



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 23 September 2009

ECRML (2009) 5

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER IN CYPRUS

2nd monitoring cycle

- A. Report of the Committee of Experts on the Charter**
- B. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter by Cyprus**

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages provides for a control mechanism to evaluate how the Charter is applied in a State Party with a view to, where necessary, making Recommendations for improving its legislation, policy and practices. The central element of this procedure is the Committee of Experts, set up under Article 17 of the Charter. Its principal purpose is to report to the Committee of Ministers on its evaluation of compliance by a Party with its undertakings, to examine the real situation of regional or minority languages in the State and, where appropriate, to encourage the Party to gradually reach a higher level of commitment.

To facilitate this task, the Committee of Ministers adopted, in accordance with Article 15.1, an outline for subsequent periodical reports that a Party is required to submit to the Secretary General. The report should be made public by the State. This outline requires the State to give an account of the concrete application of the Charter, the general policy for the languages protected under Part II and, in more precise terms, all measures that have been taken in application of the provisions chosen for each language protected under Part III of the Charter. The Committee of Experts' first task is therefore to examine the information contained in the periodical report for all the relevant regional or minority languages on the territory of the State concerned.

The Committee of Experts' role is to evaluate the existing legal acts, regulations and real practice applied in each State for its regional or minority languages. It has established its working methods accordingly. The Committee of Experts gathers information from the respective authorities and from independent sources within the State, so as to attempt to obtain a fair and just overview of the real language situation. After a preliminary examination of an initial periodical report, the Committee of Experts submits, if necessary, a number of questions to each Party to obtain supplementary information from the authorities on matters it considers insufficiently developed in the report itself. This written procedure is usually followed up by an "on-the-spot visit" by a delegation of the Committee of Experts to the State in question. During this visit the delegation meets bodies and associations whose work is closely related to the use of the relevant languages, and consults the authorities on matters that have been brought to its attention. This information-gathering process is designed to enable the Committee of Experts to evaluate more effectively the application of the Charter in the State concerned.

Having concluded this process, the Committee of Experts adopts its own report. This report is submitted to the Committee of Ministers, together with suggestions for recommendations that the latter may decide to address to one or more Parties, as may be required.

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A. Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Cyprus

adopted by the Committee of Experts on 23 April 2009
and presented to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 16 of the Charter

Chapter 1. Background Information

1.1. The Charter's ratification by Cyprus

1. The Republic of Cyprus signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as "the Charter") on 12 November 1992 and ratified it on 26 August 2002. The Charter entered into force with regard to Cyprus on 1 December 2002. Cyprus declared at the time of deposit of the instrument of ratification that the Charter would apply to the Armenian language. On 3 August 2005, Cyprus withdrew its declaration and replaced it with a revised declaration. The revised declaration clarifies that the Republic of Cyprus undertakes to apply Part II of the Charter to the Armenian language as a "non-territorial" language.

2. The Republic of Cyprus further submitted a declaration on 5 November 2008, pursuant to which the authorities recognise that Cypriot Maronite Arabic also meets the Charter's definition of a regional or minority language. The instrument of ratification is set out in Appendix I to this report.

3. Article 15, paragraph 1 of the Charter requires States Parties to submit three-yearly reports in a form prescribed by the Committee of Ministers.¹ The Cypriot authorities presented their second periodical report to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 18 January 2008 (MIN-LANG/PR (2008)1).

4. In its first evaluation report on Cyprus (ECRML (2006) 3), the Committee of Experts of the Charter (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee of Experts") outlined particular areas where the legal framework, policy and practice could be improved. The Committee of Ministers took note of the report presented by the Committee of Experts and adopted recommendations (RecChL (2006) 3), which were addressed to the Cypriot authorities.

1.2. The work of the Committee of Experts

5. This second evaluation report is based on the information obtained by the Committee of Experts from the second periodical report of Cyprus, as well as through interviews held with representatives of the regional or minority languages in Cyprus and the Cypriot authorities during the "on-the-spot" visit, which took place from 17 – 19 September 2008. The Committee of Experts received a number of comments from bodies and associations legally established in Cyprus, submitted pursuant to Article 16, paragraph 2 of the Charter.

6. In the present second evaluation report the Committee of Experts will focus on the provisions and issues which were singled out in the first evaluation report as raising particular problems. It will evaluate in particular how the Cypriot authorities have reacted to the issues highlighted by the Committee of Experts and, where relevant, to the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers. The Committee of Experts will also look at the new issues emerging during the second monitoring round.

7. The present report contains observations which the Cypriot authorities are encouraged to take into account when developing their policy on regional or minority languages. On the basis of these observations, the Committee of Experts has also established a list of general proposals for the preparation of a second set of recommendations to be addressed to Cyprus by the Committee of Ministers, as provided in Article 16, paragraph 4 of the Charter.

¹ MIN-LANG (2002) 1 Outline for 3-yearly periodical reports as adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

8. This report is based on the political and legal situation prevailing at the time of the Committee of Experts' second "on-the-spot" visit to Cyprus (17 – 19 September 2008), on the information presented by the Cypriot Government in its second periodical report to the Council of Europe (18 January 2008), on additional information provided by the Government at a later stage and on other information obtained by the Committee of Experts as stated above.

9. The present report was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 23 April 2009.

1.3. *Presentation of the regional or minority language situation in Cyprus: update*

10. As mentioned in the first evaluation report (see paragraph 16), the Constitution of Cyprus divides the Cypriot population into two "Communities", Greek and Turkish. The Communities are defined on the grounds of ethnic origin, language, culture and religion. The Constitution further makes reference to "religious groups". As the denomination implies, religious groups are defined by their religious affiliation only. According to this classification, the only religious groups of Cyprus are the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins. In 1960, a referendum was carried out by which members of the three religious groups, in accordance with Article 2 of the Constitution, had to decide which of the two Communities they wanted to belong to. All three groups chose to belong to the Greek Community. For the purpose of this report, the religious groups will be referred to as minority groups.

11. For all other basic information on the situation of regional or minority languages in Cyprus, the Committee of Experts refers to the relevant paragraphs of the first evaluation report (paragraphs 9 – 33). In its revised declaration of 3 August 2005 (see paragraphs 1-3 of the first report for further details), the Republic of Cyprus declared that it would afford Part II protection to the Armenian language as a non-territorial language defined in Article 1c of the Charter. In its first evaluation report (see paragraphs 45 – 49), the Committee of Experts was of the view that Cypriot Maronite Arabic also qualified as a regional or minority language within the meaning of the Charter.

12. The regional or minority languages covered under the Charter in Cyprus are at present the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages.

13. As regards the numbers of speakers, the Committee of Experts noted in its first evaluation report that there were 3000 Armenian-speakers but that there was no official data on the number of Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers. The authorities estimated the number of speakers to be 1300, whereas the speakers themselves estimated a number of 2500 speakers. The Committee of Experts was informed during the on-the-spot visit that a team of experts on the revitalisation of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language is planning to carry out a detailed survey on the number of speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, a project funded by the University of Cyprus. The Committee of Experts welcomes this information and looks forward to receiving the results of the survey in the next periodical report.

Kurbetcha/ Romani

14. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 32 – 33), the Committee of Experts had been informed that Roma in Cyprus referred to their language as *Kurbetcha*. The Committee of Experts was unable to receive any information on whether Roma still spoke *Kurbetcha* or any language other than Turkish and/or Greek and requested further information in the next periodical report.

15. The Cypriot authorities state in their second periodical report (paragraph 17.2.) that Roma speak mainly Turkish and only some *Kurbetcha* words. The Committee of Experts asks the Cypriot authorities to provide more detailed information on the use of *Kurbetcha* in the next periodical report.

1.4. *General issues arising from the evaluation of the report*

16. The Committee of Experts appreciates the excellent co-operation it enjoyed with the Cypriot authorities in the organisation of its on-the-spot visit. It welcomes in particular that the second periodical report responds to several requests for further information and recommendations made by the Committee of Experts.

17. Although the second periodical report was communicated to the Parliamentary Representatives of the Armenian and Maronite groups and other relevant stakeholders by the Law Commissioner, the Parliamentary Representatives informed the Committee of Experts during the on-the-spot visit that neither they nor any other relevant body were sufficiently consulted in connection with the preparation of the second periodical report.

1.5 *Particular issue concerning the Turkish language*

18. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 37 – 43), the Committee of Experts raised the issue of the particular situation of the Turkish language in Cyprus. It noted that according to Article 3 of the Constitution of Cyprus the official languages of Cyprus were Greek and Turkish, that however, most of the provisions regulating the use of the Turkish language in the public domain ceased to be implemented after December 1963 with the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots from all institutions, and that the termination of bilingualism was consolidated after the *de facto* division in 1974.

19. In the same report, the Committee of Experts also observed that since 1963, the few hundred Turkish Cypriots that decided to stay in the government-controlled area and the recently growing number of Turkish Cypriots had not been able to exercise their full linguistic rights guaranteed under the Constitution. It appeared to the Committee of Experts that the Turkish language in the government controlled area was *de facto* in a similar position to a regional or minority language but that it did not benefit from the protection under the Charter because of its official status under the Constitution of the Republic. The Committee of Experts requested the Cypriot authorities to provide more detailed information in the next periodical report with regard to the Turkish language in the government-controlled area.

20. The recent political developments in Cyprus have led to a lifting of the restrictions of the movement of Cypriot citizens across specific crossing points on the 1974 cease fire line. According to the Appendix to the second periodical report (paragraphs 176 and 177), as a result, more than 10 000 Turkish Cypriots commute daily to the government-controlled area to work there, and many more thousands of Turkish Cypriots travel there to receive medical treatment, and the numbers appear to be increasing continuously. The periodical report also reports on daily visits of Turkish Cypriots to administrative authorities to deal with certificates, passports and other administrative matters.

21. The second periodical report (paragraphs 18.1 – 18.5) provides information on a primary school in Limassol attended by Turkish and Greek Cypriot pupils, where part of the education for Turkish Cypriots is in the Turkish language. The Committee of Experts was invited to pay a visit to the school during its on-the-spot visit to Cyprus (for further information, see paragraphs 101 - 102 below).

22. The second periodical report does not give an account of the use of the Turkish language in the government-controlled area besides the above-mentioned example of the primary school. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was able to obtain only limited further information. It was informed that some officials in public administration spoke and used Turkish, as did some doctors and other staff working in hospitals in the government-controlled area. The Committee of Experts would welcome more information on the use of Turkish in hospitals and public services in the next periodical report.

23. The Committee of Experts was further informed that weekly sermons at a Mosque in Limassol were held in Turkish.

24. The Committee of Experts was also informed that the public broadcaster CyBC continues to broadcast programmes in the Turkish language (see also paragraph 103 below).

25. The Committee of Experts invites the Cypriot authorities to give more information on the situation of the Turkish language.

Chapter 2 The Committee of Experts' evaluation of the application of the Charter

26. No languages have been designated by the Cypriot authorities for protection under Part III of the Charter. The Committee of Experts has therefore evaluated how the State has fulfilled each undertaking in Part II (Article 7).

2.1. Preliminary issues

27. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 45 – 49), the Committee of Experts came to the conclusion that Cypriot Maronite Arabic qualified as a regional or minority language within the meaning of Article 1, paragraph a of the Charter and encouraged the Cypriot authorities to take urgent measures to protect and promote it in accordance with Part II of the Charter. The Committee of Experts encouraged the Cypriot authorities to comment on the implementation of the Charter with regard to Cypriot Maronite Arabic in their next periodical report. On the basis of this observation, the Committee of Ministers addressed the following recommendation to the Cyprus government: **“apply Part II protection to Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a regional or minority language in Cyprus within the meaning of the Charter (...)”** (RecChL(2006)3, Recommendation 1).

28. In their second periodical report, the Cypriot authorities comment on the application of the Charter with respect to Cypriot Maronite Arabic, which will be dealt with in detail under each provision below. As mentioned in paragraph 2 above, the Cypriot authorities have declared on 5 November 2008 that they would apply Part II of the Charter to the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language.

2.2 The evaluation in respect of Part II of the Charter

29. The Committee of Experts will focus on the provisions of Part II which were singled out in the first report as raising particular issues. It will therefore not comment in the present report on provisions where no major issues were raised in the first evaluation report and for which the Committee of Experts did not receive any new information requiring it to reassess its implementation. These provisions are as follows:

Article 7, Paragraph 1.b ;
Article 7, Paragraph 2.

30. For these provisions, the Committee of Experts refers to the relevant paragraphs of its first report but reserves the right to evaluate the situation again in future reports.

Article 7 – Objectives and principles

Paragraph 1

In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

- a *the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;*

31. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed of considerations to draw up a new constitution for Cyprus in the framework of a comprehensive solution to the Cyprus question. The Parliamentary Representative of the Armenian community demanded that any new constitution should recognise the minority groups as national minorities or communities in accordance with international legal instruments, and not as religious groups as is the case at present (see paragraph 10 above).

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

32. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 56), the Committee of Experts had not received sufficient information as to what extent the Cypriot authorities recognised Cypriot Maronite Arabic as an expression of cultural wealth and requested more information in the next periodical report.

33. During the on-the-spot visit, the Law Commissioner, whose office is responsible for preparing the periodical reports, explained to the Committee of Experts that the awareness within the government of Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a separate language and the need to protect it only emerged after the first Committee of Experts' evaluation report on Cyprus.

34. Shortly after the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the Council of Ministers of Cyprus adopted a declaration in respect of the instrument of ratification, declaring that the government would apply the provisions of Part II of the Charter to Cypriot Maronite Arabic, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1 of the Charter. The Committee of Experts commends this decision which it sees as a positive step towards official recognition of the language (see also paragraphs 2 and 28 above).

c *the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;*

35. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the Government of Cyprus did not have an earmarked budget for measures related to the protection and promotion of the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages. Activities and projects related to these languages are funded in an ad-hoc manner and are granted on the basis of submission of applications.

Armenian

36. Despite the fact that, according to the Armenian-speakers, applications were always granted, they were dissatisfied with the lack of transparency with respect to the level and allocation of funding and called for a structured funding policy and an involvement of the Armenian-speakers in the decision-making process of the funding. The Committee of Experts understands that the Armenian Parliamentary Representative has called for an annual earmarked funding. According to a representative of the Ministry of the Interior, responsible for the allocation of funds for the minority groups (Armenians, Maronites and Latins), each Ministry has a fixed annual budget for these groups of which the groups are aware. The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to make the funding procedure more transparent and to find a satisfactory solution to the allocation process of funds, in co-operation with the speakers.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

37. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 66), the Committee of Experts noted that the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language was only spoken by a very limited number of Maronites and that it was a seriously endangered language (paragraph 47) and asked the authorities to provide more information in the next periodical report on the steps taken in order to safeguard Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

38. According to the second periodical report (paragraphs 11.1 – 11.4) and additional information received during the on-the-spot visit, the Cypriot authorities organised a scientific symposium in November 2007 with the aim of initiating a process to protect the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language, starting with the codification of the language. The symposium gathered academic experts of Cypriot Maronite Arabic and of language revitalisation, as well as representatives of the government and of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers. Following the symposium, a team of experts advised the authorities to: 1) appoint a team of experts entrusted with the task of developing an action plan in close co-operation with the speakers, and as a matter of priority of codifying the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language on the basis of the Latin alphabet (see also paragraph 58 below); 2) create an archive of oral Cypriot Maronite Arabic, based on already collected data and new data which would serve the preservation of the language as well as provide a source for the production of teaching materials and corpus development; 3) encourage and provide support to the Maronite community to use and learn the language and to provide expertise and support in the field of special teaching methods for endangered languages. The team of experts encouraged the authorities to support and assist financially the protection and promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

39. Besides the above-mentioned recommendations, the team of experts agreed that measures needed to be taken on a long-term as well as on an initial short-term basis, and given the threatened status of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, immediate steps should be taken. Therefore, a one week language immersion summer camp was organised in August 2008 in the village of Kormakitis in the occupied area, attracting about 90 children. The government granted € 8000 for the summer camp. Cypriot Maronite Arabic has in the meantime been codified and can now be employed as a written language. A Cypriot Maronite Arabic revitalisation group has been set up, which is composed of the team of experts, representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers and a representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture who acts as a co-ordinator. This revitalisation group works on four areas of language revitalisation: language awareness, language revival, language documentation and financial resources.

40. Whereas the team of experts works without remuneration, the meetings and the summer camp have been partially funded by the government. The Committee of Experts was informed after the on-the-spot visit about the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Cypriot Government to formally set up a team of experts which will be responsible for drafting and implementing an action plan for Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts welcomes this decision.

41. The Committee of Experts commends the authorities for taking the above-mentioned measures that could initiate a process of reversing language shift. It welcomes the concerted action between the experts, the speakers and the government in this process.

42. Although the Cypriot authorities have contributed financially to the activities mentioned above, the Committee of Experts understands that the work of the team of experts is carried out on a voluntary basis. The Committee of Experts points out that for the action plan to be implemented and the work of the team of experts and the revitalisation group to be carried out effectively in the long-run, more financial resources need to be allocated.

43. Finally, the Committee of Experts is of the view that any action plan should be embedded within a comprehensive language policy (see also the Committee of Ministers Recommendation based on the first evaluation report (RecChL(2006)3, Recommendation 3)).

The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to allocate adequate funds to further the protection and promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

d the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;

Armenian

44. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 67 – 68), the Committee of Experts had been informed of plans to develop a more structured and regular co-operation as part of the implementation of the Agreement on Co-operation in the field of culture, education and science between Cyprus and Armenia. The Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities to provide detailed information in the next periodical report about the outcome of these negotiations and any activities carried out in the framework of the new programme under the Agreement.

45. The Cypriot authorities did not provide any further information in this respect in their second periodical report. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts received a copy of the new programme for the years 2006 – 2008. However, the Committee of Experts did not receive any information regarding the extent to which the programme was implemented in practice and therefore asks the Cypriot authorities to provide information on any activities carried out under the programme in relation to the promotion of the Armenian language.

46. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 69), the Committee of Experts observed that, apart from the Armenian cultural events that take place, the Armenian-speakers liked to express their culture and language through their own activities. It also observed that there was no structured policy and permanent funding for such activities. With regard to the print media, the Committee of Experts noted that the two Armenian monthly

periodicals were produced without any financial assistance by the state. The Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to allocate funds to promote Armenian language and culture in public and private life, including the media, through a more satisfactory arrangement in co-operation with the speakers.

47. According to the information contained in the second periodical report (paragraph 28.1), the Council of Ministers of Cyprus approved the allocation of an annual total subsidy of € 51 260 for the production costs of the print media of the three minority groups (Armenians, Maronites and Latins). While the Armenian-speakers generally welcomed this, they do not consider the amount of funding sufficient.

48. With regard to the use of Armenian in other areas of public and private life, the Committee of Experts was informed during the on-the-spot visit by representatives of the Armenian-speakers that the Armenian Parliamentary Representative took the initiative to have three statutes and three regulations, which are mainly of interest to the Armenian immigrants in Cyprus, translated into the Armenian language. The Committee of Experts welcomes this initiative.

49. However, according to the information that the Committee of Experts received, no other documents have been published in Armenian by the local or central authorities.

50. Furthermore the Committee of Experts was informed of the existence of a home for the elderly run by the Armenian Kalaydjian Foundation. According to the representatives of the Armenian-speakers, civil weddings could be held in Armenian, but the authorities did not bear the additional costs.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

51. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 70 – 71), the Committee of Experts noted that the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language was generally invisible in public life, and encouraged the authorities to facilitate and/or encourage the use of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in public and private life. The Committee of Experts further noted that Cypriot Maronite Arabic had so far not been codified or standardised and encouraged the Cypriot authorities to find means, in co-operation with the speakers, to codify Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

52. The authorities state in the second periodical report (paragraph 11) that the codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic was seen as a first step towards the protection and promotion of the language. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed by representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic revitalisation group (see paragraphs 37 – 43 above for more information about this group) that an alphabet was developed by an expert linguist and specialist in Cypriot Maronite Arabic (and member of the group), based on the Latin alphabet and taking into account the specificities of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. This was launched by the Maronite community in December 2007, and an official recognition from the Ministry of Education and Culture is still pending.

53. The Committee of Experts commends the authorities for initiating the process of codifying Cypriot Maronite Arabic (see paragraph 39 above) which will enable its use in other areas of public life.

54. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed by representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers that some news articles in Cypriot Maronite Arabic now appear in the Maronite periodicals. The Committee of Experts welcomes the fact that the new alphabet is already in use in the printed media.

55. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 72), the Committee of Experts observed that the Maronite youth expressed the need for a cultural centre where young Maronites could socialise and have an opportunity to learn and to converse in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to assist the Maronites in establishing such a Culture and Youth Centre.

56. In general, an endangered language should be promoted by motivating young people to use it. The development of a youth culture supporting the maintenance and promotion of the minority language could be strengthened by establishing electronic data bases, on-line dictionaries and Internet platforms, and song and music contests in this language. According to the second periodical report (paragraph 19.9), the Cypriot authorities suggested that the multi-purpose hall of the Maronite primary school St Maronas in Anthoupolis could be used for the cultural needs of the Maronite community. At the same time, the Ministry for Education and Culture was looking for another solution. The Committee of Experts did not receive any further information with

regard to this issue and therefore looks forward to receiving information on any developments in the next periodical report.

Broadcasting media

57. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 73 – 77), the Committee of Experts noted that the public broadcasting service CyBC (Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation) broadcast a daily one-hour radio programme in Armenian, and a one-hour television programme in Armenian once a year on the Armenian Christmas Day (6 January). The Committee of Experts also noted that CyBC broadcast a weekly 30-minute radio programme for the Maronite community in the Greek language. There were no television programmes in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

58. In their second periodical report (paragraph 23.3), the Cypriot authorities state that they have encouraged CyBC to produce more programming directed to the minority groups, but do not specify how they have done so. The director of CyBC informed the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit that the amount of Armenian radio broadcasting has remained unchanged, whereas the annual television programme in Armenian has been discontinued, apparently due to difficulties in finding a content.

59. The director of CyBC informed the Committee of Experts that the weekly programme dedicated to the Maronite community has been extended to a total broadcasting time of 55 minutes. The programme is broadcast in Greek, including a module of ten minutes in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts welcomes this positive development.

60. With regard to television broadcasting, the second periodical report (paragraph 25) states that CyBC was planning to include a 30-minute television programme dedicated to the minority groups. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that CyBC held discussions with representatives of the three minority groups to negotiate on the broadcasting of television programmes. However, they have not been able as yet to come to an agreement.

61. The Committee of Experts regrets the termination of the annual Christmas television programme in Armenian. It encourages the Cypriot authorities to encourage and/ or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

e the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;

62. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 82), the Committee of Experts had not been informed of any examples of institutionalised relations between the Armenians and Maronites and requested the authorities to provide information on this in the next periodical report.

63. The Cypriot authorities state in their second periodical report (paragraph 20) that they encouraged the Parliamentary Representatives of the Armenians and the Maronites to engage in closer relations, but that there did not seem to be a demand for this.

f the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;

Armenian

64. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 84 – 97), the Committee of Experts observed that in three Armenian primary schools (including a pre-school section), the so-called Nareg schools, part of the teaching was done through the medium of Armenian. With regard to secondary education, the Melkonian Educational Institute (MEI) in Nicosia was closed in 2005. The Committee of Experts had further been informed that the Nareg school in Nicosia had set up a lower secondary school. While commending the support the government was giving to the Armenian-speakers in this difficult situation, the Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to take appropriate steps in order to ensure that secondary education in Armenian will continue to be available.

65. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed by representatives of the Nareg schools that currently approximately 20 pupils attend the Nareg pre-schools, 95 pupils are enrolled in primary education, and 15 pupils currently attend the lower secondary school. About one third of the Armenian-speaking children of Cyprus attend the Nareg schools. Although the schools offer a free transport service, some parents prefer to send their children to a non-Armenian school closer to their homes.
66. According to the second periodical report (paragraph 12.3), the Council of Ministers decided in May 2006 to establish an upper secondary school at the Nareg school in Nicosia. However, the majority of Armenian pupils opted instead to attend the secondary school at the American Academy in Nicosia. A representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture informed the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit that the American Academy offers a special curriculum for the Armenian pupils with Armenian language and culture classes as an integral part of the curriculum.
67. The Committee of Experts is unclear about the actual number of classes taught in Armenian at the different levels of education at the Nareg schools and whether they are taught as an integral part of the curriculum. It asks the Cypriot authorities to provide detailed information in this respect in the next periodical report.
68. The construction of a new primary school building in Limassol, which was financed by the Cyprus government, has been completed. The Committee of Experts welcomes this information.
69. As was mentioned in the first evaluation report (paragraph 84), schoolbooks are imported from abroad. During the on-the-spot visit, the headmaster informed the Committee of Experts of the lack of regional reference in these books. Therefore the Ministry of Education and Culture agreed to finance a three-year project to develop schoolbooks for Armenian education in Cyprus. The Committee of Experts welcomes this information.
70. With regard to the development of the Melkonian Educational Institute (MEI) buildings and site, since the previous monitoring round, after the Supreme Court had annulled the 2004 preservation order in December 2006, the Minister of the Interior issued a new preservation order in March 2007. This was again challenged by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), an organisation that was entrusted with the custodian and management rights of MEI in July of the same year (see second periodical report, paragraph 12.4). The Committee of Experts was informed by a representative of AGBU during the on-the-spot visit that a decision by the Supreme Court is still pending. The Committee of Experts was also informed that AGBU was in contact with the government to consider the establishment of a learning centre for Western-Armenian spoken in Cyprus and in the Diaspora.
71. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the future of a valuable library of the MEI was unclear. The plans to integrate it into the University library have not been implemented yet. The Committee asks the authorities to provide information on the implementation of these plans.
72. The MEI had also offered a three-year teacher-training course in the past. Its closure has a negative impact on the Armenian teaching staff.
73. The closure of the MEI in 2005 has attracted attention by members of the Armenian Diaspora worldwide. The Committee of Experts was informed that an Armenian organisation based in Switzerland is attempting to reopen the MEI as an Armenian secondary school, including higher education. According to the organisation, funds for the school would be provided by some members of the Armenian Diaspora. For the organisation it would be acceptable to open the MEI on other grounds in Cyprus, but it would be important to retain the name 'Melkonian'. The Committee of Experts asks the Cypriot authorities to provide further information on new developments concerning the MEI in the next periodical report.
74. The Committee of Experts commends the Cypriot authorities for their continued effort to maintain Armenian secondary education. At the same time, however, the Committee of Experts remains concerned about the future existence of Armenian education in Cyprus. According to some representatives of the Armenian community, the closure of the MEI seems to also have negative repercussions on the enrolment of pupils in the Nareg primary school. Parents instead send their children to English or Greek-medium primary schools, in order to have a smooth transition to secondary level education and also from lower secondary to higher secondary education.

75. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 98), the Committee of Experts observed that neither technical education, adult education nor higher education were available in Armenian. Nor were there any possibilities for teacher training in Armenian in Cyprus. The Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to arrange teacher training in Armenian.

76. According to the second periodical report (paragraph 22), the Ministry of Education and Culture will examine the possibility of offering teacher training under the strategic plan for the educational reform. So far there is still no possibility to receive specific teacher training for teachers of Armenian-medium education. The Committee of Experts understands that the situation has become more acute, since in the past the MEI was an important provider of teachers since it had a special teacher-training programme for their pupils. Considering the currently delicate position of Armenian secondary education, the Committee of Experts reiterates the need to provide teacher training in Armenian.

The Committee of Experts urges the Cypriot authorities to arrange teacher training in Armenian.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

77. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 99 – 106), the Committee of Experts noted that at the St. Maronas primary school an optional extracurricular class of Cypriot Maronite Arabic was offered once a week in the afternoon, and was attended by 15 pupils. It observed that Cypriot Maronite Arabic was not taught at any other levels of education, nor were there any teaching materials or possibilities for teacher training. The Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to provide for the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at primary school level and otherwise where appropriate and in particular to arrange for the training of teachers and the production of teaching materials. On the basis of this observation, the Committee of Ministers addressed the following recommendation to the Cyprus government: “(...) **strengthen in particular the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at primary school level;**” (RecChL(2006)3, Recommendation 1).

78. During the on-the-spot visit, a representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture informed the Committee of Experts that the Ministry of Education and Culture agreed to offer Cypriot Maronite Arabic classes within the regular curriculum hours as from school year 2008/ 09. However, the Committee of Experts received contradictory information on its actual implementation. The Committee of Experts invites the authorities to clarify how the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been integrated into the regular curriculum. The Cypriot Maronite Arabic classes are currently attended by 21 out of 51 pupils that attend the Maronite St Maronas school. The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to consider increasing the number of hours of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

79. The Committee of Experts understands that only a fraction of the Maronite pupils attend the St Maronas school. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that there are so called “ethnic schools” in Cyprus which are attended by 40% of Maronites. Considering the success of the language immersion summer camp, the Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to consider the possibility of offering Cypriot Maronite Arabic classes at other schools if there is a sufficient number of pupils who wish to learn the language.

80. Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at any other level of education. The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to consider the possibility of offering Cypriot Maronite Arabic classes at pre-school and secondary school level.

81. The Committee of Experts understands that teaching materials for Cypriot Maronite Arabic have so far not been produced. Now that the language has been codified, the Committee of Experts encourages the authorities to produce teaching materials.

82. There has been no development with regard to teacher training. According to the representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers, there are only three teachers that are fluent in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts, however, understands that the team of experts on Cypriot Maronite Arabic plans to provide expertise on teaching methods.

83. Despite the fact that some important measures have been taken to improve the offer of Cypriot Maronite Arabic education at primary level, the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic still needs to be strengthened significantly.

The Committee of Experts urges the authorities to provide for the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at primary school level and in particular to arrange for the training of teachers and the production of teaching materials.

g the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

84. In its first evaluation report, the Committee of Experts observed that there was no possibility to learn Cypriot Maronite Arabic and it encouraged the Cypriot authorities to facilitate the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic to those who wish to learn it.

85. Representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers informed the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit that in September 2007, they offered Cypriot Maronite Arabic language courses to adults. However, the teaching proved to be difficult because the courses were carried out on a voluntary basis and the teachers lacked support in teaching methodology. According to the representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture that the Committee of Experts met during the on-the-spot visit, Cypriot Maronite Arabic language courses could be offered at the adult education centres. However, so far this has not been the case.

h the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;

86. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 110), the Committee of Experts observed that there were no possibilities for study or research on Armenian or Cypriot Maronite Arabic in Cyprus and that it had especially been made aware of requests for the establishment of a chair for Armenian studies at university level in Cyprus.

Armenian

87. According to the information provided in the second periodical report (paragraph 19.4), the University of Cyprus considered the proposal of the Armenian community to establish a department for the Armenian language and culture. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture informed the Committee of Experts that in the meantime the University had accepted to offer courses of Armenian language and culture within the already existing Department of Turkish Studies and Middle Eastern Studies. However the Armenian-speakers were dissatisfied with this option. The Committee of Experts understands that the issue is currently being reviewed. The offer of Armenian studies could alleviate the current shortage of trained teachers in Armenian. In the context of the establishment of Armenian courses at the University of Cyprus, the Committee of Experts did not receive any information on whether for example the future lecturing post would also carry out research or study on the Armenian language and therefore asks the Cypriot authorities to provide such information in the next periodical report.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

88. There is still no possibility to carry out study and research of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at universities or equivalent institutions. The Committee of Experts was nonetheless informed during the on-the-spot visit that as part of the revitalisation plan, members of the team of experts and the Cyprus Research Centre will create an archive of oral Cypriot Maronite Arabic and collect data on the language with the aim of preserving the language on the one hand, and on the other hand of creating a database for producing teaching materials. The project to record Cypriot Maronite Arabic spoken in the village of Kormakitis has already been carried out and the next project will focus on Cypriot Maronite Arabic spoken in the government-controlled area.

89. The Committee of Experts emphasises the practical need for study and research of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in the framework of revitalising the language. The successful codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic has a large impact on the spread of its use and teaching. The Committee of Experts welcomes the creation of a database of oral Cypriot Maronite Arabic as an important instrument of language revival and underlines in this context the importance of creating an official descriptive grammar.

90. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the University of Cyprus has provided funds for the survey on the language competence of Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers and on other socio-linguistic aspects (see also paragraph 13 above). The Committee of Experts welcomes this information and looks forward to receiving further information on the survey in the next periodical report.

- i the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States.*

Armenian

91. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 111 – 112), the Committee of Experts noted that through the Agreement on Co-operation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science between the governments of Cyprus and Armenia and the Cyprus-Armenia Friendship Society, cultural exchanges with Armenia took place.

92. As mentioned in paragraph 45 above, there is a new programme within the Agreement for the years 2006 – 2008. However, the Committee of Experts did not receive any information regarding the extent to which the programme is implemented in practice and asks the Cypriot authorities to provide information on any activities carried out under the programme in relation to the promotion of the Armenian language.

93. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed by representatives of the Armenian-speakers that in 2006, a first meeting was held in Cyprus with Armenian minorities from five other countries. It was decided to create an umbrella organisation and develop cross border co-operation in the field of sports and culture under a four-year plan. The Committee of Experts has no information whether the government supports this umbrella organisation and would welcome more information about this co-operation in the next periodical report.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

94. In its first evaluation report (paragraph 113 – 114), the Committee of Experts was informed about a school exchange to Lebanon and encouraged the Cypriot authorities to promote similar educational and cultural transnational exchanges.

95. The second periodical report (paragraph 19.7) mentions a bilateral agreement of 2003 between the Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Government of the Lebanese Republic in the field of cultural, educational and scientific co-operation. The Committee of Experts has not received any information however, on whether there is any exchange relating to the languages (or to the Maronites) or to what extent such an exchange would currently be desirable for the Cypriot Maronite Arabic-speakers.

96. The Committee of Experts asks the Cypriot authorities to provide further information in this respect in the next periodical report.

Paragraph 3

The Parties undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.

97. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 117 – 122), the Committee of Experts gained the impression that there was a certain level of awareness of the presence of Armenian and Maronite communities in Cyprus, but not specifically about the existence and history of their languages. Their existence was not reflected sufficiently in the school curriculum either. The Committee of Experts had also been informed about plans to promote mutual understanding between linguistic groups in Cyprus through the broadcasting media, but had no information on how this was to be achieved. The Committee of Experts therefore encouraged the Cypriot authorities to raise awareness within the general public of the traditional presence in Cyprus of the Armenian language and especially of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language and promote mutual understanding between all linguistic groups of Cyprus.

98. Responding to this recommendation, the second periodical report (paragraph 30) lists a number of measures that were taken to raise awareness of the traditional presence of regional or minority languages among the general public such as communications on the Charter, seminars and other events. While welcoming

all these measures, the Committee of Experts recalls that the extent to which a regional or minority language is protected or promoted is, in many respects, linked to the majority language speakers' perception of regional or minority languages. Awareness-raising among the majority population is therefore of utmost importance. As indicated by this provision, education and the media are especially relevant in this respect (see the first evaluation report on the implementation of the Charter in Spain, ECRML (2005) 4, paragraph 182).

99. According to information received during the on-the-spot visit from a representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Cypriot education system is currently undergoing a major reform. Within the context of revising the curriculum, consideration is to be given to revising the existing history books, in collaboration with the minority groups (see also paragraph 19.2. of the second periodical report). However, so far there has been no further development on this. In any case, a separate book on the history and culture of the minority groups is foreseen which is to be disseminated in mainstream public schools.

100. According to the representatives of speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, the level of awareness of the existence of Cypriot Maronite Arabic among the majority population has remained unchanged since the previous monitoring round. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that one of the sub-groups of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic revitalisation group is responsible for raising awareness of Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a language, both within the Maronite community and within the community at large. According to representatives of the revitalisation group and of the speakers, Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been devaluated and depreciated as a language in the past and the aim is to create a more positive image of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts welcomes this approach and looks forward to receiving information on the outcome of these activities in the next periodical report.

101. According to the information contained in the second periodical report and received during the on-the-spot visit, the authorities financially supported the setting up and maintenance of individual websites of the minority groups of Cyprus. While the website of the Armenian group is in the Armenian language, the website of the Maronites is in Greek and English. These websites provide information on their history and religion.

102. As part of the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was invited by the Ministry of Education and Culture to visit the Agios Antonis Primary School (see also paragraph 18 of the second periodical report) which is situated in Limassol. Roughly half of the pupils that attend the school are Turkish Cypriot and Turkish-speaking Roma pupils. The principal objectives of the school are to promote equality and schooling, fight racism and exclusion and create an environment of mutual understanding and respect between students and parents of different ethnic origins. The school has implemented many measures to achieve this. Two out of seven daily class units on language, culture and history are taught to the Turkish Cypriot pupils in Turkish (Cypriot). Such classes have recently also been introduced at the Agios Antonis Secondary School. Both Greek and Turkish Cypriot pupils create, for example, bilingual newspapers and songs. As mentioned in 18.3. of the second periodical report, the parents of the Turkish Cypriot pupils favoured a mixed school as opposed to a separate school to which they were entitled, following a Council of Ministers decision.

103. The Committee of Experts is impressed by the achievements of this primary school in promoting mutual understanding especially between Turkish-speakers and Greek-speakers and commends the Cypriot authorities for their support to this school, which it regards not only as a vital step towards social integration and language protection, but also as reconciliation between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

104. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed by the director of the public radio and television broadcaster CyBC that apart from the Turkish language radio and television programmes, CyBC produces a bi-communal (Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot) and bilingual programme that is produced by journalists from both communities and deals with current affairs of both communities in the entire country. The programme can also be received in the occupied territory, but not beyond the Kyrenia mountain range. According to the second periodical report, the radio and television programmes in the Turkish language broadcast by the public broadcaster CyBC are continuously being upgraded. The Committee of Experts invites the authorities to supply further information in this respect in the next periodical report.

Paragraph 4

In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.

105. In its first evaluation report (paragraphs 123 – 124), the Committee of Experts noted that the Constitution gives the Maronite and Armenian groups (and the Latin group) the right to elect a representative into the House of Representatives whose function is to present the views of his/ her group and to be consulted by the House of Representatives.

106. According to the information contained in the second periodical report (paragraph 6.1.), the Cypriot Council of Ministers directed a Policy Decision on 18 October 2006 to all ministers to consult with the elected Parliamentary Representatives in order to promote their interests and find solutions to issues concerning their respective communities. While welcoming this information, the Parliamentary Representatives informed the Committee of Experts during the on-the-spot visit that they were disappointed not to have any voting power and therefore only being able to exert limited influence. They therefore suggested the setting up of a government commissioner for national minorities.

Paragraph 5

The Parties undertake to apply, mutatis mutandis, the principles listed in paragraphs 1 to 4 above to non-territorial languages. However, as far as these languages are concerned, the nature and scope of the measures to be taken to give effect to this Charter shall be determined in a flexible manner, bearing in mind the needs and wishes, and respecting the traditions and characteristics, of the groups which use the languages concerned.

107. Armenian has been declared a non-territorial language in the instrument of ratification. In considering the position of Armenian vis-à-vis paragraphs 1 – 4 of Article 7, the Committee of Experts has kept in mind that those principles should be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

108. Although the Cypriot authorities did not specify Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a non-territorial language in their instrument of ratification, the Committee of Experts observed in its first evaluation report (paragraph 58) that the situation of the language in the government-controlled area corresponded to the definition of a non-territorial language. The Committee of Experts has therefore evaluated paragraphs 1 – 4 accordingly in a flexible manner.

Chapter 3 Findings

3.1. *Conclusions of the Committee of Experts on how the Cypriot authorities have reacted to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers*

Recommendation 1

“apply Part II protection to Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a regional or minority language in Cyprus within the meaning of the Charter and strengthen in particular the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at primary school level;”

109. Upon the initiative of the Cypriot authorities, a team of experts was set up to make proposals and recommendations on ways to protect and promote Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The team of experts in this respect formulated a two-year action plan, but has also recognised the need for immediate action which included the adoption of an alphabet and the organisation of a language immersion summer camp for children. In the meantime the Cypriot government has submitted a declaration of its instrument of ratification that it applies Part II of the Charter to the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. The Recommendation has thus been implemented.

110. With regard to education, the Cypriot authorities have taken steps to integrate the weekly Cypriot Maronite Arabic class into the regular curriculum at the St Maronas primary school. However, the actual stage of implementation is not clear. No teaching materials or teacher training are available, although it seems that through the codification of the language and with the support of the team of experts, these shortcomings could be addressed.

Recommendation 2

“take measures to ensure that teaching in and of Armenian at secondary level remains available;”

111. After the closure of the Armenian Melkonian secondary school, the Nareg primary school extended its educational offer to lower secondary school. The Council of Ministers decided in May 2006 to establish an upper secondary school at the Nareg school in Nicosia. However, the majority of Armenian students opted to attend the secondary school at the American Academy in Nicosia.

This school, which many Armenian-speakers attend, offers a special curriculum for the Armenian pupils with Armenian language and culture classes as an integral part of the curriculum. The lack of teacher training possibilities for Armenian education remains problematic.

112. While secondary education is no longer available at the Melkonian secondary school, the Cypriot authorities have continued their efforts to maintain the site of the school by a preservation order. This could enable potential investors to reopen the Melkonian school.

Recommendation 3

“adopt a structured policy for the protection and promotion of the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages.”

113. The official appointment of the team of experts on Cypriot Maronite Arabic and the adoption of an action plan are important steps towards the protection and promotion of the language, but need to be grounded in a structured language policy.

With regard to the Armenian language, no steps have been taken to adopt a language policy.

3.2 *Findings of the Committee of Experts on the basis of the results of the second monitoring round*

- A. The Committee of Experts appreciates the excellent co-operation it enjoyed with the Cypriot authorities in the organisation of its on-the-spot visit. In particular it is pleased that the second periodical report responds to the observations and requests for further information contained in the Committee of Experts' first evaluation report.
- B. The attitude of the Cypriot authorities towards regional or minority languages is characterised by goodwill and openness towards the needs and wishes of the speakers. This openness towards the concerns of regional or minority language speakers is also found within other bodies in Cyprus which are to a lesser extent under the influence of the authorities, for example the media broadcasters and the higher education and research institutions.
- C. The need to protect the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language seems to have become fully apparent to the Cypriot government since the Committee of Experts' first report. The Cypriot authorities have extended Part II protection of the Charter to the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language and progress has been achieved in the promotion of the language since the last monitoring round. The Cypriot authorities have initiated a process in this respect by establishing a team of experts entrusted with drafting and implementing an action plan. As the most significant result of these efforts so far, the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language has been codified. The general approach to language revitalisation taken so far can be regarded as good practice. The Committee of Experts however finds that in order to guarantee a long-term success and sustainability of the team of experts and effective implementation of its work, it is vital that sufficient financial resources are allocated to the work of the team and the activities and measures they plan to carry out.
- D. Although the Armenian-speakers seem in general satisfied with the level of funding allocated to the promotion of the Armenian language, there is criticism with regard to the lack of transparency of the allocation and distribution of the funding.
- E. With regard to the media, positive steps have been taken with regard to the financial support of the print media of the minority groups by a Council of Ministers decision, while the sum is not considered sufficient by some Armenian newspaper editors. The Committee of Experts is pleased to note that the recently adopted alphabet is already in use, as some articles in Cypriot Maronite Arabic language are now published in the Maronite periodicals. With regard to the broadcasting media, the annual Christmas television programme in Armenian has been discontinued. This means that there are no television programmes in regional or minority languages. Considering the role that television broadcasting plays in the promotion of minority languages, the Committee of Experts regrets the present situation. With regard to radio broadcasting, the weekly Maronite programme broadcasts a part of its programme in the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language.
- F. Armenian education at pre-school and primary school level remains satisfactory. Secondary education is however still in a delicate position after the closure of the Melkonian secondary school in 2005. The recently set up lower secondary school at the Armenian Nareg school was to be extended with a higher secondary level, but the Armenian-speakers opted for the American Academy which offers the Armenian-speakers Armenian specific classes within the curriculum. While secondary education is therefore currently secured, the situation on the whole does not seem to be a satisfactory solution for the Armenian-speakers and can ultimately have a negative repercussion on the teaching of/ in Armenian at primary school level. Finally, teacher training in Armenian is still not available in Cyprus. The future establishment of Armenian studies at the University of Cyprus could remedy this shortcoming.
- G. Important progress has been made with regard to Cypriot Maronite Arabic education, starting with the inclusion of the language class at primary school into the regular curriculum, and the adoption of an orthography which will facilitate the teaching. However, on the whole, decisive efforts still need to be made to further strengthen Cypriot Maronite Arabic education, for example to make it available at other levels of education, especially pre-school and adult education, and to produce teaching materials and offer teacher training possibilities.

H. There is still a need to raise awareness among the majority population about Cyprus' regional or minority languages as an integral part of Cyprus' cultural heritage. The preparation of the history book on the minority groups is a positive step in this direction.

The Cypriot government was invited to comment on the content of this report in accordance with Article 16.3 of the Charter. The comments received are attached in Appendix II.

On the basis of this report and its findings the Committee of Experts submitted its proposals to the Committee of Ministers for recommendations to be addressed to Cyprus. At the same time it emphasised the need for the Cypriot authorities to take into account, in addition to these general recommendations, the more detailed observations contained in the body of the report.

At its 1066th meeting on 23 September 2009, the Committee of Ministers adopted its Recommendation addressed to Cyprus, which is set out in Part B of this document.

Appendix I: Instrument of ratification



Cyprus :

Declaration contained in a letter from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Representation of Cyprus, dated 3 August 2005, registered at the Secretariat General on 4 August 2005 - Or. Engl.

In ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Republic of Cyprus deposited on 26 August 2002, a declaration which appears to be incompatible with the provisions of the Charter on undertakings to be applied by it.

In order to remove uncertainty and clarify the extent of the obligations undertaken, the Republic of Cyprus hereby withdraws the declaration of 26 August 2002 and replaces it with the following :

The Republic of Cyprus, while reiterating its commitment to respect the objectives and principles pursued by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, declares that it undertakes to apply Part II of the Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1, to the Armenian language as a "non-territorial" language defined in Article 1c of the Charter.

The Republic of Cyprus would further like to state that its Constitution and laws uphold and safeguard effectively the principle of equality and non-discrimination on the ground of a person's community, race, religion, language, sex, political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, colour, wealth, social class or any ground whatsoever.

Period covered: 4/8/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 2

Declaration contained in a Note verbale from the Permanent Representation of Cyprus, dated 5 November 2008, registered at the Secretariat General on 12 November 2008 - Or. Engl.

Further to its Declaration of 3 August 2005, the Republic of Cyprus declares that the Cypriot Maronite Arabic is a language within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which it will apply the provisions of Part II of the Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1.

In doing so, the Republic of Cyprus further declares that, since the Cypriot Maronite Arabic is also used in the village of Kormakitis, cradle of the said language, situated in an area of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus under Turkish military occupation since 1974 in which the Republic does not exercise effective control, it excludes any interpretation of the Charter's provision in this regard that would be contrary to it, particularly its Article 5.

Period covered: 12/11/2008 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 2, 5

Appendix II: Comments by the Cypriot authorities

Comments by the Authorities of the Republic of Cyprus on the Second Report of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages presented to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in accordance with Article 16 of the Charter

OFFICE OF THE LAW COMMISSIONER

26 June 2009

1. The Republic of Cyprus has the honour to refer to the Second Report of the Committee of Experts to be presented to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in accordance with Article 16 of the Charter.
2. The Committee of Experts' Report is receiving careful attention by the Cypriot Authorities. They will be guided by its findings and recommendations in the implementation of the undertakings in the Charter.
3. As in the case of its First Report, the evaluation of the Committee of Experts took place in a difficult environment for the State Party due to the abnormal conditions prevailing in the country as a result of the continued military occupation of part of its national territory for the last 35 consecutive years.
4. It should be borne in mind that the occupying power, though a Member State of the Council of Europe, is neither a party to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language nor to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and with its subordinate local administration in the occupied territory, does not consider the protection and safeguard of cultural heritage of the country, including linguistic heritage, to be amongst its obligations under international law.
5. Bearing in mind the above, the Cypriot Authorities would like to make the following comments:

A. Paragraphs 18-25 of the Second Report. Particular issue concerning the Turkish language.

The Committee of Experts in para. 19, referring to its first evaluation Report, noted that “...*the Turkish language in the Government-controlled area was de facto in a similar position to a regional or minority language but that it did not benefit from the protection under the charter because of its official status under the Constitution of the Republic.*”

The Cypriot authorities do not concur with the above evaluation of the Committee. Notwithstanding the continued forcible division of the country, the Turkish language is an official language of the State. Its legal status as an official language is guaranteed in the government-controlled area under both the Constitution and domestic legislation enacted since 1960, as well as in practice (use in the Administration, by public authorities and in the content of official documents).

The Turkish language being an official language of the State enshrined in its Constitution and upheld in the Official Languages Laws of the Republic 1988 to 2002 and other legal documents, the Cypriot authorities consider that it does not fall in the area of the Charter's field of application.

B. Paragraph 36 of the Second Report

The funding procedure is being assessed in cooperation with the Representative of the Armenian group and the speakers

C. Box at end of Paragraph 43

The recommendation of the Committee of Experts concerning ‘*the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them*’ is being considered by the Cypriot authorities. A comprehensive plan was submitted on 27 May 2009 to the Ministry of Education and Culture by the ad hoc Committee on Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

D. Paragraph 55 of the Second Report

In Paragraph 55 the Committee of Experts makes the following observation:

“In its first evaluation report (paragraph 72), the Committee of Experts observed the Maronite youth expressed the need for a cultural centre where the young Maronites could socialise and have an opportunity to learn and to converse in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to assist the Maronites in establishing such a Culture and Youth Centre.”

It seems that there is confusion around the State’s response to the request. The Cypriot Authorities would like to make the following comments:

1. The Authorities responded a long time ago to the above request. The State through a Council of Ministers decision taken in 1996 (Decision 44.139 of 10/4/1996) decided to grant the Maronite Religious Group a building plot of 4973 square meters situated in Strovolos, Nicosia, a prime area of the capital. The estimated cost for the construction of the Cultural centre, which according to the project will include a multiple purpose hall, an art gallery, a small chapel and a museum, amounts to €2.438.460. From this amount the Religious Group requested a contributing grant of €1.703.160 from the State. Given the importance of the project and the economic cost involved, the matter is being examined by the appropriate authorities.
2. It has been proposed that in the meantime, the Maronite Religious Group makes use of the multiple purpose hall (capacity of 400 people) in the Maronite Primary School St. Maronas in Anthoupolis, built in 2002.
3. It should be noted that the Cultural Centre project runs in parallel with other cultural or religious projects dedicated to the Maronite Religious Group which are funded by the State.

B. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter by Cyprus

*COUNCIL OF EUROPE
COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS*

Recommendation RecChL(2009)5 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Cyprus

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 23 September 2009
at the 1066th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers,

In accordance with Article 16 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

Having regard to the declarations submitted by Cyprus on 3 August 2005 and 5 November 2008;

Having taken note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts on the Charter with respect to the application of the Charter by Cyprus;

Bearing in mind that this evaluation is based on information submitted by Cyprus in its second periodical report, supplementary information given by the Cypriot authorities, information submitted by bodies and associations legally established in Cyprus and the information obtained by the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit,

Having taken note of the comments made by the Cypriot authorities on the contents of the Committee of Experts' report;

Recommends that the Cypriot authorities take account of all the observations of the Committee of Experts and, as a matter of priority:

1. adopt a structured policy for the protection and promotion of the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages;
2. make the policy for financial support to the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages more targeted and transparent;
3. strengthen the teaching in and of Cypriot Maronite Arabic;
4. provide teacher training for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic.