

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

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SUBMITTED BY
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OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

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Introduction

1. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities[1] was signed by the Republic of Albania on 29.06.1995 and ratified by Law no. 8496, dated 3.6.1999 "On the ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of Minorities".
2. Based on Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention, since 2001, Albania has periodically submitted to the Council of Europe five periodic reports on the implementation of the provisions of the Framework Convention on the respect for and protection of the rights of national minorities in Albania.[2]
3. Within the framework of the periodic monitoring cycles, following the submission of the periodic national Reports, the respective Opinions of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention were adopted. Following the examination of the respective Opinions of the Advisory Committee and the submission of the comments of the Albanian authorities thereon, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the respective resolutions on the implementation of the Framework Convention by Albania.
4. For the purpose of preparing this Report, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, as the institution responsible for drafting national reports in the framework of human rights, informed all competent institutions in their respective areas of competence.
5. The Report has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for the preparation of reports in the framework of the sixth monitoring cycle. The first part of the Report provides information on the measures taken to raise awareness of the results of the fifth monitoring cycle. The second part provides information on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the Framework Convention and to implement the recommendations of the fifth monitoring cycle issued by the Advisory Committee and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The annex to the Report contains further relevant and more detailed information, including statistics, activities, texts of legal acts and other relevant information.
6. The reporting period covers the period from the adoption of the Opinion under the fifth monitoring cycle, in June 2023, until the date of submission of this Report.
7. The Sixth State Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was approved by Decision No. 755, dated 7.10.2026, of the Council of Ministers.

[1] Hereinafter referred to as the Framework Convention

[2] The first Report was submitted in July 2001; the second Report in May 2007; the third Report in January 2011; the fourth Report in November 2016; and the fifth Report in May 2021.

List of Abbreviations

AMA	Audiovisual Media Authority
AQAPE	Agency of Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
DPA	Department of Public Administration
GDSP	General Directorate of State Police
RDCH	Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage
IAL	Higher Education Institution
CoE	Council of Europe
CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
LPD	Law on Protection from Discrimination
MEI	Ministry of Economy and Innovation
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MTCS	Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports
NAPEIPRE and Egyptians	National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma
RoA	Republic of Albania
RTSH/ART	Albanian Radio Television
TLAS	Tirana Legal Aid Society

I. Measures taken to raise awareness of the results of the fifth monitoring cycle

8. Following the adoption of the Fifth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention[3], in June 2023 and subsequently of the Resolution[4] of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in December 2023, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, as the institution playing a key role in the reporting process on the implementation of human rights conventions, officially informed all relevant central and independent institutions, with the aim of promoting and raising awareness of the results of the fifth monitoring cycle of the Framework Convention and, in particular, ensuring familiarity with all recommendations according to their respective areas of institutional responsibility.
9. Furthermore, on the official website of the Committee on National Minorities, the relevant links are published to consult all periodic Reports submitted by Albania, the opinions of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, as well as the Resolutions of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, for each monitoring cycle.[5]

II. Measures taken to improve the implementation of the Framework Convention and the recommendations of the fifth monitoring cycle, with regard to Articles 3-18

Article 3 – Right to self-identification

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to ensure that the secondary legislation establishing the criteria, documentation and procedures for the collection of data on the self-identification of persons belonging to national minorities is adopted without any further delay. This legislation should strictly respect the principle of free self-identification, as provided for in Article 3 of the Framework Convention, by allowing for the possibility of declaring multiple affiliations, with a view to ensuring effective access to minority rights for persons belonging to national minorities. The authorities should give decisive weight to the subjective choice of individuals to be treated as belonging to a national minority, rather than to an objective criterion based on official documentation.

10. In December 2024, the Council of Ministers adopted the last three by-laws implementing Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", namely[6]:
    - Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 843, dated 26.12.2024, "On the determination of the criteria, documentation and procedures for the collection of data on the identification of persons belonging to national minorities";

[3] Date of adoption: 6 June 2023; Date of publication: 19 October 2023
[4] Date of adoption: 13 December 2023
[5] https://pakicatkombetare.al/raporte-dhe-opinione/
[6] The full texts of the three by-laws are provided in the Annex to the Report

- Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 844, dated 26.12.2024, "On the manner of using the language of national minorities in relations between persons belonging to national minorities and local self-government bodies";
- Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 845, dated 26.12.2024, "On the composition, functions and procedures of the Commission for the review of requests for the recognition of a national minority".

11. The above-mentioned three by-laws have been translated into all minority languages and are published on the official website of the Committee on National Minorities.[7]
12. The Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities was established pursuant to Decision No. 845, dated 26.12.2024, "On the determination of the composition, functions and procedure of the Commission for the review of requests for the recognition of a national minority", and held its first meeting on 27 May 2025.
13. During 2025 and 2026, the Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities administered a total of 1555 (one thousand, five hundred fifty-five) self-identification forms (including cases submitted more than once by the same citizen). No new requests for the recognition of a national minority have been examined, as no requests have been submitted.
14. The Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities has taken 852 (eight hundred fifty-two) decisions confirming self-identification as belonging to a specific national minority, namely:
    - 224 (two hundred twenty-four) decisions confirming self-identification as belonging to the Egyptian national minority;
    - 553 (five hundred fifty-three) decisions confirming self-identification as belonging to the Bulgarian national minority;
    - 56 (fifty-six) decisions confirming self-identification as belonging to the Roma national minority;
    - 13 (thirteen) decisions confirming self-identification as belonging to the Montenegrin national minority;
    - 3 (three) decision confirming self-identification as belonging to the Aromanian national minority;
    - 1 (one) decision confirming self-identification as belonging to the Macedonian national minority;
    - 1 (one) decision confirming self-identification as belonging to the Greek national minority;
    - 1 (one) decision confirming self-identification as belonging to the Bosnian national minority;

[7] https://pakicatkombetare.al/akte-nenligjore-ne-gjuhen-e-pakicave/

15. The Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities has provided 525 (five hundred and twenty-five) responses regarding deficiencies found in the completion of self-identification forms, providing relevant guidance, individually for each citizen, on how to complete the forms. Since the last meeting of the Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities that was held on 07.07.2026, another 178 self-identification forms are currently in process for review and decision-making, to be addressed in the next meeting of the Commission.
16. The Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities has notified 852 decisions made regarding the confirmation of self-identification. During the period from May 2025 to August 2026, the Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities held 7 meetings.
17. During March 2026, the Ministry of Interior, in cooperation with the Committee on National Minorities, organized three roundtables in Kukës, Dropull, and Korçë. These activities aimed to raise awareness and inform local communities about the process of self-identification with a national minority, in accordance with the relevant bylaws. Supported by the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE Presence in Albania, these events brought together representatives of national minorities, public institutions, and civil society organizations.
18. During these activities, participants were introduced to two practical materials designed to facilitate the self-identification process:

- Guide for Civil Society Organizations: Developed to support minority representatives in assisting individuals throughout the entire self-identification process.
- Informational leaflet for the public: Specially dedicated to persons belonging to national minorities, providing valuable information on how to fill out the self-identification form and the procedure for submitting it.

19. Furthermore, meetings were held at the Ministry of Interior with representatives of recognized national minorities in the Republic of Albania, concerning various issues identified by them and the difficulties they encounter during the process, contributing to their resolution and alleviation.

Population census

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to undertake concrete and sustained efforts with persons belonging to national minorities in order to build trust in the population census process, including by raising awareness of the importance of the population census, the possibilities for free self-identification, including multiple affiliation, and the provisions of the new population census legislation. In addition, the authorities should ensure the recruitment and training of census enumerators belonging to national minorities, and that all census enumerators are appropriately trained, including in providing assistance to illiterate persons. Persons belonging to national minorities should be involved in the assessment of the population census process.

20. In the framework of the preparations for and the implementation of the 2023 Population and Housing Census, the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) undertook a series of actions to ensure the full and trustful inclusion of persons belonging to national minorities, in accordance with international standards.

Building trust and informing communities

21. INSTAT conducted a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign on the importance of the 2023 Population and Housing Census, including information materials, public messages and communication at local level before and during the conduct of the Census, based on the communication plan, which forms part of the Census Strategy. [8] The campaign emphasized the right to free and multiple self-identification, ensuring that every citizen has the opportunity to freely declare their ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation, without any restriction or external influence. Consultative meetings were organized with representatives of national minorities, civil society organizations and local institutions to share information on the process and legal safeguards.[9]

Legal framework and safeguards for free self-identification

22. Law No. 18/2023 "On the Population and Housing Census" includes clear provisions on free self-identification and the protection of the anonymity of personal data. [10] The Law stipulates that participation in the Census is mandatory for all persons residing in the territory of Albania; however, individual responses regarding ethnic, linguistic or religious affiliation are voluntary and are based solely on self-declaration.

Recruitment of census enumerators from minority communities

23. During the recruitment phase, INSTAT encouraged the inclusion of census enumerators and field supervisors belonging to national minorities, in order to increase trust in the process and facilitate communication in the field.[11] In several areas with a high presence of national minorities (such as Dropull, Pustec, Finiq, etc.), persons speaking local languages were involved in order to ensure effective communication and accuracy in the interviewing process.

Staff training and cultural sensitivity

24. All census enumerators participated in detailed training on how to respect free self-identification, confidentiality and data protection. The training module included guidance on communicating with illiterate persons, respecting cultural and linguistic differences, and ensuring equal treatment of every citizen during the interview.

Inclusion of national minorities

[8] https://www.instat.gov.al/sq/cens-2023/strategji-baze-ligjore/
[9] https://www.instat.gov.al/sq/cens-2023/aktivitete/
[10] https://www.instat.gov.al/media/8147/ligji-per-censin-nr-140-dt-26112020.pdf
[11] https://www.instat.gov.al/sq/cens-2023/punesimi/

25. Representatives of persons belonging to national minorities were involved in consultation processes before and after the implementation of the Census.

Data security and confidentiality

26. INSTAT has implemented high standards of data security and privacy, in accordance with the Law on Personal Data Protection and Eurostat standards.[12] The information collected is used solely for statistical purposes and cannot be linked to specific individuals. Through these actions, INSTAT has demonstrated continued commitment to building trust, ensuring the inclusion of persons belonging to national minorities and guaranteeing free self-identification in the 2023 Population and Housing Census.

Article 4 – Prohibition of discrimination

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to ensure that the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and the Ombudsperson are provided with the resources they require to carry out their respective mandates and to further cooperate with both institutions regarding the implementation of their recommendations.

27. Law No. 10 221, dated 04.02. 2010 "On Protection from Discrimination", as amended by Law No. 124, dated 15.10.2020, constitutes a safeguard for ensuring respect for the rights of national minorities without discrimination, in areas such as education, employment, goods and services. One of the national mechanisms for the protection of national minorities and for ensuring the implementation of the Law "On Protection from Discrimination" is the Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, as a public and independent institution in the exercise of its duties, which "ensures effective protection from discrimination and from any form of conduct that promotes discrimination" (Article 21, paragraph 1 of the Law).
28. This Law regulates the implementation and respect for the principle of equality and non-discrimination in relation to race, ethnicity, color, language, citizenship, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic or social status, educational level, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, living with HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, parental affiliation, parental responsibility, age, family or marital status, civil status, place of residence, health status, genetic predispositions, physical appearance, disability, belonging to a particular group, or any other ground. (Article 1, "Subject Matter").
29. Law No. 10221/2010 "On Protection from Discrimination" was amended by Law No. 124/2020 "On some additions and amendments to Law No. 10221, dated 04.02.2010, "On Protection from Discrimination", which entered into force in November 2020.
30. The legal amendments have strengthened the legal safeguards for the protection of national minorities. The new legal amendments define new forms of discrimination, such as: multiple

[12] https://www.instat.gov.al/sq/cens-2023/privatesia-dhe-siguria/

discrimination, intersectional discrimination, hate speech, separation/segregation, sexual harassment, structural discrimination, incitement and assistance to discrimination, and the declared intention to discriminate (Article 3 of the Law).

31. Furthermore, "serious forms of discrimination" have been defined, which shall be considered as such in cases where the discriminatory conduct is motivated by more than one ground, has been committed more than once, has continued over a long period of time, or has caused particularly harmful consequences for the victim. In such cases, the Law provides for the doubling of sanctions (Article 3/1 and Article 33). The Law expressly provides for the obligation of public authorities to promote equality and prevent discrimination in the exercise of their functions (Article 7, paragraph 3).
32. Several of the competences granted by the Law to the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination have been added and amended, including, inter alia, the competence to examine complaints submitted by organizations that have a legitimate interest to act on behalf and with the written consent of individuals or groups of individuals who claim that discrimination has occurred, or on their behalf in cases relating to collective interests.
33. It is worth highlighting the right of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination to initiate legal proceedings in defense of the principle of equality and non-discrimination in matters relating to collective interests, as well as the right to initiate proceedings before the Constitutional Court when, in the course of exercising his/her activities, the Commissioner finds that a law or normative act infringes the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals (Article 32).
34. The legal amendments establish the active role of organizations with legitimate interests by enabling them to submit complaints directly to the institution, representing collective interests, or to provide reliable information for the initiation of ex officio investigations by the Commissioner. Civil society organizations may now also directly bring discrimination cases before the courts in defense of collective interests (Articles 33 and 34).
35. The new legal amendments provide for the obligation of national media to publish the decisions of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination which have established discrimination through hate speech. The imposition of such an obligation would enable greater effectiveness.

36. The competences of the CPD, as provided for in the law and aimed at raising awareness, include:
    - promoting the principle of equality and non-discrimination, in particular by raising awareness and providing information on these issues, including by providing written information, inter alia, on this Law, in the Albanian language, in minority languages, as well as in formats accessible to persons with disabilities;
    - addressing public opinion directly on any issue related to discrimination;
    - providing information on the right to protection from discrimination and on the legal remedies available for such protection;

- developing regular dialogue on issues of discrimination with relevant social groups, including non-governmental organizations;
- developing awareness-raising and educational activities that contribute to the implementation of this Law.

37. The legal amendments to Law No. 10221/2010 "On Protection from Discrimination" have strengthened the legal safeguards for the protection of national minorities in the Republic of Albania. The Office of the Commissioner has all the necessary instruments to examine discriminatory situations affecting national minorities in a professional and effective manner. In addition to the central office, the Commissioner carries out his activities through regional offices in Fier, Korça and Shkodra.

    The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities are de facto able to benefit from all forms of legal aid, in particular by considering amending the "specific categories of beneficiaries" under the Law on "Legal Aid" to include persons belonging to national minorities, particularly Roma and Egyptian minorities.

38. Free legal aid constitutes a key mechanism for ensuring effective access to justice. In 2017, Albania adopted Law No. 111/2017 "On State-Guaranteed Legal Aid", with the aim of ensuring access to justice for vulnerable groups.
39. Although the Law provides for beneficiary categories based on economic, social and health criteria, Roma and Egyptian communities are not explicitly included. Legal and procedural barriers, such as documentation requirements and formal decisions regarding eligibility for secondary legal aid, further limit their effective access. However, it should be noted that whenever representatives of these communities have contacted local legal aid offices and have fulfilled at least one of the eligibility criteria established by law, they have been provided with primary legal aid services.
40. Despite these challenges, 411 individuals from Roma and Egyptian communities received primary legal aid services in 2023, 374 in 2024 and 381 in 2025.
41. Furthermore, in line with the Intersectoral Justice Strategy 2024-2030, specifically Objective 3.6 "Strengthening capacities to improve access to justice", the Directorate of Free Legal Aid conducted an analysis of legal and sub-legal practices during 2025. This analysis was prepared in cooperation with the organization "Social Justice" within the framework of the project "Promotion and Realization of Roma Rights in Kosovo and Albania", implemented with the support of the Karl Kübel Foundation for Child and Family (KKF) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).
42. The analysis assesses the need for amendments to the Law on Legal Aid, taking into consideration the challenges faced by Roma and Egyptian communities in accessing free legal

aid services. Its findings provide concrete proposals for amendments to Law No. 111/2017 and will serve as a basis for drafting the Law "On Amendments to Law No. 111/2017".

43. Specifically, the proposed measures include:
    a. Expanding free legal aid services by explicitly including Roma and Egyptian communities;
    b. Adoption of secondary legislation to simplify application procedures, provide dedicated assistance and strengthen staff training;
    c. Integrating legal aid with social protection policies;
    d. Implementing targeted awareness-raising campaigns through brochures, media, social networks and community outreach activities;
    e. Publishing annual statistics on Roma and Egyptian applicants and beneficiaries, the types of cases and outcomes, with the aim of ensuring transparency and accountability.

44. These measures would not only implement Recommendation No. 59, but would also strengthen Albania's compliance with international obligations, including United Nations and European Union standards, by promoting equal access to justice as a foundation for broader social inclusion.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to continue working towards reducing the risk of statelessness among persons belonging to national minorities. The authorities should take a more proactive role in investigating and addressing the impact of marriages of convenience, particularly on women and children belonging to national minorities, including by providing them with the necessary social, legal and financial support, ensuring that marriage legislation is properly implemented in a non-discriminatory manner and raising awareness among persons belonging to national minorities about the risks associated with this practice.

45. The consolidated cooperation of the Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS) with the responsible institutions has enabled the addressing of statelessness situations arising from challenges related to the registration of Roma children, particularly those born abroad.
46. Through close coordination with the General Directorate of Civil Status at the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Albania, the effective handling of complex cases concerning the registration of Roma children born abroad has continued. This consolidated cooperation has facilitated the overcoming of bureaucratic and legal barriers, enabling children at risk of statelessness to obtain the necessary civil documentation.
47. For Roma and Egyptian communities, during the period June 2023-April 2026, TLAS handled a total of 464 birth registration cases. Of these, 402 cases were addressed through administrative procedures and 62 cases through judicial proceedings. Among the administrative cases concerning Roma and Egyptian communities, 293 cases relate to births that occurred abroad, while 109 cases relate to births that occurred within the country.

48. Regarding addressing the impact of marriages of convenience, the General Directorate of Civil Status, while particularly acknowledging the contribution of law enforcement bodies, has addressed and will continue to intensify cooperation concerning cases referred by civil status offices at municipal/administrative unit level, which are responsible for the solemnization of marriages.
49. For all cases where the civil status offices at municipal/administrative unit level assess that the marriage requested to be concluded is not intended to establish a genuine cohabitation, the Minister of Interior's Instruction No. 188, dated 27.09.2024, "On the rules and procedures for the conclusion of marriages and the documentation to be maintained by civil status offices for their conclusion, as well as for the change of surname when it occurs as a result of marriage", has also been adopted".
50. For marriages in relation to which civil status officers are convinced that the marriage sought to be concluded is not intended for genuine cohabitation, all such cases are referred to the General Directorate of the State Police for further prosecution.
51. In this regard, it should be emphasized that the General Directorate of Civil Status will continue to intensify cooperation in assessing cases referred by civil status offices at municipal/administrative unit level concerning marriages considered to be marriages of convenience, which are not intended for genuine cohabitation, but rather for the use of a legal arrangement to acquire the spouse's surname as a basis for obtaining a new identity that would facilitate their departure from and stay abroad.
52. Some of these simulated marriages aim at obtaining advantages that would not have been available without entering into such a marriage, including possible property-related effects that may benefit the female citizen who entered into the marriage, whose surname has been taken by the spouse. Moreover, as demonstrated in practice, these cases are subject to further judicial examination, where investigations establish that the spouses did not intend to live together. Such cases are declared invalid marriages, which are considered as never having been concluded.
53. In this regard, the reporting of cases suspected of being simulated marriages of convenience involving all citizens, including spouses belonging to national minorities, will continue to be carried out by civil status offices at municipal/administrative unit level to the relevant bodies within the General Directorate of the State Police, which are also assisted by non-profit organizations in judicial procedures for the dissolution of marriages.
54. In this context, the General Directorate of Civil Status at the Ministry of Interior would welcome cooperation with the Council of Europe, both in the preparation of the leaflet and in the assistance provided in drafting the guidance procedure on self-identification, pursuant to Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania". In particular, such cooperation would contribute to raising awareness of the consequences arising from entering into a simulated marriage, such as the birth of a child and the subsequent problems related to the registration of the child, in accordance with the provisions set out in

the Family Code, under which the child is registered with presumed paternity, namely the husband of the mother in a fictitious marriage, rather than the child's actual biological father.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to develop methods and means for collecting equality data concerning persons belonging to national minorities, particularly Roma and Egyptian minorities, and especially in the fields of education, housing, employment and healthcare, in accordance with European data protection standards.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025 through close cooperation with local authorities and by providing adequate human and financial resources through an allocated budget for the authorities, enabling them to address the needs and concerns of persons belonging to Roma and Egyptian minorities, in cooperation with their representatives. The authorities should pay particular attention to ensuring that measures combating anti-Gypsyism are properly implemented and engage minorities and the majority population alike. Local action plans should be adequately funded and adopted in all municipalities where persons belonging to Roma and/or Egyptian minorities live, in order to ensure effective equality throughout the country.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities at all levels to work with Egyptian representatives to develop measures addressing the specific needs and interests of the Egyptian minority, while ensuring that they continue to benefit from the measures under the existing National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians.

55. In recent years, the Government of Albania has intensified its efforts to improve the living conditions of Roma and Egyptian minorities and to ensure their inclusion in social, economic and cultural life. Albania has ratified the main international human rights instruments and harmonized its legal framework with European standards, thereby establishing an advanced legal and sub-legal framework for addressing issues related to Roma and Egyptian minorities.
56. During the reporting period under the Convention, namely since June 2023, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has continued implementing proactive measures for the implementation of policies, in its capacity as the national coordinating authority for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025.
57. The Plan contains strategic objectives with targeted policies for Roma and Egyptian minorities, developed in cooperation with all responsible institutions and civil society. The implementation of the Plan for the period 2021–2025 has focused on the social, economic and cultural inclusion of Roma and Egyptian minorities through long-term and medium-term policies in the areas of access to justice, education and culture, employment, housing, social protection and combating anti-Gypsyism.

58. Through this Plan, the Poznan Declaration, signed in 2019 by the Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans, as well as the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2030, have also been addressed.
59. Recent developments in legislation and in the strategic framework for the protection of vulnerable groups, with a particular focus on Roma and Egyptian minorities, are reflected in the following legal and sub-legal acts:

- Law No. 57, dated 28.08.2019 "On social assistance in the Republic of Albania", as amended by Law No. 79/2023, dated 27.07.2023.
- Law No. 15/2019 "On employment promotion" (as amended by Law No. 47/2023, dated 22.08.2023);
- Law No. 22, dated 03.05.2018 "On social housing", as amended by Law No. 48, dated 22.07.2023.
- Law No. 10 129, dated 11.05.2009 "On Civil Status", as amended by Law No. 135, dated 05.11.2015, Law No. 71, dated 06.12.2019, and Law No. 57, dated 18.07.2024.
- National Social Protection Strategy 2024-2030 and its Action Plan, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 152, dated 13.03.2024;
- National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 173, dated 04.03.2023 (as amended);
- National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and its Action Plan for its implementation, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 621, dated 22.10.2021;
- National Health Strategy 2021-2030, approved by Council of Ministers Decision No. 210, dated 06.04.2022.

60. In implementation of paragraph No. 72 of the Advisory Committee's Opinion concerning data collection, and paragraph No. 73 concerning close cooperation with all central and local institutions to ensure effective equality for all, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has worked on monitoring the situation regarding issues affecting Roma and Egyptian minorities at national level, starting from 2021, through strengthening the capacities of civil servants at central and local level who are users of the Rom-ALB system. Around 140 focal points were trained during the period January-March 2024.
61. Under the guidance and coordination of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, training was provided to all line ministries, regional directorates and local institutions responsible for reporting on the Plan. Through the training and presentations, participants reviewed the indicators in order to ensure a more accurate and concrete analysis of progress reporting on the implementation of the Plan.
62. To promote cooperation and dialogue with all stakeholders, the 5th Albania-EU Policy Dialogue Seminar on the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian national minorities was organized in Tirana on 20 April 2022. The Policy Dialogue Seminar resulted in conclusions and operational measures, as well as Final Recommendations for the 2022–2024 timeframe. The Recommendations of the 2022–2024 EU–Albania Policy Dialogue Seminar were consulted

with representatives of central and local government, civil society organizations and international organizations. The policy areas addressed by the Recommendations include education, combating anti-Gypsyism, employment and vocational training, access to healthcare, social care, housing, civil registration and returnees.

63. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare coordinated the organization of the Ministerial Meeting on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process, which was held on 6 October 2025 in Tirana, Albania, under the auspices of the Minister of Health and Social Protection. The Meeting focused on the joint commitment of representatives from the countries of the region to promote the integration, inclusion, equality and empowerment of Roma and Egyptian minorities.
64. In terms of coordination, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has undertaken awareness-raising activities within the framework of the Social Inclusion Platform to promote dialogue and cooperation among institutions at central and local level, as well as civil society organizations, across all areas of the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians. The Platform was launched in December 2023, and recommendations have been finalised in the respective policy areas, with a particular focus on education, entrepreneurship and employment within the community.
65. The National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 focuses on the social protection of all vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptian minorities. Municipalities have continuously strengthened their efforts to improve the socio-economic situation through the measures envisaged in their Municipal Social Plans.
66. Through the Social Fund, municipalities have been supported in establishing and expanding community-based services, multifunctional centers and emergency social services, which are also accessible to Roma and Egyptian individuals and families.
67. Social services for Roma and Egyptian communities have increased from 51 services in 2021 to 115 services in 2025. Overall, 3,537 individuals from these communities, including 2,128 women, benefit from these services. The most frequently provided services are counselling, day-care centers and community-based services, which currently cover only around 11–12% of the identified needs. At present, in 35% of municipalities, vulnerable groups from Roma and Egyptian communities are treated as priority groups.
68. The “Baby Bonus” Program recorded 23,333 beneficiaries in 2025. The Program has had a positive indirect impact on Roma and Egyptian communities by encouraging birth registration and promoting early inclusion in social protection systems.
69. Overall, alongside the expansion of measures and services, strengthening their effective implementation in practice remains essential. This should be achieved through improved case management, enhanced community-based interventions, and stronger linkages between financial assistance, social care and social and economic reintegration, a priority in social protection policies.
70. With regard to combating anti-Gypsyism, the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA) organized the online training course “Protection against Discrimination of Roma and Egyptian Minorities” (March 2023), focusing on the legal framework for protection against

discrimination, with particular emphasis on Roma and Egyptian ethnic origin, the different forms of discrimination, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms in accordance with the principle of equality.

71. Furthermore, with regard to non-discrimination, ASPA developed the curriculum "Anti-Gypsyism and the Role of Public Administration in Combating this Phenomenon" in 2023. This training module addresses the issue of racial discrimination against individuals belonging to Roma and Egyptian minorities, known as anti-Gypsyism.
72. During 2024, ASPA organized three training sessions under this module, comprising two online certification courses and one information session, training a total of 83 participants.
73. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare organized the training entitled "Anti-Gypsyism in Public Administration" in November 2025. The training aimed to enhance understanding of the concept of anti-Gypsyism, promote inclusive practices, and provide public administration officials with practical tools to address discrimination more effectively.
74. Furthermore, on 25 May 2026, ASPA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, organized the training entitled "Anti-Gypsyism and Social Inclusion: Building an inclusive and non-discriminatory public administration". The session addressed the key concepts of anti-Gypsyism, the overt and covert forms of discrimination, the impact of discrimination on the equal access of Roma and Egyptian communities to public services, the role of public administration in promoting equality and social inclusion, and the provision of public services free from discrimination.
75. The commitment to ensuring inclusive education and access to higher education for Roma and Egyptian minorities is reflected in the National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025. Measures to ensure the inclusive education of Roma and Egyptian minorities include the provision of free textbooks and free transportation, the priority enrolment of Roma children in pre-school education, and ensuring access to compulsory and part-time basic education.
76. Roma and Egyptian students are exempt from tuition fees for the first cycle of higher education studies and from 50% of the tuition fee for the second cycle of higher education studies. The Council of Ministers has adopted Decision No. 666, dated 10.10.2019, "On the financial quotas for meals in student canteens and accommodation in dormitories, and on the determination of the eligibility criteria for scholarships and financial support for students in pre-university public educational institutions", as amended. The Ministry of Education has incorporated into the relevant secondary legislation provisions defining the role of education mediators.
77. Roma and Egyptian pupils enrolled in pre-university education are exempt from pre-primary education fees, and 563 pupils have benefited from free transportation to school and kindergarten. During the 2024-2025 school year, 964 Roma and Egyptian pupils were enrolled in compulsory full-time education.
78. The implementation period of the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025 has been completed. In its capacity as the coordinating institution, the Ministry of Health and

Social Welfare established an Inter-Institutional Working Group by Ministerial Order No. 504, dated 20 October 2024, to prepare the National Action Plan 2026–2030, building on the recommendations arising from the previous Action Plan.

79. Based on the recommendations of the monitoring report and the analysis of the situation, the main pillars for the 2026-2030 period were identified as equality, inclusion and participation, together with seven priority areas for intervention: Education and Intercultural Dialogue; Access to Justice and Civil Registration; Employment and Skills Development; Housing and Urban Integration; Healthcare; Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion; and Combating Anti-Gypsyism.
80. As an intersectoral strategic instrument, the NAPEIPRE 2026-2030 aims to contribute to reducing the structural inequalities affecting Roma and Egyptian communities and is guided by the following fundamental principles:
    - Equality and social justice-Combating discrimination and anti-Gypsyism constitutes a cross-cutting priority across all public policies, ensuring equal access to rights, services and opportunities.
    - Participation and empowerment-meaningful participation of Roma and Egyptians is ensured at all stages of policy design, implementation and monitoring, while promoting the empowerment of communities and representative organizations.
    - Respect for diversity and an intersectional approach-The Plan takes into account diversity within communities by addressing the intersection of factors such as gender, age, disability and socio-economic status.
    - A combined universal and targeted approach-Universal inclusion policies are complemented by specific support measures for Roma and Egyptians, with the aim of eliminating existing barriers.
    - Evidence-based decision-making and accountability-The establishment of measurable objectives and the improvement of data collection systems serve to monitor progress, enhance transparency and strengthen accountability.

81. Through these principles, the Plan reaffirms the commitment of the Government of the Republic of Albania to ensuring equality, combating discrimination and reducing the structural inequalities affecting Roma and Egyptian minorities.
82. Consultation meetings were held from 13 November 2025 to 15 May 2026 with responsible institutions, independent institutions, local government authorities and civil society organizations. The consultations involved central and subordinate institutions; local self-government units (61 municipalities); civil society organizations representing Roma and Egyptian minorities; as well as the general public. Furthermore, the monitoring framework and data collection under the NAPEIPRE indicator framework combine quantitative and qualitative indicators adapted to the local context.
83. One of the components of the 2026-2030 Plan is the budgeting for Roma and Egyptians within budget Programs. Within the framework of the joint European Union and Council of Europe

project “Roma Integration III”, a training on Roma-responsive budgeting was organized on 21-22 October 2025, with the participation of representatives of responsible institutions involved in the planning and management of budget Programs. The activity aimed to strengthen participants’ knowledge and capacities regarding the principles and implementation of Roma-responsive budgeting, as an important instrument for the effective inclusion of Roma communities in public funding planning, prioritization and allocation processes.

84. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, alongside the Ministry of Education, the Council of Europe Office in Tirana, public institutions and local authorities, participated in the meeting held on 6 February 2026 in Korça. The meeting aimed to enhance cooperation and achieve progress in the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights judgment concerning the measures taken for the “Naim Frashëri” School, as well as to prevent segregation as a phenomenon. The activity was organized within the framework of the European Union and Council of Europe joint Program “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye”.

Article 5 – Support for the culture and identity of national minorities

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to ensure adequate and sustainable funding for the support of the cultures and identities of national minorities. They should also ensure that a broad range of perspectives is reflected in the development of expressions of these cultures and identities, in particular by providing young persons belonging to national minorities with the space, opportunities and means to preserve and promote their cultures and identities.

85. The legal framework of the Republic of Albania ensures the protection of cultural heritage, freedom of artistic creation and the promotion of diversity. Article 58 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of artistic expression, while Article 59 thereof emphasizes the role of the State in safeguarding cultural heritage. Laws such as Law No. 10 352/2010 “On Art and Culture” and Law No. 27/2018 “On Cultural Heritage and Museums” regulate the management, promotion and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural assets.
86. In line with the National Strategy for Culture (2019–2025) and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS)[13] prioritises inclusive cultural policies, intercultural dialogue, audience development, digital innovation and the protection of cultural diversity.
87. From 2023 to 2025, has actively promoted cultural rights, gender equality, and the participation of national minorities, young people and vulnerable groups through festivals, exhibitions, *workshops* and educational Programs.
88. Between 2023 and 2025, Albania significantly strengthened the promotion of cultural rights, gender equality, the inclusion of national minorities and the participation of young people through festivals, educational Programs and interactive workshops.

[13] Until September 2025, the Ministry responsible for Culture was named the “Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation” (MECI). For activities carried out prior to this period, the abbreviation MEKI has been used in the Annex to the report, rather than the current name, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTKS).

89. The coordinated approach adopted by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport across all national museums, regional directorates and cultural centers has ensured that tangible and intangible cultural heritage is preserved, transmitted and celebrated, while also promoting intercultural understanding, dialogue and respect for cultural diversity. These efforts reflect Albania's commitment to sustainable cultural development and to upholding international standards and European Union integration priorities.[14]
90. Following the work of the Working Group for the implementation of the project "International Cultural Weeks 2026", as in previous editions, this project continues to serve as an important platform for fostering recognition, cooperation, and cultural exchange between local and foreign artists, contributing to the enrichment of cultural life not only in the capital city but also in various cities across Albania.

For the period May–June 2026, the following Cultural Weeks were held:

- The U.S. Cultural Week - 4-9 May 2026;
- The European Union Cultural Week -9-22 May 2026;
- The Italian Cultural Week - 31 May-8 June 2026.

Meanwhile, the following activities have been planned to be carried out by the respective embassies:

- The Israeli Cultural Week - 9-11 June 2026;
- The Egyptian Cultural Week -13-17 July 2026;
- The North Macedonia Cultural Week - 3-6 September 2026;
- The Polish Cultural Week - 15-18 September 2026;
- The Chinese Cultural Week - 21-25 September 2026;
- The Croatian Cultural Week - 26-29 September 2026;
- The German Cultural Week - 2-6 October 2026;
- The Japanese Cultural Week - 13-18 October 2026;
- The United Nations Cultural Week - 23-24 October 2026;
- The Spanish Cultural Week - 9-13 November 2026;
- The National Week of Kosovo - dates to be confirmed.

During the period May-June 2026, within the framework of the project, a total of 55 activities were implemented, of which 43 were held in Tirana and 12 activities in other cities across Albania, including Vlora, Gjirokastra, Berat, Korça, Fier, Pogradec, and Shkodra. The activities attracted a significant number of participants, with approximately 48,694 visitors, and welcomed 94 foreign artists to Albania.

[14] Information on other cultural activities organized during the reporting period is provided in the Annex to the Report

Considering that one of the project's priorities is the inclusion of national minorities and the promotion of cultural diversity, specific activities have been planned within the framework of the Polish Cultural Week (15-18 September 2026) and the North Macedonia Cultural Week (3–6 September 2026), which will contribute to strengthening intercultural dialogue and promoting the cultural heritage of the respective communities.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to sign and ratify without delay the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

91. The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the other responsible institutions, taking into consideration the commitments arising from this process, is assessing the appropriate timing for the signing and ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to promote a spirit of mutual respect and intercultural dialogue, particularly through the media. In particular, harmful stereotypes concerning the Roma minority and incidents of hostility towards the Greek minority should be effectively addressed.

92. The Audiovisual Media Authority, in its capacity as the regulatory authority in the field of audiovisual media, maintains particular and continuous attention to all audiovisual content, which must ensure compliance with the legal requirements related to fundamental rights and freedoms during their broadcasting.

93. Law No. 97/2013 "On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania", as amended, being a law aligned with the European Union acquis communautaire, specifically with Directive 2010/13/EU on *Audiovisual Media Services*, as amended by Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council, has expressly guaranteed the protection of a broad range of fundamental freedoms and rights, as well as respect for human dignity, in audiovisual broadcasts.
94. This law provides for and guarantees the rights and interests of national minorities, ensuring access to audio and audiovisual content without distinction based on race or ethnic origin, as well as their protection from discrimination in audio and audiovisual broadcasts, as follows:
95. The Audiovisual Media Authority, as well as the Complaints Council, an advisory body appointed by the AMA, whose activity focuses on monitoring the implementation of the Code and regulations adopted by the AMA, pay particular and continuous attention to all audiovisual content, as well as to complaints submitted to the Authority, especially those related to respect for human dignity and other fundamental human rights in the Programs of audiovisual service providers.
96. With regard to complaints related to national minorities in Albania, during the reporting period two complaints concerning discriminatory language against the Roma and Egyptian

communities were addressed. Following their examination by the Complaints Council, the warning measure of "Reprimand" was imposed on the respective media service providers. These entities were instructed not to repeat similar violations, as, in the event of non-compliance with the general requirements set out in Article 32(4)(a) of Law No. 97/2013 "On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania", as amended, the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) is entitled to impose administrative measures, including financial penalties in the form of fines.

Article 6 – Mutual Respect and Intercultural Dialogue

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to raise awareness of the legal protections against hate speech and hate crimes, as well as the available remedies, among those most exposed to these forms of hostility. The authorities should also systematically collect data disaggregated, inter alia, by minority affiliation, on hate speech and hate crimes, and develop targeted preventive measures in response to them.

97. The Prosecution considers the protection of human rights a continuous obligation, and the protection against hate crimes constitutes a particular institutional priority. The Prosecutor General of the Republic of Albania approved General Guideline No. 17, dated 23.12.2020, "On the effective investigation and criminal prosecution of criminal offences related to violence against women, domestic violence and hate-motivated violence", which aims to unify procedural measures within prosecutors' offices of general jurisdiction, ensuring that investigations and criminal proceedings concerning criminal offences involving hate-motivated violence are conducted within prompt and efficient timelines, with requests for effective, proportionate and deterrent sanctions, as well as the collection of data on cases of hate-motivated violence to support the analysis and development of preventive policies in this area.
98. Regarding data collection, the method of recording, collecting and reporting data by prosecutors' offices of general jurisdiction has been standardized. Currently, the statistical system is manual; however, the General Prosecutor's Office, with the support of the European Union, has initiated work on the establishment of a Case Management System, which is expected to be completed in 2028 and will enable the automatic generation of detailed statistics.
99. The Guideline requires the guarantee of the rights of victims of hate-motivated criminal offences, requiring prosecutors and judicial police officers to ensure that victims are aware of and exercise all rights provided for under the applicable legal and sub-legal acts. In particular, they are required to make efforts to ensure that victims' immediate basic needs are met, including safety, medical assistance, food, clothing and shelter, and to inform them of their right to free legal aid and the process for obtaining such assistance.
100. Considering punishment as part of the preventive chain against these offences, the criminal policy promoted by this Guideline is stringent. Prosecutors are instructed both with regard to the formulation of charges, taking into consideration the premeditation and/or continuity of the

defendant's conduct, intent, the harm (physical and psychological) suffered by the victim, and any accompanying offences, as well as with regard to requesting the determination of the type and extent of the penalty.

101. Likewise, it is instructed that certain types of mitigating circumstances provided for under criminal law, such as the commission of an offence while in a state of psychological distress, remorse, the normalization of relations between the victim and the perpetrator, etc., should not serve as grounds for reducing the sentence in cases of hate-motivated violence; on the contrary, prosecutors should seek an aggravation of the penalty.

102. According to the statistical data, during the requested period, 37 criminal proceedings were registered involving victims identified as belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities, for criminal offences such as domestic violence, sexual relations with minors, trafficking of minors, minor bodily injury, etc.

103. Regarding the strengthening of capacities aimed at increasing the effectiveness of hate crime investigations, within the framework of the continuous training of magistrates and judicial police officers of prosecution sections, the School of Magistrates has organized the following activities:

- On 7 April 2023, a training session was held on the topic "The Procedural Position of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination before the Court", attended by 5 prosecutors.
- On 25 May 2023, a training session was held on the topic "The Principle of equality, non-discrimination and hate crimes", attended by 10 prosecutors and 2 judicial police officers.
- On 31 May 2023, a training session was held on the topic "The Principle of equality, non-discrimination and hate crimes", attended by 6 prosecutors.
- On 12 December 2024, a training session was held on the topic "The Prohibition of Discrimination under European and Albanian International Law", attended by 13 prosecutors and 1 judicial police officer.
- On 18 December 2024, a training session was held on the topic "Discrimination. Gender Perspective and Discrimination. Compensation for Damage in Cases of Discrimination", attended by 9 prosecutors and 8 judicial police officers.
- On 22 April 2025, a training session was held on the topic "Integrity, Professional Ethics and Non-Discrimination", attended by 11 prosecutors and 5 judicial police officers.
- On 11 February 2025, a training session was held on the topic "Implementation of the Legal Prohibition of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech, with a Focus on LGBTQ Issues", attended by 5 prosecutors and 10 judicial police officers.

104. On 29-30 September 2025, the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), organized a two-day seminar on the systematic and sustainable collection of disaggregated data on equality and hate crimes. The seminar brought together all relevant state institutions responsible for the collection, management and analysis of statistical and administrative data in this field.

105. During the second day, the seminar focused specifically on hate crimes, examining the national legal and institutional framework, European Union standards and policies, and the key principles for recording and collecting hate crime data. With contributions from the FRA and ODIHR, the discussions identified gaps between European standards and current practice in Albania, highlighting the need for procedural improvements, the development of electronic systems, the strengthening of institutional capacities and targeted training, as well as defining concrete follow-up steps.
106. Furthermore, the "Rule of Law Roadmap", approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 736, dated 13.12.2023, provides for the development of guidelines on the identification and addressing of hate speech and hate crimes, with the aim of ensuring the systematic collection of data and the production of disaggregated statistics by 2030.
107. In parallel, within the framework of the EU accession process, a revision of the Criminal Code is envisaged in order to ensure full compliance with EU standards on hate speech and hate crimes, with the adoption by Parliament planned for 2026. Currently, the draft Criminal Code is undergoing public consultation, with 23 consultation meetings held with the relevant institutional stakeholders.
108. Regarding raising awareness of legal protection against hate speech and hate crimes, it is reported that in 2020, for the first time, the primary legal aid system was consolidated through the establishment of a number of providers, specifically:
    - 7 (seven) Primary Legal Aid Service Centers in Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Lezhë, Lushnjë, Pogradec and Gjirokastër;
    - 12 (twelve) authorized non-profit organizations operating in Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Berat and Shkodra; and
    - 9 (nine) Legal Clinics established within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), operating in Tirana, Vlorë, Durrës and Shkodra.

109. It is also worth highlighting the establishment of the "Alliance against Hate Speech" on 20 December 2019, as an initiative of the People's Advocate, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, the Audiovisual Media Authority and the Albanian Media Council, aimed at combating the phenomenon of "hate speech" in all its dimensions and manifestations within Albanian society.
110. Cybercrime structures in the State Police handle cases of hate crimes, the distribution of racist and xenophobic materials online, which also involve national minorities. Within the framework of implementing the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the State Police, through the structures responsible for investigating cybercrimes, also handles cases of criminal offenses committed or facilitated via technology, when victims may be the target of threats, stalking, harassment, discrimination, or hate speech due to their actual or perceived belonging to a national minority.
111. The online environment, particularly social media and communication platforms, can be used to spread discriminatory content, incite hatred, or issue threats against specific individuals or

communities. For this reason, the identification, documentation, and investigation of these cases, including the securing of digital evidence, constitute an important component of the activity of law enforcement structures. The State Police, through specialized structures, cooperates with other police structures and justice institutions to handle referred cases, as well as with international partners and online platforms, in accordance with competencies and the legal framework in force. In this regard, importance is given to strengthening the capacities of State Police employees to identify and investigate criminal offenses committed in the online environment, including cases where the discriminatory element or hate motivation is related to ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious affiliation.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to systematically collect data on trafficking and other forms of violence against children and women, disaggregated by minority affiliation, and to develop comprehensive policies and measures to prevent and combat these forms of violence. For this purpose, the authorities should cooperate closely with law enforcement and social services, as well as with persons belonging to national minorities, including children and women. They should also seek to provide the necessary support, whether through social care or other measures, to those in vulnerable situations, and, in particular, aim to strengthen trust between persons belonging to national minorities and institutions, especially child protection services.

112. The General Directorate of the State Police addresses all cases of domestic violence in accordance with the obligations arising from the law, without discrimination and solely based on standard operating procedures. The data collected and administered by the General Directorate of the State Police are not reported disaggregated by ethnic affiliation. Based on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), specific data on victims of violence belonging to different ethnic groups residing in the territory of the Republic of Albania cannot be made available.
113. The requested data are provided for minor victims of criminal offences, based on Article 124/b of the Criminal Code, which covers physical or psychological mistreatment, coercion, exploitation, use of or incitement to engage in work or begging. Therefore, cases of begging cannot be identified separately. These data are not administered based on the ethnic affiliation of minors. Statistical data on "Mistreatment of Minors", pursuant to Article 124/b of the Criminal Code, for the period 2016–2020, are as follows:
    - During 2016 - 35 minors were identified as victims;
    - During 2017 - 41 minors were identified as victims;
    - During 2018 -32 minors were identified as victims;
    - During 2019 -20 minors were identified as victims;
    - During the first six months of 2020 -18 minors were identified as victims

114. There are no changes regarding the information on domestic violence and the manner in which statistical data are processed (without ethnic affiliation data for either victims of violence or minors). There are also no changes concerning Article 124/b of the Criminal Code "Mistreatment of Minors", where begging is not processed as a separate category of data.

115. Regarding the update of data related to Article 124/b, the table below presents the data for the period from 2019 to the first nine months of 2025:

Table of Cases of Mistreatment of Minors by Year

Article 124/b of the Criminal Code: "Mistreatment of Minors"	**Total number of reported cases**	***Number of minors affected by the criminal offence***		**Total number of affected minors**
Annual period		***Under 14 years of age***	***14–18 years of age***	
2019	**23**	15	5	**20**
2020	**40**	30	2	**32**
2021	**35**	32	5	**37**
2022	**52**	41	13	**54**
2023	**63**	78	7	**85**
2024	**88**	54	17	**71**
First nine months of 2025	**52**	30	7	**37**

116. Within the framework of preventing and combating the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, the Anti-Trafficking Structures have worked towards increasing the number of proactive investigations, enhancing the early identification of victims of trafficking and potential victims of trafficking, as well as taking protective measures for their treatment, in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking, as follows:

117. For 2020, a total of 27 criminal offences involving 30 perpetrators were identified, as follows:

- 22 criminal offences of "Trafficking in adults" involving 25 perpetrators;
- 5 criminal offences of "Trafficking in minors" involving 5 perpetrators.

For 2021, a total of 24 criminal offences involving 34 perpetrators were identified, as follows:

- 14 criminal offences of "Trafficking in adults" involving 25 perpetrators;
- 10 criminal offences of "Trafficking in minors" involving 9 perpetrators.

For 2022, a total of 33 criminal offences involving 48 perpetrators were identified, as follows:

- 21 criminal offences of "Trafficking in adults" involving 30 perpetrators;
- 12 criminal offences of "Trafficking in minors" involving 18 perpetrators.

For 2023, a total of 37 criminal offences involving 46 perpetrators were identified, as follows:

- 22 criminal offences of "Trafficking in adults" involving 25 perpetrators;
- 15 criminal offences of "Trafficking in minors" involving 18 perpetrators.

For 2024, a total of 60 criminal offences involving 101 perpetrators were identified, as follows:

- 37 criminal offences of "Trafficking in adults" involving 76 perpetrators;
- 23 criminal offences of "Trafficking in minors" involving 25 perpetrators.

118. For the period from 1 January 2025 to 30 September 2025, a total of 41 criminal offences involving 63 perpetrators were identified: 32 criminal offences of "Trafficking in adults" involving 54 perpetrators;

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to develop and implement comprehensive training Programs for law enforcement on anti-racism and human rights, particularly to combat anti-Gypsyism.

119. In order to intensify measures and the implementation of tasks aimed at fully respecting and guaranteeing the rights of these communities and beyond, identifying and addressing complaints regarding violations and infringements of human rights, as well as holding accountable police officers who discriminate or engage in actions/attitudes that violate the rights of vulnerable communities, several administrative acts of the Director General of the State Police, such as orders, instructions, guidelines, etc., have been prepared and submitted for implementation. In addition, several cooperation agreements have been signed, respectively, as follows:

- Cooperation Agreement No. 369, dated 16 January 2023, between the General Directorate of the State Police and the Institute for Activism and Social Change, "On the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, the promotion of good practices and cooperation for safe and sustainable communities";
- Cooperation Agreement No. 4484, dated 13 June 2023, between the General Directorate of the State Police and the Centre for Human Rights in Democracy, "On respecting and guaranteeing the rights of arrested, detained and escorted persons in the premises of the State Police, and the protection of gender-based violence victims";
- Cooperation Agreement No. 1942/1, dated 13 March 2024, between the General Directorate of the State Police and the Albanian Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma and Torture, "On preventing torture, trauma and ill-treatment and increasing the level of respect for the freedoms and rights of persons deprived of liberty in State Police premises".

120. During 2023, a total of 7,155 police officers across all Local Directorates of the State Police were trained, based on the Annual Mandatory In-Service Training Plan, approved by Order No. 9963/1, dated 29 December 2022, of the General Directorate of the State Police. The training covered specific topics incorporating comprehensive approaches to the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes, diversity and non-discrimination, in their capacity as representatives of law enforcement institutions. In addition, approximately 500 students were trained at the Security Academy on topics related to combating hate speech.
121. Likewise, the Annual Training Programs for 2024 and 2025 have included and continue to include training activities, which have been provided to approximately 92% of police personnel, covering the following topics:
    - Diversity, gender equality and inclusion;
    - Hate crimes and hate speech;
    - Human rights and freedoms;
    - Aspects of cultural diversity and non-discrimination within police structures;
    - Code of Ethics and conduct. Ethics and integrity.
122. The Central and Local Structures of the State Police have taken measures and issued specific instructions to identify and establish cooperation with representatives of organizations and associations of national minorities, particularly Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as LGBTQI organizations, operating at both national and local levels. The purpose of this cooperation is to organize meetings aimed at addressing problems and concerns raised by the communities they represent regarding the attitudes/actions of police personnel, including cases involving discriminatory practices against these communities.

123. In implementation of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", within the structures of the State Police, during the period 2023–2025, a total of 24 police officers belonging to national minority communities have been employed.

Among them, 7 police officers belong to the Greek national minority, 12 to the Macedonian national minority, and 5 to the Roma national minority.

124. With regard to this recommendation, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare supports all categories of persons in need through social services. Through the Social Fund, financial support has been provided to municipalities, emergency centers and multifunctional community centers, through which social services have been delivered at the national level since 2019, supporting social services for all social groups, including the Roma and Egyptian minorities.

Article 9 – Media in Minority Languages

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to increase the quality and quantity of broadcasting in minority languages, in order to ensure that it provides Programs of relevance and interest to persons belonging to national minorities, including through the training of journalists belonging to national minorities.

125. In Albania, the main broadcaster providing dedicated Programs in the languages of national minorities is the Albanian Radio Television (RTSH/ART), as part of its public service mission. The main channels and Programs are:
126. RTSH/ART 2 is the main channel dedicated to cultural diversity and minorities in the country. Since 2017, RTSH/ART 2 has established regular television slots for several national minorities, broadcasting daily news editions (Monday to Friday, 30 minutes in total) in the following languages: Greek, Macedonian, Serbian, Vlach (Aromanian), and Romani. In addition to news editions, documentaries and Programs addressing the traditions, culture and history of the Greek, Macedonian, Roma, Vlach, Serbian, Montenegrin, Bosniak, Bulgarian and Egyptian communities are also broadcast.
127. Some local branches of RTSH broadcast specific Programs depending on the areas where these minorities reside:

- RTSH/ART Korça: Broadcasts Programs and news in the Macedonian language (for the Pustec area) and in the Vlach language.
- RTSH/ ART Gjirokastra: Has a long-standing tradition of broadcasting in the Greek language, addressing the information needs of the Greek minority.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to provide specific support for minority language media in written form, including for numerically smaller national minorities, whether online or in printed format, in order to ensure their financial sustainability."

128. The Committee on National Minorities has continued to include publications in minority languages in the open calls for funding from the Fund for National Minorities [15]. During the period 2022–2025, through the Fund for National Minorities, 21 projects were supported, within the framework of which various publications were produced in the Greek, Macedonian, Vlach (Aromanian), Romani, Bosnian, Montenegrin and Bulgarian languages.[16]
129. Under the applicable legal provisions, 5% of the total number of projects to be funded must be supported through financial, logistical and/or material resources for cultural associations/individuals who have applied and who belong to national minorities.
130. Likewise, pursuant to Council of Ministers Decision No. 769, dated 15 December 2021, "On the criteria for supporting initiatives and projects aimed at protecting the rights of national minorities, preserving and promoting their distinct cultural, ethnic, linguistic, traditional and religious identity, and the selection criteria for the financing and administration of the Fund for National Minorities", the Committee on National Minorities, through the Fund for National Minorities, finances projects aimed at preserving and promoting the distinct cultural, ethnic, linguistic, traditional and religious identity of national minorities in the Republic of Albania.
131. During the period 2022–2025, the Committee on National Minorities financed a total of 21 projects, with a total funding value of ALL 24,000,000, distributed by year as follows:

2022 – 1 project with a total value of ALL 4,000,000;
2023 – 5 projects with a total value of ALL 4,000,000;
2024 – 6 projects with a total value of ALL 4,000,000;
2025 – 9 projects with a total value of ALL 12,000,000.

132. The Committee on National Minorities, in cooperation with the Central Election Commission and the Council of Europe, enabled the translation of electoral information materials into eight minority languages. These materials were published both in the media and on the official social media pages of the Central Election Commission and the Committee on National Minorities.
133. The Committee on National Minorities envisages, for the period 2025-2026, the drafting of a specific guideline for supporting minority media, particularly the written and online press, through the institution's monthly subscriptions to these media outlets, in order to ensure their financial sustainability.

Article 10 – Use of Minority Languages in the Public Sphere

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to immediately adopt the secondary legislation on the use of minority languages with public authorities. This legislation should provide for a flexible approach to the 20% threshold and pay due attention to persons belonging to national minorities traditionally residing in specific areas, with the aim of ensuring that minority rights are effectively enjoyed in practice and in accordance with Article 10 of the Framework Convention.

[15] https://pakicatkombetare.al/shpallje/
[16] The detailed Excel table on the projects financed by the Fund for National Minorities is provided in the Annex

134. This recommendation has been fulfilled through the adoption of Council of Ministers Decision No. 844, dated 26 December 2024, "On the manner of using national minority languages in relations between persons belonging to national minorities and local self-government bodies".

135. Decision No. 844, dated 26 December 2024, sets out the rules for the use of national minority languages in local self-government units. Based on point 1 of this Decision, "Persons belonging to these minorities, who traditionally reside in these areas or constitute more than 20% of the population according to the latest census, have the right to request the establishment of conditions for the use of their language in relations with local authorities."

136. The use of minority languages aims to facilitate official communication in relations between the basic unit of local self-government and members of a national minority and focuses on:
- the sending of written official notifications from local self-government bodies to citizens;
- the acceptance of written documents signed by citizens belonging to the respective national minority.

137. The use of the national minority language is carried out as follows:
a) during the process of informing citizens about their rights, pursuant to Law No. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government", as amended, and Law No. 119/2014 "On the Right to Information", as amended, by drafting relevant regulations or through information leaflets, which may be published or displayed in visible locations within the premises of local self-government bodies;
b) through access to the transparency Program;
c) during public consultation sessions with the community prior to the review and approval of acts, in accordance with the provisions of Article 18 of Law No. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government", as amended, with representatives of national minorities or associations representing these communities;
d) for the submission of requests or complaints addressed to basic local self-government bodies regarding matters related to functions and competences falling within the jurisdiction of the local self-government unit;
e) for the submission of civic initiatives through authorized representatives addressed to the municipal council, in accordance with the provisions set out in the regulation on the organization and functioning of the municipal council, pursuant to Article 20 of Law No. 139/2015 "On Local self-government", as amended.

Article 11 – Topographical Indications

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the rights enshrined in Article 11(3) of the Framework Convention, in particular by adopting a flexible approach to the implementation of the 20% threshold, with a view to ensuring access to minority rights. They should also amend the territorial scope of application of the Law to ensure that smaller villages or urban areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities within larger municipalities are able to install topographical signs in minority languages.

138. The adoption of Council of Ministers Decision No. 844, dated 26 December 2024, represents an important step towards fulfilling the obligations arising from Article 11(3) of the Framework Convention, by regulating the right to use national minority languages in relations with local self-government bodies.
139. Point 7 of this Decision provides that "In cases where the number of citizens belonging to a national minority is at least above 20% of the total population residing in that local self-government unit, according to the data of the latest census conducted, they have the right, in addition to the Albanian language, to request the placement of the names of administrative units, streets and other topographical indications in the language of the recognized minority."

Article 12 – Equal Access to Education

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure that the presence and cultural contribution of national minorities and persons belonging to them, including women, are represented in school textbooks and other educational materials used in all schools, while ensuring at the same time that such content accurately reflects the history of Albania and its minorities and does not risk fostering inter-ethnic tensions.

140. Regarding the inclusion of the cultural contribution of national minorities in textbooks and educational materials, the Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education has integrated the principles of respect for cultural diversity and harmonious coexistence into the Pre-University Education Curriculum Framework (2024). In this context, the competence "Competence for intercultural awareness and expression" has been included, aiming to develop students' ability to understand, respect and express how ideas, values and cultural experiences are manifested across different cultures, as well as to foster a sense of belonging and identity within a culturally diverse environment.
141. The History curricula include knowledge and practical activities related to national minorities in the Republic of Albania, promoting awareness of their history, culture and contribution to the country's social and cultural life.
142. Likewise, the curricula for the Albanian language and foreign languages incorporate values and attitudes related to respect for the language and culture of others, as part of the development of students' civic and communication competences. In this regard, the school textbooks that will be included in the updating process will reflect the same inclusive and

intercultural approach, by incorporating content, examples and materials that promote respect, dialogue and intercultural understanding among students from all cultures and communities.

143. Within the framework of support for national minorities, for Greek and Macedonian national minority schools:

– The curriculum plan for national minority schools was approved by Order No. 531, dated 9 September 2022, providing for the teaching of subjects in both the Albanian language and the mother tongue of the respective minority.
– Subject curricula have been developed, including Programs for the Greek and Macedonian mother tongues, as well as history and geography.
– The process for developing school textbooks for Greek and Macedonian mother tongue, history and geography has been coordinated.
– The Romani language curriculum for grades 6-9 has been developed, with the aim of preserving and developing the linguistic and cultural identity of the Roma community.

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to take decisive action to integrate those schools affected by de facto segregation and to prevent the recurrence of segregation, by encouraging these schools to work closely with others to provide quality, inclusive education within mainstream classrooms. Such action should take into account and address socio-economic factors, including spatial segregation, which contribute to situations of school segregation.

144. Each school year, all pre-university education institutions are guided, among other matters, through the relevant school year instruction, also with regard to:

- taking measures to create an external and internal environment for a friendly, safe and inclusive school;
- the priority enrolment in schools of children belonging to the Roma and Egyptian national minorities, and supporting their completion of upper secondary education.

145. In order to increase school attendance among students, including those belonging to national minorities, the Ministry of Education has continuously undertaken supportive measures, such as:

- providing students with free school textbooks and free textbooks for 16 categories of beneficiaries;
- ensuring free transportation for students who travel more than two kilometers to attend school;
- providing scholarships, including in basic education, for students at risk of dropping out;
- improving school infrastructure;
- equipping schools with laboratories and computers;
- significantly increasing the number of assistant teachers in the pre-university education system;
- involving mediators in the education system;

- strengthening psychosocial services in schools through the continuous increase in the number of psychologists and social workers;
- including security officers in the pre-university education system;
- consolidating support Programs and initiatives, such as the "After School" Program, Community Centre Schools, etc.

146. Recently, the Ministry of Education has approved the updated Curriculum Framework, in the curricular documents of which priority has been given to the inclusion of Roma cultural heritage and history.

147. The curricula for the subjects of history, citizenship and Albanian language include elements aimed at promoting knowledge and raising awareness of Roma history and culture. These elements apply to all students, not only Roma students, and contribute to the development of linguistic and civic competences, as well as to enhancing respect and appreciation for the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Roma community.

148. Staff members of pre-university education institutions are being trained on inclusive education, diversity and anti-Gypsyism. This training is part of the measures under the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025.

149. Within the framework of promoting inclusive education and supporting national minorities, staff members of pre-university education institutions are trained on diversity and anti-Gypsyism. The Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education on the history, culture and art of the Roma and Travelers, under which 169 professional network leaders in the subject areas of Albanian language and literature, history, geography, citizenship, and foreign languages have been trained. Furthermore, under the "EU 4 Inclusive Teaching" project, 15,000 teachers have been trained in inclusive education, with the aim of strengthening their capacities to create inclusive learning environments.

150. Educational institutions monitor situations of overrepresentation of Roma and Egyptian students, with the aim of taking measures to prevent and avoid segregation. In the pre-university education system, approximately 100 Roma and Egyptian minority teachers, who hold teaching qualifications, are employed.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to appoint Roma and Egyptian mediators working with students belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities, to cooperate with school psychologists, social workers and teachers in order to increase attendance rates and prevent school dropout, including by promoting the value of education. The authorities should ensure that such mediators receive in-service training, contractual security and appropriate remuneration.

151. Roma and Egyptian students receive support from designated staff members of local pre-university education institutions, acting in the role of mediators for these groups, in order to assist them in raising awareness and improving their access to education.
152. Currently, 23 mediators are employed, holding degrees in the fields of psychology or social work, who play an important role in strengthening communication and cooperation between Roma and Egyptian families and pre-university education institutions, with the aim of supporting students' inclusion and regular attendance in the learning process.

The Advisory Committee again calls on the authorities to assess the level of demand for education in minority languages and, on this basis, to ensure effective access to minority language education for persons belonging to national minorities who request it throughout the country and at all levels of education. This should be preceded by awareness-raising campaigns to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities are sufficiently aware of their rights. The application of the 20% presence threshold within a municipality should be reviewed and, where necessary, lowered or the territorial scope of its application amended, in order to ensure effective access to education in minority languages.

153. Regarding the review of the 20% threshold of the total number of inhabitants of the administrative unit, as a subdivision of the municipality, for the establishment of classes for learning the mother tongue, the Ministry of Education has instructed the Local Pre-University Education Offices to assess, in cooperation with local self-government units, the number of inhabitants belonging to national minorities, with the aim of taking a decision on the review of the 20% threshold.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to ensure appropriate training for teachers of minority languages and to improve both the quality and timeliness of the provision of high-quality educational materials for minorities.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to develop teacher training Programs and educational materials for education in the Romani language, and to integrate such education into the curriculum. Further efforts should also be made to develop university-level education and research on the Romani and Vlach languages in Albania, with the support of the authorities.

154. In accordance with the recommendations on ensuring training for national minority language teachers, a number of concrete actions have been undertaken within the framework of the National Program for the Professional Development of Teachers. All teachers and school leaders, including those teaching in national minority schools, have been trained on:

- the development of students' competences, which are assessed through national and international assessments;
- the use of contemporary methods that promote inclusion and equality in education;
- respect for professional ethics and the building of a culture of cooperation within the school community;
- students' career guidance in lower secondary education and upper secondary education.

Other measures undertaken by the Ministry of Education are as follows:

- In April 2026, Law No. 69/2012 "On the Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania" was amended regarding the "After School" Program, with the aim of strengthening learning and promoting the comprehensive development of students' educational, social, sports, cultural and creative skills.
- The "Naim Frashëri" School, under the Local Pre-University Education Office of Korça-Pustec, is among the schools that will provide the "After School" Program. In addition, for the students of this school, a summer school Program will be implemented during the period 15–30 June 2026, with the aim of promoting children's comprehensive development, strengthening cooperation with the community and supporting measures to prevent segregation.
- The document "Methodology and Instruments for Assessing Inclusion in the Pre-University Education System" was approved by Order No. 32, dated 3 February 2026.
- The Romani language is offered as an elective subject at the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

Article 15 – Political Participation and the Committee on National Minorities

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to review the appointment procedures for the leadership of the Committee on National Minorities in order to ensure its independence. They should also develop clear procedural rules enabling it to carry out its mandate efficiently and effectively. Further attention should be given to the diversity of its membership in terms of gender and age, and to ensuring that it reflects the diversity of views within minorities.

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to implement local consultation mechanisms for national minorities in areas where persons belonging to national minorities reside.

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to consider positive measures and other possible means to increase the political participation of persons belonging to national minorities at all levels, particularly at the national level, with a focus on Roma and Egyptian minorities, in order to ensure that their concerns are reflected in the public agenda.

155. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 286, dated 10 May 2019, was amended by DCM No. 548, dated 1 October 2025, "On some amendments to Decision No. 286, dated 10.05.2019 of the Council of Ministers "On the approval of the procedures for the selection of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Members of the Committee on National Minorities"".
156. The current composition of the Committee on National Minorities reflects improved inclusion in terms of gender and age, better representing the diversity of views within minorities. In addition, internal working rules have been improved, regular meetings have been held, and decisions have been published to ensure transparency. Out of 24 employees, 14 are women. During the period 2023–2025, the capacities of minority representatives, as well as those of the supporting staff, have been significantly strengthened, and the visibility of the Committee has also considerably increased.
157. The Central Election Commission has adopted acts aimed at ensuring legal guarantees and taking concrete measures for the protection and respect of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. These rights include, among others, the right to freely express their affiliation, preserve and develop their identity, and freely and without hindrance exercise the specific elements that characterize the life of their community as a minority, including the right to vote and to receive information in their own language regarding the electoral process.
158. The Central Election Commission (CEC) has undertaken a broad educational, informational and awareness-raising campaign, focusing on voter education, including voters belonging to national minorities residing in the country, with particular emphasis on the Roma and Egyptian communities, as also addressed in the recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR following election observation missions. The campaign targeting national minorities is carried out both during and outside election periods, supporting the right to vote and ensuring that voters receive information in the language they speak.
159. The main objective of this campaign is to promote standards for free and fair elections, as well as to ensure the inclusion of all voters, regardless of the language they speak. The campaign also aims to provide voters with adequate information and raise their awareness about all stages of the electoral process.
160. Consultative roundtables and meetings have been held with all members of national minorities representing their communities in the Committee on National Minorities, prior to each electoral process. These meetings aimed to identify the areas where national minorities are concentrated or where they reside, so that electoral materials could also be made available in the languages they speak, ensuring equal access to information for every voter.
161. Furthermore, meetings have been held with civil society organizations protecting the interests of various target groups, as well as with representatives of national minority communities, with the aim of identifying the areas where voters belonging to these minorities reside and ensuring effective communication throughout the electoral process.
162. The information campaign of the Central Election Commission (CEC) for national minorities, organized on an annual basis, has had a significant impact on increasing electoral participation, strengthening trust and encouraging the engagement of national minorities in the electoral

process. The use of various methods and tools, including the translation of materials into minority languages and outreach through social media, has enabled the campaign to reach a wider audience, improve the clarity of information and enhance the participation of minorities in electoral processes.[17]

163. Regarding registered candidates belonging to national minorities, the CEC does not possess such data, as there is no legal or sub-legal act establishing an obligation for a candidate to declare their ethnic affiliation at the time of candidacy.

Access to adequate housing

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to ensure access to adequate housing for Roma, in particular by providing investments to guarantee access to safe drinking water and electricity in areas where Roma live. The authorities should pay particular attention to ensuring safe living conditions, also in light of the risks posed by environmental pollution and climate change, as well as to ensuring legal security of tenure. In this context, the regularization of property ownership for properties owned or inhabited by persons belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities is of particular importance. The relevant public authorities should comply with their obligations to report any planned evictions to the Ombudsperson and to provide suitable alternative housing, and sanctions should be applied where these obligations are not fulfilled.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to identify ways and means to ensure access to rent subsidies for persons belonging to the Roma minority, including through better implementation of regulations governing contracts between landlords and tenants.

164. Following the entry into force of Law No. 22/2018 "On Social Housing" in 2018, the Ministry of Economy and Innovation has worked on the preparation of the relevant by-laws, and all by-laws addressing Roma and Egyptian families have been adopted.

165. One of the most important ministerial regulations adopted to ensure the full inclusion of Roma families in social housing Programs is the Joint Instruction No. 22, dated 5 June 2020, "On the manner in which social housing Programs interact with Programs for social services, employment, education and healthcare".

166. Furthermore, Decision No. 361 "On eviction procedures and institutional cooperation", which was adopted in May 2019, was developed in accordance with the United Nations guidelines on evictions and displacement and includes procedures, timelines and institutional cooperation mechanisms for cases of relocation. This decision applies universally to all Albanian citizens, regardless of whether they are homeowners or not. It is important to emphasize that Decision No. 361 underlines that citizens shall not be forcibly evicted from

[17] Detailed information on the awareness-raising activities carried out by the Central Election Commission (CEC) is provided in the Annex to the Report

their houses or dwellings until an appropriate solution is provided within the framework of the social housing Program.

167. Families that have been relocated from their dwellings and whose housing has not been legalized are provided with rent subsidy support. Currently, approximately 400 relocated families whose housing has not been legalized are receiving rent subsidies.
168. Following the amendment of Law No. 22/2018 "On Social Housing" in 2023, Article 77 stipulates that at least 5% of the beneficiaries of each social housing Program must belong to the Roma minority. Since 2019, the number of Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries from housing Programs is detailed below:

Year	Roma beneficiaries	Total	%
2019	499	1653	30.2%
2020	448	1862	24%
2021	321	2710	12%
2022	410	3033	13.5%
2023	440	2326	19%
2024	479	3,133	15.3%
2025	562	3,355	16.7%

169. For the year 2025, the Ministry of Economy and Innovation has allocated:
- ALL 500 million for the implementation of the project "Improvement of living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups." Through this Program, from the total number of families benefiting in 2025, approximately 8% of the beneficiary families belong to the Roma and Egyptian minorities.
- ALL 190 million in funds to support poor and vulnerable families in covering rent costs in the private housing market. Through the rent subsidy Program, 2,297 poor and vulnerable families have benefited, of which 20% of the total are Roma and Egyptian families.

Access to healthcare

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to strengthen their efforts to ensure effective access to healthcare services for persons belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities, including sexual and reproductive healthcare services. They should also provide training for healthcare professionals on avoiding anti-Gypsyism and explore ways to provide healthcare to persons lacking the necessary documentation, or to establish mechanisms enabling them to obtain such documentation free of charge.

170. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is committed to addressing health inequalities and improving health indicators for vulnerable populations, including the Roma and Egyptian

minorities. The objective on access to healthcare under the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021–2025 incorporates the recommendations of the EU-Albania Seminar and the priorities of the Poznan Declaration on Roma integration in the region.

171. Ensuring access to quality, equitable and non-discriminatory healthcare for all Roma and Egyptian women, men, girls and boys is a priority of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The Roma and Egyptian minorities have access to primary healthcare services and healthcare packages. Regarding infrastructure conditions, improvements have been made in all healthcare centers in rural and urban areas, including those located near the settlements where Roma and Egyptian minorities live.
172. Within the framework of the Community Healthcare Program, particular attention has been devoted to vaccination, mammography and other preventive healthcare services, through the provision of home-based access to services for specific categories, particularly for the Roma and Egyptian minorities. Medical visits are carried out by doctors in the informal settlements of Roma communities. Approximately 53,000 Roma and Egyptians received services from mobile medical teams.
173. Children aged 0–18 years receive all preventive and healthcare services under the Basic Package of Primary Healthcare, regardless of their place of residence or socio-economic status, including vaccination services. In addition, 6,600 Roma and Egyptian mothers have benefited from infant care packages.

Socio-economic participation – employment and regional development

The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to implement the Roma and Egyptian employment Program throughout the country, promote their employment in the private sector, and take positive measures to encourage the participation of persons belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities in the public administration.

174. The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation has undertaken concrete initiatives to develop supportive and enabling policies for the Roma and Egyptian communities, with the aim of promoting their employment, as well as their qualification, training and integration into the labor market.
175. The National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030 and its Action Plan for implementation provided for opportunities for decent employment for women and men through the implementation of inclusive labor market policies. One of the strategic objectives relates to specific groups and envisages the "Provision of services and Programs to promote employment and training through the labor market ecosystem."
176. The Strategy envisages, in cooperation with public, non-public and private providers, the design and implementation of employment and skills development Programs for vulnerable groups, such as young people (as part of the Youth Guarantee scheme), persons with disabilities

(as part of the Employment Social Fund), working-age beneficiaries from families receiving economic assistance, long-term jobseekers, ethnic minorities, and individuals with low levels of education and qualifications (through social enterprises, community work Programs, activation in municipality-funded public works, etc.). The Programs will be gradually expanded, taking into consideration the recommendations arising from the evaluation process on their effectiveness and efficiency.

177. The Strategy includes the following measures:

- Development of a model for more specialized case management for vulnerable groups and a model for external services/contracting. A decision of the Council of Ministers on the social reintegration of specific groups, including Roma, has been approved;
- Identification of the ecosystem involving all stakeholders, together with their practices and experiences at regional level, and expansion of employment services and Programs to promote employment for vulnerable groups by using the labor market ecosystem;
- Establishment of a referral system in cooperation with local-level structures (Needs Assessment and Referral Units) for the identification, assessment and addressing of the needs of vulnerable groups (working-age beneficiaries from families receiving economic assistance, long-term jobseekers, ethnic minorities, individuals with low levels of education and qualifications, etc.). This process has started with beneficiaries of the economic assistance scheme but will be extended to all the above-mentioned categories.

178. A package of employment promotion Programs is in place, aimed at supporting various categories of unemployed jobseekers and primarily targeting vulnerable groups that face difficulties in accessing the labor market. Roma and Egyptians are among the target groups benefiting from free vocational training and are given priority in employment promotion Programs.

179. In the context of the diversification of Active Labor Market Programs, several developments have taken place during the reporting period, as follows:

180. In 2024, the portfolio of Active Labor Market Programs was expanded and diversified. Four Programs were reviewed and improved, and one new Program was introduced.

181. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation introduced targeted measures to increase employment among vulnerable groups, such as long-term unemployed persons, young people not in employment, education or training, women, persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptians. These groups are supported through individualized employment plans, specialized training and social services.

182. The new social reintegration program was introduced and aims to provide specialized counselling for employment, self-employment or vocational training. It includes coordination and referral to employment and social services to assist beneficiaries in integrating into the labor market.

183. The Program focuses on registered unemployed jobseekers, with particular attention to beneficiaries of economic assistance schemes, women in local administrative units without

employment structures, Roma and Egyptian communities, persons with disabilities, and other specific groups. The target group requires specialized counselling services due to the challenges faced in regions with a high number of jobseekers.

184. In addition, the Program ensures the coverage of employment services in areas where local employment structures are lacking. Preparations for the implementation of the Program began in the last quarter of 2024, and implementation commenced in 2025.

185. The active Programs implemented are

- One-year employment Program
- On-the-job training Program
- Professional internship Program
- Community work Program
- Self-employment Program
- Social reintegration Program
- Vocational education Program

186. In the employment offices, Roma and Egyptian communities are registered as unemployed persons and jobseekers. Active employment policies, by giving priority to Roma and Egyptian groups, have aimed to increase employment opportunities for these communities, according to the data provided in the table below:

Year	2022	2023	2024	January - June 2025
Unemployed / Jobseekers	7,198	6,863	5,929	6,052
Employed	497	1032	1086	456
Employment Promotion Programs	304	194	303	409
Vocational Training Courses	255	228	183	165

187. Based on administrative data, the situation regarding Roma participation in state employment policies indicates that:

– Roma and Egyptians accounted for 8.7% of unemployed jobseekers nationwide in 2024.

- This category is characterised by low levels of education and qualifications. Approximately 45% of unemployed Roma jobseekers and 13.9% of registered Egyptian jobseekers at employment offices have not completed primary education.
- Roma and Egyptians accounted for 4.2% of persons employed through the National Agency for Employment and Skills in 2024.
- Roma and Egyptians accounted for 11.7% of persons employed through the employment promotion Programs of the National Agency for Employment and Skills in 2024.

188. According to administrative data, Roma and Egyptians accounted for 8.8% of jobseekers nationwide during the period January–June 2025.
   - This category is characterised by a low level of qualifications and education. Approximately 48% of Roma jobseekers and 15% of Egyptian jobseekers registered with employment offices have not completed primary education.
   - Roma and Egyptians accounted for 3.7% of persons employed through the National Agency for Employment and Skills during the period January–June 2025.
   - Roma and Egyptians accounted for 15.6% of persons employed through the employment promotion Programs of the National Agency for Employment and Skills during the period January–June 2025.

189. Roma and Egyptian minorities are among the categories benefiting from Law No. 15/2019 "On Employment Promotion" and the relevant by-laws supporting the inclusion of unemployed jobseekers in the labor market. In addition, all vulnerable categories are covered by Law No. 57, dated 28.08.2019, "On Social Assistance in the Republic of Albania", as amended by Law No. 79/2023, dated 27.07.2023. These laws ensure inter-institutional coordination for the referral of employment opportunities for individuals and working-age members benefiting from economic assistance schemes.

190. The National Agency for Employment and Skills gives priority to the inclusion of these vulnerable groups in its active Programs and Employment Promotion Initiatives for Vulnerable Groups, such as the Community Work Program and the Intensive Employment Counselling Program.

191. Social Reintegration for Economic Assistance Beneficiaries is the objective of the Exit Program for working-age beneficiaries of the Economic Assistance Scheme. Through a referral mechanism, the Program aims to promote the employment and social integration of working-age beneficiaries of economic assistance across the 12 Employment Regions.

192. The Intensive Employment Counselling Program enhances the technical capacities of vulnerable groups with the aim of facilitating their inclusion in employment Programs. Initiatives such as formalised labor markets are designed to address the challenges faced by disadvantaged categories in integrating into the labor market.

January - June 2025

Type of Program	Roma	Egyptians
D.C.M 17 (Employment)	1	8
D.C.M 17 (On-the-job Training)	0	1
D.C.M 17 (Practice)	1	1
D.C.M 401 (Counselling)	3	14
D.C.M 535 (Community Work)	182	175
D.C.M 348 (Self-employment)	18	5
Total	**205**	**204**

193. The Roma/Egyptian category is mostly involved in the Community Work, Self-employment and Counselling Programs (accounting for 97% of the total participants from this category).

194. The National Implementation Plan for the Youth Guarantee Scheme was approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 173, dated 24.03.2023 (as Annex 3 of the Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030). The Plan was initially expected to be completed in 2024; however, as the pilot phase will continue in 2025 until the launch of the Operational Program for Youth Employment under IPA III, the Plan was revised and extended until the end of 2025.

195. Since the launch of the Youth Guarantee Scheme until the end of June 2025 (21 November 2023 – 30 June 2025), a total of 90 Roma/Egyptian young people not in employment, education or training have been registered in the Youth Guarantee Scheme, of whom 58% are females and 42% are males.

196. A considerable number of students from this community (Roma and Egyptians) attend vocational education schools. Specifically, for the 2023–2024 academic year, the following data are available:

- A total of 639 Roma and Egyptian students, of whom 199 are girls;
- 101 Roma students, of whom 24 are girls;
- 538 Egyptian students, of whom 175 are girls.

197. Roma/Egyptian students attending vocational schools also benefit from full scholarships and free textbooks. In addition, they receive an allowance of ALL 10,000 for clothing.

198. With regard to employment and vocational training, the amendments to Law No. 15/2019 "On Employment Promotion" in June 2023, together with the relevant by-laws, aim to support the inclusion of unemployed jobseekers by providing labor market services, measures and support. In cooperation with public, non-public and private providers, employment promotion and training Programs are designed and implemented for vulnerable groups, such as young people (as part of the Youth Guarantee Scheme), working-age beneficiaries from families supported through economic assistance, long-term jobseekers, including Roma and Egyptian communities.

199. Roma and Egyptian jobseekers have received employment and intermediation services from regional employment offices and have been registered in vocational training centers. Roma and Egyptian individuals have been integrated into the labor market through employment promotion Programs and benefit from counselling and career guidance services.

200. With regard to employment in the public administration, the applicable regulatory framework for recruitment in the civil service, as well as the procedures and measures implemented, ensure equal opportunities for all candidates, including members of national minorities.

201. With reference to Article 7 of Law No. 152/2023 "On the Civil Servant", as amended, which defines the competencies of the Department of Public Administration (DPA), among others, DPA:

i. prepares and oversees the implementation of state policies in the civil service;

ii. prepares draft legal and by-law acts related to the civil service.

202. In accordance with civil service legislation, admission to the civil service is based on the principles of equal opportunities, merit, professional skills and non-discrimination. Civil servants are selected through a fair and transparent process that assesses their professional skills and competencies through a national competition, which includes a written test, an oral examination and any other appropriate form of skills verification. Therefore, the admission of candidates to the civil service is, in all cases, based on the assessment of their knowledge, skills and competencies related to the position(s) for which they have applied, without being influenced by any other circumstances or grounds related to the candidates.

203. Meanwhile, in order to ensure the practical implementation of the principles underpinning recruitment procedures in the civil service, the legislation itself provides for several mechanisms, including, but not limited to, the following:

- As a rule, admission to the executive level of the civil service (for specialist positions) is carried out by groups of positions.
- Secondary legislation (relevant Decisions of the Council of Ministers and unifying instructions issued by DPA) sets out in detail all the stages of the competition procedures, the participating actors and their responsibilities, the scoring methodology, the method for calculating the final result, etc.
- The obligation to publicly announce vacant positions is established. In the case of state administration institutions (the Prime Minister's Office, ministries, central institutions under the authority of the Prime Minister or ministers), vacant positions are published on the official website of DPA.
- The recruitment process for state administration institutions is carried out centrally by DPA, which provides an additional guarantee for the implementation of legal standards.
- The assessment of candidates, within the framework of admission procedures to the civil service at the executive category level, is conducted by a five-member commission. The composition of the commission, including one representative from DPA, two representatives from state administration institutions and two university lecturers, provides a guarantee of objectivity and impartiality in the evaluation of candidates.

204. In addition to the above, in order to increase transparency and facilitate candidates' participation in competitions, the recruitment process in the civil service within state administration institutions has now been digitalised. In this regard:
    - Applications are submitted online through the website www.DAP.gov.al, by first creating a personal account where all documentation required in the competition announcement is uploaded.
    - The written test consists of multiple-choice questions, which are automatically generated from the question bank administered by DPA.
    - The evaluation/correction of the written test is carried out electronically through the use of information technology, thereby increasing the security and reliability of this process.
205. With the aim of promoting the role of the civil service and public administration as an attractive and competitive employer in the labor market, the Minister of State for Public Administration and Anti-Corruption and the Department of Public Administration have undertaken a number of information and awareness-raising initiatives. Accordingly, in cooperation with academic institutions and various partners, meetings have been organized with students and recent graduates, with the purpose of informing young people about application procedures and employment opportunities in the civil service.
206. Along the same lines, DPA has regularly participated in job fairs and various promotional activities, with the aim of informing interested individuals and attracting potential candidates to the state administration. Furthermore, the annual organization of Public Administration Week aims not only to familiarise the public with the daily work of the public administration, but also to strengthen its perception as a reliable and inclusive employer.
207. As a continuation of this commitment, it is also worth mentioning DPA's participation in the public event on the progress of the "Poznan Declaration", organized in 2024 within the framework of Roma Week, where the main focus was the employment of young Roma in the public administration. During this activity, DPA representatives informed Roma participants about concrete employment opportunities in the civil service, as well as the guarantees provided to candidates throughout the recruitment process to ensure equality and transparency at every stage.

Article 16 – Territorial and Administrative Reform

The Advisory Committee once again calls on the authorities to examine, in consultation with representatives of national minorities, the impact of the 2014 administrative and territorial reform on access to rights by persons belonging to national minorities, and to address any shortcomings identified.

208. At the end of 2025, the Parliament of Albania decided to establish the Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2026 Administrative-Territorial Reform, in response to the need for a new

territorial reform following the one carried out in 2014. The primary objective of this Committee is to assess the effects of the current administrative division (of 2014) and propose changes aimed at improving local governance.

209. The Committee is currently in the public consultation phase (April–May 2026) with all interested parties across all regions of the country. A total of 26 experts (8 of whom are high-level experts) have been appointed by both political sides to develop the technical models.
210. For areas where national minorities reside, particular attention is being paid to access to rights for national minorities, also taking into consideration Albania's international obligations in the framework of its EU membership process.
211. The conclusions and the final draft are expected to be ready within 2026, ahead of the next local elections in 2027. The main objective is to develop a reform that increases the efficiency of municipalities and improves public services, while aligning with European standards.

Articles 17 and 18 – Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

The Advisory Committee strongly encourages the authorities to continue working, on a bilateral and multilateral basis, on issues related to the protection of national minorities, in the spirit of good neighborliness, friendly relations and cooperation between states, while at the same time respecting the role of multilateral standards and procedures.

212. Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", in Article 17, paragraph 1, provides that "Persons belonging to national minorities have the right to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across the borders of the Republic of Albania with persons with whom they share the same ethnic, linguistic, religious identity or a common cultural heritage.
213. Based on paragraph 2 of this Article, "The Republic of Albania may conclude international agreements with other states to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the respective national minorities, in accordance with the law on international agreements in the Republic of Albania. The international agreements provided for in paragraph 2 of this Article shall, prior to their approval in principle by the Council of Ministers, be subject to consultation with the Committee on National Minorities.
214. The Albanian authorities remain committed to continuing bilateral and multilateral cooperation on issues related to the protection of national minorities, in line with the principles of good neighborliness, friendly relations and cooperation between states.

Annexes

DECISION
No. 843, dated 26.12.2024
ON THE DETERMINATION OF THE CRITERIA, DOCUMENTATION AND PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION OF DATA FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES

Pursuant to Article 100 of the Constitution and point 2 of Article 7 of Law No. 96/2017, "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", upon the proposal of the Minister of Interior, the Council of Ministers

ADOPTED:

1. The collection of data for the identification of persons belonging to national minorities shall be carried out in accordance with their right to free self-identification.
2. A person who claims to belong to a national minority and requests to be identified as such shall submit the self-identification form, according to Annex 1 of this Decision, to the same Commission established within the ministry responsible for internal affairs for the review of requests for the recognition of a national minority (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission"). The composition of the Commission shall also include a representative of the national minority to which the person has self-identified as belonging, except in cases where that minority is already represented in the permanent composition of the Commission.
3. The Commission shall meet at least twice a year and whenever deemed necessary upon the request of one-fourth of its members.
4. The Commission shall accept the self-identification and record the relevant data in the respective list of national minorities within 30 (thirty) days from the submission of the self-identification form.
5. In exceptional cases, based on grounds that raise serious doubts regarding the accuracy of the self-identification data, further verification of the self-identification may be requested, by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the Commission, in the following cases:
    a) where an increased and unusual number of self-identifications have been submitted within a six-month period;
    b) where the self-identified person resides in a unit of local self-government which, in practice, does not display distinctive cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious or traditional characteristics, as evidenced by relevant information, including, among others, the lack of collective representation through a clear absence of active, continuous and consolidated collective representation activities, including associations of the respective national minority in the relevant unit of local self-government, etc.;

c) where there are changes in the personal details of the self-identified person compared to previous documents.

6. In cases where a verification procedure is initiated, the Commission may request information from the General Directorate of Civil Status, for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the submitted data, in accordance with the provisions of point 1 of Article 3 and point 1 of Article 7 of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania".
7. The General Directorate of Civil Status shall forward the request for verification to the relevant Civil Status Archive Office at the respective regional branch, based on the self-identification data provided by the person.
8. The Civil Status Archive Office shall carry out the verifications in the following cases:

   a) where the person is found to be registered in the relevant civil status register administered by the Civil Status Archive Office, in which data relating to an ethnic affiliation other than Albanian has been recorded;

   b) where the person was born to at least one parent of non-Albanian ethnic affiliation and another ethnic affiliation is recorded in his/her birth certificate;

   c) where, prior to 2011, an ethnic affiliation other than Albanian was recorded in the person's birth certificate;

   ç) where, in the archived civil status documents relating to population registration periods for citizens belonging to an ethnic minority other than Albanian, or for their ancestors, data relating to an ethnic affiliation other than Albanian have been recorded;

   d) where there are additional data referring to another ethnic affiliation, in relation to civil status elements, which may also be reflected in marriage and death certificates administered by the Civil Status Archive Office.
9. The Civil Status Archive Office shall submit to the Commission the collected information concerning the element of ethnic affiliation. The Commission shall review the documentation collected pursuant to point 8 of this Decision, giving decisive weight to the subjective choice of the individual. Factors such as language, religion, culture or traditions provide a sufficient basis for the purpose of self-identification. The documentation obtained pursuant to points 7 and 8 of this Decision shall serve as supporting indicators for the Commission when forming its opinion.
10. In cases where self-identification is not substantiated pursuant to points 7 and 8 of this Decision, the Commission shall address the General Directorate of Archives and other institutions, if they possess official documents supporting the citizen's belonging to a national minority.
11. The data collection procedure shall be carried out in accordance with point 2 of Article 6 of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", as well as with the legislation on the protection of personal data.

12. The Civil Status Archive Offices at the regional branches shall issue data referring to the registration of citizens, based on the basic civil status registers for the respective registration periods in which such records were created. The processing of this information shall be carried out through consultation of the data contained in the basic registers, where the information of citizens with an ethnic affiliation other than Albanian is confirmed. The interested person may submit documentation or any other necessary material in support of their self-identification.
13. After reviewing the information received from the above-mentioned institutions and from the person subject to the self-identification procedure, the Commission shall proceed with taking a decision on whether or not to confirm the self-identification within 60 (sixty) days from the date of initiation of the verification procedure, as provided for in point 4 of this Decision. The period for calculating this deadline shall commence from the date on which the Commission notifies the interested party. If no decision is taken within the specified deadline, the self-identification shall be deemed confirmed.
14. The reasoned decision of the Commission shall be immediately notified to the person for whom the verification process has been carried out.
15. In cases where the person requests to appeal the decision of the Commission, an Appeal Commission shall be established.
16. The Appeal Commission shall be chaired by the representative of the ministry responsible for internal affairs and shall be composed of:
    a) a representative from the ministry responsible for internal affairs;
    b) a representative from the Ombudsman;
    c) a representative from the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination;
    ç) a representative appointed by the Committee on National Minorities;
    d) a representative from a civil society organization engaged in the protection of human rights in relation to national minorities, proposed by the Committee on National Minorities.
17. Against the decision of the Appeal Commission, the person shall have the right to file an appeal before the competent court for the resolution of administrative disputes, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 49/2012 “On the Organization and Functioning of Administrative Courts and the Adjudication of Administrative Disputes”, as amended.
18. The ministry responsible for internal affairs, the Commission, the General Directorate of Civil Status, the prefects of the regions, the Civil Status Archive Offices at the regional branches, and other state institutions administering official documents and data related to the belonging of Albanian citizens to a national minority shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.

This Decision shall enter into force upon publication in the Official Journal, with the exception of subparagraph "a" of point 5, which shall enter into force two years after the publication of this Decision and shall have no retroactive effect on self-identifications submitted up to the end of that period.

THE PRIME MINISTER
Edi Rama

Annex No. 1

Addressed to the Commission at the Ministry of Internal Affairs

SELF-IDENTIFICATION FORM
FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ALBANIAN CITIZEN
FOR THE RECOGNITION OF BELONGING TO A NATIONAL MINORITY

_____
(first name, surname)

_____
(father's name)

_____
(mother's name)

_____
(date of birth)

_____
(place of birth)

_____
(marital status)

_____
(identity card No.)

_____
(current place of residence)

_____
(citizenship)

_____
(national minority/ies to which the individual belongs)

_____
(language(s) of the national minority/ies to which the individual belongs)

(Have you ever changed your first name or surname?)

_____

_____

(*Distinctive cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious or traditional characteristics, in accordance with Article 3 of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania")*

_____

(signature)

DECISION
No. 844, dated 26.12.2024
ON THE MANNER OF USING NATIONAL MINORITY LANGUAGES IN RELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONS BELONGING TO NATIONAL MINORITIES AND LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT BODIES

Pursuant to Article 100 of the Constitution and point 6 of Article 15 of Law No. 96/2017, "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", upon the proposal of the Minister of Interior and the Minister of State for Local Government, the Council of Ministers

ADOPTED:

1. In the basic units of local self-government, where persons belonging to national minorities traditionally reside or constitute more than 20% of the total population, based on the latest census data, they have the right to submit a request to the bodies of the basic unit of local self-government for the establishment of conditions enabling the use of the minority language in their relations with these bodies.
2. The request for the use of the minority language shall be submitted in writing by the group of citizens claiming to belong to a national minority to the basic unit of local self-government within whose territory these persons traditionally reside or where they constitute more than 20% of the population of the unit. The request shall clearly specify its purpose and designate the authorized representative(s) responsible for communication with the bodies of the basic unit of local self-government until a decision is taken by the latter. The request must be accepted within 60 (sixty) days.
3. The decision of the municipal council, after undergoing legality verification by the Prefect of the respective county, shall be communicated to the authorized person, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government", as amended, and the Code of Administrative Procedures. Against a decision refusing the request for the use of the minority language in relations between persons belonging to national minorities and local self-government

bodies, applicants have the right to submit an appeal before the competent court for the resolution of administrative disputes.
4. The use of the minority language aims to facilitate official communication between the basic unit of local self-government and members of a national minority and focuses on a) sending official written notifications from the bodies of the local self-government unit to citizens; b) receiving documents signed by citizens belonging to the respective national minority.
5. The use of the national minority language shall be carried out as follows: a) during the process of informing citizens about their rights, based on Law No. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government", as amended, and Law No. 119/2014 "On the Right to Information", as amended, by drafting relevant regulations or through information leaflets, which may be published or displayed in visible areas of local self-government bodies; b) through access to the transparency Program;
c) during community consultation sessions prior to the review and approval of acts, in accordance with Article 18 of Law No. 139/2015 "On Local self-government", as amended, with representatives of national minorities or associations representing these communities; ç) in submitting requests or complaints addressed to the basic local self-government bodies regarding matters related to functions and competences falling within the jurisdiction of the local self-government unit; d) for submitting civic initiatives through authorized representatives addressed to the municipal council, in accordance with the provisions established in the regulation on the organization and functioning of the municipal council, pursuant to Article 20 of Law No. 139/2015 "On Local Self-Government", as amended.
6. To ensure the use of the national minority language as provided for in point 5 of this Decision, the responsible bodies of the basic unit of local self-government shall provide, in their annual budgets, a separate budget line for the employment of persons who know the national minority language, in accordance with the provisions of the legislation on local self-government and local finances.
7. In cases where the number of citizens belonging to a national minority is at least 20% of the total population residing in that local self-government unit, according to the latest census data, they have the right to request, alongside the Albanian language, the placement of names of administrative units, streets and other topographical indicators also in the language of the recognized minority.
8. When the circumstances provided for in point 7 of this Decision are met, the municipal council shall approve the placement of names in the language of a minority following the Albanian language. This decision shall be subject to the legality verification procedure by the institution of the respective Prefect of the County.
9. The financial effects related to signs for the designation of administrative units, boulevards, streets, squares and parks in the national minority language, within the administrative territory of the respective unit, pursuant to point 8 of this Decision, shall be covered by the budget of the respective local self-government unit, in accordance with Article 28 of Law No. 9270, dated 29.07.2004 "On the Address System", as amended.

10. The ministry responsible for internal affairs, the ministry responsible for local government, and local self-government units shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.
This Decision shall enter into force upon publication in the Official Gazette.

THE PRIME MINISTER
Edi Rama

DECISION
No. 845, dated 26.12.2024
ON DETERMINING THE COMPOSITION, FUNCTIONS AND PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE EXAMINATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF BELONGING TO A NATIONAL MINORITY

Pursuant to Article 100 of the Constitution and Article 4, paragraph 3, of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", upon the proposal of the Minister of the Interior, the Council of Ministers

ADOPTED:

1. The Request for the formal recognition of a national minority, pursuant to Article 4(1) of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", shall be submitted by a group of citizens representing more than 1% of the total number of citizens holding Albanian citizenship in the Republic of Albania, who claim to belong to a national minority. The Request shall be submitted to the Commission for the Recognition of National Minorities, established within the ministry responsible for internal affairs (hereinafter referred to as the "Commission").
2. The documentation required for the formal recognition of a national minority shall consist of:
a) the Request signed by each member of the group claiming to belong to the national minority for which formal recognition is sought;
b) the individual self-declaration form for each of the citizens who have signed the request referred to in point (a), for the recognition of the status of a person belonging to a national minority, in accordance with Annex 1 attached to this Decision.
3. The Commission shall be chaired by the Deputy Minister of the ministry responsible for internal affairs and shall comprise:
a) one representative from the General Directorate of Civil Status, within the ministry responsible for civil status matters;
b) one representative from the ministry responsible for local government;
c) one representative from the ministry responsible for internal affairs, responsible for legal matters;

ç) one representative from the ministry responsible for social protection;
d) one representative from the ministry responsible for foreign affairs;
dh) one representative from the ministry responsible for cultural heritage;
e) one representative from the General Directorate of Archives;
ë) one representative from the Academy of Sciences;
f) one representative from the Institute of History, within the Academy of Sciences;
g) four representatives from the Committee on National Minorities, one of whom shall be a representative of the national minority seeking recognition, as appropriate;
gj) three representatives from civil society, proposed by the Committee on National Minorities, from among non-governmental organizations operating in the field of human rights, including the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.
4. The Commission shall be supported in carrying out its activities by the technical secretariat, which shall be responsible for organizing the work, ensuring communication with the submitters of the requests, coordinating the work among the responsible institutions, as well as performing any other duties necessary for the proper functioning of the Commission's activities.
5. The technical secretariat shall be chaired by one of the representatives of the ministry responsible for internal affairs and shall comprise four members, as follows:
a) two representatives appointed by the head of the ministry responsible for internal affairs;
b) one representative appointed by the head of the ministry responsible for local affairs;
c) one representative appointed by the head of the Committee on National Minorities.
6. The representatives of the institutions specified in point 3 of this decision shall be senior-level officials.
7. The Commission shall examine the Request submitted pursuant to point 1 of this Decision and shall verify compliance with the legal criteria laid down in Article 3(1) of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania", as well as with the documentation submitted in accordance with the provisions of Articles 6 and 7 of this Law.
8. The Commission shall examine the Request submitted pursuant to point 1 of this Decision within 9 (nine) months from the date of its receipt by the ministry responsible for internal affairs.
9. For the examination of the Request, the Commission shall cooperate with all public institutions at central level, in accordance with the rules laid down in Decision No. 867, dated 10 December 2014, of the Council of Ministers "On the procedures for cooperation within state administration institutions", as amended.
10. The Decision shall contain the reasoning and shall be communicated to the group of citizens or to their authorized representative, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Administrative Procedures. An appeal against the Commission's Decision rejecting the Request for recognition of a national minority may be submitted to the competent court for the resolution of administrative disputes.
11. The Commission shall ensure transparency in the conduct of its activities, in accordance with Law No. 119/2014 "On the Right to Information" and the transparency Program, by publishing its activities on the official website of the ministry responsible for internal affairs.

12. In cases where the Commission decides to accept the request, it shall submit to the minister responsible for internal affairs the proposal, accompanied by a reasoned report, for the continuation of the procedures for the formal recognition of the national minority.
13. The Ministry responsible for internal affairs shall draft the bill for the formal recognition of the national minority and shall submit the relevant draft decision to the Council of Ministers, within 60 (sixty) days from the submission of the proposal by the Commission.
14. The ministry responsible for internal affairs, the ministries and institutions provided for in point 3 shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.
This Decision shall enter into force upon publication in the Official Gazette.

THE PRIME MINISTER
Edi Rama

Annex No. 1

Addressed to the Commission at the Ministry of Internal Affairs

SELF-IDENTIFICATION FORM
FOR AN INDIVIDUAL ALBANIAN CITIZEN
FOR THE RECOGNITION OF BELONGING TO A NATIONAL MINORITY

_____
(first name, surname)

_____
(father's name)

_____
(mother's name)

_____
(date of birth)

_____
(place of birth)

_____
(marital status)

_____
(identity card No.)

_____
(current place of residence)

_____
(citizenship)

_____
(national minority/ies to which the individual belongs)

_____

(language(s) of the national minority/ies to which the individual belongs)

_____

(Have you ever changed your first name or surname?)

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Distinctive cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious or traditional characteristics, in accordance with Article 3 of Law No. 96/2017 "On the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania")

_____

(signature)

I. Information on the awareness-raising activities of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination

Raising public awareness is one of the fundamental activities of the Commissioner, as well as of the representatives in the regional offices located in the cities of Fier, Shkodra and Korçë. Awareness-raising activities aim to promote the principle of equality and non-discrimination, raise awareness and provide information, as well as provide information on this Law in the Albanian language and in the languages of national minorities. The activities consist of:

- Public appearances of the Commissioner in visual and written media.
- Distribution of awareness-raising materials and organization of open days.
- Publication of leaflets and other publications;
- Continuation of awareness-raising campaigns in nine-year schools;
- Open lectures with students; development of activities on discrimination issues with relevant social groups and non-governmental organizations.

In 2023, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Mr Robert Gajda, in cooperation with the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Advancing the Protection from Discrimination in Albania", organized in Albania the "Week against Discrimination", the aim of which is to disseminate information and raise awareness on various aspects related to the protection of human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, and on the important role of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination in ensuring the protection of fundamental rights.

Within the framework of the "Week against Discrimination", several information and awareness-raising activities were held in different cities. These activities serve to support the regional offices of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination in their efforts to increase their visibility and impact in the respective communities, both in the municipalities where they are located and in the surrounding areas.

During its implementation, the "Week against Discrimination" contributed to increasing the presence of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination in smaller municipalities, where the need for information and knowledge on fundamental human rights and freedoms is greater.

This initiative is supported by the joint Program of the European Union and the Council of Europe "Horizontal Facility III" and its project "Advancing the Protection from Discrimination in Albania", which aims to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders to address the protection and promotion of minorities, the protection of the rights of the LGBTI community, and combating hate speech in line with the standards and recommendations established by the Council of Europe.

II. Issues addressed by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination during the reporting period

Period June - December 2023:
During the period June-December 2023, the Commissioner addressed 32 cases, of which 31 were complaints and 1 was an *ex-officio* case, with the complainant subjects being persons belonging to national minorities.
Division by fields:
- 29 in the field of goods and services;
- 2 in the field of employment;
- 1 in the field of education.

By gender of the complainant subjects[18]:
- 12 women;
- 15 men;
- 4 NGOs.

By ethnic affiliation:
- 26 subjects belong to the Roma and Egyptian national minorities;
- 2 to the Macedonian national minority;
- 2 to the Greek national minority;
- 1 to the Serbian national minority.

[18] The number of complainant subjects does not correspond to the total number of cases, as *1 ex-officio* case was initiated by the Commissioner's own initiative, based on information received through the media, and no complainant subject is identified.

Regarding the geographical distribution of complaints, it is evidenced that the complainant subjects who submitted complaints to the Commissioner were mainly from the cities of Tirana, Korçë, Elbasan, Kavajë and Gjirokastër.

During this reporting period, the Commissioner issued 26 decisions, as follows:

- 1 decision finding discrimination (in the field of services, for a complaint submitted by an NGO);
- 14 decisions on the termination of investigative procedures, as the effectiveness and the purpose for which the investigative procedure had been initiated had been achieved (in the field of services, submitted by 8 male complainant subjects and 6 female complainant subjects);
- 4 decisions finding no discrimination (2 in the field of services; 1 in employment and 1 in education, submitted by 2 female complainant subjects, 1 NGO and 1 ex-officio case);
- 7 decisions on inadmissibility (7 in the field of services, submitted by 5 male complainant subjects and 2 NGOs);
- 1 decision on dismissal, as the case with the same subject matter is also being examined by the judicial bodies (in the field of services, for a complaint submitted by a male complainant subject).

During this reporting period, 4 complaints alleging discrimination in the form of hate speech were submitted. For 3 of them, the Commissioner issued decisions on inadmissibility (cited above), as the subjects against whom it was alleged that discrimination had been exercised were not residing in Albania. Whereas, for 1 of them, the procedures for its examination continued in the following year.

Based on the analysis carried out, with reference to the cases examined involving complainant subjects belonging to national minorities, the complaints were mainly addressed against central and local public institutions. The issues encountered during the examination of these cases are as follows:

- The inability of members of the Egyptian and Roma minorities to use the e-Albania portal in order to obtain services from the State Cadastre Agency;
- The failure to benefit from scholarships in public pre-university education by families in need and those belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania;
- The use of inappropriate expressions in the media towards members of national minorities in Albania;

Year 2024:

During 2024, the Commissioner addressed 30 cases, of which 29 were complaints and 1 was an ex-officio case, with the complainant subjects being persons belonging to national minorities.

Division by fields:

- 21 in the field of goods and services;
- 4 in the field of employment;
- 5 in the field of education.

By gender of the complainant subjects[19]*:*

- 9 women;
- 11 men;
- 9 NGOs;
- 1 group of persons.

By ethnic affiliation:

- 20 subjects belong to the Roma and Egyptian national minorities;
- 4 to the Bulgarian national minority;
- 2 to the Serbian national minority;
- 4 foreign citizens.

Regarding the geographical distribution of complaints, it is evidenced that the complainant subjects who submitted complaints to the Commissioner were mainly from the cities of Tirana, Korçë, Elbasan, Kavajë, Shkodra, Kurbin and Vlorë.

During this reporting period, the Commissioner issued 24 decisions, as follows:

- 3 decisions finding discrimination (in the field of services, submitted by 1 male complainant subject, 1 female complainant subject and 1 NGO), including 1 decision finding indirect discrimination, 1 decision finding structural discrimination and 1 decision finding discrimination in the form of hate speech;
- 6 decisions on the termination of investigative procedures, as the effectiveness and the purpose for which the investigative procedure had been initiated were achieved (1 in the field of services and 4 in the field of education, submitted by 2 male complainant subjects, 2 female complainant subjects, 1 NGO and 1 group of persons);
- 5 decisions finding no discrimination (4 in the field of services and 1 in employment, submitted by 3 male complainant subjects and 2 NGOs);
- 8 decisions on inadmissibility (in the field of services, submitted by 2 male complainant subjects, 1 female complainant subject and 5 NGOs);
- 2 decisions on dismissal, as the complainant subjects withdrew the submitted complaints (1 in the field of education and 1 in employment, submitted by 1 male complainant subject and 1 female complainant subject).

During this reporting period, 5 complaints alleging discrimination in the form of hate speech were submitted. In 1 of these cases, the Commissioner issued a decision finding discrimination, while in 4 cases inadmissibility was established (as cited above), as the subjects against whom it was alleged that discrimination had been exercised were not residing in Albania.

Based on the analysis carried out, with reference to the cases examined involving complainant subjects belonging to national minorities, the complaints were mainly directed against central and

[19] The number of complainant subjects does not correspond to the total number of cases, as *1 ex-officio* case was initiated by the Commissioner's own initiative, based on information received from the media, and no complainant subject is identified.

local public institutions. The issues encountered during the examination of these cases are as follows:

- The inability of members of the Egyptian and Roma minorities to use the e-Albania portal in order to obtain services from the State Cadastre Agency;
- The failure to benefit from scholarships in public pre-university education by families in need and those belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania;
- The use of inappropriate expressions in the media towards members of national minorities in Albania;

Period January - October 2025:

During the reporting period of 2025, the Commissioner addressed 29 cases, of which 25 were complaints and 4 were *ex-officio c*ases, with the complainant subjects being persons belonging to national minorities.

Division by fields:

- 22 in the field of goods and services;
- 5 in the field of employment;
- 2 in the field of education.

By gender of the complainant subjects[20]:

- 8 women;
- 11 men;
- 2 NGOs;
- 4 groups of persons.

By ethnic affiliation:

- 20 subjects belong to the Roma and Egyptian national minorities;
- 2 to the Macedonian national minority;
- 1 to the Serbian national minority;
- 1 to the Greek national minority;
- 5 foreign citizens.

Regarding the geographical distribution of complaints, it is evidenced that the complainant subjects who submitted complaints to the Commissioner were mainly from the cities of Tirana, Shkodra, Pogradec and Vlorë.

During this reporting period, the Commissioner issued 19 decisions, as follows:

[20] The number of complainant subjects does not correspond to the total number of cases, as 1 *ex-officio* case was initiated by the Commissioner's own initiative, based on information received from the media, and no complainant subject is identified.

- 3 decisions finding discrimination (2 in the field of services and 1 in education, submitted by 1 female complainant subject and 2 groups of persons), including 1 decision finding structural discrimination;
- 6 decisions on the termination of investigative procedures, as the effectiveness and the purpose for which the investigative procedure had been initiated were achieved (4 in the field of services and 2 in the field of employment, submitted by 4 male complainant subjects, 1 female complainant subject and 1 NGO);
- 3 decisions finding no discrimination (3 in the field of services, submitted by 1 female complainant subject and 2 groups of persons);
- 6 decisions on inadmissibility (in the field of services and 1 in education, submitted by 4 male complainant subjects, 1 female complainant subject and 1 NGO);
- 1 decision on dismissal, as the case with the same subject matter is also being examined by the judicial bodies (in the field of employment, for 1 complaint submitted by a female complainant subject).

During this reporting period, 3 complaints alleging discrimination in the form of hate speech were submitted. For 1 of these cases, the Commissioner issued a decision on the termination of investigative procedures, as the effectiveness and the purpose for which the investigative procedure had been initiated were achieved, while in 1 case inadmissibility was established (as cited above), as the subject against whom it was alleged that discrimination had been exercised was not residing in Albania and was a foreign citizen. For 1 case, the Commissioner continues the procedures for the examination of the complaint.

Based on the analysis carried out, with reference to the cases examined involving complainant subjects belonging to national minorities, the complaints were mainly directed against central and local public institutions. The issues encountered during the examination of these cases are as follows:

- The use of inappropriate expressions in the media towards members of national minorities in Albania;
- Discontinuation of drinking water and electricity supply, mainly for citizens from families in need belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities;
- Claims related to delays or failure to legalize dwellings, mainly for citizens belonging to the Roma and Egyptian minorities;
- Removal of Roma and Egyptian minorities from their places of residence by local self-government units, without taking prior measures for their accommodation in other places of residence;
- Claims regarding discriminatory treatment in the workplace.

Activities carried out by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and the Regional Offices

Year 2023

- The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Robert Gajda, held a meeting with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov. The discussion focused on the role of the institution of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination in promoting equality and non-discrimination of national minorities.
- The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Robert Gajda, participated in the opening of the exhibition "Dusk -Green Station" near the premises of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, organized by the Committee on National Minorities in the Republic of Albania. The opening of the exhibition marked the beginning of our activities within the framework of International Roma Day.
- The Specialist of the Korça Regional Office organized two meetings with OSCE representatives at the premises of the office, focusing on issues of discrimination and violations of human rights and minority rights in the Korça Region. The cases addressed by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination were also discussed.
- A meeting was held with the Mayor of Pustec Municipality, in the presence of OSCE representatives and the Ombudsman's representative in Pogradec. The discussion focused on the presentation of the amended Law on Protection from Discrimination and the support provided by this law to minority communities, including the Macedonian community in this area.

Year 2024

- Within the framework of the Anti-Discrimination Week, Commissioner Robert Gajda held a meeting on the rights of national minorities in Pustec Municipality, together with local and international representatives, highlighting the importance of protecting equality for minority communities.
- Within the framework of awareness-raising activities, Commissioner Robert Gajda held a meeting in Dropull Municipality, focusing on the rights of national minorities and the importance of their protection. The activity aimed to promote dialogue and raise awareness about the rights of national minorities and the need for their effective protection against any form of discrimination. This activity was supported by the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe.
- The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, in cooperation with the AJMMI/ IAEMI (Ionian Agency for Environment, Media and Information) Centre and the Council of Europe, organized a roundtable discussion in Sarandë on the rights of national minorities and social services for the community, with the participation of Mr. Paolo Lobba from the Council of Europe.

- The Specialist of the Korça Regional Office held a meeting with the Regional Coordinator of the Albanian Human Rights Committee, regarding human rights violations and cases of discrimination in the area. Institutional cooperation for addressing the issues faced by citizens and minority communities was highlighted.
- An "Open Day" was organized with members of Roma and Egyptian communities within the framework of Cultural Diversity Day, under the theme "Living Together". Representatives of Devoll Municipality and women from local communities participated in the activity, promoting coexistence and equality.

Year 2025

- Following the Anti-Discrimination Week, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination organized an activity on the topic "National Minorities in Albania" in Dropull Municipality. The activity aimed to promote dialogue and raise awareness about the rights of national minorities and the need for their effective protection against any form of discrimination. This activity was supported by the joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe.
- Within the framework of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Law on Protection from Discrimination, the institution of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination organized an activity in Pustec Municipality, with representatives of the Macedonian minority, NGOs and municipal institutions.
- A meeting was held at the Regional Office of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination with OSCE representatives. During the meeting, the election campaign was discussed, as well as the involvement of minorities in the electoral process. Their monitoring and reporting in case of observed violations were also discussed.
- A meeting was held at the office premises with representatives of the Egyptian minority to discuss the issues encountered in accessing services provided by local and central institutions.
- Within the framework of 8 April, International Roma Day, the Specialist of the Korça Regional Office participated in the activities organized in Pogradec and Korça Municipalities.
- Participant in the activity organized by Korça Municipality on the occasion of 24 June, "Balkan Egyptian Day".
- Participant in the meeting organized by Free Legal Aid with the Mayor of Pustec Municipality and representatives of this institution. During the meeting, participants were informed about the work of the institutions and the cooperation between them for the benefit of citizens, the Macedonian minority and the Bulgarian minority.
- Participant in the 8 April activity organized by Korça, Devoll and Pogradec Municipalities.
- Participant in the 18th meeting of the Council of Europe dialogue, organized in Strasbourg, on the topic: "Integrating knowledge: shaping the draft Council of Europe Strategy for the inclusion of Roma and Travelers (2026–2030)", through findings from monitoring bodies.

- Participant in the activity organized by the Municipality on the occasion of 8 April, International Roma Day.
- Participant in the activity organized by the "Naim Frashëri" nine-year school on the occasion of Cultural Diversity Day.
- Participant in the fair: "Cultural Heritage of Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities in the Korça Region", organized by the "Fan S. Noli" University.
- Participant in the activity organized by Korça Municipality on the occasion of 24 June, Balkan Egyptian Day.
- Meeting with representatives of minority communities in the Korça Region (Aromanians, Greeks, Roma, Egyptians, Bulgarians and Macedonians).
- Participant in the meeting with representatives of minorities organized by the Ombudsman in cooperation with the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. The purpose of the meeting was to collect data and discuss the issues encountered by minority communities during the census process.

- Participation in the activity "Challenges of the Egyptian Community and the Constitution of the Republic of Albania", organized within the framework of the project "Youth away from all forms of violence, racial discrimination and awareness-raising of national minority communities in Vlora Municipality", on the occasion of International Balkan Egyptian Day. The activity was organized by the "Albania" Association and Vlora Municipality.
- Participation in the activity on the topic "Challenges of the Egyptian Community and the Constitution of the Republic of Albania", within the framework of the project entitled "Youth away from all forms of violence, racial discrimination and awareness-raising of national minority communities in Vlora Municipality" and "International Balkan Egyptian Day", organized by the "Albania" Association and Vlora Municipality.

III. Activities of the Central Election Commission

Year 2023

Main Activities:

- **Increasing participation:** The CEC has been continuously engaged in increasing the trust and participation of the Roma community and other minority groups in the electoral process, by promoting equality, inclusion and full access to the exercise of the right to vote.
- **Social media campaigns:** Communication through social media channels and visual campaigns with posters featuring well-known figures from the Roma community and other minorities has been used, with the aim of increasing awareness and participation in the electoral process.
- **Educational sessions in schools:** The CEC has conducted sessions with young people from minority communities, mainly first-time voters, with the aim of increasing their information and awareness regarding participation and engagement in electoral processes,

including in Pustec with the Macedonian minority, as well as meetings with young people (students) from Montenegro.

Statistics:

- **Educational Sessions and Trainings:** Around 90% of participants stated that these information sessions helped them better understand the electoral process, their rights as voters, and the importance of active participation in elections, including the participation of national minorities living in our country.
- **Participants:** 70 citizens from the Roma community and other minority groups were engaged as electoral representatives during the 2023 elections.
- **Young people:** 80% of young people from national minorities who participated in the information and awareness-raising sessions assessed the process as understandable and engaging.
- **Women in rural areas:** Around 65% of women from rural areas were informed and made aware of their electoral rights, actively participating in the sessions organized.

Communication Campaign:

- **Social media and visual campaigns:** Informative and awareness-raising messages were published on these platforms, including texts in minority languages, videos and audio materials, addressing each objective of the education, information and awareness-raising Program. Around 90% of the campaign included advertisements and informative materials in the languages of national minorities.
- **Television Spots:** Television spots for the voter information campaign were broadcast, containing subtitles in minority languages, on local television channels in the areas where minority communities reside.
- **Posters:** Informative posters on electoral offences and voting procedures were placed at polling stations in areas where minority voters exercise their right to vote.
- **Billboards:** Informative posters in minority languages were placed at border crossing points.
- **City lights:** Informative posters were placed at locations where national minority voters reside and exercise their right to vote.
- **Translation of materials:** The materials were also translated into the languages of national minorities in order to reach a wider audience.
- **CEC Website:** All information was published on the official website of CEC, including in the languages of national minorities.

Year 2024

Main Activities:

- **National Minority Engagement Campaign:** New approaches were used to support and engage primarily the Roma community and other minority groups, including interactive activities and seminars on the electoral process.
- **Translation of Materials:** All electoral materials were translated into the languages of national minorities and disseminated through social media channels.

Statistics:

- **National minorities:** National minorities were included in the CEC's information meetings during the non-electoral period and the electoral period for the Mayoral Elections in Himara, engaging as election observers and personnel involved in the electoral process.
- **Youth participation:** 70% of young people demonstrated increased interest in participating in elections following the education, information and awareness-raising campaign.

Communication Campaign:

- **Social media and visual campaigns:** Informative and awareness-raising messages were published on these platforms, including texts in minority languages, videos and audio materials, addressing each objective of the information Program.
- **Television Spots:** Television spots were broadcast as part of the voter information campaign, containing subtitles in minority languages, on local television channels in the areas where minority communities reside.
- **Posters:** Informative posters explaining electoral offences and voting procedures were placed at polling stations in areas where minority voters exercise their right to vote.
- **Translation of Materials:** Materials were translated into the languages of national minorities.
- **CEC Website:** Information was also published on the official website of the CEC in the languages of national minorities.

Year 2025

An Information and Education Program dedicated to national minorities living in our country was approved for the elections of Members of the Assembly of the Republic of Albania, to be held on 11 May 2025, through Decision No. 208, dated 11.12.2024, "Voter Education Program for National Minority Voters."[21]

[21] VendimKSHZ_2024_208_Per-miratimin-e-programit-te-informimit-te-pakicave-kombetare-2025.pdf

Main Activities:

- **Information and awareness-raising campaign for the Roma community:** This campaign aimed to continue and improve the provision of information to national minorities by familiarizing them with their electoral rights and opportunities. The main objective was to increase awareness and ensure access to clear and understandable information for everyone, regardless of language or background. The information activities focused on providing equal opportunities for individuals, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups, to understand and exercise their electoral rights.
- **Increasing trust in the CEC:** The CEC has ensured an increase in trust among vulnerable groups, particularly national minorities.
- **Educational sessions in schools:** On 13 February 2025, the CEC organized an activity in Zapod, Kukës, with students and teachers of the "Imer Mata" School, in order to inform them, in the language of the Bulgarian national minority, about the electoral process for the elections of 11 May 2025. Students were also introduced to the information campaign for the 2025 elections to the Assembly of Albania.

Statistics:

- **Participants:** Around 80% of members of national minorities have been engaged in the electoral process.
- **Trust in the CEC:** Around 70% of minority members believe that the CEC is capable of organizing free and fair elections.
- **Increasing participation:** Around 60% of minority members have so far been engaged and informed about the electoral process.

Communication Campaign:

- **Social media and visual campaigns:** Informative and awareness-raising messages were published on these platforms, including texts in minority languages, videos and audio materials, addressing each objective of the information Program.
- **Television Spots:** Television spots were broadcast as part of the voter information campaign, containing subtitles in minority languages, on local television channels in the areas where minority communities reside.
- **Posters:** Informative posters on electoral offences and voting procedures were placed at polling stations in areas where minority voters exercise their right to vote.
- Billboards: Informative posters in minority languages were placed at border crossing points.
- **City lights:** Informative posters were placed at locations where national minority voters reside and exercise their right to vote.
- **Translation of materials:** Materials were translated into the Roma language, and different dialects were used in order to reach a wider audience.

- **CEC Website:** All information was published on the official website of the Central Election Commission (CEC), including in the languages of national minorities.
- **Translation of materials and interactive trainings:** The Roma community was engaged through information and awareness-raising activities, including the use of the Roma language, as well as through the engagement of other minority communities living in our country.
- **Leaflets:** Leaflets containing information on important steps of the electoral process were produced in the languages of the eight national minorities. The leaflets were submitted to the Committee on National Minorities and were distributed by Committee members in the areas where national minority communities reside.

IV. Information from the Office of the Ombudsman

Following the adoption of the Fifth Opinion (June 2023) and the subsequent Resolution of the Committee of Ministers (December 2023), the Ombudsman has continued its engagement in two main areas: first, through advocacy for addressing gaps in the legal framework (as reflected in its annual reports), and second, through concrete interventions aimed at ensuring effective equality and the participation of minorities in public life.

The proactive role of the Ombudsman has been exercised through addressing issues arising from complaints or identified through the media and written press, while also recommending, where appropriate, measures to address the identified concerns.

During the period June 2023 – October 2025, with regard to the situation of the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Albania in relation to the standards of the Framework Convention, progress has been observed in the secondary legislative framework, while persistent challenges have also been identified in practical implementation, particularly at the local level and in ensuring effective access to public services.

The Ombudsman has addressed 44 cases concerning minority rights (17 initiated ex officio and 27 referred by third parties in the form of complaints, requests or notifications). The geographical distribution covers several municipalities and administrative units (Durrës, Shkodra, Fier, Berat, Korça, Kukës, Sarandë, Elbasan and Tirana), with a particular focus on Roma and Egyptian communities, which remain the most exposed to deficiencies in basic infrastructure and administrative barriers limiting the exercise of social and economic rights.

In the area of effective equality and non-discrimination, the most frequent issues relate to minimum living conditions and access to public services, specifically access to drinking water, electricity, public lighting, environmental pollution and adequate housing. In several areas, steps have been undertaken regarding maintenance and infrastructure interventions, as well as the inclusion of

Roma and Egyptian communities in local social plans and Programs; however, the quality of responses and the pace of implementation remain uneven among local government units.

Civil registration and the updating of actual residence records have emerged as cross-cutting obstacles with a direct impact on the enjoyment of rights. Internal displacement and inconsistencies in civil status registers exclude a number of families, mainly from Roma and Egyptian minorities, from social protection schemes, housing policies and educational services. At the national level, the need has been highlighted for unified practices regarding birth registration, address updates and equal access to services, through coordination between central administration institutions (Civil Status Office, Ministry of Interior, INSTAT) and local self-government units.

Regarding healthcare, the Ombudsman has emphasized the need for specific protocols for the management of unidentified patients, with a focus on improving inter-institutional cooperation. Furthermore, a case related to environmental issues posing high health risks was addressed, namely exposure to asbestos-containing materials identified in the "Jani Vruho" neighborhood in Berat. In this case, recommendations were issued for immediate measures to remove asbestos roofs in order to protect residents, provide the necessary healthcare and treatment, and offer alternative housing opportunities for affected residents.

With regard to data and transparency, data on national minorities have been made available through the 2023 Census, in accordance with the principle of self-identification. Furthermore, the designation of a minority in statistical publications was corrected in line with the Ombudsman's recommendations.

Education and linguistic rights present an interconnected picture of progress and challenges. In higher education, opportunities for study Programs including the Roma language have been examined; previous experience with low enrolment levels indicates that, in order to achieve the standard of effective access, accompanying supportive measures are required. In pre-university education, measures to reduce dropout rates and provide increased support for Roma and Egyptian children remain essential; institutional responses remain uneven and require further consolidation.

With regard to public participation, it has been noted that electoral materials and information were accessible to minorities, including through multilingual elements and targeted communication, and no complaints were identified following the electoral process during the reporting period.

From a normative perspective, the end of 2024 marked the adoption of three by-laws concerning minorities (data collection on minority affiliation, the use of minority languages in relations with local authorities, and the regulation of the commission for the recognition of minorities). These developments bring the national framework closer to the standards of the Framework Convention.

The main challenge remains ensuring uniform and effective implementation, particularly at the local level.

In conclusion, the legal and secondary legislative framework has been significantly strengthened and several positive practices have been identified. However, the Ombudsman considers that full compliance with the standards of the Framework Convention requires addressing several issues: systematic updating of civil registration, reduction of infrastructure inequalities and disparities in access to basic services, reduction of administrative delays, and implementation of supportive measures that make minority language learning a reality. Consolidating inter-institutional coordination and strengthening local capacities remain prerequisites for translating the improved framework into effective equality, meaningful participation and dignified living conditions for all persons belonging to national minorities.

V. Main Cultural Activities and Inclusion of Minorities (2023–2025)

For the year 2023

- "Papuski Gili (Grandfather's Song)", implemented by the "Rromano Kham" Association. This activity was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of ALL 200,000 and was carried out in Tirana. The project aimed to promote and revitalize the authentic music of the Roma minority in Albania, highlighting the importance of preserving the heritage of this unique culture.
- "Recognition of Roma and Egyptian Minorities through Handicrafts", implemented by the "Qëndistarët" Association. This activity was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of ALL 350,000 and was carried out in Korça. The project focused on promoting the values and cultural heritage of handicrafts, including knitting, crochet, embroidery, string art, and other forms of craftsmanship, as well as promoting wicker and clay processing as cultural values of the Roma and Egyptian minorities.
- "Journey through the Footsteps of Tradition", implemented by the "Shën Kosmai" Cultural Association. This activity was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture in the amount of ALL 300,000 and was carried out in Livadhja, Sarandë.
- The 5th edition of the International Folklore Festival, with the participation of folklore groups from Albania and Balkan countries, promoted cultural and ethnographic traditions among younger generations. The project included a festival featuring costume parades, photographic exhibitions, tourist guides, and the promotion of the cultural values of the Finiq area and surrounding regions.

The National Folklore Festival of Gjirokastër is the most important cultural heritage event in Albania, dedicated to the preservation, promotion and transmission of the country's rich intangible heritage to younger generations. It presents the finest examples of Albanian music, choreography, ethnography and folklore, while simultaneously mobilizing artistic talent to

present, develop and reinterpret traditional creations, rituals and games. The 21st edition of the festival, held from 24 June to 1 July 2023 at the Castle of Gjirokastër, brought together approximately 1,600 artists from Albania and abroad, including women, young people, children, elderly persons, and members of minority and marginalized groups.

All regions of Albania participated in the performances, together with representative groups from Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, the Albanian diaspora, and invited artists from the Balkans and Europe. Alongside the main Program, various other activities related to tradition and heritage were organized throughout the city, enriching cultural life, promoting tourism and supporting sustainable development.

A key principle during the preparatory and selection phases was the encouragement of active participation by amateur artists, particularly from minority communities in regions such as Gjirokastër and Korça. The festival stage highlighted distinctive elements of intangible heritage from minority groups, including the traditional costumes and dances of the Greek minority in Dropull and the Macedonian minority in Prespa. Many performers in folk ensembles and orchestras also belonged to Roma, Egyptian and other minority communities, demonstrating the festival's role as a vibrant platform for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in Albania..

For the year 2024

• "Journey through the Footsteps of Tradition", implemented by the "Shën Kosmai" Cultural Association.

This activity was financially supported by the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (MEKI) in the amount of ALL 600,000 and was carried out in Livadhja, Sarandë. The 6th edition of the International Folklore Festival was also held during this year, with the participation of folklore groups from Albania and other Balkan countries. The festival promotes cultural and ethnographic traditions among younger generations. The project included costume parades, photographic exhibitions, guided tours for tourists, and aimed to convey the values of the Finiq area and surrounding regions.

• "Promotion of the Values of Roma and Egyptian Women", implemented by the "Qëndistarët" Association.

This activity was financially supported by MEKI in the amount of ALL 200,000 and was carried out in Devoll, Korçë. The focus of this project was the promotion of the cultural values and heritage of the Roma and Egyptian communities, particularly through traditional crafts and culinary arts.

• "Roma Culture and Tradition, a Value of Diversity in Albanian Cultural Heritage", implemented by the Institute of Roma Culture in Albania (IRCA).

This activity was financially supported by MEKI in the amount of ALL 500,000 and was carried out in Tirana. The project aims to revitalise Roma culture and folklore by supporting young artisans and designers. It encourages intercultural dialogue by promoting Roma identity as an integral part

of Albania's cultural heritage. The project will conclude with a festive event entitled "Colors of the Roma", featuring Roma community songs and dances.

- **The National Museum of Photography "Marubi"**

  Regarding the Greek, Macedonian, Bulgarian and Aromanian minorities, from 21 July 2023 to 5 December 2023, the "Janaki and Milton Manaki" Photography Exhibition was hosted at the National Museum of Photography "Marubi". The exhibition was organized with the support of MEKI and the State Central Archive of North Macedonia.

  Regarding the Montenegrin minority, in September 2024, in cooperation with the Institute of History of Montenegro and with its support, the publication "Marubi" in Montenegro was released.

- **The National Centre of Traditional Activities**

  Representatives of Roma and Egyptian communities have been part of the activities organized by this institution and have participated in various events. During the National Handicrafts Fair, artisans from the Roma and Egyptian communities presented their traditional works, showcasing unique elements of their cultural heritage.

  This participation has contributed to enriching the cultural mosaic and promoting the traditional crafts of these communities.

  Furthermore, at the National Typological Folklore Festivals of Folk Ensembles, the National Folklore Festival of Rhapsodists and Folk Instrumentalists, and other events organized by the National Centre of Traditional Activities, representatives of Roma and Egyptian communities have participated by presenting songs, dances and traditions reflecting their identity and culture. They have been provided with accommodation and meals under the same conditions as other artists participating in these activities. Their participation has contributed to the diversity and preservation of the country's cultural heritage.

  Within the framework of the International Cultural Weeks project, the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation supported Mr. Kostaq Zhonga, an individual belonging to the Greek minority, who participated in activities organized during the Greek Week in all three editions.

The 5th Edition of the National Handicrafts Fair, Gjirokastër, July 2024

Minorities: Approximately 70 artisans participated in this fair, including artisans from the Roma and Egyptian minorities. Their presence contributed to broad representation of the diverse traditions and cultures that form part of Albania's cultural mosaic.

Artisans from the Roma and Egyptian minorities showcased unique traditional techniques and products, contributing to the sharing of their rich culture with visitors and other artisans. In addition, the activity provided these individuals with an opportunity to promote their cultural

heritage and engage in cultural dialogue with other participants, increasing awareness and respect for cultural diversity in Albania.
Participation of Women: Women constituted the majority of artisans participating in the fair, reflecting their strong commitment to preserving and promoting traditional crafts, keeping these traditions alive, and sharing their artistic skills with the public.
Of the total number of participating artisans, 7% were artisans from minority communities and 54% were women artisans..

National Typological Folklore Festival of Urban Folk Songs, Elbasan, March 2024
Cultural Diversity: This festival brought together a wide variety of urban folk songs and cultural traditions from different cities across Albania. The activity highlighted cultural diversity by providing an opportunity to preserve and promote intangible cultural heritage across generations.
Youth Participation: A significant proportion of participants, approximately 30%, consisted of young people. The involvement of the younger generation played an important role in preserving and transmitting cultural traditions. The festival provided an excellent opportunity to encourage cooperation and knowledge-sharing between generations.
Participation of Women: Women played an important role in this activity, representing a significant proportion of the artists, namely 37.5% of participants. Their involvement is a key factor in preserving and promoting folk songs and traditions.

• **National Typological Folklore Festival of Folk Games and Rituals, Bilisht 2024**
Cultural Diversity: This activity brought to the stage the finest traditional games and various rituals from different regions of the country.
Youth Participation: The festival encourages the involvement of young talents, contributing to the transmission of this rich tradition from one generation to the next. In this edition, a greater presence of the younger generation was observed, representing a significant proportion of participants, namely 45% (81 out of 180 artists).
Participation of Women: Women were represented at the festival (35%), playing a key role in preserving and transmitting folk games and rituals to the public.

For the year 2025
As in previous editions, the "International Cultural Weeks" served as an excellent platform for exchange, cooperation and interaction between local and foreign artists, making a significant contribution to enriching cultural life not only in the capital but throughout Albania.

Considering that the project activities also focused on the inclusion of national minorities, with the aim of promoting cultural diversity, the following activities were organized:

- As part of the Polish Cultural Week, at the Black Box Hall – UART, on 15 April 2025, from 20:00 to 22:00, the film "Papusza", directed by Joanna Kos-Krauze, was screened. The film tells the true story of the first Roma woman to write and publish her own poetry, thereby

challenging the traditional image of women within the Roma community. It portrays her life from birth to old age: forced marriage at an early age, life in a Roma camp before, during and after the Second World War, forced relocation in communist Poland, and later urban life in poverty. Her encounter with the Polish poet Jerzy Ficowski, who discovered her extraordinary talent and published her poems, placed Papusza in a tragic situation: although she became a recognized poet, she faced exclusion from her own community, which accused her of revealing their secrets. The screening concluded with a question-and-answer session with the film director.

• As part of the North Macedonia Cultural Week, at Air Turbina – Tirana, on 30 April 2025 at 19:00, the theatre performance "8%?" was presented by the Contemporary Art Theatre of Bitola, directed by Jovan Ristovski. The performance presented a powerful story about discrimination, based on real testimonies from individuals belonging to different ethnic groups from the Balkans.

• "National Folklore Festival of Folk Dances", June 2025. The 13th edition of the National Typological Folklore Festival of Folk Dances was held on 23–24 June 2025 in the city of Lushnja, in cooperation with the Municipality of Lushnja. The event became a meeting and artistic exchange platform among 300 artists from 16 competing groups representing different regions of the country.

Women's participation: Women represented a significant proportion of festival participants, accounting for 20% (60 participants), making a valuable contribution to the preservation and transmission of Albania's choreographic heritage. Their participation represented an important element in ensuring the continuity of traditional folk dances.

Youth participation: A considerable number of participating artists were young people (48 out of 300 artists), who brought their energy, creativity and passion for folk dance. Their contribution demonstrates that this heritage remains alive and is successfully being transmitted to future generations.

Participation of minority communities: Artists from various minority communities also participated in the festival, enriching the event with their unique performances. The participation of minority artists contributed to the cultural mosaic by bringing different voices and traditions that promote diversity and artistic coexistence (32 out of 300 artists, 10.67%).

National Handicrafts Fair, The National Centre of Traditional Activities will organize the National Handicrafts Fair during September 2025.

This activity will serve as an important platform for promoting the work of master artisans from across Albania, highlighting the values of national traditions and folk craftsmanship.

As part of its commitment to promoting cultural diversity and ensuring the inclusion of all social groups, the fair will include women, children, artisans from Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as representatives of other groups carrying intangible cultural heritage.

Regional Directorates of Cultural Heritage

Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Korça

During 2024, the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Korçaorganized an activity in cooperation with the Children's Village and the "Stavri Themeli" nine-year school, within the framework of 21 May, World Day for Cultural Diversity. The purpose of this activity was to introduce culture in all its dimensions, promoting tolerance, respect and understanding towards different cultures through child-friendly discussions, combining learning and entertainment.

The RDCH Korça Sector in Elbasan, in cooperation with the French Alliance of Elbasan and children participating in the Francophone summer camp, implemented the joint project activity "Little Artisans". During this activity, children were introduced to the process of recycling fabrics and old clothes, which would be reused for carpet-making. The activity continued with a visit by the children to the workshop of the Social Enterprise "My Artisan Tradition", where they became familiar with weaving tools, working techniques and the handicraft products produced in the workshop.

In 2025, as part of institutional commitments related to the protection and promotion of cultural rights, a thematic activity was organized on 26 June at the "Sterjo Spasse" Museum in Pustec, serving as a space for reflection on the role of literature and culture in strengthening the identity of minority communities. The activity was part of the Summer School, organized within the framework of the IPA project for Albania–North Macedonia cross-border cooperation, and brought together members of the Macedonian community, as well as representatives of local and cultural institutions from Albania and North Macedonia.

The focus of the activity was the figure of the writer Sterjo Spasse, one of the most important voices of the Macedonian minority in Albania, who through his life and work represented the values of culture, dialogue and social inclusion. The event was followed by the opening of an exhibition and the illumination of the pathway leading to the museum, where selected excerpts from his writings were displayed. This concluding moment served as a call to further strengthen the cultural memory of minorities and to affirm their rightful place within Albania's national heritage.

An awareness-raising and informative activity entitled "Culture, Traditions and Customs of the Roma Community" will be held on 25 September 2025 at the premises of the Roma Cultural Centre in the city of Elbasan, aiming to promote and bring closer to the public the rich cultural heritage of this community.

This meeting will provide an opportunity to gain a closer understanding of the lifestyle, customs, values and cultural sensitivities that characterize the Roma community. Participants will have the opportunity to become familiar with traditional clothing as an expression of identity and heritage, while through traditional songs, music and dances they will experience elements of the community's intangible cultural heritage. The activity will also serve as a space

for dialogue and discussion with community representatives, who will share personal experiences and aspects of their traditions.
Through this activity, the aim is not only to promote Roma culture as a valuable part of Albania's cultural mosaic, but also to strengthen interethnic interaction, respect and sensitivity towards diversity. The initiative directly contributes to fulfilling the commitments arising from the European integration process, particularly in the fields of human rights and the protection of national minorities.

2. Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Tirana

In 2025, a series of activities were organized with a focus on raising awareness, education and the involvement of young people and the community in the field of cultural heritage and local history.
On 18 April, on the occasion of the International Day for Monuments and Sites, informative and educational activities were organized in cooperation with educational institutions in Tirana. Students from the schools "Naim Frashëri", "Avni Rustemi", as well as the secondary school "Qemal Stafa", participated in visits and interactive sessions aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Students were engaged in discussions, presentations and practical activities related to the history and architectural values of the city.
In addition, in cooperation with the "Shkoza Community Centre" and the "PAK Community Centre" (Persons with Disabilities), during the months of May and June, a series of educational and recreational activities entitled "Little Archaeologist" was organized. These activities aimed to bring the concepts of archaeology and cultural heritage closer to children through games, creative workshops and practical demonstrations. Children had the opportunity to explore elements of material history, learn about the archaeological research process and establish an early connection with heritage as part of their cultural identity.
Within the framework of the National Cultural Heritage Day, on 29 September 2025, the RDCH Tirana organized an awareness-raising and educational activity for children, inspired by the concept of the "Little Archaeologist".
The activity aims to bring children closer to the world of cultural heritage through a practical and inclusive approach, providing them with the opportunity to:

- Participate in practical workshops on archaeological findings;
- Explore the excavation process through educational games;
- Learn about the profession of archaeologist and its role in preserving history.

The activity will be organized in cooperation with selected schools and community centers, aiming to ensure broad participation of children aged 8–13 years.

3. Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Shkodra

In line with its commitment to promoting cultural rights of minorities, persons with disabilities, women, young people and other specific groups, the RDCH Shkodra currently employs a maintenance worker from the Roma community, who has been trained and works with the support of the Shkodra Employment Office.

Within the framework of the International Roma Day, 8 April 2025, this Regional Directorate, in cooperation with the Multifunctional Community Centre "For the Family" of the Municipality of Shkodra, organized a special activity dedicated to the Roma language and culture.

Roma grandmothers, women and children had the opportunity to learn more about the Roma language, a valuable asset of their cultural identity. Roma culture, as an important part of our social mosaic—vibrant, diverse and inspiring—was presented through a dedicated presentation prepared by specialists of this Directorate.

4. Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Gjirokastër

During 2024, the Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Gjirokastër carried out several activities in cooperation with students from nine-year schools and secondary schools, as well as with the Gjirokastër Children's Cultural Centre, aiming to promote cultural values, encourage initiatives, support communities and foster social engagement.

The RDCH Gjirokastër, in cooperation with students from the non-public school "Xhuzepe Gras", organized the activity "The Bread of Life", which followed traditional practices in the preparation of dough and related products. The products created during the activity were sold, and the proceeds were used to support children with disabilities at the Therapeutic Child Development Centre in Gjirokastër.

In cooperation with the schools "Naim Frashëri", "Koto Hoxhi", "A. Z. Çajupi", and the Gjirokastër Children's Cultural Centre, various activities were organized, mainly focused on promoting cultural heritage through traditional cooking and handicrafts. Through the activities organized by the Children's Cultural Centre of Gjirokastër, children had the opportunity to sell their paintings, and the proceeds were used to support children with disabilities at the Therapeutic Child Development Centre in Gjirokastër.

Within the framework of 21 May, World Day for Cultural Diversity, in cooperation with the schools "Bilal Golemi" and "Asim Zeneli", as well as polyphonic groups from the Drino Valley, the activity "The Ornament of Antigonea" was organized at the Antigonea Archaeological Park. The activity promoted the heritage and traditions of different communities that are part of the Drino Valley, particularly the Aromanian (Vlach) community, the Labëria region, the Lunxhëria region, the Dropull area, and the Egyptian community.

5. Regional Directorate of Cultural Heritage (RDCH) Vlora

Within the framework of the International Day for Cultural Diversity, on 21 May 2024, the RDCH Vlorë, in cooperation with the Regional Education Directorate, organized an activity at

the premises of the "Naim Frashëri" Artistic High School. The activity focused on cultural diversity, how students perceive it, and how they imagine and interpret this diversity, reflecting their ideas through their artistic talent in painting.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Corner joined the "Aulona Inter Folk Festival" for four days, where through handicrafts, traditional crafts and folk melodies expressed through songs and dances, the picture of cultural diversity was enriched. The festival brought vibrant colours, rhythms, sounds and new energy to the streets of the city of Vlorë during the period 24–28 May 2024.

6. National Historical Museum

During the period April–July 2025, within the framework of the "Education through Culture" Program, 11 activities were organized, including:

- "My Museum" was organized 8 times.
- The informative and entertaining activity entitled "Who Has It?" – "Xhubleta" was organized 20 times.
- "History Tells" was organized 6 times.

  A total of 1,100 students participated in these activities.

Furthermore, during the period April–July 2025, the National Historical Museum organized a new activity entitled "Museum in the Square". This activity was held in Tirana on 18 May 2025 and in Mirditë on 3 July. A total of 120 participants took part in these two activities.

The activities organized by the National Historical Museum ensured the inclusion of all age groups, genders and communities.

7. National Museum of Photography "Marubi"

- On 16 May 2025, the Marubi Museum organized the activity "The Illustrated Map of Kolë Idromeno's Architecture". During a masterclass with young artists, based on research conducted by two architects, several buildings designed by Idromeno were illustrated, creating a visual journey starting from the Shkodra Lagoon and continuing through the oldest neighborhoods of the city. The activity was held within the framework of the International Museum Day, with the support of MEKI.
- On 27 August 2025, the workshop "Peep Show Box: A Paper Theatre of the Old Bazaar of Shkodra" was organized. This workshop was a creative and educational activity inviting students to build a small "Peep Show Box", inspired by historical photographs from the Marubi Collection documenting life in the Old Bazaar of Shkodra.

8. National Museum of Secret Surveillance "House of Leaves"

On the occasion of 21 May 2024, the International Day for Cultural Diversity, the ministries responsible for Education and Culture welcomed children from the Community Centre "Let's

Stay Together". This center located in Kombinat, focuses on families in need and individuals with special needs.

9. Museum Centre, Durrës

On 21 March 2024, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Museum Centre organized, in cooperation with the Multifunctional Community Centre "Nish Tulla", an informal educational activity with a group of children, the majority of whom belonged to the Roma community. The children participated in interactive communication and became familiar with the history of the ancient city through multimedia projections at the Venetian Tower in Durrës.

10. Office for the Administration and Coordination of the Apollonia Archaeological Park

The activities carried out in the Apollonia and Bylis Archaeological Parks focus on education through culture, targeting young people and the wider community.

From 13-15 June 2025, the European Heritage Days and the activity "Apollonia on a Leaflet" were organized at the Apollonia Archaeological Park by the "New Era" Youth Centre, Fier. During this activity, students discovered how archaeologists work through a simulated archaeological excavation. They also participated in educational games and activities such as "Little Archaeologist", "Let's Find the Treasure", "Color the Mosaic", "Touch the Monuments", and others.

Year	Title of the Call	Title
2022	Promotion and Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Nine National Minorities in Albania	Promotion and Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Nine National Minorities in Albania
2023	Preservation and Promotion of Art, Culture, Traditional Crafts, and Cultural Heritage of National Minorities in Albania	Photographic Album of Traditional Costumes of the Macedonian National Minority in the Republic of Albania
		The Roots of Roma Music in Modern Times
		"The Future Lies in the Origin"
		"Preservation and Promotion of the Culture and Origins of Minorities through Art and Craftsmanship"
		"Once Upon a Time There Was a Culture"
2024	Diversity: The Art of Thinking Independently Together	"Çingijet: Content of Egyptian Cultural Heritage in Albania"
		"Journey in the Footsteps of Tradition"
		"Heritage and Promotion of Traditional Roma Costumes"
		"Creation of Traditional Costumes of the Macedonian National Minority in the Prespa Area"
	Second Call on Clothing, Art, Culture, and Cultural Heritage	"Traditional Costumes of the Serbian National Minority"
		"Dropull Traditional Costumes, a Treasure of Tradition"

2025	Diversity Unites Us: Preserving Traditions and Customs, Building the Future	“Diversity Unites Us: Preserving Traditions and Customs, Building the Future”
		“The Heritage of Dropull and Pogon Traditional Costumes: Symbolism, History, and Identity”
	Second Call : “Diversity Unites Us: Preserving Traditions and Customs, Building the Future”	“Aromanian Heritage and Culture, Together at the Same Table”
		“Promoting Egyptian Culture, Protecting the Values of Egyptian Cultural Heritage in Albania”
		“Food and Festive Communities”
		“Documentation and Promotion of the Cultural Heritage, History, and Contribution of the Roma Minority through a Graphic Novel”
		“Literary Work with a Collection and Studies of Albanian Authors of Macedonian Origin”
		“Creation of Traditional Costumes of the Macedonian, Aromanian, and Roma National Minorities in the Korçë Region”
		“Gora in the Tradition of Taste”

Association/Natural Person	Minority
“Shën Kosmai” Association	Greek
Association "Ilinden"	Macedonian
Rromano Kham	Roma
Johana Bano, Natural Person	Greek
Voice of Roma in Albania	Roma
Environment and Community in Albania	Egyptian
“Environment and Community in Albania” Association	Egyptian
“Shën Kosmai” Association	Greek
“Union for the Development and Integration of the Roma Minority in Albania – Amaro-Drom” Association	Roma
“Sonce” Association	Macedonian
Mr. Bledar Kuka, Natural Person	Serbian
Cultural Association “Dhropoli”	Greek

Association “Shën Kosmai”	Greek
Association “Dhropoli”	Greek
Foundation "Harriet Martineau"	Aromanian
Association "Environment and Community in Albania"	Egyptian
Ms. Johana Bano, Natural Person	Greek
Association "Voice of Roma in Albania"	Roma
Mr. Endrit Fetahu, Natural Person	Macedonian
Association "Sonce"	Macedonian
Association "Bulgarians of Albania"	Bulgarian

Project Description
The project aims to highlight the values of cultural diversity of the nine national minorities and to modestly strengthen the objectives of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the Framework Convention “For the Protection of National
Photographic Album with “Traditional Folk Costumes of the Macedonian National Minority in the Republic of Albania”. The purpose is the preservation of the folkloric values of the Macedonian National Minority residing in the Republic of Albania, the promotion of folkloric values, and raising awareness
This project seeks to bring back traditional Roma music. The revitalization of Roma music would bring more identity to the music and would distinguish which music is the product of artists from the Roma minority. The implementation of this project would restore and promote original Roma music, which
Cultural and culinary diversity represents a valuable and unique resource in every society. The project aims to highlight the values of culinary and cultural diversity of national minorities. To promote the distinctive culinary diversity of national minorities as an added value that contributes to the enrichment
This project envisages organizing an exhibition with illustrations and paintings by Roma artist Ferdinand Koçi, who through his works shows the connection of Roma people with the land and agricultural activities. In addition, a fair with artistic and handicraft works will be held to promote and preserve the professional identity of all national minorities.
This project aims to preserve the values of saze music, as a cultural element of the Roma and Egyptian minorities in Albania, in the context of the social inclusion of young people. To build a cultural agenda
Through this project, we seek to shed light on the true meaning of the Çingije and their contributions to the heritage of the Egyptian community. By documenting their history, costumes, and performances, we aim to preserve and promote their authentic image.
To celebrate an annual tradition through the organization of a cultural folkloric gathering in these Greek minority areas. To promote and celebrate the cultural differences of minorities. To promote local tourism in these areas. To encourage and support the participation of minority artists from these areas. To encourage the younger generation’s desire for the preservation, promotion, and enrichment of the
Promotion and preservation of the traditional clothing of the Roma national minority in Albania by creating a platform for the Roma community to celebrate, share, and actively promote their culture and traditions within the broader Albanian society.
This project aims to preserve and revive the traditional folk clothing traditions of the Macedonian community in the Prespa area, in the Korçë district. This project focuses on the restoration of traditional clothing, a key element of the cultural identity of this minority.
The project aims to preserve and further transmit the tradition and culture of the Serbian minority living in Albania. National costumes are a key element of cultural heritage. The project seeks to keep alive and partially address the numerous needs for activities supporting the cultural heritage of the Serbian
The main objective of this project is to explore, preserve, and promote the living heritage of the rural communities of Dropull, through the transfer and transmission of knowledge, practices, and customs, with particular emphasis on the preservation and further development of tangible heritage elements, such

This activity, supported by the principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, aims to strengthen, preserve, promote, and support the creativity and traditions of the nine national minorities by stimulating the creation of their cultural products. The project consists of: · the organization of a 2-day Folkloric Festival with the participation of folk groups from eight national minorities (130 participants);
The project aims to revitalize the cultural life of the Dropull and Pogon areas and to encourage community involvement in the protection of tangible and intangible heritage through traditional songs,
The specific objectives of this project are: Increasing the participation of young people in the field of culinary arts, improving the distribution of traditional culinary products through digital platforms, etc. Raising awareness among local communities and, through them, the wider society that the diversity of minorities enriches the culture of the society in which they coexist and that they need support to be
The purpose of the project is to shed light on the true cultural meaning of the Egyptian minority by documenting their history, costumes, and artistic and cultural performances.
The main purpose of this project was to highlight and promote the culinary heritage of national minorities through an artistic and cultural approach. It aims to promote and preserve the cultural heritage
This project aims to document, preserve, and promote the values of Roma cultural heritage through the collection of information, documents, and photographs, and their artistic translation into an accessible graphic novel for a broad audience of Roma and non-Roma readers in Albania.
The purpose of this project is to research, collect information, and publish a literary work that will include and provide detailed accounts of the lives, works, and contributions of Albanian authors of Macedonian origin. This literary work will serve as a source of information for researchers, students, and
This project aims to preserve and revive the traditional folk clothing traditions of the Macedonian, Aromanian, and Roma communities in the Korçë Region. These national minorities reside in this region and possess a rich cultural heritage that includes language, traditions, folklore, and spiritual and historical values. The project focuses on the recreation of traditional clothing, which constitutes an essential element of the cultural identity of these communities. Furthermore, the project envisages the publication of an 8-page, full-color brochure/leaflet, which will
The main objective of this activity was to encourage and motivate young people of the Gorani national minority to preserve and further cultivate these valuable elements of local culinary heritage in the future and to transmit them to future generations. The primary purpose of this workshop was to demonstrate the cultural values to the younger generation and to document the heritage of taste.

Project Start Date	Project End Date	No. of minorities involved
20.09.2022	30.11.2022	9 national minorities
16.04.2023	16.07.2023	1 national minority
June 2023	August 2023	1 national minority
May 2023	July 2023	9 national minorities
July 2023	December 2023	9 national minorities
June 2023	December 2023	1 national minority
May 2024	September 2024	1 national minority
April 2024	July 2024	9 national minorities
May 2024	July 2024	1 national minority
May 2024	August 2024	1 national minority
October 2024	November 2024	1 national minority
October 2024	November 2024	1 national minority

May 2025	December 2025	9 national minorities
May 2025	December 2025	1 national minority
30 June 2025	15 November 2025	1 national minority
15 June 2025	25 October 2025	1 national minority
June 2025	31 October 2025	9 national minorities
1 July 2025	30 December 2025	1 national minority
June 2025	December 2025	1 national minority
1 July 2025	9 December 2025	3 national minorities (Macedonian national minority, Roma national minority, Aromanian national minority)
1 July 2025	31 October 2025	1 national minority

Project output
1. Organization of a folkloric festival of the 9 National Minorities in Albania 2. Photo exhibition with stands featuring photographs of the 9 National Minorities 3. Publication of a magazine
1. Photographic album featuring traditional clothing of the Macedonian national minority
1. 2 music videos adapted to the storyline of the song lyrics.
1. Culinary exhibition of national minorities in Albania 2. Publication of a magazine titled "The Future Is in the Origin"
1. Fair with Artistic and Handicraft Works by Young Artists from National Minorities in Albania 2. Nine (9) Podcasts with artists, artisans, authors, poets, and musicians from national minorities 3. Catalogue featuring artistic and handicraft works from national minorities 4. Small desk calendar for the year 2024 featuring artistic and handicraft works from national minorities 5. Exhibition and catalogue “Retrospective” by Roma artist Ferdinant Koçi
1. 3 concerts and photo exhibitions organized in Tirana, Berat, and Vlora.
1. Creation of 4 Egyptian traditional costumes (Çingije) 2. Historical research on Çingije 3. Brochure on the history and the costumes created
1. Second cultural folkloric meeting 2. Parade of traditional costumes 3. Photographic exhibition 4. Tourist guide for the groups participating in the meeting
1. Organization of the workshop 2. Production of costumes 3. Documentation of the production process 4. Exhibition
1. Field identification of traditional clothing 2. Design and preparation of the brochure 3. Preparation of 4 traditional costumes 4. Production of 30 miniature costumes 5. Organization of the closing event in Korçë and presentation of the costumes.
1. Preparation of traditional Serbian costumes 2. Production of a brochure on the history and creation of the costumes 3. Organization of the closing activity and presentation of the costumes
1. Meeting with artisans for the production of traditional Dropullite costumes 2. Closing activity for the presentation of Dropullite costumes 3. Brochure on the history and creation of Dropullite costumes

1. Organization of the folkloric festival 2. Photo exhibition in Livadhja 3. Publication of a photographic album 4. Production of 5 women's costumes
1. Presentation of traditional Dropullite-Pogoniate costumes 2. National Minorities Festival
1. Two-day traditional cooking demonstrations in Fier 2. Two-day cooking demonstrations in Korçë 3. Two-day cooking demonstrations in Elbasan 4. Informative roundtable 5. Brochure
1. Production of 6 costumes 2. Training session 3. Exhibition
1. Round table discussion 2. Demonstration of national minorities' traditional cuisine
1. Production of 320 panel illustrations for the graphic novel 2. Printing of 500 copies of the graphic novel 3. Increasing information and public awareness among citizens of Fier 4. Promotion of cultural heritage in secondary schools
1. Design and publication 2. Distribution and promotion of the publication
1. Preparation of 6 traditional costumes 2. Production of miniature costumes 3. Design and preparation of the brochure 4. Closing activity
1. Interviewing and collection of recipes 2. Workshop with school students 3. "Flavors of Gora" Fair 4. Publication of the brochure