

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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MIN-LANG(2023)4

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Evaluation by the Committee of Experts
of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action
contained in the Committee of Experts' sixth evaluation report on**

CYPRUS

Introduction

1. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) is a treaty of the Council of Europe putting obligations on its states parties to protect and promote the country’s traditional minority languages in all fields of public life: education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, and transfrontier exchanges. The Charter was ratified by Cyprus on 26 August 2002. The Charter entered into force in Cyprus on 1 December 2002 and applies to the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages which are covered by Part II (Article 7) only.

2. The Committee of Experts monitors the implementation of the Charter. Each state party shall present a periodical report on the implementation of the Charter every five years. On the basis of the periodical report, the Committee of Experts adopts an evaluation report in which it makes “recommendations for immediate action” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in the state concerned. Based on this evaluation report, the Committee of Ministers adopts its recommendations to the state party.

3. Two and a half years after the due date of its periodical report, the state party shall present information on the implementation of every recommendation for immediate action¹ that the Committee of Experts has made in its evaluation report. The Committee of Experts then adopts an evaluation of the implementation of these recommendations. The “further recommendations” by the Committee of Experts are examined after reception of the next periodical report and the on-the-spot visit to the state party. Five-yearly periodical reports shall contain comprehensive information about the implementation of all Charter undertakings and all recommendations by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers.

4. Cyprus submitted the **information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** contained in the Committee of Experts’ sixth evaluation report² on 9 January 2023. This **evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** is based on the information received from the authorities of Cyprus, as well as from representatives of the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic speakers pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Charter.³ As far as the compliance of Cyprus with all its undertakings under the Charter is concerned, the Committee of Experts refers to its sixth evaluation report. The Committee of Experts will examine the implementation of all of the undertakings concerning all of the minority languages in the next evaluation report.

5. This evaluation was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 16 March 2023.

¹ In accordance with [Committee of Ministers Decisions “Strengthening the monitoring mechanism of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” \(CM/Del/Dec\(2018\)1330/10.4e\), para. 1.a.](#)

² [Sixth Evaluation Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages in Cyprus](#)

³ In accordance with the [Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts \(MIN-LANG\(2019\)7\), Rule 17, paras. 1-6.](#)

Examination of the implementation by Cyprus of the recommendations for immediate action

I. General issues

Consultation of representatives of the minority language users

6. The representatives of speakers informed the Committee of Experts that they were consulted by the state authorities when preparing the information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action that the Committee of Experts has made in its sixth evaluation report. The Committee of Experts welcomes that the state authorities complied with Articles 6 and 7.4 of the Charter. Organisations concerned by the recommendations made during the sixth monitoring cycle have been consulted and their needs and wishes have been taken into consideration in the implementation and related reporting.

7. The Committee of Experts reminds the authorities of Cyprus to ensure dissemination of the Committee of Experts' evaluation reports and related Committee of Ministers recommendations on their official websites, including through their translation into the national language.

II. Recommendations for immediate action

1. Armenian

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Facilitate training of teachers of Armenian.
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Implementation measures taken by the authorities of Cyprus

8. According to the authorities, two two-week training courses were organised for teachers of Nareg Primary Schools in Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol. The lectures were given by a teacher trainer from Lebanon in Armenian in November 2021 and in May 2022. The courses focused on mentoring newly appointed teachers of the Armenian language, improving teaching methodology and broadening the knowledge on teaching Armenian history.

9. Teaching in Armenian began in upper secondary education level in September 2021 with six students. The teacher of Armenian language of the Nareg Gymnasium participated in a teacher development course in the school year 2021-2022 for the first time. The course was organised in the form of interactive seminars focusing on the improvement of teaching methodology and the improvement of reading and writing skills of the students. The courses continued in the school year 2022-2023 and are being delivered by the Inspector of the Armenian Language in Cyprus.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

10. The Committee of Experts acknowledges that despite earlier financial difficulties, the authorities are now providing funding for the introduction of Armenian in upper secondary education and have taken first steps for teacher training in the form of courses. However, the Committee of Experts considers that besides these courses a more structured teacher training is necessary in order to provide teachers with adequate qualification for teaching at the secondary level of education. The state authorities are encouraged to provide sustainable funds for teacher training in the future, to continue to explore the possibility of inviting and employing teachers from abroad, and to report on the results in the next periodical report.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Consider creating a Chair of Armenian and make efforts in order to start a study program in Armenian at the University of Cyprus.

Implementation measures taken by the authorities of Cyprus

11. In order to comply with this recommendation, the authorities have taken steps in two directions. The University of Cyprus launched a new research project called CARMELA on 1 December 2022, in collaboration with the speakers and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth to be completed by 30 November 2024. The main objective of this research project will be the creation of an Archive of Oral Tradition, based on the experience of the work conducted on the Archive of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. Oral and audio-visual data will be recorded in a series of interviews with the speakers, which will be made public along with the results of the linguistic and cultural research work.

12. The department of History and Archaeology of the University of Cyprus has continued to present elements of the history of the Armenian community of Cyprus through teaching modules called “Medieval History”, “Modern History” and “Modern Greek and Cypriot History”.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

13. Based on the positive experience of the similar revitalisation project started in 2013 in respect of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, the Committee of Experts expects that the CARMELA project will be of great importance for the preservation of the Armenian language and cultural heritage. The Committee of Experts commends the state authorities for taking this initiative and encourages them to present the progress of this project in the next periodical report. The University of Cyprus is encouraged to extend the offer of teaching modules on Armenian history in co-operation with speakers. In order to raise further awareness of Armenian language and culture in Cyprus, the Committee of Experts invites the authorities to explore the possibility to present the results of both initiatives through electronic media in co-operation with the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation.⁴

14. Both the Representative of the Armenian Religious Group and the speakers have informed the Committee of Experts about plans to establish an Armenian Department at the University of Cyprus in the sixth monitoring cycle⁵, but the Committee of Experts has received no information on the implementation yet. The Committee therefore asks for further information on this initiative, as well, in the next periodical report.

2. Cypriot Maronite Arabic

Recommendation for immediate action

a. Introduce a scheme for the basic and further training of teachers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

Implementation measures taken by the authorities of Cyprus

15. As a follow up to the last evaluation report, teacher training seminars were held in the Annual Summer Linguistic Camp in Kormakitis in 2021 and 2022, organised by the University of Cyprus. According to the state authorities, the objectives of these seminars are to offer speakers willing to take up a teaching role, a knowledge of language teaching methodology which can be used in the Summer Linguistic Camp for children in Kormakitis. In addition to the teacher training seminars, a new textbook “Sanna A1” was

⁴ See para 30 of the [Sixth Evaluation Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Cyprus](#).

⁵ See para 16 of the [Sixth Evaluation Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Cyprus](#).

introduced for the first time in this camp. The state authorities have also expressed willingness to explore additional schemes for further teacher training.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

16. The Committee of Experts notes that the authorities have taken steps in order to enhance teacher training. It invites the national authorities to report in the next periodical report on how many of the participants who took the training in the Annual Summer Linguistic Camp have actually been enrolled as teachers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. Information on the impact of the new textbook and on the plans for further teacher training is also expected in the next periodical report.

Recommendation for immediate action

b. Introduce pre-school education in Cypriot Maronite Arabic and teaching of this language in secondary education.

Implementation measures taken by the authorities of Cyprus

17. Teaching in Cypriot Maronite Arabic was extended in pre-school level in October 2022. Teaching was started in two age groups. Eight children attended the first age group (4-5 years old) and 15 children the second group (5-6 years old). Both groups attended lessons once a week. Prior to attending pre-school, the children at the Agios Maronas Pre-Primary school participated in the Sanna Summer Linguistic Camp in Kormakitis in 2022.

18. According to the authorities, two separate language courses were organised for students in secondary education in Kormakitis, during school years 2021-2022 in the Sanna Linguistic Camp. In addition, an online course for students and young university graduates was organised and financed by the University of Cyprus from October 2021.

Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed

19. The Committee of Experts welcomes that the use of Cypriot Maronite Arabic began in pre-school in October 2022. However, the exact duration of the weekly teaching remains unclear. The Committee of Experts reiterates its position that less than three hours per week of teaching of a minority language is not sufficient for the preservation and development of language skills.⁶ The Committee of Experts therefore encourages the authorities of Cyprus to increase the use of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in pre-school education. This requires measures to train the teachers in sufficient number, as well as to actively inform parents of the extended teaching offer and to encourage them to enrol their children into the Agios Maronas Pre-Primary School, where Cypriot Maronite Arabic language is being taught.⁷

20. In line with the last evaluation report, the authorities are also asked to extend the teaching offer from the language courses to a more structured form of education and to introduce teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in secondary education.⁸ Furthermore, the authorities are asked to provide information on the development of the teaching material used in both levels of education in their next periodical report.

⁶ See also: para 39 of the [Eighth evaluation Report of the COMEX on Sweden adopted on 17 November 2022](#) and also para 94 of [Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on Sweden, adopted on 22 June 2017](#).

⁷ See also: para 26,30,32 of the [Seventh IRIA report of the COMEX on Hungary, adopted on 8 October, 2020](#).

⁸ See para 18 of the [Sixth Evaluation Report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Cyprus](#).

Communication to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, while acknowledging the efforts of the authorities of Cyprus to comply with their undertakings under the Charter, has in its sixth evaluation report (CM(2022)2) made “recommendations for immediate action” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in Cyprus.

In accordance with the Committee of Ministers Decisions of 28 November 2018 (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), Cyprus had to present information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action, which contain the priority measures that should be taken by the state party. Cyprus presented this information on 9 January 2023. In the present evaluation, the Committee of Experts has examined the implementation of these recommendations.

In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the Committee of Experts invites the Committee of Ministers to:

1. take note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action by Cyprus and invite the authorities of Cyprus to disseminate it to the competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders;
2. reiterate its Recommendation CM/RecChL(2022)1 and invite the authorities of Cyprus to present their next periodical report by 1 February 2024 in the required format.