



fem

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/MR(2024)1

20 February 2024

Meeting report

82nd meeting

Approved by the Advisory Committee on 27 May 2024

■ Opening of the meeting

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities held its 82nd plenary meeting from 5 to 9 February 2024 in Strasbourg and online. Petra Roter, 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 I, were adopted without amendments.

■ Approval of the report of the 81st meeting of the Advisory Committee

Having examined the report of its 81st plenary meeting, the Advisory Committee approved it as produced in document ACFC/MR(2023)4prov without amendments.

■ Report from the Bureau

Referring to the Bureau meeting held on 22 January 2024 (online), the President shared with participants several suggestions from the Bureau concerning the presentation of draft opinions, which were all agreed by the Advisory Committee.

The Bureau informed the Advisory Committee about a study on “Assessing the Implementation of ACFC Recommendations: case studies from eight States Parties” which is being prepared by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI). The Advisory Committee agreed to hold an exchange of views with ECMI researchers during the October 2024 plenary meeting, as a follow-up to a written report to be prepared by the ECMI.

Finally, the President presented the procedure about the election of the Second Vice-President.

■ Update by the Secretariat

Elise Cornu, FCNM Executive Secretary, informed members of the Advisory Committee about the latest developments in the Committee of Ministers, including the state of play relating to the negotiation of resolutions, as well as about state reports received. She also updated them about the election of experts which became vacant (in respect of Denmark, Switzerland and Latvia). The Executive Secretary further indicated that the appointment of the eight new ordinary members, joining the Advisory Committee on 1 June 2024, will take place on 10 April 2024.

The Advisory Committee was further informed about the staff changes in the Secretariat, including the recruitment of Maxime Huot and Zeynep Usal-Kanzler as administrators.

■ Elections

The Advisory Committee elected David Smith (member in respect of the United Kingdom) as its Second Vice-President for a term of office until October 2024 when there will be new elections of the Bureau.

■ Approval of draft opinions

In application of Rule 37 of Resolution CM/Res (2019)49, the Advisory Committee unanimously approved the following draft opinions:

- Fifth draft Opinion on Azerbaijan, on 8 February 2024;
- Fifth draft Opinion on Bulgaria, on 8 February 2024;
- Fourth draft Opinion on Montenegro, on 9 February 2024.

The Advisory Committee also decided to communicate these draft opinions to the authorities concerned, and to invite the authorities of Azerbaijan, Bulgaria and Montenegro to provide their respective written observations by 15 April 2024.

Adoption of final opinions

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

- Fourth Opinion on Georgia, on 7 February 2024;
- Sixth Opinion on Denmark, on 7 February 2024;
- Fifth Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 8 February 2024.

The opinions will be sent to the states concerned for comments and be made public, at the latest, in early summer 2024.

Thematic work

The Secretariat (Ben Freeman and Sandra Velay Mateu) presented the preliminary draft of the Advisory Committee's revised thematic commentary on education. The Advisory Committee discussed the structure of the draft and a few substantive issues and took note of the next steps in view of its adoption during the next Plenary in May 2024.

Composition of Working Groups and planning of country visits

The Advisory Committee took note of the composition of working groups and planning of visits as listed in document ACFC/DOC(2024)1. The President asked the interested members to put themselves forward for the planned visits, including as backup members, as well as for the thematic working groups in which there will be vacant seats following the end of the mandate of eight experts at the end of May 2024.

Members of the Advisory Committee also shared information relevant for the upcoming visits, and agreed to provide any relevant pieces of information, documents and possible contacts to the respective working groups following a reminder from the Secretariat.

Reporting back on participation in external events

Harald Scheu and David Smith reported on their participation in the [follow-up meeting](#) regarding the Fifth Opinion on the United Kingdom, held in Glasgow (United Kingdom) on 13-14 December 2023. The format of this meeting, which brought representatives of state authorities, minority groups and academia together, was noted as an inspirational set up for future events, offering a venue that yielded fruitful dialogue among all participants.

Petra Roter reported back about her participation at the [Conference marking the 30th anniversary](#) of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) in the Hague on 24 October 2023, and informed the Advisory Committee about the launching of the new set of thematic Recommendations at this event – i.e. [the Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Social and Economic Life](#).

Petra Roter, Emma Lantschner, David Smith and Elise Cornu reported about their participation at the [International Conference on "Challenges of monitoring in the European multicultural environment"](#) organised on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Belgrade on 6-8 December 2023. The event complemented the set of smaller events for different audiences that gave the Advisory Committee an opportunity to reflect on the contemporary challenges to the implementation of minority rights enshrined in the Framework Convention. The event in Belgrade was focused on South-Eastern Europe and on the monitoring process.

Concluding remarks and dates of next plenary meetings

On behalf of all members of the Advisory Committee, the President warmly thanked Ben Freeman who will be leaving the Secretariat as of March 2024 for all his invaluable contribution over the past six years as the Secretariat member and wished him every success in his next professional steps.

The President also recalled the dates of the next plenary meetings: the 83rd plenary will be held from 27 to 31 May 2024; and the 84th plenary from 14 to 18 October 2024, both in Strasbourg.

Appendix I – Agenda and Order of Business

Monday 5 February 2024

- 9.30 – 10.00 Opening of the meeting
Adoption of the Agenda & Order of Business
Approval of the 81st meeting report
Report from the Bureau
Update by the Secretariat
- 10.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Fifth Opinion on Azerbaijan
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Fifth Opinion on Azerbaijan (cont'd)

Tuesday 6 February 2024

- 9.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Fifth Opinion on Bulgaria
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 16.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Fifth Opinion on Bulgaria (cont'd)
- 16.30 – 17.30 Thematic work: Exchange on the draft revised thematic commentary on education

Wednesday 7 February 2024

- 9.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Fourth Opinion on Montenegro
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 16.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Fourth Opinion on Montenegro (cont'd)
- 16.30 – 18.30 Monitoring: Reading and final adoption of the draft Fourth Opinion on Georgia and draft Sixth Opinion on Denmark

Thursday 8 February 2024

- 9.00 – 9.30 Monitoring: Reading and final adoption of the draft Fifth Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina
- 9.30 – 12.30 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft Fifth Opinion on Azerbaijan
- 12.30 – 14.00 Break
- 14.00 – 17.00 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft Fifth Opinion on Bulgaria
- 17.00 – 17.30 Election of a Second Vice-President

Friday 9 February 2024

- 9.00 – 12.00 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft Fourth Opinion on Montenegro
- 12.00 – 13.00 Update by members and reporting back on participation in external events
Exchange about upcoming visits
Any other business
List of decisions

Appendix II – List of participants

- Ordinary members:

Pedro AGUILERA CORTÉS (Spain)
 Laura-Maria CRACIUNEAN-TATU (Romania)
 Emilia DRUMÉVA (Bulgaria)
 Tomáš HRUSTIČ (Slovak Republic)
 Emma LANTSCHNER (Italy) – First Vice-President
 Oliver LOODE (Estonia)
 Egly PANTELAKIS (Cyprus)
 Klaus POIER (Austria)
 Mikko PUUMALAINEN (Finland)
 Petra ROTER (Slovenia) – President
 Harald Christian SCHEU (Czechia)
 David SMITH (United Kingdom) - Second Vice-President
 Nebojša VUČINIĆ (Montenegro)

- Additional member:

Besarion BOKHASHVILI (Georgia)

- Excused:

Alexandra CASTRO (Portugal)
 Teymur MALIK-ASLANOV (Azerbaijan)

► 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
 Maxime HUOT, Administrator
 Zeynep USAL-KANZLER, Administrator
 Sandra VELOY MATEU, Senior Project Officer
 Amona ZEMON, Trainee
 Kristina DEDAJ, Administrative Assistant
 Snežana LALIČIĆ, Administrative Assistant