



ACFC/MR(2022)001

Meeting report

74th meeting

Approved by the Advisory Committee on 16 May 2022

Opening of the meeting

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities held its 74th meeting from 31 January to 4 February 2022 via videoconference. Marie B. HAGSGÅRD, President of the Advisory Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Advisory Committee.

The President presented the working methods to be applied for this plenary meeting, in particular, shorter and more focused opinions with fewer recommendations, as well as discussions directed to important and difficult issues, and asked members to preliminarily evaluate at the end of the plenary whether they lead to more time for difficult and important issues. She also reported on her exchange of views with the Steering Committee on Anti-discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) with a focus on the issue of how the Advisory Committee can handle the increased workload of the confidential dialogue without a decrease in the quality of opinions.

Adoption of the Agenda and Order of Business

The Agenda and Order of Business, as reproduced in Appendix II, were adopted.

Approval of the report of the 73rd meeting of the Advisory Committee

Having examined the report of its 73rd meeting, the Advisory Committee adopted the final text of the report as reproduced in document ACFC/MR(2021)4final.

Report from the Bureau

The President reported on the Bureau meeting held on 1 December 2021. She especially mentioned that the working methods to be applied for this plenary meeting to tackle the increased workload after the pandemic and as a result of the confidential dialogue was discussed. She further referred to her participation, with Martin Collins, in the follow-up meeting in Ireland held on 7 December 2021 by videoconference and gave very positive feedback on it.

Recent developments: update by the Secretariat and report back by members on their participation in external events

The Secretariat informed the Advisory Committee about developments in the Committee of Ministers, including the state of negotiations, adoption of country resolutions, opinions to be published, as well as about as well as about state reports received.

Petter Wille reported on his participation in the conference on "National minorities in Hungary: Protection and passing on of national minority values" organised by the Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers and the Council of Europe on 4 November 2021 in Budapest. Evis Alimehmeti informed the Committee about her participation in a Gender Mainstreaming training for Council of Europe's Gender Equality Rapporteurs on 2 and 3 December 2021 in Strasbourg. She further referred to her participation, with Antonija Petričušić, in the webinar "8th International Roma Women's Conference" held on 26 November 2021.

The Advisory Committee was further informed about the recruitment of Lusine Drampyan as an administrator.

Approval of draft opinions

In application of Rule 37 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the draft Opinion on Slovenia and the draft Opinion on North Macedonia on 2 and 3 February 2022 respectively, and decided to communicate these draft opinions to the authorities concerned and to invite them to provide written observations by 11 April 2022.

Adoption of final opinions

In application of Rule 25 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, the Advisory unanimously adopted the following final opinions:

- 5th Opinion on the Slovak Republic, on 2 February 2022;
- 5th Opinion on Norway, on 2 February 2022;
- 5th Opinion on Estonia, on 3 February 2022 ;
- 5th Opinion on Germany, on 3 February 2022.

Thematic Work

Drafting Guide on Religion

Members of the Advisory Committee gave their positive feedback on the Drafting Guide on Religion and reiterated that it should serve as a practical tool for the Advisory Committee especially when elaborating questions during the upcoming country visits and the drafting of opinions. Furthermore, it was noted that the guide would be updated, if needed, in the light of the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the ACFC adopted opinions.

The Committee agreed to transmit the guide to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities for possible consultations and feedback and, in view of the May plenary, invite the Working Group to revise it, if needed, in the light of the recent ACFC opinions.

The 13th ACFC Biennial Activity Report

The members of the working group, Emma Lantschner, Alexei Avtonomov and Petter Wille, presented the outline for the substantive section of the 13th ACFC Biennial Activity Report covering the period between June 2020 and May 2022. They further introduced the next steps to be taken concerning the preparation of the report. Members were invited to submit to the working group any comments they may have on the outline.

The Committee took note of the current version of the outline and agreed with the working group proposals.

Source Book

Members of the Source Book working group, Aliona Grossu, Emma Lantschner and Mikko Puumalainen, recalled the importance of the Source Book and reiterated that together with the Glossary and Drafting Guide on Religion, it should serve as a practical tool for the Advisory Committee when drafting opinions. It was also noted that the Source Book should be updated after each Plenary Meeting in the light of the ACFC adopted opinions. The Sourcebook working group planned one more working meeting for a final review of the contents and introductory part of the document.

The Committee approved the final format of the Source Book.

Working methods

A roundtable discussion was held about the working methods which were applied at this plenary meeting. Different views and ideas were expressed. Several members expressed their satisfaction with these working methods and made proposals for further improvements, including regarding the preparation and drafting of opinions. As regards visibility and effectiveness of monitoring work, follow-up meetings were mentioned as a good means to promote the work of the Advisory Committee and raise awareness on its findings and recommendations. The importance of discussions with the representatives of minority NGOs during the follow-up meetings and the involvement of national/additional members in assessing the implementation of the recommendations were also highlighted. The need to clarify with states the scope and nature of their observations under the confidential dialogue was noted. It was further suggested to cooperate with the universities and civil society organisations to carry out an impact assessment of monitoring work. The President concluded that these suggested working methods would be further discussed and that they would also need to be considered by the new composition of the Advisory Committee.

Lastly, the Secretariat was requested to start collecting examples of good practices mentioned in the ACFC opinions for the better implementation of monitoring work.

■ Composition of Working Groups/Planning of visits

The Advisory Committee agreed on the composition of the working groups as reproduced in document ACFC/DOC(2022)1rev. The Advisory Committee took note of the list of planned visits in 2022. The Secretariat asked members to express their interest in joining the working groups on the Netherlands and the Russian Federation.

■ Any other business

The Advisory Committee confirmed the dates of the following plenary meetings:

- 75th plenary: 16-20 May 2022, with 23 May 2022 as possible extra meeting day to be held online if needed;
- 76th plenary: 3-7 October 2022;
- 77th plenary: 5-8 December 2022.

Appendix I – List of participants

- Ordinary members:

Evis ALIMEHMETI (Albania)
 Alexei AVTONOMOV (Russian Federation)
 Goran BAŠIĆ (Serbia)
 Alexandra CASTRO (Portugal)
 Emilia DRUMEVA (Bulgaria)
 Melina GRIZO (North Macedonia)
 Aliona GROSSU (Moldova, Republic of) – First Vice-President
 Marie B. HAGSGÅRD (Sweden) - President
 Emma LANTSCHNER (Italy)
 Oliver LOODE (Estonia)
 Teymur MALIK-ASLANOV (Azerbaijan)
 Antonija PETRIČUŠIĆ (Croatia)
 Mikko PUUMALAINEN (Finland) – Second Vice-President
 Harald Christian SCHEU (Czech Republic)
 Nebojša VUČINIĆ (Montenegro)
 Petter WILLE (Norway)

Excused:

Martin COLLINS (Ireland)
 Arayik NAVOYAN (Armenia)

- Additional members:

Tomáš HRUSTIČ (Slovak Republic)
 Detlev REIN (Germany)
 Petra ROTER (Slovenia)

► Secretariat of the Council of Europe

Elise CORNU, Executive Secretary and Head of the National Minorities and Minority Languages Division
 Lusine DRAMPYAN, Administrator
 Ben FREEMAN, Senior Project Officer
 Michaël GUET, Administrator, Policy Adviser
 Jörg HORN, Administrator, Policy Adviser
 Meyeti PAYET, Project Officer
 Agnes Von MARAVIĆ, Administrator, Policy Adviser
 Kristina DEDAJ, Administrative Assistant
 Katharina FOUQUET, Administrative Assistant
 Brigitte ZWICKERT, Administrative Assistant

Appendix II – Agenda

Monday 31 January 2022

- 9.00 – 9.45 Meeting of the ACFC Bureau
- 10.00 – 10.30
 - Opening of the meeting
 - Adoption of the agenda & Order of Business
 - Approval of the 73rd meeting report
 - Report from the Bureau
 - Recent developments
- 10.30 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on Slovenia
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on Slovenia (cont'd)

Tuesday 1 February 2022

- 9.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on North Macedonia
- 12.30 – 15.00 Break
- 15.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on North Macedonia (cont'd)

Wednesday 2 February 2022

- 9.00 – 11.30 Monitoring: Adoption of the final opinions on Estonia and the Slovak Republic
- 11.30 – 12.00 Exchange on the ACFC working methods: introduction by the Bureau
- 12.00 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft opinion on Slovenia (cont'd)

Thursday 3 February 2022

- 9.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: Adoption of the final opinions on Germany and on Norway
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft opinion on North Macedonia (cont'd)

Friday 4 February 2022

- 9.00 – 10.30
 - Exchange on the ACFC working methods
 - Composition of working groups/planning of visits
- 10.30 – 11.30 Thematic work – Source Book; Guide on Religion; The outline of the substantive section of the 13th ACFC biennial activity report
- 11.30 – 12.30
 - Recent developments – Update by the members & reporting back on participation in external events
 - Dates of the next plenary meetings
 - Any other business
 - List of decisions
 - Closing words