second monitoring cycle

- ▶ Netherlands in December 2013
- ▶ Latvia in January 2014
- ▶ Montenegro in February 2014

5. CM/Res(2009)3 of 16 April 2009 amending Resolution (97) 10 on the monitoring arrangements under Articles 24-26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The Advisory Committee encourages states parties to translate the opinion not only into the official language(s) of the country, but also into minority languages, which contributes to a wider dissemination and a better understanding of the implementation of the Framework Convention within the country. While the opinion is, formally, an advisory report provided by a committee of independent experts to the Committee of Ministers, it also constitutes a comprehensive document containing detailed reasoning which can usefully be taken into account by states parties when considering how best to implement the prescriptive part of the monitoring process represented by the Committee of Ministers' resolution.

The timely publication of opinions and government comments has moreover made it possible, in a number of countries, to start working with the authorities and civil society at a very early stage on the implementation of the recommendations. It has also ensured that the findings and recommendations are not outdated at the moment of their publication.

Publicity of government comments

States parties have the opportunity to submit their written comments on the Advisory Committee opinion within four months of the transmission of the opinion. These government comments constitute an important occasion to respond to the findings of the Advisory Committee and point out different views or developments that are considered of relevance by the authorities. The opinion and the comments of the government are made public at the same time to ensure transparency. Some states have included in their comments the views and suggestions expressed by minority NGOs in response to the Advisory Committee opinion. Such an approach has been welcomed by the Advisory Committee and is considered good practice.

Importance of follow-up activities

Monitoring does not end with the adoption of the Committee of Ministers' resolution. The organisation of follow-up seminars is another key step in the process. The Advisory Committee has therefore always encouraged states parties to organise follow-up activities. These are usually one- to two-day conferences, gathering minority representatives, national and local authorities, experts and civil society organisations. Such meetings have proved an excellent opportunity for examining the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and Committee of Ministers at national level and considering legal and practical arrangements for implementing them. They also constitute a useful way for the Advisory Committee to keep abreast of national developments and the viewpoints of various actors between two cycles of monitoring. While all opinions and resolutions are available in English and French, the two official languages of the Council of Europe, the follow-up activities provide an occasion to distribute the opinions and resolutions across the country in the official language(s) of the state party concerned as well as – where possible – in minority languages, thus contributing to a better understanding of the Framework Convention in broader society.

Between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2014, five follow-up events were held:

Third monitoring cycle

- ▶ Armenia in June 2012
- ▶ Sweden in April 2013
- ▶ Czech Republic, Kosovo* and Switzerland in December 2013

The Advisory Committee regrets that this is a relatively low number of follow-up events, especially when compared with the high number of opinions and resolutions adopted in the same period. The Advisory Committee underlines that, while not obligatory, follow-up activities provide a unique opportunity for a domestic discussion of the monitoring findings by the parties concerned, involving direct exchanges between the authorities and minority representatives. They also provide a chance to reflect in more depth on the findings and recommendations of the Advisory Committee, which sometimes are appreciated neither by the authorities nor by minority representatives, and to discuss directly with the Advisory Committee possible obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations. They are a valuable means to promote dialogue and encourage effective participation by the various stakeholders while making them more aware of the Framework Convention and its local relevance.

The Advisory Committee is currently reviewing best practices as regards follow-up activities. In the past two years, some states parties have, for example, taken the initiative to invite the Advisory Committee to participate in meetings at domestic level on specific issues identified as of concern during the monitoring process, thus allowing for more tailor-made follow-up based on where capacity-building is most needed. For the Advisory Committee, it is most important that follow-up events, whatever form they take, act as catalysts for progress. When successful, they can break through mutual misperceptions or mistrust and allow states and minority representatives to move forward together, based on a common understanding of what is sought and what is achievable. As such, they can be a powerful tool for ensuring the effective implementation of the Framework Convention at domestic level.

Outreach through the media

In the past two years, the Advisory Committee and its bureau have devoted considerable efforts to bringing the work of the Advisory Committee closer to the general public through media platforms that are accessible to all. Through podcasts and interviews on the Council of Europe's Web TV, as well as through interviews broadcast in the media in specific countries, members of the Advisory Committee have in particular addressed topical questions of concern to national minorities, with the aim of making the issues at stake more accessible to the wider public and thus strengthening mutual understanding and awareness on these points.

The Advisory Committee welcomes the support it has received from the Council of Europe's media services in these endeavours and looks forward to increasing its media presence and developing media strategies further in future years. It also continues to make the results of its work widely accessible through its website, www.coe.int/minorities.



Part IV

Thematic work of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee's thematic work takes its findings beyond the country-specific focus of monitoring activities and brings them into a broader context. The lessons learned in one country may provide valuable insights and assistance in dealing with similar questions elsewhere. By taking a step back from particular situations and looking at the issues through a more conceptual prism, the Advisory Committee seeks to raise awareness and understanding and promote constructive dialogue about some of the more complex or sensitive questions that confront both the authorities and minorities in their daily affairs.

On 15 October 2012, the Advisory Committee launched its third thematic commentary on the language rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the main contents of which were detailed in the Advisory Committee's previous activity report. The great interest shown in this commentary, both by representatives from capitals and other national and international actors, underlines its relevance as a tool for European societies today, which are grappling with the challenge of promoting the integration of minorities – while respecting and indeed protecting and promoting their specific identities. The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that this commentary has now been translated into seven European languages (Albanian, Armenian, Estonian, German, Latvian, Russian and Serbian), in addition to the two official languages of the Council of Europe. In connection with the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of the Framework Convention and in order to make them more readily available to member states and other interested actors, the first three thematic commentaries have now also been published in a collected edition. The Advisory Committee observes that in order to enhance their practical impact, thematic commentaries should also be translated into as many languages as possible.

At its 46th plenary meeting in March 2013, the Advisory Committee decided to devote its next thematic commentary to the scope of application of the Framework Convention. Since the Advisory Committee's first monitoring cycle, the question of the persons to whom the provisions of the Framework Convention should apply in

any given state has been a recurring theme. The Advisory Committee concluded that it is its duty to assess whether the approach taken in individual states parties is not arbitrarily excluding certain groups that wish to be covered by the Framework Convention. Nonetheless, issues surrounding the scope of application of the Framework Convention remain among the least understood in practice and may therefore occasionally be a source of tensions.

The Advisory Committee expects that its fourth thematic commentary will, similarly to the first three commentaries on education, effective participation and language rights of persons belonging to national minorities,⁶ provide useful guidance to state authorities, decision makers, minority representatives, non-governmental organisations and other relevant stakeholders. With a view to the development at the broadest level of cohesive, inclusive and tolerant societies, the commentary is intended to offer advice and practical recommendations in order to assist when drafting legislation and policies in which the scope of application of the Framework Convention is at stake.

6. See the thematic commentary on education under the Framework Convention (2006), the thematic commentary on the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social, economic life and in public affairs (2008) and the thematic commentary on the language rights of persons belonging to national minorities under the Framework Convention (2012).

Part V

Co-operation with other bodies

Since the beginning of its activities, the Advisory Committee has placed particular emphasis on co-operation with other bodies active in the field of minority protection both within and outside the Council of Europe. Maintaining and strengthening synergies with its traditional partners, including civil society, and developing good working relations with new bodies involved in minority protection, as well as academia in the states parties, has been a constant feature of the Committee's work during the period covered by the present report. The Advisory Committee was particularly pleased to have been able to organise during the current reporting period two major events involving significant contributions from and exchanges with such partners: the launch of its third thematic commentary in October 2012 and a high-level conference in November 2013 to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the entry into force of the Framework Convention. Throughout this period, the Advisory Committee and its secretariat also provided support to a significant number of awareness-raising activities, round-table discussions and seminars, with an aim to promote knowledge of the Framework Convention among key audiences. In this context, the Advisory Committee is pleased to note that its findings have regularly been taken into account by the European Court of Human Rights in relevant jurisprudence relating to minority rights protection as well as in the activities of the Human Rights Commissioner. In addition, members of the Advisory Committee and the secretariat attended many minority-related events organised by national and international institutions in different countries (see Appendix 5). The Advisory Committee has also continued to make use of the acquired expertise of its former members through their participation in its activities where appropriate.

Co-operation activities within the Council of Europe

The Advisory Committee welcomes the invitation extended by the Secretary General to presidents of Council of Europe human rights monitoring bodies during the current reporting period to participate in an annual informal meeting aimed at supporting their work, strengthening co-operation and ensuring that effective follow-up is given to their findings. The various monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe have continued to increase their co-operation since 2012 to develop further synergies and optimise the use of existing resources. For the secretariat of the Framework Convention, this has in particular meant close co-operation with ECRI, as well as increased collaboration with the secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter the Language Charter). At the level of strategic co-operation, the plenary meeting of the Advisory Committee in June 2013 was organised to coincide with the plenaries of ECRI and of the Committee of Experts of the Language Charter. This opportunity was used to hold a joint meeting of the three bureaux to discuss synergies among different monitoring bodies. The bureaux' meeting was followed by a joint plenary session of all three bodies, during which they discussed the necessary preconditions for constructive synergies. An exchange of views was also held with the Director of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies.

The Advisory Committee's co-operation with ECRI continued, in particular, through the organisation of a joint country visit to Bulgaria in November 2013. This was the second such monitoring exercise organised jointly with ECRI, following the encouragement of member states. The visit to Bulgaria was chosen as the respective visits of the two monitoring bodies were to take place at roughly the same period and a number of issues to be addressed were common to both mechanisms. The delegation was composed of representatives of both monitoring mechanisms and secretariats. A planning meeting of the heads of delegations and the two secretariats was held prior to the visit, in addition to extensive co-ordination between the two secretariats. Each of the monitoring bodies subsequently adopted its findings separately following the normal procedures, and was assisted throughout by a member of its secretariat. The joint visit allowed the authorities and civil society representatives in Bulgaria to address issues of interest to ECRI and the Advisory Committee during a single visit, which was considered an important saving of time and effort, and a means of increasing the synergies between the two monitoring mechanisms. At the same time, the very tight time constraints during the visit meant that it was extremely difficult to address in depth the full range of issues connected to minority rights protection.

This second experience of a joint monitoring visit confirmed some of the Advisory Committee's conclusions from the first such exercise, conducted in Ireland in 2012. First, joint monitoring visits raise numerous logistical issues, the resolution of which requires considerable engagement from all those involved. It is clear, for example, that the commitment of the Bulgarian authorities to the success of this joint visit was a central factor in ensuring that the two delegations were able to meet the necessary interlocutors during the visit. Second, time constraints – which are a challenge in any country visit – are felt even more strongly before and during a joint visit. Ideally, at least one additional day would be needed in order to allow both delegations to

cover adequately the necessary terrain. Third, it is important that each delegation be assisted by its own secretariat, in order to ensure rapid follow-up to the visit, and in particular the adoption by both monitoring mechanisms of their opinion/report while the information it contains is still up to date. Finally, each case of joint monitoring visits in the future will have to be considered on its own merits.

Co-operation with other international institutions

Co-operation with other international institutions involved in minority rights protection is also a permanent aspect of the work of the Advisory Committee. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and her Office should be mentioned particularly in this context. Regular and fruitful co-operation with institutions such as the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union or the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as United Nations treaty bodies and the Forum on Minority Issues also remains of key importance to the Advisory Committee. In addition, a joint programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe, Promoting Human Rights and Minority Protection in South Eastern Europe, commenced in November 2013 with an implementation span of just over two and a half years. The project is designed to break down barriers for minorities at local level so that they can fully enjoy their rights in line with European standards, in particular the Framework Convention and the Language Charter. Co-operation with other international institutions will, no doubt, also remain an important part of the monitoring process under the Framework Convention in future years as well.

Co-operation with civil society

Co-operation with civil society organisations has remained a key priority for the Advisory Committee, which has examined new ways to review co-operation with civil actors on several occasions. In addition to contacts and dialogue with minority associations and human rights NGOs in the context of the monitoring process (country visits and follow-up seminars, submission/reception of “shadow reports” and replies to the Advisory Committee’s specific questions, etc.), the members and secretariat of the Advisory Committee have continued to take an active part in capacity-building activities, including through participating in training events.



Part VI

Organisational issues

Advisory Committee

At its 45th meeting in October 2012, the Advisory Committee elected a new bureau: Ms Athanasia Spiliopoulou Åkermark (member in respect of Sweden) as President, Mr Francesco Palermo (member in respect of Italy) as First Vice-President and Ms Lidija Basta Fleiner (member in respect of Serbia) as Second Vice-President.

The Advisory Committee works as a collegial body and its output, in particular its opinions and thematic commentaries, which are adopted at its plenary sessions, are the outcome of extensive discussions and exchanges in the plenary. As noted in the Advisory Committee's previous activity report, following the Parliamentary Assembly meeting in April 2012 on the selection processes of experts of the monitoring mechanisms, the Advisory Committee underlined that in line with the provisions of the Framework Convention and Committee of Ministers' Resolution (97) 10, independence, impartiality, experience and expertise on minority issues are preconditions for the appointment as an Advisory Committee member. In addition, it is beneficial if a variety of expertise, ranging from the legal field and political science to history and anthropological and linguistic studies is represented in the Committee. Persons belonging to minority and majority communities, those with experience in academia, civil society or previous government positions, serve in the Committee and contribute to its knowledge base. Proficiency in at least one of the Council of Europe's official languages (English and French) is a prerequisite for serving on the Committee and other factors such as gender balance within the Committee may also need to be considered. These considerations need to be consistently taken into account in the selection of candidates and elections to the list of experts eligible to serve on the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee also welcomes the election of a number of candidates to the list of additional members of the Advisory Committee in the period covered

by the present activity report. This allows the Advisory Committee to draw from the experiences and expertise developed in all member states and to examine the implementation of the Framework Convention in all states in a composition which includes the independent expert member appointed in respect of the state party concerned.

Staff issues

Lack of human resources is still an issue of particular concern to the Advisory Committee. The resources allocated to the secretariat of the Advisory Committee have not been increased since 2010, when two administrators, who had departed, were not replaced. While recognising that this situation reflects general developments in the Council of Europe, the Advisory Committee wishes to underline that insufficient human resources constitute a threat to the prompt and efficient monitoring of the Framework Convention. It also leaves little room for strategic planning of follow-up activities with states parties. This is regrettable as such activities can help to promote both the effective implementation of the Framework Convention and dialogue between the authorities and minorities within states parties. Sufficient secretariat resources are also needed in order to ensure adequate media coverage of the Advisory Committee's output.

Council of Europe reform

The secretariat of the Framework Convention has been part of the Directorate General of Democracy (DGII) since October 2011. In January 2014, the secretariat was placed in the new Anti-Discrimination and Social Cohesion Department of the Directorate of Human Dignity and Equality within this directorate general. The department includes inter alia the secretariats of three monitoring mechanisms: the Framework Convention, ECRI and the Language Charter.

The Advisory Committee understands that one of the aims pursued in creating these structures is to promote the effectiveness of the above three monitoring mechanisms by enhancing synergies between them where possible. The Advisory Committee considers that this structure could result in increased co-operation between the three monitoring bodies and their secretariats and indeed has been actively engaged in efforts to promote such synergies, notably through the conduct where possible of joint monitoring visits and follow-up events. However, as the Advisory Committee has repeatedly emphasised, the fundamentally different legal bases, mandates and working methods of the three monitoring mechanisms involved must not be overlooked. The recent reform must not alter either the effectiveness or the independence of the monitoring system under the Framework Convention. For this reason, the conduct of joint activities – and in particular joint monitoring visits – must always be examined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account both the particular circumstances in the country concerned and the impact on the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the relevant monitoring mechanisms.

The preamble to the Framework Convention reminds us of the links between minority protection and democratic values, along with stability and good neighbourly relations, dialogue and societal cohesion. The Advisory Committee therefore welcomes the opportunity created by structural reforms to reinforce the links between the Framework Convention and other Council of Europe structures with a strong focus on democracy and democratic values. At the same time, Article 1 of the Framework Convention provides expressly that minority rights form an integral part of the international protection of human rights. This emphasis on human rights sets the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe apart from other organisations and their activities in this field, and constitutes a key aspect of its added value. Apart from the general principles of non-discrimination and societal cohesion that underpin the convention, it also contains a catalogue of specific minority rights related to identity protection, effective equality, cultural support, media and education, as well as provisions related to the use of minority languages and effective participation in social, economic and public life. The Advisory Committee therefore remains confident that the benefits that may be drawn from the above new institutional structures and opportunities will further enrich the Council of Europe's understanding of minority rights as an integral and fundamental part of the multilateral protection of human rights.



Appendix 1

Signatures and ratifications of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157)

Treaty open for signature by Council of Europe member states and up until the date of entry into force by any other state so invited by the Committee of Ministers

Opening for signature

Place: Strasbourg

Date : 1/2/1995

Entry into force

Conditions: 12 Ratifications.

Date : 1/2/1998

Status as of: 7/4/2014

Member states of the Council of Europe

	Signature	Ratification	Entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.
Albania	29/6/1995	28/9/1999	1/1/2000							
Andorra										
Armenia	25/7/1997	20/7/1998	1/11/1998							
Austria	1/2/1995	31/3/1998	1/7/1998			X				
Azerbaijan		26/6/2000 ^a	1/10/2000			X				
Belgium	31/7/2001				X					
Bosnia and Herzegovina		24/2/2000 ^a	1/6/2000							
Bulgaria	9/10/1997	7/5/1999	1/9/1999			X				
Croatia	6/11/1996	11/10/1997	1/2/1998							
Cyprus	1/2/1995	4/6/1996	1/2/1998							
Czech Republic	28/4/1995	18/12/1997	1/4/1998							
Denmark	1/2/1995	22/9/1997	1/2/1998			X				
Estonia	2/2/1995	6/1/1997	1/2/1998			X				
Finland	1/2/1995	3/10/1997	1/2/1998							
France										
Georgia	21/1/2000	22/12/2005	1/4/2006							
Germany	11/5/1995	10/9/1997	1/2/1998			X				
Greece	22/9/1997									
Hungary	1/2/1995	25/9/1995	1/2/1998							
Iceland	1/2/1995									
Ireland	1/2/1995	7/5/1999	1/9/1999							
Italy	1/2/1995	3/11/1997	1/3/1998							

	Signature	Ratification	Entry into force	Notes	R.	D.	A.	T.	C.	O.
Latvia	11/5/1995	6/6/2005	1/10/2005			X				
Liechtenstein	1/2/1995	18/11/1997	1/3/1998			X				
Lithuania	1/2/1995	23/3/2000	1/7/2000							
Luxembourg	20/7/1995					X				
Malta	11/5/1995	10/2/1998	1/6/1998		X	X				
Moldova	13/7/1995	20/11/1996	1/2/1998							
Monaco										
Montenegro		11/5/2001 ^a	6/6/2006	54						
Netherlands	1/2/1995	16/2/2005	1/6/2005			X		X		
Norway	1/2/1995	17/3/1999	1/7/1999							
Poland	1/2/1995	20/12/2000	1/4/2001			X				
Portugal	1/2/1995	7/5/2002	1/9/2002							
Romania	1/2/1995	11/5/1995	1/2/1998							
Russian Federation	28/2/1996	21/8/1998	1/12/1998			X				
San Marino	11/5/1995	5/12/1996	1/2/1998							
Serbia		11/5/2001 ^a	1/9/2001	54						
Slovak Republic	1/2/1995	14/9/1995	1/2/1998							
Slovenia	1/2/1995	25/3/1998	1/7/1998			X				
Spain	1/2/1995	1/9/1995	1/2/1998							
Sweden	1/2/1995	9/2/2000	1/6/2000			X				
Switzerland	1/2/1995	21/10/1998	1/2/1999			X				
“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”	25/7/1996	10/4/1997	1/2/1998			X				
Turkey										
Ukraine	15/9/1995	26/1/1998	1/5/1998							
United Kingdom	1/2/1995	15/1/1998	1/5/1998							

Total number of signatures not followed by ratifications: 4

Total number of ratifications/accessions: 39

Notes:

(54) Date of accession by the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

a: Accession - s: Signature without reservation as to ratification - su: Succession- r: Signature “ad referendum”. R.: Reservations - D.: Declarations - A.: Authorities - T.: Territorial Application - C.: Communication - O.: Objection.

Source: Treaty Office on <http://conventions.coe.int>

Kosovo* is subject to a specific monitoring arrangement in conformity with the 2004 Agreement between UNMIK and the Council of Europe.

Appendix 2

Geographical scope of application of the Framework Convention

States Parties to the Framework Convention

Albania	Estonia	Malta	Serbia
Armenia	Finland	Moldova	Slovak Republic
Austria	Georgia	Montenegro	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Germany	Netherlands	Spain
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hungary	Norway	Sweden
Bulgaria	Ireland	Poland	Switzerland
Croatia	Italy	Portugal	"The former Yugoslav
Cyprus	Latvia	Romania	Republic of Macedonia"
Czech Republic	Liechtenstein	Russian Federation	Ukraine
Denmark	Lithuania	San Marino	United Kingdom

States having signed but not ratified the Framework Convention

Belgium	Iceland
Greece	Luxembourg

States having neither signed nor ratified the Framework Convention

Andorra	Monaco
France	Turkey



Kosovo* is subject to a specific monitoring arrangement in conformity with the 2004 Agreement between UNMIK and the Council of Europe.



Appendix 3

Composition of the Advisory Committee

Composition of the bureau

President: Ms Athanasia Spiliopoulou Åkermark (Sweden) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

First Vice-President: Mr Francesco Palermo (Italy) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Second Vice-President: Ms Lidija Basta Fleiner (Serbia) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Mr Eero J. Aarnio (Finland) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Ms Arzu Aghdasi-Sisan (Azerbaijan) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Mr Grigor Badiryan (Armenia) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Ms Aleksandra Bojadjieva (“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Ms Anastasia Crickley (Ireland) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Ms Emilia Drumeva (Bulgaria) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Ms Aliona Grossu (Moldova) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Ms Helena Hofmannová (Czech Republic) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Ms Ivana Jelić (Montenegro) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Ms Milena Klajner (Croatia) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Ms Iivi Anna Masso (Estonia) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Mr Einar Niemi (Norway) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Mr Valery Ovchinnikov (Russian Federation) – term of office June 2012-May 2016

Mr Gjergj Sinani (Albania) – term of office June 2010-May 2014

Ms Edita Žiobienė (Lithuania) – term of office June 2010-May 2014



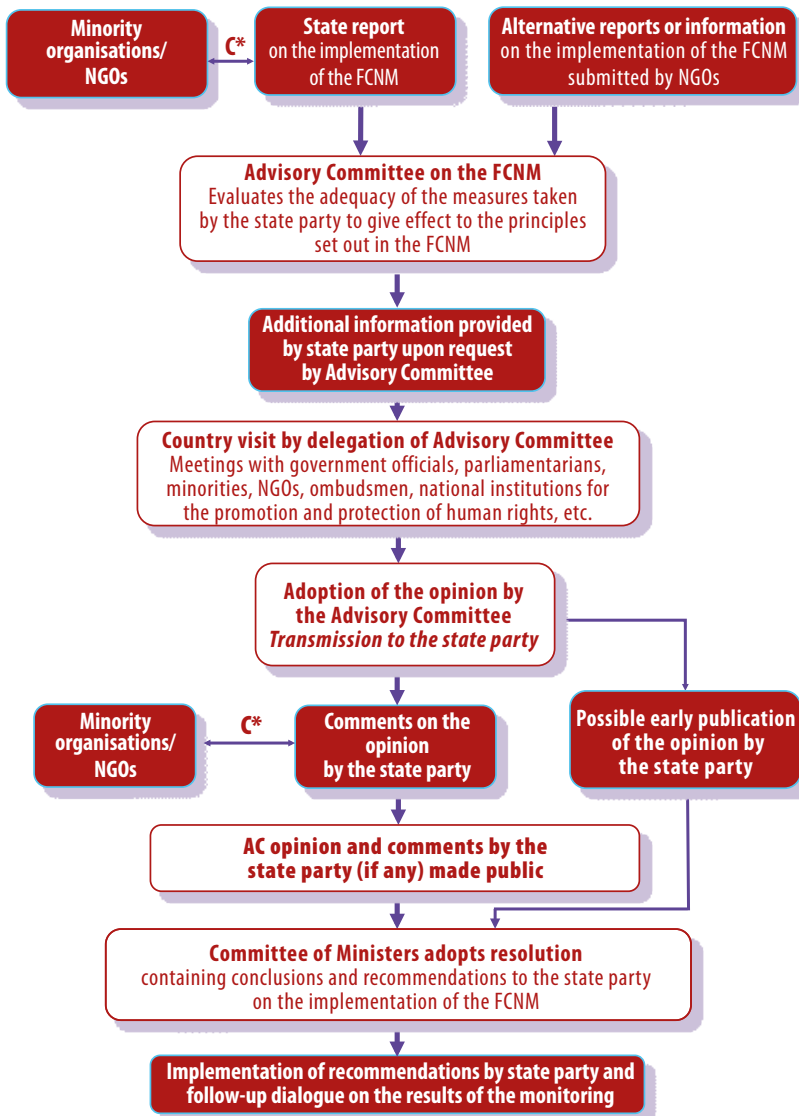
PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN EUROPE

A 2010-2014 programme of activities aimed at promoting the rights of national minorities and strengthening their participation in public life in Europe. The programme includes a series of projects and activities in various countries.

Published by the European Commission

Appendix 4

Monitoring cycle – Flow chart of monitoring arrangements under the Framework Convention and relevant Committee of Ministers' resolutions and decisions





Appendix 5

Participation in events related to the protection of minority rights

Intergroup on Traditional Minorities, National Communities and Languages, Strasbourg, 17 April 2014

Annual Meeting of Baltic States Ombudspersons for Children's Rights, Vilnius, 9-10 April 2014

Czech Government Council for National Minorities and Faculty of Law, Charles University, Seminar on Europe, Citizens and National Minorities, Prague, 24 February 2014

International Conference on Religious Liberty and Religious Minorities: Among the balance and the challenges, Faculty of Law, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, 17 January 2014

Informal meeting of Presidents of Council of Europe Human Rights Monitoring Bodies, Strasbourg, 17 December 2013

Sixth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues, Beyond Freedom of Religion or Belief: Guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities, Geneva, Switzerland, 26-27 November 2013

Gender Equality Rapporteurs Training, Strasbourg, 12-13 November 2013

Belarusian State University, presentation of the FCNM, Minsk, 30 October 2013

PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, Strasbourg, 1 October 2013

European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) Expert Workshop on the definition of "minority", Flensburg, 26-27 September 2013

OSCE Human Dimension Meeting, Warsaw, 23 September 2013

PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, Madrid, 16-17 September 2013

Shaping the Frame across the Cycles, Minority rights and monitoring practices of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, Flensburg, 5 July 2013

Meetings with DG ENLARG on regional South East Europe Joint Programmes, Brussels, 27-28 June 2013

Inter-Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, Forum on the Political Participation of National Minorities, Sofia, 12 and 13 April 2013

Round-table meeting on anti-Gypsyism in Europe, co-organised by the support team to the SRSG on Roma issues and by the Swedish authorities, Stockholm, 10 April 2013

Support team to the SRSG on Roma issues, Séminaire en présence d'Elus locaux français, La question Rom, Strasbourg, 12 December 2012

Sixth Co-ordination Meeting between staff of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Council of Europe on human rights issues, Geneva, 11 December 2012

The Right of National Minorities to Freedom of Expression in the Digital Age, Amsterdam, 7 December 2012

Informal meeting of Presidents of Council of Europe Human Rights Monitoring Bodies, Strasbourg, 4 December 2012

MRG Training within the Global Advocacy Programme, Strasbourg, 3-7 December 2012

Fifth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues, Implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities: Identifying positive practices and opportunities, Geneva, 27-28 November 2012

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, Warsaw, 2 October 2012

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE