



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

fcrnm



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REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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

**FIFTH PERIODIC REPORT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

**OFFICE OF THE
LAW COMMISSIONER**

Nicosia, 1 February 2019

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Fifth Periodic Report of Cyprus on the Application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter the "present Report") was prepared in accordance with the *Outline for State reports to be submitted under the fifth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities [ACFC(2013)001, 30 April 2013]* adopted by the Committee of Ministers at the 1169th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies on 30 April 2013. Hence, the present Report follows the proposed structure and guidelines included therein. The present Report should be read together with all background information provided in the Initial, Second, Third and Fourth Periodic Reports of Cyprus on the Application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

2. The Fourth Cycle Opinion on Cyprus of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention was adopted on 18 March 2015 (hereinafter the "Opinion") and made public on 2 November 2015. The Fourth Cycle Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN (2016)8 was adopted on 11 May 2016 (hereinafter the "Resolution"). Thus, the present Report covers the results of the Fourth Monitoring Cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention by Cyprus and the measures taken by the Cypriot authorities in the light of the Opinion, as well as the issues raised and the recommendations in the Resolution. The comments of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus (hereinafter "the Government") on the Opinion were submitted in September 2015.

3. The present Report has been prepared by the Law Commissioner of the Republic of Cyprus who, pursuant to a Decision of the Council of Ministers, is entrusted with ensuring Cyprus' compliance with its reporting obligations under international human rights instruments.

4. The information and data on the basis of which the present Report was compiled, was provided by the Ministry of Interior (MoI), the competent authority for the overall implementation of the Framework Convention and by the Ministries, Public Services and other public entities competent on specific matters, i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO), the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), the Cyprus Police, the Press and Information Office (P.I.O), the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the Statistical Service (CYSTAT)¹, the Presidential Commissioner, the Cyprus

¹ The Statistical Service (CYSTAT) is the competent authority responsible for the compilation and the publication of most of the official statistical data in Cyprus. It operates under the Ministry of Finance. It however maintains its autonomy in technical matters and has the sole responsibility for the choice of methodology, technique, definitions and procedures for the realization of the programmes of statistical activities, as well as for the publication of the statistical data produced. Since the accession of Cyprus in the European Union in May 2004, an important part of the basic activities of CYSTAT includes the continuous participation to several committees, working groups

Radio Television Authority (CRTA) and the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC). Information was also requested from the Representatives of the Armenian, Maronite and Latin religious groups and their respective Offices and received from the Armenian and Latin Representatives. The present Report, will, upon submission, be posted on the website of the Office of the Law Commissioner and the MoI. It will also be forwarded to the Representatives of the Armenian, Maronite and Latin Religious Groups.

5. As stated in previous Reports as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains no definition of the notion of “national minorities”, it is up to the individual contracting party to determine the national minorities to which it shall apply the Framework Convention. The term “national minorities” within the meaning of the Framework Convention is understood to designate for purposes of the present Report the following minority groups of citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, that is the Armenian, Maronite and Latin (Roman Catholic) religious groups composed of citizens of the Republic of Cyprus who at the time of establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 opted in accordance with its Constitution to be part of the Greek Community (Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Constitution) (hereinafter “the religious groups”).

6. Due to the continued illegal occupation of 36.2% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus since 1974, the Government is prevented from exercising effective control over all of its national territory and cannot ensure the application of the rights guaranteed by the Framework Convention in areas not under its effective control. Consequently, all information and data presented in the present Report concern the Government-controlled areas. It should be noted that, according to Protocol No.10 on Cyprus Annexed to the 2003 Act concerning the conditions of accession of the Republic of Cyprus and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the European Union is founded, the application of the *acquis communautaire* is “suspended in those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government does not exercise effective control”.

PART I

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS MADE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF THE RESULTS OF THE FOURTH MONITORING CYCLE AND OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

Please provide information about the following:

a. Steps taken to publicise the results of the fourth monitoring cycle (Opinion, State comments, Resolution): publication, dissemination and translation into the official language(s) and minority language(s) where appropriate;

7. The previous Report (Fourth), the Opinion, the comments of the Government and the Resolution have been posted on the official websites of the Office of the Law Commissioner² and the the Ministry of Interior³.

b. Any follow-up activities organised at national, regional and local levels, including activities organised jointly with the Council of Europe, such as discussions, seminars, evaluations, impact assessments, studies etc., and the outcomes of these events;

8. The Office of the Presidential Commissioner organised major events at the Presidential Palace for the promotion of the historical presence and the cultural wealth of each of the three Religious Groups. More specifically:

- On the 17th of June 2015 an event was organised at the Presidential Palace and hosted by the President of the Republic dedicated to the Latin religious group. During the event, a number of Latin group members were honoured by the Latin Representative for their services to the Latin Community.
- On the 12th of October 2017, “The House of Latins” in Nicosia was inaugurated, by the President of the Republic. During the event, the President announced a sponsorship for the operational needs of the cultural center, ensuring the permanent cooperation and support of the Government.
- On the 22nd of April 2015 and the 16th of October 2017, two events for the Maronite community were organised at the Presidential Palace, under the auspices of the President of the Republic, and included dance and singing performances by folkloric Maronite groups, in an effort, for the new generation, to preserve their history, culture and identity.

² http://www.olc.gov.cy/olc/olc.nsf/dmlindexa_gr/dmlindexa_gr?OpenDocument

³ www.moi.gov.cy

During the October event, several Maronite associations and clubs were honoured and were granted a sponsorship.

- On the 27th of May 2015 and the 11th of December 2017, two events for the Armenian community were organised at the Presidential Palace, under the auspices of the President of the Republic. The events targeted the preservation and promotion of the language, tradition and culture of the Armenian community. During the events, members of the Armenian community presented traditional entertainment programmes.

9. Moreover, several events were organised in order to promote the language and identity of each religious group in the wider society, such as:

- The European Parliament Office in Cyprus and the Representation of the European Commission in Cyprus in cooperation with the Maronite Representative's Office at the House of Representatives and the MOEC organised the event "*Cypriot Maronite Arabic: Save a language, save a culture*". The event took place in the House of the European Union in Nicosia on the 3rd of October 2014. During this event the results of the 1st phase on CMA Codification were presented. Additionally, Professor Alexander Borg of the Ben-Gurion University, Israel gave a lecture entitled "*A new comparative glossary of CMA: some thoughts on language, history and culture*".
- A press conference was organised in January 2016 by the MOEC in order to promote the results of the research based on the Action Plan for the revitalization of CMA and present the material and findings that were collected to that date.
- In the context of the European Day of Languages celebrations on the 26th of September 2016, the European Commission Representation in Nicosia, the MOEC, the University of Cyprus (Language Centre) and the Cyprus Linguistics Society organised the event entitled "*Languages for Life*". During this event a *Language Fair* took place, where visitors were able to attend language tasters – 15-minute language courses for adults and children – especially designed for the purposes of the event. In this framework both the Armenian and CMA languages were presented to the public.
- Marilena Karyolemou, Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Cyprus and Scientific Supervisor of the Project on the Creation of an Archive of Oral Tradition for Cypriot Maronite Arabic, has given a series of lectures and presentations in universities, conferences and other events regarding CMA.

c. Participation of minority organisations and other non-governmental organisations in the authorities' implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention, and their involvement in the preparation of the fifth report;

10. The Government which came into office in 1st March 2018, has demonstrated its commitment to enhance its cooperation with and support to the national minority groups. The institution of the Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues, which was created in 2013, was renamed to Presidential Commissioner in 2018 and continued to have competence, inter alia, for issues related to the religious groups.

11. The MoI is the competent Ministry regarding the issues concerning the religious groups. The Ministry is in constant consultation and dialogue with the elected Religious Groups Representatives, as well as with relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention. The Minister of Interior, at the request of the Representatives, holds meetings with the Representative of each religious group for the purpose of addressing any specific issues of their concern. In the process of the preparation of the present Report the Religious Groups Representatives have been consulted and invited to submit in writing their comments and recommendations on issues of their concern. The pre-final draft was communicated to them for any comments before finalization.

12. The MoEC constantly strives to meet the needs of the members of the religious groups and to ensure that their educational and cultural rights, deriving from the Framework Convention, are being fully exercised.

d. Any other measures taken to promote awareness of the Framework Convention among national minorities, public officials and the general public.

13. Pertinent information is given under b. above.

PART II
MEASURES TAKEN TO ADDRESS CORE ISSUES

Please provide information on how each of the specific recommendations for immediate action included in Part 2 – “Issues for immediate action” of the Committee of Ministers’ Resolution has been implemented. Indications on other policies, measures and needs assessments considered relevant in this context should also be provided

Please make an assessment on any other core issues that remain outstanding after four monitoring cycles, and any obstacles encountered in addressing such issues

- I. Ensure the enjoyment of the right to free self-identification, including in respect of multiple affiliations, in all data collection exercises as well as in the broader public debate as a means to**

overcome ethnic divisions in daily life and to facilitate the formation of an open, multilingual and inclusive society;

14. The Census of the Population is the main exercise (activity) of the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) for the collection of demographic data for the population. It is conducted every 10 years. The next Population Census will be conducted in 2021, through personal interviews with all residents in the Government controlled areas of Cyprus. The interviews will be performed by enumerators of CYSTAT, recruited and trained specifically for this purpose.

15. CYSTAT is currently in the preparatory phase for the next Census, which is an ongoing process; hence it is premature to affirm formally the final structure of the Census questionnaire. However it should be noted that efforts will be made in order to ensure the implementation of the UNECE “Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Populations and Housing”, including the topic “Ethno-cultural characteristics” which specifically refers to “ethnicity”, “religion” and “language”.

16. Within this framework several scenarios to collect ethnicity data are being examined, i.e. whether to ask the question on ethnic/religious groups to the whole population and not only to Cypriot citizens as was the case in 2011. Moreover, even though the response options on ethnicity could be pre-coded, still due to the subjective nature of the topic, the option of “other” where the respondent can freely self-declare his/her ethnicity could be a solution. In the light of this, the Committee’s recommendations are being taken into consideration and ways are sought to accommodate them in the questionnaire accordingly.

II. Raise awareness of applicable human rights norms and antidiscrimination standards amongst the police force and the judiciary and ensure that all cases of police misconduct are adequately and promptly followed-up;

17. It is noted that section 8 of the Law on Combating Certain Forms and Expressions of Racism and Xenophobia by Means of Criminal Law (L.134(I)/2011), was repealed on 7.4.2017, by L.30(I)/2017. Simultaneously, the Criminal Code was amended by L.31(I)/2017, which came into force on 7.4.2017 extending the application of the Criminal Code, so that the court can consider as an aggravating circumstance (in addition to the racist and xenophobic motivation), the homophobic motivation (section 35A).

18. More precisely, section 35A of the Criminal Code provides that the court, when imposing the penalty, may take into account as an aggravating factor the motivation of prejudice against a group of persons or a member of such a group of persons on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or other belief, descent, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Therefore, the racist, xenophobic and homophobic motivation constitutes aggravating circumstances in relation to all offences.

19. The Cyprus Police Academy provides general education related to human rights, racial and other forms of discrimination and combating xenophobia and racism at most levels of Police training. These lectures are included in the Academy's basic courses such as Sergeants' Training Programme, Inspectors Training Programme, Chief Inspectors' Training Programme, as well as at specialized programmes.

20. More specifically, the following lectures / workshops are offered on Preventing and Combating Discrimination and on Human Rights:

- Combating xenophobia and racism
- Communication in a Multicultural Society
- Policing a Multicultural Society
- Human Rights
- Racial Discrimination and other forms of Discrimination
- Human Rights & Police Ethics

21. Furthermore, in the context of further upgrading the training of police recruits, Cyprus Police has created, in conjunction with the University of Cyprus, an additional module, on Human Rights and Policing. This is to be delivered during a semester where Recruit Police Constables will study at the University of Cyprus, starting from September 2019.

22. Apart from the learning curriculum provided by the Police Academy, the Office for Combating Discrimination, in cooperation with NGOs or/and the Police Academy, has organised specific programmes covering issues, such as, eliminating stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination attitudes, producing new modules on anti-discrimination policy for combating all forms of discrimination and racism for any type of vulnerable groups, including national minorities as designated for the purpose of the Framework Convention.

23. A specific training programme with the subject «Community/Ethnic groups, behavior, Racism and ways of Combating» took place (13-14 October 2016), for 75 police members of Community Policing, in cooperation with the Ombudsman.

24. The Office for Combating Discrimination, of the Crime Combating Department, Police Headquarters, conducted (September 2016) a specialist training programme for Training officers of all Police Divisions, who proceeded to further training programmes for their members in their District jurisdiction.

25. Furthermore, since 2013 the Office for Combating Discrimination, in cooperation with the Police Academy, continues to support the training programmes in Police Academy by covering specific lectures entitled «Policy for the combating of racist violence, xenophobia and discrimination» and «Recognition and Investigation of Racial and Hate Crimes» for Police officers

and sergeants, particularly those working in the investigation and similar policing procedures (Police stations, Criminal Investigations Dept). In these seminars, particular attention is paid to the respect and protection the human rights of vulnerable groups, including those of national minorities, as designated for the purpose of the Framework Convention, and of the Roma community.

26. The Cyprus Police signed a “Memorandum of Understanding for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights” with NGOs. The purpose of the Memorandum is to further improve and develop closer cooperation between the contracting parties for the protection and promotion of human rights.

27. The Police Code of Ethics was recently revised taking into consideration, inter alia, the European Police Code of Conduct and the Guide of Conduct and Ethics for Public Servants, which was prepared with the assistance of the Ombudsman. The Code of Ethics was enriched with new provisions concerning the behavior of the police officers on duty. The Code is an institutional framework of actions, behaviors and attitudes which aims to highlight the professional and moral completeness of the Police officer as a responsible public officer. It is a framework of principles and rules that promote mutual respect and trust between the Police and citizens. The Code of Ethics was issued in a booklet form and was distributed to all members of the Police for awareness and sensitization, strengthening good administration and transparency, promotion of human rights of citizens, strengthening public confidence in the Police and further development of professionalism in the Police. The code contains provisions related to the general obligations and duties of the Police, behavior during police action, behavior during investigation and questioning, behavior during arrest and detention, etc.

28. A manual entitled “Manual on Human Rights” was prepared by the Cyprus Police in order to raise awareness and sensitize its members on the protection and promotion of human rights. The Manual, which is distributed to members of the Police and placed on the police portal, deals with issues relating, inter alia, to use of force, treatment of detainees, detention conditions, etc.

29. A one-day conference entitled “Respect for Human Rights” was organised by the Cyprus Police on 09/12/2016 on the occasion of the Human Rights Day (10th of December). The aim was to raise awareness on the respect and protection of human rights and the strengthening of human rights protection during the exercise of the duties of the Police. During the conference, speeches and presentations were made by representatives of the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for the Protection of Childrens’ Rights, the Cyprus Red Cross, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Cyprus and relevant offices of the Cyprus Police (Human Rights Office, Office for Combating Discrimination and Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings). Around 100 members of the Police attended.

30. A one-day conference entitled “The impact of the European Convention for Human Rights on the Cyprus Law Order” was organised by the Cyprus

Police on 14/12/2018 and attended by 170 persons coming from organisations within and outside the Government as well as members of the police force.

III. Enhance the available support for the promotion of minority languages and identities as an integral part of modern Cypriot society rather than primarily as elements of cultural heritage and ensure that the views and concerns of all minority communities, including the Roma, are adequately established through dialogue and taken into account in all relevant decision making.

31. The Presidential Commissioner works closely with the Representatives of the Religious Groups in the Parliament, their religious leaders and organised groups. As a result, several meetings have taken place for the discussion of issues concerning the religious groups, including the preservation and promotion of their respective language, history and culture. Acting as a channel between the Presidency of the Republic and the religious groups, the Presidential Commissioner has been in constant cooperation with the MOEC and other Public Services working towards meeting the needs of the members of the religious groups and ensuring that their rights are being fully exercised.

32. The Presidential Commissioner has also shown a particular interest in the education of children belonging to the religious groups. In that respect, he regularly visits the public and private schools of the religious groups, manifesting the commitment and support of the Government for the preservation of their language, religion and identity.

33. The Office of the Presidential Commissioner is also in the process of concluding MOU's with several University institutions (State and private) in Cyprus. These MOU's will include provisions for granting scholarships to members of the three religious groups. Further through the above-mentioned MOU's, a number of Universities offer to the three religious groups their facilities for organizing their cultural events and their sport centers for athletic purpose/use (after consultation with the University).

34. The MOEC, in close consultation with the Representatives of the religious groups, is promoting several measures to support their respective language and identity as an integral part of modern Cyprus society.

35. The educational needs of the Armenians and the Maronites are supported, mainly, through the operation of the Armenian Nareg Schools and Agios Maronas Primary School (Maronite) that are fully subsidized by the MOEC. Furthermore, the Armenian and Maronite School Boards are also financed and the MOEC subsidizes the transportation of Maronite children to Agios Maronas Primary School.

36. The Armenian language, history, geography and religion are taught in all the Nareg Schools. Moreover, the Nareg schools promote the Armenian

identity in extra-curricular activities, such as, the offering of Armenian dance and music lessons. The Armenian language is also taught at the University of Cyprus and the Adult Education Centres, on demand. Additionally, the MOEC is contributing financially to the operation of the NANOR Armenian Childcare Centre.

37. Agios Maronas Primary School operates as an optional all-day school. The curricula that are implemented in the school are enriched with issues associated with Maronites' history, religion and geography and the process to be further enriched is currently under way. Moreover, the Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) is taught as an optional course during the afternoon timetable. CMA is also taught in the Adult Education Centres and the Annual Summer Language Camp for young Maronites in the village of Kormakitis. Additionally, with the initiative of the Maronites, CMA was taught to a group of children on a weekly basis, from October 2017 to May 2018.

38. The MOEC supports the organisation of training seminars for teachers of the Armenian language and CMA, as well as the rest of the staff of the Armenian and Maronite schools. Additionally, the MOEC subsidizes the purchase and production of books and teaching material for the educational needs of the members belonging to the religious groups.

39. Regarding the children belonging to the religious groups that choose to attend private schools, the MOEC subsidizes their tuition fees. The subsidization is significantly higher for Maronite and Latin children attending Terra Santa College and St Mary's School, the private schools that are particularly affiliated with these groups.

40. It should be added that in the framework of the continuous Educational Reform the curricula for the subjects of History and Religious Education were enriched with units and success indicators regarding the history, culture, language, religion and identity of the religious groups. In the subject of History, in particular, the curriculum contains proposed activities for the designing of projects by students and a list of monuments is included for the organisation of planned visits by the teachers, thus promoting the better understanding of the history of the religious groups in Cyprus. Additionally, the curriculum specifically mentions that through the teaching of history students are expected to develop respect for religious and cultural differences.

41. As far as the implementation of the Action Plan for the protection and revitalization of CMA is concerned, the scientific work carried out by the researchers, pursuant to the recommendations of the relevant Committee of Experts, is now at its sixth phase. At this point the main focus of the researchers is the production of teaching material and the organisation of training courses for teachers and speakers of the language. Thus, more emphasis is given at this point to the actual use of the language in everyday life, the production of written texts and the increase of its proficient speakers.

42. The identity of the religious groups is also enhanced through cultural activities. The Cultural Services of the MOEC have recently reserved separate

funds for the subsidization of the cultural activities of the religious groups. Moreover, the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra Foundation has organised concerts for the religious groups and the Youth Board of Cyprus subsidizes cultural and sports events.

43. In line with the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the Roma of Cyprus (thereafter Cyprus Roma) are deemed to be members of the Turkish Cypriot Community. The information under this Part is given subject to paragraph 5 above of the present Report.

PART III

FURTHER MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

Please provide information on an article-by-article basis on measures taken to enhance the implementation of the Framework Convention. Indications on other policies, measures and needs assessments considered relevant in this context should also be provided. Particular attention should be paid to:

- A. Measures taken to implement the recommendations included in Part 2 - "Further recommendations" of the Committee of Ministers' Resolution, and*
- B. to the extent not already covered under points II and III. a. above, measures and policies adopted to implement all the detailed recommendations, various findings and conclusions contained in the Advisory Committee's Fourth Opinion.*

- I. Enhance the political and financial support to the Ombudsman Office to enable it to fulfill its multiple functions effectively and in full independence; in close consultation with civil society representatives increase awareness of and trust in the legal remedies available in case of discriminatory treatment and hate crime, targeting those groups known to be most exposed;**

44. It is in the governments' priorities to provide continuous support to the role of the Ombudsman and enhance the capacity of the Ombudsman's Office. Within the annual budgetary process, the Ministry of Finance meets the financial and technical needs of the Ombudsman's Office.

45. The authorities have sought external expertise on how best to proceed with enhancing the capacity of the Ombudsman's Office. In this regard, a reorganisation study was carried out by the Office of the Finnish Ombudsman which suggested that the Office be strengthened with one additional post.

46. Hence, the Public Administration and Personnel Department (PAPD) in cooperation with the Ombudsman's Office is examining ways to meet the permanent needs on human resources of the Office, in the context of existing

legislatory framework. For the imminent needs of NPM Function, PAPD suggested the reallocation of the existing staff of the Office and the exploitation of the tool of secondment of staff from other public services.

47. The Ombudsman was provided with broad functions of protecting, promoting and guaranteeing human rights as a National Human Rights Institution, in line with the Paris Principles. It has been accredited as a National Human Rights Institution with B status, under the Paris Principles, in November 2015. Gradual steps for improvements are under consideration in order to meet criteria for upgrading of status.

48. The religious groups are not groups most exposed to discriminatory treatment and hate crime. Therefore, the second part of the above recommendation is not applicable.

II. Systematically gather disaggregated equality data in line with international standards to ensure that all policy measures aimed at the promotion of equality, including positive measures, are based on reliable data;

49. See comments under Point I, Part II, par. 14 – 16 of the present Report.

Please also note that the Statistical Service of Cyprus does not conduct specific surveys in order to evaluate the impact of various policy measures aiming at the promotion of equality.

III. Identify without delay and in close consultation with minority representatives suitable premises that can serve as cultural centres for the relevant groups;

50. The Latins now have their own cultural centre named “The House of the Latins” in the old quarter of Nicosia. The premises, which were used in the past by the Cultural Services of the MOEC, have been included in a rental agreement between the Nicosia District Administration Office and the Representative of the Latin Religious Group. The rent paid is substantially lower than the market value. The MOEC subsidized the initial expenses of the “House of the Latins” and the centre was inaugurated on the 12th of October 2017 by the President of the Republic of Cyprus. “The House of Latins” is the reference point in the community through which the public has the opportunity to learn about the historical and continuous presence of Latins in Cyprus, and the Latin community to promote cultural and socio-economic development through different activities.

51. On 6th of December 2018 the President of the Republic inaugurated the “House of St. Maron”. The “House of St. Maron” has a historical, religious and cultural significance, for the Maronite community for cultural and religious activities that contribute significantly to the efforts for the conservation and promotion of the identity of the Maronite community in Cyprus. The Government has contributed an amount of €250,000 for the

renovation of the building which now hosts a library, museum, multipurpose hall and for enabling the use of the premises for the development of various activities. The “House of St. Maron” is now a cultural center for creative interaction for the Maronite community.

IV. Increase the availability of public television and radio broadcasting featuring minority languages and cultures and raise the capacity of journalists and media professionals to ensure that the specific situation and concerns of minorities are adequately reflected

52. The CRTA takes all necessary action to combat effectively any forms of discrimination and intolerance that may emerge in the programmes provided by audio-visual media service providers. Any expressions of racism and/or xenophobia are sanctioned by means of the relevant law, namely the Radio and Television Stations Law (L. 7(I) of 1998, as amended), the Radio and Television Stations Regulations (P.I. 10/2000), and the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation Law, (CAP.300A, as amended).

53. The CRTA encourages the access to media by persons belonging to national minorities in order to exercise the inalienable right of freedom of expression. This encouragement considers also the interests and the particularities of the Republic and the interests and the sensitivities of the local population, including those of the minorities. The CRTA acknowledges that the exercise of freedom of expression carries with it concomitant duties and responsibilities and hence the free speech right remains subject to the conditions prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society.

54. CyBC radio continues to broadcast a one-hour programme in Armenian on a daily basis, which covers issues on literature, religion, health and other and includes news bulletins and a children’s programme.

55. The Latin religious group maintains a 30-minutes radio programme in the CyBC on Friday at 16:30. On its official website, it hosts, among others the documentary film “A journey through yesterday and today with the Latin religious group”, which was funded by the Government.

56. For the Maronite religious group a weekly 55-minute cultural programme is also hosted by the CyBC radio every Friday.

57. There are no standard TV programmes for the religious groups on CyBC. The CyBC administration held meetings with the Representatives of the Religious Groups, during which the willingness of the management was expressed to broadcast on TV ready available programmes that would be provided by the religious groups themselves. This practice was followed for a short period of time e.g. until 2015 a programme produced by the Maronites was broadcasted a number of times. The program had the title “Maronites’ Routes”. Also a programme produced by the Armenians with the title “ՊԱՔԵԲ” is broadcasted by the CyBC yearly on the 6th of January (Armenian Christmas Day). The most recent broadcast was on 6/1/2019. News-related reportages on the religious groups are included regularly in the CyBC’ news,

as well as special topics on the religious groups are included in general programmes.

58. Following the Parliamentary Elections in May 2016, the P.I.O. has undertaken the updating and revision of the publications dedicated to each of the three religious groups in Cyprus and their reprint to reflect new developments.

59. During the period 2014-2018, reference to the religious groups of Cyprus was also made in other publications of the P.I.O. These include the luxury publication «Multireligious Cyprus», a trilingual (English, Greek, French) publication which showcases the prevalence of religious pluralism and religious respect in Cyprus society, which render the island a place of religious coexistence and peace. This 2016 publication, which was reprinted in 2018, includes dedicated chapters on the three religious groups, their presence on the island and their places of worship.

60. Texts on the three religious groups as well as relevant photographs are also included in the luxury hardcover publication “Window on Cyprus,” which was published in a revised format in the English language in 2015, as well as in French in 2016 on the occasion of the Cyprus’ Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The said publication was also published in Russian in 2017.

61. Moreover, the multimedia cd “Aspects of Cyprus,” which is also produced by the P.I.O. in Greek and English, includes a special section on the three religious groups.

62. All P.I.O. productions and publications which pertain or refer to the three religious groups are available free of charge to the public, are widely circulated and are also accessible online via the P.I.O. website⁴.

V. Introduce more intercultural elements into the education system and ensure that teachers and school administrators are adequately trained to promote exchange and dialogue across ethnic and linguistic lines, including through the promotion of bilingualism and linguistic diversity

63. It is reminded that the information under this Part is given subject to paragraph 5 above of the present Report.

64. The MOEC has developed and implemented an upgraded educational policy pertaining to Multicultural Education, aiming at the smooth integration of pupils/students from diverse ethnic backgrounds into the educational system of Cyprus. The policy document was prepared by an Interdepartmental Committee and approved by the Minister of Education and Culture. Subsequently, the departments of the MOEC have developed an action plan with a variety of targeted actions, through the prism of an

⁴ P.I.O. publications can be found under the following link: <https://publications.gov.cy/en/>

intercultural approach, anti-racist education and the methodology of teaching Greek as a second language. The policy focuses on five priority areas: (1) learning the Greek language, (2) reception of newly arrived children with migrant background, (3) education and teachers' in-service training, (4) data collection and analysis of the needs of pupils/students with a migrant background and (5) intercultural approach in the new curricula. The document also describes the current state of affairs regarding the integration of children with migrant background in the Cyprus Educational System as well as the teaching of Greek as a second language.

65. Furthermore, the antiracist policy of the MOEC continues to be implemented in public schools. The creation of a sensitization culture against racism and intolerance and the promotion of equality and respect is an integral part of the Curricula of various subjects (e.g. History, Literature, Modern Greek Language, Religious Education).

66. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) constantly supports teachers and schools, by providing trainings and workshops for the implementation of the anti-racist policy, such as the yearly two-day teacher training for primary and secondary school teachers, and by organizing conferences on issues of racism, gender issues and human rights. In addition, the CPI organises in-service teachers' training seminars, on a school basis, as well as a series of seminars where teachers can attend in the afternoon, as an optional choice. Specifically, the in-service seminars offered by the CPI since May 2017, for both primary and secondary education, were the following and covered issues of:

- Cultivating empathy;
- Implementing the antiracist policy at our school: Challenges in dealing with racist incidents;
- Human relations and crisis management in the school community. From conflict to respect of diversity;
- Promoting Anti-Racism and teaching equality;
- Stereotypes, prejudices, racism: Towards an education on the basis of human rights;
- Cultivating awareness of pupils against racism and intolerance;
- Integration of migrant pupils in the general classroom;
- Acceptance of the "Other";
- Developing empathy skills to pupils in the modern multicultural school;
- Teaching Greek as a Second Language;
- Stereotypes, Racism and Intolerance: towards an education on the basis of human rights.

67. The CPI also participates in the European project *BODI*. *BODI* aims to:
1) Contribute to the development of education policies and practices on

intercultural education, gender education and inclusion of children / parents of various cultural backgrounds – through our analysis of existing practices and the assessment of the method we develop. 2) Contribute to the development of teachers' competences through new methods for teacher training and new practical tools ready to adapt, concretely: • Develop an understanding of cultural differences having an impact on early childhood education, develop tools to solve possible tensions and conflicts • Develop skills and creative tools to address issues of cultural diversity, gender, and health with the children • Offer tools to involve parents (of migrant and non-migrant origin) and engage them in dialogue about sensitive issues such as cultural differences, gender, body, health 3) Contribute to the development of school's capacity to address cultural diversity, to ensure that children of different cultural backgrounds and their parents are not excluded and equip children for participation in an intercultural society tolerant towards gender diversity. Offer tools and strategies to address sensitive issues such as gender.

68. The MOEC also continues the successful coordination of the Erasmus+ project "*iDecide*" (2016-2018), which has developed an innovative toolkit and induction course to support evidence-based policy making, which can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalization, by supporting school leaders, school staff, and policymakers to engage in shared and inclusive decision making. By implementing the toolkit and collecting rich data, the project aims to understand the complexities of how decisions at school level influence marginalized groups and develop concrete recommendations for policy and practice on how to engage in shared decision making, giving voice to all stakeholders. One of the most crucial deliverables of the project will be the "*iDecide Toolkit*", which will, among others, invite school leaders and staff to consider the following factors when making decisions:

- *Cultural differences*: Visits to religious sites need to take into consideration the various religions represented in the school population/community of the area/country in order to ensure that religious sites belonging to religious groups will not be neglected systematically (regardless of intention).
- *Disability - Health issues*: All disabilities/health issues/dietary requirements of the school population and the potential difficulties they may encounter in the initial plan of the excursion/school visit need to be considered.
- *Economic obstacles*: Depending on the socioeconomic status of each pupil, school leaders and staff need to be sensitive of the cost.
- *Geographical obstacles*: The location of the community and the distance that children may need to travel everyday between the school and their homes needs to be considered.
- *Social obstacles*: Before decisions are taken social characteristics of the pupil population such as the type of their family, the citizenship status of the parents, etc. need to be considered.

VI. Enhance the equality of Roma children in the educational system, including by making suitable learning materials available and by promoting respect and openness towards diversity among all students

69. As already stated in paragraph 43 above, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the Roma of Cyprus (thereafter Cyprus Roma) are deemed to be members of the Turkish Cypriot Community. The information under this Part is given subject to paragraph 5 above of the present Report.

70. The right of education for all children is safeguarded by Article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. Moreover, the equality of all the children enrolled in schools is guaranteed by the legislation. The new regulations for the operation of public secondary schools that were issued in February 2017 clearly state that any person or public authority involved in the interpretation or implementation of the regulations is obliged to refrain from “any discrimination based on race, colour, gender, language, religion, political and other beliefs of the child or his/her parents or guardians, citizenship, ethnic or social origin, economic situation, disability, birth, sexual orientation or any other situation”. Thus, any discriminatory attitudes against the Roma or any other children are strictly forbidden.

71. In the framework stated in paragraph 69 above the MOEC takes several measures to cater for the needs of the Cyprus Roma:

- Cyprus Roma children have a priority for admission in public kindergartens, whereas families receiving a public allowance are exempted from paying fees in public kindergartens.
- The schools with Cyprus Roma population participate in the project “*School and Social Inclusion Actions*” (Agios Antonios Primary School and Agios Antonios Secondary School in Limassol). The implementation of this project aims to support the population living below the poverty line or being at risk of poverty and social exclusion. It also aims at ensuring social welfare and supporting financially the weaker groups of the population that are particularly affected by the economic crisis, reducing early school leaving, improving learning outcomes and reducing school failure and delinquency. The project’s objectives are achieved through the implementation of various measures, which include, among others, programmes for reinforcing learning and creativity for pupils (during the morning, afternoon and summer months), psychological support for pupils/students by experts and training programmes for the staff involved. Within the context of the project, participating schools can open their doors to their local communities, in order to develop cooperation and synergy with all stakeholders to be able to successfully carry out their role. The project is co-funded by the European Social Fund.
- The Adult Education Centres are offering a course titled “History-language-culture”, especially designed for Cyprus Roma children, where their history and other elements of their cultural heritage are taught free of charge. Lessons are offered once a week (90 minutes)

and last for 24 weeks. During the school year 2017-2018 two groups of children were formed. This programme was also offered during the previous school years.

- The MOEC employs Turkish Cypriot and bilingual teachers in Agios Antonios Primary and Secondary Schools, where Cyprus Roma children are enrolled: (1) Turkish Cypriot teachers are employed to teach Turkish language, History and Muslim religion; (2) An interpreter is employed in Agios Antonios Primary School, in order to facilitate the communication and interaction of the school unit with all the pupils and their parents; (3) The bilingual teacher in Agios Antonios Secondary School teaches Greek as a second language to the Cyprus Roma children.
- In Agios Antonios Primary School the following actions have taken place in the previous school years: (a) Additional measures in the framework of the project "*School and Social Inclusion Actions*", such as extra support provided to pupils in language and mathematics, teacher assistants in all classes, additional extra-curricular activities (such as sports and dancing) during school hours as well as after school hours; (b) The school participates in an EU-funded programme where all stakeholders are involved with an aim to provide a variety of learning opportunities for both pupils and teachers; (c) The school cooperates with the NGO "*Hope for Children*" and implements the programme "*PEER: Participation programme, Experiences and Empowerment for Roma Youth*", which is funded by the European Union; (d) The MOEC provides extra psychological assistance to the school through the provision of a school psychologist, who visits the school once a week, on a regular basis; (e) The school unit is also implementing projects, that involve all children, where the diversity of each separate group of children, including the Cyprus Roma, is respected. Such activities are the video recording of poems, songs and other cultural elements, the organisation of food festivals from children's different countries and the celebration of the International Roma Day in various ways, such as presentations, dances and songs; (f) Implementation of the "*Code of Conduct Against Racism and Guide for Managing and Reporting Racist Incidents*".
- In the Agios Antonios Secondary School the following actions have taken place in the previous school years: (a) Cooperation with the NGO "*Hope for Children*" and implementation of the programme "*PEER: Participation programme, Experiences and Empowerment for Roma Youth*", which is funded by the European Union; (b) Celebration of European Language Day and organisation of food festival with the participation of children from different countries; (c) Theatre, dance, graffiti, poetry recital, athletic events and other activities, both in morning and afternoon hours, in the framework of the operation of the School and Social Inclusion Actions; (d) Active participation of Cyprus Roma students in various school events; (e) Participation in an antiracist conference entitled "*All different, all the same*". In the framework of the conference the Cyprus Roma children took part in

several activities (e.g. theatre, choir, presentations of words used in the Turkish-Cypriot dialect); (f) Visit to the mosque of the region; (g) Creation of an anti-racist mosaic.

72. As far as the promotion of respect and openness towards diversity is concerned, the creation of a sensitization culture against racism and intolerance and the promotion of equality and respect is an integral part of the Curricula of various subjects (e.g. History, Literature, Modern Greek Language, Religious Education). Moreover, each school formulates an Action Plan in the beginning of the school year and several of the activities and measures that are included promote inclusion and respect of diversity. Furthermore, schools are encouraged to use the *“Code of Conduct Against Racism & Guide for Managing and Reporting Racist Incidents”*. The Code discusses research and policy which identifies the need for a whole-school antiracist policy, with a broad conceptualization of racism in all forms, in order to include all sorts of discrimination.

VII. Provide adequate opportunities for teacher training, in particular regarding language learning methodologies and teaching methods in multilingual environments, and suitable education materials to minority language schools and enhance the opportunities of all students to learn the official languages of Cyprus

73. Every school year the CPI offers compulsory and optional teacher training sessions regarding language learning methodologies and teaching methods in multilingual environments, especially regarding the teaching of Greek as a second language (see also the answer in the 5th further recommendation regarding the policy of the MOEC pertaining to Multicultural Education).

74. All children enrolled in public primary and secondary schools have the opportunity to learn the Greek language. Several programmes are currently operating for the teaching of Greek as a second language in the framework of the policy of the MOEC for the integration of children with a migrant background in the Cyprus Educational System. Moreover, lessons of Greek as well as Turkish are provided for free by the State Institutes for Further Education and the Adult Education Centres. Furthermore, the Turkish language is taught as an elective lesson in upper-secondary schools.

75. Turkish is one of the two official languages of Cyprus by virtue of Article 3 of the Constitution of Cyprus. It should be pointed out that the Constitution does not include references to “bilingualism”, but to Greek and Turkish as the two official languages of Cyprus.

VIII. Further strengthen the competences of the Armenian, Latin and Maronite representatives in all decision-making affecting their communities and promote the recruitment of members of these communities into public services; ensure the direct representation

of Roma interests and concerns in all strategies and programmes aimed at their improved participation in socio-economic life.

76. Regarding the first part of the above recommendation, kindly also refer to comments under paragraphs 96 and 97, of the 4th Periodic Report for Cyprus.

77. All the Ministries and Services involved in policy making and implementing measures affecting the Armenians, Latins and Maronites and mainly the MoI and MoEC are open to a continuous dialogue with the Representatives of these religious groups. The Ministers hold individual meetings with the Representative where necessary in order to discuss and provide support on specific issues.

78. Regarding the second part of the above recommendation, in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the Roma of Cyprus (thereafter Cyprus Roma) are deemed to be members of the Turkish Cypriot Community. The information under this Part is given subject to paragraph 5 above of the present Report.

79. The Social Welfare Services, promoted the establishment of the Cyprus National Roma Platform (Cyprus NRP), which was financially supported by the EU through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) of the EU. The objectives of the Cyprus NRP were to create a forum for disseminating information and enhancing knowledge to facilitate consultation on Roma issues, promote dialogue, mutual learning and exchange of information and good practices building on a climate of cooperation and transparency. The Cyprus NRP ran from May 2016 to May 2017 and its work was based on four working meetings with general and more targeted themes. The stakeholders invited and participated to the Cyprus NRP meetings were the Cyprus Roma, representatives of NGOs, Representatives of Local Authorities, Independent Authorities such as the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for the Protection of Childrens' Rights, Academia involved with discrimination or/ and equality or/ and Roma specific issues, Public Authorities such as the Ministries of Interior, Health and Education and Culture, the Department of Labour and the Welfare Administration Benefits Service.

80. The Social Welfare Services, as the coordinator of the Project, primary aim was to intensify its efforts in contacting the Cyprus Roma population and motivate them to participate in the meetings of the Cyprus NRP as the project scope was to create a forum in which the Cyprus Roma could contribute in the discussions in issues that affect them. The Cyprus Roma representation achieved a combination of different age groups and gender balance. However, it must be noted that Cyprus Roma attendance and participation in the meetings was very limited. The main actions of the Cyprus NRP, consisted of:

- A press conference in order to inform the wider public of this initiative.
- Acquisition of the services of an expert on Roma issues and meeting / professional facilitator.

- Organisation of four meetings during 2016-2017, in locations that could facilitate the participation of Cyprus Roma. The language used in the meetings was Greek and Turkish. The meetings included a kick off meeting on issues such as the European framework on Roma, discrimination and equality issues, two thematic meetings on housing, social services, health, employment, education and culture, and a fourth meeting on the design and monitoring techniques and reporting commitments. The meetings had short presentations on the specific themes of each meeting, while most of the time was dedicated for discussions in small groups so that a participatory approach was encompassed. Different papers were prepared prior and after the meetings to enhance knowledge and facilitate discussions. During the kick off meeting, the meeting facilitator also presented more general issues on Roma history and culture.
- In addition to the above, four newsletters were produced which were circulated to the competent government authorities, relevant independent authorities, unions of local authorities and local authorities where Cyprus Roma were residing. These newsletters were also uploaded on the website of the Social Welfare Services.

Additional comments on measures and policies adopted to implement all the detailed recommendations, following Articles 3 - 17 of the Framework Convention and Recommendations 10 to 82 of the Opinion

➤ **Article 3 of the Framework Convention**

Personal scope of the Framework Convention

(Re par. 10 of the Opinion)

81. Please refer to paragraph 5 under Introduction of the present Report.

Right to free self-identification

(Re par. 15 of the Opinion)

82. Please refer to comments under point I, Part II, par. 14 - 16 of the present Report.

➤ **Article 4 of the Framework Convention**

Legal and institutional framework for combating discrimination

(Re par. 19 of the Opinion)

83. Please refer to comments under Point I, Part III, par. 48 of the present Report.

(Re par. 20 of the Opinion)

84. Please refer to comments under point I, Part III, par. 44 – 47 of the present Report.

Measures to promote full and effective equality and equality data
(Re par. 24 of the Opinion)

85. Please refer to our comments under Point VIII, Part III, par. 78 - 80 of the present Report.

(Re par. 25 of the Opinion)

86. Please refer to comments under Point II, Part III, par. 49 of the present Report.

➤ **Article 5 of the Framework Convention**

Support for the preservation and development of national minority identities and cultures

(Re par. 31 of the Opinion)

87. The Cultural Services of the MOEC, in close consultation with the Representatives of the Religious Groups, have taken the decision to reserve separate funds in order to facilitate the subsidization of cultural activities from 2018 onwards. So far subsidies have been given through the programme “Culture” in the same way they have been given to all citizens of the Republic of Cyprus.

88. Furthermore, the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra Foundation organised a number of concerts for the religious groups. Two concerts (one in Paphos and one in Nicosia) entitled “*The Liturgy of Strings*” were dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and were organised in October 2015 in collaboration with the Armenian Genocide Centenary Committee of Cyprus, the Paphos Municipality and the organisation European Capital of Culture – Paphos 2017. Another concert was the “*Cyprus Church Organ Festival*” organised in April 2018 in collaboration with the Custody of the Holy Land – Latin Catholic Church of Cyprus under the patronage of the Representative of the Latins in the House of Representatives and the support of the Embassy of Italy.

89. Additionally, the Youth Board of Cyprus, a semi-governmental organisation under the auspices of the MOEC, subsidized many cultural and sports events, as well as other activities, of the Catholic Maronite Youth under the “*Youth Initiatives Project*” and the programme “*Student in Action*”.

90. The MOEC has also developed a programme entitled “*Encounters in the paths of Art*” with the participation of students from Nareg, Terra Santa, Stavros and Agios Vasilios High Schools. In this programme, the students studied and presented the life and work of significant and influential Maronite, Armenian, Latin and other Greek Cypriot figures, such as musicians, artists, photographers, authors etc.

91. In May 2018, Armenian Community members were invited by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage (TCCH), the European Commission and the UNDP to attend the ceremony marking the completion of the renovation of the Virgin Mary of Ganchvor in Famagusta, the first Armenian monument to be restored with the contribution of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage. To be noted that the bi-communal Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage was established in April 2008, following an agreement between the Leaders of the two Communities, within the framework of the negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem, and operates under the auspices of the United Nations.

92. During December 2018, the restoration of the Maronite Church of St Anne in Famagusta (in close proximity to the Virgin Mary Church) was also completed. This followed the handing over to the Maronite Church of Cyprus of the restored, by the TCCH, church of Ayia Marina Skyllouras, in the Nicosia district and the completion of the restoration of the Kormakitis St George Maronite church, in November 2015.

(Re par. 32 of the Opinion)

93. Please refer to comments under Point III, Part II, par. 50 – 51 of the present Report.

(Re par. 33 of the Opinion)

94. The MOEC continues the effort for the preservation of CMA, allocating every year a significant amount to support the scientific work carried out by the researchers, in accordance with the Action Plan for the revitalization of CMA and the decisions of the relevant Committee of Experts.

95. The initial phases of the project were mainly dedicated to the interviews with native speakers of CMA, orthographic and phonetic transcription of the language as well as production of teaching material. The results of phases 1-3 were presented in a Press Conference in January 2016.

96. Now research is at its sixth phase. At this point the main focus of the researchers is the production of teaching material and the organisation of

training courses for teachers and speakers of the language. Thus, more emphasis is given at this point to the actual use of the language in everyday life, the production of written texts and the increase of its proficient speakers.

97. Moreover, the ongoing research conducted for the creation of an archive of oral tradition for CMA will contribute towards the further strengthening of the teaching of the language with the creation of suitable learning material. So far, 17 teaching units for the levels A1 and A2 have been designed and completed. All the units were adapted for the teaching of children, enriched with appropriate illustrations. The educational material for the adults was also illustrated. The material produced is used in Agios Maronas Primary School, the Adult Education Centres and the Annual Summer Language Camp in Kormakitis. Additionally, with the initiative of the Maronites, CMA was taught to a group of children on a weekly basis, from October 2017 to May 2018.

98. Furthermore, in an effort to compile an “Anthology” of texts written in CMA, the researchers proceeded with the collection and orthographical transcription or correction of 21 literary texts. Furthermore, during the preparation of the teaching material, it became clear that there is a need to support fluent native speakers by providing them with easily accessed language resources such as dictionaries, grammars etc. To this end, relevant material was gathered and compiled –as Excel files–, such as all the verbs and all the nouns and adjectives found in previous works on CMA. Conjugation tables for 25 verbs were also prepared. This material will be further elaborated in view of its publication as an electronic on line dictionary. To that end the University of Cyprus organised a training seminar on the 14th of December 2016 entitled “*Principles of Lexicography*” for the researchers involved in the research for the revitalization of CMA.

➤ **Article 6 of the Framework Convention**

Tolerance and intercultural dialogue

(Re par. 36 of the Opinion)

99. The answers in the present Report relate only to comments in the Opinion which refer or relate to national minorities recognized by the State for the purposes of the Framework Convention as explained in paragraph 5 above of the present Report. Solely for clarity purposes though, it is reiterated herewith, that Turkish Cypriots are one of the two Communities of Cyprus, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, and can by no means be considered as a national minority. References to the Turkish Cypriot Community, therefore, have no place in the present Report, neither in the Opinion of the Advisory Committee.

100. However, since the Opinion refers specifically to sign - posts at the crossing points that have now been removed (par. 34) it is worth noting that the impressive number of nearly 2 million crossings per year (Greek Cypriots

and Turkish Cypriots) via the crossing points along the Green Line, without a single incident having been reported, speaks volumes of the high level of tolerance and willingness for co-existence between the two Communities in Cyprus.

Protection from hate crime

(Re par. 39 - 40 of the Opinion)

101. See comments under point II of Part II, par. 17 – 30 of the present Report.

➤ Article 8 of the Framework Convention

Religious education and the right to manifest one's belief

(Re par. 45 of the Opinion)

102. Religious education in public schools is not taught in the form of indoctrination. Pupils/Students learn about the Christian Orthodox (the predominant by far faith) beliefs and other religions, faiths and approaches to religion. If a child is not a Christian Orthodox, parents can ask for an exception of their child from Religious Education. Furthermore, schools have been asked to facilitate children of other religions in their faith practices (e.g. Muslim children during the Ramadan). The Agios Maronas Primary School adjusts Religious Education according to the Maronite faith, with the support of the Pedagogical Institute. The Armenians have their own schools, fully financed by the Government; therefore, Religious Education in their schools follows the Armenian faith.

➤ Article 9 of the Framework Convention

Minority language print media and broadcasting

(Re par. 49 - 50 of the Opinion)

103. See comments under point IV, Part III, par. 54 – 62 of the present Report.

➤ Article 10 of the Framework Convention

Support and use of minority and official languages

(Re par. 53 of the Opinion)

104. The MOEC fully respects and promotes the right of children belonging to the religious groups to speak their language and this is evident by the operation of the Armenian Nareg Schools and Agios Maronas Primary School as public schools fully subsidized by the Government. Moreover, the MOEC subsidizes the teaching of their languages, the training of language teachers and the organisation of events that promote their languages and identity. It is also important to underline that of significant importance are the results of the ongoing research for the revitalization of CMA that is now focusing on the actual use of the language in everyday life, the production of written texts and the increase of its proficient speakers (regarding the policies of the MOEC for CMA and the Armenian language, please see also the answers in the 3rd recommendation for immediate action, the 7th further recommendation and paragraph 32 above).

(Re par. 54 of the Opinion)

105. Turkish is one of the two official languages of Cyprus by virtue of Article 3 of the Constitution of Cyprus. It should be pointed out that the Constitution does not include references to “bilingualism”, but to Greek and Turkish as the two official languages of Cyprus.

➤ **Article 12 of the Framework Convention**

Intercultural education and equal access to education

(Re par. 59 of the Opinion)

106. Regarding Terra Santa College, it should be noted that the agreement with the University of Cyprus is to transform Terra Santa to a new proto-type secondary school, covering the whole academic curriculum and teaching of its secondary school programme.

107. Terra Santa College is a multicultural school promoting interethnic friendship and solidarity. The College offers only some subjects in its secondary school in a second language stream (English), therefore different language streams do interact at the school.

(Re par. 60 of the Opinion)

108. Please refer to comments under Part III, Point VI, par. 69 – 72 of the present Report.

Textbooks and teacher training

(Re par. 65 of the Opinion)

109. Regarding the Armenian language, during the school year 2017-2018 three teacher training programmes were implemented. All three were addressed to the 19 teachers who teach subjects in the Armenian language at the primary schools of Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol as well as the gymnasium in Nicosia. It involved teacher training sessions, classroom observations and mentoring. At the final stage, a formal evaluation of all the teachers took place. Furthermore, training for the teachers of the Armenian language can be offered on demand by the Pedagogical Institute. Moreover, in January 2017 an educator from Lebanon provided training for teachers working in the Nareg Schools. A training session was also organised by the University of Cyprus in February 2017 entitled “L’ école arménienne et le défi de la transmission de l’ arménien occidental”.

110. As far as CMA is concerned the following training sessions for teachers and natural speakers were organised:

- Professor Alexander Borg offered a four day teacher training course at the CPI in June 2015. Teachers of primary and secondary schools, who are also native speakers of the language, attended the seminar.
- Training seminars for native speakers of CMA have been organised by the Committee of Experts for CMA, at the request of the NGO Hki Fi Sanna and other members of the Maronite religious group. In particular, three training seminars were delivered during April and May 2016, in order to present the final proposal for the alphabet of CMA, as well as part of the prepared teaching material. During these sessions native speakers were trained in writing their language and the basic orthographic conventions included in the handbook “How do they say it in our language?” were explained.
- In June 2016 and 2017, the University of Cyprus organised training seminars for the teachers that participated in the Summer Language Camp in Kormakitis. The main themes of the training were the teaching of the writing conventions of CMA, the extensive presentation of the content to be taught in the Language Camp and the discussion of methodological issues, mainly related to the use of modern technology in language teaching.
- In the framework of the preparation for the creation of an on-line dictionary, the University of Cyprus organised a training seminar on the 14th of December 2016 entitled “Principles of Lexicography” for the researchers participating in the fourth phase of the research financed by the MOEC for the revitalization of CMA.

- A training seminar for the teaching of CMA to natural speakers wishing to become themselves able to teach the language was organised during July 2018.

111. Regarding the provision of suitable educational material, it should be underlined that the new revised curricula used in all public schools are based on success indicators, aiming to turn attention to the pupil/student and his/her own learning profile. Now the teaching process focuses more on core knowledge and the cultivation of skills, values and attitudes that characterize the modern democratic and critical citizen.

112. In the Nareg Armenian Schools, the MOEC is funding the purchase of books for the teaching of the Armenian language, history, geography and religion. As far as CMA is concerned, in 2004 a group of teachers working at Agios Maronas Primary School enriched the curriculum with issues associated with Maronites' history, religion and geography, not as different subjects, but as an enrichment of the existing curricula. This material is used by teachers of Agios Maronas Primary School until today, in their effort to preserve children's Maronite identity. In 2010 the new curricula were introduced and last year they were revised in their final form with the implementation of success indicators for all subjects. As requested by the Minister, a Committee, coordinated by the Inspector of Agios Maronas Primary School, was formed in April 2017, in order to enrich these new revised curricula. The Committee consists of three inspectors who are responsible for the subjects of History, Religious Education and Geography, four specialist teachers who were appointed as members of the teams who had previously worked for the revised curriculum in the three areas, the headmistress and one teacher from Agios Maronas School. The Maronite teachers collaborate with Maronite experts in the three areas. The enriched curriculum has been approved by the academics responsible for the three subjects. The work has been completed and the enriched curriculum has been submitted to the Committee Responsible for the Curriculum. The Minister of Education and Culture gave the final approval. The next step will be to produce teaching materials or/and propose sources of information, that teachers can use when implementing the curriculum.

➤ **Article 14 of the Framework Convention**

Teaching in and of minority languages

(Re par. 69 of the Opinion)

113. The Armenian language is taught in all the Nareg Schools, as well as the University of Cyprus and the Adult Education Centres, on demand. Additionally, the MOEC is funding the operation of the NANOR Armenian Childcare Centre. Agios Maronas Primary School operates as an optional all-day school. The teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) is taught as an

option during the afternoon timetable. CMA is also taught in the Adult Education Centres and the Annual Summer Language Camp for young Maronites in the village of Kormakitis. Additionally, with the initiative of the Maronites, CMA was taught to a group of children on a weekly basis, from October 2017 to May 2018.

114. Moreover, the ongoing research conducted for the creation of an archive of oral tradition for CMA will contribute towards the further strengthening of the teaching of the language with the creation of suitable learning material. So far, 17 teaching units for the levels A1 and A2 have been designed and completed. All the units were adapted for the teaching of children, enriched with appropriate illustrations. The educational material for the adults was also illustrated.

115. Furthermore, in an effort to compile an “Anthology” of texts written in CMA, the researchers proceeded with the collection and orthographical transcription or correction of 21 literary texts. Furthermore, during the preparation of the teaching material, it became clear that there is a need to support fluent native speakers by providing them with easy accessed language resources such as dictionaries, grammars etc. To this end, relevant material was gathered and compiled –as Excel files–, such as all the verbs and all the nouns and adjectives found in previous works on CMA. Conjugation tables for 25 verbs were also prepared. This material will be further elaborated in view of its publication as an electronic on line dictionary.

116. The MOEC supports the organisation of training seminars for teachers of the Armenian language and CMA, giving them opportunities to become more aware of language learning methodologies and teaching methods, thus increasing the standard and quality of education.

117. Please see also relevant comments under Part III, Point V and Point VII.

(Re par. 70 of the Opinion)

118. The MOEC allocates funds for the targeted support of the teaching of CMA from its structured budget, especially in relation with the operation of Agios Maronas Primary School, the lessons provided in the Adult Education Centres, the Annual Summer Language Camp in Kormakitis and the ongoing research on CMA that is now at its sixth phase. The main focus of the researchers implementing the Action Plan for the revitalization of CMA has shifted to the production of teaching material and the organisation of training courses for teachers and speakers of the language. Thus, more emphasis is given at this point to the actual use of the language in everyday life, the production of written texts and the increase of its proficient speakers.

119. Moreover, the ongoing research conducted for the creation of an archive of oral tradition for CMA will contribute towards the further strengthening of the teaching of the language with the creation of suitable learning material. So far, 17 teaching units for the levels A1 and A2 have been

designed and completed. All the units were adapted for the teaching of children, enriched with appropriate illustrations. The educational material for the adults was also illustrated. The material produced is used in Agios Maronas Primary School, the Adult Education Centres and the Annual Summer Language Camp in Kormakitis. Additionally, with the initiative of the Maronites, CMA was taught to a group of children on a weekly basis, from October 2017 to May 2018.

Learning of official languages

(Re par. 73 of the Opinion)

120. Please refer to comments under Point VII, Part III, par. 73 -75 of the present Report.

➤ Article 15 of the Framework Convention

Participation in public life and decision-making processes

(Re par. 77 of the Opinion)

121. Please refer to comments under point VIII, Part III, par. 76 – 77 of the present Report.

(Re par. 78 of the Opinion)

122. Please refer to comments under point VIII, Part III, par. 78 - 80 of the present Report.

Effective participation in socio-economic life

(Re par. 80 of the Opinion)

123. Please refer to comments under point VIII, Part III, par. 78 – 80 of the present Report.

➤ Article 17 and 18 of the Framework Convention

Bilateral cooperation

(Re par. 82 of the Opinion)

124. The Agios Maronas Primary School has developed cooperation with a school in Lebanon, the College Notre Dame des Soeurs Antonines, Hazmieth, aiming to strengthen relationships, increase the knowledge about each other's culture and exchange good practices and ideas. The initial project began in 2013 and was titled "From the cedar of Lebanon to the cedar of Cyprus". Actions are planned to take place during the school subjects of English, Religious Education, Music and Art. Pupils exchange e-mails, Christmas and Easter cards and final products, like power point presentations, a dictionary with common words in CMA and Arabic and a CD with common songs. Pupils also connect through Skype and exchange visits. Last year a group of pupils from Cyprus visited Lebanon. This year a group of Lebanese pupils will be hosted along with their Cypriot friends, in the governmental summer camp after arrangements made by the MOEC, coordinated by the school. The Agios Maronas Primary School also develops cooperation with the Armenian School Nareg, and organises an annual event, based on a different subject that derives from history or culture. This year the project was based on oral history and covered the daily life of people, who gave interviews to children. These people lived in a neighbourhood with a multicultural background which consisted of Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians, Latins and others.

125. Furthermore, the Nareg Armenian School collaborated with the Armenian Evangelical School in Lebanon. In particular, during the school year 2017-2018 15 students, the Principal and two teachers from the Armenian Evangelical School visited Cyprus and had a joint programme of Armenian Dance classes with children from Nareg School. The students performed during the annual Sports Day to the Armenian public. Moreover, in January 2017 an educator from Lebanon provided training for teachers working in the Nareg Schools.

126. On 15th of March 2016, an Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Government of the Republic of Armenia has been signed on mutual academic recognition of higher education qualifications for the access and continuation of studies to higher education institutions of the two countries. Moreover, the Ministry of Education of Culture of the Republic of Cyprus and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia have signed a Business Programme on Cooperation in the Field of Education and Science for the years 2016-2020.