An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais agus Comhionannais
Department of Children, Disability and Equality

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



Follow-up dialogue meeting on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Ireland

Dublin, 6 November 2025
Venue: Hilton Garden Inn (Custom House Quay, Dublin 1)

Ireland ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) on 7 May 1999. The Irish authorities apply the Framework Convention to persons belonging to the Traveller community, as well as to persons belonging to the Roma community.

States parties to the FCNM, including Ireland, have undertaken the commitment to support full and effective equality of persons belonging to national minorities in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, together with conditions that will enable them to express, preserve and develop their culture and identity. As part of the FCNM monitoring process, it is evaluated how the states parties implement recommendations to improve the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. Each monitoring cycle consists of the submission of a report by the state party, monitoring work by the Advisory Committee, and adoption of a resolution by the Committee of Ministers. As a follow-up to dialogue with the Council of Europe on minority issues, an event is usually organised by the state party concerned to address outcomes of the fifth-cycle monitoring. The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC) understands the monitoring of the Framework Convention as an open-ended process where each monitoring cycle builds on the previous one. Follow-up meetings form therefore an integral part of the monitoring cycles.

Follow-up meetings provide a platform for dialogue between the Advisory Committee and a multitude of stakeholders in the state party concerned. They are an opportunity for the Advisory Committee to clarify, where necessary, its position and for the authorities to report progress already achieved in the implementation of the recommendations or envisaged actions. Follow-up meetings help identify, through a dialogue with representatives of national minorities, the most efficient ways of practically implementing these recommendations and give also the possibility for the Advisory Committee to share good practices from its monitoring work. Finally, follow-up dialogue meetings can also serve the purpose to raise awareness about the principles and the provisions of the Framework Convention and the functioning of its monitoring mechanism.

As part of this dialogue, a follow-up meeting on the implementation of the FCNM, organised by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality under the Government of the Republic of Ireland, is being held in Dublin on 6 November 2025. During the event, a former expert of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention who had taken part in the monitoring visit to Ireland (18-22 September 2023), the additional member of the Advisory Committee in respect of Ireland, the Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, national and local authorities, the equality body and representatives of Traveller and Roma communities will discuss recommendations adopted by the Advisory Committee in its Fifth Opinion on Ireland, adopted on 16 October 2024 and published on 27 February 2025, as well as recommendations contained in the Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN(2025)2, adopted on 2 April 2025, and more broadly, ways to strengthen protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Ireland.

Bearing in mind the importance of a follow-up dialogue in identifying the most efficient ways of implementing the provisions of the Framework Convention, we therefore would like to invite you to have direct and beneficial exchange of information, views and future perspectives with experts and thereby develop comprehensive and inclusive approach towards the implementation of the observations and recommendations addressed to Ireland by the Advisory Committee and the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers.

ANNOTATED PROGRAMME

09:15 – 10:00 Arrival in Hilton Garden Inn (Custom House Quay, Dublin 1); Tea/coffee provided

10:00 – 10:15 OPENING REMARKS, PRESENTATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FOLLOW-UP MEETING

• Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary in the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Government of the Republic of Ireland (10' max)

• Michaël Guet, Policy Adviser on Roma and Traveller Issues, Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, National Minorities and Minority Languages Division, Anti-discrimination Department, Council of Europe: purpose and objectives of the Follow-up meeting (5' max)

10:15 – 11:15 INTRODUCTORY SESSION: MAIN DEVELOPMENTS OF THE NATIONAL MINORITIES POLICY, INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND ITS MONITORING PROCEDURE / SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH OPINION ON IRELAND

Moderator: Michaël Guet, Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Council of Europe

Speakers (discussion):

- Thomas McCann, additional member of the Advisory Committee elected in respect of Ireland: presentation of the Framework Convention, its monitoring mechanism and of the role of the national member

- Oliver Loode, consultant, former member of the Advisory Committee in respect of Estonia: main findings of the Fifth Opinion on Ireland and recommendations to the Irish authorities contained in the Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN(2025)2, and clarifications vis-à-vis the comments received from Ireland

- Carol Baxter of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Government of the Republic of Ireland, main developments concerning the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028 (NTRIS II), as well as other relevant legislation and policy by the state

- Martin Collins from Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre on the overall outcome of the Fifth Reporting Cycle on Ireland

Questions and answers: The participants may raise brief and concrete questions or request clarifications on the Framework Convention, its scope of application or its monitoring procedure and on the findings of the fifth cycle monitoring that might not be covered by the two thematic sessions below.

15' coffee break

11:30-13:00 THEMATIC SESSION 1: COMBATTING DISCRIMINATION AFFECTING TRAVELLER AND ROMA COMMUNITIES; TRAVELLER AND ROMA EDUCATION

Key topics for discussion related to discrimination: measures to combat and condemn acts of hostility, hate crime and hate speech towards Traveller and Roma communities; addressing "accent" when dealing with racially or ethnically motivated attacks; promoting Traveller and Roma women's inclusion and equality in Irish society; implementation of the National Equality Data Strategy; use of standardised "ethnic identifier" in line with international standards on data collection; granting the Workplace Relations Commission the

competence in cases of discrimination in “places of entertainment”; providing the Legal Aid Board with the possibility to represent victims of discrimination in front of all relevant bodies; addressing the contributing factors for the over-representation of Travellers in prison for minor offences, including women and youth

Key topics for the discussion related to education: implementation of the Traveller and Roma Education Strategy 2024-2030 (TRES), as well as the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028 (NTRIS II) in respect of education; addressing the extensive educational disadvantages of Traveller and Roma children and preventing their school dropouts; combating discrimination in education (e.g. through the implementation of Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying); preventing the disproportionate use of guidelines for reduced timetables on Traveller and Roma children; ensuring that school curricula and educational materials effectively promote the cultures, traditions, and histories of Traveller and Roma communities as elements of minorities’ identity.

Moderator: Sinéad McEvoy of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Government of the Republic of Ireland

Speakers:

(10’ max) • Oliver Loode, consultant, former member of the Advisory Committee in respect of Estonia, presents the concerned recommendations. In addition, he and/or the Secretariat will provide information about the main principles of the Framework Convention and some examples of good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

Discrimination

- Kieran Timmons of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)

- Martin Collins and Gabi Muntean of Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

- Margaret O’Riada of the Galway Traveller Movement

- Conor McGinn of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality

- Colm O’Loughlin of the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

Questions and answers

Education

- Maria Joyce of the National Traveller Women’s Forum

- Anastasia Crickley, former FCNM Advisory Committee member in respect of Ireland and former Chairperson of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- Eimear Heaney of Donegal Travellers Project

- Patricia Ballantine of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (TRPU)

- Amy Anderson of the Department of Children, Disability, and Equality (Early Years)

- Luke Donnelly of the Department of Education and Youth

- Niall Purcell of the Department for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science

Questions and answers

Lunch break (13:00 – 14:00), in hotel restaurant

14:00 – 16:15 THEMATIC SESSION 2: TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION AND ROMA HOUSING; HEALTH; EMPLOYMENT

Key topics for discussion on accommodation and housing: providing culturally appropriate accommodation for members of the Traveller community who so desire; improving accommodation and housing conditions for Traveller and Roma communities, including by ensuring safe living conditions; repealing the trespass legislation

Key topics for discussion on health: implementing the National Traveller Health Action Plan; developing the National Traveller Mental Health Action Plan with measures aimed at preventing suicides, including among youth, and mitigating the mental health crisis in general among Travellers; improving measures regarding the issuance of medical cards for Roma

Key topics for discussion on employment: developing the national Traveller and Roma employment strategy, developing Traveller-led social enterprises via a dedicated business support scheme

Moderator: Sinéad McEvoy of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Government of the Republic of Ireland

Speakers:

(15' max) • Oliver Loode, consultant, former member of the Advisory Committee in respect of Estonia, presents the concerned recommendations. In addition, he and/or the Secretariat will provide information about the main principles of the Framework Convention and some examples of good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

Accommodation and housing

- Bernard Joyce of the Irish Traveller Movement

- Nora Corcoran of the Galway Traveller Movement

- Danut Nae of CAIRDE

- Patrick O'Sullivan of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Questions and answers

Health

- Carmen Nae of CAIRDE

- Lynsey Kavanagh of Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

- Michael Mongan of Donegal Travellers Project

- Jim Walsh of the Department of Health

- Joe Doyle and Tony McCusker of the Health Service Executive

Questions and answers

Employment

- Michael Power of Involve CLG and Chairperson of the NTRIS II Employment Subcommittee

- Bridget Kelly of the Irish Traveller Movement

- Sergiu Pruteanu of Musicantia

- Nina Burke and Fintan Roche of the Department of Social Protection

Questions and answers

16:15 – 16:30 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE FOLLOW-UP DIALOGUE

Speakers:

• Carol Baxter, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Government of the Republic of Ireland

• Oliver Loode, consultant, former member of the Advisory Committee in respect of Estonia

• Michaël Guet, Secretary of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, National Minorities and Minority Languages Division, Anti-discrimination Department, Directorate of Equal Rights and Dignity, Council of Europe