

Strasbourg, 4 July 2011

Working document
Public

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

**COMPILATION OF OPINIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RELATING TO ARTICLE 20 OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION**

FIRST CYCLE

“Article 20

In the exercise of the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention, any person belonging to a national minority shall respect the national legislation and the rights of others, in particular those of persons belonging to the majority or to other national minorities.”

Note: this document was produced as a working document only and does not contain footnotes. For publication purposes, please refer to the original opinions.

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In some cases, the Advisory Committee considered that the implementation of the article at issue did not give rise to any specific observations.

This statement is not to be understood as signalling the adequate measures have now been taken and that efforts in this respect may be diminished or even halted. On the contrary, the nature of the obligations of the Framework Convention requires a sustained and continued effort by the authorities to respect the principles and achieve the goals of the Framework Convention.

Furthermore, a certain state of affairs may be considered acceptable at one stage but that need not necessarily be so in other cycles of monitoring.

Finally, it may be the case that issues that appear at one stage to be of relatively minor concern, prove over time to have been underestimated.

1. AZERBAIJAN

The Advisory Committee refers to its General Remark (see paragraph 10 above) concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The Advisory Committee notes that the instrument of accession of Azerbaijan to the Framework Convention contained a declaration stressing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. The Advisory Committee fully recognises the importance of the territorial integrity of States and is aware of the challenges that Azerbaijan has faced in this sphere. In spite of these difficulties, it is important to ensure that critical statements in support of improved protection of national minorities are not as such considered to imply support for separatism or a threat to territorial integrity.

In respect of Articles 20

The Advisory Committee *finds* that the instrument of accession of Azerbaijan to the Framework Convention contained a declaration stressing the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. The Advisory Committee *considers* it important to ensure that critical statements in support of improved protection of national minorities are not as such deemed to imply support for separatism or a threat to territorial integrity.

2. LITHUANIA

See Article 19