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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Second periodical report
presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter**

CYPRUS

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SECOND PERIODIC REPORT

**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR
MINORITY LANGUAGES**

**OFFICE OF THE
LAW COMMISSIONER**

17 January 2008

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Republic of Cyprus signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter referred to as the “Charter”) on 12 November 1992 and ratified it on 26 August 2002. The Charter entered into force with regard to Cyprus on 1 December 2002. Pursuant to Article 169.3 of the Cyprus Constitution, the Charter, by virtue of its ratification by the Republic of Cyprus (Ratification Law 39(III)/1993) and publication thereof in the Official Gazette of the Republic, is incorporated into the Republic’s domestic law and takes precedence over any other domestic law.

1.2. When depositing its instrument of ratification, Cyprus declared that the regional or minority language, within the meaning of the Charter, was Armenian. In order to clarify that it undertakes to apply only Part II of the Charter to the Armenian language as a non-territorial language, Cyprus replaced the original declaration on 4 August 2005 – See revised Declaration set out in para 3.3 below.

1.3. The Initial Periodical Report of Cyprus on the application of the Charter dated 17 December 2004 was presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter on 17 January 2005 (hereinafter the “Initial Report”). The Report of the Committee of Experts on the Charter together with the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter by Cyprus on the initial monitoring cycle was adopted on 27 September 2006 (hereinafter the “Report of the Committee of Experts” and the “Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers”, respectively) [ECRML (2006) 3]. Hence, the present Report is the Second Periodical Report of Cyprus (hereinafter “the present Report”).

1.4. The present Report contains information on the implementation of the Charter up to the cut off time at which it was drafted. It includes updated information on steps taken to resolve certain shortcomings highlighted in the Report of the Committee of Experts and the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers, as well as the developments that have occurred to this day. In drawing up the present Report every effort was made to follow the Outline for Three Yearly Periodical Reports approved by the Committee of Ministers at its 782nd meeting on 6 February 2002 [MIN-LANG(2002) 1 of 7 February 2002].

1.5. The present Report has been prepared by the Law Commissioner of the Republic who, pursuant to a Decision of the Council of Ministers, is entrusted with ensuring compliance of Cyprus’ reporting obligations under international human rights instruments. The information and data, on the basis of which the present document was compiled, was provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture, being the competent authority for the implementation of the Charter, the Ministry of Interior, being the competent Ministry for the protection of national minorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Law Office of the Republic. Information was also obtained from the Representatives of the Armenian and Maronite religious groups and their respective Offices. Furthermore, information was sought and obtained from a list of non governmental organisations of the Armenian and Maronite Communities in Cyprus which were provided upon request by the respective Representatives. (These are listed in paras. 8.1 and 8.2 below, respectively). The present Report was communicated to the National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights, which is chaired by the Law Commissioner and comprises representatives from all government and public sector institutions, as well as NGOs dealing with human rights issues, professional associations including the Press Council and the University of Cyprus. It will also be communicated upon submission to the Representatives of the religious groups.

1.6. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus regrets that, due to the continuing illegal occupation and effective control of 37% of its territory by Turkish military forces, it is unable to ensure the enjoyment of the rights guaranteed by the Charter in the whole of its territory. As a result, no reliable information or data is available regarding the enjoyment of the rights prescribed by the Charter by the Cypriot population living in the area that is not under Government control. Therefore, all information and data contained in the present Report relate to the Government controlled areas.

1.7. It is earnestly hoped that a just and viable settlement to the Cyprus problem will soon be achieved and that the next Periodical Report of Cyprus will provide information and data for the whole of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus.

PRELIMINARY SECTION

- ▶ **Please provide the necessary background information, such as the relevant historical developments in the country, an overview of the demographic situation with reference to the basic economic data for the regions, as well as information on the constitutional and administrative structure of the State.**

2.1. The present Report is the Second Periodic Report of Cyprus and should be read together with all background information provided in the Initial Report as well as during the on-the-spot visit of the Committee of Experts. More general information can be found in the Core Document which is set out in the Appendix to the present Report. Specific information on Constitutional issues relating to the religious groups is summarized in the following paragraphs.

2.2. The Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus recognizes as a “religious group” a group of persons ordinarily resident in Cyprus professing the same religion and either belonging to the same rite or being subject to the same jurisdiction thereof the number of whom, on the date of the coming into operation of the Constitution, exceeds one thousand out of which at least five hundred become on such date citizens of the Republic [Article2(3) of the Constitution].

2.3. Such religious groups are the Armenian, the Maronite and the Latin. The members of such groups, by virtue of the Constitution, were given the option to decide as a group or individually to be deemed to belong to either of the two Communities of Cyprus (as defined in Article 2 of the Constitution) (the Greek Community or the Turkish Community) and, thus, the provisions of the Constitution applicable to the corresponding Community would apply to them [Article 2(3), (4) and (6) of the Constitution].

2.4. The members of the Armenian, the Maronite and the Latin religious group in Cyprus have opted to be deemed to belong, for constitutional purposes, to the Greek Community and thus they enjoy all constitutional rights conferred upon the members of the Greek Community (e.g. the right to elect and be elected to the office of the President of the Republic, the President of Parliament, or a member of Parliament elected by the Greek Community, etc.).

2.5. The Constitutional obligation of religious groups to opt to belong to one of the two Communities, either the Greek or Turkish Community, should not be viewed in isolation of other Constitutional provisions which go the root of the constitutional structure of the state. The Constitution provides for organs of state which must be bi-communally composed. Participation in state organs is by reference to Community in constitutionally allotted percentages/numbers for each Community. The obligation of religious groups to opt to belong to one of the two Communities is the means provided for by the Constitution for securing that they have a right to participate in the bi-communally composed organs of state as members of the Community to which they belong. Had the Constitution left it open for religious groups, or individual members of such groups, to opt not to belong to a Community, the group or person so opting would have no right to participate in the bi-communally composed state organs. It must be noted that, the bi-communal structure is set up by Articles of the Constitution which are “basic” and under its explicit provisions (Article182) “cannot, in any way, be amended, whether by way of variation, addition, or repeal”.

2.6. Furthermore, the religious groups were given the right to have a member elected in the Communal Chamber of that Community (the Greek Community) (Article 109 of the Constitution). The Communal Chambers had legislative powers solely with regard to: (i) religious matters; (ii) all educational, cultural and teaching matters; and (iii) matters of personal status; (Article 87 of the Constitution).

2.7. The institution of the Communal Chambers is now obsolete and its legislative competence is exercised by the House of Representatives. However, the right of the members of the religious groups under Article 109 of the Constitution was deemed, by a special law, to be a right to have a Representative in the House of Representatives, (hereinafter —the Representative“) elected at special elections held for the purpose, additional to their right, by virtue of being citizens of the Republic belonging to one of the two Communities (the Greek Community), as explained above, to elect and be elected as Members of the House of Representatives and thus participate in the general elections of the Republic.

2.8. The provisions of Article 109 of the Constitution do not afford the right of representation of religious groups through elected Representatives of the group in Parliament. The right afforded relates to the Communal Chamber of the Community to which the groups opted to belong, that is, the Greek Communal Chamber, and concerns legislative functions over limited subjects, (religion, education, and matters of personal status) over which the Greek Communal Chamber has legislative competence under the Constitution. Due to the abnormal situation and the resultant non-function of the Communal Chambers the legislative functions of the Greek Communal Chamber over the said limited subjects were temporarily transferred by Law to Parliament. The right of religious groups to elect a representative in the Greek Communal Chamber was retained vis-à-vis Parliament, pending the abnormal situation, and concerning the above subjects. The role of the elected Representatives of religious groups in Parliament concerning legislative work on the above subjects is advisory. This is because the Parliament in which the Representatives are elected to represent members of the religious groups under temporary arrangements concerning the said limited subjects, is a totally different state organ from the Communal Chamber, being differently composed, elected, and functioning, under constitutional provisions which envisage participation in its work by elected Representatives of the two Communities at fixed proportions, and do not envisage participation of elected Representatives of religious groups. The Constitution provides for a bi-communally composed Parliament, comprising of 70% and 30% Greek and Turkish members, respectively, by contrast to the Greek and Turkish Communal Chambers each of which is composed only of Greek and Turkish Community elected members, respectively.

- ▶ **Please indicate all regional or minority languages, as defined in paragraph (a) of Article 1 of the Charter which exist on your State’s territory. Indicate also the parts of the territory of your country where the speakers of such languages(s) reside.**

3.1. As explained in the Initial Report and during on-the-spot visit and it is acknowledged in the Report of the Committee of Experts, the religious groups of Cyprus and, in particular, the Armenians and the Maronites, are well integrated into society and do not relate to a particular territory of the country.

Armenian

3.2. At the time of depositing its instrument of ratification, Cyprus declared that the regional or minority language, within the meaning of the Charter, was Armenian. In order to clarify that it undertakes to apply only Part II of the Charter to the Armenian language as a non-territorial language, Cyprus replaced its original declaration on 4 August 2005.

3.3. The revised Declaration of 4 August 2005, reads as follows—

“The Republic of Cyprus, while reiterating its commitment to the objectives and principles pursued by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, declares that it undertakes to apply Part II of the Charter in accordance with Article 2,

paragraph 1, to the Armenian language as a “non-territorial” language defined in Article 1c of the Charter.

The Republic of Cyprus would further like to state that its Constitution and laws uphold and safeguard effectively the principle of equality and non-discrimination on the ground of Community, race, religion, language, sex, political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, colour, wealth, social class or any ground whatsoever”.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

3.4. As elaborated in the Initial Report and acknowledged in the Report of the Committee of Experts, Cypriot Maronite Arabic is only spoken by elderly Maronites, who live in the village of Kormakitis. There is no written or standard form of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, although attempts have been made to codify it in the Greek alphabet. However, the Committee of Experts was of the opinion that, since Cypriot Maronite Arabic is traditionally spoken in Cyprus and is not a dialect of one of the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus, it must be considered as a regional or minority language within the meaning of the Charter.

- ▶ **Please indicate the number of speakers for each regional and minority language. Specify the criteria for the definition of “speaker of regional or minority language” that your state has retained for this purpose.**

4.1. Relevant information was provided by the Initial Report and it appears in the Report of the Committee of Experts. This can be summarized as follows:

Armenian Speakers

4.2. There are 3.000 Armenian speakers, of whom 400 are non-Cypriots and recent immigrants, in Cyprus. Armenian speakers constitute 0.4% of the population in the government controlled area. Most speakers live in Nicosia District and according to data provided by the authorities and the Armenian Representative, there are no Armenians or Armenian- speakers in the territory that is not under the effective control of the Cyprus Government.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic Speakers

4.3. There is no official data on the number of Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers. According to official estimations the number of speakers do not exceed 1.300. The estimations were based on the fact that Cypriot Maronite Arabic was spoken primarily by the inhabitants of Kormakitis, a village in the northwest of Cyprus which, before the Turkish invasion of the island, constituted approximately half of the Maronite population in Cyprus.

- ▶ **Please indicate the non-territorial languages, as defined in paragraph c, Article 1 of the Charter, used on your State’s territory and provide statistical data concerning speakers.**

5.1. Refer to Para. 3.1 above and the Report of the Committee of Experts. Also see document “Answers to Comments/Questions Submitted to the Government of Cyprus Regarding its Initial Periodical Report”

- ▶ **Please provide recent general statements on the policy of your State concerning the protection of regional or minority languages where it may be of use to supplement the above four points.**

6.1. A Policy Decision of the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 64.470, dated 18 October 2006) directs all Ministers to consult with the elected Representatives of the three Religious Groups, Armenians, Maronites and Latins, in order to promote their interests and find solutions to issues concerning their respective communities. The said decision was forwarded to all authorities (including Departments and Services of the various Ministries) with instructions for its implementation.

6.2. The Ministry of Education and Culture is pursuing and willing to intensify its efforts to meet the needs of members of religious groups and to ensure that their rights, concerning the areas highlighted in the Report of the Committee of Experts are exercised to their fullest extent. To this end, the Ministry will cooperate as closely and effectively as possible with the Representatives of the Religious groups in a joint effort to promote the notion of living peacefully in a multicultural society and nurture positive attitudes towards all the people living on the island.

6.3. In order to support and promote the preservation of the identity, culture and history of the three religious minorities in Cyprus, the University of Cyprus is in direct contact with religious groups. As a result, joint PhD grants are offered to students who are interested in studying the culture of a specific religious group. Additionally, special provisions are taken for the acceptance and the facilitation of students from the abovementioned religious groups at the state funded Institutions of Higher Education.

PART I

► **Please state the main legal act(s) and / or provisions that you consider essential for the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in your country. Please provide:**

- **Copies of those acts and/or provisions, in English or French, should your country not have done so in the initial periodical report;**
- **Details and copies of new legislation or policy documents with relevance to regional or minority languages;**

7.1. Since the submission of the Initial Report, the following international instruments have been concluded/ratified:

- Agreement on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Government of the Lebanese Republic
Law No. 27(III)/2003
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
Law No. 50(III)/2005
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
Law No. 30(III)/2006

Copies of the above laws are provided only in hard copy, as they are not available in electronic form.

See also document “Answers to Comments/Questions Submitted to the Government of Cyprus Regarding its Initial Periodical Report”, Part I, Question 4.

- **Details of case law or other legal or administrative developments in this field.**

7.2. There are no significant changes since the Initial Report.

- ▶ **Please indicate the bodies or organisations, legally established in your state, which further the protection and development of regional or minority languages. Please list the names and addresses of such organisations.**

8.1. Armenian Organisations

Armenian Prelature of Cyprus

47 Armenias Street, 2003 Strovolos
Archbishop Varoujan Hergelian Tel: 22-493560

The Diocesan Council of the Cyprus Armenian Church

5 Dikaiosynis Street, 2324 Lakatamia
President: Aram (Sebouh) Tavitian Tel: 99-473189

Nareg Armenian Schools Committee

47 Armenias Street, 2003 Strovolos
President: Krikor Haroutounian Tel: 99-312211

Armenian Young Men's Association (A.Y.M.A.)

Alasias Street, 2008 Strovolos
President: Antranik Ashdjian Tel: 99-623155

Armenian General Benevolent Union (A.G.B.U.)

Limassol Ave., 2112 Aglanja
President: David Shahabian Tel: 99-676148

Nor Serount Cultural Association

5 G. Christodoulou Street, 2014 Strovolos
President: Hagop Dickranian Tel: 99-3595

8.2. Maronite Organisations

The Maronite Church of Cyprus

Contact name: Father George Houris (Secretary of the Archbishop)
Contact number: (357) 99 686938

The Maronite Foundation

Contact name: Antonis Hadjirosos
Contact number: (357) 22 761660

Parents Association of the Maronite Primary State School

Contact name: Michalis Hadjirosos
Contact number: (357) 99 677610

Hki Fi Sanna Association

6, Petraki Yiallourou Street, Flat 1, 2373 Nicosia
President: Michalis Hadjirosos
Tel.: (357) 99 677610

Cultural Team Kermia Ztite

18, Saphous Street, 2335 Nicosia
Secretary: George Skordis
Tel.: (357) 99 545404

- ▶ **Please indicate if any body or organisation has been consulted on the preparation of this periodical report or about the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers addressed to your State. In the case of an affirmative answer, specify which one(s).**

9.1. The Representative of the Armenian religious group, Mr. Vartkes Mahdessian, and the Representative of the Maronite religious group, Mr. Antonis Haji Roussos, were kept informed throughout the preparation of the periodical Report by the Law Commissioner with whom they discussed the issues relating to the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers. Upon receipt by the Government of the Report of the Committee of Experts with the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers [ECRML (2006) 3], the Law Commissioner held on 19/10/2006 a special meeting with the said Representatives at which she handed them the text of the report in English and French and requested them to submit suggestions for actions regarding the implementation of the Recommendations. At the same time she informed them of the process of the Second Monitoring Cycle. On 12/4/2007, she presented them a Greek translation of document ECRML (2006) 3, requesting that it be disseminated to the members of their respective groups. By a letter dated 16/10/2007, the Law Commissioner informed the said Representatives that the Second Monitoring Cycle Report of Cyprus was under preparation and requested them to supply any additional information they wished. The present Report will be communicated to them upon submission. See also paras. 10.3 and 10.4 below.

9.2. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior was in continuous dialogue with the Armenian and Maronite Representatives. Furthermore, the Ministry consulted the Armenian and Maronite organisations listed in paragraphs 8.1. and 8.2. above on the preparation of the present Report.

► **Please indicate the measures taken (in accordance with Article 6 of the Charter) to make better known the rights and the duties deriving from the application of the Charter.**

10.1. The Charter (in English, French and Greek) and the Initial Report are posted on the official website of the Press and Information Office (www.moi.gov.cy/pio) since June 2005 and on the website of the Ministry of Interior (www.moi.gov.cy), since 14 July 2005. Furthermore, the Report of the Committee of Experts and the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers [ECRML (2006) 3] are posted, in English and Greek, on the official websites of the Ministry of Interior and of the Press and Information Office since 22 October 2007.

10.2. The Cyprus Government believes that the Charter can be effectively implemented if the dialogue between all interested parties is continuous and constructive. For this purpose the following events were organised cosponsored or supported:

10.3. On 28 September 2007, a Lecture on “International and European Standards on Minority Rights” was organised by the Association of Maronite Graduates in Cyprus, in collaboration with the Office of the Maronite Representative. Professor Dr. Patrick Thornberry, a distinguish expert of international minority rights, was the keynote speaker. The Law Commissioner of the Republic and President of the National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights, Ms Leda Koursoumba, made the opening address and answered the participants’ questions. The Law Commissioner expanded on the human rights instruments with special emphasis to those relevant, in particular, to the Maronite Community in Cyprus, and informed them on the European Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Charter’s Monitoring Cycle. She pointed out that, as a result of a recommendation made by the Committee of Experts in its Report of the Initial Monitoring Cycle, the competent authorities were planning to hold, in November 2007, a specialised meeting in linguistics, aiming at the codification of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. An officer of the Office of the Cypriot Ombudsman, Equality Authority and Antidiscrimination Body informed the participants on the situation in Cyprus.

10.4. On 9 and 10 November 2007, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education and Culture co-organised a Symposium for the codification of the Cyprus-Maronite Arabic under the auspices of the Law Commissioner. The Law Commissioner, in her opening remarks, stressed that this Symposium was an expression of the continued commitment by Cyprus to the protection of its cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. Taking this opportunity, she informed the participants that those interested in making their views known for the Second Monitoring Cycle Report, which at the time was under preparation, were welcome to do so by either contacting the appropriate Government Ministries or the Office of the Law Commissioner; she pointed out that the Initial Monitoring Cycle Report was available in its official versions (English and French) and in Greek translation, prepared by the Office of the Law Commissioner. A Representative of the Council of Europe as well as linguistic experts added value to the Seminar. Its findings are expected to enhance the capacity of the Government to engage in a constructive and sustainable dialogue with institutional representatives of speakers and civil society actors. For more details see para. 11 below.

10.5. On 24 and 25 November 2007, the European University Cyprus organised a Conference entitled “The Minorities of Cyprus: Past, Present and Future”, sponsored by the Ministries of Interior and Education and Culture.

10.6. The Ministry of Education and Culture relying on the recommendations of the Committee of Experts intends to pursue its efforts to meet the linguistic needs of the Armenians and Maronites and to ensure that the members of the religious groups may exercise their rights under the Charter. To this end, the Ministry in compliance with the Policy Decision of the Council of Ministers of 18 October 2006, (see para. 6.1 above) is in co-operation as closely and effectively as possible with the Representatives of the religious groups. Further information is provided on Part II of the present Report.

► **It is understood that full details of the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers will appear in the body of the report. Nevertheless, please summarise those measures for each recommendation.**

►

Recommendation 1

“Apply Part II protection to Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a regional minority language in Cyprus within the meaning of the Charter and strengthen in particular the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at primary school level;”

11.1. As a result of this Recommendation, the Ministry of Education and Culture, in co-operation with the Ministry of the Interior, organised specialised scientific symposium under the auspices of the Law Commissioner with the objective to examine the codification of the Cyprus Maronite Arabic language (CMA). This was a first step to charter the steps on the protection and promotion of the Cypriots Maronite Arabic language and will facilitate its teaching. The Conference took place on 9 and 10 of November, 2007. See para. 10.5 above.

11.2. At the formal part, the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Akis Kleanthous, the Representative of the Cyprus Maronite Community in the House of Representatives Mr. Antonis Haji Roussos and the Minister Plenipotentiary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Pantias Eliades addressed the Symposium. Law Commissioner, Ms. Leda Koursoumba, opened the Symposium and stressed its importance. Mr. Alexey Kozhemyakov from the Directorate General of Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe delivered the inaugural speech.

11.3. In the second part, speakers from the Maronite Community gave their views on CMA. The language's current situation, the difficulties in its teaching, its condition over the last 100 years, CMA's death as a sociopolitical phenomenon and a plan for its preservation were discussed. In the third part, specialists both from Cyprus and abroad addressed various aspects of CMA. Mrs. Arlette Roth-Geuthner spoke on the place of CMA in the Arab world. Professor Alexander Borgs' contribution was on the significance of CMA in oriental research, Rev. Antonis Frangiskou gave his experiences on transcribing Maronite Arabic. Mrs. Chryso Hadjidemetriou from Fribourg University focused on what will follow after its substitution by Greek. Finally, Assistant Professor Marilena Karyolemou spoke about planning for teaching. A general discussion followed the contributions. Apart from clarifications requested by the audience, the participants expressed their views and concerns on the future of CMA.

11.4. A meeting of specialists followed. They discussed measures to be taken for the codification of CMA and future steps towards this goal. The findings of the Symposium are expected to be available by January 2008. The Ministry of Education and Culture is determined to make good use of them and engage in a constructive and sustainable dialogue with institutional representatives of speakers and other actors in order to decide how to proceed further on the subject.

11.5. For the time being, there is no written or standard form of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, and no teaching materials or aids have been developed for the instruction of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language, and thus, the Maronite attendants to the Symposium were asked to suggest the appointment of specialists who can develop instructional curriculum and material for the teaching of their language and culture. The Ministry of Education and Culture is committed to support this effort and awaits the proposals of the speakers.

Recommendation 2

“Take measures to ensure that teaching in Armenian at secondary level remains available;”

12.1. As noted in the Report of the Committee of Experts the decision of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) to close down the Melkonian Educational Institute (MEI) caused immediate reaction of the Government which approved an additional substantial grant to continue functioning.

12.2. The civil action brought before the District Court of Nicosia by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople questioning the legal entitlement of AGBU to close down the school in August 2005 is still pending.

12.3. In view of the de facto closure of the MEI, the Council of Ministers decided (Decision No. 63.718, dated 3 May 2006) to establish an Upper Secondary School for Cypriot Armenian students, within the premises the primary Armenian School «NAREG», in Nicosia. However, though notified to that effect, the majority of the students previously enrolled at MEI decided to attend classes at the American Academy in Nicosia, a private school with a secondary education department. The tuition fees of the Cypriot Armenian students are subsidized by the government and the curriculum of the American Academy School has been modified in order to meet the needs of the specific group of pupils.

12.4. A preservation Order was issued on 2 April 2004 by the Minister of Interior, pursuant to section 38(1) of the Town and Country Planning Law. The said Preservation Order covered the old historic buildings of Melkonian Educational Institute, as well as other (non-historic) buildings on the property and the woods adjacent to the Institute. The AGBU challenged the said Preservation Order by filing a recourse for annulment before the Cyprus Supreme Court (recourse no.943/2005). They argued, inter alia, that the Order was not duly reasoned, particularly regarding the inclusion in the scope thereof of

the woods adjacent to the historic buildings of Melkonian. The Supreme Court, in its judgment dated 11 December 2006, annulled the sub judge Order and held that there was lack of due inquiry and proper reasoning as to the scope of the Order. Following the said judgment, the Minister of Interior issued a new Preservation Order, which was published in the Official Gazette on 2 March 2007 and which has, again, been challenged by the AGBU on 30 July 2007. Since the publication of the said new Preservation Order, no person can interfere with the listed property without the Minister's consent.

Recommendation 3

“Adopt a structured policy for the protection and the promotion of the Armenian and the Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages.”

13.1. It is the policy and stance of the Ministry of Education and Culture that education is open and free to everybody, regardless of their financial situation, racial or ethnic origin, colour, religion, belief or gender. Legislation provides for non-discrimination against students of vulnerable groups, hence securing their unobstructed access to education. The Republic of Cyprus is using a universal approach that covers all students, and at the same time a targeted approach that focuses on the needs of specific groups of students belonging to the religious or ethnic groups of the island. The Education Department offers pupils all possible assistance for attendance at either public or private schools; in the case of the latter, they are subsidised so that they can attend schools of their choice.

13.2 The Ministry of Education and Culture lists “the priorities of the education system” by emphasising the importance of the following:

1. Democratisation, which is reflected by:
 - Respect for the dignity and uniqueness of each individual,
 - Respect for the opinion of the majority and the minorities,
 - Opportunities for participation in the decision making processes,
 - Encouragement of cooperation and responsibility,
 - Equal opportunities in all aspects of school-life.
2. Developing the sound values of democratic citizens.
3. Creating favourable conditions for existence, cooperation and combating intolerance and xenophobia, in a world where an international character is increasingly developed, cultural diversity promoted and boundaries abolished.

13.3. The priorities of the education system are stressed by the following objectives of the Educational Reform, which is currently in progress:

- A democratic school system that promotes the social inclusion of all children and combats dropping out of the system as well as social exclusion; hence a democratic school of inclusion and not of exclusion.
- A school system/education that respects difference, pluralism (cultural, language, religious) and multiple intelligence.

13.4. The Council of Ministers decided (Decision No. 63.847, dated 6 June 2006) to provide free afternoon lessons for the History, Language and Culture of Maronites, Armenians and Latins. The Ministry of Education and Culture had continuous consultations with the Representatives of the religious groups, who indicated that this decision is extremely difficult to apply for practical reasons. As a result the Ministry has asked for alternative proposals. Responding positively, the Representatives proposed the preparation of books on their culture and history. Consultations held with the Representatives of the three groups, concluded that specific suggestions will be brought by the latter. Upon evaluation of the proposals, the Ministry will proceed to the implementation of specific projects.

Armenian

13.5. The Armenian Community in Cyprus suggested the opening of an Armenian Language and Culture Department at the University of Cyprus, in order to promote Armenian language and culture in the public and private life. The proposal was studied by the University of Cyprus which suggested the inclusion of Armenian Language and Armenian Culture courses as electives at the Department of Turkish and Middle East Studies. The Ministry of Education and Culture supports this suggestion as the above courses will contribute to the preservation of the Armenian language and culture and will be available not only to Armenian students but to anyone interested in those subjects.

13.6. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture commits itself to examine the possibility to offer Armenian language courses under the new revised syllabuses for Life Long Learning, available at the Adult Education Centres.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

13.7. In relation to the Cypriot Arabic Maronite language, the Ministry of Education and Culture underlines its respect to the sensitivity of the Maronite community about their unique language. As already explained under paragraph 11 above, the Ministry of Education and Culture is taking measures aiming at its codification in an effort to help to charter the next steps for its protection and promotion. At present, its communicative utility is minimal and so far only a small number of the displaced persons originating from Kormakitis have shown interest in studying it. The Cypriot Maronite Arabic is taught on a voluntary basis at the Saint Maronas Primary School, in afternoon classes as part the All Day School curriculum. As indicated by the participation of only few students, the interest in studying the Maronite language, as an option, is very limited. It is expected that when the findings of the November Symposium are finalised, a dialogue with all institutional representatives of the speakers will take place leading to further measures for the protection and promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

► **Indicate what steps your state has taken to inform the following of the recommendations:**



- All levels of government (national, federal, local and regional authorities or administrations);
- Judicial authorities;
- Legally established bodies and associations.

14. See paras. 9.1, 10.1, 10.3 and 10.4 above. Document ECRML (2006) 3 in English and in Greek translation appears on the website of the Ministry of Interior and of the Press Information Office and it will also be on the website of the Law Commissioner which is now under construction.

► **Please explain how your state has involved the above, in implementing the recommendations.**

15. The Ministry of Interior, has made the Greek translation of the Report of the Committee of Experts and the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers [ECRML (2006) 3] available to all relevant Ministries, Government Departments and Services, District Administration Offices and the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation for their comments in the implementation of the Recommendations and to provide information on new developments in this field. This, together with the Policy Decision of the Council of Ministers of 18 October 2006 (see para. 6.1 above), will lead to effective implementation of the Recommendations. Their comments as well as new developments which have been integrated in the present Report, reflect the importance that the Cyprus attaches to the national minorities and their languages. Refer to para 11 above.

PART II

- **Please indicate what measures your State has taken to apply Article 7 of the Charter to the regional or minority languages referred to in paragraphs 1 and 3 of part I above, specifying the different levels of government responsible.**

16. This Part of the present Report contains updated and comprehensive information on the status and situation of the languages to which the Charter applies in Cyprus. At the same time it gives information in relation to the comments/recommendations of the Committee of Experts, in particular those in boxes, and supplements the information given in Part I, in particular paras. 11 to 13 above, concerning the steps taken following the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers.

Issues concerning the Roma students – this relates to para. 33 of the Report of the Committee of Experts:

17.1. The Ministry of Education and Culture, in its effort to enhance the achievement of Roma pupils, has developed a strategic plan which represents part of the government's agenda for education reform and aims to improve the public schools by reducing the achievement gap of minority students including the Roma. The Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented special support measures for Roma pupils in all schools they attend.

17.2. According to data, received from the District Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Limassol, the majority of the Gypsies in the Government controlled area of Cyprus speak only Turkish and use very few Kurbetcha words when they want to communicate without being understood by others. Few of them know some Greek.

17.3. The majority of the schools with high registration and attendance of Roma students and other non-native language speakers operate as “Zones of Educational Priority”. The policy of these Zones is derived from the strategy of positive discrimination (UNESCO), the unequal treatment of inequalities. The Ministry of Education and Culture provides additional resources to the vulnerable groups of schools which are included in the Zones of Educational Priority.

17.4. Empirical and theoretical research related to minority education and specific educational initiatives has generated a number of assumptions which have guided the Ministry of Education and Culture in developing and implementing programs for the Roma and other non-native language speaking students where the emphasis is based on the following:

- Students who are less than fully proficient in the language used in school will have difficulty deriving academic benefit from their educational experience, since the inability to understand the language in which instruction is given interferes with comprehension of the content of that instruction. Therefore extra tutoring, in subjects such as Language Arts, Math, Science is provided to these students.
- Instruction of students in the native language allows them to participate in school and to acquire the skills and knowledge covered in the curriculum while learning Greek. In addition, it allows Roma students to make use of the skills, knowledge and experience they already have and to build on those assets in school. Evaluating the above, the Ministry of Education and Culture initiated the employment of bilingual teachers, especially in Elementary Schools.
- In their schools, students need adequate exposure to Greek in order to acquire it as a second language. Such exposure takes place when focused on the learners' special linguistic needs. Subject matter instruction in Greek can provide the exposure that Roma students need, as long as it is appropriately tailored for them. Subject matter instruction in the school language is an essential component in bilingual Education. Therefore, free private lessons in Greek are given to Roma pupils in the afternoon at the State Funded Institutions for Further Education.

- Formal instruction in Greek as a Second Language (GSL) can help students start learning the language. GSL instruction, whether formal or informal, is an integral part of all bilingual education programs; in order to help students acquire more knowledge books and printed material on the subject are provided to teachers, students parents and schools free of charge by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- Children, including those in bilingual programs, have the best chance of realising their full academic potential when their language skills, social and cultural experience, and knowledge of the world are affirmed in school; these are the foundations of academic development. Instruction in Public Schools, takes into consideration students' linguistic and Cultural attributes across grade levels throughout the entire curriculum.
- Even though the National Curriculum has a clear focus on the acquisition of basic skills (such as reading, writing, math and language arts), in schools where the percentage of minority (Roma) pupils is high, educators have the liberty to adapt the curriculum to the Roma populations' specific needs in order to offer lessons on heritage in their mother language (Turkish).

17.5. Other measures and strategies for the Roma students are the following:

- Provision of bilingual teachers who facilitate the communication between teachers, students and parents.
- Provision of breakfast.
- Provision of meals for the students who attend the whole-day school.
- Provision of special support and attention from the Service of Educational Psychology and the Social Welfare Services.
- Organization of a number of intercultural programs and events.

17.6. The information given under para. 18 below relating to issues concerning the Turkish language / education of Turkish Cypriots students, relates also to the Roma population of Cyprus. Roma population in the Government controlled area of Cyprus is not stable, as they move to and from the occupied area and, thus, it is often in many cases very difficult for them to benefit from the opportunities offered by the Government. Otherwise, the policy of the Ministry is the same which applies to Turkish speaking students in Cyprus. See para. 18 below.

Issues concerning the Turkish language and education of Turkish students – this relates to para. 43 of the Report of the Committee of Experts:

18.1. The Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented a number of measures with regard to the Turkish language as well. Among others, during the school years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008, the following actions took place:

- Greek-Turkish interpreters were employed at schools where a great number of Turkish Cypriot pupils are enrolled.
- Free breakfast is provided to all Turkish speaking pupils attending public schools.
- Free lunch is provided to all Turkish speaking pupils attending all day public primary schools.
- The Adult Education Centres offer Turkish and Greek language classes to Turkish-Cypriot students and their parents free of charge.
- Underprivileged pupils receive financial support (e.g. school uniform, stationary, registration fees and insurance cover).
- At the Ayios Antonios Primary School, in Lemesos, where the majority of the Turkish speaking students are enrolled:

- Two Turkish Cypriot teachers are employed full time to teach the Turkish language and culture to Turkish Cypriot pupils both in morning and afternoon classes.
- A students' bilingual calendar and a bilingual newspaper are published with articles in Greek and Turkish.
- A Greek-Turkish interpreter was employed full time.
- An educational psychologist and a logo therapist were appointed.
- The number of students in each class was reduced. The school operates with 11 classes in six grades with a very small number of students (12-16) in each class.
- A substantive number of extra teaching periods, over the school's allowance according to the timetable, were allocated to support weak and foreign speaking students.
- Children were encouraged to play and work together, in order to improve relations, promote acceptance and fight discrimination.
- Seminars for teachers, parents and students were organised in an effort to open the school to the community (e.g. seminars and lessons were organised and offered to Turkish Cypriot mothers and teachers and parents formed a theatrical group and performed a play).
- Educational activities and other events open to all parents, Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and foreigners were organised.
- Greek and Turkish Cypriot parents were encouraged to participate and be active members of the school's parent's council.

18.2. The Agios Antonios Primary School is situated in an underdeveloped area of Lemesos, with a population which consists of Greek Cypriot displaced persons, Turkish Cypriots, Roma and economic immigrants with a limited exposure to education and of a low socioeconomic level. Through its curriculum the School's aims to promote equal opportunities and quality in education whilst respecting the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of students. The aforementioned area presents social, cultural, religious, and ethnic diversities. The School's basic target is to improve the quality of the offered education, promote equality and schooling, and fight exclusion and racism. Among its priorities is to deal with foreign speaking students, persuade Roma families to enroll their children to school and create an environment of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect between students and parents of different ethnic origins. Integrating Turkish Cypriot students and other students risking exclusion from the school's society are also equally important objectives. The School unit developed several actions and introduced a number of educational innovations, receiving in this process a substantial material help from several governmental and other non profit bodies and organisations.

18.3. The Agios Antonios Primary School was recognized internationally for Education best practices. At the 16th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (16CCEM), in Cape Town, South Africa (10 to 14 December, 2006) it received the second place prize of the "*Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards 2006*", for its educational innovations in this field in the last three years, for fighting racism, ethnic and religious discrimination and xenophobia.

18.4. Despite the decision of the Council of Ministers for the establishment of a special primary school in Lemesos for the needs of the Turkish speaking pupils, the families of those students did not show any interest nor have expressed any support to this idea. This conclusion was reached as a result of personal interviews with the parents, carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture; it shows that the Turkish speaking pupils who reside in Lemesos are satisfied with the current policy and practice, leading to the aforesaid Commonwealth recognition and favourable comments from the Council of Europe.

18.5. The Council of Ministers has recently decided with regard to Agios Antonios Secondary School that the teaching of the Turkish language, history, culture and Islamic religion class be conducted by a Turkish Cypriot teacher. It also decided to establish an introductory class and to increase the teaching periods of Greek language to the Turkish-speaking students.

Issues concerning the Armenian and the Cypriot Maronite Arabic Languages:

19.1. As stated in para. 13.4 above, for the promotion of the Armenian and the Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages, the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 63.847, dated 6 June 2006) to provide free afternoon lessons for the History and Culture of Maronites, Armenians and Latins. The Ministry of Education and Culture had continuous consultations with the Representatives of the religious groups, who indicated that this decision is extremely difficult to apply for practical reasons. As a result the Ministry has asked for alternative proposals. Responding positively, the Representatives proposed the preparation of books on their culture and history. Consultations held with the Representatives of the three groups, concluded that specific suggestions will be brought by the latter. Upon evaluation of the proposals, the Ministry will proceed to the implementation of specific projects.

19.2. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture has committed itself to revise the existing History Books, in collaboration with the religious groups. The Representatives responding to the request of the Ministry provided the relevant materials and the matter is in progress. The Ministry has appointed a scientific committee to examine the suggestions which has recently accomplished its task and the project is expected to be completed in the near future.

19.3. Consultations are also being held in relation to the issue that new generations should become familiar with other cultures in Cyprus. Subsidies for the activities of the minority groups are being implemented, under the annual budgets. For example, the Council of Ministers approved the funding of a monument in Larnaca (Finikoudes), as a memoir of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, with the sum of CY£100.000. (€170.860).

19.4. The Armenian community in Cyprus also suggested the opening of an Armenian language and Culture Department at the University of Cyprus, in order to promote Armenian language and culture in public and private life. The proposal was studied by the University of Cyprus which suggested the inclusion of Armenian language and Armenian culture courses as optional subjects at the Department of Turkish and Middle East Studies. The Ministry of Education and Culture supports this suggestion as the said courses will contribute to the preservation of the Armenian language and culture and will be available not only to Armenian students but to anyone interested in those subjects. The Ministry commits itself to examine the possibility to offer Armenian Language Courses under the new revised syllabuses for Life Long Learning, available at the Adult Education Centres.

This relates to comments in box after para. 69 of the Report of the Committee of Experts. See also paras. 23 to 29 below.

19.5. In relation to the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language, the Ministry of Education and Culture underlines its respects to the sensitivity of the Maronite community about the uniqueness of their language. For more information on this see paras. 11.1 to 11.5, 13.1 to 13.4 and 13.7 above. As noted above, since Cypriot Maronite Arabic is only spoken, its communicative utility is minimal and so far only a small number of the displaced persons originating from Kormakitis have shown interest in studying it. It is taught, as an optional subject, on a voluntary basis at the Saint Maronas Primary School, in afternoon classes as part the All Day School curriculum. As indicated by the participation of only few students, the interest in studying the Maronite language is very limited. The majority

of the Maronite school population is not enrolled at the Saint Maronas Primary School. Both parents and the students prefer public primary schools near their place of residence and support the establishment of multicultural schools emphasising pupils' ethnic, religious and cultural diversity while preparing them for university, for the labour market and for co-existing in society in general.

19.6. The teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a subject under the programs offered by the Adult Education Centres will be examined in the near future by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Regarding the training of teachers as well as the production of teaching materials the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasises its will to support the efforts of the Maronite Community and encourages the Community to take initiatives towards the realisation of this project by submitting specific proposals to the Government. See para. 19.8 below.

19.7. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Government of the Lebanese Republic have signed a bilateral agreement regarding cultural, educational and scientific cooperation (see para. 7.1 above). The Agreement provides for the exchange of teachers, scientists, specialists as well as scientific delegations in order to participate in conferences and symposia, exchange ideas and methodologies concerning the said fields. The two countries already collaborate by exchanging publications in the fields of science, education, technology, literature, the study of their history, geography, culture and art. The Ministry of Education and Culture will make every effort to promote and strengthen this cooperation. Note, however, that the spoken language in Lebanon is different from Cyprus Maronite Arabic.

19.8. As indicated in paras. 11.1 to 11.5 above, the Ministry of Education and Culture has endorsed a scientific approach to the issue by organising a Symposium to charter the measures for the codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. As indicated in para. 13.7 above, as soon as the findings of the Symposium are finalised, a dialogue with all institutional representatives of the speakers will take place leading to further measures for the protection and promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. This in turn will provide possibilities for ensuring the teaching of CMA and to arrange for the training of teachers and production of teaching materials.

This together with paras. 11.1 to 11.5 and 13.7 above, relate to comments in box after paras. 49 and 106 of the Report of the Committee of Experts.

19.9. Concerning the request for the establishment of a Maronite Cultural Centre, a meeting was held on 3 May 2007. An extract of the minutes of the meeting in question with the Committee on Cultural Issues is provided below:

«Following the suggestions forwarded by the Planning Bureau, alternative ways of meeting the demands have been considered. It has been observed that in the primary school of Saint Maronas in Anthoupolis, which was built in 2002, there is a multi-purpose hall with a capacity of approximately 400 persons. This hall consists of a stage and changing rooms, as well as a lobby which can be converted into a display room. This room can be used for the cultural needs of the Maronite religious group. Therefore, the Committee suggests that this hall can be adequately used in the future for cultural activities».

19.10. Notwithstanding the above suggestion, the Ministry of Education and Culture is re-examining the request in order to offer a solution that addresses the needs of the Maronites comprehensively. In parallel, the government funds a number of Maronite associations for cultural activities. Specifically since October 2006, the newspaper "Maronite Press", the Cultural Society "Elias the Prophet", the Institution for the Social Welfare of the Maronites, the Holy Monastery of Elias the Prophet and the Community Council of Asomatos village have received subsidies.

19.11. The Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture frequently meet demands made by the religious groups upon fulfilment of certain criteria. The Ministry of Education and Culture is ready to examine suggestions submitted by any religious group.

19.12. The request of the Maronites for the creation of database for History and their culture will be examined by the Ministry upon submission of the Representative's final proposal.

This relates to the comments in box after para. 72 of the Report of the Committee of Experts.

Institutional relations between Armenians and Maronites - this relates to para. 82 of the Report of the Committee of Experts

20. Such a request has never been made by the Representatives of the three religious groups, though encouraged to do so upon communication of the Report of the Committee of Experts. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate the communication between the members of the three religious groups, the Ministry of Interior has funded the creation of three websites, one for each religious group. This decision falls within the framework of the Government's policy to reinforce the Religious groups' efforts to promote their cultural heritage and identity. See also paras. 28.2 and 28.3 below.

Issues concerning Secondary education in Armenian – this relates to comments in box after para. 97 of the Report of the Committee of Experts.

21.1. See paras. 12.3 and 13.1 to 13.5-13.6 above.

Training for the Educators employed at Armenian Schools – this relates to comments in box after para. 98 of the Report of the Committee of Experts.

22. The Ministry of Education and Culture through its Department of Pre-Primary and Primary Education, the Department of Secondary Education and the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus offer in-service training to educators that are employed at the Armenian Schools. The training includes subjects such as teaching Greek as a Second Language, Teaching Practices and Methodology, Classroom Management, as well as subjects that are identified by the schools themselves as areas of concern. Under the strategic plan for Educational Reform that is being implemented, the Ministry of Education and Culture will examine the possibility of offering teacher training in Armenian.

Issues relating to allocation of funds to promote Armenian language and culture in public and private life – this relates to comments in box after para. 69 of the Report of the Committee of Experts.

23.1. During the period under review, the role of mass media and communication media in promoting participation in cultural life has been strengthened mainly because of the operation of private radio and television stations. The ratio of programmes dedicated to culture has increased tremendously during recent years. A variety of events covered by the various media (TV, radio, press) give the opportunity to those interested to get acquainted with their own culture and learn about the culture of others.

23.2. More specifically, the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) which is the public radio and television broadcaster, has adopted the following measures in order to promote cultural life:

- 16% of the total television hours (CyBC 1, CyBC 2) and 39% of the total radio broadcast hours (First, Second and Third Channels) are devoted to culture and cultural activities;
- Cultural events and activities are promoted through programmes, live transmissions, interviews, statements and announcements;

- Concerts, lectures, discussions and contests of a purely cultural content are organised and broadcasted as well as high quality documentaries and feature films, series based on actual events and acclaimed literature, operas, concerts, ballets, theatre performances and cultural programmes;
- Media sponsoring, promoting in particular, cultural events are sponsored by the organization.

23.3. The Government has taken steps to strengthen the capacity of media to promote cultural diversity and support intercultural dialogue. More specifically, it has encouraged the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation to produce more programming directed to the island's communities and religious groups -

Programming addressed to the three Religious Groups

24.1. In recent years public service television, the CyBC, has upgraded its programmes addressed specifically to the religious groups in Cyprus, i.e. the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins. Issues concerning these religious groups are covered in various television news and discussion magazine programmes as well as in cultural magazines.

24.2. Cy BC First Radio Channel transmits a programme devoted to the Maronite religious group called "The Voice of Maronites" every Friday between 16.30 and 17.00 CLT. It presents the history, culture and activities of the Maronites living in Cyprus.

24.3. For the Armenian religious group, there is a daily variety programme, which includes a news bulletin, Armenian songs, a magazine, a children's spot etc. on CyBC Second Radio Channel between 17.00 and 18.00 CLT. CyBC-1 TV Channel devotes every year on 6 January (Armenian Christmas Day) an hourly festive programme in Armenian (Armenian music, traditional dances etc.)

24.4. For the Latin religious group, CyBC First Radio Channel carries a programme devoted to the Latin religious group called "The Latins of Cyprus yesterday and today" every Friday between 16.30-17.00 CLT. It hosts members of the Latin religious group of Cyprus and covers issues which concern the history, religion, traditions and culture of the Latins (Catholics). The programme also covers current affairs and activities of interest to the Latin religious group.

24.5. For all foreign residents and tourists in Cyprus, CyBC carries a daily news bulletin in English between 18.25-18.35 CyBC-2 TV Channel. The Second Radio Channel carries the international programme, which is mainly in English. It covers about half of the 24h-schedule of this channel. Programmes include news bulletins and music.

Future Planning

25. CyBC is planning to include, in the upcoming season schedule (2007-8), a half-hour television programme on CyBC-2 TV Channel, specifically prepared for the island's religious groups (Maronites, Armenians, Latins), and, possibly for the foreigners living in Cyprus.

26. The mass media demonstrate awareness and sensitivity on issues concerning the linguistic groups of Cyprus, reflecting on different issues prompted by current events or anniversaries; otherwise their focus is oriented towards more popular issues.

27. See paras. 13.4 and 19.1 above for Decision of the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 63.847, dated 6 June 2006) to provide free afternoon lessons for the History and Culture of Maronites, Armenians and Latins.

28.1. On 21.3.2006, the Council of Ministers approved a proposal for a yearly total subsidy of CYP30.000 (€ 51.260) to be allocated to the three religious groups (Maronites, Armenians and Latins) in order to strengthen their print media, such as newspapers published by the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins. The relevant proposal was submitted by the Ministry of the Interior, having taken into consideration Cyprus' commitment under the Charter and the Framework Convention and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

28.2. The Ministry of the Interior has also decided to provide financial assistance to the three religious groups, in order to create and/or strengthen their individual websites. The Press and Information Office of the Republic will be responsible for coordinating the process of developing the three sites. For this purpose in November 2007, the Ministry of Interior allotted CYP 5,000 (€ 8.540) to each religious group. The websites will include information on the cultural heritage of the religious groups (history, religion, civilization), as well as on topics regarding youth and information on activities, hence raising awareness both locally and abroad. The three sites will be in Greek and English, while the Armenian site will also be in Armenian. The Representatives have undertaken the task of providing the content.

28.3. The Government has also decided to create a website, consistent with the format of all Government sites, which will include succinct information about the three religious groups and links to their respective websites. This website, which will be in Greek and English, will present the Government's policy on issues pertaining to the religious groups.

Cultural policy abroad for Armenians and the cultures they reflect

29.1. Cultural links have been established through transfrontier exchanges. The Republic of Cyprus has concluded with the Republic of Armenia an Agreement on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science [ratified by Law 19(III)/1998]. See document "Answers to Comments/Questions submitted to the Government of Cyprus, Regarding its Initial Periodical Report", Part I, Question 4. By virtue of Article 6 thereof: "A joint Cypro-Armenian Committee shall meet alternately every three years in Nicosia and Yerevan to consider matters relating to the implementation of the present Agreement. The dates of the meetings will be arranged through the diplomatic channels."

29.2. Within the framework of the official visit to the Republic of Armenia in October 2004 of the Cyprus Permanently Delegation, a Protocol of Co-operation between the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia and the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus was signed by their respective Presidents aiming, inter alia, to future cooperation in the field of culture. In a Memorandum, signed at the same time between the same Presidents, it was considered necessary, inter alia,-

- to further promote cultural exchanges and assist in the development of cooperation between enterprises of the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Armenia,
- to express their support for the continued functioning of the Melkonian school, which forms part of the historical and cultural heritage of Cyprus,
- to ensure mutual assistance and cooperation of the parliamentary delegation of the two countries in international organizations.

Awareness raising – this relates to the comments in box after para. 122

30. A number of measures were taken to raise awareness within the general public of the traditional presence in Cyprus of the Armenian language and especially of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. These include:

- The action of the Law Commissioner described in para. 9 above.
- Posting of the Charter, the Initial Report and the Report of the Committee of Experts with the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers on a number of public websites. See para. 10 above.

- Organisation/sponsorship of various seminars/symposia and scientific gatherings on linguistics. See paras. 13, 14, 15 and 16 above.
- Communications/Consultations of the Ministry of the Interior with the relevant NGOs which are set out in paras. 8.1 and 8.2 above. See para. 9.2 above.

► **If, appropriate, state any future measures which are envisaged in your country.**

31. The effects of the State's policy, regarding multicultural education will be apparent in the long-term. However, the first positive outcomes are evident in all public schools starting from the students' attendance, participation, academic achievements and last but not least their social integration between different religious and cultural backgrounds.

Nicosia,
Office of the Law Commissioner

17 January 2008