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**FOURTH REPORT SUBMITTED BY CYPRUS
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 25, PARAGRAPH 2
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR
THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

**FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

**FOURTH PERIODIC REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**OFFICE OF THE
LAW COMMISSIONER**

Nicosia, 28 April 2014

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Fourth Periodic Report of Cyprus on the Application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the "present Report") was prepared in accordance with the *Outline for State reports to be submitted under the fourth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities [ACFC(2013)001, 30 April 2013]* adopted by the Committee of Ministers at the 1169th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies on 30 April 2013. Hence, the present Report follows the proposed structure and guidelines included therein. The present Report should be read together with all background information provided in the Initial, Second and Third Periodic Report of Cyprus on the Application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

2. The Third Cycle Opinion on Cyprus of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention was adopted and made public on 19 March 2010 (hereinafter the "Opinion"). The Third Cycle Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN (2011)16 was adopted on 21 September 2011 (hereinafter the "Resolution"). Thus, the present Report covers the results of the Third Monitoring Cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention by Cyprus and the measures taken by the Cypriot authorities in the light of the Opinion, as well as the issues raised and the recommendations in the Resolution. The comments of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus (hereinafter "the Government") on the Opinion were submitted in September 2010 and made public on 26 October 2010.

3. The present Report has been prepared by the Law Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus who, pursuant to a Decision of the Council of Ministers, is entrusted with ensuring Cyprus' compliance with its reporting obligations under international human rights instruments.

4. The information and data on the basis of which the present Report was compiled, was provided by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the competent authority for the overall implementation of the Framework Convention and by the Ministries, Public Services and other public entities competent on specific matters, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), the Cyprus Police, the Press and Information Office (PIO), the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, the Statistical Service (CYSTAT)¹, the Law Office of the Republic, the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights

¹ The Statistical Service (CYSTAT) is the competent authority responsible for the compilation and the publication of most of the official statistical data in Cyprus. It operates under the Ministry of Finance. It however maintains its autonomy in technical matters and has the sole responsibility for the choice of methodology, technique, definitions and procedures for the realization of the programmes of statistical activities, as well as for the publication of the statistical data produced. Since the accession of Cyprus in the European Union in May 2004, an important part of the basic activities of CYSTAT includes the continuous participation to several committees, working groups and educational programmes as well as the collaboration with the Statistical Offices of the European Union (EUROSTAT).

(Ombudsman) also in her capacity as the Head of the Anti-Discrimination Body (ADB) and Equality Body, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues (CHI), the House of Representatives, the Public Service Commission and the University of Cyprus. Information was also obtained from the Representatives of the religious groups in the House of Representatives, namely the Armenians, Maronites and Latins (hereinafter “the Religious Groups Representatives”), to whom the present Report will be communicated upon submission, and from their respective Offices.

5. As stated in the Third Periodic Report (hereinafter the “previous Report”), since the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains no definition of the notion of “national minorities”, it is up to the individual contracting party to determine the national minorities to which it shall apply the Framework Convention. The term “national minorities” within the meaning of the Framework Convention is understood to designate for purposes of the present Report the following minority groups of citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, that is the Armenian, Maronite and Latin (Roman Catholic) religious groups composed of citizens of the Republic of Cyprus who at the time of establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 opted in accordance with its Constitution to be part of the Greek Community (Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Constitution) (hereinafter “the religious groups”).

6. Due to the continued illegal occupation of 36.2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus since 1974, the Government does not exercise effective control over all of its national territory and cannot ensure the application of the rights guaranteed by the Framework Convention in areas not under its effective control. Consequently, all information and data presented in the present Report concern the Government-controlled areas. It should be noted that according to Protocol No.10 on Cyprus Annexed to the 2003 Act concerning the conditions of accession of the Republic of Cyprus and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the European Union is founded, the application of the *acquis communautaire* is “suspended in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government does not exercise effective control”.

PART I

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS MADE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD MONITORING CYCLE AND OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

Please provide information about the following:

a. Steps taken to publicise the results of the third monitoring cycle (Opinion, State comments, Resolution): publication, dissemination and translation into the official language(s) and minority language(s) where appropriate;

7. The previous Report, the Opinion, the State comments and the Resolution have been posted on the official websites of the Office of the Law Commissioner², the Ministry of Interior³, as well as on the official website of the PIO⁴.

b. Any follow-up activities organised at national, regional and local levels, including activities organised jointly with the Council of Europe, such as discussions, seminars, evaluations, impact assessments, studies etc., and the outcomes of these events;

8. In October 2010 the Office of the Ombudsman organised in cooperation with the Religious Groups Representatives a one-day awareness raising event. The event consisted of conference in the morning - titled "*The Contribution, Rights and Protection of the Minorities in the Cyprus Society*" - and a cultural event in the afternoon - titled "*A Cultural Trip with the Maronites, Armenians and Latins*" which included a short theatrical performance titled "*The Parachute*" presented by students of Terra Santa College, a catholic school considered as a "national" school of the Latin religious group.

9. This event was funded by the European Commission through the European Community Programme "Progress" for Employment and Social Solidarity, which aims to combat discrimination and promote diversity. The Programme aims to improve public awareness on the right of equal treatment and a life free from discrimination regardless of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation. The event was held under the auspices of the Minister of Justice and Public Order in his capacity as the "national focal point" for monitoring and absorption of EU funds under this Programme.

10. In May 2012 the MoEC placed under its aegis the organisation of the "International Conference on Endangered Languages of Eastern

² http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/dmlindexa_gr/dmlindexa_gr?OpenDocument

³ www.moi.gov.cy

⁴ www.moi.gov.cy/pio

Mediterranean: Current Challenges”. The Conference was organised by the Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Cyprus. The Conference, which was also supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal) and the “Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (France)” brought together 40 leading experts from different countries aiming to form a network of researchers with a special interest in the study of endangered languages of Eastern Mediterranean. Various papers, dealing with the study of endangered languages were presented. Themes included: the dynamics of endangered languages, the measurement of language vitality, the issue of language and education policies and the social requirements and demands related to these areas. In the framework of the conference two workshops with the following themes were organised:

- “Teaching/transmitting Western Armenian grammar today: challenges and solutions”
- “How to teach an oral endangered language: Cypriot Maronite Arabic”.

c. Participation of minority organisations and other non-governmental organisations in the authorities’ implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention, and their involvement in the preparation of the fourth report;

11. The Government which took office in 1st March 2013, has demonstrated its commitment to enhance its cooperation with and support to the national minority groups. As a response to a request by the Religious Groups Representatives, a Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues was appointed to be responsible, inter alia, for issues related to the religious groups. The CHI is appointed by and is directly accountable to the President of the Republic. She has the responsibility to promote and protect the rights of the religious groups recognised by the Constitution, as complemented by the participation of Cyprus in international human rights instruments, ratified by Cyprus, including the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. To this end, she works closely with the Religious Groups Representatives, their leaders and relevant NGOs.

12. The MoI is the competent Ministry regarding the issues of concern of the religious groups. The Ministry is in constant consultation and dialogue with the elected Religious Groups Representatives, as well as with relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention. The Minister of Interior has at least one annual meeting with the Representative of each religious group aiming to address any specific issues of their concern. At the request of the Representatives, additional meetings can be arranged with the Minister of Interior. In the preparation of the Report the Religious Groups Representatives have been consulted and invited to send their written comments and recommendations on issues of their concern.

13. The MoEC constantly strives to meet the needs of the members of the religious groups and to ensure that their educational and cultural rights, deriving from the Framework Convention, are being fully exercised. The Minister of Education and Culture had meetings with the Religious Groups Representatives and the CHI in the presence of senior civil servants in the fields of education and culture. The Minister was briefed on key issues and reassured the participants of his commitment to consider any proposals promoting and preserving the educational and cultural identity of the religious groups.

14. In an effort driven by the strategic target to modernize the educational system of Cyprus so as to address the challenges of the 21st century, the educational reform programme, initiated in 2005 by the MoEC, has entered an evaluation phase.⁵ In this context, issues regarding the religion, language, history and culture of national minority groups will be addressed with due consideration and discussed with stakeholders.

d. Any other measures taken to promote awareness of the Framework Convention among national minorities, public officials and the general public.

15. Pertinent information is given under b. above.

PART II
MEASURES TAKEN TO ADDRESS CORE ISSUES

Please provide information on how each of the specific recommendations for immediate action included in Part 2 – “Issues for immediate action” of the Committee of Ministers’ Resolution has been implemented. Indications on other policies, measures and needs assessments considered relevant in this context should also be provided

Please make an assessment on any other core issues that remain outstanding after three monitoring cycles, and any obstacles encountered in addressing such issues

I. Take adequate measures to ensure, during the population census in 2011 and other forthcoming processes, effective implementation of the principle of self-identification, especially in respect of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, as well as the Roma

16. The 2011 Census of Population took place during the period under review. It was conducted through personal interviews to all residents of

⁵ See comments under Recommendation 4 of the previous Report

Cyprus. The interviews were performed by enumerators of the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT), especially employed and trained for this purpose. The results of the Census are published on CYSTAT's official website: www.cystat.gov.cy.

17. Regarding the implementation of the principle of self-identification the Census included the following questions:

- **PLACE OF BIRTH**

Where did’s mother reside when she gave birth to him/her?

Municipality/Community: _____

District: _____

Don't know municipality/community

Abroad (specify country): _____

Don't know country

- **COUNTRY OF BIRTH OF PARENTS**

Where was’s father born?

Cyprus

Abroad (specify country): _____

Where was’s mother born?

Cyprus

Abroad (specify country): _____

- **RELIGION**

What is’s religion?

Christian Orthodox.....

Armenian Church

Maronite Church

Roman Catholic

Moslem.....

Aglican/Protestant church.....

Other (specify) _____

- **COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP**

What citizenship does have?

1st Citizenship.....

Cypriot

Other (specify country)

2nd Citizenship.....

Cypriot

Other (specify country)

- **ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS GROUP**

Is?

Greek Cypriot.....

Armenian

Maronite

Latin

Turkish Cypriot.....

- **LANGUAGE**

What language does speak fluently?

Greek.....

Other (specify): -----

(See also paragraphs 45-50 below for reply to paragraphs 43-46 of the Opinion)

II. Take urgent action to combat and sanction effectively all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including misconduct by members of the police force

18. In 2011 a new law was enacted transposing the EU Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28.11.2008, on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, *the Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by means of Criminal Law (L.134 (I)/2011)*. The Law criminalises public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin, and public condoning, denying or grossly trivialising crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Additionally, this law expressly states that the racist and xenophobic motivation for any offence constitutes an aggravating circumstance (i.e. not only for specific discrimination offences).

19. According to the said Framework Decision and the transposition Law, the following intentional conduct is punishable:

- i. publicly inciting to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin,
- ii. the commission of an act referred to in point (i) by public dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material,
- iii. publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined in Articles 6, 7 and 8 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, directed against a

group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group,

- iv. publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising the crimes defined in Article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal appended to the London Agreement of 8 August 1945, directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group.

Legal persons are also liable for the above mentioned offences.

20. Further to Law 134(I)/2011, Cyprus law also criminalises inter alia the following acts/conduct by virtue of the law ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the Criminal Code:

- i. Incitement to acts or activities likely to cause racial discrimination, violence or hatred,
- ii. public expression of ideas which are racially insulting,
- iii. discriminatory refusal to supply goods and services in the exercise of one's profession,
- iv. establishment or participation in organizations that promote racial discrimination,
- v. publication of material that promotes ill-will or hostility between different communities,
- vi. public statements likely to instigate ill-will between communities,
- vii. procuring to acts of violence, mutual discord, or a spirit of intolerance, and
- viii. discriminatory conduct by members of the civil service.

Therefore, the observation of the last sentence of paragraph 93 of the Opinion has been addressed. It should also be noted that by Law 134(I)/2011 racist and xenophobic motivation was introduced as an aggravating circumstance for any offence.

21. The Police Academy has designed courses to raise awareness and sensitise recruits as well as for other members of the Police on human rights, diversity and discrimination issues. During the courses, lectures are given by the Ombudsman's Office, the UNHCR and other experts and professionals, i.e. criminologists, lawyers, judges, psychologists, members of NGOs, university professors, etc, with an academic background or experience in the area of human rights.

22. For the prevention of racist attitudes, discrimination, human rights violations, ill treatment, etc, by Police circular letters are issued to address the following:

- i. Police members should demonstrate respect to and treat equally all individuals irrespective of racial, ethnic, religious or other origin.
- ii. All complaints with regard to racial offences or offences with a racial motive are recorded promptly and investigated impartially with thoroughness by a Police Sergeant or a high ranking officer and are monitored by the investigator's line manager, as well as by the local assistant Police Commander in charge for the Operations.
- iii. Members of the Police should never refer to members of racial, ethnic, religious or other communities in an offensive way or in a way that may contribute to a climate of hostility, fear and bias.
- iv. Racial profiling should be avoided.

23. Education in public schools, is focused on the acceptance of difference, tolerance as well as the respect for other cultures as to prepare tomorrow's citizens for living in a multicultural environment. In order to raise awareness concerning the principles of non-discrimination and equality, the MoEC has issued a circular for three consecutive school years (September 2008 - 2010) emphasising the priority goals, described as the Enhancement of mutual respect and understanding among the different cultures of the island for nurturing the peaceful coexistence⁶. In cooperation with the religious groups, the MoEC has prepared brief chapters referring to the religion and cultural heritage of each of the religious groups. The units entitled, "Our neighbours the Armenians," "Our neighbours the Maronites" and, "Our neighbours the Latins" have been incorporated in the religious instruction textbooks used for the third class of all public primary schools. The books were distributed to schools during the academic year 2012-2013.

24. In order to achieve the overall objective of social inclusion, the MoEC focuses its efforts on ensuring compatibility of programs run by local authorities and NGOs with specific social inclusion objectives and policies of the MoEC, leading to a more decisive and substantial contribution of local authorities and the voluntary sector towards meeting the needs of modern society.

25. One example of this effort is a project recently launched in cooperation with the Armenian religious group. For its effective function the Armenian religious group, the Armenian School Board, the Parents' Association and the MoEC cooperate closely in order to secure sufficient funding and to develop programmes that address the educational and other needs of the students which will benefit the community as a whole. The program aims to enhance the students' computer skills, to provide extra tutoring to students in need, as

⁶ Please refer to <http://www.schools.ac.cy/dde/circular/daya/Doc7387.pdf> and <http://www.moec.gov.cy/stoxoi/stoxoi2009/stoxos1.html> (in Greek)

well as to promote hobbies and sports making full use of school infrastructure.

26. Another example is the support offered by the MoEC to the Maronite religious group by subsidising a substantial percentage of the cost of the CMA summer language camp. Intended for children 8 years of age and above, the CMA language camp takes place annually in August since 2008, at the occupied village of Kormakitis. The MoEC also subsidises the production of a CD with children's songs in CMA and covers the cost for transportation, accommodation and fees of the Lebanese folkloric dance instructor who visits the camp every year in order to teach the pupils traditional dances.

III. Take additional measures to provide a more adequate response to the educational needs of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, in particular as regards the availability of teaching materials and qualified teachers; provide the support needed to enable adequate minority language teaching for the Armenians and the Maronites.

27. See comments under Recommendation 4 and pages 16 – 18 of the previous Report regarding the Educational Reform Program launched in January 2005. The Reform foresees among others the development of a new curriculum. The pilot phase of the implementation of the new curriculum began in September 2010 with the in-service training program of all teachers. The radical improvement of the quality of teaching through teacher training is one of the key objectives of the Educational Reform Program. A comprehensive strategy for in-service training of teachers has been recently adopted, which provides for the systematic identification of training needs and planning of specific programs to address these needs in order to upgrade the skills of teachers at various stages of their career, keep them at the fore front of technological and educational developments and compensate for any weaknesses they may exhibit. The strategy promulgates a combination of institutional and school-based training variety of forms of training aiming at a balance between theoretical and practical training.

28. According to information received from the University of Cyprus and the Representative of the Latin religious group, the University of Cyprus signed in February 2013 a cooperation agreement with Terra Santa College, one of oldest Latin schools of the country, which will operate as from the academic year 2013-2014 as a model University of Cyprus High School. The agreement will result in the introduction of curriculum changes in the College from the first class of the Gymnasium cycle of the 2013-2014 school year and develop yearly, unless both sides decide to speed up the process. According to statements of the University Rector, the agreement intends among others to bring the University of Cyprus in closer contact with the Armenian, Latin and Maronite religious groups while also benefiting society as a whole.

PART III

FURTHER MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

Please provide information on an article-by-article basis on measures taken to enhance the implementation of the Framework Convention. Indications on other policies, measures and needs assessments considered relevant in this context should also be provided. Particular attention should be paid to:

- A. Measures taken to implement the recommendations included in Part 2 - "Further recommendations" of the Committee of Ministers' Resolution, and*
 - B. to the extent not already covered under points II and III. a. above, measures and policies adopted to implement all the detailed recommendations, various findings and conclusions contained in the Advisory Committee's Third Opinion.*
- I. Re-examine in the light of the principle of free self-identification and in view of any subsequent revision of the Constitution, the obligation of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites to affiliate themselves with either the Greek Cypriot Community or the Turkish Cypriot Community, as well as the statutory obligation to vote to elect their representative in parliament**

29. We take note of this recommendation {which will be re-examined in the eventuality of a future revision of the Constitution. It should also be noted at this point that the members of the religious groups as part of the Greek-Cypriot community fully participate in the political life and vote twice during the elections for the House of the Representatives: once for the representatives of their religious group and once for the general elections for the members of the House of the Representatives. Several members of the religious groups have been elected as members of the Parliament, including a former President of the House of the Representatives. Also see comments under Recommendation 1 (Part II, A) of the previous Report.

30. The legal obligation to vote in elections applies to every citizen of the Republic. Nevertheless, the new Government has declared its intention to proceed to an amendment of the relevant law so that voting at any election will be optional.

II. Pursue the dialogue with the Armenians and the Maronites concerning their possible recognition as a national minority rather than “religious groups”, and with the Latins to find a designation more acceptable to them

31. It is impossible to change the designation of Armenians Maronites and Latins from “religious groups”, to “ethnic groups” or “national minorities” without constitutional amendments. They are so designated by virtue of the operation of constitutional provisions which define the groups which were to opt to belong to one of the two Communities in 1960, (for enabling their participation in the constitutional bi-communal structure of the state) by reference to a common religion shared by their members and the number of those sharing it. Armenians, Maronites and Latins formed such separate groups of the requisite number sharing a common religion, and as such and under the designation of “religious groups” as defined by the Constitution their groups opted in 1960 to belong to the Greek Community. The constitutional provisions thus operated in 1960, and by the operation of these provisions the Armenians, Maronites, and Latins became as from that time, Cyprus’ “religious groups” referred to in the Constitution, possessing and exercising under this designation the rights afforded by it to the “religious groups” of Cyprus. See also comments under Recommendation 1 (Part II (A) of the previous Report.

32. As to the wish of the Latins to be designated by a term reflecting the Roman Catholic religion, see comments under paragraph 15 (1) (2) in the Second Periodic Report and p. 19 of the previous Report.

III. While stepping up measures to protect and support the Roma under the Framework Convention, identify ways to establish a structured dialogue with them and to obtain up-to-date information regarding their ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations

33. In the framework of the EU Strategy on Roma population, the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance have been designated by Council of Ministers Decision No. 72.892 of 2.12.2011 as the national contact point for the coordination of these policies to be implemented by governmental bodies for the Roma population.

34. In January 2012 Cyprus submitted to the European Commission the “Policy measures for the social inclusion of Roma⁷” describing the approach taken on the matter, the overarching principle and the policies promoted in the four policy areas (education, employment, healthcare – including social support, housing and essential services).

7 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm

35. According to MoI data for 2012, the number of Cyprus Roma in the Government-controlled areas is estimated between 650 and 700. A document prepared by the support team of the Special Representative of the Secretary - General of the Council of Europe for Roma issues updated in July 2012 estimates that the Cyprus Roma population (both in the Government and non-Government controlled area) amounts to 1250. The number for Roma migrants including Roma related groups (Sinti, Travellers) present in Cyprus cannot be estimated.

36. The overall government policy approach is to promote integration of the Cyprus Roma through horizontal policy measures targeting vulnerable groups within existing broader social inclusion policies and structures (e.g. general social inclusion policies and the National Reform Programme). The targets for increasing employment and reducing poverty and social exclusion are particularly relevant, as are the flagship initiatives under the Inclusive Growth strand of the Strategy, especially the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. Since Cyprus promotes Cyprus Roma inclusion through integrated policy measures within existing structures, separate monitoring mechanisms have not been set up.

37. In December 2013, the Social Welfare Services have submitted to the European Commission a progress report on the implementation of the set of policy measures for the social inclusion of Cyprus Roma. On 9 December 2013, the Council of the European Union adopted a "Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states". This recommendation aims to provide guidance to member states in enhancing the effectiveness of their measures to achieve Roma integration and to strengthen the implementation of their national strategies. It stresses the importance of adopting an integrated approach, covering housing, education, healthcare and employment. Involving Roma in the social inclusion process is also important. The recommendation put forward by the European Commission in the context of the EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020 launched in 2011, also highlights the vital importance of the gender dimension: many Roma women and girls find themselves in a particularly difficult situation.

38. Regarding implemented housing policies for Cyprus Roma, approximately seventy-three Cyprus Roma families presently reside in the Paphos district, approximately eighty-three Cyprus Roma families reside in the Limassol district where the vast majority reside in Turkish Cypriot houses. The MoI is the competent authority to implement the governmental housing policy for the Cyprus Roma. It established in the past years two housing projects in Limassol and Paphos consisting of housing units for the Cyprus Roma. These housing units are equipped with all basic amenities such as water (drinking water incl.) and electricity supply, telephone line installation, sewage, solar heaters, playgrounds, etc. The state's budget provided for €34.000 in 2010, €28.000 in 2011 and €20.000 in 2012 for repairs/ improvements of houses allocated for housing Cyprus Roma in Limassol and Paphos. No budget was allocated for 2013.

39. In the field of education and culture, the MoEC is promoting several measures to cater for the particular needs of Cyprus Roma pupils enrolled in public schools. Empirical and theoretical research related to minority education and specific educational initiatives have guided the Department in developing and implementing programmes for the education of Cyprus Roma and other non-native language speaking pupils, such as:

- i. Provision of bilingual teachers who facilitate the communication between teachers, pupils and parents,
- ii. Provision of special support and attention from the Educational Psychology Service and the Social Welfare Services,
- iii. Organising of a number of intercultural activities and events,
- iv. Organising of education seminars for parents and legal guardians on a subject matter of their interest based on the distinctive characteristics of each local community in which they reside,
- v. Cyprus Roma children have a priority for admission to public kindergartens, whereas families receiving a public allowance are exempted for paying fees in public kindergartens. There is no segregation of pupils and, pursuant to national legislation pupils must enroll at the school nearest to their place of residence.

40. The 18th Elementary School of Limassol where a great number of Cyprus Roma pupils are enrolled is involved on its own initiative in the Comenius lifelong education programme, with special theme: "All different all the same Europe's children". The school unit is also implementing action plans (projects) that involve all children and the diversity of each separate group of children (including Cyprus Roma) is respected. Such activities are:

- i. Video recording of poems, songs and other cultural elements;
- ii. Organisation of international food festivals and
- iii. Celebration of the International Roma Day.

41. For the current school year 2013-2014, the school has planned the following actions:

- i. Extra physical education classes will be offered, with the participation of Cyprus Roma pupils in order to have a more relaxed programme that meets their specific needs
- ii. A dance and theatre programme will be implemented in order to improve pupils' behaviour and self-discipline
- iii. The school's Art counselor will prepare an intervention programme
- iv. Books on teaching of the Turkish language adapted to pupil's abilities will be purchased
- v. The school's English counselors will prepare sample lessons for the two Turkish-Cypriot teachers aiming at presenting various activities, which can be integrated to the lessons in order to be more effective.

Extra support lessons will be offered to pupils in the afternoon, including the Cyprus Roma.

42. These as well as other activities are organised with the participation of children and parental involvement, where possible. Furthermore, the Adult Education Centres are organising one or two groups of Cyprus Roma children, depending on the number of those interested and their age, where their history and other elements of their cultural heritage will be taught free of charge. The course titled "History - language - culture" will be offered once a week (90 minutes) or twice a week (45 minutes each) and will last for 24 weeks.

43. The Commissioner for Children's Rights issued on 28 December 2013 a Report on the circumstances of education in the 18th Elementary School which was communicated to the Minister of Education and Culture and the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance. The Report includes the findings of the Commissioner and makes specific recommendations in relation to -

- i. composition of the school population and the specific pedagogical needs,
- ii. staffing of the school,
- iii. social integration and cooperation with the Roma community.

The new Minister of Education and Culture instantly reacted positively to the Report, had a meeting with the Commissioner and visited the school committing himself to implement the Commissioner's recommendations.⁸

44. In a report dated 27.9.2011 submitted to the MoEC the ADB called for the strengthening of its efforts to facilitate the access to Cyprus Roma students to education which corresponds to their particular characteristics and allows the evolution of their culture, while also minimizing drop-out and school failure rates as much as possible. As a response to this report the MoEC informed about particular actions that will take place concerning the education and the particular needs of Cyprus Roma students.

Additional comments on measures and policies adopted to implement all the detailed recommendations, following Article 3 of the Framework Convention and Recommendations 39-41 and 43-48 of the Opinion

➤ **Article 3 of the Framework Convention**

Personal scope of the Framework Convention

(Re paras 39-41 of the Opinion)

See paragraph 5 above

⁸ http://www.childcom.org.cy/ccr/ccr.nsf/DMLindex_gr/DMLindex_gr?OpenDocument

Collection of Data

(Re paras 43-48 of the Opinion)

45. For questions on individual's ethnic origin, language and religion included in the 2011 Census of Population, see paragraphs 16-17 above.

46. These questions were included in all censuses conducted in Cyprus. For comparability purposes, the format of questions remained the same. The preparation of the census methodology and the construction of the questionnaire was not preceded by particular consultation with any minority groups. The methodology applied was based on Regulation No. 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 9 July 2008 on population and housing censuses, with which Cyprus has to comply. No specific provision has been included in the questionnaire of the census for the Cyprus Roma. The ethnic/religious groups and/or Communities included are those falling under the constitutional provisions.

47. As presented above, the relative questions included in the Census had open-ended answers in order to provide the necessary flexibility to the respondents.

48. The population was informed about the Census of Population through television announcements, printed leaflets as well as through the website of the Statistical Service. The importance of cooperating with the Statistical Service as well as of providing accurate and reliable data was strongly emphasised during the campaign. No particular campaign was made for specifically targeting minorities or certain vulnerable groups.

49. There was an open call for enumerator positions in the five districts of Cyprus. All persons interested in a position could apply and were called for interviews. The Census questionnaire was made available in Greek and Turkish, the two official languages, as well as in English, Bulgarian, Romanian and Russian, the most commonly spoken languages by the main nationalities of foreign residents in Cyprus.

50. Data on the employment and educational level of the population can also be obtained from the Census of Population. There is therefore no need for other sources of information.

IV. Take more resolute measures to increase awareness on the equality and non-discrimination principles, focusing in particular on Journalists, law enforcement forces and members of the judiciary; ensure the operational independence and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Institution and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ombudsman Office

(Re paras 58-60 of the Opinion)

51. The Cyprus Bar Association, the regulatory authority for all practising lawyers, co-organises seminars with other authorities (i.e. professional associations) and participates in conferences either in Cyprus or abroad. Since 2009 lawyers have participated in a number of such events on human rights, including equality and non-discrimination principles.

52. As regards the recommendation to ensure the operational independence and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Institution and to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman), by virtue of *the Commissioner for Administration Law (L.3/1991)* as amended by L.158 (I)/2011, the Ombudsman is vested with competence of a national human rights institution (NHRI) with extensive powers for the promotion and protection of human rights. This is supplementary to the general powers of the Ombudsman to examine issues of maladministration and violation of human rights and issue reports with recommendations to the Government. The Law was enacted in the end of 2011 and the competences were officially assumed by the Ombudsman in 2012.

53. The NHRI, as well as the ADB and the Equality Authority, do not have a separate budget. They operate with the personnel and on the premises of the Ombudsman. Taking into account the current financial constraints in Cyprus, the Ombudsman has not requested any increase to her budget.

54. Concerning the establishment of the NHRI in compliance with the Paris Principles, the Institution is in the process of applying during the year to the OHCHR for accreditation.

➤ **Article 4 of the Framework Convention**

Legal and institutional framework for combating discrimination

55. The answers in the present Report relate only to comments in the Opinion which refer or relate to national minorities recognised by the State for the purposes of the Framework Convention as explained in paragraph 5 above.

V. Make efforts to adjust public support to the preservation and development of the culture of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites to their actual needs, and effectively assist these groups in the establishment of cultural centres

56. The MoI's 2013 budget provides for an amount of €7.500 to support the publication of printed material, following a Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 63.526 of 21.3.2006 and for an amount of €4.000 to cover the cost for the design and maintenance of a website for the Armenian and Maronite religious groups.

57. Within the framework of the long-running initiative of the Slovak Embassy in Nicosia for bi-communal meetings of the leaders of the G/C and T/C political parties, representatives of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political parties with the Armenian Representative and other members of the religious groups, accompanied by the Slovak Ambassador in Cyprus, paid a visit to the occupied part of Cyprus' in November 2013 where they met with representatives of the Maronite religious group in Kormakitis village in the north-eastern tip of Cyprus. They also visited the ruined Armenian Sourp Magar Monastery situated in the Pentadaktylos mountain range whose history goes back to 1000 AD. According to Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot politicians and the Armenian Representative, it is necessary to restore the Monastery ruins as the building is the only Armenian monastery in Cyprus. Party representatives and religious leaders stated publicly their support for the protection of religious monuments in the island. On the Armenian Sourp Magar Monastery, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Religion or Belief Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt, who conducted a mission to Cyprus in March 2012 (report: A/HRC/22/51/Add.1, 24 December 2012), refers to its very poor condition when he visited the Monastery. He strongly recommends the future use by the Armenians of the Armenian Church in occupied Nicosia, which was recently restored (paragraph 50 of his abovementioned report). The UN Special Rapporteur reaffirmed, inter alia, that the Maronite enclaved "do not have regular access to some of their traditional churches and monasteries which are located in military compounds". Professor Bielefeldt also mentions that one of the traditional churches of the Maronites was recently looted, and that the condition of the Maronite cemeteries in the occupied areas is "far from satisfactory" (paragraph 49 of his aforementioned report). It should be noted that the occupied Maronite Saint George Old Church in Kormakitis is one of the several religious monuments selected to receive conservation and emergency support works by the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage established in April 2008 after an agreement by the leaders of the two communities on 21st March 2008, within the framework of the negotiations for the solution of the Cyprus problem. The Committee is currently operating under the auspices of the United Nations.

VI. Take effective measures, including of a financial nature, to support the revitalization and promotion of the language of the Maronites

as well as their culture, religion and traditions and increase efforts to facilitate their contacts with persons who share their identity and place of origin

➤ **Article 5 of the Framework Convention**

Support for the preservation of the identity and culture of persons belonging to national minorities

(Re paras 73-75 of the Opinion)

See comments in paragraphs 81-88 of the present Report below.

58. Due note has been taken of the Advisory Committee's recommendation in paragraph 74 of the Opinion that the Maronites are informed as soon as possible of any developments of interest to them in the talks for a settlement of the Cyprus problem. The Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues (CHI) has already arranged a meeting to that effect which took place on 10.3.2014 of the Religious Groups Representatives with the Negotiator, for exchange of views on the subject.

VII. Take more resolute steps to promote mutual respect and understanding within Cypriot society; pursue and develop measures to enable effective participation of Turkish Cypriots in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them;

➤ **Article 6 of the Framework Convention**

Tolerance and intercultural dialogue

(Re paras 87-90 of the Opinion)

59. The answers in the present Report relate only to comments in the Opinion which refer or relate to national minorities recognised by the State for the purposes of the Framework Convention as explained in paragraph 5 above.

Police and human rights

(Re paras 95-97 of the Opinion)

(See also paragraphs 18 -22 above)

60. The answers in the present Report relate only to comments in the Opinion which refer or relate to national minorities recognised by the State for the purposes of the Framework Convention as explained in paragraph 5 above.

***Situation of Turkish Cypriots living in the government
- controlled territory***

(Re paras 105-106 of the Opinion)

(See comments under Article 6 of the previous Report for the status of Turkish Cypriots within the context of the Framework Convention)

61. The reference in paragraph 105 of the Opinion that “The authorities should continue and strengthen their efforts to provide the necessary conditions for Turkish Cypriots to be able to exercise their rights effectively and have full and equal access to public services” is groundless since the Republic of Cyprus does not impose any restriction whatsoever. The same goes for a similar reference in paragraph 106. As such, they should better be avoided.

Situation of the Roma living in the government - controlled territory

(See also paragraphs 33-44 above for Reply to paragraphs 113-114 of the Opinion)

➤ **Article 8 of the Framework Convention**

Military service and the right to manifest one’s religion

(Re paras 117-119 of the Opinion)

62. According to information submitted from the MoD, despite absence of concrete problems reported by members of the Maronite religious group in relation to the military service and the enjoyment of their right to manifest their own religion, any such problems submitted to the competent services are resolved in close cooperation and consultation with the elected Religious Groups Representatives within the framework of the relevant legislation.

63. As regards the oath of enlistment taken by recruits as commented in paragraph 118 of the Opinion, Christian Orthodox recruits take this oath after

their enlistment in the National Guard. The wording of the oath provided by section 29 of the *National Guard Law (L.19(I)/2011, as amended)* can be used as a solemn declaration. For this reason, the oath has been amended to include the verb “assure”. Recruits of a different dogma or faith make a solemn declaration at the Recruit Training Centre with the same ceremonial as those taking the oath.

64. A brochure titled «Serving my country» provides general information and guidelines to all conscripts. Its introduction makes reference to the religious groups. The brochure has been adapted to include a brief historic and cultural overview to the religious groups highlighting their contribution to Cyprus society and historic heritage.

65. The brochure has been also modified to include information on transfer procedures of recruits who are members of the religious groups in order to do their service in army camps located in districts with a church of their denomination so as to be able to practice their religion. The transfer requests are examined by a special committee.

66. By an Order of the Army provision is made for leave during Christmas and Easter for those recruits who are members of the national minorities in case their respective religious holidays do not coincide with the Greek Orthodox ones.

Religious education

(Re para 123 of the Opinion)

67. The MoEC works closely with the Representatives of the Maronite religious group in order to accommodate the needs of the children studying in the St. Maronas School. Specific measures have been taken to facilitate access of Maronite children to the school and to align the instruction with the cultural specificities of the group:

- i. The Ministry subsidises the transportation of Maronite children to the school. Currently seventy-five out of the eighty-one students are using this option.
- ii. Specific measures are taken so that the Maronite teachers are enabled to teach at the aforementioned school. Currently four out of ten teachers of the school as well as the headmistress are members of the Maronite religious group.
- iii. Upon request from the school administration, a process for the twinning of the school with a school in Lebanon is under way.
- iv. The technical services of the MoEC are working on finding the most efficient way to identify and address any needs regarding the school's infrastructure.

➤ **Article 9 of the Framework Convention**

Access to media by persons belonging to national minorities

(Re paras 130-131 of the Opinion)

68. The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) radio continues to broadcast a one-hour programme in Armenian on a daily basis, which covers issues on literature, religion, health and other and includes news bulletins and a children's programme.

69. The CyBC television broadcasts a forty-minute programme in Armenian once a month, which includes issues concerning the social and cultural activity of the Cypriot-Armenian community.

70. Additionally, the CyBC television broadcasts yearly, at least, one live programme in Armenian and one in CMA. Regarding the request of the CMA speakers' representative for broadcasting programmes in their language, the CyBC is open to consider specific proposals from the respective Representative.

71. As a result of its significant budget reduction, the CyBC was forced to discontinue the broadcasting of the annual one-hour TV program of the Armenian Christmas Day. Instead, the CyBC broadcasted on 6 January a special forty-minute program, called "ΠΑΡΕΒ", devoted to the Armenian religious group. This program included a Christmas message from the Archbishop of the Cypriot-Armenian Church and the Christmas celebration of the Cypriot-Armenian Church and choir.

72. The Latin religious group maintains a 30-minutes radio programme in the CyBC on Friday at 16:00. On its official website, it hosts, among others the documentary film "A journey through yesterday and today with the Latin religious group", which was funded by the Republic.

73. In 2012, the PIO prepared and published a series of three publications dedicated to the religious groups. Each of these publications circulated in Greek and English, provides a basic overview, an introductory outline about the members of each religious group, their history and culture as well as their contribution to the Cyprus society at large. The publications were prepared in collaboration with the Religious Groups Representatives and include an introductory message from each Representative. In 2013, the publications on the Maronites and Latins were also translated and published in Italian.⁹

⁹ The links for the said publications on the PIO website are as follows:

<http://goo.gl/gJxY3D> Armenians GR

<http://goo.gl/1pKcVq> Latins GR

<http://goo.gl/OVoGjX> Maronites GR

<http://goo.gl/BJDt01> Armenians EN

<http://goo.gl/OcjgxO> Latins EN

<http://goo.gl/eZWvMK> Maronites EN

74. During the period 2009-2013, the religious groups were also referenced in other publications by the PIO. These publications include “The loss of a civilization: destruction of cultural heritage in occupied Cyprus”, where reference is made to religious and other monuments which were destroyed during the invasion and continued occupation of the northern part of Cyprus by Turkey since 1974.

75. Texts on the religious groups as well as relevant photographs were also included in the luxury edition “Window on Cyprus”, which was published in a revised format in 2010 to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus and in 2012 on the occasion of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The multimedia CD “Aspects of Cyprus,” which is also prepared by the PIO in Greek and English includes a special section on the religious groups.

➤ **Article 12 of the Framework Convention**

Intercultural education. Equal opportunities for access to education

(Re paras 144-145 of the Opinion)

76. The MoEC provides Greek language courses (beginners and advanced levels) for non-native speakers. Non-native speakers of Greek can register free of charge to the evening classes of the MoEC which provide a variety of subjects.

77. The MoEC facilitates the entry of the members of the religious groups to public universities by reserving a certain number of places in the universities in question. Members of the religious groups are entitled to an exemption from the subject of religious studies upon approval from the MoEC.

78. Counseling is offered on a systematic basis at the Nareg Armenian Secondary School by the Career Counseling and Education Services of the MoEC.

➤ **Article 13 of the Framework Convention**

Private Schools

(Re para 149 of the Opinion)

79. In 2009, Cyprus was affected by the world financial crisis, the economic impact of which gradually spread over all sectors. Despite the economic difficulties that Cyprus is currently facing, it is determined to continue its coordinated efforts to ensure full compliance with all international human rights treaties to which it is a party, and safeguard the human rights of all

people in Cyprus. Respect for human rights is of paramount importance for Cyprus and the efforts of the authorities to that effect will continue unabated.

80. Financial support from the MoEC to the religious groups is twofold. On the one hand there are activities which can be implemented within the framework of the general policy regarding the community education, language and culture. The full subsidisation of Nareg Armenian Schools in Nicosia (Preprimary, Primary and Secondary), Larnaca (Preprimary, Primary), Limassol (Preprimary and Primary) and St. Maronas school falls within this framework. It also includes an earmarked budget for the partial implementation of the Action Plan for the revitalisation of CMA and support by the Cultural Services to particular cultural activities. On the other hand, the members of the two linguistic communities can benefit from financial support which is available for civil society organisations and initiatives at large.

➤ **Article 14 of the Framework Convention**

The right to learn a minority language and education in a minority language

(Re paras 155-156 of the Opinion)

81. The overall direction of education which affects the formulation of the attitudes of the general population towards minority languages considers them as integral elements of the cultural diversity of Cyprus which should be nurtured. Action plans and activities have been promoted in relation to the protection and promotion of the Armenian and the Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) minority languages.

82. In a report submitted to the MoEC dated 12.5.2009 the ADB recommended the teaching of CMA in the core educational program of St Maronas Primary School. The ADB also recommended the adoption of a comprehensive policy for the protection and promotion of CMA. In this regard, the Council of Ministers by its Decision No. 62.425, dated 17.9.2009, decided the formation of a Group of Experts which in May 2010 submitted to the MoEC an Action Plan on the revival of CMA.

83. As regards policy actions and plans for the Armenian and CMA:

i. Cyprus Maronite Arabic (CMA)

A significant development regarding the CMA language is the adoption and the beginning of implementation of the Action Plan submitted by the Committee of Experts for the revival and empowerment of CMA. The Action Plan includes three main pillars of action:

- recording, coding, standardisation and development of CMA: Mapping the language while proficient speakers are still alive in order to create a CMA file and use the recorded data for culture and

language development; use of written code which has already been adopted by the community, with a short-term goal to stabilise the language and eventually to produce written texts in CMA,

- teaching of CMA or improving the proficiency of those speakers who know it poorly with the help of custom made methods and programs in order to increase the number of proficient speakers of CMA among younger generations,
- linguistic revival and informing the Cypriot society and the scientific community in relation to CMA, the efforts to revive it and the ways in which the community can have an active role in the revival , aiming at creating a positive image for the language and the revival process.

A budget for the gradual implementation of the Action Plan has been allocated and specific activities are starting to be implemented. The first actions concerned the recording and codification of CMA. The actions further described below (see paras 84-85), were chosen to be implemented first as part of the structured approach. The rationale shared by involved stakeholders is that the codification of the language is a fundamental issue and will serve as a base for further actions, such as language teaching and teacher training.

ii. Armenian

The protection and promotion of the Armenian language is mainly safeguarded through the functioning of the Nareg Armenian School (Preprimary, Primary and Secondary Education in Nicosia, Pre-primary and Primary in Larnaca and Limassol, thus covering the whole Cyprus), which is subsidised entirely by the MoEC. The school programme is improved through measures decided in close cooperation with the representatives of the Armenian religious group and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The MoEC further subsidises the teaching of the Armenian language in two contexts:

- University of Cyprus: Classes of two different levels (150 hour each) for learning Armenian are being offered at the University of Cyprus. The classes are open to all students and the successful fulfilment of the course leads to the acquisition of a diploma.
- Adult Education Centres (AEC): The MoEC offers classes of Armenian at the AEC in Acropolis area in Nicosia. The classes are open to all and the MoEC is ready to arrange classes according to the demand.

84. Strengthen the teaching in and of Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA):

CMA continues to be taught in the following contexts:

- Lessons provided at the St. Maronas School. The teaching of CMA has been examined by the Division of Primary Education and a new policy for CMA at the St. Maronas School has been formed in collaboration with the Committee of Experts and the Representatives of the Maronite religious group. Regarding the training of teachers as well as the production of teaching materials, specific suggestions that are included in the submitted proposal were materialised. The MoEC affirms its intention to support all efforts of the Maronite religious group and encourages it to take initiatives towards the realisation of this project and submit additional proposals at any stage. This educational material is used for the instruction of CMA during the voluntary schedule of the St. Maronas School. The material was designed and developed by Maronite teachers who have experience in developing curricula and syllabuses.
- The MoEC offered financial support for the Sanna Project, an initiative of the non-governmental organisation Hki Fi Sanna. The Organization has been receiving in recent years the lump sum of €4650 annually for the realisation of this project. Through the project, a 'language nest' was established, offering childcare and language immersion afternoon lessons. The teachers' salary is covered by the MoEC.
- The MoEC also supports the summer camp in the village of Kormakitis organised by Hki Fi Sanna every year. The camp aims to promote the learning of the CMA language by young people in an enabling and culturally appropriate context. It includes intensive language classes and uses learner-centered methodologies. This yearly activity is supported by a specific lump sum of €4000 annually, which is included in the annual budget of the MoEC.

85. The teaching of CMA shall be enhanced as soon as CMA is recorded and transcribed through the activities included in the Action Plan for CMA. Acknowledging the importance of the aforementioned effort and as part of the structured approach for the revival and empowerment of CMA, recording and transcribing CMA is considered a priority. To this end, two fundamental activities have already been implemented:

- i. A three-year programme of implementation has been designed consisting of the most urgent priorities of the Action Plan which needs to be addressed. The process of recruiting researchers in a competitive and transparent manner has been concluded. Four researchers have been recruited for conducting interviews with native speakers of CMA. Two researchers have been recruited for the transcription of the language. The researchers are currently undergoing training for this purpose.
- ii. For measures related to the transcription and revitalisation of CMA a budget of €7.758 was allocated in 2012. This amount covered the cost for acquiring technical equipment and for supporting language

learning by youth through the “Language nest” organised by the Hki Fi Sanna NGO.

86. Teacher training for Armenian:

Since one of the most financially viable ways of in-service teacher training in Armenian is through exchanges with Lebanon, such training has been organised twice over the past two years. The first training involved a general workshop on the methodology of teaching subjects in Armenian, while the second one was more specific and targeted at teachers of Armenian language and history only.

87. Through exchanges with Lebanon teachers of the Armenian language and history acquired their teaching diploma at the local Haigazian University. During the past two years, the Nareg Armenian Schools in Cyprus have organised two teacher training sessions, inviting a trainer from Lebanon. The first session which took place in March 2011 involved a workshop on effective strategies for teaching Armenian language, history and religion. Twenty-three Armenian teachers of the Nareg Armenian Schools of Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol attended. The first part of the seminar involved a presentation and discussion on the importance of Classroom Dynamics and Classroom Climate, stressing the vital role played by the teacher on student motivation and learning. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and innovative teaching methods were also discussed to highlight the changing role of the teacher. The second part involved a presentation on "The necessity and importance of teaching Armenian language and history in the schools of the Diaspora". Following the presentation an interactive workshop was organized, in order to offer practical guidance in lesson-planning and student assessment methods for effective teaching.

88. The training session in November 2012 was divided into two parts. In the first part, class observations were carried out by a consultant and the school principal in order to observe and record the teaching practices used by each teacher. Following the class observations, meetings were arranged with the teacher where the observers provided feedback and recommendations. On the next day, the consultant taught the same classes herself, giving the teachers the chance to observe an effective lesson and to experience different methods of teaching. According to the feedback given to the Ministry of Education and Culture from the school management, these training sessions have proven to be very constructive for teacher improvement.

VIII. Identify ways to enable a more effective participation of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites in public affairs in parliament and through improved consultation mechanisms

89. By the *Religious Groups (Representation) (Amendment) Law (L. 66(I)/2011)* enacted in 2011 following a consultation among the Attorney-General of the Republic, the parliamentary political parties and Religious Groups Representatives, the role of the Religious Groups Representatives has been strengthened. Moreover, their participation in the legislative and government decision process in issues affecting the religious groups has been enhanced.

90. The House of Representatives, through the competent Parliamentary Committee and any authority of the Republic shall ask for and take into account the views of the elected Religious Group Representative before taking measures concerning education, culture and religion of the specific religious groups. The Religious Group Representative shall be invited to express his opinion on the matter orally and/or in writing. If the final decision contradicts the Representative's view, the competent Parliamentary Committee or competent authority must justify its position in writing.

91. Religious Groups Representatives have the right to attend the meetings of the Parliamentary Committee for Education without a voting right. All the Parliamentary Committees meetings agendas, as well as the agenda of the plenary meetings, must be communicated to the Representatives. In this respect, a Bill was submitted in 2013 by a member of the House of Representatives proposing to strengthen the role and representation of the religious groups in the school boards.

➤ **Article 15 of the Framework Convention**

Effective participation of persons belonging to minorities in public affairs

(Re paras 166-168 of the Opinion)

See also para 11 of the present Report

92. The CHI was appointed in 2013 as an Independent State Official with a mandate to promote the cooperation between the State and the religious groups. The CHI focuses on the development and adoption of a structured policy on issues and concerns raised by the religious groups and holds meetings with their Representatives and presents their views to the Government. The appointment re-established a post which existed and was considered to have been effective. The re-instatement was decided upon the request of the Religious Groups Representatives and in compliance with the recommendation in the Opinion indicating the need to improve the access of the religious groups to the decision-making process and for increased participation in the preparation and adoption of measures of their concern.

93. The mission of the CHI is to ensure that the views of the Religious Groups Representatives are taken into account in all matters affecting them. The CHI accompanies the Representatives to meetings with Ministers and other government officials and is also present at the House of Representatives

when Bills affecting them are discussed at the committee stage. She also provides a direct link between the religious groups and the President of the Republic. Further she participates with providing information in the compilation of the present Report (see para 4 above).

94. The CHI also participates actively in the social and political life of the religious groups, attending significant religious and public events organised by the groups. Apart from keeping in close contact with the Parliamentary Representatives of the religious groups, she also keeps a close contact with their religious leadership.

95. Regarding the implementation of the recommendation relating to facilitation of access to civil service posts for members of the Armenian religious group, the CHI is currently in dialogue with the relevant bodies in an effort to examine possible ways to implement this recommendation.

96. In response to comments included in paragraphs 165 and 168 of the Opinion and specifically in paragraph 165, reference is made to the fact that the qualifications for appointment to the civil service are prescribed in the relevant schemes of service which, in accordance with section 27 of *the Public Service Law (L.I/1990 as amended)*, are issued as Regulations by the Council of Ministers, approved by the House of Representatives (see para 97); and the Public Service Commission does not have the authority to amend. In almost all schemes of service requirements are set for different levels of language proficiency in relation to the Greek language (i.e. excellent knowledge or very good knowledge), the English language (very good knowledge or good knowledge) and, in some schemes of service, other European languages. However, for candidates whose mother tongue is other than Greek and who do not possess a school-leaving certificate from a Greek speaking secondary education institution and who, pursuant to Article 2.3 of the Constitution, chose to belong to the Greek Community, provision is made for a lower level of proficiency in the Greek language (good knowledge) provided that they have a very high level of proficiency in the English language (excellent knowledge). As to the level of language proficiency required and the respective proof of proficiency, there are certain criteria set by the Public Service Commission in collaboration with the MoEC. It must be noted that the provision mentioned above allows a degree of flexibility on the requirements for language proficiency and thus ensures better access to the civil service for the members of the different groups.

97. With reference to recommendation of paragraph 168 of the Opinion, the qualifications for appointment to the civil service are set out in *the Public Service Laws (L.I/1990 as amended)* and *the Evaluation of Candidates for Appointment to the Public Service Law (L.6(I)/1998, as amended)*. In the process for appointment there is no discrimination concerning members of the Armenian, Maronite and Latin religious groups. All applicants are treated on an equal basis, irrespective of their ethnic background, religious or other beliefs. Pursuant to section 31 of *the Public Service Laws*, no person is appointed to the civil service, unless he/she is a citizen of the Republic or, provided that the post does not entail direct or indirect participation in the exercise of public authority and in the protection of the general interests of

the state, he/she is citizen of an EU member state, providing, however, for exceptions in special cases. In relation to paragraph 168, it is furthermore noted that the application form used for applying for civil service posts, has been modified since June 2006 so that information on the candidates' religion, marital status, as well as on their spouse's and parents' citizenship, religion, date and place of birth, is no longer required.

➤ **Article 17 of the Framework Convention**

The right to establish contacts with persons sharing the same ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity

(Re para 172 of the Opinion)

98. The authorities of the Republic of Cyprus do not apply restrictions to the freedom of movement of its citizens or foreign nationals legally residing in the Republic. Therefore, the urge to further facilitate the movement of Maronites through the "green line" must be addressed to the occupying power which continues to impose restrictions to the freedom of movement to the occupied part of Cyprus.

99. For further references see also paragraphs 26 and 84 above and more specifically the information on the MOEC supported educational camp organized by the non-governmental organisation Hki Fi Sanna every summer in the village of Kormakitis. The village of Kormakitis is situated in the areas not under the Government control. It is the place where CMA was thriving before the forced displacement of the Maronite inhabitants in 1974, due to the Turkish military invasion. Some of the proficient speakers of CMA still live in the village. The camp aims to promote the learning of the CMA language by young people in an enabling and culturally appropriate context. It includes intensive language classes and uses learner-centered methodologies.

➤ **Article 18 of the Framework Convention**

Bilateral agreements concerning the protection of minorities

(Re para 175 of the Opinion)

100. The Law Commissioner will take the initiative to invite the Religious Groups Representatives to express any specific interest in the development of bilateral cooperation with other countries in the fields of culture, education and science on matters of particular concern to them.