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Working document

Compilation of Opinions of the Advisory Committee relating to Article 14 of the Framework  
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (4<sup>th</sup> cycle)

"Article 14

- 1 The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.
- 2 In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.
- 3 Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language."

Note: this document was produced as a working document only and does not contain footnotes. For publication purposes, please refer to the original opinions.

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As of 18 September 2017, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities had adopted a total of 24 opinions, among which 17 opinions on Article 14, of which 17 are public.

NOTE

Based on the information currently at its disposal, the Advisory Committee considers that implementation of certain articles does not give rise to any specific observations.

This statement is not to be understood as signalling that adequate measures have now been taken and that efforts in this respect may be diminished or even halted. On the contrary, the nature of the obligations of the Framework Convention requires a sustained and continued effort by the authorities to respect the principles and achieve the goals of the Framework Convention. Furthermore, a certain state of affairs may be considered acceptable at one stage but that need not necessarily be so in further cycles of monitoring. It may also be the case that issues that appear at one stage of the monitoring to be of relatively minor concern prove over time to have been underestimated.

Armenia

*Adopted on 26 May 2016*

#### Article 14 of the Framework Convention

##### Teaching in and of minority languages

The Advisory Committee notes that the Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi languages continue to be taught both at primary and at secondary level schools. According to data for 2015, the Assyrian language is taught in six schools established in Yerevan and the Ararat, Kotayk and Armavir *marzes* (regions) to 557 children. The Kurdish language is taught in seven schools in the Aragatsotn *marz* to 394 children. Finally, the Yezidi language is taught in 23 schools located in the Ararat, Aragatsotn and Armavir *marzes* to 847 children. The national minority languages are taught two hours per week and the minimal number of children required to establish a class has been set at 10.

With regard to teaching in the Russian language, it has to be noted that in 43 schools in Yerevan, Ararat, Armavir, Gegharkunik, Lori, Tavush, Kotayk and Shirak *marzes* instruction of all subjects, with the exception of Armenian language, literature and history, is carried in that language. In addition, 60 schools teach intensive Russian-language courses, and all others teach Russian as a foreign language.

The Advisory Committee commends the authorities' efforts to produce textbooks and teaching materials in minority languages. Textbooks used in schools providing education in the Russian language continue to be printed in Armenia. In addition, complementary teaching materials are imported from the Russian Federation. During the current monitoring cycle, Kurdish language textbooks for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades were published in 2012, and the textbooks intended for the 5th, 6th and 7th grades were published in 2014. As regards the Yezidi language, textbooks for grades 2 to 11 were published between 2011 and 2014, and the "Alphabet of the Yezidi language" was re-published also in 2014. Finally textbooks for 1st grade children "Speak Assyrian" and 2nd graders "Write and speak Assyrian" were published in 2010 and 2011.

The Oriental Studies Department at Yerevan State University offers Persian, Arabic and Turkish studies. The Kurdish and Assyrian languages are also taught at the faculty. The Russian Language Faculty trains specialists in the area of Russian language and philology. The Advisory Committee notes, however, the persisting lack of teachers of Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi which besets village schools in remote locations, due principally not to lack of qualified specialists, but rather to lack of interest and financial incentives to relocate to such challenging areas.

The Advisory Committee notes finally that School 74 in Yerevan offers in-depth Greek language and history teaching. As no specific textbooks have been produced locally for teaching Greek, teaching materials from Greece are accepted. In addition, one preschool and a Sunday school offer opportunities to learn Greek. Less numerous minorities undertake similar steps (in particular by organising Sunday schools) to create opportunities for children to learn their minority languages.

##### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee invites the authorities to continue monitoring the situation, in consultation with the representatives of national minorities, to assess whether the framework for teaching of and in minority languages corresponds to actual needs and, where appropriate, take the necessary steps to address any shortcomings.

Austria

*Adopted on 13 October 2016*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Minority language teaching and learning at public schools

*Present situation*

The Advisory Committee is pleased to note that the minority language education system, according to the 1988 Minorities School Act for Carinthia, is further developing and that interest in bilingual education is constantly increasing. According to national minority representatives in this Land, the appeasement after years of tensions surrounding bilingual signposts (see Article 11) has had a positive impact on prestige and attractiveness of the Slovenian language amongst the public. Close to 50% of primary school pupils attend bilingual classes. As a result, the percentage of children who do not have Slovenian as a first language when they start school has also increased. In the view of the Advisory Committee, it is therefore particularly important to provide sufficient opportunities to access bilingual nursery schools as an integral part of public education, so that children may begin their language immersion from an early age. While welcoming the increased public support provided to the ten private nursery schools that offer bilingual tuition, the Advisory Committee agrees with national minority representatives that the number of available spaces for bilingual preschool tuition in Carinthia is far too limited. While noting that some municipal kindergartens also receive support for their bilingual groups from the Federal Chancellery, it further considers that bilingual preschool education should be funded in line with the Carinthian legislative framework through the public education system and not from the scarce funds available for cultural activities, in particular given that one year forms part of compulsory schooling.

In Burgenland, Burgenland Croatian continues to be taught in bilingual classes at 24 primary schools and may be studied as an optional subject in some additional schools. There are also two bilingual German-Hungarian primary schools. With few exceptions, all children living in the bilingual municipalities therefore attend bilingual primary schools. In those municipalities, minority languages are also taught in the nurseries for at least 12 hours per week. In other municipalities, this is possible if 25% of parents so request. According to national minority representatives, however, the availability of minority language daytime care establishments depends substantially on the will of the respective mayor and municipal council because the additional costs must be carried by the municipal budget. Moreover, the quality of teaching reportedly often remains low and few pupils gain acceptable levels of proficiency at the end of the fourth grade. As demand is rising, so is the need for qualified staff. National minority representatives argue that particular expertise and specialisation are required from teachers to cope with the fact that only a small percentage of the children speak the minority language at home and very few opportunities exist to hear the languages outside the classroom (see also Article 10). It is further regrettable that the interest among the Roma in Romani language classes remains very low. The Advisory Committee welcomes efforts by the regional school authorities to organise workshops regarding the Romani language and culture in interested schools which may trigger awareness of the possibilities for Romani language classes among parents.

In both regions, the minority language education system is particularly well established and attended at primary school level. At secondary level, however, the provision of bilingual education is considerably reduced to three schools in Carinthia and four schools in Burgenland. In addition, the minority languages

can be chosen as compulsory subjects in a number of secondary level schools in Carinthia as well as in some schools in Burgenland. Often however, the continued learning of the minority language can be chosen only at the expense of studying another foreign language, such as English, which demotivates students. In addition, the limited number of suitably qualified teachers as well as the fact that most students would have to travel to attend a school where they could study the minority language, results in overall significantly reduced numbers of students of the minority languages at upper secondary level, particularly in Burgenland. Minority representatives are further concerned by the fact that the standardisation of the school-leaving examination has resulted in reduced opportunities for students of Croatian to pass the examination in that language. As of 2015, this is no longer possible at schools where Croatian is merely a subject of choice. Given the particular significance of high quality minority language education for the affected communities, the Advisory Committee is pleased to note the establishment of a dialogue mechanism in early 2015, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education (see also Article 15), that enables national minority representatives to meet regularly with education officials to discuss their specific concerns with respect to the conditions and standards of minority language education.

Outside Burgenland and Carinthia, minority language education in the public school system is limited to optional classes that are offered at some schools where there is parental demand and subject to the availability of teachers. The Advisory Committee notes that an increasing number of pupils in Styria have chosen Slovenian as an optional subject and that national minority representatives consider that there is sufficient demand for a more comprehensive approach, including the use of Slovenian in nursery schools. The system of first language teaching is implemented in Vienna in respect of 27 languages, either through a second teacher who accompanies all classes and provides teaching in a language other than German, or through additional classes. Croatian may be chosen as an optional subject in a number of schools, and as of 2016, this is also possible for Slovenian. The Advisory Committee further welcomes the fact that Romani-language classes are also offered at some schools in Vienna. Overall, it considers that the flexible and student-oriented approach taken by school authorities towards growing linguistic diversity in classrooms could pave the way for responding more comprehensively also to the specific educational needs of persons belonging to national minorities outside Burgenland and Carinthia, such as in Vienna and in Styria.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to pursue their efforts towards promoting high-quality minority language teaching and learning, including through bilingual methodology, and to take all necessary measures to enhance access to minority language learning in particular at the upper secondary level.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to maintain close dialogue with national minority representatives to ensure that their specific needs and concerns with respect to the conditions and quality of the teaching and learning of the national minority languages throughout Austria are adequately considered.

Croatia

*Adopted on 18 November 2015*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Instruction in and of minority languages

*Present situation*

Education in and of minority language continues to be arranged through three models of education, Model A and Model C being most common. Model A schools offer all tuition in minority languages (with obligatory classes of Croatian), Model B schools offer bilingual education, and Model C schools follow the regular Croatian curriculum with additional classes in or of a minority language, literature and culture. The Advisory Committee notes that national minority representatives are generally satisfied with the education offered in Model A schools as graduates gain adequate proficiency in the minority language as well as in Croatian. It notes, however, concerns amongst the Italian community regarding the decreasing number of pupils in such schools and the possible necessity of school closures as a result. It further regrets that no solution has been found regarding the long-standing application for six elementary schools to be registered as Model A Serbian language schools in Vukovar-Srijem County. Despite the acknowledgement by the Ministry of Education that the conditions for the re-registration of the present-day Model C schools are met, the community has met with resistance at county and municipality level, neither of whom reportedly consider themselves responsible for the decision. It is regrettable that the continued absence of a constructive dialogue in this county appears to have led to a “stalemate”, where new initiatives that are supported by parents, such as the opening of a mixed school in Vukovar where both Latin and Cyrillic script are used, are met with apprehension on both sides.

Lesser-used minority languages, such as Albanian, German, Russian, Slovak, Slovenian or Ukrainian continue to be taught in a number of Model C schools throughout the country, which is highly appreciated by representatives of those numerically smaller minorities. Czech, Hungarian and Serbian are also taught at Model C schools in some areas where these minorities reside in non-substantial numbers. As a result of the lack of an adopted curriculum and appropriate textbooks, however, there is concern about the quality of minority education in those schools. Some children belonging to the Hungarian minority reportedly attend school across the border in Hungary as they consider the education in Model C schools as inadequate. The lack of an adopted curriculum for the teaching of some subjects at minority language schools is also problematic in that it prevents the comprehensive monitoring of education standards at Model C schools.

The Advisory Committee further notes the unanimous regret among minority communities that the Directorate for National Minorities within the Ministry of Education was discontinued and co-ordination of issues related to national minority education taken over by the Department for National Minorities and Children with Special Needs. According to most representatives, access to information has become significantly more difficult and time-consuming since.

*Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to closely consult with national minority representatives on all questions related to the administration and organisation of minority language schooling, and to ensure that the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to be taught in their

own language and script are evenly implemented throughout the country, including for languages spoken by the Roma.

It further encourages them to consider the introduction of modern bi- and multilingual teaching methodologies to improve the quality of language teaching at all schools and to facilitate the accommodation of high-quality learning of different languages in integrated education environments, in particular in areas where lower numbers of students may prompt mergers.

Cyprus

*Adopted on 18 March 2015*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching in and of minority languages

*Present situation*

The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that the authorities continue to provide considerable support to the promotion of teaching in and of minority languages. There is one public primary school, including pre-school, where CMA as well as elements of Maronites cultural traditions and religion are taught. In addition, three Armenian pre- and primary schools exist in Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol as well as one Gymnasium in Nicosia. The Advisory Committee notes, however, that the vast majority of funds allocated by the Ministry of Education to the support of minority communities is used to cover the private school fees incurred by secondary school students from the various groups as well as Turkish Cypriots. While changes in practice and in the religious education curriculum (see comments on Article 8) have led to an increase in students with a minority background opting for public schools in their area of residence, the Advisory Committee understands that the increasing cost of private schools, which is not compensated by the government subsidy that has remained equal over years, is the main reason why students opt for public schools at secondary level. The Advisory Committee considers that public funds could be more appropriately and more sustainably spent to promote opportunities for the learning of and in minority languages within the public school system, in close consultation with minority representatives, rather than using them to cover the fees of students with minority background as well as Turkish Cypriots at private schools.

St. Maronas School continues to offer optional classes of Maronite language, culture and religion in the afternoon while pupils generally follow the public school curriculum in Greek. The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that the authorities maintain their support to make the school accessible to children with a Maronite background, including from the areas outside government control, although transportation problems continue to be reported. In the 2014/2015 school year, some 80 children are attending the school, the vast majority belonging to the Maronite community. Despite the fact that the school is open to children from all groups, it is faced with an overall decreasing number of pupils. The Advisory Committee further regrets that currently only about 20 children are enrolled in the afternoon classes. While reiterating its appreciation for the support provided by the Ministry of Education to the University of Cyprus in storing and archiving CMA (see comments under Article 5), it finds that more efforts must be made to revitalise CMA as a living language, in parallel to the ongoing efforts by the University, which may take years before completion. It considers that CMA should be taught in the public curriculum, such as through language classes offered to all children at St. Maronas School in the

mornings and/or through the use of CMA as auxiliary language in the teaching of other subjects, in accordance with modern bilingual teaching methodologies. Such an approach, adopted and implemented in close consultation with community and school representatives and in line with adequate expertise related to relevant teaching models, may raise the attractiveness of the school for parents from all communities who are interested in modern language learning methodologies, and will increase the prestige of CMA as a living tool of communication rather than a relic of old times. It is further vital that capacity within the Ministry of Education is developed to establish and oversee adequate standards for the teaching of CMA in Cyprus, possibly with support from neighbouring countries, and that the quality of teaching is supported through the provision of more advanced teaching materials (see comments on Article 12).

The “Nareg” Armenian schools continue to function as public schools with special status. The Nareg primary schools, which are attended by some 200 children of Armenian background, do not follow the public curriculum but have developed their own programme, replacing religious education with Armenian literature, for instance, and adding four weekly classes of Armenian language as well as one history and one religion class. While the Advisory Committee welcomes the authority of the school to establish its own curriculum, it shares the concerns of the community that only the Greek language and history classes are supervised by the Ministry of Education and all other subjects, as they are taught in Armenian, fall outside the scope of its inspection capacity. Efforts are reportedly underway to recruit a suitable specialist, which is vital to ensure the continued high quality of teaching at the schools in line with academic standards. Continuity of education remains another concern for the community as the kindergartens at the Nareg schools do not receive sufficient state funding and the payment of fees for roughly half of the students must be subsidised through private donations. In addition, there is only one secondary school, the Nareg Gymnasium in Nicosia, offering Armenian language instruction until graduation. The number of students is reportedly slowly increasing at this school, which follows the main public curriculum and offers Armenian courses as an additional afternoon programme.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to increase their support for the learning of minority languages as integral part of the education system and with the appropriate level of supervision from the Ministry of Education in terms of standards and quality of education.

The Advisory Committee further calls on the authorities, in close consultation with community and school representatives, to allocate additional funds for the targeted support of the teaching of CMA at school, which should be separate from the efforts of preserving its original forms as cultural heritage.

#### Learning of official languages

##### *Present situation*

Armenian community representatives continue to report disadvantages when proficiency in the official language is required and tested, such as in order to enter the civil service (see comments under Article 15). The Advisory Committee welcomes in this regard the efforts made by the Nareg Gymnasium to follow the public school curriculum in Greek, spreading Armenian language teaching into the afternoon, thereby presenting its students with the ability to be fully proficient in both Greek and Armenian when graduating. It reiterates, however, that sufficient attention must be paid by the authorities to ensure that schools that teach in another medium of instruction than Greek, in Armenian or English for instance, provide adequate Greek language learning opportunities, including through a possible increase



in weekly classes as well as through the introduction of bilingual teaching and learning approaches (see comments on Article 12), as Article 14(3) of the Framework Convention entails the obligation to ensure that persons belonging to minority communities have equal access to the learning of official languages to promote their integration and effective participation in society.

The Advisory Committee notes with regret that very few opportunities exist for the learning of Turkish as one of the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus. While the Ministry of Education disburses considerable amounts to cover the school fees of Turkish Cypriots attending private schools in the Republic, such as the English school (see above comments), and these students do have access to Turkish language classes, teaching is reportedly organised at the same time as Greek language courses. This organisation deprives most students of the opportunity to learn both official languages of Cyprus despite the fact that there is an interest in that amongst parents and students alike. The Advisory Committee welcomes efforts commenced in 2003 to offer Turkish language courses in the public school system as well as in adult education centres but notes that these attempts are currently not enhanced and the few students who enrolled reportedly have been faced with resentment and suspicions. It considers that more efforts must be made to promote official bilingualism in line with the Constitution by strengthening the offer of Turkish language teaching in the public school system as the second official language.

*Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to strengthen the opportunities for all students to learn the official languages of the Republic of Cyprus.

Czech Republic

*Adopted on 16 November 2015*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching of/in minority languages and instruction in these languages

*Present situation*

The Advisory Committee recalls that the Education Act of 2004 creates the necessary conditions guaranteeing equal access to education of children belonging to national minorities and that representatives of national minorities express general satisfaction with its implementation.

A well-developed system of Polish language education, from pre-school to secondary school level, exists in the Frýdek-Místek and Karviná districts, permitting students belonging to the Polish national minority to receive instruction in Polish. The Advisory Committee notes that in the 2014/2015 academic year, 852 children attended 32 Polish language kindergartens, 1,781 children received instruction in Polish in 25 elementary schools in the region, and that these numbers continued to increase year by year. The number of children attending Polish language high-schools (383 in the academic year 2014/2015) showed, however, a trend going in the opposite direction.

The Advisory Committee regrets to note that the situation has not changed since the last monitoring cycle and there are no opportunities for Roma children to learn the Romani language in primary schools. Romani language is taught, as a foreign language, however, to 41 children at one secondary school (a secondary vocational school of management and law).

As regards other languages, it is not possible to determine from statistical data collected by the Ministry of Education the number of pupils educated at primary and secondary schools belonging to a specific national minority, and consequently the number of national minority children belonging, for example, to the Russian and German national minorities learn these languages in the framework of the study of modern languages as part of the curriculum. Given the small number and geographic dispersal of persons belonging to national minorities, the pre-condition of eight children asking for teaching of a minority language in a particular school is extremely difficult to fulfil. Lessons of less spoken languages in the Czech Republic, such as Hungarian or Croat are organised by organisations of these national minorities with the financial assistance of the authorities, and representatives of these minorities report their satisfaction with the current situation.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to continue monitoring the situation, in consultation with the representatives of national minorities, to assess whether the framework for teaching of and in minority languages corresponds to actual needs and, where appropriate, take the necessary steps to address any shortcomings.

The authorities should increase their efforts to provide persons belonging to the Roma minority with better opportunities to receive teaching in their language, according to the demand.

Denmark

*Adopted on 20 May 2014*

#### Article 14 of the Framework Convention

##### Minority language teaching

The Advisory Committee notes that schools teaching in the German language operate as private educational institutions and are co-financed by the central state authorities of Denmark and Germany, the Danish municipalities concerned, the Land of Schleswig-Holstein (Germany) and parents. There are currently 14 primary and lower secondary schools, one upper secondary school and one private independent boarding school teaching in the German language in Denmark. The Advisory Committee further notes that the number of children attending primary and secondary schools teaching in the German language has remained stable in the last four years, with around 1 400 children enrolled in these institutions. Representatives of the German minority consider that the number of schools and their location fully meet the demand for German language teaching in South Jutland. The Advisory Committee also notes with satisfaction that the amount of the state subsidy provided by the Danish authorities per child in schools teaching in the German language increased in 2011 to match the state subsidy per child in Danish language public schools.

The Advisory Committee further notes that, under the existing legislation municipalities in Denmark are required to offer mother tongue classes to pupils who speak languages of the EU/EEA Member States, as well as Faroese and Greenlandic, provided that a request is made on behalf of at least 12 children and that a qualified teacher can be provided.

The Advisory Committee regrets that the Ministry of Education was not able to provide information on the number of classes where Faroese and Greenlandic languages were taught in mainland Denmark.

According to information provided by representatives of the Faroese and Greenlandic communities, such classes are very few and do not meet the demand for teaching of these languages. Although some teaching is organised in Copenhagen at the Faroese community hall in Føroyahúsið and the Greenlandic House *Løvstræ Kalaallit Illuutaat* most of the children of Faroese and Greenlandic descent do not learn their mother tongues and assimilate rapidly in the mainstream Danish society. The Advisory Committee finds this situation regrettable, as learning Faroese and Greenlandic languages is a right recognised by Danish law. The absence of adequate opportunities for learning these languages also demonstrates that a combination of factors, such as the high numerical threshold and the lack of successful enforcement of these rights, make the relevant legislative provision a dead letter.

#### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee calls upon the authorities to intensify their dialogue with representatives of different groups to whom legislation on teaching in or of mother tongues applies, in order to analyse the existing needs and find appropriate solutions allowing all interested to receive instruction in or of their minority language.

Estonia

*Adopted on 19 March 2015*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

#### Minority languages in secondary education

##### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee notes that in the last seven years Russian-language schools in Estonia increased teaching of courses in Estonian language with the aim of reaching 60 percent of the curriculum to be dispensed in Estonian. As of the academic year 2013/2014 five compulsory courses (Estonian literature, music, civic education, history and geography of Estonia) are taught in Estonian with elective courses added to meet the required threshold. The authorities have undertaken significant efforts to improve the language proficiency of teachers who teach subjects in Estonian in Russian-language schools. According to the Estonian Education Information System (EIS), in the 2013/2014 academic year, in the 57 Russian-language upper secondary schools, of the 788 teachers who taught different subjects in Estonian, the share of teachers who had command of the Estonian language at least at C1 level was 93 per cent.

In this context the Advisory Committee notes also that free of charge courses in Estonian language at C1 level are available for teachers who teach in Estonian in Russian-language schools. It notes that teachers with intermediate level of proficiency in Estonian language (B2) can continue to teach in Russian in accordance with the school curriculum.

The transition to Estonian language of instruction has brought about some difficulties and problems for the schools, teachers and children alike. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that the obligation to adhere precisely to the 60:40 ratio has made some schools sacrifice their specific profile and choose optional and elective subjects according to the possibility of hiring teachers able to teach in Estonian and not in keeping with the school's specificity. This problem is particularly acute in vocational schools.

In addition, the teaching manuals and other materials, which have been developed for students whose first language is Estonian, are not adapted to national minority students who in addition to the subject matter have to struggle to comprehend the medium in which it is presented. Another problem is caused by the fact that some teachers, who in principle have the required C1 level command of the Estonian language (or, for 7 per cent of them, have acquired an intermediate level of proficiency - B2), are not capable of delivering their lessons in a comprehensible way. Reportedly, some young persons belonging to national minorities, who are otherwise motivated to learn Estonian, have also expressed their perception of being discriminated and humiliated by the transfer to 60% teaching in Estonian. Finally, according to the assessment carried out by the authorities themselves, the aim of the teaching process has become less concerned with acquisition of knowledge and learning colloquial and conversational Estonian, instead focusing on preparing for passing university entry tests in the Estonian language.

Notwithstanding the above, the Advisory Committee notes that according to a major international study focused on mathematics, reading, science and problem-solving, conducted in 2012 under the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Estonian schools combine high levels of performance with equity in education opportunities. The results of the study indicate also small variations in student scores, proving that high performance is possible for all students.

The manner in which national examinations are carried out is also problematic for children whose first language is not Estonian. The requirement to pass an English language exam at the same level of difficulty as all other students is perceived as unfair, given that there are less hours of instruction of that subject in Russian-language schools. This also has the effect that unlike their Estonian counterparts, Russian-language students have to pass two compulsory examinations in languages other than their first language.

### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that the authorities monitor in consultation with persons belonging to national minorities and taking into account their interests, the implementation of the requirement of teaching of 60 per cent of the study workload in Estonian in the Russian-language schools, with the view of introducing the required flexibility into the system. It further recommends that the authorities ensure that the range of subjects taught in minority language schools, including in particular the vocational ones, generally is not undermined by a lack of qualified teachers capable of teaching specialist subjects in Estonian.

The Advisory Committee further calls on the authorities to ensure that education materials in sufficient quantity and quality are available in minority language schools and teachers are adequately trained, including as regards the teaching of non-philological subjects in minority languages.

Finland

*Adopted on 24 February 2016*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Instruction in and of minority languages

*Present situation*

During the reference period, progress has been achieved in access to basic education in Sámi in the Homeland, fully supported by public funding (Law 2009/1705). The Advisory Committee notes that, overall, students attending school in Sámi up to the matriculation level slightly increased from 554 in 2012-2013 to 613 in 2013-2014, the majority of them studying in North Sámi, at basic education level, and within the Homeland. While all three Sámi languages are still endangered, and in particular Skolt Sámi, the number of students attending basic education increased, particularly that of Inari Sámi. Skolt Sámi students, on the contrary, diminished. Upper secondary school and professional education can also be provided in Sámi, although there is no statutory obligation. The offer is more limited and concentrated in one upper secondary school in Utsjoki and one professional institute in Inari, the Sámi Education Institute (SAKK). The Advisory Committee observes that children's knowledge of the three Sámi languages is expected to produce spillover effects on education attendance through the language nests initiative (day care) which have opened in the Homeland and appreciates the financial effort by the government in this respect. Sámi representatives, nonetheless, pointed out to the Advisory Committee that financial support should be made permanent to keep language learning sustainable.

The Advisory Committee is however concerned that access to education in Sámi outside the Homeland is much more limited. Although one language nest started operating in Helsinki and others are planned in other cities, Sámi organisations based outside the Homeland pointed out that the current educational offer is not sufficient to maintain the knowledge of the language, which represents also a prerequisite and an undeniable link to Sámi livelihoods. As is the case with other minority languages, two hours' tuition in Sámi is provided by municipalities when a study group composed of at least two children can be formed (this applies also to Roma, while a minimum of six children is required for Russian-speakers and speakers of other languages). Municipalities receive discretionary government grants to provide such instruction, which applies to national minority languages, as well as first languages spoken by immigrants. The opinion conveyed to the Advisory Committee by minority representatives, and not only for the Sámi, is that often logistical issues, scarce resources for municipalities, and difficulties in recruiting teachers prevent these activities from taking place or being fruitful. The Advisory Committee recalls the benefits of multilingualism to promote tolerance and respect for diversity in society, as well as the importance to ensure equal opportunities to learn one's minority language in parallel to the state language.

In the context of the National Roma Policy, teaching of the Romani language has been facilitated in preschool and basic education, as well as in upper secondary education, through discretionary government funding from the National Board of Education compensating municipalities. The number of pupils studying Romani increased up to 2011, when 170 students received Romani-language teaching in 12 municipalities, but dropped to 120 in 2014 (notwithstanding that the number of required students to form a class is just two). Special allocations have also been provided for language nests, which are currently 14 in Finland, to help with reviving the oral language at all ages. Since 2012, Romani language

and culture is taught at the University of Helsinki and this should bring some positive rippling effects in terms of a future qualified teaching body.

The Advisory Committee, however, also understands that the whole process of reviving the Romani language in education and guaranteeing the linguistic rights of persons belonging to the Roma minority face considerable challenges owing to shortcomings such as the number of qualified teachers available, as well as of education material (see also Article 12), combined with persisting discrimination patterns affecting Roma individuals' everyday life. Interlocutors also pointed out that those municipalities, which are ultimately in charge of providing this voluntary instruction, are not always aware of the availability of dedicated resources.

The Advisory Committee observes that little progress has been achieved in first language instruction in Russian. Interlocutors pointed at difficulties such as logistic arrangements for classes due to a scattered population and the minimum number of students required starting a class (six pupils) as major obstacles. Instruction in Karelian was launched in 2012 in Joensuu. From a general perspective, the Advisory Committee points in this regard to the substantial research suggesting the benefits of first language learning in schools for broader academic achievement in life including the proficient learning of second languages.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue supporting effective access to education in Sámi languages in the Homeland, and to develop additional opportunities in the rest of the country's territory, such as in the capital and other cities, where Sámi children are present in substantial numbers and if there is sufficient demand. To this purpose, particular attention should be paid to enhancing the role of and financial support to municipalities, including developing alternative ways of teaching.

The Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to continue their efforts towards maintaining and reviving the Romani language, including through making municipalities more aware of the availability of funds as well as providing alternative incentives to enhance their offer in all minority languages.

Germany

*Adopted on 19 March 2015*

#### Article 14 of the Framework Convention

##### Teaching in and of Frisian languages

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee welcomes the new constitutional protection granted to the teaching of North Frisian through amendments made to the Constitution of Schleswig-Holstein in December 2014. In practice, however, the Advisory Committee understands that North Frisian is taught only as an optional subject in Schleswig-Holstein, in some Danish minority and German public schools, often outside school hours and at inconvenient times; moreover, due to its status as an optional subject, there is no obligation to replace teachers of North Frisian when they retire or leave a school. Continuous education in North Frisian from kindergarten to high school level is only provided on Föhr Island. Representatives

of North Frisians have indicated that whereas ten years ago there were more than 1000 pupils learning North Frisian, today there are less than 900. In parallel, the circles in which individuals express themselves in North Frisian have shrunk drastically, with many North Frisians today having little contact with the North Frisian language outside their immediate family. This leads to a damaging loss of prestige for this language. Against this background, representatives of North Frisians in Schleswig-Holstein underline that there is a real need to increase the provision of teaching in North Frisian in German public schools. The Advisory Committee welcomes information provided by the authorities of Schleswig-Holstein according to which the action plan for languages and language rights to be published in 2015 will include plans to strengthen the teaching of North Frisian as a regular subject.

As regards the teaching of Sater Frisian in Lower Saxony, the Advisory Committee welcomes the issuing of a decree entitled "The Region and its Languages in Education", which came into force at the beginning of the 2011/2012 school year. This decree expressly acknowledges the value of the early acquisition of lesser-used languages such as Sater Frisian and recognises the important role that primary schools can play in this area. The decree allows primary schools to provide teaching of most compulsory subjects in Sater Frisian. It also allows for the continuation of such teaching, as well as the teaching of elective subjects in Sater Frisian, at secondary level. The Advisory Committee warmly welcomes the introduction of bilingual teaching at primary school level in the Litje Skoule Skäddel in Scharrel, and understands that other schools have established study groups for Sater Frisian as an optional subject. It also welcomes the existence of small groups in several kindergartens in which children are able to participate twice a week in activities in Sater Frisian. This possibility, initially provided essentially on a voluntary basis through the efforts of elderly or retired Sater Frisian speakers, now also benefits from the involvement of qualified teachers, and is designed to prepare the ground for children to grow up as bilingual speakers of German and Sater Frisian.

The Advisory Committee observes, however, that public support for these initiatives hangs by a thread. It is concerned that the strict application of rules on minimum class sizes may adversely affect the provision of bilingual teaching in Lower Saxony. It also draws attention to the particular importance, given the very small number of active speakers of Sater Frisian, of taking positive measures to promote continuity in teaching – for example, to ensure that the prolonged absence of a single teacher does not lead to the interruption of teaching in or of this language in the school concerned. It shares the view of representatives of Sater Frisians that one means towards achieving this would be for the *Land* authorities to take teachers' proficiency in the Sater Frisian language into account when allocating teachers to the Saterland district. It further notes that the need for proficiency in Frisian to be taken into account when recruiting and allocating public servants to posts has also been underlined by representatives of North Frisians.

The Advisory Committee considers that in view of the challenges outlined above, a comprehensive strategy, developed in consultation with Frisian representatives and involving language experts and local, *Land* and federal authorities to the full extent of their respective competencies, is needed in order to enable Frisians to preserve their language and pass it on to future generations. In the field of education, this should encompass providing teaching in and of Frisian from kindergarten level to the end of school, including using bilingual teaching methodologies, as well as through adult education. Adequate tertiary instruction and continuing education must also be provided for teachers of Frisian.

### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to step up the support provided to teaching in and of North Frisian in Schleswig-Holstein and recommends that they continue to develop the provision of teaching in and of Sater Frisian in Lower Saxony.

It recommends in addition that the authorities remove administrative obstacles to the provision of teaching in and of Frisian. As a positive measure to promote access to teaching in and of Frisian, account should be taken of proficiency in Frisian when appointing teachers to schools in the traditional settlement areas of Frisians, and special efforts should be made to replace teachers who provide teaching in or of Frisian where they are absent for long periods, leave the area or retire. Particular flexibility should also be applied as regards minimum class size requirements, to ensure that these do not prevent the delivery of teaching in or of Frisian where a demand for it exists.

### Teaching in and of Sorbian

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee welcomes the continued implementation of the *Witaj* project and 2plus concept to promote early bilingual education in German and Sorbian for children, starting at kindergarten level, with the aim of revitalising the Sorbian language. It understands that both of these projects are currently being evaluated, and hopes that these evaluations will enable the projects to be strengthened further. In this respect it notes the concerns of Sorbian representatives as regards the progressive decrease in teaching hours delivered in Sorbian as students advance through bilingual schooling and a lack of continuity to the end of school education for students who attend comprehensive schools. As noted above (see Article 12), the lack of qualified teachers also continues to act as a hindrance to replacing ill or departing teachers, leading in some cases to the cancellation of classes in Sorbian for protracted periods of time. The Advisory Committee welcomes the inclusion of a new possibility in Brandenburg, following the amendment of Sorbs/Wends Act, for the umbrella organisation Domowina to attend school conferences in bilingual schools, and hopes that this will make it easier for such concerns to be heard and taken into account at an early stage.

The Advisory Committee emphasises in this context that the authorities should not take a passive approach, waiting for demands for education in Sorbian to be expressed before seeking ways to respond to them, but should stimulate such demand through awareness-raising among parents and pupils, and actively promote and foster possibilities for minority language teaching.

#### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee again recommends that the authorities intensify measures to maintain a sound and sustainable network of Sorbian language schools in the area of traditional Sorbian settlement, at all levels of the educational system.

### Teaching of Romani

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee notes that the teaching of Romani is a sensitive question in Germany, with representatives of some Sinti organisations holding strongly to the view that this language should be kept strictly within the Sinti community and that it is inappropriate to teach it in schools. However, the Advisory Committee notes that this view is not universally shared among Sinti and Roma representatives



in Germany, and observes that where a need for the teaching of this language is expressed, it should be followed up on to the extent possible.

The Advisory Committee again notes with appreciation the information brought to its attention concerning the teaching of the Romani language in some schools, notably in Hamburg, offered in response to local demand and aimed generally at preserving and developing the culture and language of this community. It also notes with interest that the *Land* of Rhineland-Palatinate, acknowledging the reluctance of Sinti and Roma to have the Romani language taught officially through the state school system, has in the past supported initiatives of this minority to provide self-organised additional classes aimed at preserving and developing the culture and language of this community. However, the latter activities were run essentially on a volunteer basis, which is not sustainable in the long term. The Advisory Committee hopes that a more secure basis for supporting the teaching of Romani, where such a need is expressed, can be found in future. It observes in this context that research points to considerable benefits for minority pupils in learning their minority language, which is not only linked to the preservation of individual identity, but also forms an important basis for the development of the individual linguistic repertoire and the acquisition of additional languages.

#### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee again encourages the authorities concerned to monitor and review regularly the demand for teaching Romani, as well as Romani language teaching projects and their impact on academic achievement by Roma children, in the interests of furthering good practice in this field. The authorities should ensure the effective participation of representatives of the Roma community in these monitoring and evaluation procedures. They should also identify means by which to place successful projects in this field on a sustainable footing.

Hungary

*Adopted on 25 February 2016*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching in and of minority languages

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee notes that the Fundamental Law of 2011 reaffirms in Article XIX the right of “nationalities living in Hungary [...] to be educated in their native languages”. Secondary legislation, such as the Act on the Rights of Nationalities and the Act on Public Education, provide a detailed framework for different models of teaching in and of minority languages, in accordance with the needs of the national minority communities.

The Advisory Committee notes that, in accordance with the Act on Public Education, a well-developed system of minority language education exists in Hungary, permitting students belonging to national minorities to receive instruction in or of their languages. Three basic models have been developed to meet different needs and expectations of national minorities. In “nationality schools” all subjects are taught in the language of a national minority; bilingual schools dispense teaching in such a way that sciences are taught in Hungarian, whereas arts and humanities are taught in the minority language; and, finally, a “nationality education component” consisting of teaching a national minority language and

culture can be included in the school curricula of ordinary schools at the initiative of at least eight parents (in the case of kindergartens and primary schools) or 14 parents (in the case of secondary schools).

The Advisory Committee notes that in the school year 2011-2012 (the only year for which figures were provided), according to the information provided in the State Report, 17,806 children belonging to Bulgarian, Croat, German, Greek, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serb, Slovak and Slovenian minorities studied in 273 “nationality kindergartens”, 50,745 children in 348 “primary nationality schools” and 3,362 children in secondary “nationality schools”. Management of many of such schools has been taken over by national minority self-governments since the legal possibility was created in 2004 and the process is ongoing. The Advisory Committee notes that, according to representatives of national minorities, the financial framework for operating “nationality schools” is sufficient as regards larger schools (teaching 150 or more children). Smaller schools often struggle with the amount of funding allocated by the Ministry of Human Capacities and are obliged to seek extra funding from the municipal authorities or private donors.

Bilingual schools, in accordance with the national core curriculum of 2012, are under the obligation to offer at least 50% of courses in a minority language with the remaining classes taught in Hungarian. In the schools which have opted to introduce a “nationality education component” the time frame for teaching national minority culture and languages has been increased to five hours per week in schools teaching Croat, German, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak and Slovenian languages, and to three hours in the case of Romani and Beash languages, with one extra hour allocated per week to teach minority cultures.

The Advisory Committee notes that this model of national minority language teaching is expanding rapidly, with reportedly a quarter of all schools in Hungary offering a “nationality education component”, partially on account of Hungarian students wishing to benefit from expanded language learning opportunities (in particular as regards the German language) but also due to extra funding which is provided to such schools. In addition, the obligation to pass baccalaureate exams in two foreign languages, with all national minority languages qualifying, is an additional magnet attracting both the majority and minority students to schools with a “nationality component”. The Roma pedagogical programme has also been extensively introduced as a “nationality component” in schools with a large population of Roma children.

The Advisory Committee notes that, under the new 2011 Act on National Public Education, the municipal national minority self-governments, like churches and other ecclesiastical institutions, can establish (or take over from the state) and operate institutions providing preschool and school education for children belonging to a national minority. This possibility has been used by a growing number of municipal self-governments in particular to ensure greater degree of control over the local schools teaching in minority languages and thus to gain greater independence, in particular as regards self-administration, from Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre (KLIK). It has to be noted, however, that the room for manoeuvre of the self-governments remains limited due to the fact that the ownership of the buildings in which minority educational institutions reside remains with the municipality, the budget is determined by KLIK and the curricula are set by the Ministry of Education. The new opportunity for self-regulation is welcome by the self-governments as they, together with the school directors, can manage staff as well as both the curriculum-based and extra-curricular activities within their establishments.

The Advisory Committee notes the efforts of the Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Capacities to ensure an adequate supply of textbooks in languages of national minorities. It notes, however, that, in particular as regards smaller ethnic groups, such as Armenians, there are no textbooks available in their languages. Also, the frequent changes to the school curricula make the existing textbooks obsolete, and put a strain on teachers and students alike. Furthermore it must be noted that numerically smaller minorities do not have the capacity to write or to translate in a limited time frame textbooks corresponding to the requirements of the valid curricula. In this context, the Advisory Committee notes that manuals and other teaching aids produced in the 'kin-states' are allowed as additional teaching aids in schools. In some cases, teachers are invited from the 'kin-states', although some representatives of national minorities have expressed reservations due to their limited awareness of cultural specificity of minority children and of the context of the Hungarian state.

Finally, the Advisory Committee is pleased to note the continued assistance of the German, Serb and Slovak pedagogical and methodological centres offered to institutions teaching their respective languages in Hungary.

#### *Recommendation*

Recalling that presence of minority languages in education is an essential part of diverse and multicultural societies, the Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to continue monitoring the situation, in consultation with the representatives of national minorities, to assess whether the framework for teaching in and of minority languages corresponds to their actual needs and take the necessary steps to address any shortcomings.

Italy

*Adopted on 19 November 2015*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

#### Availability of minority language education

##### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee recalls its observations made in the previous monitoring cycles that a solid network of schools offering teaching of or in minority languages exists in Italy. In particular, the Advisory Committee recalls that numerous opportunities for instruction in the minority language are available to the German-speaking and Ladin minorities in the Trentino-South Tyrol region and to the French-speaking minority in the Aosta Valley region. According to a Ministry of Education publication of 2010 which provided a detailed overview of the then existing minority language teaching arrangements, there were 2,971 "education points" (schools of all levels, kindergartens, etc.) teaching the languages of all recognised linguistic minorities. According to the available data, in the vast majority of schools minority languages were taught over the whole cycle of education or at least no less than over six years of education. The amount of teaching in a minority language varied from school to school. For example in the five schools teaching in the Croatian language 96% of all subject matters were taught in that language, while for the Ladin language in the Trento Province this indicator was at 66%, for German 47%, for Friulian and Franco-provençal over 30%, for Sardinian, Albanian, Greek, Occitan (in the Piedmont Region) and Slovenian over 15%. There was no teaching in Catalan, French and Occitan (in Calabria), but these languages were taught as subjects.

Schools with the Slovenian language of instruction have existed in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia for over 60 years. The Advisory Committee notes that there has been in the last ten years an improvement in the provision of Slovenian-language teaching. In particular, in the Province of Trieste a network of state schools teaching Slovenian at all levels of education has been expanded and the number of children enrolled in the schools with Slovenian as the language of instruction has increased. The state educational offer is supplemented by non-state and private schools and institutes, including the municipal kindergartens (in the Municipalities of Trieste and Duino-Aurisina), a vocational training institute and a private music school, all of which are financially supported in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 38/2001. In addition, the comprehensive state-run institute of *S. Pietro al Natisone* offers bilingual education in the Slovenian and Italian languages. The Advisory Committee notes that this school is currently being refurbished, with work to be completed in 2016.

The Office for Education in the Slovenian Language continues to be the focal point for curriculum development, provision of teaching material and continuous teacher training and administrative management of the staff working at the state-run schools. In addition the Slovenian School Trade Union has been recognised as a representative organisation for the teaching and non-teaching personnel of schools with Slovenian as the language of instruction. The Advisory Committee welcomes the information contained in the State Report concerning the ongoing financial support for the projects submitted by 19 networks of schools for a total of 187,737 Euros in the years 2014-2015. These projects included the development of transferable multimedia pedagogical resources and teaching aids based, among others, on a recreational approach such as the production of music and sound recordings, with the aim of raising their visibility.

The Friulian language is taught in kindergartens, and as a subject in primary and junior secondary schools in the provinces of Udine, Gorizia and Pordenone. The Advisory Committee notes that according to the State Report approximately 60% of all children attending school in these municipalities chose to study that language and that some 1,350 teachers are considered to be capable of dispensing education in that language. However, it has to be noted that the teacher qualification is assessed by each school separately as no commonly agreed testing standard has been developed. This raises doubts as to the real proficiency in the Friulian language of all the teachers concerned. In this context, the Advisory Committee welcomes the establishment in 2012 of the Permanent Committee for the Teaching of Friulian within the relevant Central Directorate for Education, University, Research, Family, Voluntary Associations and Co-operation whose task it is to ensure coordination among different institutions involved in the Friulian-language teaching.

#### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to assess, in consultation with representatives of national minorities, whether the framework for teaching of and in minority languages corresponds to actual needs and take the necessary steps to address any shortcomings.

Moldova, Republic of  
 Adopted on 25 May 2016

## Article 14 of the Framework Convention

### Instruction in and of minority languages

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee is pleased to note the continued support for minority language education in Moldovan schools. In line with Article 6 of the Law on National Minorities, the special status of the Russian language is also anchored in the education system, where instruction in the Russian language from preschool level through to university is guaranteed. Altogether, there are 259 schools in which the Russian language is the medium of instruction. Other minority languages are taught additionally in some of those schools for four hours per week (three hours for the minority language and literature and one hour for the minority culture). In addition, there are two schools that pilot the use of Ukrainian as the medium of instruction in some subjects and one school piloting instruction in the Bulgarian language at primary level. Altogether, however, the education system provides too few opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities to learn their languages at a satisfactory level. Moreover, the fact that such an option is still available only in Russian-language schools limits their choice with respect to further educational and employment opportunities. Given the continued shortcomings in the teaching of the state language at Russian-language schools (see below), many persons belonging to national minorities feel obliged to choose between either foregoing their guaranteed right to minority language education by enrolling in a state language school, or attending a minority language school, knowing that their professional future in Moldova will be compromised by their low state language proficiency (see also Article 15).

The Advisory Committee further notes with concern that persons belonging to national minorities are in addition faced with declining levels of quality in education in their minority languages as well as in Russian. Persistent shortcomings in minority language schools regarding the adequate supply of educational materials and teacher training opportunities (see Article 12) have led to a reduction in the number of students at such schools over recent years. Fears for the maintenance of the schools are now compounded by the entry into force of the new Education Code in 2014 and recent regulations from the Ministry of Education that introduce stricter rules regarding the minimum number of students required to maintain a lyceum. While efforts have reportedly been made thus far to avoid the closure of minority language schools, in particular when they constitute the only option for studying in minority languages within a certain locality, the lack of legal certainty regarding the continuity of those schools has led to significant concerns amongst parents. In addition, the new code foresees a re-certification of all school directors which is to be performed in the state language, thereby placing many of the current directors in a very disadvantaged position.

The Advisory Committee considers that the merger of schools, which may in some cases be a reasonable response to the general decline in student numbers, must not necessarily lead to assimilation, as some national minority representatives fear. Indeed, if accompanied by specific measures to guarantee continued education in minority languages, and through the promotion of bilingual and multilingual education methods, school mergers may offer opportunities for children from diverse language backgrounds to continue their education, while promoting intercultural understanding and awareness. It is essential, however, that the integration of small minority language schools into larger and multilingual organisational units is conducted gradually and in close consultation with the respective school administrations and teachers to ensure that the views of parents and students are effectively taken into

account. Attention must also be paid to ensuring that transportation to schools does not become too difficult as a result of school mergers.

The Advisory Committee welcomes in this context the current efforts to revive the former minority language department in the Ministry of Education and to recruit specialists for the various languages to ensure that the standards of education in minority language schools are effectively monitored and that adequate attention is given towards high quality education. It is further pleased to note the substantial increase of support provided to education in and research of the Gagauz language, as well as the plans to open preschools with Gagauz and Bulgarian as languages of instruction in Comrat and Taraclia respectively. It reiterates its concern, however, with respect to the fact that the study of Romani is not included at any school, as no apparent efforts have been made to develop a corresponding curriculum or prepare teachers and education assistants for the study of and in Romani.

As regards access to university education and vocational training for persons belonging to national minorities, the Advisory Committee notes with concern that the opportunities reportedly continue to decline. Following previous changes to the Education Code, the faculties that used to provide instruction in the Russian language are cutting courses and transposing their modules into the state language. In addition to the effect that this development has had on access to services for persons belonging to national minorities (see Article 15) and the implementation of the language legislation (see Article 10), the Advisory Committee also notes with concern that an increasing number of graduates of Russian-language schools decide to leave Moldova for their further studies, as they see limited opportunities for their future if they stay. The particularly large number of scholarships on offer for studying abroad that are available supports them in this choice.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee urges the authorities to enter into a close dialogue with minority representatives, parents and school administrations to enhance the available opportunities to study in minority languages through the introduction of modern bilingual and multilingual teaching methodologies and through the accommodation of high quality learning of different languages in integrated education environments.

It further calls on the authorities to ensure that minority language schools remain attractive and high quality educational establishments that offer their graduates the perspective of a successful academic and professional career in Moldova.

### State language learning

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee notes with regret that the limited availability and quality of state language teaching in Russian-language schools remains one of the main concerns of minority representatives. Against the common perception prevailing amongst the majority of the population that the low levels of mastery of the state language amongst minority communities is due to a lack of motivation, the Advisory Committee notes that significant private means are deployed by persons belonging to national minorities to attend private courses. According to minority representatives, the situation is particularly problematic in Gagauzia and Balti, where students are surrounded by an almost entirely Russian-speaking environment and therefore are particularly reliant on schools for their state language learning. The efforts made to promote state language proficiency amongst teachers and the adult population strongly rely on the non-governmental sector, which appears at odds with the expressed government commitment to promoting the state language as the main tool for public communication. The Advisory Committee welcomes in this context the continued functioning of 35 Russian-language pilot schools where, in addition to the study of the state language, some subjects such as civic education and

geography have been taught using the state language as the medium of instruction. The experiment is reportedly successful and well-liked by parents and students alike, yet it remains to be replicated in other schools. The Advisory Committee considers that more opportunities should be made available to persons belonging to national minorities to learn their minority languages as well as the state language and other languages and to gain adequate proficiency through the introduction of multilingual education methodologies.

The Advisory Committee regrets that the study of the Russian language in state language schools, which, according to the new Education Code, is compulsory in all schools until 2018, has been adapted without adequate changes being made to the curriculum. As of 2014, the Russian language has been introduced in the 5th grade and taught until 9th grade, while formerly it was taught as of the 2nd grade. According to the interlocutors of the Advisory Committee, schools continue to use the same Russian language textbooks as before, without adjustments, which presents difficulties for the learning process. Moreover, it appears unclear from the new Education Code what the status of the Russian language in the education system will be after 2018. It considers that there should be close consultations with relevant communities before any changes are introduced which may have a significant impact on language abilities in society and thereby on the overall societal climate. Indeed, while sustained and comprehensive efforts must be made to raise knowledge of the state language amongst those belonging to national minorities, including by promoting its use as a common tool for communication, a reduction in Russian language skills amongst the population does not appear to be an appropriate measure. In fact, it may rather result in less dialogue and less understanding across linguistic lines, thereby possibly jeopardising the high regard in which Russians and Russian speakers are currently held in Moldovan society (see Article 6).

The Advisory Committee finally notes with deep concern the persistent practical obstacles and administrative pressures faced by students and teachers of the eight schools in Transnistria that continue to teach the state language in the Latin script. It welcomes the commitment of the authorities to resolving the situation through dialogue and to promoting the right to equal access to education of the students at these schools, and notes in particular the resumption of the activity of the working group on education in 2014.

#### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee again urges the authorities to design comprehensive and long-term measures to substantially enhance the availability and quality of state language teaching in the public education system through a balanced approach that contains parallel measures to adequately protect and promote the languages of national minorities, including through the introduction of multilingual teaching methodology.

Norway

*Adopted on 13 October 2016*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching and learning in and of minority languages

#### *Present situation*

According to existing legislation, teaching and learning in Kven is part of the programme for Finnish as a second language, which is statutory in primary and lower secondary school in the counties of Troms and

Finnemark only. Such teaching is offered if at least three pupils belonging to the Kven/Norwegian Finns minority or to the Finnish-speaking population request it and on condition that sufficient teaching resources are available. No such statutory right exists for the upper secondary level. The authorities indicated that, in 2014/2015 there were respectively 471 pupils in Finnemark and 123 pupils in Troms receiving instruction in Finnish as a second language in primary and lower secondary education. Instruction in Kven, as well as in Finnish, was available in only one municipality where 40-50 pupils attended school. In 2014, according to the State Report, three pupils took the final examination in Finnish at upper secondary level and none in Kven.

There are several reasons which explain the low numbers and the decline in attendance from primary to secondary school. The Advisory Committee considers that the main reasons are, *inter alia* the limited information provided by schools on language learning opportunities, the rare opportunity to continue language learning in upper secondary and tertiary education, the lack of qualified teachers, the absence of financial incentive for students in the form of scholarships, as well as the very limited visibility of the language in society. In addition the insecurity about the choice of the language in which teaching and learning takes place at school, either Finnish or Kven, or both, is a factor that contributes to reluctance with respect to enrolment. This question has considerable impact, especially in areas where differences between these two languages are more pronounced.

The Advisory Committee further notes that Kven language learning seems to suffer from limited funding for early language education: so far only the municipality of Porsanger has established a language nest for full early language immersion while otherwise the presence of Kven in kindergarten is limited to a few hours per week when there are at least three pupils requiring it. In this respect, the Advisory Committee was informed that the pilot project put in place in the Porsanger municipality to provide Kven language immersion in early care and kindergarten, although successful, is at risk of being stopped since funds have not been earmarked by the government for it to become permanent. With respect to higher education, there is a full-time university course only in Tromsø, but the number of registered students is low. More students attend the part-time, one-year long introductory course organised by the same university (there will be eight students in the academic year 2016-2017), which is often used as a qualification to teach in school, although it provides only basic training. Academics and minority representatives are of the opinion that this arrangement is insufficient to be able to boost the knowledge of the language. They suggested that regular funding and financial incentives (similar to those which exist for Sami students) could help in raising the number of prospective students, as well as contribute to the extension of the successful mentor programme. Finally, Kven tuition is not offered outside the traditional geographical areas, thereby failing to take into account social trends of people moving into the big cities.

Finally, the Advisory Committee observes that, with a few exceptions, the teaching of Romani and Romanes languages is virtually absent due to the lack of qualified teachers and teaching materials, as well as to other reasons more intrinsically related to these communities. As regards the Romani language, there seems to be diverging views within the Tater/Romani community between those who consider their language to be important to their identity and who would like more proactive measures to be put in place by the state in order to revitalise this language, and those against such measures, due to their increased visibility in society which would inevitably result. Roma organisations expressed the view that more opportunities for members of this minority to learn Romanes would reinforce their identity and their standing in Norwegian society. In primary and secondary school, pupils with a first language other than Norwegian or Sami have the right to special instruction in Norwegian, until they have sufficient Norwegian skills to follow ordinary education in schools.



*Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to intensify their efforts to develop Kven language teaching and learning by ensuring continued funding for early education initiatives, including language nests. They should also provide teaching and learning opportunities in and of Kven in compulsory education more widely and systemically, including outside the traditional geographical areas in order to take into account social trends of moving to urban centres. In addition, the authorities should increase efforts to raise the number of students of Kven in higher education by means of financial incentives.

The authorities should also adopt measures to improve teacher training in the Kven language as part of the broader scheme to revitalise this language.

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to engage in a dialogue with both the Tater/Romani and the Roma minorities in order to consider flexible and pragmatic solutions to allow for the provision of teaching and learning of Romani and Romanes languages for those interested in receiving such an education.

Slovak Republic

*Adopted on 3 December 2014*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Instruction in and of minority languages

*Present situation*

The authorities continue to provide substantial support to education in and of minority languages. Pupils may either study the minority language and literature as elective subject in classes organised at schools teaching in Slovak or they may attend schools where all subjects are instructed in the minority language, with obligatory classes in Slovak language and literature. Ukrainian language is also taught at bilingual schools where some subjects are taught in Slovak and some in Ukrainian. The Advisory Committee notes that education is mainly provided in Hungarian, followed by Ukrainian and Ruthenian, and that some courses are also offered in Bulgarian, Croatian, German or Polish. It regrets that Romani continues to be taught only as elective subject at two primary schools and five secondary schools. According to its interlocutors, instruction of and in Romani is still considered unnecessary by many teachers and sometimes even viewed as a challenge to wider integration in society. The situation is particularly problematic for Roma children living in southern regions of Slovakia, such as in Rimavská Sobota, who reportedly mainly speak Hungarian at home. The Advisory Committee points in this regard to the substantial research suggesting the benefits of mother tongue learning in schools for broader academic achievement in life, including the proficient learning of second languages.

The School Act was amended in December 2013, forcing the closure of very small schools in order to make school management more effective. The fact that minority language schools are generally small has been taken into account by lowering the minimum number of students required to open or maintain a class. As a result of the amendment, about 25% of small elementary schools are expected to close, among them many minority language schools. The Advisory Committee welcomes the special provisions for minority language schools and the possibility for further exceptions to be made in special cases. It

considers that the closure of small minority language schools must not lead to assimilation, which some national minority representatives fear, but may, if accompanied with specific measures, among others through the promotion of bi- and multilingual education methods, offer opportunities for children from various language backgrounds to continue their education, while at the same time also promoting intercultural understanding and awareness. It is essential, however, that the integration of small minority language schools into larger organisational units is conducted gradually and in close consultation with school boards, ensuring that the views of parents and national minority representatives are effectively taken into account. Changes must further be appropriately accompanied with expert advice regarding the introduction of bi- and multilingual teaching methodologies to ensure continued high-quality education in minority languages, Slovak language, and possibly also third languages.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to increase their efforts to maintain high quality minority language education and to pursue a close dialogue with national minority representatives, parents and school administration to ensure that the closure of small schools does not hinder effective opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities to learn in their minority languages.

The Advisory Committee further calls on the authorities to consider the introduction of modern bi- and multilingual teaching methodologies to improve the quality of language teaching at all schools and to facilitate the accommodation of high-quality learning of different languages in integrated education environments.

### State language learning

#### *Present situation*

Continued efforts are being made to promote the quality of Slovak language learning at minority language schools, including through the provision of targeted teacher training (see above). The Advisory Committee notes, however, that all non-minority languages are taught using the same foreign language learning methodology and that pupils at Hungarian language schools, for instance, have the same number of classes in Slovak language as they do in English. According to minority and government representatives, graduates of minority language schools are as a result often not fully proficient in the state language, in particular when common daily life is concerned. The Advisory Committee considers it essential to develop appropriate methodology for teaching the state language as second language from pre-school level onwards to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities gain full, mother tongue level, proficiency in the state language. Specific measures must further be taken to respond to the situation of some Roma children attending Hungarian language schools in southern Slovakia, for whom the state language may be the second foreign language, which may present particular barriers to language learning and academic achievement generally.

#### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to devise a comprehensive methodology of teaching Slovak as second language in minority language schools to promote full proficiency of all persons belonging to national minorities in the state language.

Spain

*Adopted on 3 December 2014*

Article 14 of the Framework Convention

Teaching in and of officially recognised or minority languages

Following the publication in 2011 of the beginner-level Romani language learning method *Sar san?*, designed for use both in the classroom and by self-taught students, the Advisory Committee welcomes the continuing work towards developing higher-level modules of this programme. It observes that the availability of such teaching materials will certainly facilitate the provision of teaching in these languages where such a demand exists. Regrettably, however, it remains the case that there is currently no teaching of the Romani and *caló* languages in the school system. While it acknowledges that demand amongst Roma for such language-learning possibilities may at present not be high, the Advisory Committee underlines that interest in such possibilities has been repeatedly expressed by Roma representatives. The level of demand for such teaching now needs to be assessed and followed up as needed.

The Advisory Committee has also been approached by speakers of languages other than Spanish (Castilian) and that are officially recognised in parts of Spain regarding a recent decrease in the use of those languages as the medium of instruction in schools. In Galicia, for example, the possibility of providing teaching in Galician has dropped since the adoption of the Decree on Multilingualism in 2010. As regards teaching in Catalan, the Advisory Committee has been informed that linguistic immersion programmes have been negatively affected by the enactment of the LOMCE, which stipulates that where an Autonomous Community cannot provide a reasonable proportion of teaching in Spanish, it must cover the costs of education in private schools for families who wish their children to receive a higher proportion of teaching in Spanish. The Advisory Committee further understands that there is little provision of instruction in languages other than Spanish (Castilian) that are officially recognised in Spain outside the Autonomous Communities where these languages have official or protected status, although a demand for such teaching may exist.

*Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to identify the needs and demands of the Roma with regard to studying the Romani and *caló* languages in the school system and to endeavour to provide such teaching in consequence.

It invites the relevant authorities to engage in dialogue with the speakers of regional or minority languages regarding possibilities for promoting teaching and learning in such languages, including outside the Autonomous Communities where they have official or protected status, where such a demand exists.

“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

*Adopted on 24 February 2016*

#### Article 14 of the Framework Convention

##### Instruction in and of minority languages

###### *Present situation*

Instruction in minority languages continues to be provided in Albanian, Serbian and Turkish. The quality of education in some of the minority-language schools, however, is considered problematic. Turkish minority representatives report, for instance, that only some 20 of the 65 schools that officially teach subjects in the Turkish language have the resources they need to teach consecutively throughout ten years of obligatory schooling. The others limit the Turkish language education to primary school level, as they lack teachers or appropriate textbooks for secondary school level. Similar concerns are reported by representatives of the Serb minority who consider the quality of education in the Serbian language seriously compromised by the lack of suitably trained teachers. Despite the fact that the Vlach language is accepted as an official language in Kruševo (see Article 10), Vlach is not included in the regular curriculum of any school, not even in Kruševo municipality itself. Bosnian, Romani and Vlach “languages and cultures” can in principle be taught as optional classes for two hours per week provided that a sufficient number of students demand such classes. While noting the steps made to promote pedagogical methods for the teaching of Bosnian, Romani and Vlach, as well as assurances by the Ministry of Education that all efforts are made to respond to such demands, the Advisory Committee regrets to have received information that many requests for such optional classes have been turned down at local level with the argument that there is insufficient demand, that no suitable teachers are available, or that it is for other technical reasons not possible. The Advisory Committee welcomes the fact that the Bosnian language is now taught within the regular curriculum at three schools in Saraj and Veles municipalities. According to minority representatives, many more requests for the attendance of regular Bosnian language classes have been made and the Ministry of Education is reviewing the possibilities to extend the programme to more schools.

The Advisory Committee further notes with regret that the attendance of optional classes is reportedly discouraged also by the fact that teachers are rarely equipped with appropriate textbooks, and that classes often either compete with other optional courses such as computer classes or are organised late in the afternoon. Despite a large and sustained interest amongst Roma communities, where Romani is often spoken at home, Romani language and culture classes are reportedly taught in only very few schools. Information about the availability of these optional courses appears to be still insufficient among parents. In addition, requests must be made during the summer period when many Roma families are not present in their school districts. In the view of minority representatives, it is problematic that the organisational costs for optional courses must be covered by the municipalities, because they are often reluctant to spend their limited resources in favour of numerically smaller communities, from whom there is little political capital to be gained. As a result, a number of additional private initiatives for the teaching of minority languages have been taken, often with support from interested embassies, such as Croatian- and Russian-language courses organised in Skopje. The Advisory Committee also notes the opening of a private university teaching in the Turkish language in Gostivar, which is attended by some 200 students.

As regards the learning of the official language, the Advisory Committee regrets that Albanian students commence the study of the Macedonian language only in the third grade, for two hours per week, and as of the sixth grade for three hours per week. This appears insufficient to gain proficiency in the language, particularly given that there are few opportunities in daily life for Albanian students to use and practice their Macedonian-language skills (see Article 12). Moreover, students who attend Macedonian language schools do not learn any Albanian as part of the curriculum, nor other languages used in official communication in Macedonia. Quite a number of students and parents have reportedly expressed their interest in optional Albanian-language classes. However, the Advisory Committee was informed that they are discouraged from doing so because they are only allowed to register for an Albanian course as a second optional course, i.e., they cannot only learn Albanian, but they must then follow an additional language or a technical course in the afternoon which is too much of a burden for many students. The Advisory Committee notes with concern that the pursuit of bilingualism is effectively discouraged, which has a direct negative impact on the country's ability to function sustainably as a multi-ethnic and multilingual state.

#### *Recommendations*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to increase their efforts to maintain high-quality minority-language education and to pursue a close dialogue with national minority representatives, parents and school administrators to ensure that all minority languages, including the languages of the numerically smaller minorities can be learned effectively as part of the regular education system.

It further calls on them to consider the introduction of modern bi- and multilingual teaching methods to improve the quality of language teaching methodology at all schools and to effectively assist the high-quality learning of different languages in integrated education environments.

United Kingdom

*Adopted on 25 May 2016*

#### Article 14 of the Framework Convention

##### Instruction in and of minority languages

#### *Present situation*

The Advisory Committee welcomes the Education (Scotland) Bill 2015, which imposes a duty on local authorities to promote Gaelic education, a provision to allow parents to request Gaelic-medium education for their child and a duty on Bòrd na Gàidhlig to produce Guidance on Gaelic Education. According to the authorities, both Gaelic-medium education and Gaelic teaching have been progressing in the period under examination in terms of number of pupils (overall 14 500), schools, availability of higher education courses and teacher training, and curriculum material. Dedicated institutions and grants are available to achieve these results. In 2014, four Scots language co-ordinators were appointed to Education Scotland to take forward the Scottish Government's priorities for Scots within education. This includes developing resources and providing teacher training.

The Welsh Government has strategic responsibility for Welsh-medium education, which is planned at the local level by local education authorities, and progress has been registered across Wales. Local authorities began implementing statutory Welsh in education plans required by the School Standards

and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013. The purpose of these plans is to improve planning for Welsh-medium education, Welsh Second Language and the teaching of subjects through the medium of Welsh. The Executive is also funding the production of Welsh-language, bilingual educational and learning resources. However, the Advisory Committee understands from the authorities that progress to open Welsh-medium schools is slow since it is based on demand, and it requires a cultural change to embrace the language. Moreover, the level of Welsh teaching in bilingual schools is not consistent across the nation.

Article 89 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 places a statutory duty on the Department of Education to 'encourage and facilitate' Irish-medium education in line with demand. Interlocutors informed the Advisory Committee that, although some progress has been made in respect of Irish-medium education in recent years (two new primaries and one additional secondary school), after some 45 years of Irish medium education, the number of children currently receiving their education through Irish remains around 5 000. Limited engagement of the Department of Education, the fact that the curriculum is rather an add-on to the mainstream English curriculum and the current economic climate, which poses a particular threat to university courses in Irish, are all factors preventing further progress. Likewise, there is a lack of teachers, which is particularly serious at post-primary level, and very little training is available.

Interlocutors of the Advisory Committee indicated that the current piecemeal and ad hoc provision of language and cultural awareness sessions and language teaching in primary and secondary schools in Cornwall is the consequence of education being centrally organised by the government and the lack of dedicated funding. The curriculum is entirely English and this has prevented, on the one hand, the introduction of the Cornish language and Cornish Studies on schools' curricula, and, on the other hand, the establishment of immersion education in Cornish. Any inclusion of Cornish issues is on a voluntary basis initiated by a teacher and not incorporated on a permanent basis in the teaching. Finally, there is no pre-school provision through the medium of Cornish, though there are parents expressing such an interest. In view of the recognition of the Cornish as a national minority, its representatives expressed readiness to begin a dialogue on education policies with the UK Government. Finally, educational resources in Cornish are very limited and there is a lack of teacher training in terms of language awareness, their own language skills in Cornish and their ability to teach Cornish.

The Advisory Committee expresses concern about the fact that initiatives to provide first language education for national and ethnic minorities' children, and curricula that reflect their culture in the classroom, appear to be very limited. According to minority representatives, while there is the possibility of teaching minority languages in schools where there is enough demand, this does not appear to be common practice, or it has been abolished (e.g. Polish in Northern Ireland). Similarly, bilingual assistants are not available for all minorities, and teaching of the Romani language is not available.

### *Recommendation*

The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to renew and intensify their efforts to develop Irish-medium education and Irish language teaching. They should also engage in a dialogue with the Cornish minority to consider flexible and pragmatic solutions to allow for a more systematic provision of teaching in and of the Cornish language, as well as taking measures to develop the teaching of minorities' first language.