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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Initial Periodical Report
presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter**

ARMENIA



The First Report of the Republic of Armenia
According to Paragraph 1 of Article 15 of
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

June 2003, Yerevan

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Armenia signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on May 11, 2001.

In respect of Armenia the Charter has come into force since May 1, 2002. The RA introduces the following report according to Paragraph 1 of Article 15 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

This report has been elaborated and developed by the State Language Board at the Ministry of Education and Science based on the information submitted by the relevant ministries NGOs and administrative offices, taking into consideration the remarks and suggestions made by them and all parties interested, while discussing the following report.

PART I

Historical Outline

Being one of the oldest countries in the world, for the first time in its new history Armenia regained its independence on May 28, 1918. The first Republic existed till November 29, 1920, when Armenia after forced sovetalization joined the Soviet Union, becoming on of the 15 republics.

As a result of referendum the Republic of Armenia revived its independence on September 21, 1991.

Armenia covers an area of 29,8 thousand km², the population is nearly 3200000¹. Armenia borders on Iran, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The Republic of Armenia is located on the Armenian plateau. Since ancient times this area has been inhabited by Armenians, whose language is Armenian, one of the branches of Indo-European language family. Armenian written documents are known since the 9th century BC (the so-called “urartian” temple-writing). But Armenian mass writing culture has developed since the 5th century with the alphabet created by Mashtots. At present Armenian is the state language of RA. Not only the population of Armenia speaks the language, but part of 7-8 million Armenians in Diaspora (more than 3,5 million people).

During different time-periods (not always) various language communities have lived in Armenian highlands - as invaders (Arabs, Turks, Persians, Mongoloids, etc.), peaceful immigrants (Georgians, Assyrians, Greeks, Russians, Germans, Gypsies, Yezidis, Kurds) or the deported and exiled (Russian speaking molokans, Jews, Utines, etc). Armenian population periodically has undergone repatriation, [genocide](#), massacres and apostasy and forced change of language, it has also emigrated and immigrated. At present nearly 97% of RA population are Armenians, who speak eastern Armenian literal language² or one of Armenian dialects.

¹ On the date July 1, 2000 the urban population in RA was 66.5%. As a result of emigration the population has decreased. There is no due figure of the population as a result of non-exact calculation of emigration.

² The Western Armenian literal language is spoken by that part of Armenians in Diaspora, who has been banished from Western Armenia (eastern regions of present-day Turkey) during the first two decades of the 20th century, as a result of genocide carried out by Ottoman Turkey.

The Republic of Armenia according to RA Constitution

The RA Constitution was adopted on July 5, 1995, as a result of referendum³.

According to the Constitution RA is declared as a sovereign, democratic state, based on social justice and the rule of law. The Constitution is the source, which serves as a basis to form legislation.

Regional Division of the Republic of Armenia

According to the Constitution of Armenia (may be referred as to RA) is a unitary state. The RA regional units are marzes and communities. State government is carried out in marzes, and local government – in the communities, according to RA Constitution, Law on Regional division and local government. The Republic of Armenia consists of 10 marzes and Yerevan City, which has a status of marz.

The RA Main Economic Data

The RA GDP data of 2002 are as follows:

- GDP according to market prices forms 1243810,2 million drams (\$2126171282)
- GDP per capita makes (\$662)
- The income of the population makes 853448,4 million drams.

After gaining independence the political, economic, social and radical changes, the closing down of large plants and enterprises to prevent natural disasters, the fuel and energetic crisis, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the economic blockade on Armenian-Azerbaijani and Armenian-Turkish border, the devastating earthquake of 1988 affect the general situation of RA, which caused mass emigration.

The Demographic Situation

The last official census in Armenia was held in October 2001.

It is known that there are no monoethnic countries in the world and Armenia is not an exception. Throughout centuries Armenia has been inhabited by different national minorities, who, at present, make 2,2% of population.

According to the initial data of the 2001 national census, the proportion of ethnicities in Armenia is the following:

	Absolute figure	%
Armenians	3142,7 thousand	97,81
Yezidi	40,5 thousand	1,26
Russians	14,8 thousand	0,46
Assyrians	3,5 thousand	0,11
Kurds	1,6 thousand	0,05
Greeks	1,3 thousand	0,04

³ On May 25 2003 a referendum on constitutional reforms was held but failed due to insufficient votes in favour of it.

Other peoples	8,7 thousand	0,27
Total	3213,1 thousand	100
Among them non-Armenians	70,4 thousand	2,19

Among the 20 peoples who live in Armenia together with Armenians the Assyrians, Greeks, Yezidis, Kurds, Russians, as well as Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Germans, Poles and Jews form comparatively large number. Here they found their second motherland and they contribute to the economic and cultural development of Armenia as much as they can. If we put parallels from the chronological viewpoint, it could be seen that the first date these communities settled in Armenia goes back to the second quarter of the XIX century.

The first group of Assyrians (descendants of old Assyrians) settled in Armenia in 1830s. Some groups immigrated during World War I. They are Christians. At present the 3500 Assyrians in Armenia live mainly in the villages Verin Dvin, Nor Artagers, Arzni, Dimitrov and in Yerevan, Artashat, Abovyan cities. They speak Assyrian, Russian and Armenian.

The number of Yezidis in Armenia in 1830 was 324 registered. At present there are 40500, whose ancestors immigrated from Iran and Mesopotamia. They live mainly in villages Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisez, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachia, Derek, Avshen, Sipan, and Zovuni. They are Zoroastrians. They speak Yezidi, Armenian.

The present Greek community emigrated from Turkey in 1763. Some groups immigrated during World War I. They are Christians. At present there are 1300 Greeks who live mainly in the villages Yaghdan, Koghes, Madan, Hankavan, as well as in Stepanavan, Alaverdi, Akhtala, Shamlough and other towns. They speak Greek, Russian and Armenian.

The first groups of Russians that settled in Armenia in 1830-1850 were groups of exiled sectarians from Russia (Molokans, Priguns, etc.). They still live in the villages Lermontovo, Fioletovo, Privolnoye, Medovka, Kruglaya, Shishka, Novoseltsovo, Saratovka, Mikhailovka, Petrovka, Blagodarnoye, Pushkino, Semyonovka, Chkalovka, Bovadzor, Urasar, as well as in Dilijan, Tchambarak, Stepanavan towns. Some groups were moved from Russia to Armenia (Gyumri, Yerevan, etc.) during Soviet times. They speak Russian.

Kurds settled in Armenia during the Turkish and Persian power, emigrating from Mesopotamia and partly from Iran. They are Moslems or Zoroastrians. At present the existing in Armenia 1600 Kurds live mainly in the villages Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkan, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachia, Derek, Avshen, etc. they speak Kurdish, Armenian.

Lately no serious regional changes have occurred in Armenia to move the structure of population. The law on regional division takes into consideration political, economic, as well as ethnic, language and other peculiarities when carrying out regional division. Though it should be mentioned that in Armenia, except for several villages, there are no areas peculiar with national minority or any different from Armenian language.

1. Main legal acts and provisions to implement the European Charter for regional or minority languages

The preservation of national minority languages is the problem of national minority rights protection, and the latter is the inseparable part of international human rights protection.

The Republic of Armenia is a party to the following international instruments⁴ (the most important are given):

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December and Protocol Thereto
- Convention on the Rights of Child
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
- International Covenant on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention against Discrimination in Education
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and Protocol thereto
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women
- Convention on civil procedure
- Convention on protection of cultural and natural world heritage (1972)
- Convention on technical and professional education (1989)
- European Cultural Convention
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Agreement on the rehabilitation rights of deported persons, national minorities, signed within CIS
- Convention on guaranteeing the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, signed within CIS on January 21, 1994
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- Agreement on establishing and functioning of branches of higher educational institutions in CIS countries (2001)
- Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Protocols 1,4,7 thereto

According to Article 37 of the Constitution the citizens belonging to national minorities are entitled to the preservation of their traditions and the development of their language and culture. And according to Article 15 of the Constitution citizens, regardless of national origin, race, sex, language, creed, political or other persuasion, social origin, wealth or other status, are entitled to all the rights and freedoms, and subject to the duties determined by the Constitution and the laws.

The law on language indicate the main provisions of language policy, regulates the language condition in Armenia, the relationship between the state authorities, governing bodies, enterprises, administrative offices and organizations in the field of language usage. According to the mentioned law Armenian is declared as the state and official language, which must attend to all the spheres of RA life. Then it specifies, “the Republic of Armenia guarantees the

⁴ International treaties that have been ratified are a constituent part of the legal system of the Republic. If norms are provided in these treaties other than those provided by laws of the Republic, then the norms provided in the treaty shall prevail. International treaties that contradict the Constitution may be ratified after making a corresponding amendment to the Constitution.

free usage of minority languages on its territory” (Article 1). There are also provision concerning the national minority languages in Articles 2 and 4 of the Law.

By the law on language it is envisaged that general education of national minorities in the communities may be organized in their native language, state program and state patronage, with obligatory studying of Armenian (Article 2). On the territory of Armenia only the RA government may found a foreign language non-general educational institution. According to Article 4 of law on language, the national minority organizations residing in Armenia form their documents, blanks, seals in Armenian together with the translation into their native languages.

In Article 24 of RA Constitution freedom of speech is stated as one of the human’s important rights. According to that article, every person has the right to insist on his opinion. It is forbidden to make a person waive his opinion or change it. It is also stated that every person has freedom of speech, including the freedom of looking for, getting and disseminating ideas or information through any information means, irrespective of state borders.

The law on the press and the mass media states that in RA the press and the mass media are free and they are not subject to censorship. The citizens are entitled to express their opinions about any problem of public life through the press and the mass media as well as to get reliable information. The national minorities, alongside with the other rights, may prepare, get and disseminate information in their native language.

Article 5 of RA law on TV and radio specifies, that on the territory of Armenia the TV and radio programs must be broadcast in Armenian, with the exception of cases stated in the law (programs broadcast to foreign countries and for national minorities). In Article 28 of the law on Public TV and radio companies, it is mentioned that when broadcasting programs the interests of the national minorities in Armenia should be taken into consideration. And Article 28 envisages that the Public TV and Radio Company “can spare air time for programs in the language of national minorities in RA”. National minorities are guaranteed an hour of airtime per week on public TV, and an hour per day on public radio.

According to paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Civil procedure code, the person involved in a civil case, who does not know Armenian, has the right to learn the case materials, to participate in the procedure and to speak in court through an interpreter.

According to Article 15 of Criminal Code, criminal procedure is held in Armenian. According to the same article, during criminal procedure every person (except for the body processing the criminal case) has the right to speak in his/her language, which he/she possesses. Upon the decision of the body processing the criminal case, the person involved in the criminal case, who does not know the procedure language, is entitled to have free interpreter, through whom he can carry out his rights specified in the mentioned code. The person involved in a criminal case, who does not know the procedure language, is given certified translations of all subject to delivery documents in the language they know. Documents in other languages are attached to the case with their Armenian translation.

The legislation does not prohibit executive bodies to turn to national minorities (also written) in their languages and to speak to these bodies in their native languages. In such cases, when giving written response to the applications, state language is used, which though is not an obstacle to form the response in the relevant language upon the applicant’s request. This has had its legal reflection in the RA draft law on administrative procedure which was submitted for consideration.

State officials are not prohibited, by the post they hold, to communicate with minority people in their language, if they know it.

However, if one has applied to executive bodies not in Armenian, the relevant authority must respond to the application duly, with the exception of cases, when special requirements to meet the application are specified by law. In that case, however, the application cannot be refused, but the established special order of its introduction must be guaranteed.

The statutes or other documents of registered in Armenia organizations have no provisions on not accepting the minority language usage or on limiting them. There is no legislative ban as to economic and public activities to obstacle the minority language usage. In practice no such obstacles arise.

In the field of spiritual culture Articles 36 and 37 of RA Constitution fully guarantee the national minorities' the rights according that everyone is entitled to freedom of literary, artistic, scientific and technical creation, to benefit from the achievements of scientific progress and to participate in the cultural life of society. Intellectual property shall be protected by law. Citizens belonging to national minorities are entitled to the preservation of their traditions and the development of their language and culture.

According to Article 8 of RA law on "the Principles of cultural legislation", which came into force on December 26, 2002, "the Republic of Armenia supports the preservation and development of the cultural identity of national minorities on its territory". Through implementation of state programs it contributes to the creation of conditions for preservation, dissemination and development of their religion, customs, language, cultural inheritance and culture." Article 9 of the same law guarantees carrying into life cultural activities irrespective of nation, race, sex, language, religion, belief, social origin, property or other status. Article 6 of the law considers the languages, national customs and traditions, geographical names, cultural values as well.

Citizens, who speak the languages of national minorities, have the right to found cultural organizations according to law. There are more than 40 active NGOs, which deal with the problems of people that speak the language of national minorities. The regulations of these NGOs envisage goals to deal with preservation, dissemination and development of national cultural values. To bring this to life they cooperate with each other, as well as with governmental, regional and local government bodies.

According to Article 58 of RA marriage and family code, the child is given a name upon the parents' agreement, patronymic name is given according to the father's name, but in cases mentioned in Article 57 of the same code, patronymic name is the person's name registered as the father. According to provisions of Article 59, the children's surname is given upon the parents' surname. In case parents have different surnames, the child is given the father's or mother's surname, upon their agreement, and in case they don't come to an agreement, it is decided by the guardianship bodies. The RA legislation envisages the possibility for an individual to preserve or change his name, surname and patronymic name or to restore his previous name, surname or patronymic name.

Article 22 of RA Civil Code specifies that a citizen obtains rights and duties and implements them under his name, which includes his name and surname, and he wishes, his patronymic name. In cases and order envisaged by law a citizen may use a nickname. A citizen may change his name in established by law order. The citizen, who has changed his name, has the

right to demand that relevant changes be done in all the documents formed under his previous name.

The law on geographical names specifies, that when giving names to settlements, the viewpoints of the natives should also be considered (Article 3), and when giving or changing a name proposals may be made by both the local government bodies and legal entities and natural persons (Article 6).

Article 5 of law on regional division specifies that a community including one settlement is given the name of that settlement, and a community including two and more settlements is given the name of the settlement having the most population. Article 6 specifies the order of changing the RA regional division according to which changes in RA marz division, marz borders, administrative centres, communities, district communities, settlement and district area borders, foundation of new communities or settlements, changes in settlement classification, as well as the naming and renaming or marzes, settlements, districts, communities and district communities are done by the RA Government presentation through making relevant changes and amendments in this law. It further states that settlement renaming is done only to restore historical names to eliminate strange, non-euphonic and repeated names, taking into consideration the viewpoint of the population in that settlement.

As to the traditional local names and street names, paragraph 9 of Article 12 of RA law on local government, it is only in the competence of Council of Elders of the community, which gives agreement to name or rename community streets, avenues, squares, parks, educational, cultural, other institutions and organizations, to number private houses, blocks of flats and buildings. And the head of the community names and renames the community streets, avenues, squares, parks, community subjection educational, cultural, other institutions and organizations.

The law on advertisement has been in force in Armenia since April 30, 1996. In RA the language for advertisement is Armenian. If necessary, as an addition, the advertiser's message may be given in other languages, but with comparatively small letters. This provision does not concern the published newspapers, special announcements, labels and brands. The size of an Armenian advertisement text must not be less than the foreign language version. It is specified in Article 8, that advertisements lacking propriety are forbidden, i.e. advertisements that

- a) discredit the general morality and national norms,
- b) have intuitive expressions, comparisons and pictures concerning the race, nationality or social origin, age group or sex, language, religion or other beliefs.

Article 35 of Constitution specifies that every citizen is entitled to education. Education shall be free of charge in state secondary educational institutions. Every citizen is entitled to receive higher and other specialized education free of charge and on a competitive basis, in state educational institutions. Law shall prescribe the establishment and operation of private educational institutions

The RA law on education refers to the RA law on language when the language matter is touched upon. Proceeding from principles of state policy in the field of education (the humane nature of education, formation of relevant worldview in certain aspects, creation of bases for the principles of democracy in the field of education, integration in the international educational system, secular education in educational institutions, reasonable self-government of educational institutions, and, at last, availability and continuousness of education) the RA guarantees the right to education irrespective of nationality, race, language, religion, political

or other beliefs, social origin, property state or other circumstances. If it is taken into consideration the main problems of pre-school education, it could be obvious that preconditions must be created to communicate in the native language and on those bases to study foreign languages. The founder of a state educational institution is the Republic of Armenia in the person of government or relevant state licensed body. The founder of community educational institutions is the community in the person of local self-governing body. Non-state educational institutions may have any organizational or legal form envisaged by the law. Natural or legal persons may be their founders.

In Article 1 of RA law on “Religious organizations and freedom of conscience” it is mentioned “every citizen freely decides his relations about religion, has the right to profess any religion, to carry out religious rituals alone or with other people.” 14 different religious trends were officially registered in Armenia in 2000, including Russian Orthodox Church, Yezidi religious community, Jewish community, which use relevant minority languages for ritual without any limitation.

The CIS Convention on protection of national minority rights specifies that, “Any contracting Party is bound to provide national minorities with right to make contacts between each other without any obstacle, as well as to make contacts with organizations of those citizens and countries, with whom they have common ethnical, cultural, language or religious beliefs.” Article 7 of the mentioned convention specifies that national minorities may be involved in peaceful mass meetings and unions.

The Republic of Armenia has signed bilateral (for friendship and cooperation) and multilateral agreements with other countries and neighbouring countries especially, to undertake the protection of national minorities. In these agreements such provisions are touched upon which directly concern the protection of national minority rights. Such treaties exist with Greece, Russian Federation, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Lebanon etc where certain provisions concern the implementation of certain measures and creation of necessary conditions to develop and preserve the ethnical, cultural, language and religious identity of national minorities living in the respective Parties. The mentioned treaties⁵ state the peculiar traditional friendly relations and various connections established between the two peoples throughout the history, conscious of the importance of a number of obligations, undertaken by many documents, the countries commit to cooperate in all aspects with mutual trust and good relationship, and to sign other agreements if necessary.

⁵ For the texts of the treaties please visit www.armeniaforeignministry.am

2. Regional or Minority and Non-territorial Languages

According to the definition in Paragraph a), Article 1 of the Charter, in RA there are no regional or non-territorial languages, instead there are minority languages (which, after all, are the languages of the immigrants). They are Assyrian, Yezidi, Greek, Russian and Kurdish, which are in fact the languages of the minorities: only the representatives of the relevant national minorities have spoken the traditionally used languages and have brought them to Armenia. None of these national minorities is autochthonous, and traditionally and historically they are not connected with the area, though there are separate small areas (villages), where mostly these minorities inhabited. The only language is Russian that a large number of non-Russians speak. Though Russian, according to the above-mentioned definition, cannot be regarded as a non-territorial language, as it is not traditionally used in the territory of Armenia. The dissemination of Russian as a second language in Armenia is a result of Russian Empire, the national, language, cultural and economic policy run by the USSR, and was carried out mostly through schooling and higher education. The dissemination of Russian language is a result of exile and economic immigration, deportation or return of Armenians from countries of CIS, peoples' integration policy in Soviet Union.

Thus, there are no languages relevant to Article 1 of the Charter in Armenia. Though, Armenia, as an expression of good will, bears the responsibility for the above-mentioned five languages, especially since three of them (Assyrian, Yezidi and Kurdish) are not state languages in any country.

3. The Number of Minority-Language Speakers

On the territory of RA nearly 3,15 thousand people consider Assyrian as their native language (nearly 90% of Assyrians living in RA), Yezidi – 32,4 thousand people (nearly 80% of Yezidi living in RA), Greek – 0,75 thousand people (nearly 58% of Greeks living in RA), Kurdish – 1,25 thousand people (nearly 78% of Kurds living in RA). Not all of the above-mentioned people have good command of their native language (there are no reliable data about how many and how much). Anyway, the number of those having good command of the language does not exceed the given figures (e.g. 80% of Assyrians has good command of the spoken language, 2% - written language). Nearly 98% (14,5 thousand people) of the Russians living in RA considers Russian their native language.

In Armenia some individuals know Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Polish, Georgian, Jewish, etc.

As to the Charter requirements, the Assyrians, Yezidis, Kurds and Greeks do not fully use the opportunities given by RA legislation, especially in the field of education and media. Very often the Assyrians and Greeks prefer Russian to their language: they publish Russian newspapers, get Russian education and become Russian-speaking.

According to the initial data of the 2001 national census, the proportion of ethnicities in Armenia is the following:

	Absolute figure	%
Armenians	3142,7 thousand	97,81
Yezidi	40,5 thousand	1,26
Russians	14,8 thousand	0,46
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Other peoples	8,7 thousand	0,27
Total	3213,1 thousand	100
Among them non-Armenians	70,4 thousand	2,19

Among the 20 peoples who live in Armenia together with Armenians the Assyrians, Greeks, Yezidis, Kurds, Russians, as well as Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Germans, Poles and Jews form comparatively large number. Here they found their second motherland and they contribute to the economic and cultural development of Armenia as much as they can. If we put parallels from the chronological viewpoint, it could be seen that the first date these communities settled in Armenia goes back to the second quarter of the XIX century.

The first group of Assyrians (descendants of old Assyrians) settled in Armenia in 1830s. Some groups immigrated during World War I. They are Christians. At present the 3500 Assyrians in Armenia live mainly in the villages Verin Dvin, Nor Artagers, Arzni, Dimitrov and in Yerevan, Artashat, Abovyan cities. They speak Assyrian, Russian and Armenian.

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Kurds settled in Armenia during the Turkish and Persian power, emigrating from Mesopotamia and partly from Iran. They are Moslems or Zoroastrians. At present the existing in Armenia 1600 Kurds live mainly in the villages Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkan, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachia, Derek, Avshen, etc. they speak Kurdish, Armenian.

The RA Policy in the Field of Preserving Minority Languages

The RA Constitution is the main source in running the state policy on preserving minority languages.

On December 8, 1991, in Minsk, Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia signed an agreement on “Creating cooperation between CIS”. The agreement formally stated the end of the USSR⁶, as well as that the parties will preserve the national minorities living in their areas, wishing to contribute to the development and preservation of their national, cultural, language and religious peculiarity.

Armenia has signed a number of international agreements and contracts in the field of protecting human and minority rights, preserving language and other cultural values.

In Armenia a number of laws directly specify and guarantee the preservation of national minority languages and cultures – within the scope of law.

The main provisions of the Armenian language policy are defined by the Constitution, the Law on Language, as well as by “State program of language policy”. It is stated in the Constitution and in the law that the Republic of Armenia guarantees the free usage of minority languages in its territory, including in the field of education. In current legislation there is no obstacle in minority language usage, as well as it does not envisage or implement any legislative or practical means against language preservation or development, damage, threat or restriction.

In the state program of language policy it is mentioned that respect towards the multiculturalism and polylingualism, promotion of national minority languages and culture development is one of the conditions that guarantee Armenia’s reputation in the international arena. The supremacy of Armenia’s state language harmonically goes with the national minority language preservation and principles of mutual respect of all cultures – relevant to norms and principles of international law and Council of Europe language policy. One of the program goals is to guarantee the rights of all Armenian citizens to get education in their native language. The 7th section of the language policy is titled “Preservation of RA national minority rights in the field of language”.

As the major objectives of the aspect are mentioned the following:

1. The national minority languages are the inseparable part of Armenia’s language and culture, they are its value. The state support of these languages is of great importance for the process of democratisation of our country and civil society development.
2. The rights of citizens of Armenia in the field of language have double nature – national and public. On the national level it provides the right to know the native language, to get education and to use it, on the public level it provides the right and duty of all citizens of Armenia to know the state language and use it.
3. State support of some national minority identity preservation may positively affect the linking of our country with the native state of those peoples.

As program activities the following are mentioned:

1. Comprehensive support to the preservation and development of national minority languages.
2. Support to the effective language communication and mutual understanding between the national minorities – relevant to the norms of Council of Europe language policy.
3. Enrolment of scientific-pedagogical potential of the given people’s intelligentsia to preserve national minority right to get educated in their native language.

⁶ Eight former USSR republics joined the agreement (including Armenia) and on December 21, 1991 signed the protocol, which is the integral part of the agreement.

4. Support in preparing and training national minority language teachers.
5. Analyses of national minority language textbooks' creation possibility and development of a publishing program.

The program also envisages a number of events that have been carried out or are under way.

It should be mentioned that the terms “national minority” and “minority languages” are fully apprehensible for Armenian people, that have spread all around the world as a result of genocide at the beginning of the XX century and in different countries it forms minority. As to Article 11 of the Constitution, it stipulates “Historical and cultural monuments and other cultural values are under the care and protection of the state. Within the framework of principles and norms of international law, the Republic of Armenia shall promote the protection of Armenian historical and cultural values located in other countries, and shall support the development of Armenian educational and cultural life”.

The Law on language specifies: “The Republic of Armenia supports the preservation and dissemination of Armenian language among Armenians living abroad.”

Facing similar problems, our Republic focuses on national minorities and on running similar policy towards their language. Though it should be mentioned, that Armenian, as a minority language, has not yet been honoured with the preservation within the Charter even in those countries (Greece, France, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Russian Federation, etc)⁷, where Armenians lived in large communities in middle ages and even in early Middle Ages, or where Armenian is a territorial language of a native people, and where Armenian community participated in the formation of those statehoods. Whereas Eastern Armenian, spoken in European countries is included in the “Red Book of European Languages” and longs for urgent support.

5. Bodies and Organizations dealing with Minority Language Preservation

1. Creation of the Coordinating Council for national minorities under the Presidency is an important step in the act of national minority languages and culture preservation. This body was officially established on June 15, 2000 upon the decree of the President to guarantee the national minority protection, to activate their intercommunity relations, as well as eliminating from the necessity to care more effectively for special educational, cultural, legal other problems. The president's decree followed the First Congress (12 March 2000) of the representatives of non-governmental, cultural and national minority organizations. The Coordinating Council is an interim circle in the way of creating a separate state structure to deal national minorities.

2. The State Language Inspectorate of Ministry of Education and Science, established in 1993, is a body dealing with national minority language preservation, according to Article 5 of the law on language and the resolution of RA Supreme Council on the order of application of this law. At first it worked attached to the RA Government, and then in 2002 it became a separate department of the Ministry of Education and Science. According to the statutes of the State Language Inspectorate the objectives and goals of the Inspectorate are:

- a) Implementation of a unified policy in the field of language in RA
- b) Providing ground to implement the requirements of RA law on language and RA state program of language policy

⁷ Cyprus is an exception, where Armenian has a status of non-territorial language

c) Providing RA national minority language rights.

To implement its objectives and goals the Inspectorate, according to the established by the RA legislation order, controls the implementation of state language policy by state and local governing bodies.

Within the Inspectorate the Board of foreign and national minority languages functioned, where RA national minority language speakers and representatives from relevant communities were involved.

3. The permanent committee for education, science, culture and youth matters of RA National Assembly deals with the matters of national minorities, their culture and language preservation.

4. The following NGOs, registered in RA according to the established order, deal with the matters of preserving national minorities, their culture and language.

1. "Atur Assyrian Association" NGO, Yerevan, Pushkin 11, 565151, Pavel Tamrazov
2. Council of RA Kurd Intelligentsia, Yerevan, Arshakuniats 2, 12 floor, 529612, Amarik Sardaryan
3. "Kurdistan Committee" NGO, Yerevan, Teryan 62/19, 582207, K. Chalanyan
4. "Yezidi National Union" NGO, Kotayk marz, v. Zovuni, A. Hajoyan
5. "Menora" Jewish Culture Centre" NGO, Yerevan, Vardanants 5a, apt. 113, 525882, V. Vainer
6. "Patrida" Greeks of Armenia NGO, Yerevan, Vardanants 2, 774500, 495774, E. Polatov
7. "Union of Nations of Republic of Armenia" NGO, Yerevan, Tigran Mets 8, apt. 525594, V. Chatoev
8. "Aghbiur" Community of Germans of Armenia, Yerevan, Pushkin 14, 580300, A. Yaskorski
9. "Ukraina" Federation of Ukrainians of Armenia NGO, Yerevan, Kyulpenkyan 2/1, apt. 52, Yavir Romanya
10. "Polonia" Benevolent NGO of Polish cooperation, Yerevan, Isahakyan 14, apt. 9, 568004, A. Kuzminskaya
11. Community of Yezidi and Kurds, Yerevan, Shiraki 19/15, 561600, S. Sadoyev
12. "Elpida" Greek Community" NGO, Vanadzor, 46588, Tigran Mets 48, Arkadi Khitarov
13. World Yezidi National Union NGO, Yerevan, Arshakuniats 2, 12 floor, 522550, A. Tamoyan
14. "Assyrian "Ashur" Youth Centre" NGO, Yerevan, Teryan 105, building 4, Room 4102, 598515, I. Gasparyan
15. "Greek Community "Ponti" of Yerevan" NGO, Yerevan, Arghutyan 29/22, 233297, F. Nikolaidis
16. "Anastasi" Greek Community NGO, Hrazdan, Pionerneri 12, apt. 27, K. Avgitov
17. "Pontos" Greek Community of Alaverdi, Alaverdi, Zoravar Andraniki 197, apt. 1a, Angela Kilinkarova
18. "Belarus" Community of Byelorussians in Yerevan" NGO of Armenia, Yerevan, Gogoli 5, apt. 7, 395938, V. Varazhan-Krishtopik
19. "Olympos" Greek Community of Noyemberyan, Noyemberyan, Kamoyi 3, 22098, Tamara Tamazyan
20. "Yezidi National Committee" NGO, Yerevan, Davit Anhaght 23, floor 3, 240068, T. Namatyan
21. "Stepanavan Regional "Pontos" Community of Lori marz" NGO, Stepanavan, Yeritasardakan, Cottage 43, 22904, A. Khristoforidi

22. "Yezidi Abroad" NGO, Yerevan, Davit Anhaght 23, R. Khudoyan
23. Association of Ukrainians NGO, Yerevan, Narekatsi District 38, apt. 61, 621273, O. Parkhomenko
24. "'Patriotis" Greek Community of Gyumri in Shirak marz" NGO, Yerevan, Savoyan 225, apt. 296, Vrazh Kutikov
25. Relief and Support Fund for Russian Compatriots in Armenia, Yerevan, 443341, 228993, I. Semyonov
26. "Rossia" NGO of Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, P. Biuzand 1/3, 565491. Y. Yakovenko
27. "Slavyanski Dom" Ngo, Yerevan, 771455. N. Gustova
28. "Garmonia" international centre of Russian culture, Yerevan, 534121, Aida Harutyunyan
29. "Rossiane" NGO, Kapan, 085-62212, G. Aghakhanyan

6. The Bodies and Organizations the authors of this report have consulted with

While preparing this report the committee consulted with the representatives of organizations 1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 26 of the above mentioned list, it cooperated with the National minority coordinating council under the Presidency, with the permanent committee for education, science, culture and youth affairs of the National Assembly. Representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of culture, youth and sport, the Ministry of Justice, the department of social matters of RA Government staff, the National Committee of TV and Radio, the RA Public Radio. The Ministry of Foreign affairs, Ministry of Interior, National Statistics Service, Council of Public TV and Radio, Yerevan City Municipality, Regional councils, introduced materials.

7. Information to national communities

Article 38 of RA law on international treaties specifies that the international treaties that came into force in accordance with the law are published in the "Official gazette of International treaties". The "Official gazette of International treaties" is the official periodical of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is published according to periodicity established by the RA Ministry of Foreign affairs. RA international treaties concerning human rights, freedoms and obligations are also published in "Official gazette" according to the law on legal acts. The mentioned gazette must be subscribed by all RA state, regional government bodies, local self-government and judicial bodies and are available to all NGOs, unions, enterprises and individuals. They are available state libraries and are sold.

Before and after the ratification of the Charter, according to Article 37 of the law on "RA international treaties", the RA Ministry of Foreign Affairs the text of the charter was sent to competent ministries, administrative and other state bodies. Upon the request of the NGOs dealing with matters of national minorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs submits the Charter to them as well. Besides that the State Language Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Science submitted the copies of the Charter to RA national minority communities, asking for necessary information for the annual report. The regional government bodies have also provided the national communities with information about the Charter.

The public radio program "Andradarts" (Reflection) several times has touched upon the Charter and the fact of the ratification of it by Armenia.

On December 19-20, 2002, in Yerevan the RA Ministry of Education and Science and the Council of Europe Secretariat held the conference "The educational policy and the

minorities”, where matters concerning the Charter were touched upon and minority language users were invited as well.

PART II

Measures taken connected with the goals and principles connected with the implementation of European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages

The Republic of Armenia implements a policy towards all minority languages existing on its territory relevant to the definition of Article 1 of the Charter and according to the status of every language for the following goals and principles:

- recognition of minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth,
- willingness to take necessary measures in supporting the minority languages and to protect them,
- facilitating the usage of minority languages and/or encouragement of spoken or written language in public or private life,
- preservation and development of connections between the groups using the same language, or between the groups in different countries using the same or identical language, as well as creation of cultural links between other groups in the same country using different languages,
- providing relevant ways and means of teaching and learning minority languages according to all phases,
- providing conditions, that will enable non-speakers of the minority language living in that area (where that language is used) to learn the language in case they want it,
- stimulation of the study and research of minority languages at universities or adequate educational or scientific institutions,
- stimulation or exchange of relevant interracial forms in the fields mentioned in the Charter for regional or minority languages used similarly or identically in one or two countries,
- abolition of any unjustified difference, exclusion, limitation or preference which refer to the minority language usage and threaten the preservation and development of the given language, on condition that adoption of special measures concerning minority languages, directed to support the equality of rights among the users of these languages and the rest of the population, will not be considered as an act of discrimination towards the users of that language on a due level,
- including tolerance, mutual understanding and respect towards the minority languages among the goals of learning and teaching,
- availability of bodies to advise the authorities about all the problems concerning minority languages.

2. Further Aims

The following events are envisaged for coming years:

- to continue the considerations of the issue of preserving and developing Assyrian and Assyrian culture,
- to create ground to restore Assyrian cultural-information radio programs,
- to find sponsors to publish school text-books in Assyrian, Kurdish, Yezidi,
- to support the organization of training courses or teachers of Assyrian, Kurdish, Yezidi,
- to develop a law on National minorities

- to create a cultural centre for national minorities,
- to resume the functioning of State Language Inspectorate of RA Ministry of Education and Science and language board of national minorities.

PART III

In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 1 of the Charter, the Republic of Armenia declared that within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages minority languages in the Republic of Armenia are Assyrian, Yezidi, Greek, Russian and Kurdish languages.

Republic of Armenia applies the following provisions of the Charter to the Assyrian, Yezidi, Greek, Russian and Kurdish languages:

Article 8 – Education

Sub-paragraphs 1.a.iv; 1.b.iv; 1.c.iv; 1.d.iv; 1.e.iii; 1.f.iii.

Article 9 - Judicial authorities

Sub-paragraphs 1.a.ii, iii, iv ; 1.b.ii ; 1.c.ii and iii ; 1.d.
Paragraph 3.

Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services

Sub-paragraphs 1.a.iv and v; 1.b; 2.b; 2.f; 2.g; 3.c; 4.c.
Paragraph 5.

Article 11 – Media

Sub-paragraphs 1.a.iii ; 1.b.ii ; 1.c.ii ; 1.e.
Paragraphs 2 and 3.

Article 12 - Cultural activities and facilities

Sub-paragraphs 1.a.c.f.
Paragraphs 2 and 3.

Article 13 - Economic and social life

Sub-paragraphs 1.b ; 1.c ; 1.d ; 2.b ; 2.c.

Article 14 - Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraphs a and b.

1. Assyrian

Article 8. Education

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia supports the communities of national minorities to organize the basic part of education in relevant languages for at least those pupils, whose families asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. There is no such request for Assyrian yet.

Subparagraph iv of b) of Paragraph 1

Primary school is available for RA national minority communities in relevant languages, or within elementary education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an integral part of the curriculum, at least for pupils whose families requested for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus Assyrian is taught as a special course in schools in Verin Dvin, Dimitrov, Arzni, Nor Artagers villages and in Yerevan Pushkin school no. 8. Nearly 800 pupils attend the classes.

Subparagraph iv of c) of Paragraph 1

Secondary education is available for national minority communities in relevant languages, or within secondary education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus Assyrian is taught as a special course in schools in Verin Dvin, Dimitrov, Arzni, and Nor Artagers villages and in Yerevan Pushkin School no. 8.

In the 7th and 8th grades in these schools national history or literature study may also be included upon request by specialists and parents.

Subparagraph iv of d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the technical and professional education is available in the language of national minorities, or within technical and professional education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for them who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. There is no such request for Assyrian yet.

Subparagraph iii of e) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia allows university or other forms of higher education in the language of minorities or giving opportunities to teach these languages as disciplines at universities and higher educational institutions. Several universities can offer special courses of Assyrian upon demand. In particular “Davit Anhaght” Humanitarian University offers the profession “Assyrian Studies”.

Subparagraph iii of f) of Paragraph 1

Since secondary education in Armenia is obligatory, there are no illiterate adults. If they have problems with education, they apply to higher or post-graduate educational institutions.

Hence almost no problem arises connected with adults on-going education in other institutions. However, there function a number of language-teaching courses in Armenia that can offer courses of Assyrian upon demand to those who wish, without any age limitation. There is a Sunday course of Assyrian in Arzni for adults. Union “Atour” periodically organizes training of Assyrian language teachers.

Article 9. Judicial authorities

Subparagraph ii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 15 of Criminal code stipulates that every person during court procedure (with the exception of the body processing the proceedings) has the right to speak the language he/she knows. Upon the decision of the mentioned body, the person(s) involved in the procedure, who does not possess the language of procedure, are given free of charge opportunity to realize all their rights provided by the code through an interpreter. This line of action is used in Armenia not only in the regional judicial authorities, where the number of minority language speakers is in accord with events established by Article 9 of the Charter, but in any other area too.

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

The same Code provides that inquiries and evidences (written or oral) must not be considered exclusively unacceptable, as they have been formulated in the languages of minorities.

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

According to the Code persons who do not know the procedure language, based on inquiry about the legal matters, are given the certified copies of documents in the language they know subject to submission.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

According to Paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Civil Procedure Code, the person involved in civil proceeding, who does not know the procedure language (Armenian) is provided with the right to learn the case materials, to take part in the procedure and to speak in the court in other language through an interpreter free of charge.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

It is envisaged by the RA draft law on “Principles of Administration and Administrative procedure” (submitted for consideration) to allow the party to speak the language of minorities before the court, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph iii of c) of Paragraph 1

The same draft law envisages allowing the documents and evidences to be given in minority languages, if necessary through interpreters and translations, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

The legislation guarantees that implementation of Paragraphs b) and c) and turning to help for translations and interpreters will not include extra expenses from the persons concerned.

Paragraph 3

Texts of much more important laws of national legislation are available in Armenia to Assyrian population in the state language, Russian and sometimes Assyrian: especially texts, which concern speakers of Assyrian (if not otherwise defined). The reason is that in Armenia Assyrians have good command of Russian and Armenian.

Article 10. Administrative authorities and public services

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The law does not forbid to turn to bodies in power in minority languages (written as well) and to express oneself in his/her language. In such cases when answering the applications in written form, the state language is used, which, though is not a ban to formulate the answer in the relevant language, in case the applicant requests for that. Hence within the administrative areas, where the number of minority language speakers is sufficient, the minority languages speakers may introduce their claims written or oral in their language. We have this situation particularly in villages Verin Dvin, Nor Artagers, Arzni and Dimitrov, populated with Assyrians.

Subparagraph v of a) of Paragraph 1

On the same bases it is guaranteed, that minority language speaker has the right to introduce documents in those languages.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

Administrative texts and forms widely used in Assyrian communities are available to the population, as they are often written in Russian, and usually Assyrians have good knowledge of Russian or official language.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to local or regional bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language speakers have the opportunity to place an order in those languages written or oral.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 2

With regard to RA local or marz bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language usage during their meetings (discussions) is allowed by the local authorities, though without excluding the usage of the language (languages) officially adopted by the state.

Subparagraph g) of Paragraph 2

The RA law on “Geographical names” specifies, that when giving settlement names the natives’ viewpoints must also be considered (Article 3), and when naming or renaming, offers may be made by both local self-governing bodies and by legal and natural persons (Article 6). In particular a number of squares, streets, fields, water springs, etc, of several villages inhabited by Assyrians have Assyrian names.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 3

With regard to the state services of the administrative bodies or persons acting in their name on the area where minority languages are used, the minority language speakers are allowed to make inquiries and get answers in those languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 4

The officials are not restricted by the post they hold, to communicate with minority language users in their language, if they possess it. However, if a person has applied in written to executive bodies in a language different from Armenian, then on the area the mentioned language is used, that authority must answer the application in essence, with the exception of cases, when the law specified special requirements concerning the introduction of an application. In that case, though, the application can not be refused, but the special order of its introduction must be preserved.

Paragraph 5

The legislation envisages the opportunity for a person to preserve or change his name, surname or patronymic name, to restore his previous name surname or patronymic name. Assyrian citizens are free to choose Assyrian surnames and to use them in Assyrian.

Article 11. Media

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 28 of RA law on TV and Radio envisages that public TV and Radio Company can spare air time for special programs in minority languages. Article 28 of the same law specifying that among other duties of the public TV and Radio Company, mentions that interests of national minorities must also be considered when broadcasting programs or series of programs.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides the national minorities with an hour a day of air time on Armenian public radio. Assyrian radio has functioned for many years at Armenian radio committee and the programs were heard in the whole east. But it is two years since the programs were stopped, as there are no qualified specialists. These programs can be restored if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

According to the above-mentioned law the national minorities are provided with an hour per week of air time on public TV. They can prepare also Assyrian programs if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Subparagraph i of e) of Paragraph 1

Recently the publishing house agency of the Ministry of cultural, youth affairs and sport has been allocating more than 1 (one) million AM drams to publish newspapers for national minorities. With those allocations Assyrian newspapers or magazines can also be published if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Paragraph 2

According to Article 10 of the above-mentioned law programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies may be completely rebroadcast in Armenia based on the license given by the National TV and Radio Committee or based on the international treaty. And licensed in TV and Radio Companies can rebroadcast programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies on contract bases.

Paragraph 3

It is guaranteed in Armenia that interests of national minority language users are introduced or are taken into consideration by bodies established by law, which are responsible for freedom of media and for providing pluralism of viewpoints. This is confirmed by the statutes and activities of the publishing house agency of the Ministry of cultural, youth affairs and sport, Public TV and Radio Company board and TV and Radio National Committee.

Article 12. Cultural activities and facilities

Subparagraph a) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia, where such languages are used and to the extent the state bodies are competent, have rights or play some role in that field, they encourage those forms of expression and initiations, which are peculiar to minority languages.

The Assyrian Union “Atour” (Motherland) carries out cultural and sport events. Assyrian national ensembles function, though not regularly. There are cultural centres in villages inhabited by Assyrians. In the libraries of those villages there are Assyrian books, though not many. Children’s ensembles function in schools.

In 2001-2002 the Union “Atour” participated in international Assyrian games organized in Iran and in four kinds of sport (football, basketball, tennis, chess) won 1st and 2nd prizes, cups and gold medals. In 2003 they are going to participate in the championship, expecting sponsorship from Armenian authorities.

The Institute of History of National Academy of Sciences and the “Arbela” Scientific-cultural centre, which is involved in “Atour” Union, have organized a cultural conference titled “Armenian-Assyrian Christian links”.

There are Assyrian post-graduate students in the National Academy of Sciences, who study the history of Assyrian genocide and culture.

There is an Armenian-Assyrian scientific-cultural centre in Verin Dvin.

The Assyrian youth centre “Ashour” functions in Yerevan, which deals with educational programs and with protection of Assyrians rights. It participated in youth conferences in Iran and Russia.

In Assyrian villages national, religious and cultural celebrities are regularly organized (Assyrian New Year on April 1, Shara, Saint Mariah, etc), as well as the Genocide day in Ottoman Turkey is celebrated. Performances and concerts are organized on these days. They intend to perform the national drama “Assyrian girl” Razmik Khosroyev, who was an actor at Yerevan Soundoukyan Theatre.

In churches Assyrian divine service is given.

The RA preserves and restores not only Armenian, but other monuments as well, which have been built by other nations in different times. The Agency of Monument Preservation at the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has registered and introduces the following Assyrian monuments:

- Assyrian Saint Kiril church, 1840, Ararat marz, village Dimitrov,
- Assyrian Urma church, end of XIX century, Ararat marz, village Verin Dvin.

The community made an effort to create Assyrian alphabet (author – T. A. Mouradova), which is still in handwritten condition.

A Committee for Assyrian teaching methodology and Assyrian language teachers training and qualification functions at RA National Academy of Sciences.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

It is guaranteed that all bodies responsible for organization and support to different cultural activities will give relevant permission, so that knowledge and usage of minority languages and culture joint the initiatives undertaken by them or for which they support.

In 2002 in Yerevan two great events were organized with the participation of all communities of RA national minorities.

- a) Two years subsequently, 2001 and 2002, on September 21, financed by the Government and the Ministry of cultural, youth affairs and sport (500.000 and 300.000 drams respectively) great song and dance festivals were held at the Small Philharmonic Hall, dedicated to the RA Independence Day. Representatives from all the national minorities, individually and in-groups, participated in these festivals, introducing their national and folk art.
- b) On April 5, 2002, “Armenia – our home” event took place at Khnko Aper Children’s Library, with participation of RA Government members, Embassies’ representatives and political figures. Women from different nationalities showed their hand-made goods, representing their national ornaments.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 1

Armenia supports the direct participation of representatives from minority language users in the implementation and planning of cultural activities. Thus, according to the Resolution of Coordinating Council (consisting of representatives from national minorities) of functioning under the Presidency staff, the allocated sum 20 million drams for 2001-2002 (i.e. 10 million annually) was equally divided between the 11 Coordinating Board member community representative organizations in order to support the national minority educational and cultural activities.

Paragraph 2

With regard to the areas different from areas traditionally using the minority languages, the Armenian authorities allow and support relevant cultural activities and possibilities, according to the previous paragraph, even if the number of minority language users is not sufficient.

Paragraph 3

To lead its cultural policy abroad the Armenia recommends introducing its national minority languages and cultures as well.

Article 13. Economic and social life

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

According to RA legislation, in the field of economic and social activity, in the entire territory of the country it is forbidden to include any provision in the documents, regulations, in other acts or private documents of companies, that does not accept or limits the usage (at least with those using the same language) of national minority languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

Armenia counteracts the practice of preventing from minority language usage connected with economic and social activity.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

Companies and enterprises in Armenia decide on their own which language to use.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to the economic and public activity to the extent the RA State bodies are competent, if possible they organize activities stimulating minority language usage in the economic and public parts directly under their control (state sector) on the territories using national minority language. This, in particular, happens in the villages Verin Dvin, Nor Artagers, Arzni, Dimitrov, inhabited by Assyrians.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 2

The legislation guarantees that institutions of state maintenance (like hospitals, nursing homes and hostels) receive and care for people from national minorities, who need care because of

poor health, age or other reasons. In this respect no case of discrimination or limitation has been registered or observed.

Article 14. Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraph a)

The RA has concluded both bilateral and multilateral treaties to support the creation of links between the same language speakers (Assyrian in particular). Thus the CIS Convention on Protecting the rights of National minority people specifies, that, “Every contracting party is obliged to provide the national minority people with the right for free contact between themselves, citizens and organizations with whom they have common ethnic, cultural, language or religious descent.” Article 7 of the mentioned Convention specifies that national minorities may be involved in peaceful mass meetings and unions. The Assyrian “Atour” Union and “Ashour” youth centre have close relations with Assyrian world union in northern Iraq, Iran, Sweden and with Assyrian unions and centres functioning in CIS countries, and receive from them newspapers, literature and text-books.

Paragraph b)

For the benefit of national minority languages there is no obstacle for transfrontier cooperation, in particular between marzes and local authorities, in the territory of which the same language is used similarly or identically.

2. Yezidi

Article 8. Education

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia supports the communities of national minorities to organize the basic part of education in relevant languages for at least those pupils, whose families asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. There is no such request for Yezidi yet.

Subparagraph iv of b) of Paragraph 1

Primary school is available for national minority communities in relevant languages, or within primary education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an integral part of the curriculum, at least for pupils whose families requested for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus Yezidi is taught (2-4 hours a week) at the school in the village Zovuni, Kotayk marz. There are similar courses in 16 villages of Aragatsotn marz inhabited by Yezidi people. They were in four more villages, but because of absence of teachers they do not function regularly.

Subparagraph iv of c) of Paragraph 1

Secondary education is available for RA national minority communities in relevant languages, or within secondary education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus Yezidi is taught (2-4 hours a week) at the school in the village Zovuni, Kotayk marz. There are similar courses in 16 villages of

Aragatsotn marz inhabited by Yezidi. They were in four more villages, but because of absence of teachers they do not function regularly. In 7th and 8th grades in these schools national history or literature study may also be included upon request by specialists and parents.

Subparagraph iv of d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the technical and professional education is available in the language of national minorities, or within technical and professional education it is provided the relevant minority language teaching as an integral part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Several years ago the department of Yezidi language was opened at Yerevan Pedagogical vocational school after Bakunts, but it was closed due to the absence of applicants. The department can recommence its functioning if applicants are available.

Subparagraph iii of e) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia allows university or other forms of higher education in the language of minorities or giving opportunities to teach these languages as disciplines at universities and higher educational institutions. Several universities can offer special courses of Yezidi upon demand. In particular Yerevan University of Management offers the profession “Yezidi Studies”.

Subparagraph iii of f) of Paragraph 1

Since secondary education in Armenia is obligatory, there are no illiterate adults. If they have problems with education, they apply to higher or post-graduate educational institutions. Hence almost no problem arises connected with adults’ on-going education in other institutions. However, there function a number of language-teaching courses in Armenia that can offer courses of Yezidi upon demand to those who wish, without any age limitation.

Article 9. Judicial authorities

Subparagraph ii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 15 of RA criminal code specifies that every person during a court procedure (with the exception of the person carrying on the procedure) has the right to speak the language he knows. Upon the decision of the body proceeding the case, the involved person, who does not know the procedure language, are given free of charge opportunity to realize all their rights established by the mentioned law through an interpreter. This line of action is used in Armenia not only in the regional judicial bodies, where the number of minority language speakers is in accord with events established by Article 9 of the Charter, but in any other area too.

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

The same Code provides that inquiries and evidences (written or oral) must not be considered exclusively unacceptable, as they have been formulated in the languages of minorities.

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

According to the Code people who do not know the procedure language, based on inquiry about the legal matters, are given, envisaged by the Code, the certified copies of documents in the language they know subject to submission.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

According to Paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Civil Procedure Code, the person involved in civil proceedings, who does not know the procedure language (Armenian) is entitled to learn the case materials, to take part in the procedure and to speak in the court in other language through an interpreter – without any expenses.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

It is envisaged by the draft law on “Principles of Administration and Administrative procedure” (submitted for consideration) to allow the party to speak the language of minorities before the court, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph iii of c) of Paragraph 1

The same draft envisages allowing the documents and evidences to be given in minority languages, if necessary through interpreters and translations, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

The legislation guarantees that implementation of paragraphs b) and c) and turning to help for translations and interpreters will not include extra expenses from the persons concerned.

Paragraph 3

Texts of much more important laws of national legislation are available to Yezidi population in the state language, Russian and sometimes Yezidi: especially texts, which concern speakers of Yezidi (if not otherwise defined). The reason is that in Armenia Yezidi have good command of Russian and Armenian.

Article 10. Administrative authorities and public services

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The law does not prohibit to turn to bodies in power in minority languages (written as well) and to express oneself in own language. In such cases when answering the applications in written form, the state language is used, which, though is not a ban to formulate the answer in the relevant language, if the applicant requests for that. Hence within the administrative areas, where the number of minority language speakers is sufficient, the minority languages speakers may introduce their claims written or oral in their language. We have this situation particularly in villages Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisz, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachai, Derek, Avshen and Zovuni populated with Yezidi.

Subparagraph v of a) of Paragraph 1

On the same bases it is guaranteed, that minority language speakers have the right to introduce documents in those languages.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

Administrative texts and forms widely used in Yezidi communities are available to the Yezidi speaking population, as they are sometimes written in Yezidi, and usually Yezidi have good knowledge of RA State language.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to RA local or regional authorities and bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language speakers have the opportunity to submit applications in those languages written or oral.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 2

With regard to local or regional bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language usage during their meetings (discussions) is allowed by the local authorities, though without excluding the usage of the language (languages) officially adopted by the state.

Subparagraph g) of Paragraph 2

The law on “Geographical names” specifies, that when giving settlement names the natives’ viewpoints must also be considered (Article 3), and when naming or renaming, offers and proposals may be made by both local self-government bodies and by legal and natural persons (Article 6). In particular a number of villages have Yezidi names - Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisz, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachai, Derek, Avshen, etc, as well as a several water springs, fields, streets, squares, etc.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 3

With regard to the state services of the administrative bodies or persons acting in their name on the area where minority languages are used, the minority language speakers are allowed to make inquiries and get answers in those languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 4

The officials are not banned by the post they hold, to communicate with minority language users in their language, if they possess it. However, if a person has applied in written to RA executive bodies in a language different from Armenian, then on the area the mentioned language is used, the mentioned state body must answer the application in essence, with the exception of cases, when the requirements concerning the introduction of an application are provided specially by law. In that case, though, the application cannot be refused, but the special procedure of its introduction must be preserved.

Paragraph 5

The legislation envisages the opportunity for a person to preserve or change his name, surname or patronymic name, to restore his previous name surname or patronymic name. In Armenia it is up to Yezidi citizens to choose Yezidi surnames and to use them in Yezidi. Part of Yezidis prefers to act like that.

Article 11. Media

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 28 of RA law on TV and Radio envisages that public TV and Radio Company “can spare air time for special programs in RA minority languages”. Article 28 of the same law specifies that among other duties of the public TV and Radio Company the interests of RA national minorities must also be considered when broadcasting programs or series of programs.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides the national minorities with an hour per day of air time on Armenian public radio. For many years half an hour Yezidi programs are being broadcast every day (information, community life, culture, folk music).

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

According to the above-mentioned law the RA national minorities are provided with an hour a week of air time on public TV. They can prepare also Yezidi programs if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Subparagraph of e) of Paragraph 1

Recently the publishing house agency of RA Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has been allocating more than 1 (one) million AM drams to publish newspapers for national minorities. With those allocations Yezidi “Lalesh”, “Ezdikhana” (The Voice of Yezidi, in Armenian⁸), newspapers are published.

Paragraph 2

According to Article 10 of the above-mentioned law programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies may be completely rebroadcast in territory based on the license given by the National TV and Radio Committee or based on the intergovernmental treaty. And licensed in TV and Radio Companies can rebroadcast programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies on contract bases.

Paragraph 3

Armenia guarantees that interests of national minority language users are introduced or are taken into consideration by bodies established by law, which are responsible for freedom of media and for providing pluralism of viewpoints. This is confirmed by the statutes and

⁸ The choice of the language is made by the Yezidis.

activities of the publishing house agency of the Ministry of cultural, youth affairs and sport, Public TV and Radio Company board and TV and Radio National Committee.

Article 12. Cultural activities and facilities

Subparagraph a) of Paragraph 1

In territories, where such languages are used and to the extent the state bodies are competent, have rights or play some role in that field, they encourage those forms of expression and initiations, which are peculiar to minority languages.

Today the World and Armenia Yezidi national Union operates in Armenia, the “Ezdikhana” NGO is registered. They have their national flag and coat of arms. There are cultural centres in villages inhabited by Yezidis.

Since middle ages, according to national-religious tradition, writing and literature have been forbidden among Yezidis, and only in Soviet times the ban was removed. In 1921 for the first time Armenian-lettered ABC book “Shams” was published for Yezidi children, which is still used at schools. Now, despite the present situation (in 21 villages inhabited by Yezidis national schools functioned or are functioning), 50% of school-aged pupils do not attend school.

There are nearly 2000 Yezidi books preserved in National Library. They have such books also in their village libraries.

In 2001-2002 with the authorship of Yezidi national hero Aziz Tamoyan and with the editorship of professors from Faculty of Oriental Studies of Yerevan State University the books “We are Yezidi: genealogical, religious, historical essay”, “The Heroism of Yezidi people: Yezidis in Artsakh War” are published. The latter was published with the sponsorship of Ministry of Defense and Minister of Defence Serzh Sargsyan himself. The book introduces 36 Yezidi warriors who died in Artsakh War; three of them are buried in Yerablur (cemetery where warrior are buried).

“National Heroes of Yezidi People”, “National Saints of Yezidi People”, “Aziz Tamoyan – National Hero of Yezidi People” postures have also been published.

National-folk holidays are celebrated with the following sequence:

- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday of the first week after February 13 of every year is fasting,
- The first Wednesday after April 13 is Malake Taus – Yezidi New Year. the same Wednesday in Lalesh – Yezidi sanctuary, is called Red Wednesday,
- Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday after December 13 is fasting. Friday is the Red Sultan Yezidi holiday.

The people sacredly preserve the above-mentioned rituals and traditions.

Formerly 3 folk ensembles functioned, which come together only occasionally.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

The RA guarantees that all bodies responsible for organization and support to different cultural activities will give relevant permission, so that knowledge and usage of minority languages and culture joint the initiatives undertaken by them or for which they support.

In 2002 in Yerevan two great events were organized with the participation of all communities of RA national minorities.

- c) Two years successively, 2001 and 2002, on September 21, financed by RA Government and the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport (500.000 and 300.000 drams respectively) great song and dance festivals were held at the Small Philharmonic Hall, dedicated to the RA Independence Day. Representatives from all the national minorities, individually and in groups, participated in these festivals, introducing their national and folk art.
- d) On April 5, 2002, “Armenia – our home” event took place at Khnko Aper Children’s Library, with participation of RA Government members, Embassies’ representatives and political figures. Women from different nationalities showed their hand-made goods, representing their national ornaments.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 1

Armenian authorities support the direct participation of representatives from minority language users in the implementation and planning of cultural activities. Thus, according to the Resolution of Coordinating Council national minority national-cultural NGO’s functioning under the Presidency staff, the allocated sum of 20 million drams for 2001-2002 (i.e. 10 million annually) was equally divided between the 11 Coordinating Board member community representative organizations, with the purpose of supporting the national minority educational and cultural activities.

Paragraph 2

As to the areas different from areas classically using the minority languages, the RA allows and supports relevant cultural activities and possibilities, according to the previous paragraph, even if the number of minority language users is not sufficient.

Paragraph 3

To lead its cultural policy abroad the RA recommends introducing its national minority languages and cultures as well.

Article 13. Economic and public life

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

According to the legislation, in the field of economic and public activity, in the whole territory of the country it is forbidden to include any provision in the regulations or private documents of companies, that do not accept or limit the usage (at least with those using the same language) of national minority languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

Armenia counteracts the practice of preventing from minority language usage connected with economic and public activity.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the companies and enterprises decide on their own which language to use.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to the economic and public activity to the extent the state bodies are competent; if possible they organize activities stimulating minority language usage in the economic and public parts directly under their control (state sector) on the territories using national minority language. This, in particular, happens in the villages Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisz, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachai, Derek, Avshen, Zovuni and other settlements inhabited by Yezidi.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 2

The RA legislation guarantees that institutions of state maintenance (like hospitals, nursing homes, and hostels) receive and care for people from national minorities, who need care because of poor health, age or other reasons. In this respect not a single case of discrimination or limitation has been registered or observed.

Article 14. Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraph a)

Armenia has concluded bilateral and multilateral treaties to support the creation of links between the same language speakers (Yezidi in particular). Thus the CIS Convention on Protecting the rights of National minority people specifies, that, “every contracting party is obliged to provide the national minority people with the right for free contact between themselves, citizens and organizations with whom they have common ethnic, cultural, language or religious descent.” Article 7 of the mentioned Convention specifies that national minorities may be involved in peaceful mass meetings and unions. Yezidis in Armenia keep in touch with Yezidi communities in Iran and Iraq. Their religious sanctuary is in Iraq where they sometimes visit.

Paragraph b)

For the benefit of national minority languages there is no obstacle for transfrontier cooperation, in particular between marzes and local authorities, in the territory of which the same language is used similarly or identically.

3. Greek

Article 8. Education

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia supports the communities of national minorities to organize the basic part of education in relevant languages for at least those pupils, whose families asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Children are taught Greek in Yerevan Kindergarten 52.

Subparagraph iv of b) of Paragraph 1

Primary school is available for national minority communities in relevant languages, or within elementary education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils whose families asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus teaching of Greek is organized in Yerevan Schools no. 12 and 74.

Subparagraph iv of c) of Paragraph 1

Secondary education is available for national minority communities in relevant languages, or within secondary education it is provided the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus teaching of Greek is organized in Yerevan Schools no. 12 and 74. In 7th and 8th grades in these schools national history or literature study may also be included upon request by specialists and parents.

Subparagraph iv of d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the technical and professional education is available in the language of national minorities, or within technical and professional education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. There is no such request for Greek yet.

Subparagraph iii of e) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia allows university or other forms of higher education in the language of minorities or giving opportunities to teach these languages as disciplines at universities and higher educational institutions. Several universities (Yerevan State University, Yerevan Linguistic University, “Atcharyan” University) have or offer special courses of Greek. There is a Department of Greek language at Yerevan University of Culture. 22 students study there. Yerevan “Monte Melkonyan” University and University of Management offer the profession “Hellenic studies”. According to international agreement it is also possible to organize higher education in Greek for the Greek community and others who wish so. Greece finances the visit of school graduates’ of Greek descent to Greece, to continue higher education there.

Subparagraph iii of f) of Paragraph 1

Since secondary education in Armenia is obligatory, there are no illiterate adults. If they have problems with education, they apply to higher or post-graduate educational institutions.

Hence almost no problem arises connected with adult's on-going education in other institutions. However, there function a number of language-teaching courses in RA that offer courses of Greek, alongside with other languages to those who wish, without any age limitation (e.g. "Haiknet" educational centre). In 10 settlements inhabited by Greeks there function Sunday schools, supported by Greek Embassy to Armenia. Teachers of Greek have training courses in Greek.

Article 9. Judicial authorities

Subparagraph ii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 15 of the Criminal code specifies that every person during court procedure (with the exception of the body proceeding the case) is entitled to speak the language he knows. Upon the decision of the person carrying on the procedure, the involved person who does not know the procedure language, are given free of charge opportunity to realize all their rights established by the mentioned law through an interpreter. This line of action is used not only in the regional judicial bodies, where the number of minority language speakers is in accord with events established by Article 9 of the Charter, but in any other areas too.

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides that inquiries and evidences (written or oral) must not be considered exclusively unacceptable, as they have been formulated in the languages of minorities.

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

According to the same law person who does not know the procedure language, based on inquiry about the legal matters, are given, envisaged by the Code, the certified copies of the documents in the language they know subject to submission.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

According to Paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Civil Procedure Code, the person involved in civil proceedings, who does not know the procedure language (Armenian) has the right to learn the case materials, to take part in the procedure and to speak in the court in other language through an interpreter – without extra expenses.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

It is envisaged by the draft law on "Principles of Administration and Administrative procedure" (submitted for consideration) to allow one of the sides to speak the language of minorities before the court, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph iii of c) of Paragraph 1

The same draft envisages allowing the documents and evidences to be given in minority languages, if necessary through interpreters and translations, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

The Armenian legislation guarantees that implementation of Paragraphs b) and c) and turning to help for translations and interpreters will not include extra expenses from the persons concerned.

Paragraph 3

Texts of much more important laws of national legislation are available to Greek population in the official language, Russian and sometimes in Greek: especially texts, which concern speakers of Greek (if not otherwise defined). The reason is that in Armenia Greeks have good command of Russian and Armenian.

Article 10. Administrative authorities and public services

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The law does not prohibit to turn to bodies in power in minority languages (written as well) and to express oneself in own language. In such cases when answering the applications in written form, the state language is used, which, though is not a ban to formulate the answer in the relevant language. In case the applicant asks for that. Hence within the administrative areas, where the number of minority language speakers is sufficient, the minority languages speakers may introduce their claims written or oral in their language. Such a situation particularly exists in villages Yaghdan, Koghes, Madan, Akhtala, Shamlugh and other settlements, populated with Greeks.

Subparagraph v of a) of Paragraph 1

On the same bases it is guaranteed, that minority language speakers have the right to introduce documents in those languages.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

Administrative texts and forms widely used in Greek communities are available to the population, as they are often written in Russian, and usually Greeks have good knowledge of Russian or official language.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to local or marz bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language speakers have the opportunity to place an order in those languages written or oral.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 2

With regard to local or marz bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language usage during their meetings (discussions) is allowed by the local authorities, though without excluding the usage of the language (languages) officially adopted.

Subparagraph g) of Paragraph 2

The law on “Geographical names” specifies, that when giving settlement names the natives’ viewpoints must also be considered (Article 3), and when naming or renaming, offers may be made by both local self-governing bodies and by legal and natural persons (Article 6). In particular a number of squares, streets, fields, water springs have Greek names.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 3

With regard to the state services of administrative bodies or persons acting in their name on the area where minority languages are used, the minority language speakers are allowed to make inquiries and get answers in those languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 4

The officials are not banned by the post they hold, to communicate with minority language users in their language, if they know it. However, if a person has applied in written to executive bodies in a language different from Armenian, then on the area the mentioned language is used, the mentioned state body must answer the application in essence, with the exception of cases, when the law has specified special requirements concerning the introduction of an application. In that case, though, the application cannot be refused, but the special order of its introduction must be preserved.

Paragraph 5

The legislation envisages the opportunity for a person to preserve or change his name, surname or patronymic name, to restore his previous name surname or patronymic name. Greek citizens are free to choose Greek surnames and to use them in Greek. Most of Greek citizens prefer to do so.

Article 11. Media

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 28 of law on TV and Radio envisages that public TV and Radio Company “can spare air time for special programs in minority languages”. Article 28 of the same law specifies that among other duties of the public TV and Radio Company the interests of national minorities must also be considered when broadcasting programs or series of programs.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides the national minorities with an hour a day of air time on Armenian public radio. Greek programs may be organized within this time if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

According to the above-mentioned law the RA national minorities are provided with an hour a week of air time on public TV. They can prepare also Greek programs if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Subparagraph i of e) of Paragraph 1

Recently the publishing house agency of RA Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has been allocating more than 1 (one) million AM drams to publish newspapers for national minorities. With those allocations the Greek “Patrida” NGO publishes the “Byzantine inheritance” Russian⁹ monthly magazine for the Greek community.

Paragraph 2

According to Article 10 of the above-mentioned law programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies may be completely rebroadcast in Armenia based on the license given by the National TV and Radio Committee or based on the intergovernmental treaty. And licensed in TV and Radio Companies can rebroadcast programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies on contract bases.

Paragraph 3

Armenia guarantees that interests of national minority language users are introduced or are taken into consideration by bodies established by law, which are responsible for freedom of media and for providing pluralism of viewpoints. This is confirmed by the statutes and activities of the publishing house agency of the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport, Public TV and Radio Company board and TV and Radio National Committee.

Article 12. Cultural activities and facilities

Subparagraph a) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia, where such languages are used and to the extent the state bodies are competent, have rights or play some role in that field, they encourage those forms of expression and initiations, which are peculiar to minority languages.

The Greek Community has several organizations (“Partida” in Yerevan, “Patriotis” in Gjumri, “Elpida” in Vanadzor, “Pontos” in Alaverdi).

450 books are preserved in National Library of Armenia. Some of them are in libraries in settlements inhabited by Greeks. School textbooks, handbooks, other books and press are received from Greece. There are cultural centres in villages inhabited by Greeks.

“Pontos” youth dance group and “Elas” ensemble function in the Greek community. “Pontos” dance ensemble is famous with similar dance ensembles. It mainly introduces classical Greek dances, as well as national costumes. Together with dance ensemble “Elas” “Pontos” acted in orphanages, in Brusov State Linguistic University, in Arabkir House of Armenian-borns, Kanaz cultural centre.

The Greek community lives with various cultural interests, it takes part in state and national celebrations. It often organizes events in Armenian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

In 2001-2002, besides the events organized with other national minorities the community has also celebrated:

⁹ The language has been chosen by the Greeks

- May 12, 2001, European language teaching day, upon the invitation from the Council of Europe, the Greek community exhibited Greek books and textbooks in “Moscvva” cinema-house.
- On March 8, on the 4th anniversary of Armentel, the “Pontos” dance ensemble went to Greece to perform on tour.
- March 25 is celebrated every year as Greece Independence Day.
- Easter is celebrated in April.
- On April 24 Armenian Genocide Day is commemorated.
- On May 19 the Greek Genocide Day is commemorated (in 1992 in eastern Turkey. 600 thousands Greeks were killed).
- The Greek community was awarded a diploma by the President of Armenia for participation in NGO Assemblage organized on 10-19 October in “Karen Demirchyan” cultural centre.
- October 28 is celebrated as “No” day against fascism.
- On October 29 the “Pontos” dance ensemble gave a concert for the professors of Armenian State Engineering University
- The community took active part in the 10-day Greek film festival.

The “Pontos” union of Greek community has organized TV programs about its activities. Interesting programs have been organized about the Greek community by “Bari Luis Hayastan” (Good morning Armenia) and “Sektor Pro” (Sector Pro) programs on “Prometheus” TV-channel. The public radio programs “Haik” as well as other information programs on public TV often tell about the community life.

The public radio often broadcasts concerts of Greek music. Tapes and laser CDs with Greek songs are sold everywhere.

Armenia preserves and restores not only Armenian, but other monuments as well, which have been built by other nations in different times. The Agency of Monument Preservation at the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has registered and introduces the following Greek monument:

St. Sava church of Greek belief, 1909, Lori marz, Toumanyanyan subregion, village Shamlough.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

The RA guarantees that all bodies responsible for organization and support to different cultural activities will give relevant permission, so that knowledge and usage of minority languages and culture joint the initiatives undertaken by them or for which they support.

In 2002 in Yerevan two great events were organized with the participation of all communities of RA national minorities.

- e) Two years successively, 2001 and 2002, on September 21, financed by RA Government and the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport (500.000 and 300.000 drams respectively) great song and dance festivals were held at the Small Philharmonic Hall, dedicated to the Armenian Independence Day. Representatives from all the national minorities, individually and in-groups, participated in these festivals, introducing their national and folk art.
- f) On April 5, 2002, “Armenia – our home” event took place at Khnko Aper Children’s Library, with participation of RA Government members, Embassies’

representatives and political figures. Women from different nationalities showed their hand-made goods, representing their national ornaments.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia supports the direct participation of representatives from minority language users in the implementation and planning of cultural activities. Thus, according to the Resolution of Coordinating Council of national minority national-cultural NGOs functioning in co-operation with the presidency staff, the allocated sum 20 million drams for 2001-2002 (i.e. 10 million annually) was equally divided between the 11 Coordinating Council member community representative organizations, with the purpose of supporting the national minority educational and cultural activities.

Paragraph 2

With regard to the areas different from areas traditionally using the minority languages, the RA allows and supports relevant cultural activities and possibilities, according to the previous paragraph, even if the number of minority language users is not sufficient.

Paragraph 3

To lead its cultural policy abroad the RA recommends introducing its national minority languages and cultures as well.

Article 13. Economic and social life

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

According to the legislation, in the field of economic and public activity, on the whole territory of the country it is forbidden to include any paragraph in the regulations or private documents of companies, that does not accept or limits the usage (at least with those using the same language) of national minority languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

Armenia counteracts the practice of preventing from minority language usage connected with economic and public activity.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the companies and enterprises in RA decide on their own which language to use.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to the economic and public activity to the extent the state bodies are competent, if possible they organize activities stimulating minority language usage in the economic and public parts directly under their control (state sector) in the territories using national minority language. This, in particular, happens in the villages Yaghdan, Koghes, Madan, Akhtala, Shamlough inhabited by Greeks.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 2

The legislation guarantees that institutions of state maintenance (like hospitals, nursing homes, hostels) receive and care for people from national minorities, who need care because of poor health, age or other reasons. In this respect not a single case of discrimination or limitation has been registered or observed.

Article 14. Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraph a)

Armenia has signed bilateral (with Greece) and multilateral (within CIS countries) agreements to support the creation of links between the same language speakers (Greek in particular) in the fields of culture, education, information, profession and permanent education. Thus, the treaty on friendship and cooperation signed between Armenia and Greece, developing relations of cooperation in several aspects, (Article 20) straightly specifies that Armenia and Greece guarantee the creation of necessary conditions and the implementation of relevant measures to preserve and develop ethnic, cultural and religious identity of Armenians in Greece and Greeks in Armenia, according to the norms and principles of international law. The Contracting parties support on state level the public, spiritual, cultural, educational, sports and charity activities of Armenian community in Greece and Greek community in Armenia.

Paragraph b)

For the benefit of national minority languages there is no obstacle for transfrontier cooperation, in particular between marz and local authorities, on the territory of which the same language is used similarly or identically.

4. Russian

Article 8. Education

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The main part of pre-school education in Russian is available in Armenia to all Russian children, who expressed a wish to get it. In Armenia in all settlements, where the number of Russians is sufficient, there are Russian pre-school educational institutions or groups (departments). In most of the educational institutions teaching of Russian is organized according to parents' wish. So it is organized in all Yerevan schools and Gyumri pre-school educational centres 4, 6, 8,9, 1, 15, 16, 18, 23, 26, 27, 30.

Subparagraph iv of b) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia primary education in Russian is available to all Russian children who expressed a wish to get it. In Armenia in all settlements, where the number of Russians is sufficient, there are Russian primary schools or groups. So schools with Russian education function in Yerevan, Tsakhkadzor, villages Fioletovo and Lermotovo. There are Russian language departments (classes) in 47 schools (15 of them in Yerevan). More than 10.000 children study there. In Armenia also function 3 schools of Russian Federation army garrison (Yerevan, Gyumri, Armavir) as well as Russian Embassy school (Yerevan Secondary School no. 54),

where citizens' children study together with Russian Federation citizens' children (in these schools Armenian language is not taught).

Besides, in primary classes of all schools, Russian is a compulsory subject as a foreign language (4 hours a week).

Treaty between Armenia and Russia on friendship, cooperation and mutual support (1997) specifies that Armenian party will create conditions in the RA system of education for profound study of Russian language. This obligation was brought to life by the RA Government Resolution 48, on September 16, 1999, on the issue "Russian language in the RA system of education and cultural and public life", according to which schools provided with professional staff were given an opportunity to organize profound study of Russian with special program (4-6 hours a week). Now there are 52 such schools. In 5 more schools they carry out Armenian-Russian bilingual teaching with a special program and special textbooks.

Subparagraph iv of c) of Paragraph 1

Secondary education in Russian is available to all Russian children, who expressed a wish to get it. In Armenia in all settlements, where the number of Russians is sufficient, there are Russian secondary schools and groups. They are the same mentioned in the previous paragraph. These schools use books and handbooks published both in Armenia and Russia. In the 7th and 8th grades they study "History of Russia" and "Russian Literature."

Besides, in all forms of schools Russian is a compulsory subject, as a foreign language (3 hours a week, in schools with Russian bias 4-6 hours a week).

Subparagraph iv of d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the technical and professional education in Russian is available at least to pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. There is a Department of Russian at Yerevan State Humanitarian College. In all other technical and vocational educational institutions they teach Russian as a foreign language as an inseparable part of the curriculum.

Subparagraph iii of e) of Paragraph 1

Higher education in Russian is available to those who expressed a wish to get it. In all major settlements of Armenia (Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Gavar) there are higher educational institutions and departments with Russian education. Russians as well can study there without any discrimination. There are 250 students at the Department of Russian Philology at Yerevan State University, 240 students at the Department of Russian language and literature and Russian department of primary education pedagogy and methods at Yerevan State Pedagogical Institute named after Kh. Abovyan, 350 students at the department of Russian linguistics and intercultural relations and 75 students at the Department of Russian and English languages at Yerevan Brusov State Linguistic University, 200 students at the department of Russian language and literature of Gyumri State Pedagogical University, 100 students at Russian department of primary education pedagogy and methods of Vanadzor State Pedagogical University, 100 students at the department of Russian language and literature at Gavar State University. There is a department of Russian at Yerevan State Institute of theatre and cinema. There are departments of Russian in several private universities in Armenia (Yerevan "Haibusak", "Hiusisayin", "Hrachya Acharyan", Gyumri "Progress", Spitak "Spitak", etc.). According to the intergovernmental agreement signed in

1997 there functions Russian-Armenian (Slavonakan) State University, which has 700 students. This University allocates 3 non-competitive places to the Russian community, 5-6 representatives of the community are admitted to the Preliminary department of the University free of charge. In Armenia there also function 15 branches, departments or educational-consulting units of different Russian higher educational institutions where more than 2000 students study. The Russian Federation allocates 70 state scholarships to Armenian citizens (10 of which to the Russian community). The Moscow authorities and the Ministry of education of Russia have spared computer, lingaphone and laboratory equipments to the Armenian-Russian University. The rest of the higher educational institutions included two-year course of Russian in their curricula.

Subparagraph iii of f) of Paragraph 1

Since secondary education in Armenia is obligatory, there are no illiterate adults. If they have problems with education, they apply to higher or post-graduate educational institutions. Hence almost no problem arises connected with adult's on-going education in other institutions. However, a number of language courses function, which, among other language courses offer Russian as well to those who wish, without age limitation. Besides, 200 Russian language teachers regularly go to Russia (Moscow and Rostov na Don) to improve their qualification. In 2002 in Moscow 7 teachers from Armenia became laureates of international competition – winning Pushkin prizes. It is planned to found a regional centre for Russian language teachers to improve their qualifications, at the Armenian-Russian State Univeristy (Slavyanski). Since 2002 “Union of Russian philologists of Armenia” has been functioning at the Brusov State Linguistic University. Since 2000 the quarterly magazine “Russian language in Armenia” has resumed its publication (with cooperation of “Pedagogical initiation” Armenian Company and Centre for Educational reforms of Ministry of education and science of Armenia). Since 2001 with the sponsorship of the Union of Armenians in Russia, Armenian Centre for Russian language development has been functioning, which held an international competition named “Russia and Russian language in my life” (for pupils of top classes in CIS and Baltic countries). According to the agreement signed between two states (2001) both countries admit all the documents concerning educational, scientific degrees and titles.

Article 9. Judicial authorities

Subparagraph ii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 15 of Criminal code specifies that every person during a court procedure (with the exception of the person proceeding the case) has the right to speak the language he knows. Upon the decision of the person carrying on the procedure, the persons involved who do not know the procedure language, are given free of charge opportunity to realize all their rights established by the mentioned law through an interpreter. This way of action is used in Armenia not only in the regional judicial bodies, where the number of minority language speakers is in accord with events established by Article 9 of the Charter, but in any other area too.

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides that inquiries and evidences (written or oral) must not be considered exclusively unacceptable, as they have been formulated in the languages of minorities.

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

According to the same law people who do not know the procedure language, based on inquiry about the legal matters, are given, envisaged by the Code, the verified copies of subject to submission documents in the language they know.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

According to Paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Civil Procedure Code the person involved in civil proceedings, who does not know the procedure language (Armenian) is provided with the right to learn the case materials, to take part in the procedure and to speak in the court in other language through an interpreter – without any expenses.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

It is envisaged by the draft law on “Principles of Administration and Administrative procedure” (submitted for consideration to the RA Government) to allow the party to speak the language of minorities before the court, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph iii of c) of Paragraph 1

The same draft envisages allowing the documents and evidences to be given in minority languages, if necessary through interpreters and translations, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

The RA legislation guarantees that implementation of Paragraphs b) and c) and turning to help for translations and interpreters will not include extra expenses from the concerned person.

Paragraph 3

Texts of much more important laws are available in to Russian speaking population in Russian (if not otherwise defined). In Soviet times in Armenia legal documents were often and sometimes exceptionally available in Russian. This tradition to some extent is continued to present day. In RA newly enacted important laws are published in translation in Russian language press. A number of documents are signed in Russian as well. A number of international legal instruments are more available in Russian, than in Armenian.

Article 10. Administrative authorities and social services

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The law does not forbid to turn to bodies in power in minority languages (written as well) and to express oneself in his/her language. In such cases when relying to the applications in written form, the official language is used, which, though is not a ban to formulate the answer in the relevant language in case the applicant asks for that. Hence within the administrative areas, where the number of minority language speakers is sufficient, the minority languages speakers may introduce their claims written or oral in their language. We have this situation particularly in villages Semyonovka, Chkalovka, Lermontovo, Fioletovo, Blagodarnoye,

Novoseltsovo, Saratovka, Medovka, Kruglaya Shishka, Mikhailovka, Petrovka, Privolnoye, Pushkino and other villages populated with Russians. Oral or written applications in Russian are not usually refused in other settlements and administrative areas either.

Subparagraph v of a) of Paragraph 1

On the same bases it is guaranteed, that minority language speakers have the right to introduce documents in those languages.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

Administrative texts and forms widely used in Russian communities are available to the Russian speaking population, as they are sometimes written in Russian or Russian as well. For example, the alderman and the village mayor of Fioletovo village community are given the right to formulate their resolutions, messages or official notes only in Russian.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to RA local or marz bodies, on the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language speakers have the opportunity to place an order in those languages written or oral.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 2

With regard to RA local or marz bodies, on the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language usage during their meetings (discussions) is allowed by the local authorities, though without excluding the usage of the language (languages) officially adopted by the state.

Subparagraph g) of Paragraph 2

The RA law on “Geographical names” specifies, that when giving settlement names the natives’ viewpoints must also be considered (Article 3), and when naming or renaming, offers may be made by both local self-governing bodies and by legal and natural persons (Article 6). In particular a number of villages have Russian names - Semyonovka, Chkalovka, Lermontovo, Fioletovo, Blagodarnoye, Novoseltsovo, Saratovka, Medovka, Kruglaya Shishka, Mikhailovka, Petrovka, Privolnoye, Pushkino, etc, as well as a several rivers, water springs, fields, mountain passes, streets, squares, etc.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 3

With regard to the state services of RA administrative bodies or persons acting in their name on the area where minority languages are used, the minority language speakers are allowed to make inquiries and get answers in those languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 4

The RA State officials are not banned by the post they hold, to communicate with minority language carriers in their language, if they know it. However, if a person has applied in written to RA executive bodies in a language different from Armenian, then on the area the mentioned language is used, the mentioned state body must answer the application in essence, with the exception of cases, when the law has specified special requirements concerning the

introduction of an application. In that case, though, the application can't be refused, but the special order of its introduction must be preserved.

Paragraph 5

The RA legislation envisages the opportunity for a person to preserve or change his name, surname or patronymic name, to restore his previous name surname or patronymic name. RA Russian citizens are free to choose Russian surnames and to use them in Russian. Most of RA Russian citizens prefer to act like that. A number of citizens of Armenian origin emigrated from Russia, Azerbaijan and other CIS countries have also preserved the Russian variant of their surnames.

Article 11. Media

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 28 of law on TV and Radio envisages that public TV and Radio Company “can spare air time for special programs in minority languages”. Article 28 of the same law specifies that among other duties of the public TV and Radio Company the interests of RA national minorities must also be considered when broadcasting programs or series of programs.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides the national minorities with an hour a day of air time on Armenian public radio. Half of that daily hour is given to Russian “Haik” public cultural information program, and 15 minutes are given to Russian information program. Every Sunday the spiritual program “Haitnutyun” (Discovery) is broadcast, and on Saturdays the information-analytical program “Antsats shabatum” (During the past week) is broadcast (10 minutes), 15 minutes daily are given to interstate (for CIS countries) “Mir” (World) Russian language information program (30 minutes on Sundays). Radio Company “Van” mostly broadcasts Russian language programs.

On Saturdays the program “Haik” is devoted to the national minority communities in Armenia, to their culture and public problems.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

According to the above-mentioned law the RA national minorities are provided with an hour a week of air time on public TV. 35 minutes of that hour (5 minutes a day) is allocated to the information program in Russian. Besides, on average 6-7 hours of Russian films (original or translated) are shown. Several private TV companies have regular programs in Russian: “Prometheus”, “ALM” (“Na samom dele” /In reality/ talk show on Sundays), “Kentron” (“Armianskoye Radio” /Armenian Radio/ satirical program, etc.) Nearly all the private TV companies show 5-8 hours of Russian films (original or translated). “Prometheus” TV Company allocates 30 minutes every day to interstate (for CIS countries) “Mir” (World) program in Russian.

Subparagraph i of e) of Paragraph 1

Recently the publishing house agency of the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has been allocating more than 1 (one) million AM drams to publish newspapers for national minorities. With this allocation “Respublika Armenia”, “Urartu”, “Novoye Vremya”

newspapers and “Literaturnaya Armenia” magazines are published. Newspapers like “Golos Armenii”, “Efir”, “TV kanal” in Russian language are published in rather great circulation, more than 10 scientific and other magazines, great number of Russian newspapers and magazines are freely disseminated. The Russian Embassy in Armenia has subscribed two Russian newspapers (“Rosiyskaya Gazeta”, “Uchitelskaya Gazeta”) of 25 organizations of Russian community. The Russian newspaper of Jewish community “Magen Davit” (Davit’s Shield) is also published in Armenia. A number of bilingual (Armenian and Russian) and multilingual magazines and newspapers are also published.

Paragraph 2

According to Article 10 of the above-mentioned law programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies may be completely rebroadcast on RA territory based on the license given by the RA National TV and Radio Committee or based on the intergovernmental agreement. TV and Radio Companies licensed in Armenia can rebroadcast programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies on contract bases. Through public TV-centre TV channels RTR, ORT, NTV, MuzTV and “Russkoye Radio”, “Mayak”, “Dinamit FM”, “Yevropa Plus” radio channels are broadcast round the clock, TVTs, TVC, MTV and “Mshakuyt” Russian language TV channels and “Hit FM” radio channel are broadcast partly. The Russian version of “Euronews” is also broadcast.

Paragraph 3

The RA guarantees that interests of national minority language users are introduced or are taken into consideration by bodies established by law, which are responsible for freedom of media and for providing pluralism of viewpoints. This is confirmed by the statutes and activities of the publishing house agency of RA Ministry of cultural, youth affairs and sport, Public TV and Radio Company board and TV and Radio National Committee.

Article 12. Cultural activities and facilities

Subparagraph a) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia, where such languages are used and to the extent the state bodies are competent, have rights or play some role in that field, they encourage those forms of expression and initiations, which are peculiar to minority languages.

The bookshop “Russkaya Kniga” functions in Yerevan. A great number of Russian books are sold in bookshops all around Armenia. Every year many Russian books are published (belles-letters, scientific, children’s journalistic, informative dictionaries, etc.).

In 2002 the “Rosiya” NGO initiated the publishing of the following 3 Russian books: “G.S. Griboyedov and Armenia”, “Russia and Armenia. XIX century”, “Together Forever: on Russian-Armenian historical-cultural and literary links”. All in all 106 books with different names in Russian were published in 2002, and 32 books with different names were published in the first quarter of 2003.

In the state central, regional, university, administrative and other libraries Russian books make a great number. For example, in the library of Yerevan Municipality there are 423515 Russian books.

Every year in the Yerevan central library named after A. Isahakyan it is organized Russian literature day, jubilee celebrations devoted to the classics of Russian literature and art, and exhibitions.

Yerevan Municipality organized a donation day to the library of “Slavyanskaya” Secondary School, and donated 355 Russian books.

A great number of state bodies, organizations, individuals have Russian language (or bilingual or trilingual: Russian included) Internet pages and sites.

In Yerevan Russian State Theatre of Drama after Stanislavski functions, which has a separate building, great audience and fame. It goes on tour to Russia several times a year. In 2002 the representative office of the Russian centre for cultural and scientific international cooperation was established in Yerevan, which has become an important centre for Russian culture.

Different Chairs of Russian Philology from RA universities with Russian departments and from Armenian branches of RF universities regularly organize conferences, seminars and publish their materials.

The Russian community of Armenia has several NGOs of which the most representative is “Rossiya”. The organization has 2500 members and 11 branches in 9 marzes of the Republic. When carrying out cultural programs “Rossiya” cooperates with other Russian organizations, in particular with “Harmony” NGO.

A coordinating council for Russian NGOs has been established, which deals with preservation and preaching of Russian culture and traditions, and dissemination of Russian language. The council struggles for increasing the Russian language status (to declare it an official or state language). For this purpose lobbying is carried out in RA National Assembly trying to review the RA law on language. The council is for the review of 4 projects, at least two of which envisage equalization of the Russian language status to Armenian, which will actually mean subordination of the Armenian language to the Russian language, as it was in Soviet times.

Within past two years more than 100 events have been organized in the communities, of which rather important are:

- On October 10-13, 2002 for the first time in Armenia Romance international competition was held, which will be held every year. Ara Abrahamyan, President of the Union of Armenians in Russia, sponsored the competition. The Russian Ambassador A. Dryukov, RA Minister of Culture R. Sharoyan, Head of the Benevolent Fund for Cultural Development A. Darbinyan participated in it.
- On October 8-13 Days of Russian culture were held together with the fund of the Union of Armenians in Russia (Gyumri, Artsakh, Malishka).
- In 2002 and 2003 Festivals of Russian films were held in “Moscv” cinema-house.

Besides the above-mentioned well-known political, public and church holidays, jubilee anniversaries are celebrated.

- The holiday to the 1700th anniversary of adoption of Christianity as a state religion in Armenia.
- Series of parties devoted to Armenian-Russian vocal music (Khachatryan, Babajanyan, Chaikovski, Rakhmaninov) at the museum of A. Khachatryan.
- Music parties devoted to Christmas and Easter.

- Popular scientific meeting about Armenian- Russian literary and cultural links.
- Youth entertaining show-programs.
- Children's celebrities (Children's International Day: June 1, "First time first grade": September 1, New Year's Eve performance, "Childhood Day", Fairy-tale festivals).
- Russian folk celebrations ("Ivan Kupala", "Maslenitsa", "Troitsa", "Easter", "Svyatki", etc).

The Russian community often organizes events in Armenian Society for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries©

Within "Rossiya" NGO "Orpheus" vocal-chamber and "Solnishko" dance ensembles function. Under "Harmony" NGO the "Garmoshka" children's puppet-theatre functions. At present with the help of "Harmony" NGO and the Fund for support to Russian compatriots in Armenia "Sudaroushka" folk choir and "Rus" travelling philharmonic orchestra are being established. Guest concerts are regularly held in orphanages, nursing homes, hospitals and military units with professional and beginner singers and actors.

A club of interesting meetings functions based on "Slavyanskaya" Secondary school, with the help of which the pupils get to know famous figures of Armenian and Russian culture.

Russian tapes, videotapes and CDs are sold everywhere, Russian songs, films, satirical programs are shown on TV.

The RA preserves and restores not only Armenian, but other monuments as well, which have been built by other nations in different times. The Agency of Monument Preservation at the RA Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has registered the following Russian monuments:

- Russian church next to the military unit in Kanaker-Zeitun district of Yerevan. It was built in 1913. In 1984 a plan was developed in "Yerkaghnorogumnakhagits" Institute to make the church a cultural house.
- A Russian frontier post in the village Yervandashat of Baghramyan subregion in Armavir marz. It is built of raw brick before the Russian-Turkish war in 1877-1878.
- Russian church next to the railway station square in Vanadzor. It was built in 1895. Upon the resolution by the executive committee of the City council it has been made a museum of Armenian-Russian friendship. In 1977 it has been reconstructed.
- A complex of a Russian castle on the southwestern border of Gyumri. It was built in 1834-44 by the order of Nikolai I. Within the complex the "Severski Fort" fortification is still standing, which has round map and serves as a military unit ammunition depot.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

The RA guarantees that all bodies responsible for organization and support to different cultural activities will give relevant permission, so that knowledge and usage of minority languages and culture joint the initiatives undertaken by them or for which they support.

In 2002 in Yerevan two great events were organized with the participation of all communities of national minorities.

- g) Two years successively, 2001 and 2002, on September 21, financed by RA Government and the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport (500.000 and 300.000 drams respectively) great song and dance festivals were held at the Small Philharmonic Hall, dedicated to the RA Independence Day. Representatives from

all the national minorities, individually and in-groups, participated in these festivals, introducing their national and folk art.

- h) On April 5, 2002, “Armenia – our home” event took place at Khnko Aper Children’s Library, with participation of Government members, representatives of diplomatic corps and political figures. Women from different nationalities showed their hand-made goods, representing their national ornaments.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 1

The RA supports the direct participation of representatives from minority language users in the implementation and planning of cultural activities. Thus, according to the Resolution of Coordinating Council of national minority national-cultural NGO’s functioning with the RA President staff, the allocated sum 20 million drams for 2001-2002 (i.e. 10 million annually) was equally divided among the 11 Coordinating Council member community representative organizations, with the purpose of supporting the RA national minority educational and cultural activities.

Paragraph 2

With regard to the areas different from areas traditionally using the minority languages, the Armenia allows and supports relevant cultural activities and possibilities, according to the previous paragraph, even if the number of minority language users is not sufficient.

Paragraph 3

To lead its cultural policy abroad the RA recommends introducing its national minority languages and cultures as well.

Article 13. Economic and social life

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

According to RA legislation, in the field of economic and public activity, in the whole territory of the country it is forbidden to include any provision in the regulations or private documents of companies, that does not accept or limits the usage (at least with those using the same language) of national minority languages. Russian language is rather widely used in Armenia. Most of population knows Russian to some extent, and nearly 1/8th of rural population speaks Russian better than any other language.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

The RA counteracts the practice of preventing from minority language usage connected with economic and public activity.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

In RA the companies and enterprises in RA decide on their own which language to use. In many RA companies and enterprises Russian is used as the language for oral communication. In postures and advertisements Russian is rather often used as a foreign language parallel to Armenian.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to the economic and public activity to the extent the RA State bodies are competent, if possible they organize activities stimulating minority language usage in the economic and public parts directly under their control (state sector) in the territories using national minority language. This, in particular, happens in the villages Fioletovo and Lemontovo inhabited by Russians.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 2

The RA legislation guarantees that institutions of state maintenance (like hospitals, nursing homes, hostels) receive and care for people from national minorities, who need care because of poor health, age or other reasons. In this respect no case of discrimination or limitation has been registered or observed.

Article 14. Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraph a)

The RA has signed bilateral (with Russian Federation) and multilateral (within CIS countries) multilateral agreements to support the creation of links between the same language speakers in the field of culture, education, information, professional and permanent education. According to the agreement signed between Armenia and Russia both countries admit all the documents and certificates concerning educational, scientific titles and degrees. According to another agreement (between CIS educational administrative offices, 2001) Russia (and other CIS countries) higher educational institutions can establish branches in Armenia and admit students without discrimination. According to several treaties a number of Russian TV and Radio companies are broadcast in RA. The treaty between Armenia and Russia on friendship and cooperation specifies provisions concerning the implementation of certain measures and creation of necessary conditions to develop and preserve ethnic, cultural, religious identity of national minorities living in both countries. The arrangements consider the special traditional friendly relations and relations established between the two peoples throughout the history. Realizing the importance of a number of obligations undertaken by number of international treaties, the countries are obliged to cooperate in line of friendship and mutual trust in all aspects, if necessary to sign further supporting agreements.

The transfrontier cooperation between Russia and Armenia is made maximum easy. No visa is required to visit either of the countries.

Paragraph b)

For the sake of national minority languages there is no obstacle for transfrontier cooperation, in particular between regional and local authorities, in the territory of which the same language is used similarly or identically.

6. Kurdish

Article 8. Education

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia supports the communities of national minorities to organize the basic part of education in relevant languages for at least those pupils, whose families asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. There is no such request for Kurdish yet.

Subparagraph iv of b) of Paragraph 1

Primary school is available for national minority communities in relevant languages, or within elementary education it is provided the relevant minority language teaching as inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils whose families asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus Kurdish is taught (2 hours a week) at the school in the village Zovuni, Kotayk marzes. Until recently there have been similar courses in 20 other villages inhabited by Kurds (Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Hakko, etc), but due to the absence of teachers they do not operate regularly.

Subparagraph iv of c) of Paragraph 1

Secondary education is available for RA national minority communities in relevant languages, or within secondary education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Thus Kurdish is taught (2 hours a week) at the school in the village Zovuni, Kotayk marz. Until recently there have been similar courses in 20 other villages inhabited by Kurds (Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Hakko, etc), but because of absence of teachers they do not function regularly. In the 7th and 8th grades in these schools national history or literature study may also be included upon request by specialists and parents.

Subparagraph iv of d) of Paragraph 1

In RA the technical and professional education is available in the language of national minorities, or within technical and professional education it provides the relevant minority language teaching as an inseparable part of the curriculum, at least for pupils who (or whose families) asked for that and whose number is considered sufficient. Several years ago the department of Kurdish language was opened at Yerevan Pedagogical vocational school after Bakunts, but it was closed due to the absence of applicants. The department can restore its functioning if applicants are available.

Subparagraph iii of e) of Paragraph 1

The Republic of Armenia allows university or other forms of higher education in the language of minorities or giving opportunities to teach these languages as disciplines at universities and higher educational institutions. Several RA universities can offer special courses of Kurdish upon request and demand. There is such a course in the Department of Oriental studies of Yerevan State University. Yerevan “Davit Anghat” Humanitarian University offers the profession “Kurdish Studies”.

Subparagraph iii of f) of Paragraph 1

Since secondary education in Armenia is obligatory, there are no illiterate adults. If they have problems with education, they apply to higher or post-graduate educational institutions. Hence almost no problem arises connected with adult on-going education in other institutions. However, there function a number of language-teaching courses in Armenia that can offer courses of Kurdish upon demand to those who wish, without any age limitation.

Article 9. Judicial authorities

Subparagraph ii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 15 of Criminal procedure code specifies that every person within court procedure (with the exception of the body proceeding the case) is entitled to speak the language which he/she knows. Upon the decision of the body proceeding the case, the involved persons, who do not know the procedure language, are given free of charge opportunity to realize all their rights established by the mentioned Code through an interpreter. This manner is used in Armenia not only in the regional judicial bodies, where the number of minority language speakers is in accord with events established by Article 9 of the Charter, but in any other area too.

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

The same Code provides that inquiries and evidences (written or oral) must not be considered exclusively unacceptable, as they have been formulated in the languages of minorities.

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

According to the Criminal procedure Code people who do not know the procedure language, based on inquiry about the legal matters, are given the certified copies of documents in the language they know subject to submission.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

According to Paragraph 2 of Article 7 of Civil Procedure Code, the person involved in civil case, who does not know the procedure language (Armenian) is provided with the right to learn the case materials, to take part in the procedure and to speak in the court in other language through an interpreter – without any expenses.

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

It is envisaged by the draft law on “Principles of Administration and Administrative procedure” (submitted for consideration) to allow the side to speak the language of minorities before the court, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph iii of c) of Paragraph 1

The same draft envisages allowing the documents and evidences to be given in minority languages, if necessary through interpreters and translations, without any extra expenses for it.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

The legal system guarantees that implementation of Paragraphs b) and c) and turning to help for translations and interpreters will not include extra expenses from interested people.

Paragraph 3

Texts of much more important laws of national legislation are available to Kurdish population in the state language, Russian and sometimes Kurdish: especially texts, which concern speakers of Kurdish (if not otherwise defined). The reason is that in Armenia Kurds have good command of Russian and Armenian.

Article 10. Administrative authorities and public services

Subparagraph iv of a) of Paragraph 1

The law does not forbid to turn to bodies in power in minority languages (written as well) and to express oneself in his/her language. In such cases when answering the applications in written form, the state language is used, which, though is not a ban to formulate the answer in the relevant language in case the applicant asks for that. Hence within the administrative areas, where the number of minority language speakers is sufficient, the minority languages speakers may introduce their claims written or oral in their language. We have this situation particularly in villages Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisz, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachai, Derek, Avshen and Zovuni populated with Yezidi.

Subparagraph v of a) of Paragraph 1

On the same bases it is guaranteed, that minority language speakers have the right to introduce documents in those languages.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

Administrative texts and forms widely used in Kurdish communities are available to the Kurdish speaking population, as they are sometimes written in Kurdish, and usually Kurds have good knowledge of official language of Armenia.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

With regard to local or regional bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages speakers is sufficient, the minority language speakers have the opportunity to submit applications or place an order in those languages written or oral.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 2

With regard to RA local or regional bodies, in the territory of which the number of minority languages users is sufficient, the minority language usage during their meetings (discussions) is allowed by the local authorities, though without excluding the usage of the language (languages) officially adopted by the state.

Subparagraph g) of Paragraph 2

The law on “Geographical names” specifies, that when giving settlement names the natives’ viewpoints must also be considered (Article 3), and when naming or renaming, offers may be made by both local self-governing bodies and by legal and natural persons (Article 6). In particular a number of villages have Kurdish names - Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisz, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachai, Derek, Avshen, etc, as well as a several water springs, fields, streets, etc.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 3

With regard to the state/public services of administrative bodies or persons acting in their name on the area where minority languages are used, the minority language speakers are allowed to make inquiries and get answers in those languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 4

The officials are not banned by the post they hold, to communicate with minority language users in their language, if they know it. However, if a person has applied in written to executive bodies or public service employees in a language different from Armenian, then on the area the mentioned language is used. The mentioned state body or employee must answer the application in essence, with the exception of cases, when the law has specified special requirements concerning the introduction of an application. In that case, though, the application cannot be refused, but the special order of its introduction must be preserved.

Paragraph 5

The legislation envisages the opportunity for a person to preserve or change his name, surname or patronymic name, to restore his previous name surname or patronymic name. In Armenia Kurdish citizens are free to choose Kurdish surnames and to use them in Kurdish. Part of Kurdish citizens prefers to act like that.

Article 11. Media

Subparagraph iii of a) of Paragraph 1

Article 28 of law on TV and Radio envisages that public TV and Radio Company “can spare ethereal time for special programs in minority languages”. Article 28 of the same law specifies, alongside with the other duties of the public TV and Radio Company, that interests of national minorities must also be considered when broadcasting programs or series of programs.

Subparagraph ii of b) of Paragraph 1

The same law provides the national minorities with an hour a day of air time on Armenian public radio. For many years half an hour Kurdish programs are being broadcast every day (information, community life, culture, folk music, etc).

Subparagraph ii of c) of Paragraph 1

According to the above-mentioned law the national minorities are provided with an hour a week of air time on public TV. They can prepare also Kurdish programs if the community takes the initiative and provides the language and subject part.

Subparagraph i of e) of Paragraph 1

Recently the publishing house agency of RA Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has been allocating more than 1 (one) million AM drams to publish newspapers for national minorities. With this allocation Kurdish “Ria Taza” (New Way) newspaper is published.

Since 1999 “Mijagetk” (Mesopotamia) bilingual newspaper published every two weeks in 4-signature size, the first 14 pages of which are in Armenian, and the last two pages in Kurdish – to teach Kurdish and to disseminate Kurdish culture. The Newspaper “Ria Taza” is for the same purposes, sometimes acting like a native language textbook.

Paragraph 2

According to Article 10 of the above-mentioned law programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies may be completely rebroadcast in Armenia based on the license given by the National TV and Radio Committee or based on the intergovernmental agreement. And being licensed in Armenia TV and Radio Companies can rebroadcast programs of foreign TV and Radio Companies on contract bases.

Paragraph 3

Armenia guarantees that interests of national minority language users are introduced or are taken into consideration by bodies established by law, which are responsible for freedom of media and for providing pluralism of viewpoints. This is confirmed by the statutes and activities of the publishing house agency of the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport, Public TV and Radio Company board and TV and Radio National Committee.

Article 12. Cultural activities and facilities

Subparagraph a) of Paragraph 1

In territories, where such languages are used and to the extent the state bodies are competent, have rights or play some role in that field, they encourage those forms of expression and initiations, which are peculiar to minority languages.

Nearly 2000 Kurdish books are kept in the National library of Armenia. Some of them are in libraries of villages inhabited by Kurds.

There are cultural centres in villages inhabited by Kurds.

In 2002 the “Mijagetk” publishing house published the book “The role and essence of Yezidi reality in Kurdistan” in Armenian.

In 2002 the Kurdish ABC book “Zmane de” was published in Yerevan under the authorship of Karlene Chachani, Head of the Department of Kurdish at Writers’ Union.

In 2003 in Yerevan the book “About the Son of the Padishah” by Karlene Chachani in Russian translation and the book of poems “Conscience” (in Kurdish) by Sh. Ashir were published.

The “Kurdistan” Committee has been coordinating the activities of Kurdish community recently. Besides “Kurdistan” committee there also functions the Armenian-Kurdish Friendship Promotion, together with which different cultural events are organized. In 2002 they in particular organized:

- The exhibition of Edward Ghazaryan’s miniature carvings in Armavir,
- Meetings with famous figures of culture,
- Celebrations of famous writers’ anniversaries,
- Celebration of the 25th anniversary of “Kurdistan” Party.

In the Kurdish community there function the Folk Song and Dance Ensemble of Aragatsotn marz, the youth ensemble of Baisez village of Talin, the Children’s Choir of Alagiaz and the Ensemble of Zilan village.

There is a Department of Kurdish in Writers’ Union.

Since 2000 Kurds in Armenia use Latin alphabet (instead of Cyrillic one).

In Institute of oriental studies at National Academy of Sciences there is a group of Kurdish Studies, where Kurd scientists work as well (M. Makhmoyan, Ph.D.).

The RA preserves and restores not only Armenian, but other monuments as well, which have been built by other nations in different times. The Agency of Monument Preservation at the RA Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport has registered the following Kurdish monument:

Kurdish cemetery, XVI-XVIII centuries, Aragatsotn marz, Aragats subregion, village Ria Taza.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

The RA guarantees that all bodies responsible for organization and support to different cultural activities will give relevant permission, so that knowledge and usage of minority languages and culture joint the initiatives undertaken by them or for which they support.

In 2002 in Yerevan two great events were organized with the participation of all communities of RA national minorities.

- i) Two years successively, 2001 and 2002, on September 21, financed by RA Government and the Ministry of cultural, youth matters and sport (500.000 and 300.000 drams respectively) great song and dance festivals were held at the Small Philharmonic Hall, dedicated to the RA Independence Day. Representatives from all the national minorities, individually and in groups, participated in these festivals, introducing their national and folk art.
- j) On April 5, 2002, “Armenia – our home” event took place at Khnko Aper Children’s Library, with participation of RA Government members, Embassies’ representatives and political figures. Women from different nationalities showed their hand-made goods, representing their national ornaments.

Subparagraph f) of Paragraph 1

The RA supports the direct participation of representatives from minority language users in the implementation and planning of cultural activities. Thus, according to the Resolution of Coordinating Council (consisting of representatives from national minorities) allocated sum of 20 million drams for 2001-2002 (i.e. 10 million annually) was equally divided between the 11 Coordinating Council member community representative organizations, with the purpose of supporting the national minority educational and cultural activities.

Paragraph 2

With regard to the areas different from areas traditionally using the minority languages, the Armenia allows and supports relevant cultural activities and possibilities, according to the previous paragraph, even if the number of minority language users is not sufficient.

Paragraph 3

To lead its cultural policy abroad the RA recommends introducing its national minority languages and cultures as well.

Article 13. Economic and social life

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 1

According to the legislation, in the field of economic and public activity, in the whole territory of the country it is prohibited to include any provision in the regulations or private documents of companies, that does not accept or limits the usage (at least with those using the same language) of national minority languages.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 1

Armenia counteracts the practice of preventing from minority language usage connected with economic and public activity.

Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1

In Armenia the companies and enterprises decide on their own which language to use.

Subparagraph b) of Paragraph 2

As to the economic and social activity to the extent the respective authorities are competent, if possible they organize activities stimulating minority language usage in the economic and public parts directly under their control (state sector) in the territories using national minority language. This, in particular, happens in the villages Shamiram, Tlik, Sorik, Hakko, Giatlo, Barozh, Baisz, Avtona, Dian, Ghabaghtapa, Ria-Taza, Amre-Taza, Mirak, Sangiar, Shenkani, Alagiaz, Jamshlu, Ortachai, Derek, Avshen, Zovuni and other settlements inhabited by Kurds.

Subparagraph c) of Paragraph 2

The legislation guarantees that institutions of state maintenance (like hospitals, nursing homes, hostels) receive and care for people from national minorities, who need care because of poor health, age or other reasons. As of now in this respect no case of discrimination or limitation has been registered or observed.

Article 14. Transfrontier exchanges

Paragraph a)

Armenia is a party to treaties to support the creation of links between the same language speakers. Thus the CIS Convention on Protecting the rights of National minority people specifies, that, “every contracting party is obliged to provide the national minority people with the right for free contact between themselves, citizens and organizations with whom they have common ethnic, cultural, language or religious descent.” Article 7 of the mentioned Convention specifies that national minorities may be involved in peaceful mass meetings and unions.

Kurdish organizations have relations with Kurds in Iran and Iraq; they receive newspapers and books from them. In Yerevan Kurds have organized demonstrations and marches in defence of Abdula Ojalan.

Paragraph b)

For the benefit of national minority languages there is no obstacle for transfrontier cooperation, in particular between marzes and local authorities, in the territory of which the same language is used similarly or identically.

Nevertheless, transfrontier exchange and co-operation is not carried out between the authorities and regions and national minorities group of some neighbouring states because of border blockade.