

SIXTH EVALUATION REPORT ON CYPRUS

Committee of Experts
of the European Charter
for Regional or Minority
Languages



Adopted on 1 October 2021

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages provides for a control mechanism to evaluate how the Charter is applied in a State Party with a view to, where necessary, making recommendations for improving its legislation, policy and practices. The central element of this procedure is the Committee of Experts, set up under Article 17 of the Charter. Its principal purpose is to report to the Committee of Ministers on its evaluation of compliance by a Party with its undertakings, to examine the real situation of regional or minority languages in the State and, where appropriate, to encourage the Party to gradually reach a higher level of commitment.

To facilitate this task, the Committee of Ministers adopted, in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 1, an outline for periodical reports that a Party is required to submit to the Secretary General. This outline requires the State to give an account of the concrete application of the Charter, the general policy for the languages protected under Part II and, in more precise terms, all measures that have been taken in application of the provisions chosen for each language protected under Part III of the Charter. The Committee of Experts' first task is therefore to examine the information contained in the periodical report for all the relevant regional or minority languages on the territory of the State concerned. The periodical report shall be made public by the State in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 2.

The Committee of Experts' role is to evaluate the existing legal acts, regulations and real practice applied in each State for its regional or minority languages. It has established its working methods accordingly. The Committee of Experts gathers information from the respective authorities and from independent sources within the State, in order to obtain a fair and just overview of the real language situation. After a preliminary examination of a periodical report, the Committee of Experts submits, if necessary, a number of questions to each Party to obtain supplementary information from the authorities on matters it considers insufficiently developed in the report itself. This written procedure is usually followed up by an on-the-spot visit by a delegation of the Committee of Experts to the State in question. During this visit the delegation meets bodies and associations whose work is closely related to the use of the relevant languages and consults the authorities on matters that have been brought to its attention. This information-gathering process is designed to enable the Committee of Experts to evaluate more effectively the application of the Charter in the State concerned.

Having concluded this process, the Committee of Experts adopts its own report. Once adopted by the Committee of Experts, this evaluation report is submitted to the authorities of the respective State Party for possible comments within a given deadline. A confidential dialogue may, at this stage, be requested by this State Party. The final evaluation report is made public, together with the comments, if any, which the authorities of the State Party may have made. This document is then transmitted to the Committee of Ministers for the adoption of its recommendations to the State Party, on the basis of the proposals for recommendations contained in the evaluation report.

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Executive Summary

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages entered into force in Cyprus in 2002 and applies to the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages, under Part II (Article 7).

The state authorities continue to support the minority language speakers by funding existing cultural institutions and establishing new sports facilities where their languages can be used. Consultation with representatives of minority organisations and their elected representatives in the Parliament is regular and their opinions are taken into account. Awareness about the Armenians and Maronites in the Cypriot society has improved, and no cases of discrimination were reported. The new scheme for funding cultural activities and the overall financial support of the state authorities is well-structured and adequate, within the possibilities of the state budget.

Armenian is taught in pre-school, primary and lower secondary education and teaching of Armenian is scheduled to begin in upper secondary education from September 2021. The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation broadcasts a radio program in Armenian on a daily basis. However, there is no regular presence of the Armenian language on public television, and it is absent from print media.

Cypriot Maronite Arabic is only taught in primary education. The teaching of this language should be extended to pre-school and secondary education in order to cover more age groups and thus ensure the future of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The research programme on Cypriot Maronite Arabic called the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic is in its seventh phase and is supported by the state authorities. Despite some efforts, Cypriot Maronite Arabic is almost absent from the broadcast media. The series of short documentaries on minorities planned to be broadcast by the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) may raise awareness in Cyprus about both minorities and their languages besides providing teaching materials in minority languages.

Teacher training for Armenian and especially for Cypriot Maronite Arabic has to be further facilitated by the state authorities. The offer of teaching materials has improved since the last monitoring cycle.

The use of both minority languages is detectable only in the cultural sphere of the public life, meaning that the state authorities' financial support is mainly aimed at this sector. Consultation between the speakers and the state authorities could be initiated about a gradual extension of both minority languages to other fields of public life, based on the slow but steady rise of the number of speakers of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

This sixth evaluation report by the Committee of Experts is based on the political and legal situation prevailing at the time of the Committee of Experts' on-the-spot visit to Cyprus in July 2021.

Chapter 1 The situation of the regional or minority languages in Cyprus – Recent developments and trends

1. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) is a treaty of the Council of Europe which places 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. Cyprus signed the Charter on 12 November 1992 and ratified it 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. Article 15 (1) of the Charter requires State Parties to submit three-yearly reports¹ on the implementation of the Charter. The Cypriot authorities submitted their sixth periodical report on 30 December 2019.² Due to COVID-19 containment measures the on-the-spot visit could only be organised in July 2021. This sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts is based on the information contained in the periodical report and statements made by representatives of the speakers of the minority languages during the on-the-spot visit (6-7 July 2021) and/or submitted in written form pursuant to Article 16 (2) of the Charter.

3. In its evaluation of the implementation of the Charter in Cyprus, the Committee of Experts has borne in mind that the Cypriot authorities are not in a position to exercise effective control over all of its national territory and cannot ensure the application of the Charter in areas not under its control. Consequently, all information and data presented in the periodical report concern the government-controlled areas.

4. Chapter 1 of this evaluation report focuses on the general developments and trends regarding the regional or minority languages in Cyprus and the situation of these languages. It examines, in particular, the measures taken by the Cypriot authorities to respond to the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers at the end of the fifth monitoring cycle and also highlights new issues. Chapter 2 provides a detailed overview of the state of implementation of each undertaking by Cyprus in respect of the given language as well as the recommendations addressed to the Cypriot authorities. On the basis of its evaluation, the Committee of Experts proposes, in Chapter 3, recommendations to the Committee of Ministers to be addressed to the Government of Cyprus, as provided in Article 16 (4) of the Charter.

5. The sixth evaluation report was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 1 October 2021. It was made public on 16 December 2021.

1.1 General developments in policies, legislation and practice concerning the regional or minority languages in Cyprus

6. The Committee of Experts was informed about the forthcoming census of October 2021 and asks the authorities to report on the outcome of the census in relation to statistics on the number of minority language speakers.

Resolute action to promote the regional or minority languages

7. The state authorities promote the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages mainly through education and cultural activities and provide financing on the same level despite shortages in the state budget. Financial support has been secured for the expansion or renovation of cultural facilities. These decisions were taken in co-operation and in consultation with the minority language speakers. The Committee of Experts acknowledges the close co-operation and constructive dialogue between the speakers and the state authorities and asks the latter to report on the implementation of the projects they support in the next monitoring cycle.

8. The Committee of Experts has not received new information on the progress made in the promotion of the minority languages in other fields of public life during the on-the-spot visit. It therefore asks the state authorities to develop a plan on the promotion of the minority languages in other fields of public life such as television and print media.

9. The Commissioner to the Presidency for Humanitarian Affairs and Overseas Cypriots (henceforth the Presidential Commissioner) coordinates and facilitates actions of all governmental bodies, visits the

¹ Since 1 July 2019, new rules apply according to the Committee of Ministers decisions adopted on 28 November 2018 on the strengthening of the monitoring mechanism of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages whereby States Parties submit their periodical report every five years (instead of every three years) and information on the implementation of the recommendations identified by the Committee of Experts in its evaluation report as being for immediate action every two and a half years.

² MIN-LANG (2020) PR 1.

Armenian and Maronite schools, attends cultural events and raises awareness of the minorities through publications and speeches. The education of children was given a high priority. For example, he visited the Nareg School on 14 November 2019, when the decision on the renovation and upgrade of the school was taken. The works were completed in 2021. There are several plans for renovating or expanding the establishments of the Maronites.

Use of the regional or minority languages in education

10. In pre-school education Armenian is the only language used in NANOR Armenian Childcare Centre for six hours per day for children up to three years of age. In 2021, 18 children were enrolled in NANOR under the supervision of four staff members. The institution needs to expand as the number of children slowly increases each year and there is even a waiting list for new admissions. All Nareg **Armenian** primary schools (Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca) and the Nareg Gymnasium in Nicosia, which is a lower secondary education institution, are fully financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (hereinafter "MOECSY"). Subjects such as history, religious education, geography, art and mathematics are taught in Armenian. The education system consists of a pre-school (52 children), a primary (145 students) and lower secondary school (24 students) in the 2020-2021 school year. Further investment is necessary within online teaching in terms of IT equipment and broadband internet access.

11. In the fifth evaluation report on Cyprus the Committee of Experts renewed its recommendation that the teaching of Armenian at the Nareg High School should be continued from lower secondary level to upper secondary level. The Committee of Experts has learned that due to financial reasons and low number of potential applicants the teaching of Armenian has not been extended to upper secondary level so far. However, according to the state authorities, teaching of Armenian will be introduced in one upper secondary school (lyceum) in Nicosia from September 2021 with 6 students, on a pilot basis. The Committee of Experts recommends that financial support should be given to ensure the provision of Armenian-language education in upper secondary level at the Nareg High School.

12. Teachers of Armenian have continued to update teaching materials or to develop new ones. However, textbooks are not available in sufficient numbers and their content is not always suitable to the Cypriot context. Teacher manuals and children's journals in Armenian are still imported from Lebanon and the United States of America. These materials are revised in Cyprus because the content of the books printed in the diaspora are outdated, and the history and heritage of the Armenians in Cyprus is not sufficiently covered.

13. The MOECSY has continued funding the purchase of these teaching materials from abroad. The Committee of Experts recommends to the state authorities to finance the editing of teaching materials in Armenian in Cyprus with the aim of being able to produce digital and printed materials in Cyprus in the near future.

14. Teacher training is provided in the Nareg Armenian Schools in Nicosia with the assistance of the University of Cyprus. The supply of teachers has been a problem since the closing of the Nicosia based Melkonian Institute³ in 2005. Despite the offer of government scholarships, no application for a position of teacher of Armenian language was received in 2021. The shortage of teachers can only be solved with teachers coming from Lebanon who would carry out training sessions two-three times a year. Although the funding has been secured by the state authorities through the Armenian School Board, immigration and visa issues hamper the process with the additional problem that foreign teachers often do not speak Greek. In addition, the training of teachers carried out by teachers from abroad had to be cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions.

15. In addition to these institutions, the Armenian language is taught for one month during the summer school holidays in the Nareg Summer School in Nicosia. Teaching of the Armenian language for adults is provided at the Adult Education Centres, where seven participants attended the course of 25 teaching sessions in the 2019-2020 academic year. The timetable of the Adult Education Centres has to be adapted to the needs of working parents in order to maintain these courses. The expenses are covered by the state authorities.

16. There is no study program of Armenian at university level. However, the speakers and the Representative of the Armenian Religious Group highly advocate the establishment of a Chair of Armenian

³ See para 45 of the 4th Evaluation Report of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on Cyprus. "A reopening of the Melkonian Educational Institute cannot be expected. The Cypriot authorities have contacted the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the owner of the establishment, but its position concerning the closure of the school has remained unchanged" also para. 61, footnote 6, in the 3rd Evaluation Report. "The Melkonian Educational Institute was an internationally recognised Armenian private school in Nicosia, providing bilingual Armenian English secondary education. It had existed for over 70 years and was closed down in 2005. See also paragraphs 88-91, 1st Evaluation Report.

Department in the University of Cyprus.⁴ The Committee of Experts asks the state authorities to consult with the Representative of the Armenian speakers in order to start a study programme in Armenian at university and encourages the establishment of a Chair of Armenian Department at the University of Cyprus.⁵

17. **Cypriot Maronite Arabic** is not present at preschool level. It continues to be taught at the Agios Maronas Primary School as an optional course in the afternoon, after the regular school hours have finished. 50 out of 78 students studied this language in the afternoon classes in the 2020-2021 school year. There are plans to teach this language in the morning classes, and the Committee of Experts is looking forward to reports on this initiative. The Maronite School Board is responsible for the daily management of the Agios Maronas Primary School, and the MOECSY is responsible for the financing of the institution. This system works adequately according to the School Board.

18. Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at secondary level. Since 2016, every year, around 100 children and 20 teachers and group leaders participate in the Annual Language Summer Camp in the village of Kormakitis, where both the language and the culture are taught. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, the Sanna e-Kkamp⁶ took place in August 2020. The number of children and youth enrolled in the programme was comparatively low (23). This was completely financed by the MOECSY.

19. The teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic is also provided at the Adult Education Centres on demand, and the expenses for the operation of the programme is covered by MOECSY. Teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic was not provided online from March 2020 to the end of May 2020, since the operation of the Adult Education Centres was suspended after 11 March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Cypriot Maronite Arabic was taught online to groups of students through a specific programme of the Office of the Representative of the Maronites. Moreover, lessons that began at Kormakitis in October 2019 for children permanently residing in the village with their families, continued online during the pandemic.

20. The authorities continued financing the training of teachers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in the last monitoring cycle along with producing new teaching materials, using the results of the work conducted in the framework of the Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. As a result of this work, A1 level teaching materials have been finalised and printed textbooks are ready to be used in the new school year 2021-2022 for students of 6-13 years of age, whereas work on textbooks for A1 level teaching for adults is underway and they are expected to be published by the end of 2021. The authorities claim to have difficulties in finding suitable young teacher candidates who would be willing not only to improve their language skills, but also to take up the task of teaching the next generations relatively quickly. There is currently only one qualified teacher of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in Cyprus.

21. The codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been completed, including writing conventions and an orthographic guide. Through a life-long learning programme of the MOECSY, an online course on new orthographic and writing conventions for university students and new graduates, funded by the University of Cyprus, was held between January and May 2021.

22. The MOECSY continues to promote Cypriot Maronite Arabic by producing teaching materials based on a new, updated curricula, which were piloted in the Agios Maronas Primary School in the 2020-21 school year. The new materials give a broader insight of the history and culture of the Maronites using partly the findings of the research of the Archive of Oral Tradition, and supplementing the subjects of religious education, history and geography. They will be applicable for grades 1-6, once approved by the Curriculum Development Unit of the Pedagogical Institute. The Committee of Experts welcomes this initiative but notes that the language of the new educational material is Greek, and therefore recommends that it is translated into Cypriot Maronite Arabic and incorporated in the regular curricula.

23. **The Committee of Ministers recommended in the last monitoring cycle, that the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic should be extended and strengthened.** The Committee of Experts found out that no decision about the extension of the number of teaching hours has been taken and urges the Cypriot authorities to take resolute action in this matter.

24. Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at university level. However, a research project at the University of Cyprus titled "The collection of an archive of oral tradition of Cyprus Maronite Arabic" is underway. The Committee of Experts noted the existing difficulties for expanding the teaching of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. However, despite the acute shortage of teachers, the Committee of Experts asks the state

⁴ See also para 187 of the 5th Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ACFC) on Cyprus, adopted on 7 November 2019.

⁵ See para 46 of the 3rd Periodical Report on Cyprus.

⁶ See Council of Europe, Protection and promotion of regional or minority languages: promising practices across Europe 2015-2020, p.20.

authorities to make steps in order to promote study and research on Cypriot Maronite Arabic at university or equivalent institutions in line with its recommendation from the 5th monitoring cycle.

Use of the regional or minority languages in the media

25. **The Committee of Ministers recommended in the 5th monitoring cycle to strengthen the presence of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic in broadcasting.** The CyBC radio station covers live Christmas and Easter Church Services of all minority groups. The CyBC radio station continues to broadcast a one-hour radio programme in **Armenian** on a daily basis, which covers literature, religion (the Armenian Christmas Divine Liturgy), content for children, health and news from Cyprus and the Armenian diaspora worldwide. These programmes are prepared and presented by Armenian speakers. Candidates for the seat of the Representative of the Armenian minority in the House of Representatives are hosted in the year of parliamentary elections, in order to present their political agenda.

26. However, there is no regular presence of Armenian on television. CyBC television broadcasts the programme "PAREV" using Armenian and Greek on an irregular basis. The last "PAREV" in 2019 lasted for 60 minutes and the content was mostly presented in Greek and included religious songs sung by the Armenian Church Choir in Armenian. The speakers would like to see more children's programmes to make Armenian more appealing to them. There are cartoons on the internet in Western Armenian which - in the speakers' view - could be broadcast in 30-minute blocks by the CyBC.

27. A magazine called "Artsakank" was published every other month, but the printed version was discontinued in 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so currently only the e-version is available. The speakers have raised their concern that the older generation was reading the printed version and would not use the e-version. Moreover, the two versions do not cover exactly the same scope, with the e-version focusing more, in terms of its content, on younger generation who use social media. The website www.artsakank.com.cy is in Armenian and English. The Ministry of Interior provides annual financial support for the publications of the Armenians of Cyprus. In 2018 and 2019 the amount of the support was 10 000 euros per year. The official website of Armenians living in Cyprus (www.cyprusarmenians.com) is available in English and Greek besides Armenian and is partly subsidised by the authorities.

28. The presence of **Cypriot Maronite Arabic** in the broadcast media is rare. The radio programme called "The voice of the Maronites" is presented by CyBC in Greek by a Maronite presenter and editor, and only occasionally includes interviews, religious and traditional music and songs in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. "Sigma TV", a private television channel has broadcast three seasons of television series called "Galateia", which contains Cypriot Maronite Arabic words and phrases incorporated into the Greek dialogues and portrays the last 200 years of Maronites living in Cyprus. Other than this series, there is no television programme in Cypriot Maronite Arabic. The Committee of Experts invites the authorities to publicise the results of the linguistic research 'Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic' in radio or television in programmes aimed at adult speakers and children alike, thus facilitating teaching of the language.

29. "Maronite Press" is the only print media of the Maronites, which is published by the Office of the Representative of the Maronites, with the financial support of the Ministry of Interior. The publication is in Greek and English, containing only sporadically the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language. There are two websites covering Maronite topics (www.maroniteslive.com and www.kormakitis.net), both in the Greek language. The website www.kormakitis.net, has a special field for Cypriot Maronite Arabic with recipes, articles and matters related to the Maronites in that language, a keyboard in Cyprus Maronite Arabic, the alphabet and recordings of Cypriot Maronite Arabic are also available. In the Library section of this website, one can find many publications and books on Maronites, as well as A1 level teaching materials. The Ministry of Interior provides annual financial support for the publications of the Maronites as well. Since 2018 the amount of their support has been 10 000 euros annually.

30. The Committee of Experts has proposed structural amendments and improvements for the minority language programs to the state authorities during the on-the-spot visit. The state authorities explained that the CyBC is ready to air new programmes made by the speakers and that the CyBC is to be restructured this year, hoping that a reinforced media house will be able to offer a wider range of programs, including those in the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages.

Use of the regional or minority languages in cultural activities and facilities

31. A children's church choir performing in **Armenian** is an important institution for the practice of the Armenian language. There are also many cultural activities, involving the young generations, based on Armenian traditions and presented in Armenian language such as plays and folklore dances performed by children. Students of the Nareg School also participate in presenting short stories in Armenian and Greek to

the non-speakers as well. Cultural activities that are performed to celebrate the Armenian Christmas are broadcast by the CyBC.

32. Kormakitis is the village where Maronites traditionally speak **Cypriot Maronite Arabic**. It has become one of the venues of cultural activities such as the celebration of St. George's Day. Up until 2018, subsidies were given to individual members, NGOs and artistic groups of the three Religious Groups of Cyprus through an overall cultural programme of the Department of Cultural Services titled "POLITISMOS", in the same way they have been given to all citizens of the Republic of Cyprus. However, that scheme did not prove to be effective as only one application was received from the Maronite community, and only four applications from the Armenian community. In 2019 a new scheme called Grant-aid Scheme for the Cultural Activities of the three Religious Groups of Cyprus was launched by the Department of Cultural Services of the MOECSY in close consultation with the Representatives of the Religious Groups in order to promote the regional and minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth more effectively. Up to 50 000 euros per year have been earmarked for funding these cultural activities. All the citizens of the Republic of Cyprus who belong to the three Religious Groups are eligible to apply under this Scheme - either individually or as part of a group or organisation - through the Office of the Representative of the relevant Religious Group. The applications are evaluated, and a higher score means greater percentage of funds granted (between 70% and 90% of the approved expenses) with a ceiling of 10 000 euros per application. It is to be noted that 60% of the approved subsidy is granted immediately. The Committee of Experts welcomes the introduction of the new scheme of funding of the cultural activities. However, it asks the authorities to assess the effectiveness of the evaluation process and report on it in the next periodical report.

33. In addition to the new funding scheme, the Presidential Commissioner has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Public and Private Educational Institutions of Cyprus which enables members of the Armenian and Maronite communities to use the facilities of these institutions for their cultural events, free of charge.

Use of the regional or minority languages in transfrontier exchanges

34. Two trilateral meetings were held with the participation of the respective foreign ministers of Cyprus, Greece and Lebanon, and Cyprus, Greece and Armenia in 2019. The joint statements concluded that higher education is the field of co-operation that has to be developed, alongside science and culture. These new developments are still to bring results in the development and preservation of the **Armenian** language, so further information on the implementation of this co-operation is expected in the next monitoring cycle. For traditional reasons, the international exchanges are the strongest with Lebanon, given the fact that Cypriot and Lebanese Armenians speak Western Armenian. As a result, many textbooks, teacher manuals and journals come from Lebanon. In the framework of international co-operation, teacher training is provided in the Nareg Armenian School by a trainer from Lebanon two or three times a year, complemented by mentoring and evaluation of the headmistress of that institution, and funded by the MOECSY through the Armenian School Board.

35. The student exchange envisaged by the International Agreement concluded between the University of Cyprus and the American University of Armenia, has not yet taken place. The Agios Maronas Primary School has a school partnership with a school in Lebanon. During the reporting period, both schools co-operated in the creation of a dictionary of common words in Arabic and **Cypriot Maronite Arabic**.⁷

Non-discrimination

36. The Constitution of Cyprus, along with many important pieces of legislation in the field of media (Radio and Television Stations Law of Cyprus (L. 7(I) of 1998) and education (Regulations for the operation of public secondary schools issued in February 2017), contain regulations safeguarding equality and combating discrimination on grounds of nationality and language. The MOECSY continues to conduct an anti-discrimination campaign in public schools. Combating racism and intolerance and promotion of equality and respect between minority language speakers and the majority speakers is part of the curricula of subjects such as history, literature and religious education. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute organises trainings and workshops on anti-discrimination for teachers where the focus is on identifying various forms of discrimination in school and discussing ways of prevention. Moreover, both the Nareg and Agios Maronas Schools organise joint programmes with the participation of students from other public schools in order to enhance the acceptance and tolerance within the society. These programmes were conducted online when face-to face meetings were not possible during the COVID 19 pandemic. The speakers have also declared that they are not aware of cases of discrimination.

⁷ See also para.182 of 5th ACFC Opinion on Cyprus.

37. The idea of creating a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history and cultural heritage of Armenians living in Cyprus is supported by the Presidential Commissioner, the Representative of the Armenian Religious Group and the speakers alike. The decision that the exhibition will be presented as part of the new state-run museum, housing the collection of the entire cultural heritage of Cyprus, ensures the sustainability of the exhibition and also strengthens the sense that Armenians are an integral part of the modern society of Cyprus.

Consultation of the language groups

38. According to the speakers of both minority languages, there are sufficient channels and opportunities for consultation with the state authorities and both the Armenians and the Maronites consider that they are well looked after by the government. Suggestions of the speakers are taken into consideration and the implementation of their proposals of cultural or educational nature depend mainly on the financial resources of the state budget. The speakers were consulted in the course of the preparation of the sixth state report. The significance and the level of their political representation is at an adequate level, according to the Representative of the Armenian Religious Group. Improvements could be initiated, however, by having an official appointed at MOECSY to act as a liaison officer exclusively for the minority groups and language speakers.

39. The Presidential Commissioner, appointed by the President of the Republic of Cyprus and directly accountable to him, is responsible for the coordination of policy making and the implementation of issues related to minority language speakers. His office examines and gives support to all issues related to the religious groups. On a regular basis, the Commissioner has meetings with the Representatives of the Religious Groups in the House of the Representatives and other associations and NGOs of the minority speakers.

Awareness of the regional or minority languages in society

40. The state authorities continued to effectively raise awareness about the Armenian and Maronite minorities in Cyprus. The results of the scientific research on the culture and history of these minorities are regularly included in the general curricula, thus promoting acceptance through education.

41. The good co-operation between the Armenian Nareg schools and the Agios Maronas Primary School regarding teaching Cypriot Maronite Arabic has continued in the sixth monitoring cycle. Four primary schools participated in the event hosted by the Agios Maronas Primary School called "The Stories that a Gate Has Heard: a Voyage to the Neighbourhoods of Paphos Gate" on 7 February 2018. According to the authorities, there have been interactions between students from Nareg Gymnasium (lower secondary school) and Greek language gymnasiums (lower secondary school) and with the speakers as well. The meeting of majority and minority language speakers and cultural backgrounds of all age groups has contributed to a better promotion of the minority languages. St. Maronas Day was celebrated with the participation of four primary schools on 20 February 2019 in the Nareg Armenian School. During this event, the so called "language tasters" (15-minute language courses for adults and children), that were introduced in language fairs held in previous years, were also staged in order to present a short and engaging introduction of the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages to non-speakers as well.

42. The Office of the Representative of the Armenians, in collaboration and with the financial support of the MOECSY, organised its annual cultural event on 5 May 2019 at the Strovolos Municipal Theatre. The event included folkloric dances, songs, theatrical acts and an artistic programme, all based on Armenian history and traditions, in the Armenian language. This event could not take place in 2020 and 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

43. Digitalised issues of the updated versions on the history and culture of the Armenians and Maronites prepared by the representatives of the two minorities in the Parliament and the Press and Information Office of the Ministry of the Interior are available in English, Greek and French on CD and on the website of the Press and Information Office. Other publications like "Multireligious Cyprus", "Window on Cyprus" and "Aspects of Cyprus" are also available in several languages and in multimedia format and online. The publication's main purpose is to raise awareness and to promote culture of the minority language speakers of Cyprus.

44. Fourteen short TV spots of up to five minutes about minority language speakers are being prepared by the CyBC in order to raise awareness. These short films are to be broadcast in 2021. Also, a documentary of 30 minutes for the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language has already been produced. The Committee of Experts recommends the CyBC to broadcast these spots with subtitles in Greek and Armenian or Cypriot Maronite Arabic respectively. In this way, these programmes could serve double purpose of preserving the minority languages and raising awareness of these languages in the majority population at the same time.

1.2 The situation of the individual regional or minority languages in Cyprus

45. **Armenian** protected in Cyprus is an endangered language. It is a medium of instruction in pre-school, primary and lower secondary education. Teaching Armenian in upper secondary level will commence in September 2021, according to the state authorities. Teaching materials in Armenian are imported from Lebanon and the United States of America, but there is a lack of certain books, such as fiction, especially for young readers. There is no study programme of Armenian at the university level. The use of Armenian in public and private radio and television has not improved in the current monitoring cycle. The CyBC is planning to broadcast new TV spots in Armenian that may improve the situation. Due to the discontinuation of the printed version of the magazine “Artsakank” because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the speakers were left without regular printed news in Armenian and only the online news portal was available. Armenian is scarcely present outside the education system and cultural sphere in Cyprus. The acceptance and tolerance towards Armenians are commendable in the society, which reflects the efforts of the state authorities.

46. **Cypriot Maronite Arabic** is an endangered minority language. The level of language competency varies among the speakers. Cypriot Maronite Arabic is taught at the Agios Maronas Primary School by native Maronite teachers as an optional course in the afternoon, since the school follows the general curricula adopted in all primary schools in Cyprus in the morning. In the 2018-2019 school year 35 students attended the lessons. This language is not taught in any other educational level, apart from the Adult Education Centres where 35 adult students attended the lesson in the 2018-2019 school year. Apart from some teaching materials, textbooks are only available in a digital form. Cypriot Maronite Arabic is taught for the younger generation every August in the Annual Summer Language Camp in Kormakitis. This educational scheme is financed by the government and has become a popular choice of preserving culture and learning mother tongue for young Maronites. Teacher training is also organised in Kormakitis every July.

47. The linguistic research programme **Action Plan for the Revitalisation and Empowerment of Cypriot Maronite Arabic** is in its seventh phase. The objectives of this phase are similar to those of the previous ones by laying emphasis on the production of teaching material, the training of native speakers and on ethnographic work in order to enrich the **Archive of Oral Tradition** with new material. According to the authorities, 64 ethnographic interviews have been held with the participation of native speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic. Particular interest was given to collecting short stories, which were known only to those elderly Maronite speakers who were born and raised in Kormakitis prior to their expulsion from the village, as they hold not just linguistic value, but are witnesses of an almost forgotten cultural and traditional heritage of Kormakitis. More than 190 hours of natural speech and stories in Cypriot Maronite Arabic have been collected in the Archive.

48. There has been progress in developing teaching materials, too. A1 level teaching materials for children have been completed, and A2-B1 level teaching materials for children are in a preparation stage. The materials for adults for levels A1 and A2-B1 are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021. The publication of the materials is within the competence of the Pedagogical Institute and the MOECSY. All approved materials will be piloted through adult and children language classes currently organised by the MOECSY or the Office of the Representative of the Maronite community.

49. The creation of an online dictionary of Cypriot Maronite Arabic was not completed because it was not approved by the relevant committee of experts appointed by the Council of Ministers for the revitalisation of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, and it is currently under review. The existing material is, however, regularly updated to include new vocabulary from the interviews and is internally used. Standardisation of the writing has been completed. The whole revitalisation process has been carried out in close co-operation of and active collaboration with the speakers. Therefore, almost unanimous consent by the speakers has been achieved over the new writing system. According to the authorities, the scientific work will be continued based on the recent achievements. A new action plan will be launched for the next three years, which will be aimed at two actions: (1) the preparation of the Archive of Oral Tradition for researchers and the speakers (2) and the training of young teachers who will be called upon to take over language teaching. The Committee of Experts acknowledges the effort of the authorities and encourages them to continue the work on the revitalisation of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, because this programme is essential for the teaching and wider use of this language in public in Cyprus.

50. As the Committee of Experts has not received sufficient information on the traditional presence and use of Kurbetcha Romani in Cyprus, it asks again the Cypriot authorities to examine this with the help of experts or through a scientific study, and to return to this issue in the next periodical report.

Chapter 2 Compliance of Cyprus with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and recommendations

2.1 Armenian

2.1.1 Compliance of Cyprus with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Armenian

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle:

improvement deterioration = no change

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of Cyprus concerning Armenian ⁸	Fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
Part II of the Charter <i>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</i>						
Art. 7 – Objectives and principles						
7.1.a	recognition of Armenian as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Armenian	=				
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Armenian	=				
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Armenian, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life		=			
7.1.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Armenian • establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups 	=				
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Armenian at all appropriate stages		=			
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Armenian to learn it	=				
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Armenian at universities or equivalent institutions				=	
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Armenian	=				
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Armenian	=				
7.3	promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Armenian among the objectives of education and training encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Armenian among their objectives	=				
7.4	take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Armenian establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Armenian	=				

* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

Fulfilled: Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

Partly fulfilled: Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

Formally fulfilled: Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

Not fulfilled: No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

⁸ In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: [http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/\(treaty No. 148\)](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/(treaty%20No.%20148)).

No conclusion: The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

In its evaluation of the application of Art. 7.1-7.4 to Armenian, the Committee of Experts has kept in mind that these provisions should be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

2.1.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Armenian in Cyprus

The Committee of Experts recommends the Cypriot authorities to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.1.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in Cyprus⁹ remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

I. Recommendations for immediate action

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

II. Further recommendations

- c. Promote the use of Armenian, in speech and writing, in different fields of public life, especially in television and print media.
- d. Extend teaching of Armenian in upper secondary education.

⁹ See the Committee of Ministers Recommendations on the application of the Charter by Cyprus: CM/RecChL(2006)3 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c13c9); CM/RecChL(2009)5 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805afe41); CM/RecChL(2012)1 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805cada6); CM/RecChL(2014)7 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c4fa9); and Recommendation CM/RecChL(2018)1 (<https://rm.coe.int/09000016807b4266>); See also the relevant recommendations contained in the Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN(2021)3 of 13 January 2021 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Cyprus.

2.2 Cypriot Maronite Arabic

2.2.1 Compliance of Cyprus with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle:

improvement deterioration = no change

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of Cyprus concerning Cypriot Maronite Arabic ¹⁰	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
Part II of the Charter						
<i>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</i>						
Art. 7 – Objectives and principles						
7.1.a	recognition of Cypriot Maronite Arabic as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic	=				
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Cypriot Maronite Arabic	=				
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life		=			
7.1.e	maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Cypriot Maronite Arabic establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups	=				
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Cypriot Maronite Arabic at all appropriate stages		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic to learn it	=				
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Cypriot Maronite Arabic at universities or equivalent institutions		=			
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Cypriot Maronite Arabic		=			
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Cypriot Maronite Arabic	=				
7.3	promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Cypriot Maronite Arabic among the objectives of education and training encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Cypriot Maronite Arabic among their objectives	=				
7.4	take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Cypriot Maronite Arabic establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Cypriot Maronite Arabic	=				

* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

Fulfilled: Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

Partly fulfilled: Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

Formally fulfilled: Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

Not fulfilled: No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

No conclusion: The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

¹⁰ In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: [http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/ \(treaty No. 148\)](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/(treaty%20No.%20148)).

Changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle

Information regarding the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in Cyprus was provided by the state authorities in their periodical report as well as by the representatives of this community during the on-the-spot visit. This information allows the Committee of Experts to conclude that Article 7.1.f is partly fulfilled (see above paragraphs 17 to 24).

2.2.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Cypriot Maronite Arabic in Cyprus

The Committee of Experts recommends the Cypriot authorities to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.1.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in Cyprus¹¹ remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

I. Recommendations for immediate action

- a. **Introduce a scheme for the basic and further training of teachers of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.**
- b. **Introduce pre-school education in Cypriot Maronite Arabic and teaching of this language in secondary education.**

II. Further recommendations

- c. Promote the use of Cypriot Maronite Arabic, in speech and writing, in different fields of public life, especially in television and print media including an offer for children.
- d. Promote transfrontier exchanges in the fields covered by the Charter for the benefit of Cypriot Maronite Arabic.
- e. Continue producing teaching materials in Cypriot Maronite Arabic to be used in pre-school, primary and secondary education.

¹¹ See the Committee of Ministers Recommendations on the application of the Charter by Cyprus: CM/RecChL(2006)3 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c13c9); CM/RecChL(2009)5 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805afe41); CM/RecChL(2012)1 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805cada6); CM/RecChL(2014)7 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c4fa9); and Recommendation CM/RecChL(2018)1 (<https://rm.coe.int/09000016807b4266>); See also the relevant recommendations contained in the Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN(2021)3 of 13 January 2021 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Cyprus.

Chapter 3 [Proposals for] Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Experts, while acknowledging the efforts the Cypriot authorities have undertaken to protect the regional and minority languages spoken in their country, has in its evaluation chosen to concentrate on some of the most important deficiencies in the implementation of the Charter. The recommendations forwarded by the Committee of Experts to the Committee of Ministers should not, however, be interpreted as diminishing the relevance of the other, more detailed observations contained in the report, which remain valid in their own right. The recommendations proposed by the Committee of Experts are drafted accordingly.

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, in accordance with Article 16 (4) of the Charter, proposes on the basis of the information contained in this report, that the Committee of Ministers makes the following recommendations to Cyprus.

The Committee of Ministers,

In accordance with Article 16 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

Bearing in mind the instrument of ratification submitted by Cyprus on 26 August 2002;

Having taken note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts of the Charter with respect to the application of the Charter by Cyprus;

Having taken note of the comments submitted by the Cypriot authorities on the content of the report of the Committee of Experts;

Bearing in mind that this evaluation is based on information submitted by Cyprus in its fifth periodical report, supplementary information given by the Cypriot authorities, information submitted by bodies and associations legally established in Cyprus and on the information obtained by the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit;

Recommends that Cyprus take account of all the observations and recommendations of the Committee of Experts and, as a matter of priority:

1. strengthen and extend the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic;
2. provide teacher training for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic;
3. promote study and research on Armenian at university level;
4. strengthen the presence of Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic in broadcasting.

The Committee of Ministers invites the Cypriot authorities to submit the information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action contained in the sixth report of the Committee of Experts in due course and their seventh periodical report by 1 February 2024.¹²

¹² See Committee of Ministers' decisions [CM/Del/Dec\(2018\)1330/10.4e](#), and Outlines for the periodical reports on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to be presented by the States Parties, [CM\(2019\)69-final](#).

Appendix I: Instrument of Ratification



Cyprus:

Declaration contained in a letter from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Representation of Cyprus, dated 3 August 2005, registered at the Secretariat General on 4 August 2005 - Or. Engl.

In ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Republic of Cyprus deposited on 26 August 2002, a declaration which appears to be incompatible with the provisions of the Charter on undertakings to be applied by it.

In order to remove uncertainty and clarify the extent of the obligations undertaken, the Republic of Cyprus hereby withdraws the declaration of 26 August 2002 and replaces it with the following:

The Republic of Cyprus, while reiterating its commitment to respect the objectives and principles pursued by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, declares that it undertakes to apply Part II of the Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1, to the Armenian language as a "non-territorial" language defined in Article 1c of the Charter.

The Republic of Cyprus would further like to state that its Constitution and laws uphold and safeguard effectively the principle of equality and non-discrimination on the ground of a person's community, race, religion, language, sex, political or other convictions, national or social descent, birth, colour, wealth, social class or any ground whatsoever.

Period covered: 4/8/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s): 2

Declaration contained in a Note verbale from the Permanent Representation of Cyprus, dated 5 November 2008, registered at the Secretariat General on 12 November 2008 - Or. Engl.

Further to its Declaration of 3 August 2005, the Republic of Cyprus declares that the Cypriot Maronite Arabic is a language within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which it will apply the provisions of Part II of the Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1.

In doing so, the Republic of Cyprus further declares that, since the Cypriot Maronite Arabic is also used in the village of Kormakitis, cradle of the said language, situated in an area of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus under Turkish military occupation since 1974 in which the Republic does not exercise effective control, it excludes any interpretation of the Charter's provision in this regard that would be contrary to it, particularly its Article 5.

Period covered: 12/11/2008 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s): 2, 5

Appendix II: Comments from the Cypriot authorities

I. Introduction

1. Cyprus would like to thank the Committee of Experts for the preparation of its Sixth Evaluation Report under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
2. The report and its recommendations will be studied in detail and are duly noted. Furthermore, Cyprus will translate the recommendations of the 6th monitoring cycle in Greek and will publish them on the relevant Governmental websites.
3. Cyprus takes the opportunity to express its appreciation to the Committee for the constructive dialogue on the occasion of its country visit in July 2021.
4. As also stated both in the Reports of the Republic and in the Instrument of Ratification, the Republic of Cyprus undertakes to apply Part II of the Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1, both to Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages.

II. Comments on the observations and recommendations contained in the Sixth Evaluation Report of the Committee of Experts

The following comments are intended to clarify some issues mentioned in the Report and to provide some factual corrections:

5. Page 4 (Executive Summary) "...teaching of Armenian is scheduled to begin in upper secondary education from September 2021".

Comment: The sentence in question has to be corrected as follows: "...teaching of Armenian is scheduled to begin in one upper secondary school in Nicosia, where a significant number of students that belong in the Armenian Religious Group is enrolled".

6. Page 4 (Executive Summary): "...Cypriot Maronite Arabic is only taught in primary education".

Comment: The sentence should be corrected as follows: "Cypriot Maronite Arabic is taught at Agios Maronas Primary School as an optional course during the afternoon timetable".

7. Par. 14, "Teacher training is provided in the Nareg Armenian Schools in Nicosia with the assistance of the University of Cyprus".

Comment: There was a misinterpretation regarding this point. The sentence should be corrected as follows: "Teacher training is provided in the Nareg Armenian Schools in Nicosia with the assistance of the Pedagogical Institute (PI) of the MOECSY".

8. Par. 17 "...There are plans to teach this language in the morning classes, and the Committee of Experts is looking forward to reports on this initiative".

Comment: There was a misinterpretation regarding this point. Thus, the above sentence should be corrected as follows: "...There are no plans to teach this language in the morning classes".

9. Par. 19 "...Teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic was not provided online from March 2020 to the end of May of 2020, since the operation of the Adult Education Centers was suspended after 11 March 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic".

Comment: At the end of this sentence there is a missing information. Thus, it must be added that "One course for beginners' level was offered online from March to May 2021".

10. Par. 19 "...Cypriot Maronite Arabic was taught online to two groups of students 7-13 through a specific program of the Office of the Representative of the Maronites".

Comment: The sentence should be corrected as follows "Cypriot Maronite Arabic was taught online to two groups of youngsters 7-13 through a specific program of the Office of the Representative of the Maronites".

11. Par. 21 "... The codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been completed, including writing conventions and an orthographic guide. Through a life-long learning programme of the MOECSY, an

online course on new orthographic and writing conventions for university students and new graduates, funded by the University of Cyprus, was held between January and May 2021”.

Comment: For reasons of accuracy, the above sentence should be corrected as follows: “The codification of Cypriot Maronite Arabic has been completed, including writing conventions and an orthographic guide. Through a life-long learning programme of the MOECSY, an online course to students and young adults with little or no knowledge of CMA, funded by the University of Cyprus, was held between January and May 2021”.

12. Par.24 “...Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at university level. However, a research project at the University of Cyprus titled “The collection of an archive of oral tradition of Cyprus Maronite Arabic” is underway. The Committee of Experts noted the existing difficulties for expanding the teaching of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language”.

Comment: The following should be added: “Cypriot Maronite Arabic is not taught at university level. However, a research project at the University of Cyprus titled “MapCyArS which stands for Mapping Cypriot Arabic speakers: An investigation into linguistic demography and the sociolinguistic profile of Kormakiote Maronites” was financed by the A. Leventis for the years 2017-2020 and is now completed. The results have been published online at http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/synedria/literacy/2019/3rd_Lit_Con_Proceedings.pdf and in the journal Applied Linguistics”.

13. Par. 27 “...A magazine called “Artsakank” was published every other month, but the printed version was discontinued in 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so currently only the e-version is available. The speakers have raised their concern that the older generation was reading the printed version and would not use the e-version”.

Comment: It must be clarified that even though an e-version is only available because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was not done due to budget cuts of the Ministry of Interior.

14. Par. 32 “...Up to 50 000 euros per year have been earmarked for funding these cultural activities”.

Comment: The amount should be corrected as follows: “Up to 60 000 euros per year have been earmarked for funding these cultural activities”.

15. Par. 37 “.... The decision that the exhibition will be presented as part of the new state-run museum, housing the collection of the entire cultural heritage of Cyprus, ensures the sustainability of the exhibition and also strengthens the sense that Armenians are an integral part of the modern society of Cyprus”.

Comment: The above point should be reworded as follows “...The idea of creating a museum or cultural exhibition center dedicated to the history and cultural heritage of Armenians living in Cyprus is supported by the Presidential Commissioner and the Representative of the Armenians in the Parliament. We are in the phase of trying to find the appropriate location of the museum, always in consultation with the Armenian Representative in Parliament, to find the most suitable place”.

16. Par. 46. “...Apart from some teaching materials, textbooks are only available in a digital form”.

Comment: The sentence should be corrected as follows: “...Some teaching materials and a textbook is available in print since June 2021”.

17. Par. 48 “...All approved materials will be piloted through adult and children language classes organised by the MOECSY or the Office of the Representative of the Maronite community”.

Comment: There was a misinterpretation in this point. It must be clarified that “...All approved materials have already been piloted through adult and children language classes organised by the MOECSY or the Office of the Representative of the Maronite community”.

18. Par. 44. “...Also, a documentary of 30 minutes for the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language has already been produced”.

Comment: The reference is inaccurate and it should be corrected as follows: “Also, a short documentary for the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language will be produced”.

19. Par. 50 “As the Committee of Experts has not received sufficient information on the traditional presence and use of Kurbetcha Romani in Cyprus, it asks again the Cypriot authorities to examine this

with the help of experts or through a scientific study, and to return to this issue in the next periodical report”.

Comment: Not applicable. Cypriot Authorities do not concur with the above statement of the Committee. During the on the- spot- visit no information were asked on the traditional presence and use of Kurbetcha Romani in Cyprus.

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is an independent body that evaluates the compliance of the States Parties with their undertakings and, where appropriate, encourages them to gradually reach a higher level of commitment.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 25 June 1992 and entered into force on 1 March 1998, is the European convention for the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages. It is designed to enable speakers to use them both in private and public life and obliges the States Parties to actively promote the use of these languages in education, courts, administration, media, culture, economic and social life, and cross-border co-operation.

Regional or minority languages are part of Europe's cultural heritage and their protection and promotion contribute to the building of a Europe based on democracy and cultural diversity.

The text of the Charter is available in over 50 languages.

www.coe.int/minlang

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.