

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

GVT/COM/V(2022)001

**Comments of the Government of Norway on the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the
implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Norway**

received on 12 May 2022

Comments and observations from Norway regarding the *Fifth Opinion on Norway – the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*

1. The Government of Norway welcomes the opinion from the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. We will take this opportunity to thank the Advisory Committee for its efforts in drafting the opinion and appreciate the amount of work the committee has put into it. We reiterate that we look forward to continued dialogue and cooperation during the next monitoring cycle.

2. We also appreciate the opportunity to make comments and observations regarding the opinion. We have chosen to highlight a few issues in our comments. However, we note for the record that the lack of comments on any other topic or issue may not be construed to mean that we vouch for the factual accuracy of all parts of the opinion. We further want to emphasise that we agree with and appreciate many parts of the opinion, although this document is not the place to expand on topics where agreement is in place.

Paragraph by paragraph comments

Administration of collective reparation for Romani people/Tatars minority (Article 5)

3. In the *paragraphs 103–114* the Advisory Committee writes about the collective reparation to Romani people/Tatars. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development would like to give a general comment on the topic.

4. In *paragraph 114* (and corresponding paragraphs 5 and 22), the Advisory Committee writes that it urges the authorities to build confidence between the Romani people/Tatars and the authorities, with a view to distributing funds from the collective reparation with the full participation of the Romani people/Tatars minority.

5. The Ministry has authorised the Arts Council to arrange for the involvement of the Romani people/Tatars, in collaboration with the minority itself. It is stipulated in the regulation of the scheme that the Romani people/Tatars shall be involved in the administration of the scheme. However, according to Norwegian regulations on financial management of government funds, no one can allocate funds to themselves, or anybody close to them. This creates limits for the participation of small minority groups in the allocation of funds to their own group.

6. There was widespread distrust of the Foundation's management of the collective reparation within the minority itself. This was pointed out both in NOU 2015: 7, in the hearing of the report and by individuals who contacted the Ministry. Some organisations also resigned from the Foundation because of collaboration problems among the board members.

7. The Ministry experiences that the trust between parts of the Romani people/Taters minority and the authorities has increased because of the change in the management of the funding.

8. For the time being, the Ministry finds that the solution with an expert group which the Arts Council has established, where the organisations appoint two members, and the Arts Council appoints two members nominated by the Romani people/Taters and two independent experts, is a model that should be tried out for some time to see if it works well and according to the intentions. Based on experiences with this model, adjustments can be made over time.

9. The Ministry also wants to mention that the Romani people/Taters' organisations have few members and cannot speak for most of the Romani people/Taters. The majority of the Romani people/Taters in Norway are not members of any of the organisations for Romani people/Taters. The Ministry will continue to consider measures that can build trust between the authorities and all persons belonging to the Romani people/Taters minority.

Intercultural education (Article 12)

10. With regards to *paragraph 215*, we can inform the committee that The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufdir) was tasked with analysing whether a guidance scheme regarding knowledge about Muslim identity, based on the methods in the Sami and Jewish pathfinder schemes, might be feasible. Bufdir did consider the matter and recommended that existing schemes be strengthened instead, including DEMBRA, which the Advisory Committee refers to in paragraph 206. Through this scheme, schools and teacher education programmes are offered guidance and courses with the aim of preventing prejudice, xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, and extremism. The government has decided to follow this advice from Bufdir. Furthermore, the government will consider how work against racism and discrimination in schools can be strengthened, including work to prevent prejudice, discrimination and hatred toward Muslims.