



Vlada Republike Hrvatske
Government of the Republic of Croatia

Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina |
Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



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

Zagreb, 23 May 2022, from 09h00 to 15h30

Venue: Croatian Parliament (Ivan Mažuranić meeting room)

Background information on Follow-up meetings: Croatia has ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) on 11 October 1997 and applies it to 22 recognised national minorities: Albanians, Austrians, Bosniaks, Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Russians, Rusyns, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenians, Turks, Ukrainians and Vlachs.

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC) understands the monitoring of the Framework Convention as an open-ended process where [each cycle](#) builds on the previous one. Follow-up meetings are 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. The Follow-up meeting to be organised in the Croatian Parliament on 23 May 2022 offers an opportunity to discuss recommendations adopted by the Advisory Committee in its [Fifth Opinion on Croatia](#), adopted on 1 February 2021 (summary available in [Croatian](#)), as well as recommendations to the Croatian authorities contained in the [Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN\(2022\)2](#), adopted on 23 February 2022.

Follow-up meetings 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 planned. Follow-up meetings help identify, through a dialogue with representatives of national minorities, the most efficient ways of practically implementing these recommendations. Such follow-up meetings give also the possibility, for the Advisory Committee, to share good practices from its monitoring work.

Finally, follow-up 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.

ANNOTATED PROGRAMME

08:30 – 09:00 **Arrival and registration of participants**

09:00 – 09:30 Opening remarks, presentation of the objectives of the follow-up meeting

Moderator: Romana Kuzmanić Oluić, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Speakers:

(10' max) • **Anja Šimpraga**, Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Coordination for Social Affairs and Human and Minority Rights

(10' max) • **Alen Tahiri**, Director of the Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities

(10' max) • **Marie B. Hagsgård**, President of the Advisory Committee, member elected in respect of Sweden

09:30 – 10:00 Introductory session: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and its monitoring procedure; summary of the Fifth Opinion on Croatia

Moderator: Mr. Michaël Guet, Administrator, Roma Policy Adviser, Secretariat of the Framework Convention, Anti-Discrimination Department, DGII Democracy, Council of Europe

Speakers:

(10' max) • **Antonija Petričušić**, member of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Croatia

(10' max) • **Marie B. Hagsgård**, President of the Advisory Committee, member elected in respect of Sweden

(10') **Questions and answers:** The participants may raise brief and concrete questions or request clarifications on the Framework Convention, its monitoring procedure and on the main recommendations.

15' coffee break

10:15 -12:00 SESSION 1: Promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and self-identification as a minority, and combatting discrimination, hate crime, hate speech, anti-minority rhetoric and stereotypes, including in the media

Recommendations for immediate action of the CM Resolution:

1. ensure that both the census procedure and questionnaire are in accordance with international standards, so as to increase trust in data collection processes and census results; the category of 'other' should not be used to classify or reflect multiple affiliation;
2. develop a comprehensive strategy to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and an inclusive society, as well as to monitor and evaluate its impact; support periodic assessment of attitudes towards national minorities and perception of inequality and discrimination in society;
3. resolutely address and publicly condemn all instances of public incitement to violence and hatred, hate crimes, as well as radical nationalism, historical revisionism, glorification of persons convicted for having committed war crimes, and anti-minority rhetoric in public and political discourse, and ensure that cases of hate crimes affecting persons belonging to national minorities are prevented, effectively investigated and appropriately sanctioned; also step up efforts to ensure that all alleged cases of online hate speech concerning persons belonging to national minorities, along with those in the print and audio-visual media, are effectively monitored and, where applicable, sanctioned;

Further recommendations in the CM Resolution:

5. promote and implement measures to combat and sanction any form of discrimination, including intersectional discrimination, whilst paying particular attention to groups at risk such as Roma and Serb national minorities and returnees; in this respect, further improve the efficiency of the system of free legal aid to ensure equal access to justice for all persons belonging to national minorities, in particular the most vulnerable who are subject to discrimination;

6. ensure a more prominent presence of national minorities in public media by, *inter alia*, increasing the quantity and quality of media production for persons belonging to national minorities, as well as by increasing financial and human resources allocated for public radio and TV programmes developed for, about and by national minorities, in close consultation with their representatives.

Moderator: Aleksa Đokić, Head of Service for National Minorities, Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities

Speakers:

(10' max) • **Marie B. Hagsgård, President of the Advisory Committee** presents the concerned recommendations and provides additional information or further clarification on their meaning and context. In addition, she 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.

(20' max) • **Relevant authorities** inform, if applicable, of implementation measures already taken or of the measures planned, taking into account the interpretative guidance given by the ACFC member. In addition, they specify approximately when individual implementation measures will be taken until the due date of the next state report (1st March 2023) and indicate the authorities and officials in charge with a view to facilitating direct contacts between the minority representatives and those officials.

(30' max) • **Representatives of national minorities** react to the proposed actions and timing and make concrete proposals how the authorities could implement the recommendation(s) concerning persons belonging to their respective minorities. In addition, they may clarify how their associations can support the authorities in the implementation process.

(30') **Dialogue:** The dialogue between the representatives of national minorities and authorities aims at reaching a mutual understanding of how the recommendations of the AC/CM should be implemented by practical measures or other concrete action taken.

45' buffet lunch break

12:45 – 14:00 SESSION 2: Intercultural and inclusive education, use of minority languages and scripts, and display of topographical signs in minority language

Recommendation for immediate action of the CM Resolution:

4. promote inclusive and quality education; resolutely combat school segregation; ensure school attendance for all children during compulsory education; further reduce school absenteeism and early drop-out among Roma children and conduct an in-depth study on both internal and external causes of these issues, closely involving persons belonging to the Roma national minority and Roma mediators, as well as all competent authorities at state and municipal levels with a view to adjusting educational policies and measures.

Further recommendations of the CM Resolution:

7. reduce the minimum threshold for the official use of language and script of national minorities in local self-government units and ensure that the relevant legal requirements are observed and applied by all local authorities;

8. implement the right of persons belonging to national minorities to display street names and indications on public buildings in minority languages and scripts in accordance with the national legal framework and Article 11 (3) of the Framework Convention; also raise awareness at all levels and among the public about these legal obligations, as a demonstration of the diverse character of areas in which persons belonging to national minorities reside, traditionally and at present. In the implementation of these obligations, close consultations should be conducted between the authorities and representatives of minorities and the majority;

9. further develop and implement intercultural education in all schools and for all students about the contribution of national minorities to Croatian society, as well as their history and culture, as a part of the curricula of history, music and civic education. Education should be based on independent research and be designed in co-operation with representatives of the national minorities, with a view to reducing the prevalence of negative stereotypes and counteracting the tendencies in society of historical revisionism. Teacher training and updated textbooks and teaching materials in minority languages should be provided accordingly.

Moderator: Mr. Michaël Guet, Administrator, Roma Policy Adviser, Secretariat of the Framework Convention, Anti-Discrimination Department, DGII Democracy, Council of Europe

Speakers:

(5' max) • **Marie B. Hagsgård, President of the Advisory Committee** presents the concerned recommendations and provides additional information or further clarification on their meaning and context. In addition, she may provide related good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

(20' max) • **Relevant authorities** inform, if applicable, of implementation measures already taken or of the measures planned, taking into account the interpretative guidance given by the ACFC member. In addition, they specify approximately when individual implementation measures will be taken until the due date of the next state report (1st March 2023) and indicate the authorities and officials in charge with a view to facilitating direct contacts between the minority representatives and those officials.

(20' max) • **Representatives of national minorities** react to the proposed actions and timing and make concrete proposals how the authorities could implement the recommendation(s) concerning persons belonging to their respective minorities. In addition, they may clarify how their associations can support the authorities in the implementation process.

(30') **Dialogue:** See description in Session 1 above.

14:00 – 15:15 SESSION 3: Effective participation and access to socio-economic opportunities

Further recommendations of the CM Resolution:

10. ensure that the rights to effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public affairs, notably their right to be represented in the parliament, as well as other minority rights, are not limited;

11. in the light of relevant existing legislation, continue and intensify ongoing measures to ensure in practice proportional representation of persons belonging to national minorities in public services, the judiciary, the police and in the administrative bodies of local self-government units through appropriate measures;

12. assess on a regular basis the fulfilment of the local and regional self-government units' legal obligations as regards the effectiveness of support to all minority councils and representatives; make sure that all minority councils have sufficient resources to be able to participate effectively in local and regional decision-making processes and to preserve their independence;

13. improve housing and living conditions, with a particular focus on the Roma national minority and Serb returnees and find suitable and sustainable solutions to legalise informal settlements; strengthen existing measures contributing to the economic empowerment of minority communities, including returnees, through, *inter alia*, targeted investments in infrastructure.

Moderator: Aleksa Đokić, Head of Service for National Minorities, Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities

Speakers:

(5' max) • **Marie B. Hagsgård, President of the Advisory Committee** presents the concerned recommendations and provides additional information or further clarification on their meaning and context. In addition, she may provide related good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

(20' max) • **Relevant authorities** inform, if applicable, of implementation measures already taken or of the measures planned, taking into account the interpretative guidance given by the ACFC member. In addition, they specify approximately when individual implementation measures will be taken until the due date of the next state report (1st March 2023) and indicate the authorities and officials in charge with a view to facilitating direct contacts between the minority representatives and those officials.

(20' max) • **Representatives of national minorities** react to the proposed actions and timing and make concrete proposals how the authorities could implement the recommendation(s) concerning persons belonging to their respective minorities. In addition, they may clarify how their associations can support the authorities in the implementation process.

(30') **Dialogue:** See description in Session 1 above.

15:15 – 15:30 Concluding remarks and summary of the result of the dialogue

Moderator: Romana Kuzmanić Oluić, Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Speakers:

- **Alen Tahiri**, Head of the Government Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities.
- **Marie B. Hagsgård**, President of the Advisory Committee, member elected in respect of Sweden.