

GVT/COM/VI(2025)2

Comments of the Government of Cyprus on the Sixth Opinion of the
Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National
Minorities by Cyprus

received on 29 October 2025

The comments have been submitted under the sole responsibility of Cyprus and made public by the Council of Europe Secretariat in accordance with Rule 29 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49 on the revised monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Final Comments of the Government of Cyprus on the Sixth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Document ACFC/OP/VI(2025)2prov, adopted on 1st July 2025

I. Introduction

1. The Republic of Cyprus wishes to once again extend its sincere gratitude to the Advisory Committee for the preparation and drafting of the Sixth Opinion under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. We acknowledge the continued efforts of the Committee and value the constructive dialogue fostered during the recent country visit in November 2024.

2. Following our initial response, Cyprus has carefully reviewed the Opinion and the recommendations contained therein. We appreciate the opportunity to provide final comments to further clarify our position and to ensure mutual understanding regarding the interpretation and application of the Framework Convention within the unique and societal context of Cyprus.

II. Final Comments on the observations and recommendations contained in the Advisory Committee's Sixth Opinion

The following final comments are submitted to elucidate specific matters addressed in the Sixth Opinion and to present accurate factual corrections.

1. **Par. 9** “...*Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at the secondary school level.*”

Comment: It must be noted that Cypriot Maronite Arabic is taught in secondary school pupils every year during the annual Sanna Camp that is organised in occupied Kormakits.

2. **Par. 13.9**, *“The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure the possibility for persons self-identifying as Armenian, Latin and Maronite to be registered on the electoral rolls for the election of their respective representatives in the House of Representatives without requiring documentation from the religious authorities as a precondition [para. 126 under Article 15].”*

Comment: It should be noted that changes can be made to the procedures for registering on the electoral rolls of the religious groups, but these must, in principle, ensure the integrity of the elections. This issue concerns the election of representatives of the groups in question, and therefore, in some way, it should be confirmed that each person who requests registration on the electoral roll of a religious group actually belongs to the specific group.

3. **Par. 35**, *“According to data available from the 2021 living in Cyprus.”*

Comment: The sentence must be corrected as follows: “According to data available from the 2021 Population and Housing Census, out of the three constitutionally recognised religious groups, there were 5.245 Maronites (79,0% live in Nicosia, 13,9% in Limassol, 5,0% in Larnaca and 1,4% in Paphos), 3.434 Armenians (57,0% live in Nicosia, 19,9% in Limassol, 15,4% in Larnaca and 6,4% in Paphos) and 301 Latins (51,2% live in Nicosia, 34,9% in Limassol, 12,0% in Larnaca and 1,0% in Paphos) living in Cyprus.

4. **Par. 53**, *“The MoESY is supporting efforts...”*

Comment: The sentence must be corrected as follows: “Furthermore the MoESY is supporting efforts into revitalizing Cypriot Maronite Arabic at the Agios Maronas Pre-Primary and Primary School...”

5. **Par. 77**, *“Currently, there are no television programmes available in Armenian or in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. In radiobroadcasting, the CyBC radio station RIK 2 continues to broadcast a one-hour daily radio programme and news bulletin in Armenian, a 30-minute programme for the Latin religious group, and a weekly 90-minute cultural programme for the Maronite religious group.”*

Comment: Paragraph 77 line 3 must be corrected as “the CyBC radio station RIK1 broadcasts a 30- minute weekly programme for the Latin religious group...”

6. ***In relation to Footnote 84, “From 4pm to 4:30pm”***

Comment: To be corrected as “From 5.30 pm to 6.00 pm every Saturday”

7. ***Furthermore, in relation to Footnote 85, “The radio programme “The voice of the Maronites” is broadcast by CyBC every Friday in Greek, with an excerpt of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, and includes interviews, religious and traditional music and songs.”***

Comment: To be corrected as “The radio programme “The Voice of the Maronites” is broadcast by the CyBC radio station RIK1 every Saturday from 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm, in Greek. Consideration is given to involve native speakers from Kormakitis village to promote the language, by telling stories of their experience and everyday life. The programme often includes traditional songs in Cypriot Maronite Arabic.”

8. ***Par. 84, “The second official language of Cyprus, Turkish including at local level.”***

Comment: It should be noted that, the CyBC radio station RIK 2 broadcasts a daily programme in Turkish from 6.00am-5.00pm which is also rebroadcast from 6 pm-5am by the same radio station. The programme includes amongst others three news bulletins in Turkish.

9. ***Par. 90, “They underlined that greater support for research on national minority cultures and histories and minority languages at the university level is needed, including the establishment of study programmes and chairs for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic at the University of Cyprus. A similar request for the establishment of a chair was made by Gurbeti Roma interlocutors who met the Advisory Committee during its visit.”***

Comment: It must be clarified that the Creation of a Chair for Cypriot Maronite Arabic at the UCY, was not brought before the Government of the Republic of Cyprus by the Representative of the Maronite Religious Group, nor was it raised and discussed during the visit of the Advisory Committee. The same applies for the establishment of a chair for Cyprus Roma.

10. **Par. 91**, *“The absence of national minorities from curricula and educational materials contributes to their invisibilisation in public life.”*

Comment: It should be added that there are numerous references to the religious groups concerning their history, culture, religion, languages and identity in several aspects of the curricula both in primary and secondary education. Also please refer to par. 98, 115, 116 of the sixth Report.

11. **Par. 106**, *“In-service Armenian language.....and teaching methods.”*

Comment: The sentence should be corrected as follows: “In-service teacher training regarding the Armenian Language is conducted twice a year in the Nareg Armenian schools in Nicosia with the assistance, enhancing teachers’ awareness of opportunities of language learning methodologies and teaching methods.”

12. **Par. 109**, *“New teaching materials based on the recent codification of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language.”*

Comment: The sentence should be corrected as follows: “New teaching materials were produced and approved by the Curriculum Development Unit of the Pedagogical Institute of the MoESY, providing a broader insight into the history, culture and religion of the Maronites, to Maronite students in the framework of religious education, history and geography”. Please refer to par. 64 of the sixth Periodical Report submitted by the Republic of Cyprus.

13. Par. 110, *“Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at university level, and no chair of Maronite studies has been established at the University of Cyprus.”*

Comment: It must be clarified that the Creation of a Chair for Cypriot Maronite Arabic at the UCY, was not brought before the Government of the Republic of Cyprus by the Representative of the Maronite Religious Group, nor was it raised and discussed during the visit of the Advisory Committee.

14. General Comments:

- i. Where “Gurbeti Roma” it referred must be replaced with “Cyprus Roma” which is the correct referral.

- ii. We observe with concern that the Opinion continues to include references to Cyprus Roma in a manner that does not fully take into account our previous comments, which state that representation in the House of Representatives is determined by the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus and does not extent to the Cyprus Roma. In this regard, we consider it imperative that the text must incorporate references to religious groups as defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, including the relevant fundamental constitutional provisions.