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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER IN CYPRUS

4th monitoring cycle

- A. Report of the Committee of Experts on the Charter**
(adopted on 14 May 2014)
- B. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter by Cyprus**
(adopted on 24 October 2014)

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, paragraph 1, an outline for periodical reports that a Party is required to submit to the Secretary General. The report shall be made public by the State, in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 2. 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 the State Party.

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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 14 May 2014
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, to which it will apply the provisions of Part II of the Charter. The instrument of ratification is set out in Appendix I of 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 fourth periodical report to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 16 January 2014.

1.2. The work of the Committee of Experts

4. This fourth evaluation report is based on the information obtained by the Committee of Experts from the fourth periodical report of Cyprus, as well as through interviews held with representatives of the regional or minority language speakers in Cyprus and the Cypriot authorities during the on-the-spot visit, which took place on 8-9 April 2014.

5. In the present fourth evaluation report, the Committee of Experts will focus on the provisions and issues which were singled out in the previous evaluation report as raising particular problems. It will evaluate in particular how the Cypriot authorities have reacted to the recommendations made by the Committee of Ministers and to the issues detected by the Committee of Experts. The report will firstly recall the key elements of each issue. The Committee of Experts will also look at the new issues detected during the fourth monitoring round.

6. The present report contains detailed observations and recommendations 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 fourth set of recommendations to be addressed to Cyprus by the Committee of Ministers, as provided in Article 16, paragraph 4 of the Charter.

7. The present report reflects the policies, legislation and practice prevailing at the time of the on-the-spot visit. The present report was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 14 May 2014.

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

Armenian

8. According to the results of the 2011 census, carried out in the government controlled area, 1 831 persons declared that they belonged to the Armenian minority, and 668 persons declared Armenian as their first

¹ MIN-LANG (2009) 8 Revised outline for 3-yearly periodical reports as adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

language. During the on-the-spot visit representatives of the Armenian speakers stated that, given, *inter alia*, the number of pupils learning Armenian, the number of speakers is higher than indicated in the census results.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

9. In the 2011 census, 3 656 persons declared their affiliation with the Maronite minority, but none declared Cypriot Maronite Arabic as their first language. However, the periodical report notes that members of the Maronite minority also live in the non-government controlled area and that other available data, such as initial findings of the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic or other estimates, indicate a number of between 1 300 to 2 500 people mastering Cypriot Maronite Arabic at different levels. The Committee of Experts considers that the implementation of the Action Plan for Cypriot Maronite Arabic, in particular activities on recording the language, could be an appropriate framework for carrying out surveys about the number of speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. It looks forward to receiving further information in this respect in the next periodical report.

The 2011 census

10. The Committee of Experts observes that, as the censuses normally only give each person the possibility to indicate one language, many minority language users tend to choose the official language, rather than their own language, even if they speak their own language fluently. This is understandable, since most minority language speakers also use the official language on a daily basis. Therefore, there is usually an under-representation of declared minority language speakers in the censuses. To acquire a more correct figure of minority language speakers, there should be a possibility for people to indicate more than one language in the census. Alternatively, the census should be followed up with targeted surveys, in order to produce a more accurate number of minority language speakers than what is at present usually the case.

1.4. Kurbetcha Romani and Turkish

Kurbetcha Romani

11. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Experts asked the authorities to provide detailed information on the use of Kurbetcha Romani.

12. According to the fourth periodical report, nobody declared Kurbetcha as their language in the 2011 census. The Roma in Cyprus are predominantly part of the Turkish Community.

13. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to examine the traditional presence and current use of Kurbetcha Romani in Cyprus thoroughly, if necessary with the help of experts or through a scientific study, and to return to this issue in the next periodical report.

Turkish

14. According to Article 3 of the Constitution, the official languages of Cyprus are Greek and Turkish. However, in its evaluation reports, the Committee of Experts expressed the view that, in the present situation in Cyprus, Turkish is *de facto* in a minority language situation in the government controlled area and considered it important to include data about the situation of Turkish in the part of its report where the language situation in Cyprus is presented. The Committee of Experts invited the Cypriot authorities to provide further information on the situation of the Turkish language.

15. In the fourth periodical report, the authorities reiterate that, as an official language of Cyprus, Turkish falls outside the scope of the Charter. While acknowledging the position of the Cypriot authorities, the Committee of Experts wishes to mention that Article 3.2 of the Charter creates the possibility for Cyprus to protect Turkish as a less-widely used official language.

Chapter 2 Conclusions of the Committee of Experts on how the Cypriot authorities have reacted to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers

Recommendation 1

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

16. Regarding Armenian the Cypriot authorities concentrate their efforts in the field of Armenian education. Nevertheless, a structured policy should be more comprehensive in order to ensure the protection and promotion of the language also in other domains of language use. As far as Cypriot Maronite Arabic is concerned, the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of this language has been formally adopted and its implementation started but it is only at its first phase.

Recommendation 2

“strengthen the teaching in and of Cypriot Maronite Arabic”

17. Cypriot Maronite Arabic continues to be taught only at the Saint Maronas pre-school and primary school, as an extra-curricular subject in afternoon courses. Professional teaching materials have not yet been developed. The Cypriot authorities continue to offer financial support to the Sanna Project, a non-governmental initiative which organises language learning activities, and to a summer camp where language classes are offered. In accordance with the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, work to register and standardise the language is being carried out.

Recommendation 3

“provide teacher training for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic”

18. Basic teacher training is not available in any of the languages. Further teacher training possibilities for Armenian based on co-operation with Lebanon exist, but they are still too limited to ensure that a sufficient number of adequately trained teachers for the Armenian schools is available. There are still no teacher training possibilities for Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

Chapter 3 The Committee of Experts' evaluation of the application of the Charter

19. As no languages have been designated by the Cypriot authorities for protection under Part III of the Charter, the Committee of Experts has evaluated how Cyprus has fulfilled each undertaking in Part II (Article 7).

20. The Committee of Experts will focus on the provisions of Part II which were singled out in the previous evaluation reports as raising particular issues. It will therefore not comment in the present report on provisions where no major issues were raised in the previous evaluation reports 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.

21. For these provisions, the Committee of Experts refers to the relevant paragraphs of its previous reports, 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;

22. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities for more information about the adoption of a new constitution and the status of the minorities in it, since the groups concerned had expressed an interest in their recognition as national minorities or communities in a new constitution, rather than as religious groups.

23. According to the fourth periodical report, there have been no further developments in this respect. During the on-the-spot visit, it became clear that a constitutional change on this issue is not envisaged at present for sensitive political reasons. The authorities underlined that this would not negatively affect the protection and promotion of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

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

Armenian

24. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered that a more structured approach with respect to the Armenian language was needed in order to ensure its protection and promotion. The Committee of Ministers recommended that the Cypriot authorities “**adopt a structured policy for the protection and promotion of the Armenian [language] [...]**”.

25. According to the fourth periodical report, the network of Nareg Armenian-language schools, the teaching of Armenian in courses organised by the University of Cyprus and in adult education, and awareness-raising about minority languages as an integral part of the culture of Cyprus in education (see Article 7.3) are part of a structured approach for the protection and promotion of Armenian. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Armenian speakers stated that the Cypriot authorities have maintained their financial support to the Armenian language education despite the crisis.

26. The Committee of Experts commends the Cypriot authorities for their commitment. It nonetheless reiterates that a structured approach implies a comprehensive perspective or plan on the protection and promotion of the language also in areas other than core education. Based on the information received during the on-the-spot visit, it appears to the Committee of Experts (see also below) that a structured policy with respect to Armenian should also include measures concerning teacher training and media. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to develop a structured approach with respect to the Armenian language in order to ensure its protection and promotion.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

27. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended that the Cypriot authorities “**adopt a structured policy for the protection and promotion of the [...] Cypriot Maronite Arabic [language]**”.

28. According to the fourth periodical report, the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been adopted and its implementation has begun. The plan is structured into three pillars: 1. recording, codification, standardisation and development of the language; 2. teaching or improving language proficiency; 3. awareness-raising within the Maronite minority, the Cypriot society as a whole and academia. The implementation of the Action Plan is financed by an earmarked amount included in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

29. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers informed the Committee of Experts that the authorities asked the minority to prioritise measures implementing the Action Plan, owing to financial constraints. As a result of the prioritisation, only a project dealing with the recording, transcription and codification is presently being carried out. To this end, a three year implementation programme has been designed. Researchers have been recruited to conduct interviews with native Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers and for the transcription of the language. In 2012, € 7 758 was allocated for the transcription and revitalisation of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The money was used to acquire technical equipment and to support language learning in the framework of the Sanna Project, which aims to create a cultural and language centre for Maronite children and youth, and carries out different activities (“language nest”, theatre, music, publications, etc).

30. The Committee of Experts considers the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic an important first step of a structured policy regarding the promotion of this language. It therefore encourages the Cypriot authorities to fully implement it in close consultation with the speakers.

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

Armenian

31. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities to provide more information regarding measures taken to facilitate and/or encourage the use of Armenian in public life, including on television. In addition, it asked the authorities to provide further information about the situation of the library of the Melkonian Educational Institute, a former school in Nicosia which provided bilingual Armenian-English secondary education until it closed down in 2005.

32. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) continues to broadcast a one-hour daily radio programme in Armenian covering news, culture and general information. On television, Armenian is used only occasionally.

33. The Committee of Experts was also informed that the monthly publication *Artsakank* has not received financial support from the authorities lately. As a result, and due to rising printing costs, the volume of the publication had to be reduced from 28 to 16 pages. These pages are entirely in Armenian.

34. A children's church choir exists and performs in Armenian. Since this choir is an important institution for the practice of the Armenian language, representatives of the speakers regretted during the on-the-spot visit that it does not receive sufficient financial support to carry out all its activities.

35. As regards the Melkonian Educational Institute's library, the Library of the University of Cyprus is willing to assist the Armenians in cataloguing the books as well as to host the entire collection in its new headquarters, if requested by the Armenian minority.

36. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to continue supporting the publishing of at least one Armenian printed publication and the broadcasting of television programmes in Armenian. It also encourages the authorities to recommend to the CyBC to include programmes for children in their broadcasting offer in Armenian. Such programmes should be broadcasted regularly, at fixed days and times.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

37. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities to provide information on how they have encouraged and/or facilitated the broadcasting of television programmes in Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

38. According to information received during the on-the-spot visit, Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not used on television and radio. Programmes about this minority are broadcast in Greek. However, the fourth periodical report states that CyBC is willing to consider proposals from the Representative of the Maronite Community for programmes in Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

39. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of radio and television programmes in 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;*

40. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities to provide information on the co-operation between the Armenians and the Maronites, in addition to the co-operation of their Parliamentary Representatives.

41. According to the fourth periodical report, the authorities have encouraged the development of links between the two minorities. A joint conference on Cypriot Maronite Arabic and Armenian was organised by the University of Cyprus in 2012. There is also some co-operation in concrete cases between the representatives of the groups in Parliament. The links between the two minorities are to be further enhanced through co-operation of the associations promoting both minority languages, with the support of the newly appointed Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs. However, representatives of the speakers of both languages observed during the on-the-spot visit that except for the aforementioned instances, co-operation has occurred so far only occasionally, for example in the form of cultural events. The Committee of Experts looks forward to receiving further information in the next periodical report on the way the authorities support co-operation between the Armenians and the Maronites.

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

Armenian

42. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Cypriot authorities to strengthen Armenian secondary education. It also asked the authorities to provide further information on the possible reopening of the Melkonian Educational Institute. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers recommended that the Cypriot authorities “**provide teacher training for Armenian [...]**”.

43. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Armenian speakers expressed their appreciation that the authorities have globally maintained their support for Armenian language education despite the economic crisis experienced by Cyprus. They noted in particular the existence of a structured approach in Armenian language education and the availability of earmarked funding for the schools.

44. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts learned that the number of pupils enrolled in the network of Nareg Armenian schools, which cover kindergarten, primary and lower secondary (*Gymnasium*) levels, has been steadily growing over recent years to a current enrolment figure of 208 pupils. From primary level onwards, education is provided in Armenian, Greek and English. The subjects of Armenian language, history, Armenian geography, art and religion are taught in Armenian. Mathematics is partly taught in Armenian. However, Armenian is not taught at upper secondary level.

45. A reopening of the Melkonian Educational Institute cannot be expected. The Cypriot authorities have contacted the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the owner of the establishment, but its position concerning the closure of the school has remained unchanged.

46. In the field of teacher training, Cyprus co-operates with Lebanon. Armenian language and history teachers have obtained diplomas at the Haigazian University in Beirut. Two in-service teacher training sessions, held by a trainer from Lebanon, were organised by the Nareg schools in 2011 and 2012. The first session, attended by 23 teachers of the Nareg schools, dealt with methods for teaching the Armenian language, history and religion, while the second one focused on practical teaching exercises. The ordinary basic training of secondary school teachers, carried out by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute, has been reassigned to the University of Cyprus, as part of the on-going reform of education. Representatives of the Armenian speakers informed the Committee of Experts during the on-the-spot visit that the Armenian schools encounter problems in recruiting trained teachers of Armenian because teachers from Lebanon often do not have the required knowledge of Greek and have difficulties in obtaining a work permit.

47. The Committee of Experts is concerned about the absence of an offer of Armenian upper secondary and university education. It invites the Cypriot authorities to strengthen their efforts to establish an offer of Armenian education at these levels, and if appropriate in co-operation with other countries where Armenian is spoken.

The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Cypriot authorities to provide Armenian secondary education as well as basic and further teacher training for Armenian.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

48. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to offer Cypriot Maronite Arabic classes at schools other than the Saint Maronas School. Furthermore, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Cypriot authorities to “**strengthen the teaching in and of Cypriot Maronite Arabic**” and to “**provide teacher training for [...] Cypriot Maronite Arabic**”.

49. Cypriot Maronite Arabic continues to be taught at the Saint Maronas kindergarten (15 children) and primary school (80 pupils) in Anthoupolis. Teaching takes place in the form of afternoon courses. The Ministry of Education and Culture has assessed the teaching process and a new policy has been prepared in co-operation with the Expert Committee for Cypriot Maronite Arabic and the speakers. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers expressed the wish that the teaching of the language be integrated into the regular curriculum of the Saint Maronas primary school. Furthermore, the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic should in their view be extended to other schools.

50. The Ministry of Education and Culture has also contributed € 4 650 annually to the Sanna Project, initiated by the association Hki Fi Sanna. In the framework of the project, a language nest has been set up, offering childcare and language immersion. The teacher is paid by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition, the Ministry of Education and Culture continues to provide € 4 000 annually for the organisation of a summer camp in the village of Kormakitis, in the non-government controlled area. The summer camp offers intensive language classes and activities promoting language learning.

51. There are currently neither possibilities for teacher training nor professional teaching materials. According to the fourth periodical report, the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic can only be strengthened once the recording, transcription and codification of the language are finalised. The same applies to teacher training, the production of teaching materials and the extension of the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic to other schools. In the meantime, Cypriot Maronite Arabic teachers can attend courses for second language teaching, organised by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

52. The Committee of Experts considers that the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic should be developed in parallel with, rather than after the transcription and codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. Intermediate teaching materials should be used until teaching materials based on a standardised language are produced, and the extension of teaching to schools other than Saint Maronas School can be done by a peripatetic teacher.

The Committee of Experts again strongly urges the Cypriot authorities to strengthen the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at all levels and 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;*

Armenian

53. Armenian language courses, at two different levels (150 hours each), are offered by the University of Cyprus. The Adult Education Centre in Acropolis (Nicosia) also offers Armenian courses. The courses in both institutions are subsidised by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

54. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the authorities to provide facilities enabling non-speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic to learn the language.

55. In the fourth periodical report, the authorities state that this provision does not apply to Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

56. The Committee of Experts underlines that the provision also applies to Cypriot Maronite Arabic. It further notes that in the previous monitoring round, the Ministry of Education and Culture declared its willingness to offer Cypriot Maronite Arabic at the adult education centres, should a sufficient number of interested learners exist. According to representatives of the speakers, there are no Cypriot Maronite Arabic courses at adult education centres.

57. The Committee of Experts urges the Cypriot authorities to provide facilities enabling non-speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic to learn the language.

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

58. In 2012, the University of Cyprus organised, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Culture, an international conference on the endangered languages of the Eastern Mediterranean. One workshop was dedicated to the teaching of Western Armenian grammar and another to the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic as an oral language.

Armenian

59. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked for more information about the activities of the Chair of Armenian History and Civilisation of the University of Cyprus.

60. According to the fourth periodical report, an agreement was signed between the University of Cyprus and the University of Yerevan, which provided, *inter alia*, for the setting up of a Chair of Armenian Studies at the University of Cyprus. The Chair has not yet been set up due to the financial austerity measures the university had to take. Representatives of the Armenian speakers noted during the on-the-spot visit that the creation of the chair would facilitate the training of teachers for Armenian-language education.

61. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to provide for the study and research on Armenian at university level and to open a Chair of Armenian studies at the University of Cyprus.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

62. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked for more information about the outcome of a project conducted by experts and the Cyprus Research Centre collecting data about Cypriot Maronite Arabic, with the aim of preserving the language and of creating a database for producing teaching materials. It also asked the authorities to provide information concerning a survey on the language competence of Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers and on other socio-linguistic aspects, funded by the University of Cyprus.

63. According to the fourth periodical report, the Cyprus Research Centre gathered oral accounts of people from all ethnic groups of Cyprus, including the Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers. The material has been digitalised and is being kept for future reference. As for the survey on the language competence of Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers, the authorities state that they have no information about this issue.

64. There is currently no university Chair for Cypriot Maronite Arabic, and the language cannot be learned at university.

65. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to look into possibilities for providing for the study and research on Cypriot Maronite Arabic at university level.

- 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

66. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked for more information on the promotion of exchanges with Lebanon in relation to the Armenian language.

67. According to the fourth periodical report, teacher training is carried out in co-operation with Lebanon (see above).

Cypriot Maronite Arabic

68. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities to provide information on activities carried out in the framework of the 2002 Agreement 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, with regard to Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

69. According to the fourth periodical report, no activities were carried out.

70. The Committee of Experts considers that the Agreement between Cyprus and Lebanon provides a suitable framework for exchanges regarding the promotion of both the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages. It encourages the Cypriot authorities to further promote such exchanges, for example in fields such as education, culture or the media.

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.

71. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Cypriot authorities to provide information on measures taken to promote awareness of and understanding for the regional or minority languages.

72. According to the fourth periodical report, the educational reform, which is in the evaluation phase, puts an emphasis on human rights, awareness-raising and acceptance of different cultures. These aspects are also reflected in teacher training. The new curricula, which are under assessment, include specific goals and activities raising awareness about the minorities in Cyprus and their languages. In addition, in 2012, the Press and Information Office published two brochures about the Armenian and Maronite minorities in Greek and English. Drafted in co-operation with the two minorities, these include information about their history, culture, personalities, educational institutions, organisations, media, etc. The Committee of Experts considers these as useful tools. Awareness-raising is also part of the Action Plan for Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The periodical report further states that exchanges and joint events were organised by the Nareg Armenian schools in co-operation with regular public Cypriot schools, whereby Armenian students introduced their language and culture to their peers. These activities increased awareness about the Armenian minority among participants. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the CyBC broadcasts a weekly programme in Greek about the Maronite minority. Furthermore, it was informed that a presentation of both minority groups and their languages are included in the general curriculum for primary and lower secondary education, and that the written material for the teaching at these levels contains such presentations.

73. Nevertheless, representatives of the speakers of both minority languages informed the Committee of Experts during the on-the-spot visit that the general awareness of the existence of the Armenian and Maronite minorities is low. In addition, no information about the existence of the minority languages is provided during the general teacher training. Both minorities expressed the wish for awareness-raising measures be carried out, especially on television.

74. The Committee of Experts encourages the Cypriot authorities to continue their effort to raise awareness among the Cypriot society as a whole about the Armenian and Maronite minorities, their languages and their cultures. Measures could include, for example, a wide distribution of the two brochures about the minorities or an information campaign in the printed and broadcasting media.

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.

75. After the February 2013 elections, the Council of Ministers of Cyprus appointed a Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, in response to a request from the Representatives of the Religious Groups. The Commissioner is responsible for promoting the rights of the minorities, in line with the Constitution and the international treaties to which Cyprus is party. To this end, the Commissioner co-operates closely with the Representatives of the Religious Groups, their leaders and associations.

76. A Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs has also been appointed, whose work provides an opportunity to address, *inter alia*, the needs of associations promoting minority languages.

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.

77. 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*.

78. 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 4 Findings of the Committee of Experts in the fourth 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.
- B. The attitude of the Cypriot authorities towards the minority languages remains characterised by goodwill and openness towards the needs and wishes of the speakers.
- C. The authorities are aware of the need to safeguard the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. A Committee of Experts for Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been formally appointed by the Council of Ministers and an Action Plan, worked out in co-operation with the speakers, is being implemented. Bearing in mind the situation of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, it is vital that the effective implementation is treated as a priority. Furthermore, there is a need to continue and develop the teaching of the language in parallel with the first phases of the implementation of the Action Plan.
- D. The authorities continue to provide financial support for various activities carried out by the Armenian and Maronite minorities. Some cuts were made, due to the financial crisis, but on the whole the Cypriot authorities made efforts to maintain the support to the Armenian and Maronite minorities.
- E. The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation continues to broadcast a daily radio programme in Armenian. On television, Armenian is used only occasionally. Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not used by the broadcast media. Furthermore, a cultural magazine is published in Armenian. Media play a particularly important role in promoting minority languages and there is a need to strengthen and facilitate the presence of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic in broadcasting, especially regarding programmes for children.
- F. Armenian education at pre-school and primary school level remains satisfactory. However, the Armenian Nareg school offers only primary and the lower level of secondary education. Therefore, Armenian is not taught at upper secondary level or at university. Teacher training for Armenian is still not available in Cyprus.
- G. Cypriot Maronite Arabic continues to be taught at the Saint Maronas primary school in Anthoupolis. The Sanna project at pre-school level is still running. Decisive efforts still need to be made to further strengthen Cypriot Maronite Arabic education, and to produce teaching materials and offer teacher training possibilities.
- H. There is a need to continue raising awareness among the majority population about Cyprus' regional or minority languages as an integral part of Cyprus' cultural heritage.

The government of Cyprus 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 1210th meeting on 24 October 2014, 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 of the Government of Cyprus

The government of Cyprus expresses its appreciation for the Report of the Committee of Experts on the Fourth Periodical Report of Cyprus, adopted on 14 May 2014, in accordance with Article 16 of the Charter.

Cyprus has no further comments to make at this stage.

The government of Cyprus takes this opportunity to emphasize that the observations and proposals of the Committee of Experts of the ECRML and the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers will be taken into serious consideration, as always, in the development of new policies and the improvement of its relevant legislation and practices on regional or minority languages.

Any such further improvement on the progress achieved will, of course, be communicated with the Fifth Periodical Report.

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

Recommendation CM/RecChL(2014)7 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 24 October 2014

at the 1210th 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 fourth 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 and recommendations of the Committee of Experts and, as a matter of priority:

1. provide teaching of Armenian at upper secondary level;
2. take immediate measures to strengthen and extend the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic;
3. provide teacher training for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic;
4. strengthen the presence of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic in broadcasting.