



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



Follow-up dialogue meeting on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by the Slovak Republic

Bratislava, 28 June 2023

Venue: Hotel Bôrik, Bôrik street 1628/15, SK-811 02 Staré Mesto, Bratislava

Background information: The Slovak Republic ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) on 14 September 1995 and applies it to the following national minorities: Bulgarians, Croats, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Jews, Moravians, Poles, Roma, Russians, Ruthenians, Serbs and Ukrainians. Furthermore, on 7 June 2023, the Vietnamese has been officially recognised as the 14th national minority. The Goral community has also made a request to be recognised as a national minority and its request is still under examination.

State Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), including the Slovak Republic, have undertaken commitment to support full and effective equality of persons belonging to national minorities in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, together with conditions that will enable them to express, preserve and develop their culture and identity. As part of the FCNM monitoring process, it is evaluated how the State Parties implement recommendations to improve protection of national minorities. [Each monitoring cycle](#) consists of the submission of a report by the State Party, monitoring work by the Advisory Committee, and adoption of a resolution by the Committee of Ministers. As a follow-up to dialogue with the Council of Europe on minority issues, an event is usually organised by the State Party concerned to address outcomes of the fifth-cycle monitoring. The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention (ACFC) understands the monitoring of the Framework Convention as an open-ended process where each monitoring cycle builds on the previous one. Follow-up meetings form therefore an integral part of the monitoring cycles.

[Follow-up meetings](#) provide a platform for dialogue between the Advisory Committee and a multitude of stakeholders in the State Party concerned. They are an opportunity for the Advisory Committee to clarify, where necessary, its position and for the authorities to report progress already achieved in the implementation of the recommendations or envisaged actions. Follow-up dialogue meetings help identify, through a dialogue with representatives of national minorities, the most efficient ways of practically implementing these recommendations and give also the possibility for the Advisory Committee to share good practices from its monitoring work. Finally, follow-up dialogue meetings can also serve the purpose to raise awareness about the principles and the provisions of the Framework Convention and the functioning of its monitoring mechanism.

As part of this dialogue, a follow-up meeting on the implementation of the FCNM - **organised by the Government Office of the Slovak Republic / Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities** will be held in Bratislava on 28 June 2023. During the event, experts of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention, the Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, national authorities, representatives of national minorities, and experts from the academia will discuss recommendations adopted by the Advisory Committee in its [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#), adopted on 2 February 2022 (a summary is also available in [Slovak](#)), as well as recommendations to the Slovak authorities contained in the [Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/ResCMN\(2022\)8](#), adopted on 3 November 2022, and more broadly, ways to strengthen protection of national minorities in the Slovak Republic.

ANNOTATED PROGRAMME

Invitations to the event will be distributed together with the programme in the second half of June

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

09:00 – 09:20 **OPENING REMARKS, PRESENTATION OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FOLLOW-UP MEETING**

- **Ingrid Brocková (tbc.)**, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Government
- **László Bukovszky**, Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities
- **Alexandra Castro and Mikko Puumalainen**, members of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Portugal and Finland respectively: purpose and tasks of the Follow-up meeting, presentation of the Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic (10' max)

09:20 – 10:10 **INTRODUCTORY SESSION: MAIN DEVELOPMENTS OF SLOVAKIA'S NATIONAL MINORITIES POLICY, INTRODUCTION TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND ITS MONITORING PROCEDURE / SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH OPINION ON SLOVAKIA**

Moderator: **Zoltán Kovács**, head of the secretariat of Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities

Speakers (discussion):

László Bukovszky, Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities: main developments concerning Slovakia's national minority legislation and policy and position concerning the extension of the list of recognised ethnic and national minorities to Goral and Vietnamese communities

Ján Hero, Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities: main developments concerning Slovakia's national Roma inclusion strategy

Tomáš Hrustič, member of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of the Slovak Republic: presentation of the Framework Convention and its monitoring mechanism and of the role of the national member

Alexandra Castro and Mikko Puumalainen, members of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Portugal and Finland respectively: main findings of the Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic and clarifications vis-à-vis [comments](#) received from the state authorities

Questions and answers: The participants may raise brief and concrete questions or request clarifications on the Framework Convention, its scope of application or its monitoring procedure and on the findings of the fifth-cycle monitoring that might not be covered by the three thematic sessions below.

5' coffee break

10:15 -11:30 **THEMATIC SESSION 1: MINORITIES' CULTURES AND LANGUAGES**

Key topics for the discussion: culture and language as elements of minorities' identity; rights of persons belonging to national minorities resulting from population census results; legislative and policy changes necessary to promote the effective protection of minorities' languages and cultures / ways to ensure proper funding of these activities

[CM/ResCMN\(2022\)8](#): recommendation for immediate action 2 and further recommendations 10 & 15.

See also [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#) recommendations in para. 112, 174, 186, 195, 196 & 238.

Moderator: **Milan Ján Pilip**, head of Office for Slovaks living abroad, member of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups representing the Ruthenian national minority

Speakers:

(10' max) • **Mikko Puumalainen**, member of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Finland, presents the concerned recommendations. In addition, he and/or the Secretariat will provide information about the main principles of the Framework Convention and some examples of good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

Discussion:

Alena Kotvanová, Director of Minority Culture Fund

Attila Lovász, Director of Section of national broadcasting, RTVS (public broadcasting)

Peter Medvid', member of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups representing the Ruthenian national minority

Klára Orgovánová, Director of Roma Institute

Ákos Horony, member of Round Table of Hungarians in Slovakia

Questions and answers

buffet lunch break (11:30 – 12:30)

12:30 – 13:45 THEMATIC SESSION 2: EDUCATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Key topics for discussion: *respective roles of the state, local and regional authorities and civil society in the education sector; inclusive and quality education of Roma children and measures to address persistent segregation in schools; legislative and policy measures for strengthening the teaching in and of minority languages at schools*

[CM/ResCMN\(2022\)8](#) recommendation for immediate action 3 & further recommendations 11, 12 & 13

See also [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#) recommendations contained in para. 204, 224 & 239.

Moderator: **Ábel Ravasz**, former Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities and member of the Committee for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups representing the Hungarian national minority

Speakers:

(10' max) • **Alexandra Castro**, member of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Portugal, presents the concerned recommendations. In addition, she and/or the Secretariat will provide information about the main principles of the Framework Convention and some examples of good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

Discussion:

Kálmán Petőcz, Director General, Ministry of Education

Ján Hero, Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities

Attila Fodor, Director of Comenius Pedagogical Institute

Luba Králová, Director of civic association Kolysočka – Kolíska (education in ruthenian language)

Questions and answers

coffee break (15 min)

14:00 – 15:15 **THEMATIC SESSION 3: EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

Key topics for discussion: challenges, including political ones, for strengthening the participation of persons belonging to national minorities; legislative and institutional framework for ensuring effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in decision-making; use of minority languages in local self-governments; networks of Roma mayors and of local authorities on national minorities

[CM/ResCMN\(2022\)8](#) further recommendations 6 and 14.

See also [Fifth Opinion on the Slovak Republic](#) recommendation contained in para. 246.

Moderator: **Kálmán Petőcz**, Director General, Ministry of Education

Speakers:

(10' max) • **Mikko Puumalainen**, member of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Finland, presents the concerned recommendations. In addition, he and/or the Secretariat will provide information about the main principles of the Framework Convention and some examples of good practices in other States Parties that could be used as sources of inspiration.

Discussion:

László Bukovszky, Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities

Róbert Dobrovodský, The Public Defender of Rights

Béla Keszezh, mayor of Komárno and vice president of Union of Towns and Cities of Slovakia

Štefan Vavrek, Roma activist, former member of parliament

Questions and answers

15:15 – 15:45 **CONCLUDING REMARKS AND SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE DIALOGUE**

Speakers:

• **László Bukovszky**, Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for National Minorities: main developments concerning Slovakia's national minorities policy

• **Alexandra Castro and Mikko Puumalainen**, members of the Advisory Committee, elected in respect of Portugal and Finland respectively