

GVT/COM/VI(2026)2

Comments of the Government of Italy on the Sixth Opinion of the
Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National
Minorities by Italy

received on 12 May 2026

The comments have been submitted under the sole responsibility of Italy and made public by the Council of Europe Secretariat in accordance with Rule 29 of Resolution CM/Res(2019)49 on the revised monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Ministry of Education and Merit

With reference to the VI Opinion on Italy adopted on 11 February 2026 by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe (ACFC), we make the following comments and updates regarding intercultural education and knowledge of national minorities (Article 12) and the teaching of minority languages (Article 14).

Preliminarily, we welcome with satisfaction that the reference to the new Guidelines for the curriculum for pre-primary school and first cycle of education was incorporated in the VI Opinion, which emphasized the importance of learning languages and their cultures, as fundamental for active inclusion in the contemporary, interconnected and multicultural world. In this regard, it should be noted that, pending the adoption of the VI Opinion, the Guidelines for the curriculum for pre-primary schools and first cycle of education, which will come into force from the 2026/2027 school year, were formally adopted by Ministerial Decree No. 221 of 9 December 2025 and were published on the website of this Ministry. Therefore, it is requested to update footnote no. 209 (and consequently the subsequent notes 210 and 211) with the new link to the final text:

https://www.mim.gov.it/documents/20182/10554370/curricolo_web.pdf/f91c31a0-5ed4-65f3-bfeafb49adaba55f?version=1.0&t=1773224873548

With reference to the statement contained in paragraphs 143 and 146 of the VI Opinion, according to which *the high degree of school autonomy in the choice of teaching and learning materials, particularly textbooks, poses the risk of an inadequate representation of historical linguistic minorities, contributing to a broader lack of societal awareness about them*, we underline that in the Italian school system the school autonomy allows the National Guidelines to be adapted to the local context through the tool of the school curriculum. Teachers, in fact, within the scope of their constitutionally protected freedom of teaching, can use various kinds of teaching materials (not only textbooks but also articles, narrative texts, literary texts in the local language, self-produced materials, etc.) depending on the linguistic community in which they teach the minority language. Teachers can also choose not to adopt textbooks but to use other teaching materials of their choice. In this context, textbooks (especially those on history and geography) provide a general overview of linguistic minorities for the needs of agility and ease of reading, leaving teachers the appropriate insights into the local context. Textbooks are simply a support for teachers, who integrate the proposed topics and activities with other materials, readings and supports. Teachers have the responsibility to deepen the topics according to local history, culture and geography, within the framework of the curriculum defined at the school level.

In this regard, the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Merit continues in the expansion of the national training and research project "Integrated local curriculum and production of teaching materials in minority language". For the next two years, training and research activities will continue with an in-depth study of issues related to the design, evaluation and documentation of teaching materials in minority languages. In particular, other schools will be involved in the project also in order to encourage the development of regional and interregional "communities of practice", both in the same language and in different languages. In addition, a series of regional seminars is being held with the aim, on the one hand, of disseminating and sharing the methodological-didactic practices experimented from a curricular perspective in each minority language, and on the other hand, activating synergies, inter-institutional collaborations at the local level with local authorities, associations, cultural and academic bodies that can offer schools educational and didactic opportunities in the enhancement of the linguistic and cultural heritage minority.

Ministry of Culture

In response to the “Sixth Opinion on Italy” of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee, based on the information collected from the relevant departments, the Ministry of Culture provides the following elements with particular reference to the paragraphs concerning the protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity.

1. Preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of national minorities (relevant to Article 5 Preservation and promotion of minority cultures and languages)

The Ministry of Culture is actively engaged in the protection and promotion of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage related to historical linguistic minorities.

In this context, the Directorate-General for Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape, through the Central Institute for Intangible Heritage, implements research, documentation and dissemination initiatives. In particular, the project “*Gli Italiani dell’Altrove*” (2012 – ongoing) addresses the historical and contemporary presence of linguistic minorities in Italy and their intangible cultural heritage. The initiative has involved several minority communities and has resulted in publications, exhibitions and documentation activities.

2. Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue (relevant to Article 6 Promotion of intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding)

In response to observations concerning the promotion of intercultural dialogue and awareness of cultural diversity, the Ministry supports initiatives aimed at fostering interaction among communities. The project “*Italia dalle molte culture*” (2019 – ongoing) focuses on intercultural dynamics linked to migration and promotes cooperation with local communities and associations. Activities include ethnographic research and initiatives aimed at encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding in multicultural contexts.

3. Support to minority languages and cultural expressions (relevant to Article 5 Preservation and promotion of minority cultures and languages and Article 10 Use of minority languages in contacts with the administration)

With regard to the promotion of minority languages, the Ministry supports initiatives aimed at strengthening their visibility and use in cultural contexts.

Under the “Borghi” funding scheme, the Ministry has supported the last three editions of the Arbëresh Song Festival. The event, now in its 44th edition (August 2026), represents an important initiative for the promotion of the Arbëresh language and culture, contributing to its diffusion and vitality.

4. Cultural institutions and access to culture (relevant to Article 5 Preservation and promotion of minority cultures and languages and Article 10 Use of minority languages in contacts with the administration)

With regard to access to culture, information provided indicates that cultural institutions under the Ministry have implemented initiatives aimed at enhancing minority languages and cultures.

These include cultural events, educational activities and guided tours in minority languages, particularly in the Sardinian language, within museums and archaeological sites. Such initiatives promote the use of minority languages as tools for accessing and interpreting cultural heritage.

In addition, measures have been undertaken to enrich bibliographic collections relating to linguistic minorities.

5. Role of libraries (relevant to Article 12 Intercultural education and knowledge about national minorities)

The Directorate-General for Libraries and Cultural Institutes has highlighted the role of the National Central Library of Rome in preserving and promoting bibliographic heritage related to linguistic minorities. Activities include cataloguing, conservation, seminars and cooperation with national and international institutions.

6. Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities (relevant to Article 5 Preservation and promotion of minority

cultures and languages paragraphs 64–75)

With reference to the observations contained in the “Sixth Opinion on Italy” concerning Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities, information provided by the Ministry’s relevant structures indicates that, in certain territorial contexts, there is a limited presence of structured initiatives specifically targeting the Sinti community.

Furthermore, based on the available elements, the participation of these communities in institutional cultural activities appears to be limited in the same contexts.

These elements may be interpreted as indicative of a still limited level of interaction between the communities concerned and the institutional cultural offer.

7. General remarks

Overall, the information provided indicates an approach aimed at supporting the safeguarding and promotion of the cultural heritage of minorities, as well as fostering cultural and linguistic diversity through cultural, educational and research-related measures.

Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Department for Regional Affairs and Autonomies

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: with reference to the subject matter, it is hereby noted that the comments are presented in a logical and systematic order, rather than following the sequential numbering of the points set out in the Sixth Report.

Law No. 482 of 15 December 1999, implementing Article 6 of the Constitution, aims to protect the twelve historical linguistic minorities recognised in Italy (Catalan, Ladin, Greek, German, Croatian, Sardinian, Occitan, Franco-Provençal, French, Albanian, Slovene and Friulian). The Department for Regional Affairs and Autonomies is responsible for allocating the funds - annually appropriated under the Budget Law - for the financing of projects submitted in accordance with Articles 9 and 15 of the aforementioned Law (point 8).

The budgets initially allocated under Article 9 and 15 of Law 482/1999 were originally expressed in lire; the corresponding budgets amount to euro 5,061,277.61 and to euro 4,493,175.02 respectively (point 59).

Allocation procedures of the above-mentioned funds are set out in the related Implementing Regulation (Presidential Decree No. 345 of 2 May 2001). In particular, Article 8:

- Paragraph 1 provides the issuance, every three years, of a decree establishing the criteria for the allocation of funds, which does not require qualitative or quantitative criteria (point 36).
- Paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 identify the potential beneficiaries, which are: central government administrations and national non-economic public entities, local authorities, chambers of commerce, local health authorities, and the regions. The protective provisions for each historical linguistic minority apply within the territory where the minority is historically established, and where the recognised minority language corresponds to the means of expression of its members. (points 1 and 60).

When the historical linguistic minorities referred to in Article 2 of Law 482/1999 are distributed across different provincial or regional territories, they may establish coordination and advisory entities that local authorities have the right to recognize (point 67).

In order to obtain the funds provided for under Law 482/1999 – following a public notice issued on an annual

basis – local authorities, chambers of commerce, and local health authorities located in the designated territories submit, to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Regional Affairs and Autonomies – via their respective Region, projects concerning the following lines of action: linguistic helpdesks, language training, toponymy, and cultural activities (point 60).

Central government administrations and national non-economic public entities submit their projects concerning linguistic helpdesks and language training directly to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – Department for Regional Affairs and Autonomies (point 60).

It is hereby noted that linguistic helpdesks, whose activities must last for a full year, are intended to enable public administration offices to correspond in the minority language, through the use of employees possessing proven specific skills in the use of the languages recognized for protection, including employment, where relevant, under fixed-term contracts of up to one year (point 122). Where the entity is subject to the staffing limits established under current legislation, it may use alternative methods provided under Article 6, paragraph 3, of Presidential Decree No. 345 of 2 May 2001 (agreements to be signed with research and professional institutes, educational institutions, universities, etc.) (point 72).

It is also noted that the Department may provide a breakdown of the funds granted for each individual language, on an annual basis and by lines of action (point 121).

A graphical representation of the disbursement of funds over the 2014–2023 period has been published on the institutional website at the following link:

<https://www.affariregionali.it/media/mtsipjzb/allegato-3-analisi-dei-finanziamenti-2014-23-31724.pdf>

It is to be noted that a public notice is an administrative procedure used by the public administration to allocate grants, subsidies, or assign services without placing participants in competition with one another, unlike tendering procedures (point 65). All historical linguistic minorities may access the funds for their projects, provided they comply with the criteria set out in the public notice (point 60).

The allocation of funds is guided by the following general criteria:

by language - taking into account the territorial significance of each historical linguistic minority recognized for protection and, where possible, ensuring the financing of at least one project in favor of each minority in each region;

by lines of action: the percentage shares of each line have varied as of 2025, following consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee, as set out below:

linguistic helpdesks (30%), language training (5%), toponymy (5%) and cultural activities (60%) – point 72 -

With reference to the amount of resources from state budget appropriations for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024, it is noted that there has been a significant decrease in the appropriations made available for the purposes of intervention under Law 482/1999, a trend which is also confirmed for the year 2025.

It is highlighted that the timelines for the delivery of funds to the recipient entities have been respected by the Department, and that over the last three years the funds have been fully allocated (point 66).

As is well known, the protection of linguistic minorities in Italy concerns twelve historical language groups (Albanian, Catalan, Croatian, French, Franco-Provençal, Friulian, Germanic, Greek, Ladin, Occitan, Sardinian, and Slovenian) distributed across 14 Italian regions, which have adopted specific regional laws to implement the

protection provided under Article 6 of the Constitution and the national framework Law No. 482/1999. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 1 of Law No. 38 of 23 February 2001, the Republic recognizes and protects the rights of Italian citizens belonging to the Slovenian linguistic minority based in the provinces of Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine, in accordance with Articles 2, 3, and 6 of the Constitution and Article 3 of Constitutional Law No. 1 of 31 January 1963, approving the Special Statute of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region (point 1, point 67).

Within the Department for Regional Affairs and Autonomies, the Technical Advisory Committee referred to in Article 12 of Presidential Decree No. 345/2001 was established by Ministerial Decree of 17 March 2000. The Committee includes representatives of central government administrations, local authorities, the regions involved in the protection of minority languages, as well as representatives of the historical linguistic minorities themselves (point 8).