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## EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

### APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER IN THE NETHERLANDS

#### 4<sup>th</sup> 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 the Netherlands

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 language 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 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 the State Party.

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## **A. Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands**

adopted by the Committee of Experts on 22 March 2012  
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 Introductory remarks**

1. The Kingdom of the Netherlands signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) on 5 November 1992 and accepted it on 2 May 1996. On 19 March 1997, a supplementary declaration was submitted in a Note Verbale to the Council of Europe, by the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands (attached in Appendix I). The Charter entered into force for the Netherlands on 1 March 1998. The Dutch authorities published the text of the Charter in the Dutch Treaty Series in 1993, No. 1 (in English and French) and No. 199 (in the Dutch language).

2. Article 15.1 of the Charter requires States Parties to submit three-yearly reports in a form prescribed by the Committee of Ministers. The fourth periodical report, which had been due on 4 September 2010, was submitted by the Dutch authorities with a considerable delay on 15 September 2011. This report has been made public.

3. Besides the delayed submission of the periodical report, the Committee of Experts notes that the fourth periodical report contains only very limited information about the application of the Charter to Low Saxon. In addition, it does not provide answers to several questions raised in the questionnaire<sup>1</sup> submitted to the Dutch authorities by the Secretariat on 19 October 2009. The Committee of Experts recalls that the Committee of Ministers’ outline for three-yearly periodical reports<sup>2</sup> requires States Parties *inter alia* to provide “information regarding measures which have been taken in response to the recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers, and to the questions and box recommendations made by the Committee of Experts” in the previous evaluation report.

#### **1.2 The work of the Committee of Experts**

4. The fourth evaluation report is based on the information the Committee of Experts obtained through the fourth periodical report of the Netherlands and through meetings held with representatives of the speakers of the regional or minority languages and the Dutch authorities during the on-the-spot visit, which took place from 23 to 25 January 2012. The Committee of Experts received several comments from bodies and associations legally established in the Netherlands, submitted pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Charter.

5. The present report focuses on the measures taken by the Dutch authorities to respond to the recommendations of the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers in the third monitoring cycle. This report also highlights new issues, which the Committee of Experts considers to be of particular importance in the context of this fourth monitoring cycle.

6. The Committee of Experts has in the present report presented detailed observations and recommendations which the Dutch authorities are encouraged to take into account when developing their policies on the regional or minority languages. On this basis, the Committee of Experts has also proposed recommendations to the Committee of Ministers to be addressed to the Government of the Netherlands, as provided in Article 16.4 of the Charter. The present report reflects the policies, legislation and practice prevailing at the time of the on-the-spot visit (January 2012). Any changes after that time will be taken into account in the next report of the Committee of Experts concerning the Netherlands.

7. The present report was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 22 March 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> MIN-LANG (2009) 15

<sup>2</sup> MIN-LANG (2009) 8, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/StatesParties/Outline3yearly\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/StatesParties/Outline3yearly_en.pdf)

### 1.3. Presentation of the regional or minority language situation: up-date

8. During the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Experts was informed that there are six local varieties of Limburgish in the Province of Limburg: Kleverlands, Michkwartier, Central Limburgish, Eastern Limburgish, varieties on a continuum with Ripuarian, and Ripuarian. In the fourth periodical report and in the replies to the questionnaire submitted by the Committee of Experts, the Dutch authorities have specified that, in the context of language promotion (e.g. teaching, textbook development, literature), the six local varieties are grouped into three main varieties spoken in Central and Southern Limburg, Northern Limburg and South-Eastern-Limburg. *Northern Limburgish* is mainly spoken in the municipalities of Bergen, Gennep, Horst, Mook en Middelaar, Venlo and Venray. In South-Eastern Limburg, *Ripuarian* is present in Kerkrade/Kirchroa, Simpelveld and Vaals while there is also a Ripuarian continuum west of these municipalities (around Heerlen/Heële). *Central and Southern Limburgish* is spoken in the remaining parts of the province and extends over most of Limburg's territory. Ripuarian differs considerably from both Central and Southern Limburgish and from Northern Limburgish.

### 1.4 General issues arising from the evaluation of the periodical report

#### *Possible application of Part III to Low Saxon*

9. The Committee of Experts had been informed during the previous monitoring cycles about negotiations between the Low Saxon-speaking provinces (Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel and Gelderland) and the Low Saxon-speaking municipalities of the Province of Fryslân (Ooststellingwerf and Weststellingwerf) on the one hand and the Dutch central authorities on the other hand about the possible application of Part III of the Charter to Low Saxon. The Provinces of Drenthe, Groningen and Overijssel as well as the municipalities of Ooststellingwerf and Weststellingwerf commissioned a feasibility study about this issue. This study ("Nedersaksisch waar het kan"<sup>3</sup>) was drawn up by the legal department of the University of Groningen in close consultation with the umbrella organisation of the Low Saxon speakers and was published in 2008. It reached the conclusion that the relevant Dutch legislation as well as the policies and practice pursued by the provinces and municipalities concerned already comply with at least 37 Part III undertakings. In their view, this would fulfil the requirement of Article 2.2 to apply a minimum of 35 undertakings to a language that shall be covered by Part III. As the study's title ("Low Saxon where possible") already suggests, the examination paid particular attention to the situation of Low Saxon. As a result, the 37 selected undertakings concern in particular areas of oral language use and culture. In 2009, the regional and local authorities concerned endorsed the findings of the study (including the suggested menu of undertakings) and asked the Dutch central authorities again to apply Part III to Low Saxon.

10. However, after examination of the proposal submitted to them, the Dutch authorities have informed the Committee of Experts that in their view significant parts of the existing legislation and regulations are currently not yet at a level that would allow the application of Part III. According to the authorities, central government would have to intensify its policy in a number of areas, amend legislation and regulations, and face additional financial consequences. On the other hand, the Committee of Experts understands from the information received that the Dutch authorities do not rule out the application of Part III to Low Saxon in the future. The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to continue the dialogue with the Low Saxon speakers in order to find adequate ways of improving the situation of Low Saxon.

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<sup>3</sup> "Low Saxon where possible"

## **Chapter 2 – Conclusions of the Committee of Experts on how the Dutch authorities reacted to the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers**

### **Recommendation no. 1:**

*“strengthen the teaching of and in Frisian at all levels of education”*

11. The number of Frisian-speaking and bilingual pre-school institutions has increased, now covering up to 30% of the pre-school children in the Province of Fryslân. Furthermore, the number of trilingual (Frisian-Dutch-English) primary schools has increased, covering about 10% of all primary schools. With regard to secondary schools, the Province of Fryslân is experimentally introducing a trilingual programme in which Frisian will be used as one of the languages of instruction. However, it is not sufficiently clear how Frisian is taught as an integral part of the curriculum at other secondary schools. According to a report by the Education Inspectorate of 2010, there were still few teachers qualified for teaching Frisian as a subject. The Dutch authorities have made an additional €100,000 annually available to Frisian colleges for 2010-2012 for the training of Frisian teachers. No steps have been taken to provide the necessary basic and further training for pre-school teachers of Frisian. Also, the future of studies of Frisian language and literature at the University of Groningen is in a critical situation.

### **Recommendation no. 2:**

*“adopt legal and practical measures in order to ensure the use of Frisian in central State administration agencies located in the Province of Friesland”*

12. The Dutch government announced the adoption of a Law on the Use of Frisian (*Wet gebruik Friese taal*) in which Dutch and Frisian are listed as the two official languages of the Province of Fryslân. The aim of the legislative proposal is to reinforce the opportunities to use Frisian in legal and administrative matters, to guarantee the right of everyone in the Province of Fryslân to the use of their own language (Dutch or Frisian) in courts and in communications with administrative bodies. The future law is expected to be an important stimulus towards the use of Frisian by central government bodies in Fryslân. However, it appears that no practical measures facilitating the use of Frisian by such authorities have been taken.

### **Recommendation no. 3:**

*“ensure that a national language policy for Limburgish and Low Saxon is developed, particularly in the field of education, in co-operation with the speakers and the provincial authorities”*

13. The Dutch authorities have reiterated their view that the promotion of Limburgish and Low Saxon shall remain an exclusive responsibility of the provinces concerned. As a result, the central authorities have not taken any steps regarding Limburgish. As far as Low Saxon is concerned, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has, in response to the aforementioned recommendation, approached the provinces in the Low Saxon-speaking region and proposed to them to create a Consultative Body for Low Saxon with a view to better harmonising and co-ordinating their policy on Low Saxon. In June 2010, the provincial authorities concerned decided to establish a Consultative Body for Low Saxon. It will initially operate for a period of four years (2010-2014). This will be followed by an evaluation of how the Consultative Body is functioning. A positive outcome may result in a continuation of the body for another four-year period.

### **Recommendation no. 4:**

*“ensure that a structured dialogue is developed with the representatives of the Romanes-speakers and take measures to protect and promote Romanes, in particular in the field of education, in co-operation with the speakers”*

14. The Dutch authorities have informed the Committee of Experts that direct contacts between central government and Roma organisations exist, but that there is no structured consultation such as requested by the Committee of Ministers. In fact, the Dutch central government has transferred a number of relevant duties and powers to local authorities. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is facilitating Roma municipalities with the development of a more coherent and focussed approach in respect of this group through the subsidisation of the National Platform for Roma Municipalities. However, issues related to the promotion of Romanes in accordance with the Charter have so far not been discussed.

## Chapter 3 - The Committee of Experts' evaluation of Parts II and III of the Charter

15. The Committee of Experts will focus its evaluation on the provisions of Parts II and III of the Charter which were specifically outlined as problematical in the Committee of Experts' previous evaluation report. It will not comment on provisions in relation to which no major issues were raised in its first, second and third reports and for which it did not receive any new information requiring a revised assessment. The Committee of Experts does, however, reserve the right to carry out at a later stage a new comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of Parts II and III of the Charter.

### 3.1. The Committee of Experts' evaluation in respect of Part II of the Charter

16. In the present evaluation report, the Committee of Experts will not comment on Articles 7.1.a, b, g and 7.2.

#### *Article 7 - Objectives and principles*

17. In the Netherlands, Article 7 of the Charter applies to Frisian, Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romanes and Yiddish.

#### *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:***

...

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

#### *Frisian*

18. According to the fourth periodical report, the Dutch government announced the adoption of a Law on the Use of Frisian in which the equal rights of the Dutch and Frisian languages within the Province of Fryslân would be safeguarded. An initial draft act was made public in 2011 in order to initiate a public debate. The aim of the legislative proposal is to reinforce the opportunities to use Frisian in legal and administrative matters and to stimulate the promotion of Frisian in these fields. The Committee of Experts welcomes this development. However, it also notes that, during the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Frisian speakers expressed their wish to cover also other policy fields under this law, reflecting the Dutch undertakings for Frisian under the Charter (for example education, media, healthcare and the use of Frisian place names). Given that the draft law is still under discussion, the Dutch authorities are encouraged to consider taking such proposals into account.

19. Furthermore, the central authorities and the provincial authorities of Fryslân will discuss a new Covenant on the Frisian Language and Culture in the first half of 2012. Covenants outline mid-term objectives for the promotion of the Frisian language. As in its previous evaluation reports, the Committee of Experts welcomes that the good practice of concluding covenants will be continued.

#### *Limburgish and Low Saxon*

20. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Netherlands to **“ensure that a national language policy for Limburgish and Low Saxon is developed [...], in co-operation with the speakers and the provincial authorities”**. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts **“urged the Dutch national authorities to develop, in co-operation with the speakers and the provincial authorities, a national language policy for Limburgish and Low Saxon”**.

21. In the fourth periodical report, the Dutch authorities reiterate their view that the promotion of the two regional languages shall remain an exclusive responsibility of the provinces concerned. Accordingly, the central authorities have not taken any steps with regard to Limburgish. However, the Committee of Experts would like to remind the Dutch authorities of their legal obligation under the Charter. Article 7.1.c puts an obligation on the Dutch authorities which cannot simply be referred to the provincial or local authorities and to the regional or minority language speakers.

22. As far as Low Saxon is concerned, the fourth periodical report states that in response to the aforementioned recommendation, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations has approached the provinces in the Low Saxon-speaking area and proposed to them to create a Consultative Body for Low Saxon with a view to better harmonising and co-ordinating their policy on Low Saxon. In June 2010, the authorities concerned decided to establish a Consultative Body for Low Saxon that has its seat at the State University of Groningen. It will initially operate for a period of four years (2010-2014). This will be followed by an evaluation of how the Consultative Body is functioning. A positive outcome may result in a continuation of the body for another four-year period. The Committee of Experts welcomes this initiative.

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

*General issues*

23. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed about the draft Media Act which shall lead to a recentralisation of the competence for regional television from the provinces to the national authorities. The new Media Act is expected to enter into force in 2016. It is unclear at present what effects the adopted law would have on the broadcasting time in Limburgish and Low Saxon and on the financing of these programmes. The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to take measures so that the new media legislation will improve the presence of Limburgish and Low Saxon in the media.

*Limburgish*

24. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Dutch authorities to continue and extend the promotion of Limburgish in the media and foster the use of Limburgish by and in relations with administrative authorities.

25. Radio and television programmes continue to be broadcast in Limburgish (e.g. daily programmes on “Plat-eweg” radio; “Kinjerkraom”, a television programme for children broadcast three times per week). However, there are apparently no public service contracts ensuring the use of Limburgish. The broadcasts concerned receive the same financial support by the central and provincial authorities as any other media. Furthermore, the Province of Limburg has launched a web television series<sup>4</sup> on its website. The Committee of Experts welcomes this measure. It encourages the Dutch authorities to continue developing the provision of broadcasts in Limburgish, if necessary through financial incentives.

26. In the print media, the newspapers “Dagblad De Limburger” and the “Limburgs Dagblad” feature weekly articles in Limburgish.

27. With regard to the field of administrative authorities, the Committee of Experts was informed that 15 municipalities in the Province of Limburg have bilingual place-name signs (Dutch/Limburgish) some of which were introduced during the reporting period (e.g. Brunssum/Broenssem, Maasgouw/Maasgoew, Peel en Maas/Pieël en Maas [using the *Central and Southern Limburgish* variety] and Kerkrade/Kirchroa [*Ripuarian*]). A total of 116 places belonging to the aforementioned municipalities have bilingual place-name signs. There are also bilingual street name signs in some places, for example in the centre of Maastricht. The Committee of Experts welcomes these efforts.

28. In addition, Limburgish is occasionally used in debates of local councils (e.g. in Weert/Wiert municipality for committee meetings), but only orally and in informal contexts. Owing to the high number of Limburgish speakers<sup>5</sup>, they have a natural presence in administrations. However, there exists no special policy to ensure the use of Limburgish in this field.

29. In culture, the provincial authorities finance literary publications such as the series “Literair Limburg” (collection of stories appearing quarterly in the different varieties of Limburgish) and “Platbook” (containing short stories and poetry in Limburgish).

30. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts also asked the Dutch authorities to report about the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Limburgish in economic and social life in their next periodical report. The Committee of Experts was informed during the on-the-spot visit that no measures are being taken by the Dutch authorities to promote the use of Limburgish. In light of the high number of Limburgish speakers, the Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to promote Limburgish in the economic field (private companies) and in social life (e.g. health and elderly care).

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<sup>4</sup> Title: “Streektaal spreken: een kwestie van gewoon doen” (Speaking the regional language: just a question of doing it)

<sup>5</sup> According to the Dutch authorities, approximately 83% of the residents of the Province of Limburg (approximately 1.123.000) could be regarded as speakers of Limburgish and 99% have receptive knowledge of it.



### *Low Saxon*

31. The provincial authorities continue to take initiatives promoting Low Saxon in the cultural field. Examples include the production of DVDs with Low Saxon songs, cultural and literary magazines (“Krödde”, “Toal and Taiken” containing poetry and short stories), libraries, and the organisation of reading and drafting competitions.

32. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Dutch authorities to provide general information about the possibility to use Low Saxon before judicial authorities. As the fourth periodical report did not contain the requested information, the Committee of Experts asks the Dutch authorities to report about this matter in their next periodical report.

33. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts also asked the Dutch authorities to report on the use of Low Saxon in public services and with administrative authorities.

34. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information about this issue. Representatives of the Low Saxon speakers have informed the Committee of Experts that the Dutch authorities do not take any structural measures to promote the use of Low Saxon by, and in relations with, the local and provincial authorities. Unlike in the Province of Limburg, there is no practice of installing bilingual place-name signs in Dutch and Low Saxon. However, several municipalities have official street names in Low Saxon, or based on Low Saxon. Some municipalities offer Low Saxon language courses to their officials. Also, each municipality in the Province of Drenthe has a contact person (“ambassador”) for issues pertaining to Low Saxon.

35. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to further promote the use of Low Saxon in all the media”.

36. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information about this issue. Representatives of the Low Saxon speakers have informed the Committee of Experts that the provincial authorities concerned support the regional radio and television broadcasters RTV-Noord and RTV Oost. However, there are apparently no public service contracts ensuring the use of Low Saxon. Furthermore, Radio North regularly broadcasts programmes in Low Saxon (a daily music programme of one hour and programmes of three hours each on Saturdays and Sundays). Low Saxon is also used in television and radio news and in the weather forecast. As far as the two Low Saxon-speaking municipalities located in the Province of Fryslân are concerned, Omrop Fryslân only occasionally broadcasts in Low Saxon.

37. With regard to print media, the newspaper “Dagblad van het Noorden” has a weekly column in Low Saxon. Local newspapers regularly publish short articles and stories in Low Saxon (weekly, sometimes daily) (e.g. “De Stentor”, “De Peperbus”, “Stadskoerier”, “Stellingwerf”, “Nieuwe Ooststellingwerven”). New media also use the regional language as for example internet magazines in Low Saxon.

38. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Dutch authorities to report about the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Low Saxon, in speech and writing, in economic and social life.

39. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information about this issue. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the Province of Overijssel promotes the use of Low Saxon in elderly care.

### *Romanes*

40. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to consult with the Romanes-speakers in order to establish how the use of Romanes could be facilitated and/or encouraged, in speech and writing, in public and private life”.

41. While the Dutch authorities carry out regular consultations with certain representatives of the Romanes speakers (see under Article 7.4), issues related to the promotion of Romanes in accordance with the Charter have so far not been discussed. The Committee of Experts got the impression that the promotion of Romanes is not considered by the authorities to be relevant for the inclusion of Roma in the Dutch society. In particular, the National Strategy on the Inclusion of Roma, which covers the fields of education and culture, does not deal with measures for maintenance and the active promotion of language use within the Roma and Sinti communities. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Dutch authorities stated that the representatives of the Roma and Sinti communities during consultations never raised the issue of promoting Romanes. However, representatives of the Romanes speakers underlined their interest in the promotion of Romanes. In light of the above, the Committee of Experts notes that measures promoting the inclusion of

Roma in society should not be at the expense of the promotion of the language and that the Dutch authorities should proactively raise the issue of promoting Romanes, as required by the present provision.

42. As regards the media, the Committee of Experts has been informed by representatives of the Romanes speakers that since 2008 there exists a radio programme in Amsterdam (Radio Patrin) using Romanes for two to four hours per week. These broadcasts are supported by the Dutch Institute of Sinti and Roma and the municipality of Amsterdam.

43. In light of the interest expressed by Romanes speakers and the activities in the field of radio broadcasting, the Committee of Experts urges the Dutch authorities to consult with the speakers in order to establish how the use of Romanes could be facilitated and/or encouraged, in speech and writing, in public and private life.

#### *Yiddish*

44. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Dutch authorities to consider the request of structured financial support for the cultural journal “Grine Medine” that is important for the Yiddish-speaking community and for the protection and promotion of the language.

45. According to the fourth periodical report, “Grine Medine” continues to be published by the Stichting Jiddisj (Yiddish Foundation). During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that this journal is not financially supported by the authorities. Furthermore, the Stichting Jiddisj expressed an interest in projects supporting musicians playing Yiddish songs and in publishing a Dutch-Yiddish dictionary. However, the implementation of such projects would require state funding which is not available at present.

46. In light of the proposals made by Yiddish speakers, the Committee of Experts urges the Dutch authorities to consult with the speakers in order to establish how the use of Yiddish could be facilitated and/or encouraged, in speech and writing, in public and private life, and whether structured financial support could be provided to the cultural journal “Grine Medine”.

***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;***

47. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Dutch authorities to establish links between speakers of the regional or minority languages.

48. The fourth periodical report does not contain any specific information about this issue. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the central authorities were of the view that the regional or minority language speakers should establish the relevant links themselves and stated that the authorities are not considering taking positive action in this respect.

49. The Committee of Experts underlines that Article 7.1.e puts an obligation on the Dutch authorities which cannot simply be delegated to the regional or minority language speakers. It therefore urges the Dutch authorities to develop links between speakers of the regional or minority languages.

#### *Romanes*

50. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Dutch authorities to continue their initiatives facilitating links between all the organisations representing the Roma and Sinti, with particular emphasis on the protection and promotion of Romanes.

51. According to the fourth periodical report, the “Netherlands Institute for Sinti and Roma” began its work as a consultative body for the government on Roma and Sinti issues in 2010. Both communities are represented in the institute’s Advisory Council, but not in the board. Other Roma and Sinti organisations, including local ones, are not involved. During the on-the-spot, the Committee of Experts met representatives of Roma and Sinti organisations which have developed a constructive co-operation on the ground although they have different approaches concerning particular linguistic issues. The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to continue their initiatives facilitating links between all the organisations representing the Roma and Sinti, with particular emphasis on the protection and promotion of Romanes.

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

### *Limburgish*

52. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Dutch authorities to **“ensure that a national language policy for Limburgish [...] is developed, particularly in the field of education, in co-operation with the speakers and the provincial authorities”**. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to intensify the teaching of Limburgish, in particular in pre-school education”.

53. According to the provincial authorities and representatives of the speakers, there exists no national language policy for Limburgish. The teaching of Limburgish in primary and secondary education (see below) has not yet been included in the regular educational programme as defined by the central authorities. As a result, the provision of teaching Limburgish depends on the initiative of teachers. Given that most Limburgish teachers have not been trained to teach the regional language, the lessons rely on improvisation. Also, teaching of Limburgish begins only in the upper grades of primary education (at the age of eleven or twelve).

54. As far as pre-school education is concerned, the Committee of Experts was informed during the on-the-spot visit that Limburgish is only occasionally used. There is no structured approach regarding the use of Limburgish in kindergartens, which is also due to reservations among some parents who want their children to speak Dutch first.

55. With regard to primary education, the provincial authorities have informed the Committee of Experts that Limburgish is taught as an optional course at up to 80 primary schools. The school book “Dien eige taal” has been made available in different varieties of Limburgish. *Central and Southern Limburgish* is taught in Brunssum/Broensem, Echt-Susteren/Ech-Zöstere, Geleen/Gelaen, Maastricht, Roermond/Remunj, Sittard/Zittert, Tegelen, Thorn/Thoear and Weert/Wiert, *Northern Limburgish* in Venlo, and *Ripuarian* in Kerkrade/Kirchroa. Furthermore, the “Veldeke Limburg” association has issued a teaching package on popular culture for the upper grades in primary school. The Committee of Experts welcomes the fact that the offer of teaching Limburgish has been extended during the reporting period. However, a number of municipalities in Limburg are not yet covered by this offer. The Committee of Experts therefore encourages the Dutch authorities to continue extending the offer of teaching Limburgish at primary level, in particular regarding *Northern Limburgish* (e.g. in the Horst and Venray municipalities) and *Ripuarian* (in Simpelveld and Vaals).

56. Concerning secondary education, the provincial authorities have informed the Committee of Experts that Limburgish is taught as an optional course at up to 20 secondary schools. Teaching takes place on the basis of the school book “Wiejer in dien eige taal” which is available in different varieties. *Central and Southern Limburgish* is taught in Sittard/Zittert, Geleen/Gelaen, Maastricht, Roermond/Remunj and Weert/Wiert, *Northern Limburgish* in Horst and Venlo, and *Ripuarian* in Kerkrade/Kirchroa. As in the case of primary education, the Committee of Experts welcomes the fact that the offer of teaching Limburgish at secondary level has been extended during the reporting period. However, in several municipalities there is no continuity from primary to secondary education. Also, the offer of teaching Limburgish is patchy in northern and south-eastern Limburg. The Committee of Experts therefore encourages the Dutch authorities to continue extending the offer of teaching Limburgish at secondary level, in particular regarding *Northern Limburgish* and *Ripuarian*.

57. The Committee of Experts has not received information as to whether Limburgish is used in technical and vocational schools. It asks the Dutch authorities to submit such information in the next periodical report.

58. In co-operation with the regional language officer, the “Raod veur ’t Limburgs” in 2011 organised a province-wide campaign raising parents’ awareness of the benefits of raising children bilingually. This campaign (slogan: “Geer kalt toch ouch Limburgs mit de kienjer!” / “You talk to the kids in Limburgish, too, don’t you?”) consisted of a public poster campaign and full-page advertisements in Limburg’s regional newspapers. The Committee of Experts welcomes this campaign as a step to overcome hesitations among parents to enrol their children in Limburgish-language education, in particular in pre-schools (see above).

59. In general, the Committee of Experts notes that Limburgish is not yet taught as a school subject in its own right. Teaching Limburgish depends on coincidental initiatives of teachers and is practically non-existent in pre-schools and at the lower grades of primary school. There is no scheme for teacher training either. Considering the high number of Limburgish speakers, the Committee of Experts considers that a more structured approach is needed and that teaching of Limburgish should be offered as a regular school subject.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Fourth Report by the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Charter in Germany, RecChL (2011) 2.

***The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to upgrade the teaching of Limburgish to the status of a regular school subject and intensify it, in particular in pre-school education.***

#### *Low Saxon*

60. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Dutch authorities to **“ensure that a national language policy for [...] Low Saxon is developed, particularly in the field of education, in co-operation with the speakers and the provincial authorities”**. Moreover, the Committee of Experts “urge[d] the Dutch authorities to co-ordinate and strengthen efforts made by the local and regional authorities of the Low Saxon area in the field of education”.

61. In general, teaching of Low Saxon depends on the approval of the headmaster or teachers, local authorities and parents. Several cultural institutions have developed teaching materials (Huis van de Groninger cultuur, Stellingwerper Schrieversronde) and offer courses for adults (Huis of Groninger cultuur, Twentse Welle, Huus van de Taol, and Ijsselacademie).

62. According to representatives of the Low Saxon speakers, Low Saxon is, if at all, used only occasionally in pre-school. Such activities depend entirely on staff initiatives.

63. At primary level, the teaching of Low Saxon has not yet been included in the regular educational programme as defined by the central authorities. However, primary schools in a large number of municipalities pay attention to Low Saxon on a project basis, including activities such as music and theatre. There are educational materials available which have been developed by cultural institutions. A number of certified teachers of Low Saxon provide guest lessons on demand in primary schools. In all primary schools in Stellingwarf, Low Saxon is dealt with in the framework of the subject on local culture (Heemkunde), although it is not clear to what extent this contributes to language acquisition.

64. In secondary education, Low Saxon is only occasionally used (e.g. Dr. Nassau College in Beilen, Roner Borg in Roden, Estdal College in Borger). A number of certified teachers of Low Saxon provide guest lessons on demand in secondary schools.

65. As far as technical and vocational education is concerned, Low Saxon was taught at the Drenthe College in Emmen only in the school year 2010-2011. Furthermore, there are teaching materials available concerning the use of Low Saxon by social institutions (“Streektaal in de zorg”).

66. At the teacher training college (*Pabo*) in Emmen (Stenden College), Low Saxon is an obligatory part of the curriculum in the first two years and an optional subject in the third and fourth years.

67. The Committee of Experts refers to its general conclusion regarding Limburgish (see above) which applies to Low Saxon accordingly.

***The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to upgrade the teaching of Low Saxon to the status of a regular school subject and intensify it, in particular in pre-school education.***

#### *Romanes*

68. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Dutch authorities to **“take measures to protect and promote Romanes, in particular in the field of education, in co-operation with the speakers”**. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts “urge[d] the Dutch authorities to take, in co-operation with the speakers, the necessary steps to enable the teaching of Romanes”.

69. According to the fourth periodical report, the Dutch authorities have held regular consultations with the National Information and Support Centre for Specific Target Groups concerning the policy to combat underachievement in schools. The centre also deals with Roma and Sinti. However, according to the Dutch authorities, a specific need for teaching in Romanes has not emerged from these consultations. At present, Romanes is only occasionally used by Sinti class assistants as an auxiliary language. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed by representatives of the speakers that there is growing interest within parts of the Roma community to receive instruction in Romanes.

70. The Committee of Experts regrets that Romanes is still not taught at all in Dutch schools and that there have been no developments. In light of the interest of some of the speakers in teaching of Romanes, the Committee of Experts considers that the Dutch authorities should adopt a pro-active attitude towards the

teaching of Romanes, in dialogue with the speakers. In addition, the authorities should consider educational initiatives proposed by representatives of the Romanes speakers.

***The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Dutch authorities to take the necessary steps, in co-operation with the speakers, to enable the teaching of Romanes to those interested.***

#### *Yiddish*

71. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to explore, in co-operation with the Cheider school in Amsterdam, the possibility of extending the teaching of Yiddish”. The Cheider school is the only school in the Netherlands where Yiddish is used. One third of the approximately 180 pupils of this school speak Yiddish as their first or second language.

72. According to the fourth periodical report, there have been no developments. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Cheider school informed the Committee of Experts that the school does not receive financial support for the teaching of Yiddish. In 2010 and 2011, the headmaster of this school sent applications for financial support to the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and the local authorities of Amsterdam with a view to extending the offer of teaching Yiddish, including to adults. The letters, of which the Committee of Experts has received copies, quoted the aforementioned recommendation of the third evaluation report. The school applied for financial assistance to train teachers, develop a teaching methodology and purchase teaching materials and literature. However, the two ministries refused the application arguing that the central authorities do not implement a policy for minority language promotion themselves, given that they have decentralised this policy field to local authorities and the linguistic groups concerned. At local level, however, the City of Amsterdam refused the application by stating that it does not promote minority languages. Contacts with provincial authorities have not led to a positive result either.

73. The Committee of Experts considers the way the promotion of Yiddish is handled by the Dutch authorities as very unsatisfactory. Considering the observations made regarding other provisions, in particular Article 7.1.d, the Committee of Experts notes that, after four monitoring cycles, there are no indications that the Charter is applied to the Yiddish language at all. The Committee of Experts reminds the Dutch authorities of their responsibility for the implementation of the Charter and urges them to clarify, as a matter of priority, the concrete administrative responsibilities for ensuring the continued teaching of Yiddish and to consider requests for support put forward by the speakers of this language.

***The Committee of Experts urges the Dutch authorities to ensure, in co-operation with the Cheider school in Amsterdam, the continued teaching of Yiddish and to provide the necessary financial support.***

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

#### *Limburgish*

74. According to the fourth periodical report, the provincial authorities assented in 2011 to the appointment of a Chair for Language and Culture in Limburg at the University of Maastricht for the duration of four years. The specific duties of the holder of the chair are to research the ways in which languages in Limburg (including Limburgish) are spoken, sung and/or written, and to carry out research on local culture and the regional language. Furthermore, a project in collaboration with the Radboud University Nijmegen focuses on developing a website where users can practise their spelling of Limburgish. Research on Limburgish is conducted at a variety of universities and research institutes, e.g. the Meertens Institute in Amsterdam (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences). Doctoral research is currently being conducted at Radboud University Nijmegen concerning the use of the *Riparian* variety in Limburg and the neighbouring Rhineland (Germany).

#### *Low Saxon*

75. The University of Groningen has created a chair of Low Saxon. In addition, its Low Saxon Institute carries out research on Low Saxon.

#### *Yiddish*

76. At the University of Amsterdam, in the second year of Hebrew studies, Yiddish is taught two to four hours a week. Five students attend these classes. Irregular Yiddish courses are offered at the University of Leiden.

- 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.*

#### *Limburgish*

77. According to the provincial authorities of Limburg, the “Raod veur ‘t Limburgs” (advisory body on the promotion of Limburgish) co-operates with institutions in the Province of Limburg in Belgium where varieties of Limburgish are spoken. Furthermore, exchanges exist with the “Institut für Landeskunde und Regionalgeschichte” (Bonn), the “Verein Öcher Platt” (Aachen) and the “Akademie für uns kölsche Sproch” (Cologne) in Germany which are located in the area where *Ripuarian* is spoken. Two of the eight seats in the “Raod veur ‘t Limburgs” are reserved for one representative each from Belgium and Germany.

#### *Low Saxon*

78. According to representatives of the Low Saxon speakers, there are contacts between cultural institutions promoting Low Saxon in the Netherlands and cultural institutions promoting Low German in Germany.

#### *Romanes*

79. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to further promote appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by the Charter, for Romanes”.

80. The fourth periodical report does not contain any specific information about this issue. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Romanes speakers informed the Committee of Experts that such exchanges are not promoted by the authorities.

#### *Yiddish*

81. Students of the Cheider school in Amsterdam participate in international exchanges where Yiddish is used. However, this is not supported by the Dutch authorities.

82. The Committee of Experts urges the Dutch authorities to promote appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by the Charter, for Romanes and Yiddish.

### **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.***

83. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts asked the Dutch authorities to provide, in their next periodical report, information on the implementation of this provision.

84. The fourth periodical report does not contain any specific information about this issue. The Committee of Experts asks the Dutch authorities to provide the necessary information in the next periodical report.

85. The revision of the media act provides an opportunity for the authorities to include in the act an objective on behalf of the media to pursue respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages in the Netherlands. The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to avail themselves of this opportunity.

### **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.***

#### *Frisian*

86. According to the fourth periodical report, the Dutch government announced a Law on the Use of Frisian in which the equal rights of the Dutch and Frisian languages within the Province of Fryslân would be safeguarded. The creation of a Body for the Frisian Language is also a part of this act. This new body

replaces the Consultative Body for Frisian created in 1998 as an advisory body to the Minister of the Interior pursuant to Article 7.4 of the Charter. In conformity with the 2010 Decree to Establish a Consultative Body for Frisian, this new advisory body is entrusted with making recommendations to the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations concerning the implementation of the Covenant for the Frisian Language and Culture between central government and the Province of Fryslân. In addition, the Consultative Body for Frisian can also report on all matters relating to Frisian. The Committee of Experts welcomes these plans.

#### *Limburgish*

87. According to the fourth periodical report, the “Raod veur ’t Limburgs” operates as an advisory body within the meaning of Article 7.4. It makes recommendations to the Provincial Executive on the development of language policy of the Province of Limburg with regard to the application of Part II of the Charter.

#### *Low Saxon*

88. As stated above (see under Article 7.1.c), the regional authorities in the Low Saxon-speaking area decided in 2010 to establish a Consultative Body for Low Saxon. However, the Committee of Experts was informed that the umbrella organisation of the Low Saxon speakers (SONT) is so far not represented in this body. The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the Low Saxon speakers in the work of the Consultative Body.

#### *Romanes*

89. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Dutch authorities to **“ensure that a structured dialogue is developed with the representatives of the Romanes-speakers”**.

90. According to the fourth periodical report, the Dutch central authorities have transferred a number of duties and powers relating to the Roma and Sinti to local authorities. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations is facilitating the task of the ten municipalities concerned with the development of a more coherent and focussed approach in respect of Roma and Sinti, through the subsidisation of the “National Platform for Roma Municipalities”. In 2010, the “Netherlands Institute for Sinti and Roma” began its work as a consultative body for the government on Roma and Sinti issues. Both communities are represented in the institute’s Advisory Council, but not in the board. Other Roma and Sinti organisations, including local ones, are not subsidised.

91. According to representatives of the Romanes speakers, however, the “Netherlands Institute for Sinti and Roma” does not cover the promotion of the Romanes language. Besides, the Committee of Experts was informed that there is no structured dialogue between the Dutch central authorities and representatives of the Roma and Sinti about the promotion of the Romanes language. The Committee of Experts urges the Dutch authorities to ensure that a structured dialogue is developed with the representatives of the Romanes-speakers.

#### *General issues*

92. The Committee of Experts has been informed by representatives of the speakers of Frisian and Romanes that their associations were not consulted with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers contained in the third evaluation report. Furthermore, it appears that no comprehensive consultations have taken place in the framework of the drafting of the fourth periodical report. The Committee of Experts underlines that a dialogue between the authorities and the associations representing the regional or minority language speakers about the application of the Charter is indispensable for a state in determining its policy with regard to regional or minority languages.

***The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to initiate a structured dialogue with the representatives of the regional or minority language speakers about the implementation of the Charter and the recommendations evolving from its monitoring mechanism.***

#### ***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.***

93. In its appreciation of the situation of Yiddish and Romanes vis-à-vis Article 7 paragraphs 1-4 of the Charter, the Committee of Experts has kept in mind that those principles should be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

### **3.2. The Committee of Experts' evaluation of the application of Part III of the Charter: Frisian**

94. In the present evaluation report, the Committee of Experts will not comment on the following provisions:

- Article 8, paragraphs 1f (i), i; 2
- Article 9, paragraph 1 a.ii, iii, b.iii, c.ii, iii; 2b
- Article 10, paragraphs 1a (v); 2a-g; 4a; 5
- Article 11, paragraph 1 f.ii; 2
- Article 12, paragraphs 1, a, b, d, g, h; 2
- Article 13, paragraphs 1a; 1d; 1c
- Article 14.a

#### *Reform of judicial authorities and police administration*

95. While the Committee of Experts at present has no indications that the undertakings under Article 9 are no longer fulfilled, it nonetheless notes that a draft law is being prepared which shall merge several courts. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that court hearings regarding citizens living in the Province of Fryslân might take place outside the province, in Groningen. There are concerns among the Frisian speakers whether in the future the use of the Frisian language will be possible in such hearings. The same problem may occur with regard to the restructuring of the police administration. The Committee of Experts encourages the Dutch authorities to consult representatives of the Frisian speakers in the context of the preparation of the law so as to make sure that the implementation of the Charter undertakings is not affected by the pending reforms.

#### *Court interpreters*

96. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was also informed by representatives of the Frisian speakers that there is only one court interpreter for Frisian. The Committee of Experts asks the Dutch authorities to provide, in their next periodical report, information on the possibility in practice to use Frisian in court cases, including whether there is a need to recruit and train more Frisian-speaking interpreters.

#### Article 8 - Education

##### *Preliminary remarks*

97. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended the Dutch authorities to **“strengthen the teaching of and in Frisian at all levels of education”**.

98. The Dutch authorities state in the fourth periodical report that the then Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations set up a Steering Committee for the Decentralisation of the Frisian Language to the Province of Fryslân on 26 May 2009. This Steering Committee was entrusted with making proposals for a coherent decentralisation and coordination of duties connected with the Frisian language. On the basis of the steering committee's final report, the legislation will be amended to give the Province of Fryslân the power to draft core objectives for the subject of Frisian on its own initiative. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science must assent to those objectives. Should a difference of opinion exist between the Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Province of Fryslân concerning the compliance of the new core objectives with these conditions, the minister will ask the Education Inspectorate for its recommendations.

##### *Paragraph 1*

***With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:***

##### ***Pre-school education***

**a. ...**

**ii. to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages;**



99. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking partly fulfilled. It “urged the Dutch authorities to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in Frisian”.

100. According to the fourth periodical report, the number of Frisian-speaking and bilingual playgroups has increased to 110 (out of a total of 350) by 2011. The Committee of Experts welcomes that the number of Frisian-speaking and bilingual playgroups is continuously growing and that up to 30% of the pre-school children (up to four years) in the Province of Fryslân are enrolled in these pre-schools.

101. The Committee of Experts welcomes this positive development, but would need further information on the proportion of Frisian-language education in the bilingual model and on the degree to which the offer of Frisian-speaking and bilingual playgroups really meets the demand of parents. The Committee of Experts asks the Dutch authorities to provide this information in the next periodical report.

### **Primary education**

**b.** ...

**ii. to make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages;**

102. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled. It “strongly urged the Dutch authorities to make available a substantial part of primary education in Frisian”.

103. According to the fourth periodical report, the number of trilingual (Frisian-Dutch-English) primary schools increased to 42 by 2011, which corresponds to about 10% of all primary schools and an annual increase of up to ten schools. The Committee of Experts has been informed by representatives of the Province of Fryslân that only this educational model implies teaching in Frisian. As the demand for such an educational model is larger than the present offer, the full implementation of this undertaking still remains to be achieved. Furthermore, the trilingual schools do not receive special financial support to implement this education model, but only the subsidy granted to schools that teach Frisian as a subject.

104. During the on-the-spot-visit, representatives of the Frisian speakers underlined the need to have exams at the end of primary school in order to show the quality of the teaching in Frisian. The central authorities confirmed that this matter will be addressed by the new Covenant on the Frisian Language and Culture.

105. The Committee of Experts acknowledges the positive developments which have occurred during the reporting period. It asks the Dutch authorities to submit more detailed information about the concrete set-up of the trilingual educational model in primary education and also information on the strategy to meet the demand for Frisian-language education in the future.

### **Secondary education**

**c.** ...

**iii. to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum;**

106. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled and “strongly urged the Dutch authorities to improve the situation of the teaching of Frisian in secondary education”. The Committee of Experts also noted that Frisian was a mandatory subject at secondary schools in Fryslân only in the first year and did not constitute an integral part of the curriculum in subsequent school years, causing problems of continuity for the teaching of Frisian.

107. In the fourth periodical report, the Dutch authorities state that the Province of Fryslân is experimentally introducing a trilingual programme in secondary education at three secondary schools (in Burgum, Koudum and Wommels). In the framework of this trilingual programme, Frisian will be used as the language of instruction for the subjects of Frisian and history (30% of the time), English for the subjects of English and mathematics (30%), and Dutch for the other subjects (40%). By 2015, this model will be introduced at ten secondary schools in the province. The Committee of Experts considers that the aforementioned educational model constitutes a good basis for the implementation of this undertaking.

However, the Committee of Experts has not received sufficient information about how Frisian is taught as an integral part of the curriculum at other schools and what share of the secondary school students in the province benefit from such teaching.

108. In light of the available information, the Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It strongly urges the Dutch authorities to improve the situation of the teaching of Frisian in secondary education.

***The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Dutch authorities to continue strengthening the teaching of and in Frisian at all levels of education.***

### ***University and higher education***

e. ...

***ii. to provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects.***

109. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking fulfilled. It “nevertheless encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to strengthen the position of Frisian in university and higher education”.

110. The fourth periodical report does not provide any specific information on this issue. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the future of studies of Frisian language and literature at the University of Groningen is in a critical situation. As a result of the new Law on Education, students following two studies will have to pay the usual fees twice. As this particularly concerns studies of Frisian, the number of students of Frisian is expected to decrease. The Committee of Experts asks the Dutch authorities to comment on this issue in their next periodical report.

111. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking fulfilled at present. It nevertheless urges the Dutch authorities to strengthen the position of Frisian in university and higher education.

### ***Teaching of history and culture***

***g. to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language***

112. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled at present. It “encourage[d] the provincial authorities of Friesland to continue their efforts to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by Frisian and to provide the relevant information in the next periodical report”.

113. The Committee of Experts was informed during the on-the-spot visit that basic teaching materials on Frisian history exist. However, it appears that this material is not wholly satisfactory. It is used by only about 10% of the schools in the province. This hampers the effectiveness and quality of history teaching. Moreover, a “Frisian Canon Programme” started in 2011, but there is at this stage no detailed information available about the number of schools already involved. Furthermore, the fourth periodical report states that Frisian history will be taught in Frisian in the framework of the new programme for trilingual secondary schools.

114. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking still not fulfilled. It urges the Dutch authorities to continue their efforts to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by Frisian and to provide the relevant information in the next periodical report.

### ***Teacher training***

***h. to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the Party;***

115. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking fulfilled with regard to primary and secondary education and not fulfilled for pre-school education. It “strongly urge[d] the Dutch authorities to take active measures to provide the necessary basic and further training for pre-school teachers of Frisian”.

116. The fourth periodical report does not provide any specific information on this issue. In light of the information obtained during the on-the-spot visit, it appears that no steps have been taken to provide the necessary basic and further training for pre-school teachers of Frisian.

117. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts also observed that 25% of the teachers who provided Frisian-language education did not have any formal qualification for the task. According to a report by the Education Inspectorate of 2010, there were still few teachers qualified for teaching Frisian as a subject. In this context, the Committee of Experts takes note that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has made an additional €100,000 annually available to Frisian colleges for 2010-2012 for the training of Frisian teachers.

118. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled with regard to primary and secondary education and not fulfilled for pre-school education. It strongly urges the Dutch authorities to take active measures to provide the necessary basic and further training for pre-school and primary school teachers of Frisian.

## **Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services**

### ***State authorities***

#### ***Paragraph 1***

***Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:***

...

- c. to allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language.***

119. In the third monitoring cycle, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled. The Committee of Ministers recommended the Dutch authorities to “**adopt legal and practical measures in order to ensure the use of Frisian in central State administration agencies located in the Province of Friesland**”. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts “urge[d] the Dutch authorities to ensure that the administrative authorities in Friesland concerned take the necessary measures which would allow them to draft documents in Frisian”.

120. As stated above (see under Article 7.1.c), the Dutch government announced a Law on the Use of Frisian in which Dutch and Frisian are listed as the two official languages of the Province of Fryslân. The aim of the legislative proposal is to reinforce the opportunities to use Frisian in legal and administrative matters, to guarantee the right of everyone in the Province of Fryslân to the use of their own language (Dutch or Frisian) in courts and in communications with administrative bodies. The Committee of Experts understands that this implies also an allowance for the administrative authorities to draft documents in Frisian.

121. As also stated above (see under Article 7.4), the draft act foresees the establishment of an advisory body on the Frisian language. The duties of this body will include reporting to all administrative and judicial authorities insofar as these are established in the Province of Fryslân or else have the Province of Fryslân as their sphere of activity, such as the Education Inspectorate. Alongside this, the body can set parameters for policy plans and regulations for the purpose of the administrative bodies intended in this regard. This is expected to be another important step towards allowing the administrative authorities to draft documents in Frisian in the future.

122. The Committee of Experts currently still considers this undertaking not fulfilled. It encourages the Dutch authorities to implement the necessary legal and practical measures so as to ensure that the present undertaking is fulfilled.

## **Implementation measures**

### **Paragraph 4**

***With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:***

...

- c. compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.***

123. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts was not in a position to conclude whether this undertaking was fulfilled. It “urge[d] the Dutch authorities to register requests from public service employees having a knowledge of Frisian to be appointed in the territory in which Frisian is used and provide the relevant information in the next periodical report”.

124. The fourth periodical report does not provide any specific information on this issue.

125. Given the repeated lack of information, the Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled.

## **Article 11 - Media**

### **Paragraph 1**

***The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:***

- a. to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:***

...

- iii. to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages;***

126. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking fulfilled. It “nevertheless encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to ensure that Frisian broadcasting is sufficiently funded on a permanent basis”.

127. The Committee of Experts was informed that the Dutch authorities intend to continue providing an annual contribution for the development of Frisian-language programmes based on applications, despite reductions in the budget of the national public broadcasting company.

128. *Omrop Fryslân* currently broadcasts almost entirely in Frisian. As mentioned under Article 7.1.d above, the Committee of Experts was informed about the draft Media Act which shall lead to a recentralisation of the competence for regional television from the provinces to the national authorities. The new Media Act is expected to enter into force in 2016. Although a consultation on the respect of the Charter by the new Media Act will be carried out, representatives of the provincial authorities and Frisian associations voiced concern that recentralisation might result in a reduction of the broadcasting time in Frisian. It is also unclear whether the central authorities would also finance the broadcasting in Frisian, given that the provinces will no longer provide funding.

129. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking fulfilled at present. It nonetheless encourages the Dutch authorities to consult representatives of the Frisian speakers in the context of the preparation of the draft Media Act and to take measures so that the new media legislation will improve the presence of Frisian in the media.

- b. ...
  - ii. ***to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;***
- c. ...
  - ii. ***to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;***

130. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled and “strongly urge[d] the Dutch authorities to take steps to promote the use of Frisian in private broadcasting”.

131. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information on the implementation of these undertakings. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts received confirmation that there are no private broadcast media using Frisian.

132. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled.

***The Committee of Experts strongly urges the Dutch authorities to take steps to promote the use of Frisian in private broadcasting.***

## **Article 12 - Cultural activities and facilities**

133. The Committee of Experts was informed during the on-the-spot visit that cuts in the national budget affect cultural activities in the Frisian language (Tryater, Oerol Festival, etc.). Among other cuts, the Dutch Foundation on Literature will no longer finance Frisian magazines. The Committee of Experts considers that these measures are likely to hamper the promotion of Frisian in the field of culture and encourages the Dutch authorities to ensure that the budget cuts do not affect the implementation of the relevant undertakings under the Charter.

### **Paragraph 1**

***With regard to cultural activities and facilities - especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies - the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:***

...

- e. ***to promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of the regional or minority language concerned, as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population;***

134. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking partly fulfilled, but asked the Dutch authorities to provide additional information on the implementation in the next periodical report.

135. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information on the implementation of this undertaking. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that cultural bodies in Fryslân have staff at their disposal who have a full command of Frisian and who are encouraged to use it during their work. In addition, some cultural bodies organise language courses for their staff, if required.

136. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking fulfilled.

- f. ***to encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of a given regional or minority language in providing facilities and planning cultural activities;***

137. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts was not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of this undertaking and asked the Dutch authorities to provide additional information in the next periodical report.

138. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information on the implementation of this undertaking. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts received confirmation that direct participation by representatives of the users of Frisian in providing facilities and planning cultural activities is ensured.

139. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking fulfilled.

### **Paragraph 3**

***The Parties undertake to make appropriate provision, in pursuing their cultural policy abroad, for regional or minority languages and the cultures they reflect.***

140. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled. It “urge[d] the Dutch authorities to include the Frisian language and the culture it reflects in its cultural policy abroad”.

141. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information on the implementation of this undertaking.

142. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking not fulfilled. It strongly urges the Dutch authorities to include the Frisian language and the culture it reflects in its cultural policy abroad.

### **Article 13 - Economic and social life**

#### **Paragraph 2**

***With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, in so far as the public authorities are competent, within the territory in which the regional or minority languages are used, and as far as this is reasonably possible:***

...

***b. in the economic and social sectors directly under their control (public sector), to organise activities to promote the use of regional or minority languages;***

143. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking not fulfilled. It “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to organise activities to promote the use of Frisian in the economic and social sectors directly under their control (public sector)”.

144. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Dutch central authorities stated that, owing to the privatisation of the Dutch Railway, post and telephone provider, the present undertaking is no longer relevant. At a later stage, the Committee of Experts received information that at least in regard to the Dutch Railway, tenders are time-limited, and it is therefore possible to include conditions related to the use of Frisian when new tenders are announced. Furthermore, the Committee of Experts notes that there are also other economic and social sectors that are relevant for this undertaking, in particular at provincial and local levels.<sup>7</sup> For example, the provincial authorities of Fryslân have decided to grant permissions to public transport companies only if the latter fulfil certain requirements regarding the use of Frisian. Frisian must be used in contacts with Frisian speaking clients, travel information, topographical indications and marketing. The Committee of Experts welcomes this step, which it considers good practice for the implementation of this undertaking.

145. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It encourages the Dutch authorities to identify the economic and social sectors that are relevant for this undertaking, to raise their awareness of the promotion of Frisian, and to organise activities promoting this language.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example First Report on the Application of the Charter in Spain, ECRML (2005) 4.

- c. to ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the possibility of receiving and treating in their own language persons using a regional or minority language who are in need of care on grounds of ill-health, old age or for other reasons;**

146. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking partly fulfilled. It asked the Dutch authorities to provide more detailed information on the practical impact of the initiatives taken by the steering committee “Fries in de Zorg” and on other measures aimed at ensuring the use of Frisian in social care facilities”.

147. According to the fourth periodical report, one of the achievements of the steering committee “Fries in de Zorg” is that a variety of care institutions have made efforts for greater visibility of Frisian within their organisations, e.g. signs in Frisian. Over the past years, the Province of Fryslân has entrusted the Afûk Institute with promoting the use of Frisian in care. General practitioners (200), dentists (150), physiotherapy and speech therapy practices (160 and 40, respectively) and clinics (93) in Fryslân have been approached by Afûk with information about the possibility of using Frisian in healthcare. According to the Afûk’s estimates, 60 to 70% of all healthcare centres possess material to stimulate the use of Frisian in healthcare. 50% of the healthcare institutions have received a ‘Just Speak Frisian’ mirror with magnetic Praat-mar-Frysk badges that are worn by staff while at work. There are also activities in the field of children’s health. However, the Committee of Experts was informed by representatives of the Province of Fryslân that the introduction of a language policy in social care facilities is hampered by the absence of clear legislative guidelines on this issue.

148. The Committee of Experts welcomes the efforts to raise awareness about the possibility to use Frisian in the health sector and observes that Frisian is used in a number of cases. However, it still remains unclear to what extent services in Frisian are provided.

149. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking partly fulfilled. It asks the Dutch authorities to provide, in their next periodical report, information about the implementation of this undertaking in practice.

#### **Article 14 - Transfrontier exchanges**

##### ***The Parties undertake:***

...

- b for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.**

150. In the third evaluation report, the Committee of Experts considered this undertaking fulfilled. It nevertheless “encourage[d] the Dutch authorities to actively promote co-operation between regional or local authorities in the Province of Friesland and in the Frisian-speaking areas of Germany on a more structured basis”.

151. The fourth periodical report does not contain any information on the implementation of this undertaking. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that “De Fryske Rie” (The Frisian Council) organises co-operation activities with Germany. It remains unclear to the Committee of Experts to what extent the Dutch authorities support such co-operation.

152. The Committee of Experts considers this undertaking fulfilled. It nevertheless urges the Dutch authorities to actively promote co-operation between regional or local authorities in the Province of Fryslân and in the Frisian-speaking areas of Germany on a more structured basis.

## Chapter 4 Findings of the Committee of Experts in the fourth monitoring round

A. The Committee of Experts acknowledges the improvements made in education (e.g. regarding teaching of Limburgish, increased teaching in Frisian) and the intention to increase the competences of the Province of Fryslân in setting the core objectives in Frisian-language education. In addition, the draft Law on the Use of Frisian constitutes a confirmation of the willingness to promote and protect Frisian.

B. The Dutch authorities have reiterated their view that the promotion of the regional or minority languages shall remain a responsibility of local and regional authorities. In such a situation, however, it is crucial that the central authorities ensure the application of the Charter in practice. Even if competencies are delegated to local and regional authorities, the State represented by the central authorities still has the final responsibility.

C. There is no structured dialogue with the representatives of the regional or minority language speakers about the implementation of the Charter and the recommendations evolving from its monitoring mechanism. Furthermore, no comprehensive consultations have taken place in the framework of the drafting of the periodical report. However, a dialogue between the authorities and the speakers is indispensable for a state in determining its policy with regard to regional or minority languages.

D. With regard to Limburgish, additional teaching materials have been introduced in primary and secondary schools. However, Limburgish is not yet taught as a school subject in its own right. Teaching Limburgish depends on initiatives of individual teachers and is practically non-existent in pre-schools and at the lower grades of primary school. There exists no scheme for teacher training. Limburgish continues to be present in regional media and culture. Also, there is rising awareness of Limburgish among local authorities.

E. The provincial authorities continue to take initiatives promoting Low Saxon in the cultural field. Low Saxon is also used in television and on radio. However, there is currently no structured approach for the teaching of Low Saxon at all relevant levels. Low Saxon is also absent in the field of administrative authorities.

F. There is an interest among Romanes speakers for measures to protect and promote this language. Roma and Sinti organisations have developed a constructive co-operation on the ground although they have different approaches concerning particular linguistic issues. The Dutch authorities have made efforts to improve co-ordination between the Sinti and Roma organisations, but they still do not consult these organisations regarding the promotion of Romanes. There is no teaching of Romanes in Dutch schools at present.

G. Yiddish is taught at the Cheider school in Amsterdam and there is a strong interest in expanding the offer of teaching Yiddish. Furthermore, the publication of the cultural journal "Grine Medine" continues to be important for the Yiddish speakers. There is an urgent need for funding projects in the educational and cultural fields and for clarification of the administrative responsibilities regarding the continued teaching of Yiddish.

H. Progress has been made regarding the development of Frisian language education. The number of Frisian-speaking and bilingual pre-school institutions has increased and covers now up to 30% of the pre-school children in the Province of Fryslân. Furthermore, the number of trilingual (Frisian-Dutch-English) primary schools has increased and now makes up about 10% of all primary schools in the province. With regard to secondary schools, the Province of Fryslân is experimentally introducing a trilingual programme in which Frisian will be used as one of the languages of instruction. However, it is not sufficiently clear how Frisian is taught as an integral part of the curriculum at other secondary schools. The studies of Frisian language and literature at the University of Groningen are in a critical situation.

I. According to a report by the Education Inspectorate of 2010, there were still few teachers qualified for teaching Frisian as a subject. The Dutch authorities have made extra annual funding available for the training of Frisian teachers. However, no steps have been taken to provide the necessary basic and further training for pre-school teachers of Frisian.

J. The Dutch government announced a draft Law on the Use of Frisian in which Dutch and Frisian are listed as the two official languages of the Province of Fryslân. The aim of the legislative proposal is to reinforce the opportunities to use Frisian in legal and administrative matters, to guarantee the right of everyone in Fryslân to the use of their own language (Dutch or Frisian) in court and in communications with administrative bodies. The future law is expected to be an important stimulus towards the use of Frisian by central government bodies in Fryslân. In the meantime, however, no practical measures facilitating the use of



Frisian by such authorities have been taken. As regards courts and the police, the planned reform of the organisational set-up might lead to a reduced use of Frisian before courts and in relation with the police.

K. The public service broadcaster *Omrop Fryslân* does not regularly receive earmarked assistance to cover the extra costs arising from broadcasting in Frisian. Furthermore, the envisaged re-centralisation of the regional media might have a negative impact on the implementation of the undertakings under the Charter. Frisian is not used at all by private broadcasters.

L. The provincial authorities of Fryslân have taken steps to ensure the use of Frisian in public transport and have made efforts to raise the social sector's awareness of the necessity to use Frisian in the provision of their services, although the degree to which Frisian is used in social care facilities still seems to be very limited.

The Dutch 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 the Netherlands. At the same time it emphasised the need for the authorities of the Netherlands to take into account, in addition to these general recommendations, the more detailed observations contained in the body of the report.

At its 1153<sup>rd</sup> meeting on 24 October 2012, the Committee of Ministers adopted its Recommendation addressed to the Netherlands, which is set out in Part B of this document.

## Appendix I: Instrument of Acceptance



The Netherlands :

### **Declaration contained in the instrument of acceptance, deposited on 2 May 1996 - Or. Engl.**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands accepts the said Charter for the Kingdom in Europe.

**Period covered: 01/03/98 -**

**The preceding statement concerns Article(s): -**

### **Declarations contained in a Note Verbale handed over by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands at the time of deposit of the instrument of acceptance, on 2 May 1996 - Or. Engl.**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands declares, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 2, and Article 3, paragraph 1, of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, that it will apply to the Frisian language in the province of Friesland the following provisions of Part III of the Charter:

#### In Article 8:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (ii), b (ii), c (iii), e (ii), f (i), g, h, i.  
Paragraph 2.

#### In Article 9:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (ii), a (iii), b (iii), c (ii), c (iii).  
Paragraph 2, sub-paragraph b.

#### In Article 10:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (v), c.  
Paragraph 2, sub-paragraphs a, b, c, d, e, f, g.  
Paragraph 4, sub-paragraphs a, c.  
Paragraph 5.

#### In Article 11:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (iii), b (ii), c (ii), f (ii).  
Paragraph 2.

#### In Article 12:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a, b, d, e, f, g, h.  
Paragraph 2.  
Paragraph 3.

#### In Article 13:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a, c, d.  
Paragraph 2, sub-paragraphs b, c.

#### In Article 14:

Paragraph a.  
Paragraph b.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands further declares that the principles enumerated in Part II of the Charter will be applied to the Lower-Saxon languages used in the Netherlands, and, in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 5, to Yiddish and the Romanes languages.

**Period covered: 01/03/98 -**

**The preceding statement concerns Article(s): 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9**

Declaration contained in a Note Verbale from the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands, **dated 18 March 1997, registered at the Secretariat General on 19 March 1997 - Or. Engl.**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands declares, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1, of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 5 November 1992, that the principles enumerated in Part II of the Charter will be applied to the Limburger language used in the Netherlands.

**Period covered: 01/03/98 -**

**The preceding statement concerns Article(s): 2**

## Appendix II: Comments by the Dutch authorities

Ministry of the Interior and  
Kingdom Relations

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T +3170 4266827

**Kenmerk**  
2012-0000373127

Date : 3 July 2012  
Subject

Response to the draft report from the  
Council of Europe in respect of the  
Charter for Regional or Minority  
Languages

Dear Sir,

It is with much interest that the Dutch government has taken note of the findings of the committee of experts concerning the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which you sent to me on 20 April 2012.

I would like to take the opportunity to respond to the draft report. The draft report states that the Netherlands does not yet fulfil the obligation pursuant to Article 10, paragraph 1, under c, of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. I should like to inform you that with the advent of the Use of Frisian Act, provision is also being made for a Body for the Frisian Language. The duty incumbent on this body will be to provide recommendations to the Provincial Executive of the province of Fryslân concerning the realisation and execution of the Covenant on the Frisian Language and Culture. In addition, it can report on requirements and wishes in respect of the Frisian language and culture to all administrative bodies and judicial authorities, insofar as these are located in the province of Fryslân or else include the province of Fryslân as their area of operation. Furthermore, the Body can also draw up guidelines for policy plans and rules. Consequently, it will be able to play an important role in fulfilling Article 10, paragraph 1, under c, of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

I would be grateful for your inclusion of this point in your final conclusion. Finally, I should like to extend my sincere thanks to you for the meticulous work that the committee of experts has performed.

The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations,

Ms drs. J.W.E. Spies, LLM

## **B. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter by the Netherlands**

### **Recommendation CM/RecChL(2012)5 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by the Netherlands**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 October 2012  
at the 1153rd 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 declaration made by the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 2 May 1996 and to the supplementary declaration submitted on 19 March 1997;

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

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

Having taken note of the comments made by the Dutch authorities on the contents of the Committee of Experts' report,

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

1. establish a structured dialogue with representatives of the regional or minority language speakers about the implementation of the Charter and the recommendations evolving from its monitoring mechanism;
2. continue to strengthen the teaching of and in Frisian at all levels of education;
3. upgrade the teaching of Limburgish and Low Saxon to the status of regular school subjects and extend the offer of education in these languages, including in pre-schools;
4. explore, in co-operation with representatives of the speakers, possibilities to teach Romanes and to secure and extend the teaching of Yiddish.