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**Fourth Report submitted by the Netherlands pursuant to Article 25,
paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National
Minorities**

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FOURTH REPORT FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

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Introduction

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a Council of Europe convention, entered into force on 1 February 1998. As a signatory to the convention, the Netherlands is committed to certain agreements that protect the status of the Frisians as a national minority. Member states that sign and ratify the convention undertake to promote the full and effective equality of people belonging to national minorities in all areas of economic, social and cultural life. The conditions required for them to express, preserve and develop their culture and identity must also be safeguarded. In 2004 the Dutch parliament approved a government proposal that the Framework Convention should explicitly protect Frisians.

The Netherlands ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on 16 February 2005, and it entered into force in the Netherlands on 1 June 2005. The Dutch government also stated that it assumed that the protection offered under article 10, paragraph 3, despite the differences in wording, did not differ from that offered under article 5, paragraph 2 and article 6, paragraph 3 (a) and (e) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

As part of its obligations under the convention, the Netherlands must report periodically to the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Framework Convention. This fourth report addresses the practical measures taken at national level relating to the Framework Convention, measures taken in response to recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers, and further measures taken to implement the Framework Convention. This report covers the period from the publication of the third report (June 2018) to March 2021 inclusive. Before turning to this, however, a number of general developments and developments concerning the Frisian language and culture will be sketched out.

Developments

Information on recognised languages

In 2020 central government made information on the recognised languages more broadly accessible. The website www.erkendetalen.nl offers information on all recognised languages in the Netherlands, as well as the answers to frequently asked questions. The site also lists the relevant legislation, administrative agreements and voluntary agreements pertaining to each language, and has links to documents on the languages shared with the House of Representatives. The possibility of providing the information on the site in the languages concerned is being explored.

Regional languages symposium

The second Regional Languages Symposium took place in Venlo in 2019. The goal of the symposium was to bring together experts in the various regionally based minority languages (Frisian, Limburgish and Low Saxon) to share knowledge and experiences. The main themes were attitudes to the language and language infrastructure. Three sessions on education, image and digital tools gave participants the opportunity to explore the subject of their choice in more breadth and depth. The afternoon programme included the signing of an administrative agreement on Limburgish. The authorities and language organisations involved greatly appreciated the event. The symposium was regarded as a good way of enabling speakers of the various recognised languages to connect and learn from each other. The Ministry of the Interior plans to organise a third Regional Languages Symposium in autumn 2021.

Developments concerning Frisian

Frisian and Dutch are both official languages in the province of Fryslân. In 2019-2021 central government and the provincial authority took further steps to promote and strengthen the Frisian language in the various fields covered by the Charter, thus fulfilling the undertakings in the (Administrative Agreement on the Frisian Language and Culture (*Bestjoersôfspraak Fryske Taal en Kultuer 2019-2023*, BFTK). Halfway through the term of the BFTK the House of Representatives and the provincial council will be informed about the implementation of the agreement. This report is expected to be ready towards the end of 2021. The Taalskipper Frysk ('Frisian language captain') role will also be evaluated in 2021.

Current issues associated with Frisian concern education, justice, communications and the visibility of the language. These issues are examined more closely below. Before turning to the implementation of parts II and III of the Charter, we will first briefly outline the current situation as regards Frisian.

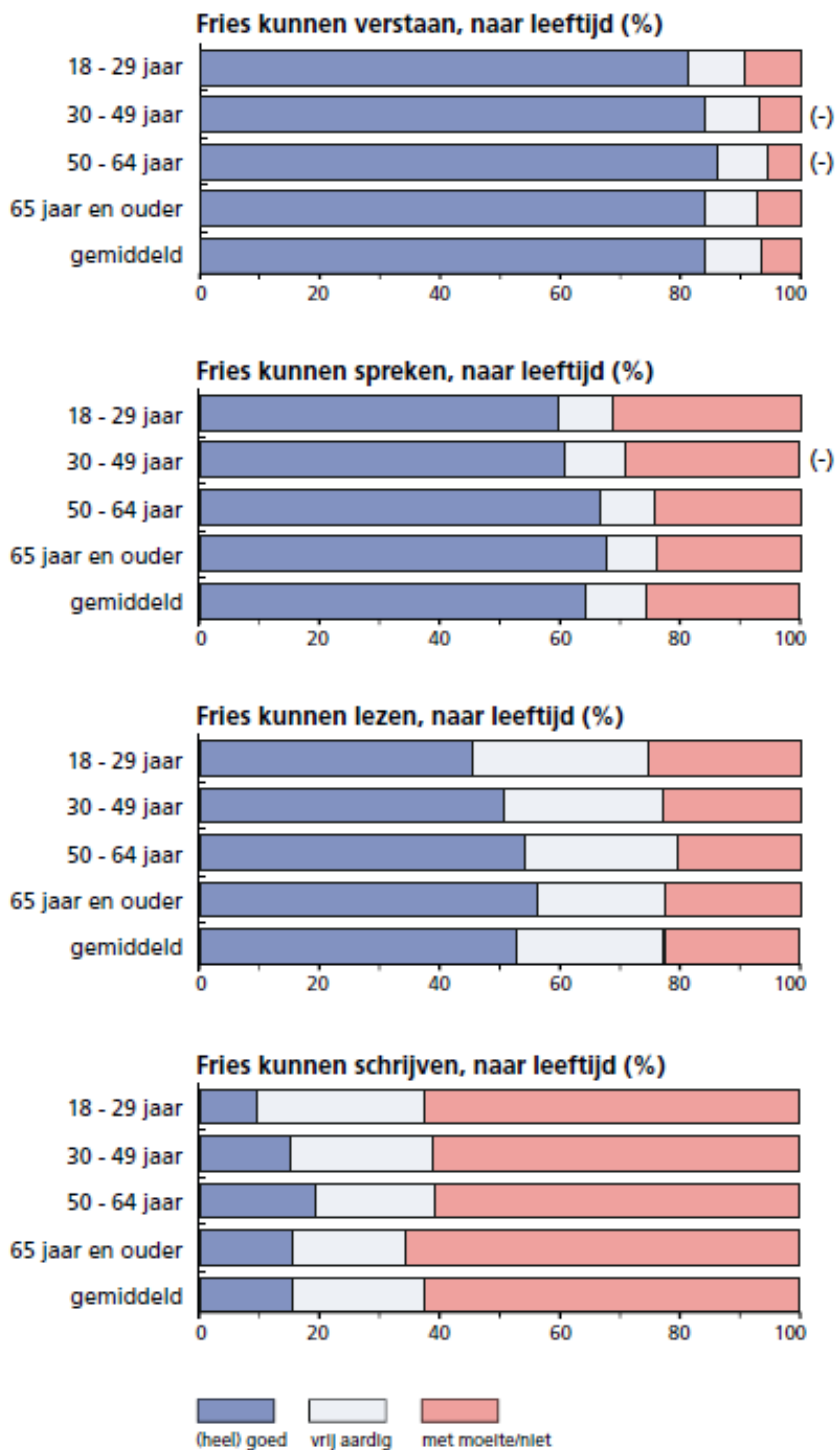
Frisian in focus

In 2020 Fryslân provincial authority published a new edition of its survey of the state of the Frisian language (*Fryske Taalatlas*).¹ The *Taalatlas* gives an idea of the command and use of Frisian by residents and public authorities, and in education and business. Residents were asked in a survey to what extent they are able to understand and use Frisian, and actually do so. All findings are self-reported. As in previous surveys, it was found that almost all residents of Fryslân understand the language (93.3%). The *Taalatlas* points out that the proportion indicating they understand Frisian well to very well (84.1%) has declined by one percentage point since the 2015 survey. The same applies to the proportion of Frisians who say they speak Frisian well or very well (down from 66.6% in 2015 to 64.1 % in 2019). The proportion of people able to read Frisian has increased since 2007, and

¹ <https://friesland.databank.nl/report/Taalatlas%202020%20%28Fries%29.pdf>

there was also a small increase in 2019. In the 2019 survey, 15.9% of respondents indicated that they could write Frisian well to very well, up from 14.5% in 2015 and 9.5% in 2007. The *Taalatlas* concludes that the proportion of Frisians able to read and write the language has increased slightly over the past 12 years. The proportion able to understand and speak Frisian has remained stable.

1.3 ■ Beheersingsniveau Fries in Fryslân (%) naar leeftijd



*Command of Frisian: listening, speaking, reading, writing – by age. From: De Fryske Taalatlas 2020 – Frisian in Focus.*²

I. Practical measures taken at national level relating to the results of the third monitoring cycle and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

a. *Steps taken to publish the results of the third cycle: publication, dissemination and translation into the official languages and minority languages, where appropriate.*

As in the case of the Advisory Committee's previous evaluations, the third evaluation relating to the Netherlands' implementation of the Framework Convention was translated into Frisian. The report, evaluation and government response were sent to the House of Representatives and published on www.rijksoverheid.nl.³

b. *Follow-up activities organised at national, regional and local level, including activities organised in conjunction with the Council of Europe.*

The Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD), chaired by Sietske Poepjes of the Fryslân provincial executive, held a Network Breakfast Meeting in 2019 hosted by the Council of Europe in Brussels (Council of Europe Liaison Office). This meeting was also attended by the Head of the Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe (ECRML), Sixto Molina.

In October 2019 Fryslân provincial authority, in partnership with the Council of Europe, also organised the monitoring visit by the Committee of Experts to the province of Fryslân. This included a visit to a Frisian secondary school in connection with the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and various meetings were held with stakeholders representing Frisian interests. Fryslân provincial authority has organised this working visit in respect of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities since 2018.

² [Text in image:]

1.3 Command of Frisian in Fryslân, by age

[headings:]

Ability to understand Frisian, by age (%)

Ability to speak Frisian, by age (%)

Ability to read Frisian, by age (%)

Ability to write Frisian, by age (%)

[ages on left]

aged 18-29

aged 30-49

aged 50-64

65 and over

average

[colour coding:]

blue: well/very well

white: reasonably well

pink: with difficulty/not at all

³ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/erkende-talen/documenten/rapporten/2019/11/05/6e-evaluatie-nederland-voor-europees-handvest-voor-regionale-talen-of-talen-van-minderheden>

In 2020 the NPLD, chaired by Sietske Poepjes of the Fryslân provincial executive, issued a joint statement with the Council of Europe to mark the European Day of Languages. Ms Poepjes also helped put together a video for activities organised by the Council of Europe to celebrate this day.⁴

Aside from these activities, which came about in cooperation with the Council of Europe, Fryslân provincial authority, in consultation with central government, continued to work on several recommendations made by the Council of Europe. In the period under review, for example, as this report also shows, more has been invested in the quality of education in Frisian.

c. Participation of organisations representing minorities and other NGOs in implementing and monitoring the Framework Convention and their involvement in the preparations for the fourth report.

Organisations concerned with the Frisian language and culture were asked to provide input for the fourth report on the Framework Convention. Besides the authorities concerned, the following and other language organisations responded to the request for input from the Ministry of the Interior or Fryslân provincial authority: DINGtiid, Fryske Akademy/Mercator, Association of Teachers of Living Languages – Frisian Section, Steatekomitee Frysk, Cedin, the Chair of Frisian Language and Literature at the University of Groningen, Jongfryske Mienskip, Ried fan de Fryske Beweging, Stifting Fryske Berne Opfang and Feriening Frysk ûnderwiis. Their input was included either directly or indirectly in the part of this report on the Frisian language and culture. Generally speaking, the organisations' input concerned their own activities relating to Frisian, and their main priorities concerning the language. The advisory body on the Frisian language, DINGtiid, was asked to comment on the draft version of this report drawn up at the end of March for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.⁵ In view of the large degree of overlap relating to Frisian between the Charter and the Framework Convention, this input has also been included in this report. Jongfryske Mienskip chose to respond to the Dutch government's response to the Advisory Committee's third evaluation, expressing criticism of the response and calling for the government to do more for the Frisian language and culture.⁶

d. Other measures taken to raise awareness of the Framework Convention among minorities, officials and the general public.

In order to make information about the Framework Convention and the recognised languages in the Netherlands more accessible to a wider audience, it has been accorded its own place on the central government website at www.erkendetalen.nl. The site provides information about the recognised languages in the Netherlands and, in the section on the Frisian language, about the Framework Convention too. Publications relating to the Framework Convention can also be consulted via this website (under *Documenten*).

The European Charter Classroom Activities (ECCA) project, in which Fryslân provincial authority is involved as one of the partners in the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD), and which was set up in connection with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, also devotes attention indirectly to the Framework Convention.⁷ A series of lessons is being devised within this project that deals with young people's language rights. For the time being the focus is on

⁴ [Video European Day of Languages](#)

⁵ [Advisory letter on the draft report on the European Charter \(in Dutch and Frisian\), DINGtiid](#)

⁶ <https://www.e-pages.dk/frieschdagblad/1596/article/1306692/24/3/render/?token=84a7ada732e4916de002339558e8c029>

⁷ www.thisismylanguage.eu

the European Charter, but the development of a similar set of lessons looking at the Framework Convention may be looked at in 2022. This teaching material will initially be made available in Frisian, Dutch and English.

II. Measures taken in response to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers

1. *Ensure that the implementation of the 2019-2023 Administrative Agreement on the Frisian Language and Culture results in substantial and lasting improvements for the rights of persons belonging to the Frisian national minority; ensure that the province of Fryslân is equipped with all necessary resources to fulfill its newly assigned role as “language captain” for Frisian; take a strategic and participatory approach in all areas of language use with a specific focus on education and teacher training, on the right to use the Frisian language in court, and on the use of the Frisian language on TV, in print and in digital media.*

The third report already mentioned the Administrative Agreement on the Frisian Language and Culture 2019-2023 (BFTK)⁸. Central government and Fryslân provincial authority will inform the House of Representatives and Fryslân provincial council in mid-2021 about the implementation of the agreements in the BFTK by means of an interim report. DINGtiid, the advisory body on the Frisian language, will be involved in this evaluation of the agreement in its role as defined in the Use of Frisian Act (*Wet Gebruik Friese Taal*). In 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations will also commission an evaluation of the *Taalskipper* role, which Fryslân provincial authority undertook in 2017. These two reports will be shared with the House of Representatives, and made available online at www.rijksoverheid.nl. The use of the Frisian language in education, courts of law, the media and other areas is addressed in more detail in the sections relating to articles 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18.

2. *Ensure the effective participation of Roma, Sinti and Travellers in policy making and, together with the stakeholders concerned, develop a comprehensive policy addressing discrimination against Roma, Sinti and Travellers in education, the labour market and housing. In particular, take resolute measures to support municipalities in implementing the new housing policy adopted in June 2018.*

The Netherlands pursues a generic policy to promote the equality, inclusion and participation of Roma and Sinti. Discrimination against Roma and Sinti is therefore addressed as part of a government-wide approach to tackle discrimination. There will be a significant development in this approach in 2021, when the government will elaborate plans for the appointment of a National Antiracism and Antidiscrimination Coordinator. In addition, a National Antiracism and Antidiscrimination Commission will be set up. It will carry out long-term studies over a number of years, including into discrimination within government.

The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations holds regular consultations with representatives of Sinti, Roma and traveller communities concerning policy on caravans and caravan pitches.

⁸ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/convenanten/2018/11/30/bestjoersofspraak-fryske-taal-en-kultuer-2019-2023>

3. *Promote intercultural respect and tolerance in society, inter alia through the creation of a sustainable, transparent and representative structure for consultation of minority groups and supporting civil society organisations of these groups.*

The Netherlands is becoming a very diverse society. The diversity of the population has increased sharply in recent years, and 25% of residents now have a migration background. The government regards a broad-ranging and flexible dialogue with society as important. A flexible dialogue means that the government consults a range of different parties. Depending on the matter in hand, they may be professional experts, opinion makers, people with knowledge derived from experience and/or representatives of communities. The form these consultations take depends on the subject and the parties concerned.

With regard to the Frisian language and culture, the Use of Frisian Act regulates the establishment of an entity for the Frisian language.⁹ DINGtiid, the advisory body for the Frisian language, has the task of promoting equality between the Frisian and Dutch languages in the province. One of its core duties in this regard is reporting on needs and wishes with regards to the Frisian language and culture in relation to the Use of Frisian Act, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. DINGtiid submits advisory opinions to both central government and Fryslân provincial authority.

The reporting centre Meldpunt Frysk launched by the provincial authority in May 2020 has received 50 reports, ranging from the occasional compliment or anti-Frisian view to comments and requests concerning failure to use Frisian by the authorities (in announcements, brochures, forms), media, educational establishments, other public bodies (lack of visibility) and tech companies (Wikipedia, Facebook etc.).

The provincial authority works with Tûmba, a centre of expertise on discrimination, diversity and equality in Leeuwarden, when responding to reports that are regarded as discriminatory. The reports received to date have led, among other things, to the fine-tuning of internal language policy at Fryslân provincial authority, and a greater focus on the use of Frisian in multilingual central government communications (on coronavirus measures, organ donation).

⁹ [Use of Frisian Act \(in Dutch\) - BWBR0034047 \(overheid.nl\)](#)

III. Further measures taken to implement the Framework Convention – by article

Article 3 of the Framework Convention

Scope

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to adopt a more flexible approach towards the scope of application of the Framework Convention. It invites the authorities to extend its scope of application on an article-by-article basis to the groups who could benefit from its provisions. It further calls on the authorities to enter into a formal dialogue with representatives of groups interested in the protection provided by the Framework Convention.

The government has not changed its views on this point. In accordance with the applicable criteria, the Frisians were designated by the government as a national minority coming under the scope of the Framework Convention. When the bill to ratify the Framework Convention was approved, the government and parliament agreed that it would only apply to the Frisians. While the government devotes attention to other groups, such as Roma and Sinti for example, it does so in different ways. Ethnic and religious national minorities enjoy protection in an international context under article 14 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These articles prohibit discrimination in relation to the rights and freedoms set forth in the ECHR and the denial of the right of minorities, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language respectively.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to clarify the legal situation regarding the territorial scope of application of the Framework Convention following the 2010 constitutional reform.

In 2005 the Framework Convention was approved with regard to the Netherlands. Prior to the constitutional reform of 10 October 2010, the Kingdom of the Netherlands consisted of the countries of the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. The islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, Saba, St Eustatius and St Maarten made up the Netherlands Antilles. In 2005 the Kingdom of the Netherlands became a party to the Framework Convention. In the same year, the Framework Convention was ratified and entered into force in respect of the Netherlands. The Framework Convention was not ratified and did not enter into force with respect to the countries of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. This means that those countries are not bound by the Convention. Since the constitutional reform of 10 October 2010, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has consisted of the following countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten. The islands of Bonaire, Saba and St Eustatius are public bodies and are part of the Netherlands. Together, these three islands form the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. Treaties that were approved with respect to the Netherlands prior to the constitutional reform do not automatically apply to the Caribbean part of the Netherlands after 2010. So far the Framework Convention has only entered into force with respect to the European part of the Netherlands. As things currently stand, the Framework Convention therefore applies neither to the Caribbean part of the Netherlands nor to the other Caribbean countries of Kingdom.

Article 4 of the Framework Convention

Protection against discrimination

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to explicitly incorporate the ground of 'language' into the General Equal Treatment Act in order to increase clarity, accessibility and visibility of the provisions in place, including with respect to Frisian speakers.

In accordance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the definition contained therein and the established case law of the Supreme Court (since HR 15 June 1976, NJ 1976, 551, with commentary from Van Veen), the term 'race' in the Equal Treatment Act (*Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling*; AWGB) must be interpreted broadly and also includes: colour, descent and national or ethnic origin (Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives 1990/91, 22 014, no. 3, p. 13).

Since the Netherlands is a party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the predecessor of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights established (inter alia in its findings in case 2012-56) that the Dutch government had, in the context of the Framework Convention, designated the Frisians as a national minority. It had done so for reasons including the fact that the Frisians had their own language, culture and history and had been living in the province of Fryslân for centuries (Parliamentary Papers, House of Representatives, 2003/04, 26389, no. 9). In addition, Frisian is recognised as a regional language in the context of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and is designated in the General Administrative Law Act (section 2:7) as a language that can be used in dealings between citizens and administrative authorities in so far as the latter are located in the province of Fryslân.

These considerations, taken together, led the predecessor of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights to conclude that Frisian origin comes under the term 'race'. This conclusion is supported by the debate on the Framework Convention in the Dutch parliament, which explicitly addressed the question of whether a national minority within the meaning of the Convention could invoke the AWGB. The minister concerned answered this question with regard to the Frisians in the affirmative (Parliamentary Papers, Senate, 2000/01, 26 389, no. 60, p. 3).

The Advisory Committee considers it essential to ensure that the National Institute for Human Rights, the Ombudsperson and the Local Anti-Discrimination Bureaus have adequate resources and invites them to invest in raising awareness of the anti-discrimination legislation and remedies available in particular among persons belonging to national minorities.

The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, the Ombudsman and the municipal anti-discrimination services (ADVs) play an important role in supporting victims of discrimination. In response to the report 'Unprecedented Injustice', the government recently decided to give a substantial additional injection of funds to the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights and the ADVs. In the former case the extra money is intended for handling complaints against implementing organisations, such as the Benefits Agency. The ADVs are receiving extra funds to offer legal and emotional support when complaints of this kind are submitted. They must always be thoroughly investigated and followed up appropriately. The proper handling of discrimination complaints against implementing organisations will be discussed by the government with the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights. In addition, the Institute will offer training courses to the staff of implementing organisations to preventively counteract unconscious biases. To this end, capacity and resources will be substantially increased in 2021.

Article 5 of the Framework Convention

Promotion of Frisian culture

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue providing stable support to institutions and projects which protect and promote Frisian culture in consultation with the provincial authorities, municipalities, and civil society organisations.

Central government and the province of Fryslân will continue to work together to promote the Frisian language and culture, taking their cue from the Administrative Agreement on the Frisian Language and Culture 2019-2023 (BFTK). As well as arrangements on promoting the Frisian language, it also includes arrangements on supporting Frisian cultural institutions and projects.

The House of Representatives and language organisations have recently raised questions about concentrating responsibility for the Frisian language and culture in a single ministry. The government does not believe it would be wise to make one ministry responsible for the different aspects of the Frisian language. Language does not exist in isolation. It is important that policy on Frisian is aligned with developments in, for example, education, culture, healthcare and the justice system. This requires such a level of expertise that it would not be desirable to concentrate responsibility for the Frisian language and culture in a single ministry. The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations coordinates the efforts of other ministries in The Hague, and is the first point of contact on the Frisian language both for the ministries concerned and for the provincial authority. The ministries all retain their own responsibilities. The Ministry of the Interior is of course also responsible for helping to implement the BFTK, in so far as the arrangements agreed lie within its area of responsibility. In its advisory letter DINGtiid indicated its endorsement of this position.

In 2020 the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Media announced that from 2024 central government would withdraw from municipal programmes with Regional History Centres. In his response to questions from parliament concerning this matter, the minister indicated that this will not have any implications for agreements under the BFTK and the Charter, and that funding for Frisian history and literature centre Tresoar would be continued.¹⁰

In the Explore the North project the provincial authority is working to establish a production company focusing on Frisian and multilingualism, building on the legacy of *Lân fan Taal*, and forging connections with City of Literature and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's experimental schemes. As mentioned above, Leeuwarden City of Literature is a key element of efforts to strengthen the Frisian literature infrastructure. Preparations are for example being made to establish a Frisian *skriuwersskoalle* (school of creative writing), an international writer-in-residence programme, and a Frysk international project will be launched to promote reading and multilingual literacy, taking literature as its starting point. The City of Literature project is also doing a lot to make the Frisian language and literature more visible. In 2020 sets of cards with poems were distributed to food banks, and elderly people in care homes were also sent cards with Frisian poetry. By focusing on more accessible reading material, the provincial authority hopes to bring the language to a wider audience, not only making Frisian more visible, but also using it as a functional language. The Explore the North production company will associate the language with other art forms over the coming years, and profile the Frisian language on local, national and international platforms.

Leeuwarden-Fryslân was admitted to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) on 31 October 2019. This involves sharing experiences about literature and promoting books and multilingualism

¹⁰ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2020/06/25/antwoorden-op-de-schriftelijke-vragen-over-het-bericht-provinsje-tsjin-foarnimmen-minister-slob-om-tresoar-of-te-stjitten>

with an emphasis on the Frisian language. Within this UNESCO network, attention is paid to Frisian culture not only through literature, but also through design, film and gastronomy.

Aside from this initiative, at international level Fryslân provincial authority will examine, in line with the agreements made under the BFTK and in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to what extent cultural activities at Dutch embassies can also devote explicit attention to the Frisian language and culture. The province authority will address this issue further in the course of the year.

Article 6 of the Framework Convention

Tolerance and intercultural dialogue

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to promote intercultural respect and tolerance in society, including through the creation of a sustainable, transparent and representative structure for the consultation of minority groups and supporting civil society organisations of these groups.

For the flexible dialogue being pursued by central government, see also part II, point 3. Within citizenship education, too, it is important that pupils learn to deal with diversity and efforts are made to enhance mutual understanding of each other's culture and religion, and to tackle intolerance. In late 2019 the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science submitted a revised citizenship bill to this effect to the House of Representatives.

Protection from hate speech and hate crime

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue effectively preventing, investigating, prosecuting and sanctioning hate speech and hate crime through adequate legislation and sufficiently resourced institutions and to raise the awareness of persons belonging to minority groups of the possibilities of reporting.

The Public Prosecution Service is entrusted with the task of enforcing criminal law. As far as discrimination is concerned, the framework for this task is provided by criminal-law provisions on discrimination and the protected interests envisaged by the legislator in criminalising the conduct in question: the protection of public order, the protection of the unimpeded societal functioning of groups and the protection of individuals. With due regard for its position and task in the judicial system, the Public Prosecution Service consults with partners, interest groups and media experts on how to highlight the criminal-law approach to tackling discrimination. In an open dialogue the parties involved exchange ideas on the impact of discrimination on the community, the scope and limitations of criminal law and the dilemmas surrounding communication regarding criminal cases.

In order to increase willingness among victims of discriminatory violence to report incidents or lodge a criminal complaint, the police are focusing on measures to support victims who report an incident or lodge a criminal complaint, and on increasing knowledge and expertise by making use of internal police networks. The police work on the principle that their services are available to all and anyone should be able to approach any police officer and receive the help they need.

Roma, Sinti and Travellers

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to take resolute measures and provide all necessary support to municipalities in implementing a non-discriminatory and effective housing policy for Travellers in line with the recommendations given by the Office of the National Ombudsman and the National Institute for Human Rights.

Over the past few years Platform 31 has implemented a support programme for municipalities, commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. A large number of municipalities have taken part in the programme.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure effective participation of Roma, Sinti and Travellers in policy making through strengthening grassroots organisations and investing in partnerships based on a relationship of trust.

The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport introduced a grant scheme in 2015 to promote the rights of Sinti and Roma in the Netherlands and foster their participation in society. The scheme distributes funds – the remainder of the compensation awarded in connection with the persecution of Sinti and Roma in the Second World War – among the community. Partly in view of the history of these funds, it is important to guarantee the involvement of Sinti and Roma throughout this process, and to talk with and not about Sinti and Roma concerning policy relating to them. The scheme was therefore drawn up after extensive consultation with the Sinti and Roma community.

Projects focused on cooperation, for instance between Sinti and Roma, and between Sinti, Roma and all tiers of government, are encouraged. The funds enable Sinti and Roma themselves to strengthen their position in society over the coming years. Sinti and Roma should be given a voice not only in the preliminary phase, but also when proposals are assessed. To this end an advisory committee made up of Sinti and Roma has been set up, which will advise the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport on the assessment of the grant applications.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to consider adopting a more evidence-based, comprehensive and strategic approach towards the persistent discrimination and inequality experienced by persons belonging to the Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities especially in the areas of education, housing and employment.

No central registry is kept in the Netherlands that records data relating to ethnicity. The Personal Records Database (BRP) only registers objective data on origin (country of birth and parents' country of birth). However, these data cannot be used to identify Roma and Sinti, because they come from a large number of different countries and data on origin does not indicate whether a person belongs to the Roma or Sinti communities. The survey on the social inclusion of Roma and Sinti in terms of housing and living conditions that is conducted in the Netherlands by the Risbo research consultancy at Erasmus University Rotterdam is qualitative in nature. The researchers talk to professionals who have a broader picture of the position of Roma and Sinti in the Netherlands and indicate that the survey gives a valid and robust overview of the position and developments within the Roma and Sinti communities in the Netherlands.

Article 9 of the Framework Convention

Media in the Frisian language

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to continue their support for sustainable functioning of the only Frisian language broadcaster in the country and to ensure its availability throughout the entire country.

In recent years national public broadcaster NOS and regional broadcasters have increasingly worked together, initially mainly online and in the television news broadcasts at 12.00 and 15.00. Since January 2021 NOS has been working even more closely with local (NLPO) and regional public broadcasters (RPO) since NOS journalists have been posted with several regional and local

broadcasting organisations, using funding from central government.¹¹ In turn, NOS regularly uses footage from the Frisian broadcasting organisation, increasing the frequency with which subtitled interviews with people speaking Frisian are seen on its national news programmes.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to develop a coherent strategy for Frisian language media, making use of new technological developments and the possibilities opened up by social media; to consider investing in the creation of high-quality and relevant content in the Frisian language targeted at a broad range of Frisian speakers of all ages, which can be used by different types of online and print media.

The three major Frisian media organisations – radio and TV broadcaster Omrop Fryslân, and the *Leeuwarder Courant* and *Friesch Dagblad* newspapers – are currently preparing a joint project application for 2021-2023. The application, to be submitted to the provincial authority, is for a work experience programme to teach new journalists the Frisian language, culture and identity. The parties involved have also looked into European grant opportunities for journalists who speak minority languages. However, no suitable scheme has so far been identified among the existing European Commission grant schemes.

In implementing their 2021-2024 plans for primary schools, in order to achieve the ambitions set out in *Taalplan Frysk 2030*, Omrop Fryslân developed a Frisian family vlog as a product for social media and television. The broadcaster hopes the vlog will link Frisian use at home and at school.

For some time now, Fryslân provincial authority has been casting its net wider than simply the traditional media described in the Charter. Several organisations have also stressed the importance of an accessible Frisian magazine. Alongside the funding of literary magazine *de Moanne*, *Ensafh* and a magazine for young people (LinKk), the provincial authority also promotes other innovative media products in Frisian, in so far as this is appropriate to its role as a public authority.¹² The Ried fan de Fryske Beweging has launched a Frisian-language magazine called *de Nije*. The organisation believes it is important to focus more on accessible material for ordinary readers, in order to make Frisian a functional language. The magazine is produced in an edition of 800-1000 copies, in line with current demand from the Frisian public.¹³

The use of Frisian on social media and in podcasts is also important for the continued existence of the Frisian language.

Given the increasingly digital world we live in, Fryslân provincial authority is devising a coherent strategy to harness new technological developments and the possibilities offered by social media for the benefit of Frisian.

Article 10 of the Framework Convention

Use of Frisian in relationship with administrative authorities

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that the right to use the Frisian language in contacts with the administration, as guaranteed by the Use of Frisian Act, is fully implemented in practice in all public services, including in law enforcement.

¹¹ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2364537-nos-gaat-samenwerking-aan-met-lokale-en-regionaleomroepen.html>

¹² LinKk » LinKk, wat is dat?

¹³ Glossy 'De Nije' gaat door ondanks geringe verkoop (frieschdagblad.nl)

The provincial authority organises the inter-authority discussions *Mei-inoar foar it Frysk* for Frisian municipal authorities involved in implementing the Use of Frisian Act. In 2020 Frisian administrators and representatives of advisory body DINGtiid paid a working visit, led by the King's Commissioner, to the authorities in Luxembourg to learn about ways of making their own language visible. Work also continued on the drafting of a joint long-term agenda for Frisian. The provincial authority has planned talks with all municipal authorities in spring 2021 to agree what they will do over the coming years to ensure they use Frisian at least 25% more than presently. This might take the form of an increase in the number of letters and municipal notices drafted in Frisian, the use of Frisian on the municipal website, a focus on command of Frisian in recruitment, a focus on the municipal authority's role in shaping early years education using both Frisian and Dutch, the introduction of Frisian or multilingual signs in order to make Frisian more visible, or language courses for municipal officials and public-facing staff.

At the start of 2021 the provincial authority itself published its internal policy plan '*Fanselssprekkend Frysk*', which includes the goal that by 2030 90% of staff with direct contact with the public should be able to speak and write Frisian. Vacancy notices will include a standard requirement that applicants have a positive attitude to Frisian. New staff will take a language test and, if necessary, be offered a language course.¹⁴ According to the language ordinance drafted by the provincial authority in 2014, the authority will at any rate draft the provincial budget, accounts and policy documents in Frisian.¹⁵ Its goal will be for all information issued in the form of flyers and on social media and in campaigns to be bilingual by default. This information is currently often only in Dutch, as the Dutch versions reach more people. The provincial authority also intends that residents should be able to indicate that they only wish to receive correspondence from the authority in Frisian.¹⁶

In 2018 the Mercator Research Centre performed a study on behalf of DINGtiid on the role of Frisian in municipal boundary changes in Fryslân (Schukking & Klinkenberg 2018).¹⁷ It found that boundary changes (up to 2018) had often led to compromises, and sometimes to a deterioration in Frisian language policy. Partly in response to the study, extra consideration has been given to language policy in more recent boundary changes. The new municipalities have for example adopted a new language policy that includes a focus on multilingualism in those municipalities. A study by Afûk and Partoer commissioned by DINGtiid has shown, however, that municipal authorities in Fryslân could do much more to promote Frisian both inside and outside their organisation. On 12 March 2020 DINGtiid held a 'DINGpetear' meeting at which academics and representatives of Frisian municipalities were able to discuss the issue. A follow-up was planned for January 2021, but had to be postponed until further notice because of the coronavirus restrictions.

All municipal authorities subject to the Use of Frisian Act have now fulfilled their statutory obligation to adopt a language plan. These language policy plans can be used to promote the use of Frisian within the municipalities. Some municipal authorities still need to flesh out their plans in order to actively implement them, however. The provincial authority's *Mei-inoar foar it Frysk* scheme will be extended and updated for this purpose. It will also be opened to semi-public authorities in the province, such as Wetterskip Fryslân, the safety region, the emergency control centre and subnational authorities like the Central Judicial Collection Agency (CJIB) and the Tax and Customs Administration.

In 2019 DINGtiid performed a case study at the request of the Ministry of the Interior on the use of Frisian at central government implementing organisations. The purpose was to obtain a clear idea of

¹⁴ [Provincie wil Fries zichtbaarder maken \(e-pages.dk\)](#) [Zichtbaar Fries voor stimuleren taalgebruik --News item - Provincie Fryslân](#)

¹⁵ [Feroarderding oangeande it brûken fan de Fryske en de Nederlânske taal mei en troch de bestoersorganen fan de provinsje Fryslân \(overheid.nl\)](#)

¹⁶ [Provincie wil Fries zichtbaarder maken \(e-pages.dk\)](#)

¹⁷ [Weryndieling Fryske Gemeenten, Mercator Research Centre-- \(mercator-research.eu\)](#)

the role that Frisian plays within these organisations. It was found that staff of central government implementing organisations are aware of the Use of Frisian Act and the legal status of Frisian. Although the organisations concerned have no official language policy, and have no statutory obligation to draft one, they do use Frisian in daily practice. DINGtiid recommends that the organisations be encouraged to draw up guidelines for the use of Frisian, and points out that organisations like Afûk can help them do so. DINGtiid also recommends stepping up the focus on command of Frisian with courses and ways of establishing employees' language competence. In its role as *Taalskipper* Fryslân provincial authority has discussed DINGtiid's recommendations with representatives of central government implementing organisations. It should be noted that these organisations are independent, and enjoy full discretion when it comes to their own internal operations.

Frisian may be used at hearings at all locations used by the Northern Netherlands District Court and the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal, provided the person wishing to use Frisian lives, resides or has their registered office in the province of Fryslân.

Use of Frisian in courts

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to fully implement the right to use the Frisian language in courts as guaranteed by the Use of Frisian Act. To this end, they should monitor and evaluate the situation, raise awareness and provide the necessary resources so that the availability of Frisian-speaking staff can be secured.

Residents of Fryslân have the right to speak Frisian and submit documents in Frisian in cases heard by the Northern Netherlands District Court or the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal. This is provided for in the Use of Frisian Act. Residents of Fryslân may litigate in Frisian at all locations used by the district court (Leeuwarden, Assen and Groningen) and by the court of appeal (Leeuwarden and elsewhere, including Arnhem and Zwolle).

Residents of Fryslân are welcome to use Frisian in cases heard by the Northern Netherlands District Court or the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal. In principle, cases involving residents of the province of Fryslân are dealt with in Leeuwarden, although some types of administrative law cases constitute an exception. However, a specific local association can mean that these cases, too, are heard in Leeuwarden. In accordance with section 15, subsection 2 of the Use of Frisian Act, suspects, parties, witnesses and interested parties will be reminded in correspondence of their right to speak Frisian at the hearing if they live, reside or have their registered office in the province of Fryslân. Court buildings in Leeuwarden also have signs inviting residents to speak Frisian. Information on the use of Frisian in judicial matters is also available on the court's website.¹⁸ Prior to the pandemic, the right to use Frisian in court proceedings was also discussed during school visits to the court in Leeuwarden.

In 2020 Fryslân provincial authority held out the promise of an end to the shortage of Frisian interpreters in the judicial system. The resources that the authority has made available will allow several interpreters to be trained. As a result, there are now two sworn Frisian interpreters. The availability of several Frisian interpreters should help hearings at which Frisian is spoken to be scheduled more quickly, and it is also expected to encourage more residents of Fryslân to speak Frisian in court.

To offer further encouragement, Fryslân provincial authority will also take steps to raise public awareness of the right to conduct legal proceedings in Frisian (both spoken and written).

¹⁸ Use of [Frisian in judicial matters \(in Dutch\)](#) | [Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal](#) | [Rechtspraak.nl](#)

The district court and court of appeal require their staff to have a passive knowledge of Frisian, or be prepared to learn the language. To improve staff knowledge of Frisian, both courts organise regular Frisian courses for their employees. If staff have a command of Frisian, the need to use the services of an interpreter will be reduced.

Fred van der Winkel was appointed president of the Northern Netherlands District Court with effect from 1 December 2020. In his previous role as president of the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal, he liaised with the King's Commissioner in Fryslân on the use of Frisian in the judicial system. In 2021, as stated in the BFTK 2019-2023, the provincial authority will initiate talks with the Northern Netherlands District Court and the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal on the use of Frisian in the judicial system.

Article 11 of the Framework Convention

Minority language signs and topographical indications

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to increase their efforts in promoting the display of signs and topographical indications in the Frisian language.

In the Frisian municipality of Noardeast-Fryslân, the municipal council adopted an amendment in 2020 to translate all place names in the municipality into Frisian with a view to harmonisation. This decision was made partly on the basis of the agreement that, in the pursuit of harmonisation, municipalities should follow the most progressive policy with regard to Frisian and that the position of Frisian should not deteriorate. The amendment has two parts. The first part relates to the decision to include a Frisian toponym, or a variant for which an argument can be made on historical grounds, for all villages, in the Addresses and Buildings Database (BAG). The second part concerns the displaying of the Frisian name on village name signs. With regard to the latter point, a village may express, through a village interest group or other body representing the village, a preference for a particular variant that is supported by a demonstrable majority of villagers.

It is a competence of the municipality to adopt Frisian versions of place names, but this issue is currently giving rise to problems, and even court action, in various parts of the municipality of Noardeast-Fryslân. A small number of village interest groups, and some councillors, who previously agreed to the amendment, now have concerns about, for example, the costs involved. The municipal authorities emphasise that it is important to dispel prejudices and confusion surrounding Frisian place names. Because this is a municipal task, neither the provincial authority nor central government have a role to play. The provincial authority does, however, provide some of the funding.

Article 12 of the Framework Convention

Knowledge about national minorities, intercultural education and multilingualism

The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to continue to comprehensively assess the effects on Frisian language learning in the framework of the multilingual approach.

Fryslân provincial authority and the Inspectorate of Education hold regular consultations at inter-authority and official level. Certain arrangements incorporated into the Administrative Agreement on the Frisian Language and Culture are designed to ensure that the Inspectorate monitors Frisian. It has, for example, been agreed that the Inspectorate will conduct a special survey of Frisian in primary and secondary education every five years.

The Inspectorate was also involved in a webinar on Frisian in education that took place in autumn 2020. Consultations at official and administrative level were held with all inspectors working in Fryslân. Official talks also took place concerning the specific situation of schools on the Frisian Islands. All of these consultations will continue on a frequent basis in 2021.

During its four-yearly reviews of boards and schools, the Inspectorate considers if necessary how school boards monitor and enhance the quality of the teaching materials offered, including teaching materials for Frisian. If there are signs that the teaching offered has serious shortcomings, the Inspectorate may decide to perform a verification or risk assessment in schools to ascertain the quality of teaching in Frisian. In this connection, in December 2019 the Inspectorate issued a report entitled ‘Sizzen is neat, mar dwaan is in ding. Fries in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs’ (‘Sizzen is neat, mar dwaan is in ding. Frisian in primary and secondary schools’).¹⁹ In the report, the Inspectorate of Education concludes that primary school governors feel no compulsion to make any efforts in support of Frisian. Half of the governors surveyed said they had ‘no ambitions’ to expand teaching in and of Frisian. Their main concerns are staff policy, school premises and mergers.

In February 2021 advisory body DINGtiid published a report commissioned by the Fryslân provincial authority, recommending what the monitoring of Frisian as a subject should focus on.²⁰ The provincial authority believes it should have this responsibility. DINGtiid, however, advises that the power to monitor Frisian as a subject in primary and secondary schools should remain in the hands of central government (and thus the Inspectorate of Education), and not be transferred to the provincial authority. DINGtiid concludes, on the basis of discussions with several stakeholders, that the trend in terms of monitoring Frisian in education is a positive one. Everyone prioritises the interests of Frisian, and wants to advance Frisian in schools. DINGtiid concludes that the existing official attribution of responsibility is good. Monitoring has improved in recent years, but to optimise it will take further improvements, on the part both of regulators and policymakers. This would not require any transfer of authority from the Inspectorate to the provincial authority.²¹

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to support the mainstreaming of Frisian history and culture in the general curricula, including outside of the province.

A small proportion of the digital teaching material for Frisian developed by language promotion organisation Afûk in collaboration with Cedin, with the support of Fryslân provincial authority, also covers the teaching of Frisian history and culture. This online material is available in Frisian. It is, however, very limited, and not designed specifically for history teachers. Furthermore, the ‘Kanon fan de Fryske skiednis’²² (canon of Frisian history) developed for the purpose in 2008 is now outdated, and is not always entirely suitable for use in today’s online learning environments. A book for primary schools on Frisian history in Frisian was published in 2014.²³ Again, however, there is a lack of attractive physical or online teaching material in Frisian for use in history lessons at secondary schools in Fryslân. To continue putting the recommendation into practice and ensure that all pupils are offered lessons on history and culture in Frisian will require further action. This might initially involve surveying the potential for developing a Frisian scheme for teaching history with a focus on Frisian history in the ten historical periods covered, in addition to the national scheme. There are no teaching materials (online or otherwise) on Frisian culture and history for schools outside the province of Fryslân. Perhaps some of the material to be developed in the province could also be

¹⁹ [Sizzen is neat, mar dwaan is in ding. Fries in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs | Thematic report | Inspectorate of Education \(onderwijsinspectie.nl\)](https://onderwijsinspectie.nl)

²⁰ [DINGtiid – advisory body on the Frisian language](#)

²¹ [Advys skoalynspeksje Frysk: besteande rolferdieling is goed - DINGtiid](#)

²² [Kanon fan de Fryske Skiednis \(11en30.nu\)](#)

²³ [Gewoon gek op skiednis, Erik Betten](#)

shared nationally, so that schools in the Netherlands as a whole can devote some attention to Frisian history and culture as a matter of common practice.²⁴

In 2020 the provincial authorities and the Creative Industries Fund NL awarded funding to 8D Games, Bureau Maalstroom, Tresoar, Afûk and Fers, to develop the multilingual *Fryske digiTales*, which from 2021 will provide a fun way to access an innovative library where users can discover traditional tales and heritage online. The project is designed for children aged 6 to 12, and comprises an extensive collection of additional teaching material on Frisian history to supplement the official syllabus. For the time being, it contains only three well-known Frisian folk tales. This project, therefore, does not yet ensure that teaching of Frisian history and culture (in Frisian) is available to all students.

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching in and of the Frisian language

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to provide all necessary support to the implementation of the Frisian Language Plan in close co-operation with teachers, parents, students and minority organisations with a view to reaching the 2030 target of a significant increase in the knowledge of the Frisian language, both orally and in writing. A sufficiently high quality level of teaching has to be ensured and monitored systemically by the Education Inspectorate.

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to undertake measures to make Frisian language teaching and learning more attractive in secondary schools, e.g. through setting low thresholds for opening Frisian language courses and removing any obstacles to choosing Frisian as a subject in final exams.

Fryslân provincial authority and central government have adopted the common goal that all primary and secondary schools should offer all attainment targets for Frisian at a satisfactory level by 2030 at the latest. The level to be offered will be determined using the *Taalplan Frysk* ('Frisian Language Plan') on the basis of profiles. The aim is that all schools should take further steps every four years, so that they all actually teach Frisian at the required level by 2030. The achievement of this common goal will ensure a rise in the number of hours of teaching of and in Frisian in primary schools, and the number of secondary schools that offer Frisian. The provincial authority has also drafted goals for other levels of education (early years education, secondary vocational education, higher professional education and special education).

In 2016-2018 the *Taalplan Frysk* project performed an initial survey of how Frisian is taught in primary and secondary schools in Fryslân. The provincial authority assigned each school a 'teaching profile' on this basis. Schools with an 'A profile' already offer Frisian at an adequate level according to the attainment targets; 27% of primary schools and 39% of secondary schools were assigned an A profile.

In October 2020 Fryslân provincial authority announced that at least 17 secondary schools and secondary vocational schools (MBOs) in the province had taught more hours of Frisian in the 2019/2020 academic year than the year before. They used a grant scheme set up by the provincial authority for the purpose, which enabled secondary schools to appoint Frisian teachers, for example.

To move further towards the 2030 goal, at the end of 2020 Fryslân provincial authority asked all education-related institutions receiving grants in the current financial year to draft and implement a

²⁴ One good example of a school offering Frisian language and culture to all students is the Drachtster Lyceum, where 'Frisian culture' has been offered as part of the subject 'art and culture' since the start of the 2020-2021 academic year. During the lessons, students explore the history of their own town or village in the province of Fryslân. The school plans to continue offering 'Frisian culture' as a standard part of its art and culture lessons.

joint plan to achieve the targets over the next policy period, 2021-2024. As a result, Cedin, Afûk, NHL Stenden university of applied science, Stifting Frysktalige Berne Opfang, Omrop Fryslân, Kunstwurk and SEMKO are currently working in a more focused way to help schools offer Frisian to their students. They are taking a realistic approach, bearing in mind the context in which each specific school operates. The plan is focused on the policy objectives of central government and the provincial authority. In four years' time, each school must have gone up at least one level in terms of its *Taalplan Frysk* profile. The deadline for the eventual goal remains 2030, though this may be accelerated slightly by the new approach the provincial authority has now adopted. However, the extent to which this acceleration occurs does depend on extra financial resources to boost efforts.

The Chair of Frisian language and literature has highlighted the importance of literacy in passing on Frisian to future generations, and the fact that education curriculums must therefore devote sufficient attention to this.²⁵ To be awarded the A profile described above, schools must offer attainment targets for Frisian that focus on attitude, listening and reading comprehension, reading and speaking skills, language awareness and writing skills. The eventual goal of *Taalplan Frysk* is that by 2030 all schools in the Frisian language area²⁶ should offer Frisian at an adequate level (A profile), and not focus exclusively on oral use of Frisian.²⁷

There are concerns in the Frisian language field about the number of students taking Frisian as part of their school leaving examinations. Though numbers are rising gradually, they remain low. Afûk, Omrop Fryslân and SJB media have therefore launched a campaign to inspire secondary school pupils to take final exams in Frisian, the goal being that 25% of pupils do so by 2024.²⁸

As of 2009, attainment targets for Frisian are also adopted by order in council for special education. In contrast to regular primary education, Frisian is not a mandatory subject in special education. Any Frisian taught in special schools must meet the requirements as set out in the Attainment Targets (Expertise Centres Act) Decree. Even though these schools have no statutory obligation, they may make use of support and Frisian teaching materials specially designed for the target group. They are also eligible for the financial resources made available by the provincial authority as part of the *Frysk foar No en Letter* (FFNEL) scheme.²⁹

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that the supply of Frisian and bilingual preschools also meets the needs in larger towns in the Province of Fryslân.

Demographic developments play a major role in the province of Fryslân. The population is shrinking overall. Childcare and early years education providers are the first to notice this, and the trend is leading to mergers and closures. Over the past few years, however, several local and regional childcare providers have made progress on the provision of bilingual childcare in towns and larger (predominantly Dutch-speaking) population centres in the province of Fryslân, in collaboration with the SFBO (the centre for Frisian-language childcare provision). However, the SFBO has indicated that the supply is still unable to meet the needs of the children growing up there. What is more, in larger population centres, the services are not equally accessible to all parents. Municipal authorities could

²⁵ Literacy need not only be taught in schools. The design and distribution of digital learning tools for writing, such as spellcheckers and predictive text tools, can also play an important role. Digital tools have been developed with the support of the provincial authority and other parties. They include the Frisian spellchecker for Microsoft, Swiftkey and Gboard for mobile phones, and the online dictionary Taalweb.frl. See also: Other tools (in Dutch) » [Afûk \(afuk.frl\)](http://Afûk.afuk.frl).

²⁶ All Frisian municipalities, with the exception of the Frisian Islands and the municipality of Weststellingwerf.

²⁷ http://taalplan.frl/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/PDF_FRL-DEF.pdf.

²⁸ [Kampanje om mear learlingen foar eksamen Frysk te krijen | Omrop Fryslân \(omropfryslan.nl\)](https://www.omropfryslan.nl/kampanje-om-mear-learlingen-foar-eksamen-frysk-te-krijen)

²⁹ [3,2 miljoen beschikbaar voor verbeteren Friestalig onderwijs | News item | Provincie Fryslân](https://www.provincie.frl/nieuws/3-2-miljoen-beschikbaar-voor-verbeteren-friestalig-onderwijs)

play a role here by drawing attention to the availability and spread of bilingual childcare in the agreements they make with providers.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to assess the need for providing for the possibility of Frisian language teaching in schools and preschools outside the Province of Fryslân.

The extent to which there is a demand among parents outside the province of Fryslân for preschool teaching in Frisian has not been studied. The SFBO has also indicated that this would present practical difficulties.

Frisian language teachers

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to make the obtaining of qualifications concerning the Frisian language teaching better advertised, more accessible and more attractive for potential candidates, including through financial and professional incentives for Frisian and non-Frisian students as well as teachers of other subjects.

The Inspectorate of Education, and several organisations involved with Frisian, have indicated that the lack of suitable teachers is the greatest challenge for Frisian. In primary schools, not all teachers are qualified and competent to teach Frisian. Frisian is too small a subject in secondary schools, and many have only one Frisian teacher and in the event of illness lessons are therefore cancelled. The inspectorate advises school boards to take on more qualified teachers.³⁰ The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has suggested that Frisian teachers serving more than one school might be a possible solution.

Fryslân's primary schools in particular also face a general shortage of teachers. By 2025, this shortage could amount to 35 FTEs across the province of Fryslân, a study of the education labour market has suggested. To tackle the specific shortage of Frisian teachers in primary and secondary schools, the provincial authority will, among other things, seek to attract more students to train as Frisian teachers at NHL Stenden Leeuwarden, where a pilot project has been launched allowing students to graduate with teaching qualifications in both Dutch and Frisian. The first three graduated in 2020. As of 2021 NHL Stenden is offering a new Frisian course for teachers. It has developed the 'Klasse Frysk "WOW Frysk!"' course, in collaboration with educational support service Cedin, and with funding from Fryslân provincial authority. The course gives primary teachers qualified to teach Frisian practical tips on how to plan Frisian lessons. Extra courses have now been scheduled to meet demand.

In addition, over the past year the education ministers, together with the education sector, have set up a national task force to boost efforts to tackle the general shortage of teachers. It is important that teacher training courses are better tailored to the needs of the target group, and that teachers themselves are also more involved in these efforts.³¹ As of the policy period 2021-2024 Fryslân provincial authority has made it easier for students to train as grade one or two Frisian teachers by providing NHL Stenden with a grant. This funding has been used both to make the range of courses offered more attractive (including by allowing combination with primary teacher training) and to introduce a grant scheme that enables working teachers to obtain a teaching qualification for Frisian.

³⁰ [Sizzen is neat, maar dwaan is in ding. Fries in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs | Thematic report | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

³¹ [Task force om aanpak lerarentekort te verstevigen | News item | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

Article 15 of the Framework Convention

Participation

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure persons belonging to national minorities are duly consulted in the development and implementation of language policies in the context of municipal mergers.

On 1 January 2019 the Frisian municipalities of Dongeradeel, Ferwerderadiel and Kollumerland and Nieuwkruisland merged to form the municipality of Noardeast-Fryslân. Since then, there have been no boundary changes in the province of Fryslân, which now consists of 18 Frisian municipalities. A number of municipalities such as Noardeast-Fryslân and Dantumadiel do provide public services together as a single administrative unit. Weststellingwerf, Ooststellingwerf and Opsterland municipal councils also collaborate under an arrangement governed by private law, but they have not officially merged their public services. No boundary changes are planned in the near future that may constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the Frisian language. In 2019 Fryslân provincial authority launched a process of administrative reform whereby collaboration is becoming the norm, and in which the various authorities (municipal, Wetterskip (water authority) and provincial) intend to operate as a single entity.³²

A Mercator study (October 2018) commissioned by DINGtiid revealed that Frisian language policy is more likely to be weakened than strengthened by municipal boundary changes.³³ The study looked at the role of Frisian in the merger processes in four municipalities (Leeuwarden, Súdwest-Fryslân, Waadhoeke and Noardeast-Fryslân), where Frisian-speaking rural municipalities merged with more urban municipalities where Frisian plays a smaller role. All Frisian municipalities that are part of the Frisian language area now have a language policy plan and ordinance to strengthen the position of Frisian, as required under the Use of Frisian Act (2014). All administrators involved in the mergers also signed an administrative agreement on Frisian language policy. The provincial authority is monitoring the implementation of the agreements and will consider how to incorporate this in the existing framework for monitoring municipalities in the coming year.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to set up a permanent and structured consultation scheme with Frisian minority NGOs, including youth NGOs and take active measures in involving them in the decision-making processes at all levels.

The Fryslân provincial authority regularly initiates consultations with actors in the field of Frisian language and culture, including with representatives of Jongfryske Mienskip. The provincial authority also seeks to engage young people in decision-making processes on topics other than language at all levels. It does so in part through its contacts with Tienskip, an organisation set up for and by young people with the object of getting them involved in local politics.³⁴

Articles 17 and 18 of the Framework Convention

Cross-border cooperation

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue their active involvement and support to cross-border, international and inter-regional activities, including via the effective sharing of good practices.

Until 1 December 2020 the European Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) was chaired by the member from Fryslân provincial executive. The network takes joint action wherever possible in

³² Discussion paper on democratic renewal

³³ [De rol van het Frysk bij gemeentelijke herindelingen in Friesland \(The role of Frisian in municipal boundary changes in Fryslân\), Mercator Research Centre \(mercator-research.eu\)](#)

³⁴ [Tienskip](#)

the language-policy fields covered by the Charter. One special project that unfortunately could not be fully implemented due to the coronavirus pandemic was the NPLD-cofunded project European Charter Classroom Activities (ECCA) (www.thisismylanguage.eu). Despite the pandemic, however, this project was highlighted as an example of best practice in the field of education during a webinar organised by the School Education Gateway (European Commission).³⁵

Fryslân provincial authority is working with four other NPLD regions on this project to raise young people's awareness of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. They have set up an exchange programme for students and teachers, in order to focus positive attention on the language, with the slogan 'Push your boundaries with your own language'. Although the exchange programme has been unable to come into action as yet, classroom activities on the Charter have taken place in several regions, including the Frisian language region. The kickoff event in Brussels towards the end of 2019, before the pandemic, was attended by a representative of the Council of Europe.

Staff of Fryslân provincial authority paid a working visit to the authorities in Luxembourg in 2020. Frisian administrators and representatives of advisory body DINGtiid, led by the King's Commissioner and the member of the provincial executive with responsibility for the Frisian language, took the opportunity to find out about the multilingual situation in Luxembourg. As soon as possible, plans may also be made for a return visit to the province of Fryslân.

In 2021 Fryslân provincial authority will further explore the possibilities for profiling Frisian internationally through exchanges, in consultation with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

³⁵ The ECCA project, featured as best practice at EU level : NPLD – Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity