



COE056770

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Strasbourg, 25 February 1999

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DH-MIN (99) 3

**COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ISSUES RELATING
TO THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
(DH-MIN)**

**Possible follow up by the DH-MIN concerning
“Participation of minorities in decision-making processes”**

Secretariat memorandum

Introduction

On Tuesday 16 March 1999 the DH-MIN will discuss, in a Joint Meeting with the Government Offices for National Minorities, the theme of “Participation of minorities in decision-making processes”(Agenda item 3.). The purpose of this brief Secretariat memorandum is to provide elements for consideration by the Committee when it discusses the question of giving possible follow-up to the work carried out so far. It is recalled that the terms of reference of the Committee are as follows:

“i to act as a forum for the exchange of information, views and experience on policies and good practices for the protection of national minorities at the domestic level and in the context of international instruments;

ii to identify and assess ways and means of further enhancing European co-operation on issues relating to the protection of national minorities and, where appropriate, to make proposals to this effect for consideration by the CDDH;

iii in so doing it shall, where appropriate,

- carry out or commission relevant policy research
- involve in its work representatives of national minorities and non-governmental organisations with recognised competence in this field.”

Preparation of a publication

A first possibility could be the publication of the replies to the questionnaire and/or of the synthesis prepared by the Secretariat. The latter document exists in French and English. The text in respect of the different countries will, of course, be submitted to the respective countries for verification. Publication of these documents would require declassification by the Committee of Ministers. Should the DH-MIN consider a publication along these lines desirable, it may wish to notify the CDDH and the Committee of Ministers of this fact in the meeting report.

Commissioning of an expert study

The results of the replies to the questionnaire constitute a unique overview of forms of participation of minorities in decision-making processes in European countries. The DH-MIN might consider the possibility of commissioning an expert study to analyse the different forms of participation with a view to developing a typology of them and identifying parameters relevant to the choice of a specific form of participation for a given situation. Such a study could also, in the form of pilot studies, seek to ascertain perceptions as to the functioning of some forms of participation in practice. Such a study could be carried out in the course of 1999 and the results could then be presented to the DH-MIN at its spring meeting of the year 2000.

Further follow-up

Having received the expert study, the DH-MIN may consider further follow-up, which could take the form of an exchange of views on and publication of the expert study, the preparation of a collection of good practices, the elaboration of guidelines for member States which could subsequently be included in a report or a Recommendation, etc.
