



Strasbourg, 5 September 2007

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**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

**COMMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PORTUGAL
ON THE FIRST OPINION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
BY PORTUGAL
(received on 1 March 2007)**



*Missão Permanente de Portugal
junto do
Conselho da Europa*

Nº24

Strasbourg, 27 February 2007

Dear Mr. Korkeakivi,

With reference to the Opinion of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities on Portugal, adopted on 6 October 2006, I have the honour to send the comments of the competent Portuguese authorities:

“As stated during this consultation process, Portugal does not recognize the existence of national minorities in its territory, recognizing only one ethnic minority, the Roma community.

A different matter is that Portugal has become a destiny country for immigration, which addresses different concerns than those of the protection of national minorities mentioned in the Convention. In fact, and as shown by the results of Eurobarometer's December report, Portugal is the second member of the European Union (following Sweden), whose citizen's most defend that immigrants are an important contribution to the country.

We would also have to disagree with paragraph 62, which states that attitudes of rejection and hostility towards minorities are present in the Portuguese society, for this does not accurately reflect the rule in the Portuguese society.

We would also like to reinforce that Portugal has in its legal frame several mechanisms to fight and punish practices of racial or ethnic discrimination in defence of any citizen that might be a victim of those practices, instead of a protection given to one national minority. Furthermore, it develops efforts to eliminate racism and intolerance, as recognized at the ECRI's 3rd report on Portugal.

Finally, we would like to inform you that the public statement mentioned in paragraph 47 was subscribed by the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination.”

With my best regards,

Joaquim Duarte
Permanent Representative

Mr. Antti KORKEAKIVI
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection
of National Minorities
Directorate General III – Human Rights
COUNCIL OF EUROPE