

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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 12 September 2016

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

(received on 12 September 2016)

Comments regarding the report of the Advisory Committee

Recommendations for immediate action:

- The Hungarian Government does everything in order to strengthen tolerance and respectful attitudes towards minorities within the majority population. The autochthonous minorities living in Hungary feel comfortable in Hungary; the beneficial direction of legislation and of national minority policy, the favourable development of the social climate is also confirmed by the fact that during past years, the number and ratio within the population of those declaring their nationality identity has started to increase. The last comprehensive census held in Hungary took place in 2011. According to the census data, almost 6% of the population of the country (a total of 644 524 persons) have affiliation to a nationality.
- During past years, significant measures were taken to prevent Roma children from eventually being wrongfully placed in special schools; e.g. the development of modern investigatory procedures and tests, protocols connected to the diagnose of special educational needs; monitoring before the diagnose of special educational needs; regular reviews; the development of a monitoring system that is also capable of recording nationality data. As a result of these measures, the ratio of schoolchildren with mild intellectual disability has decreased year by year, from 2.1% (2005) to 1.5% (2014).

Further recommendations:

- The national minority policy in Hungary focuses on the protection of the thirteen autochthonous national minorities, in maximum compliance with the recommendations of the Framework Convention. The condition with regard to the 100 years was already included in the previous Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, the act in force in 2009, when the previous country report was submitted. The new nationalities act of 2011 further developed the nationality policy of Hungary on the basis of the act of 1993. The 100 years were included into the law because of historical traditions: The autochthon national minorities are considered as the national minorities that lived, moved, and settled in the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary, around 100 years ago. Our country is open and inclusive towards all those who legally arrive in Hungary in compliance with European laws.
- In contrast with the report of the Advisory Committee, demand has increased in the field of national minorities not for the takeover of the management of minority cultural institutions, but rather of minority public education institutions. The government supports the operation of minority public education institutions – in addition to the general budget – with an increased supplementary amount. As a result, the takeover of minority education institutions by nationality self-governments has increased fivefold between 2010 and 2016.

- The national minorities living in Hungary have the condition strengthened by law to use their minority language in public life and in public administration. The government has supported all the claims submitted, concerning the display of topographical indications in minority languages. Therefore we feel it necessary for the recommendation to reflect the measures taken. It is not clear what survey, data the recommendation is based on; it would be necessary to indicate references supporting it.
- In Hungary, the pillars of democracy are the municipalities and the elected Members of Parliament. The relationship between these two is the internal affair of national minorities; their cooperation however is supported by the government in every aspect.
- In Hungary, if in a given settlement at least twenty-five persons had declared their affiliation to a given national minority based on the data from the previous census of 2011, the a nationality self-government can be formed. Every condition and support is provided for the effective and meaningful cooperation of the local municipality and the local nationality self-government, to fill this with content is the task of the local stakeholders.

Budapest, 8 September 2016