



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/MR(2024)3

Meeting report

84th meeting

Approved by the Advisory Committee on 24 February 2025

Opening of the meeting

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) held its 84th meeting from 14 to 18 October 2024 in Strasbourg. Petra Roter, President of the Advisory Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Advisory Committee.

Adoption of the Agenda and Order of Business

The Agenda and Order of Business, as reproduced in Appendix I, were adopted without amendments.

Approval of the report of the 83rd meeting of the Advisory Committee

Having examined the report of its 83rd meeting, the Advisory Committee approved the report as reproduced in document ACFC/MR(2024)2, without amendments.

Report from the Bureau

The President warmly welcomed the newly elected members of the Advisory Committee. She informed them about changes introduced in the monitoring procedure by the reform of 2019 and in particular about the confidential dialogue as a mandatory procedural aspect of the monitoring process provided for under the Resolution CM/Res(2019)49 on the revised monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Furthermore, the President informed the members of the Bureau's decision to grant the Azerbaijani Government an extension of one month for submitting their comments on the Fifth Opinion on Azerbaijan, in accordance with Rule 28 of the Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, and that this opinion, together with the comments, would be published on 8 November 2024.

Update by the Secretariat

Elise Cornu, Executive Secretary, informed the Advisory Committee about developments in the Committee of Ministers, including the state of negotiations of country resolutions and updated the members of the Advisory Committee on the timeframe of upcoming state reports.

She also presented the procedure for the election of the Bureau (President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President).

Elections

With Tomáš Hrustič (member in respect of Slovakia) in the chair, as the longest serving member, the Advisory Committee elected by acclamation Petra Roter (member in respect of Slovenia) as the President, Besarion Bokhashvili (member in respect of Georgia) as the First Vice-President and David Smith (member in respect of the United Kingdom) as the Second Vice-President.

Approval of draft opinions

On 17 October 2024, in application of Rule 37 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the Sixth Opinion on Finland and the Fifth Opinion on Serbia.

The Advisory Committee also decided to communicate these draft opinions to the authorities concerned, and to invite the authorities of Finland and Serbia to provide written observations by 8 January 2025.

Furthermore, the Advisory Committee decided to defer the conclusion of the second reading and the vote on the approval of the Sixth Opinion on Czechia to its next plenary session, to be held in February 2025.

Adoption of final opinions

In application of Rule 25 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, the Advisory Committee unanimously adopted the following final opinions:

- Fifth Opinion on Lithuania on 15 October 2024,
- Fifth Opinion on Ireland on 16 October 2024.

The opinions will be sent to the states concerned for comments and be made public, at the latest, by March 2025.

Composition of Working Groups/Planning of visits

The Advisory Committee appointed Judith Wyttenbach (member elected in respect of Switzerland) as Gender Equality Rapporteur, for a term of two years in accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure.

The Advisory Committee agreed that the document on the composition of Working Groups would be circulated among the members, members, after consultation of the Secretariat and the Bureau, and the President invited all members to come forward with their preferences and availability to serve as members of individual working groups.

Future plenary meetings

The Advisory Committee confirmed the dates of the following plenary meetings:

- 85th plenary from 24 to 28 February 2025;
- 86th plenary from 30 June to 4 July 2025;
- 87th plenary from 13 to 17 October 2025.

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Launch Event of the Thematic Commentary on Education

On 17 October, the Launch Event of the new "[Thematic Commentary on Education: a practical tool to ensure inclusive and quality education](#)" was held in a hybrid format. The event was attended, *inter alia*, by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, the Director General of Democracy and Human Dignity of the Council of Europe, Marja Ruotanen, several Permanent Representatives and Deputies to Permanent Representatives of member states, staff of the Council of Europe, members of the Advisory Committee, as well as external experts.

The event was opened by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, who highlighted the importance of the Framework Convention with its unique monitoring process in times where minority rights are increasingly under pressure. The event was moderated by the President of the Advisory Committee, Petra Roter. Four panellists contributed to the discussion: Nicolas Levrat, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues; Brigitta Busch, University of Vienna, Department of Linguistics; David Smith, Vice-President of the Advisory Committee, member in respect of the United Kingdom; and Harald Scheu, Additional member of the Advisory Committee in respect of Czechia.

In his presentation, Nicolas Levrat emphasised the importance of co-operation between regional and global mechanisms to guarantee equal access to education for persons affiliating with minorities and explained the difference between direct and indirect discrimination of persons affiliating with minorities in the education sector. Brigitta Busch stressed the importance of continued education in minority languages from kindergarten onwards and pointed out that a person's home cannot be a sufficient and the only source of language transmission and that, therefore, education in minority languages must be provided continuously throughout different levels of education, including at the secondary and tertiary level. David Smith discussed that the Advisory Committee often encounters different perspectives and

narratives of historical events during their visits and explained how multiperspectivity in history teaching can contribute to intercultural dialogue and generating a shared vision of society. Finally, Harald Scheu highlighted that segregated education tends to provide lower quality and poorer education outcomes and elaborated on the difference between segregated education and separate education.

Following an exchange with the participants, Petra Roter closed the meeting by stressing the key role of quality and inclusive education that takes into account both specific needs and interests of persons affiliating with minorities and the broader societal goals for integration of diverse societies. She thanked all those who had contributed to the preparation of the thematic commentary, in particular the members of the Advisory Committee's working group in charge of this work, who participated in the panel, as well as Emma Lantschner, who participated online, and expressed the wish that it is widely disseminated and used by all interested stakeholders.

Appendix I – Agenda

Monday 14 October 2024

- 9:45 – 10:30 Opening of the meeting
Adoption of the Agenda & Order of business
Approval of the 83rd meeting report
Report from the Bureau
Report from the Secretariat
Pictures
- 10:45 – 12:45 Monitoring: First reading of the fifth draft opinion on Serbia
- 12:45 – 14:00 Break
- 14:00 – 18:00 Monitoring: Continuation of the First reading of the fifth draft opinion on Serbia

Tuesday 15 October 2024

- 9:00 – 10:00 Monitoring: Reading and Approval of draft fifth opinion on Lithuania
- 10:00 – 12:45 Monitoring: First reading of the draft sixth opinion Finland
- 12:45 – 14:30 Break
- 14:30 – 18:00 Monitoring: Continuation of the First reading of the draft sixth opinion Finland

Wednesday 16 October 2024

- 9:00 – 10:00 Monitoring: Reading and final adoption of the draft Fifth Opinion on Ireland
- 10:00 – 12:30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Czechia
- 12:30 – 14:30 Break
- 14:00 – 18:00 Monitoring: Continuation of the First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Czechia

Thursday 17 October 2024

- 9:00 – 11:30 Monitoring: Second reading and approval of the draft Fifth Opinion on Serbia
- 11:30 – 12:00 Election of the Bureau
- 12:00 – 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 – 15:30 Monitoring: Second reading and approval of the draft Sixth Opinion on Finland
- 16:00 – 18:30 Launch event Thematic Commentary on Education

Friday 18 October 2024

- 9:00 – 11:30 Monitoring: Second reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Czechia
- 11:30 – 13:00 Exchange about upcoming visits
Any other business
List of decisions

Appendix II – List of participants

▪ Ordinary Members

Pedro AGUILERA CORTÉS (Spain)
Evis ALIMEHMETI (Albania)
Ingeborg BIRNIE-HAVENGA (Netherlands)
Besarion BOKHASHVILI (Georgia) – First Vice-President
Laura-Maria CRĂCIUNEAN-TATU (Romania)
Vladimir DJURIĆ (Serbia)
Yuliia FYSUN (Ukraine)
Tomáš HRUSTIČ (Slovak Republic)
Šarūnas LIEKIS (Lithuania)
Tove H. MALLOY (Denmark)
Egly PANTELAKIS (Cyprus)
Klaus POIER (Austria)
Detlev REIN (Germany)
Petra ROTER (Slovenia) – President
Roksana RUDEVIČA (Latvia)
Elisabeth SÁNDOR-SZALAY (Hungary)
David SMITH (United Kingdom) - Second Vice-President
Judith WYTTEBACH (Switzerland)

▪ Additional Members:

Mikko PUUMALAINEN (Finland)
Harald Christian SCHEU (Czechia)

➤ **Secretariat of the Council of Europe**

Elise CORNU, Executive Secretary and Head of the National Minorities and Minority Languages Division
Lusine DRAMPYAN, Administrator
Michaël GUET, Administrator, Policy Adviser
Maxime HUOT, Administrator
Zeynep USAL-KANZLER, Administrator
Jörg HORN, Administrator, Policy Adviser
Amona ZEMON, Project Officer
Kristina DEDAJ, Administrative Assistant
Snežana LALIČIĆ, Administrative Assistant
Lorenz TRIPP, Study visitor