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EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Information Document
on the implementation of the
Recommendations for Immediate Action
based on the 5th monitoring cycle**

**Submitted by Armenia
on 27 May 2021**

**Recommendations for immediate action
as contained in the fifth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Armenia**

Assyrian

1. Favour the provision of at least a substantial part of pre-school education in Assyrian and provide information about the teaching in/of Assyrian in primary and secondary education.

Ensuring pre-school education for national minorities' children in their mother tongue is realized in accordance with the Republic of Armenia (RA) Law on "Pre-school Education" in the RA pre-school educational institutions. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that, in communities inhabited by national minorities, their contribution is considered as mandatory in the framework of the competition for investment programs of alternative pre-school services.

About 311 school-age children receive education (within the framework of educational curriculum) in their mother tongue (Assyrian) in the secondary schools of Ararat and Kotayk provinces of the Republic of Armenia.

2. Introduce the broadcasting of a public television programme in Assyrian on a regular basis and of a sufficiently long duration.

Related departments in the Public Radio of the RA, produce and broadcast radio programs in Assyrian for 15 minutes daily. Public Radio has created an Assyrian section on their website, on which they post the news in Assyrian language.

3. Promote the use or adoption of place names in Assyrian in accordance with the script and spelling of this language.

There has not been any proposal submitted to change the naming of places in Assyrians communities' whereabouts of the Republic of Armenia to territorial bodies.

In the meantime, it is noteworthy that in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic which has been ratified by the Republic of Armenia in 1968, inscription of traffic signs shall be in the National Language of the country (Armenian) and in international language, in this case with English letters.

German

Increase support to the Sunday school of the German minority, including by providing modern teaching materials in German.

The German community organizes Sunday school on the allotted area of the National Minority's Edu-Cultural centre or online due to restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic. Besides allotting the area to ensure the function of Sunday school, a corresponding amount has been provided from the state budget based on the presented estimation.

Thus, out of the 818,000 AMD allocated in 2020, 320,000 AMD has been spent for the organization of the Sunday school (mainly online), and in 2021, according to the submitted application, the amount was 360,000 AMD.

Greek

1. Favour the provision of at least a substantial part of pre-school education in Greek and teach Greek as an integral part of the curriculum in primary and secondary education.

Ensuring pre-school education for national minorities' children in their mother tongue is realized in accordance with RA Law on "Pre-school Education" in RA pre-school educational institutions. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that, in communities inhabited by national minorities, their contribution is considered as a mandatory in the framework of the competition for investment programs of alternative pre-school services.

Two organizations representing the Greek community facilitate a Sunday school. "Ponti" Greek NGO, organizes Sunday school in the Edu-cultural centre for National Minorities provided from the state (Address: 22 Saryan str.).

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, in 2020, the state funds allocation was not materialized for that purpose. For year 2021, and under the state funding structure, the amount of 500,000 AMD is allocated for the purpose of organizing Sunday school. "Union of Greek communities" NGO, organizes online Greek Language courses, for which 23,700 AMD was spent from state allocations in 2020, and for 2021 the corresponding amount was 728,000 in accordance with the presented application.

2. Introduce the broadcasting of a public television programme in Greek on a regular basis and of a sufficiently long duration.

Related departments in Public Radio of the RA, produce and broadcast radio programs in Greek for 15 minutes daily. Public Radio has created a Greek section on their website, on which they post the news in Greek language.

3. Promote the use or adoption of place names in Greek in accordance with the script and spelling of this language.

There has not been submitted any proposal to change the naming of places in Greek communities' whereabouts of the Republic of Armenia to territorial bodies. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic, which has been ratified by the Republic of Armenia in 1968, inscription of traffic signs shall be in the National Language of the country (Armenian) and in international language, in this case with English letters.

Kurdish

1. Favour the provision of at least a substantial part of pre-school education in Kurdish and provide information about the teaching in/of Kurdish in primary and secondary education.

Ensuring pre-school education for national minorities' children in their mother tongue is realized in accordance with RA Law on "Pre-school Education" in RA pre-school educational institutions. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that, in communities inhabited by national minorities, their contribution is considered as a mandatory requirement in the framework of the competition for investment programs of alternative pre-school services.

About 315 school-age children receive education (within the framework of educational curriculum) in their mother tongue (Kurdish) in the schools of Aragatsotn province of the Republic of Armenia.

2. Introduce the broadcasting of a public television programme in Kurdish on a regular basis and of a sufficiently long duration.

Related departments in Public Radio of the RA, produce and broadcast radio programs in Kurdish for 30 minutes daily. Public Radio has created a Kurdish section on their website, on which they post the news in Kurdish language.

3. Promote the use or adoption of place names in Kurdish in accordance with the script and spelling of this language.

There has not been any proposal submitted to change the naming of places in Kurdish communities' whereabouts of the Republic of Armenia to territorial bodies. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic, which has been ratified by the Republic of Armenia in 1968, inscription of traffic signs shall be in the National Language of the country (Armenian) and in international language, in this case with English letters.

Russian

Ensure that users of Russian may submit written applications in Russian to local branches of the national authorities.

Based on Article 20 of the RA Constitution, as well as Article 4 (a) of the RA Law on Language, correspondence in the RA state bodies is carried out in Armenian. At the same time, it should be noted that foreign language applications to the state bodies of the Republic of Armenia, including Russian applications, are processed. Therefore, persons communicating in Russian may submit written applications to the territorial bodies of the Republic of Armenia in Russian.

Ukrainian

Increase support to the Sunday schools of the Ukrainian minority, including by providing modern teaching materials in Ukrainian.

The Ukrainian community, on the contrary to "Ukraine" Federation of Ukrainians" NGO, is organizing a Sunday school in the office provided by the government. In 2021, for this purpose, according to the application submitted within the framework of the state grant, 250,000 AMD was allocated.

Yezidi

1. Favour the provision of at least a substantial part of pre-school education in Yezidi and provide information about the teaching in/of Yezidi in primary education.

Ten modular pre-school educational institutions are envisaged by means of the RA state budget, one of which is in Alagyaz Yezidi community of Aragatsotn province. The right to pre-school education of the children of both Alagyaz and six adjacent Yezidi communities will be ensured in the above-mentioned educational institution (teaching will be carried out in Yezidi language).

In all other pre-school educational institutions of the Republic of Armenia ensuring pre-school education for national minorities' children in their mother tongue is realized in accordance with RA Law on "Pre-school Education" in RA pre-school educational institutions. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that, in communities inhabited by national minorities, their contribution is considered as a mandatory in the framework of the competition for investment programs of alternative pre-school services.

About 1864 school-age children receive education (within the framework of educational curriculum and extracurricular group) in their mother tongue (Yezidi) in the schools of Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir and Kotayk provinces of the Republic of Armenia.

2. Introduce the broadcasting of a public television programme in Yezidi on a regular basis and of a sufficiently long duration.

Related departments in Public Radio of the RA, produce and broadcast radio programs in Yezidi for one hour and 15 minutes daily. Public Radio has created a Yezidi section on their website, on which they post the news in Yezidi language. The Yezidi section of the website has a 24-hour network radio station broadcasting Yezidi national music. Public Radio started producing and broadcasting Yezidi video programs on the Internet for a total of 15 minutes a week.

3. Promote the use or adoption of place names in Yezidi in accordance with the script and spelling of this language.

There has not been any proposal submitted to change the naming of places in Yezidi communities' whereabouts of the Republic of Armenia to territorial bodies. In the meantime, it is noteworthy that in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic, which has been ratified by the Republic of Armenia in 1968, inscription of traffic signs shall be in the National Language of the country (Armenian) and in international language, in this case with English letters.

Information on Recommendation CM/RecChL(2020)6 of the Committee of Ministers on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Armenia

1. favour the provision of at least a substantial part of pre-school education in Assyrian, Greek, Kurdish and Yezidi;

According to the law of the RA about "Pre-school education" admission of a child belonging to a national minority to an institution can be done by teaching the child in the mother language or in an institution that has a course of that language and in the absence of the teaching language it's selection can be made by the child's parent (legal representative of the child). For the implementation of the teaching process or an education course of respective language of the children of national minorities in their mother language the existence of relevant requirement is necessary (operation of groups comprising children of national minorities is possible by the density of incomplete set in the case of 8-10 children).

2. improve minority language teaching in primary and secondary education by extending the number of weekly lessons, promoting teacher training and producing modern teaching materials;

According to the drafted exemplary curricula by the RA MoESCS for 2020-2021 academic years by the "Exemplary curriculum for the secondary general education of national minorities" for the teaching of national minorities" "Mother language and literature" subject it is provided 3-4 hours for a week (4 hours for the grades of 1-5, 3 hours for the grades of 6-12). In the exemplary curricula of 2020-2021 national minorities it is not planned to add courses of mother language and literature.

In the RA the teachers' training and certification is not implemented for the purpose of modernization and improvement of process of training and certification since 2019.

For the training of teachers' staff it has been developed and is circulated new procedure of training and certification (it is also the order for selection of retraining organizations), as well as National centre for education and innovations of the RA MoESCS has started its activities which within the framework of its functions will restart the teachers' training and certification process. The training and certification process of all the teachers of RA will launch in 2021-2022 including the teachers belonging to the ethnic minorities.

The development of textbooks of mother language and literature textbooks of national minorities' as well as the modern educational materials is implemented by the representatives of national minorities.

3. introduce the broadcasting of a public television programme in Assyrian, Greek, Kurdish and Yezidi on a regular basis and of a sufficiently long duration;

The aims of function of Public TV Company of Armenia defined by law assume only the use of state language. Taking into consideration the importance of the issue the organizing process of TV shows in the languages of national minorities of the RA is planned to implement after the operation of Public TV company's second 24-hour channel which plans to provide an hour to the broadcast shows in the Kurdish, Yezidi, Greek and Assyrian languages every Sunday. The organization of the TV shows in the languages of national minorities of RA is planned to implement in 2022-2023 in case of provision of appropriate funding by the Government for the launch of the second public channel.

4. take steps to ensure that speakers of Assyrian, Greek, Kurdish, Russian and Yezidi can use their language in contacts with administrative and judicial authorities;

Legislation: The relevant Armenian legislation with regard to Article 9 and 10 of the Charter (*Use of the regional or minority languages by judicial and administrative authorities*) has been provided to the Committee and was reflected within the 5th Committee of Experts Report (hereinafter referred to as “Report”) (Pages 50-52). These provisions have served as a basis for the experts for their evaluation and elaboration of the Chapter 2 “Compliance of Armenia with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and recommendations” of the Report in a table format.

Remarks: It has to be underlined that in relation to Article 9 the legislation of Armenia does not have any differentiation between the representatives of national minorities: the legislation is the same for all national minority groups. The Republic of Armenia provided comments in this regard and asked the Committee to consider the information provided within the evaluation enshrined in Chapter 2 and to make relevant amendments (Please see the 1st paragraph of page 52 of the 5th report of the Committee of Experts in respect of Armenia).

We would like to also bring the attention to the Table of Evaluation (Chapter 2) of Article 9 in the Report, which is as follows:

Art. 9 Judicial authorities (from 9.1 aii-d)					
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Assyrian				↙	
Greek		↗			
Kurdish				↙	
Russian		↗			
Yezidi				↙	

- In the chapter related to changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle the following is mentioned:

Assyrian	The Armenian legislation regulating language use in judicial proceedings does not permit a speaker of Greek to use this language if he/she speaks Armenia, nor does it guarantee that the use of Greek would not involve extra expense. <u>Furthermore, Assyrian has not been used in practice before judicial authorities during the reporting period. Consequently, the Committee of Experts considers the undertakings</u>
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	<u>concerned not fulfilled.</u>
Greek	The Armenian legislation regulating language use in judicial proceedings does not permit a speaker of Greek to use this language if he/she speaks Armenia, nor does it guarantee that the use of Greek would not involve extra expense. <u>However, there were cases of translations from/into Greek made in criminal and civil proceedings during the reporting period. Considering on the one hand the deficient legal framework, but, on the other hand, a certain (albeit limited) practice the Committee of Experts considers the undertakings concerned partly fulfilled.</u>
Kurdish	The Armenian legislation regulating language use in judicial proceedings does not permit a speaker of Greek to use this language if he/she speaks Armenia, nor does it guarantee that the use of Greek would not involve extra expense. <u>In addition, there were very few cases of translations from into Kurdish made in criminal proceedings during the reporting period. Considering the deficient legal framework and the very limited practice the Committee of Experts considers the undertakings concerned not fulfilled.</u>
Russian	The Armenian legislation regulating language use in judicial proceedings does not permit a speaker of Greek to use this language if he/she speaks Armenia, nor does it guarantee that the use of Greek would not involve extra expense. <u>Nevertheless the Armenian authorities have provided data indicating that translations from/into Russian have been made in criminal and civil proceedings as well as in proceedings concerning administrative matters. Considering on the one hand the deficient legal framework, but, on the other hand, a certain (though limited) practice the Committee of Experts considers the undertakings concerned partly fulfilled.</u>
Yezidi	The Armenian legislation regulating language use in judicial proceedings does not permit a speaker of Greek to use this language if he/she speaks Armenia, nor does it guarantee that the use of Greek would not involve extra expense. <u>In addition, there were</u>

	<p><u>very few cases of translations from into Yezidi made in criminal proceedings during the reporting period. Considering the deficient legal framework and the very limited practice the Committee of Experts considers the undertakings concerned not fulfilled.</u></p>
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- It has to be also mentioned that the statistics enshrined in the Paragraph 33 of the Report were put on the basis of the evaluation of this Article. We would like to state that the absence or very few cases of translation from/into mentioned languages does not mean that the legislation does not provide this opportunity. Since the legislation is one for all the national minorities and provides equal opportunities for all, the absence of translation may either mean that there were no necessity (for example: the person also knows Armenian) or there were no any criminal or other proceedings with regard to the person belonging to that national minority. Moreover the high number of translations from/into Russian is also conditioned by a number of cases with regard to the persons engaged in proceedings but who does not belong to the national minority (not citizens of the Republic of Armenia).

- In the light of abovementioned we will highly appreciate it if the Committee of Experts could reconsider the evaluation of the implementation of undertakings under Article 9 for Assyrian, Yezidi and Kurdish from not implemented to partly implemented (since the Russian and Greek are considered as partly fulfilled having also the relevant statistics on translations implemented).

- With regard to the use of the national minority language with no extra expenses in all proceedings the Ministry of Justice will send the request to the Supreme Judicial Council to provide the relevant statistics of cases with the involvement of persons belonging to national minority groups and will consider the possibility of making relevant amendments.

ARTICLE 10

Taking into consideration the abovementioned, as well as the fact the Armenian legislation does not differentiate the rights for different minority groups (the legal regulations are the same for all minority groups); we will highly appreciate it if the Committee of Experts could reconsider the evaluation of the undertakings under Article 10 (10.1., 10.2.b, 10.5) as fulfilled/partly implemented/formally implemented in accordance with existing Armenian legislation and without any differentiation with regard to questions on the guarantees provided for by the legislation for all minority groups.

5. promote the use or adoption of place names in the minority languages in the municipalities concerned;

The relations related to the naming and renaming of geographical names is regulated by law on “Geographical Names” according to which’s part 2 of article 4 the naming of geographical objects is accomplished considering geographical, historical, cultural, ethnographic, social and other local conditions of that place. According to the article 6 of the same law suggestions on naming and renaming geographical objects maybe made by state administration and local self-government bodies, public organizations, legal and individual persons. According to location of geographical objects suggestions are represented to respective marzpet (Governer of the region) of RA. Within

two weeks marzpets of RA discuss the suggestions on the naming or renaming of geographical objects and the documents substantiating them and represent their conclusion to the Real Estate Cadastre Committee to the Republic of Armenia. Within one month the Real Estate Cadastre Committee together with the professional commission established by the government of Republic of Armenia studies the suggestion on naming or renaming geographical objects. In case of positive opinion, they are submitted to the Government of the Republic of Armenia for discussion in accordance with the established procedure. According to article 7 part 1 of the same law the names of geographical objects of the Republic of Armenia are given in Armenian. In the communities of the RA the use of topographic signs and signboards in the language of minorities cause no big problems. When there is a need to place street names as well as other topographic signs for the population and signboards in the language of ethnic minorities the issue is regulated by the law on Language of the Republic of Armenia which define that state and self-government bodies of the Republic of Armenia, enterprises, institutions and organizations are obliged to shape signboards, papers, stamps, seals, international postal envelopes, all means of advertising in Armenian combining them in other languages if necessary.

6. provide adequate funding for cultural activities and to the national minority associations in order to ensure the promotion of the minority languages, including extracurricular education.

Due to the need to address the issue, Council on national minorities' issues on its sessions of previous years has discussed it and has adopted a condition for the distribution of the means of national minorities' NGO-s provided by state budget. In the Council it was discussed the issue of increasement of the money allocated by the budget but restrictions regarding to covid-19 and hostilities in 2020 didn't allow an organization of progress.

At the same time, considering the suggestion on National minorities' issues, it was added surplus 5 million AMD to the 20 million AMD planned for national minorities by the budget, which can be provided as needed and directed to the implementation of communities' educational programs; organizing of Sunday schools and its activation in the whole territory of the republic, teacher's training, special courses, necessary educational literature, etc.