



fem

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/MR(2022)002

Meeting report

75th meeting

Approved by the Advisory Committee on 3 October 2022

Opening of the meeting

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities held its 75th meeting in Strasbourg from 16 to 20 May 2022 in a hybrid format. Marie B. HAGSGÅRD, President of the Advisory Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Advisory Committee.

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 74th meeting of the Advisory Committee

Having examined the report of its 74th meeting, the Advisory Committee approved it as reproduced in document ACFC/MR(2022)001.

Report from the Bureau

The President reported on the Bureau meeting held on 4 May 2022. She informed the Advisory Committee of the decisions adopted by the Committee of Ministers so far as regards the consequences of the cessation of membership by the Russian Federation in the Council of Europe, including on their participation in open conventions such as the FCNM. She expressed the wish of the Bureau that decisions relating to the modalities of this participation in the FCNM monitoring mechanism could be adopted as soon as possible by the Committee of Ministers.

Recent developments: update by the Secretariat, exchange on the impact of the war in Ukraine on persons belonging to national minorities and report back on participation in external events

The Secretariat informed the Advisory Committee about developments in the Committee of Ministers, including the adoption of country resolutions, the election of experts and the current discussions regarding the modalities of participation of the Russian Federation in monitoring bodies such as the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee members exchanged information on how the war in Ukraine affects persons belonging to national minorities in Ukraine as well as in the Russian Federation and countries receiving refugees from Ukraine.

Emma Lantschner and Harald Scheu reported on their participation in the follow-up meeting held in Prague (Czech Republic) on 21 April 2022. The President informed the Committee of her participation in a follow-up meeting to be held in Zagreb (Croatia) on 23 May 2022.

Approval of draft opinions

In application of Rule 37 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, the Advisory Committee approved the draft Opinion on Italy (unanimously) and the draft Opinion on Armenia on 19 and 20 May 2022 respectively, and decided to communicate these draft opinions to the authorities concerned and to invite them to provide written observations by 29 July 2022.

Adoption of final opinions

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

- 5th Opinion on Slovenia, on 18 May 2022;
- 5th Opinion on North Macedonia, on 18 May 2022.

Exchange of views

On 18 May, the Advisory Committee held an exchange of view with representatives of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues (UNPFII). Sven-Erik Soosaar, UNPFII member nominated by governments, introduced the work of

the Permanent Forum, before Anne Nuorgam, Vice-Chair of the UNPFII and member nominated by the Indigenous Peoples' organisations, presented international and domestic standards for the protection of Sami People in Europe. The Committee also heard a presentation by Petter Wille, ACFC member in respect of Norway, on "Human Rights Protection against Interference in Areas Traditionally Occupied by the Sami". The Advisory Committee experts and UNPFII members then exchanged views on national minorities and Indigenous Peoples' rights in Europe. As they agreed to further explore possibilities for co-operation, UNPFII members extended an invitation to the President of the Advisory Committee to take part in the next session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2023).

On 19 May, Hallvard Gorseth, Head of the Anti-Discrimination Department, exchanged views with members of the Advisory Committee. Mr Gorseth informed the Advisory Committee about the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Council of Europe's 46 member States to be held in Turin on 20 May under the Italian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers. Mr Gorseth further took the opportunity to thank the departing nine members of the Advisory Committee for their outstanding work, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. He also highlighted their valuable efforts concerning the elaboration and implementation of reforms in the Advisory Committee's working methods. During the exchange, experts underlined the importance of ensuring the implementation of the ACFC recommendations, including through follow-up meetings and cooperation programmes.

Thematic Work

Drafting Guide on Religion

The Secretariat informed the Committee of developments of the Drafting Guide on Religion, which was communicated, as agreed by the Committee, to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in early 2022. Members were invited to provide to the Secretariat and reflection group over summer any important developments in ACFC jurisprudence relating to religion in any recently approved or adopted opinions. The Advisory Committee agreed to continue its reflections on religious issues over the coming years, including as to the nature and use of the guide itself.

Glossary on terminology and phraseology relating to the FCNM

The Committee approved the updated Glossary on terminology and phraseology relating to the FCNM and the work of the Advisory Committee. The need to keep the Glossary updated was underlined.

The 13th ACFC Biennial Activity Report

The Advisory Committee approved the text of the substantive section of its 13th Activity Report, which focuses on trends and challenges related to the Covid-19 pandemic, youth participation, and climate change, and took note of the descriptive part of the report prepared by the Secretariat. The Committee also adopted a [statement](#) on the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. The ACFC member in respect of the Russian Federation abstained from participating in the discussion and adoption of the Activity Report and the statement.

The Committee was informed that the 13th Activity Report would be presented to the Committee of Ministers on 28 September 2022 by the Acting President and published the same day.

Gender mainstreaming

Evis Alimehmeti, Gender Equality Rapporteur (GER), gave an overview of the work accomplished in her term of office, notably the update of the Gender Equality checklist. She offered suggestions on further gender mainstreaming in ACFC work starting with holding gender focused plenary items periodically, exchanging with GERs of other Council of Europe monitoring bodies. Further thematic work could be considered such as dedicating a section of the next biennial report on gender perspective in ACFC opinions, holding panel discussions on gender and national minority rights, with the aim to publish an ACFC thematic commentary on national minority women's rights. The Advisory Committee agreed to include a section of the Sourcebook on gender equality and reiterated its commitment to further mainstream gender equality in its work.

Working methods

The Advisory Committee approved the explanatory note on the involvement of members in the consideration of the opinions concerning the state in respect of which they have been elected (ACFC/DOC(2022)6) and the Guidelines for follow-up meetings on the implementation of the Framework Convention (ACFC/DOC(2021)4rev2). It agreed to include them in the Guide for members, as well as a reference to the Drafting guide on religion and the Gender equality checklist.

The Committee also agreed to take note by written procedure, with a deadline expiring on 31 May 2022, of the Working document on FCNM Secretariat communication tools (ACFC/DOC(2022)7) and of the document on examples of good practices identified in ACFC opinions (ACFC/DOC(2022)9rev). It was decided that members should send any examples of good practice found in new opinions to Elise Cornu starting with opinions approved or adopted at this plenary.

The departing experts were invited to take stock of their term of office and to share their possible ideas on how to further improve the work of the Advisory Committee. The President then warmly thanked the secretariat and the experts for their work during the last four years and praised the atmosphere of dialogue, respect and compromise which prevailed between the experts during the discussions.

6th cycle outline for state reports

The Advisory Committee approved the outline for state reports to be submitted under the 6th monitoring cycle with a view to its approval by the Committee of Ministers.

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)4 and appointed Alexandra Castro as Gender equality rapporteur and Emma Lantschner as representative to the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). The Advisory Committee also took note of the list of planned visits in 2022 and the first quarter of 2023.

Any other business

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

- 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)
 Martin COLLINS (Ireland)
 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)
 Arayik NAVOYAN (Armenia)
 Antonija PETRIČUŠIĆ (Croatia)
 Mikko PUUMALAINEN (Finland) – Second Vice-President
 Harald Christian SCHEU (Czech Republic)
 Nebojša VUČINIĆ (Montenegro)
 Petter WILLE (Norway)

- Additional members:

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 16 May 2022

- 9.00 – 9.45 Meeting of the ACFC Bureau
- 10.00 – 11.00 Opening of the meeting
 - Adoption of the agenda & Order of Business
 - Approval of the 74th meeting report
 - Report from the Bureau
 - Recent developments
- 11.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on Italy
- 12.30 – 14.30 Break
- 14.30 – 18.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on Italy (cont'd)

Tuesday 17 May 2022

- 9.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on Armenia
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 17.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft opinion on Armenia (cont'd)
- 17.00 – 18.00 First reading of the substantive section of the 13th biennial activity report

Wednesday 18 May 2022

- 9.00 – 11.30 Monitoring: Adoption of the final opinions on Slovenia and North Macedonia
- 11.30 – 12.30 Update of the drafting guide on religion, update of the ACFC Glossary on terminology and phraseology, approval of the 6th cycle outline for state reports, composition of working groups/planning of visits
- 12.30 – 14.30 Break
- 14.30 – 17.00 Exchange of views on the rights of indigenous peoples with representatives of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues (UNPFII)
- 17.00 – 18.00 Thematic work: Gender mainstreaming, report by the ACFC Gender Equality Rapporteurs

Thursday 19 May 2022

- 9.00 – 11.30 Monitoring: Second reading and possible adoption of the 13th biennial activity report (cont'd)
 - Exchange on ACFC working methods and possible approval of working documents on the involvement of national members, on follow-up meetings and on communication
- 11.30 – 12.00 Exchange with Hallvard Gorseth, Head of Anti-Discrimination Department
- 12.00 – 13.30 Break
- 13.30 – 17.30 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft opinion on Italy (cont'd)

Friday 20 May 2022

- 9.00 – 13.00 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft opinion on Armenia (cont'd)
 - Dates of the next plenary meetings
 - Any other business
 - List of decisions
 - Closing words