



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/MR(2026)1

Meeting report

88th meeting

Approved by the Advisory Committee on 18 May 2026

Opening of the meeting

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) held its 88th meeting from 9 to 13 February 2026 in Strasbourg. 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.

Approval of the report of the 87th meeting of the Advisory Committee

Having examined the draft of its 87th meeting report, the Advisory Committee approved the report as reproduced in document ACFC/MR(2025)2, without amendments.

Report from the Bureau

The President reported on the Bureau meeting held on 5 February 2026, during which the organisation of the 88th plenary was discussed.

Update by the Secretariat

Elise CORNU, Executive Secretary, informed the Advisory Committee about staff changes in the Secretariat. The Advisory Committee was informed of the departure of Zeynep USAL-KANZLER. The Advisory Committee welcomed Sara CAMUSSI and Tankut SOYKAN as new members of the Secretariat. The Executive Secretary also informed 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 and forthcoming publication of opinions.

Approval of draft opinions

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

- Combined 5th and 6th ACFC Opinions on Ukraine, on 12 February 2026;
- Sixth Opinion on Croatia, on 12 February 2026;
- Sixth Opinion on the Slovak Republic, on 13 February 2026.

Adoption of final opinions

In application of Rule 37 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49, the Advisory Committee unanimously adopted the Sixth Opinion on Italy, on 11 February 2026.

Exchange of views with Michael O'Flaherty, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

The Commissioner emphasised the importance of the ACFC's monitoring activities. He outlined his four priorities as Commissioner: to seek to embed human rights in the pathways to peace for Ukraine; to bring attention to human rights in the great issues of the day, including the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers and the oversight of AI; to defend the human rights of the most marginalised in Council of Europe states, in particular Roma and Travellers; and to stand up for human rights defenders amid unprecedented challenges and increasing pressure on them and their work. The Commissioner noted the importance of building alliances among all relevant actors to strengthen protection for human rights defenders.

The Commissioner answered questions from the experts of the Advisory Committee on a number of topics. These included: third-party interventions in cases before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the lack of identity documents and its effects on persons affiliating with the Roma minority, the effects of 'culture defence' on women's access to justice, foreign influence laws, the role of the ACFC in raising awareness of diversity and inclusion, and on strengthening protection for rights defenders.

Exchange on the outline of the draft 15th Activity Report covering the period from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2026

The Advisory Committee was informed that, following the plenary meeting, there will be a two-week period during which ACFC experts could comment on the outline of the substantive part of the draft 15th activity report of the Advisory Committee (2024-2026).

Composition of working groups/planning of visits

The Advisory Committee appointed Elisabeth SÁNDOR-SZALAY as a member of the working group on the Sourcebook and took note of the interest expressed by members to join different country working groups. As the term of office of Judith WYTTEBACH, Gender Equality Rapporteur, will end on 31 May 2026, the Advisory Committee agreed that Elisabeth SÁNDOR-SZALAY would act as Gender Equality Rapporteur from 1 June 2026 until the next plenary meeting of the Advisory Committee in October 2026 and the appointment of a new Gender Equality Rapporteur. The Advisory Committee also agreed that the composition of working groups will be discussed once the new composition is confirmed by the Committee of Ministers (i.e. at its 89th plenary session in May 2026).

Next meetings

The Advisory Committee confirmed the dates of its next plenary meetings as follows: 18-22 May 2026; 26-30 October 2026.

■ Appendix I – Agenda

Monday, 9 February

- 9.30 – 10.00 Opening of the meeting
 Adoption of the Agenda & Order of Business
 Approval of the report of the 87th meeting of the Advisory Committee
 Report from the Bureau
 Recent developments: update by the Secretariat
- 10.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Ukraine
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Ukraine

Tuesday, 10 February

- 9.00 – 10.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Ukraine
- 10.00 – 11.00 Exchange of views with Michael O'Flaherty, Council of Europe Commissioner for H. Rights
- 11.15 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Ukraine
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on Croatia

Wednesday, 11 February

- 9.00 – 10.00 Monitoring: Reading and final adoption of the draft Sixth Opinion on Italy
- 10.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on the Slovak Republic
- 14.00 – 18.00 Monitoring: First reading of the draft Sixth Opinion on the Slovak Republic

Thursday 12 February

- 9.00– 12.30 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft Combined Fifth and Sixth Opinion on Ukraine
- 14.00 – 17.30 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft Sixth Opinion on Croatia

Friday, 13 February

- 9.00 – 12.30 Monitoring: Second reading and possible approval of the draft Sixth Opinion on the Slovak Republic
- 14.00 – 17.00 Composition of Working groups/Planning of visits
 Exchange about upcoming visits (Slovenia, Romania, Republic of Moldova)
 Next meetings
 Any other business
 List of decisions adopted during the meeting

Appendix II – List of participants

▪ Ordinary Members

Pedro AGUILERA CORTÉS (Spain)
 Evis ALIMEHMETI (Albania)
 Ingeborg BIRNIE-HAVENGA (Netherlands)
 Besarion BOKHASHVILI (Georgia)
 Vladimir DJURIĆ (Serbia)
 Yuliia FYSUN (Ukraine)
 Tomáš HRUSTIČ (Slovak Republic)
 Šarūnas LIEKIS (Lithuania)
 Tove H. MALLOY (Denmark)
 Egly PANTELAKIS (Cyprus)
 Klaus POIER (Austria)
 Detlev REIN (Germany)
 Petra ROTER (Slovenia)
 Roksana RUDEVIČA (Latvia)
 Elisabeth SÁNDOR-SZALAY (Hungary)
 David SMITH (United Kingdom)
 Judith WYTTEBACH (Switzerland)

▪ Excused

Laura-Maria CRĂCIUNEAN-TATU (Romania)

▪ Additional member

Emma LANTSCHNER (Italy) online

▪ Guest speaker

Michael O'FLAHERTY, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

▪ Secretariat of the Council of Europe

Elise CORNU, Executive Secretary and Head of the National Minorities and Minority Languages Division
 Sara CAMUSSI, Project Officer
 Lusine DRAMPYAN, Administrator
 Michaël GUET, Administrator, Policy Adviser
 Maxime HUOT, Administrator
 Tankut SOYKAN, Administrator
 Zeynep USAL-KANZLER, Administrator
 Snežana LALIČIĆ, Administrative Assistant
 Thomas GRIFFITHS, Trainee

Claudia LAM, Head of Division, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
 Cristina GENOVESE, Adviser, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights