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**REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 25, PARAGRAPH 1
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR
THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part 1
Part 2
Article 1
Article 3
Article 4
Article 5
Article 6
Article 7
Article 8
Article 9
Article 10
Article 11
Article 12
Article 13
Article 14
Article 15
Article 16
Article 17
Article 18
Article 20
Article 21
Article 22
Article 23
Article 30

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**REPORT
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS
OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

The Russian Federation signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (of 1 February 1995) on 28 February 1996 while joining the Council of Europe. Russia ratified this Convention on 18 June 1998. On 21 October 1998 its instruments of ratification were deposited in the Secretariat of the Council of Europe.

In respect of Russia the Convention entered into force on 1 December 1998.

The present report is transmitted in accordance with art.25, para.1 of the Convention. This is the first report on the implementation by the Russian Federation of the provisions of this Convention.

The report has been prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the basis of information provided by various ministries and agencies, the Office of the General Prosecutor of the Russian Federation, the Chamber for Information Disputes under the President of the Russian Federation, the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and scientific and research institutions. A request to prepare written responses to the respective articles of the Convention was sent to the leader of the Congress of National Associations of Russia.

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Part 1

The Russian Federation is one of the largest multinational states in the world inhabited by more than 170 peoples, the total population being about 140 million.¹

Historically, Russia was formed as a poliethnic state. For most peoples the territory of modern Russia is their historical native land. The so called "title" ethnoses consist of 23 peoples and represent the "classic" national minorities (the Azerbaidjanians, Armenians, Byelorrussians, Greeks, Georgians, Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Koreans, Letts, Lithuanians, Moldavians, Germans, Poles, Tajiks, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Finns, Estonians and others). The number of small indigenous peoples in Russia is 65.

The population of various ethnic groups (including minorities) varies from several millions (the Ukrainians) to 10 thousand or less (24 ethnoses). On the whole minorities constitute about 20% of the population of the Russian Federation.

Successful implementation of national policy in a state with such ethnic, confessional and cultural diversity is impossible without a solid legislative basis. The fundamental instrument that regulates the obligations of the state in this field is the Constitution of the Russian Federation which guarantees every citizen equal rights and freedoms, provides for the right of citizens to determine themselves their national affiliation, to use their mother tongue, to choose a language of communication, education, etc.²

In recent years at the federal level several laws have been adopted that form a mechanism for the implementation of respective articles of the Constitution and directly concern the rights of national minorities. These are the Laws on National and Cultural Autonomy, on Guarantees of Rights of Small Indigenous Peoples, on Citizenship, on Education, on Mass Media, on the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation, on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations, etc. The new Penal Code that was adopted in 1996 provides for responsibility for violation of equal rights of citizens on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, material and official status, place of residence, relation to religion, opinion, affiliation to public organizations, as well as for acts aimed at inciting national, racial, religious hatred, degrading of national dignity, and for propaganda of exclusiveness, supremacy or inferiority of citizens on the grounds of their religious, national or racial affiliation.

The Laws on National Minorities in the Russian Federation, on the Principles of Organization of Indigenous Peoples Communities in the North, Siberia and the Far East, as well as the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on Measures to Prevent Incitement of National Dissension and Responsibility of Officials are being drafted or agreed upon. The process of the legislative base consolidation is under way not only at the federal level but also at the level of entities of the Federation. Its intensity raises problems of another kind, namely the need to overcome occasional inconsistencies between federal and local laws.

The main purpose of the national policy is to create conditions for equal social, national and cultural development for all citizens of Russia, as well as for integration of the society.

¹ See Annexes 1, 2 and 3.

² Here and below see the Annex entitled "Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation".

This purpose is most fully reflected in the Concept of the State National Policy approved on 15 June 1996 by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation. This Concept sets the following basic principles of the state national policy:

- equal rights and freedoms of an individual and a citizen irrespective of his race, nationality, language, relation to religion, affiliation to social groups and public associations;
- prohibition of any forms of restrictions on the rights of citizens on the grounds of social, racial, national, linguistic or religious affiliation;
- preservation of historic integrity of the Russian Federation;
- equal rights for all entities of the Russian Federation in their relations with the federal authorities;
- guarantees of the rights of small indigenous peoples in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, generally recognized principles and rules of international law and international treaties to which the Russian Federation is a Party;
- the right of every citizen to determine and specify his/her national affiliation without any coercion;
- promotion of development of national cultures and languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation;
- prompt and peaceful settlement of contradictions and conflicts;
- prohibition of activities aimed at undermining the state security, inciting social, racial, national and religious dissension, hatred or animosity.

The State Duma of the Russian Federation, in its statement of 6 November 1998 on inadmissibility of actions and declarations that aggravate ethnic relations in the Russian Federation, reaffirms that "the national issue may not and should not become a subject of political speculations... The historic experience of Russia's development has proved that the unity of our state can be maintained only through the strengthening of friendship and concord between its peoples... In our fatherland actions and declarations that aggravate ethnic relations are inadmissible... The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation strongly condemns all manifestations of national and religious intolerance that are alien to the peoples of Russia and stresses that benevolence, mutual support, respect for national dignity of all peoples have been and still are the most important factors of the strong Russian statehood".

The purpose of ensuring equal development of national minorities in Russia is extremely important for counteracting national and political extremism and separatism. The protection of the rights of national minorities represents for Russia a condition for maintaining its statehood and territorial integrity.

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According to the Constitution (Article 1) "The Russian Federation - Russia is a democratic federative law-governed state with a republican form of government".

The Head of State is the President of the Russian Federation (Article 80 of the Constitution).

The legislative body of the Russian Federation is the Federal Assembly - parliament of the Russian Federation (Article 94 of the Constitution). The Federal Assembly consists of two chambers - the Federation Council and the State Duma. The Federation Council includes two

representatives from each constituent entity of the Russian Federation: one from the legislative and one from the executive State government body (178 members altogether). The State Duma consists of 450 deputies: 225 deputies are elected in single-mandate electoral districts (a majoritarian one-round system of relative majority); 225 deputies are elected according to the lists of electoral associations under a single federal electoral district (proportional system).

The executive power is exercised by the Government of the Russian Federation. The Government consists of the Chairman of the Government, deputy chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation and federal ministers.

According to Article 118 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation "justice in the Russian Federation shall be administered only by court. Judicial authority shall be exercised by means of constitutional, civil, administrative and criminal proceedings". The Constitution of the Russian Federation establishes the legal regime of the functioning of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation and the Supreme Arbitration Court of the Russian Federation.

Article 15, para.4, of the Constitution of the Russian Federation says that "universally recognized principles and norms of international law, as well as international agreements of the Russian Federation shall be an integral part of its legal system. If an international agreement of the Russian Federation establishes rules which differ from those stipulated by law, than the rules of the international agreement shall apply".

A historically established combination of national-territorial and administrative-territorial principles of the state system is characteristic of Russia. The Russian Federation comprises 89 constituent entities of the Federation: 21 republics, 6 krais, 49 oblasts, 2 cities of federal significance, 1 autonomous oblast and 10 autonomous okrugs (Article 65 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

Out of 89 equal constituent entities of the Federation 21 republics (former autonomous republics whose constitutional status was raised), 1 autonomous oblast, 10 autonomous okrugs are, in fact, national-state entities enjoying complete political and administrative autonomy.

From the demographical point of view these entities are polyethnic. Only in 7 republics out of 21 representatives of the title nationality account for more than half of the local population. In a number of republics a large part of the title nationality lives beyond the limits of their national-state entity.

The situation when, as for example in Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Tuva and Yakutia where the percentage of those belonging to the title nationality is large or where representatives of this nationality constitute the majority in the state power bodies is not infrequent either.

For some peoples belonging to national minorities national administrative-territorial units were established in a number of constituent entities of the Russian Federation in early 1990s (for more detailed information see the reply to Art. 15 of the Convention).

In 1998 the gross domestic product of the Russian Federation amounted to 2,685 billion rubles and the per capita GDP - to 18,275,000 rubles.

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Part 2

Article 1

The protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights, and as such falls within the scope of international cooperation.

The Russian Federation is a member of the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, CBSS, ILO, UNESCO and cooperates with them in questions, pertaining to the protection of national minorities.

The Russian Federation has signed and ratified the following international conventions related to the protection of national minorities:

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of December 16, 1966;

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of December 16, 1966;

Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of December 16, 1966;

Convention on the Rights of the Child of November 20, 1989;

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of December 9, 1948;

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of December 21, 1965;

Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime on Apartheid of November 30, 1973;

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of December 18, 1979;

European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of November 4, 1950 and Protocols thereto;

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of February 1, 1995.

Preparation is underway to sign by Russia the European Social Charter and the European Charter for Regional Languages or Minority Languages.

Article 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually, as well as in community with others.

Article 26 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation says: "Everyone shall have the right to determine and declare his (her) nationality. Nobody shall be forced to determine or declare his (her) nationality".

In the Russian legislation in force there is no definition of the notion of "national minority" and consequently there is no list of population groups recognized as national minorities.

In view of the complex nature of this problem Russian scientists and politicians have not formed yet a common opinion about the criteria determining the notion of "national minority".

At the same time practice has shown that in satisfying various demands of national minorities two groups of entities in the ethnic composition of the Russian Federation are singled out:

- established nations or nations living in the territory of Russia for an extensive period of time, which can be conditionally called indigenous peoples;
- ethnic groups of a relatively more recent origin whose "mother" ethnoses live outside the Russian Federation (the CIS and Baltic countries, as well as Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, Korea, Poland, Finland and a number of another countries), and also those groups that do not have state entities at all (Assyrians, Karaites, Kurds and Gipsies).

Russian ethnographers and politicians argue whether it would be appropriate to refer to national minorities those national groups that represent Russian peoples living in a dispersed or compact manner outside their national territorial entities that are constituent entities of the Russian Federation (Bashkirs, Mordovians, Tatars and a number of other ethnoses).

In the state practice the full volume of rights in the fields of preserving and developing mother tongue, receiving education on mother tongue and choosing the language of education, conserving and developing national culture, establishing exterritorial national-cultural autonomy is extended to all ethnic groups (national minorities, indigenous and small peoples, etc.).

Article 4

1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.

2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons, belonging to national minorities.

3. The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

All citizens of the Russian Federation have an equal access to justice, including those belonging to national minorities.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation (paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 19) proclaims the equality of everyone before the law and before the court. At the same time the

State guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms of a person and citizen irrespective of gender, race, nationality and language. Restriction of rights in any form on the grounds of social, racial, national, linguistic or religious affiliation is forbidden. Protection by the court is also guaranteed by Article 46 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

The principle of equality of everyone before the law and the court is also enshrined in Article 7 of the Federal Constitutional Law on the Judicial System of the Russian Federation, where it is stressed that the courts shall not give preference to any bodies, persons, or parties to the proceedings on the grounds of race, nationality and language. According to Article 10 of this Law beside the Russian language the court proceedings can also be held in the official language of the Republic where the court is situated. The persons that take part in the proceedings are entitled to make statements and give explanations in their native language or in any language they chose, and to use interpretation.

The principle of equality of everyone before the law regardless of race, nationality or language is enshrined in all codes of procedure valid in the Russian Federation.

Article 69 of the Constitution safeguards the rights of small indigenous peoples in accordance with the generally accepted principles and norms of international law and international treaties signed by the Russian Federation.

The Federal Law on Guarantees of the Rights of Small Indigenous Peoples of the Russian Federation provides for judicial protection of the rights of small indigenous peoples (Article 14). Native environment, traditional life-style and economy, as well as trades and crafts of small peoples are also subject to such protection. During trials in which persons belonging to small peoples take part, customs and traditions of such peoples can be taken into account, and participation in defense of authorized representatives of small peoples is possible.

In Russia attention is paid to the development of institutions of non-judicial protection of rights and freedoms of a person and citizen, designed to complement the judicial mechanism of their securing. The national system of state non-judicial institutions for protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens, including those belonging to national minorities, include:

1. The Russian Federation Procurator-general's Office;
2. Commissioner on human rights;
3. The Presidential commission on human rights.

The Committee on Nationalities of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation is to work out a draft law on amendments and additions to the Russian Federation Criminal Code and the RSFSR Code of Criminal Procedure on responsibility for infringement on the integrity of the Russian Federation and violation of equality of citizens.

Article 5

1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to the national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation declares the Russian language the official state language in all the territory of the country. At the same time the republics of the Federation are entitled to declare their own state languages to be used by the bodies of state power, local authorities and state agencies of these republics along with the official state language of the Russian Federation.

The Constitutions of some republics contain special provisions on preservation and development of national cultures of the peoples that live in their territory, as well as on the right of these national groups to establish ethnic and cultural associations. So, the Republic of Buryatia «...provides for free development of nations and national groups that live in its territory, for creation of conditions necessary to preserve and develop their customs and traditions, promotion of legal activity of ethnic and cultural centers, associations and other social formations» (Part 2, Article 4 of the Constitution of the Republic)

The Constitution of the Republic of Bashkortostan (Article 53) «...provides for preservation and protection of intellectual and artistic heritage, increase of cultural values, preservation and development of Bashkir culture, of national culture of other peoples that live in the territory of the Republic».

The Russian Federation Federal Law on Fundamentals of the Russian Federation Legislation on of Culture of October 9, 1992 guarantees the right of peoples and other ethnic entities to preservation and development of their cultural and ethnic identity, protection, reconstruction and maintenance of native historical and cultural environment.³ All ethnic communities, living in a compact way outside their state entities or having no state, are guaranteed the right to cultural and national autonomy (Article 21).

To promote the guarantees contained in the federal legislation some republics worked out and adopted various laws incorporating the norms that to a certain extent deal with the issues of national and cultural development.

So, the Law of the Republic of Bashkortostan of July 13, 1993, on Culture recognizes the equal value of cultures of all peoples and ethnic communities living in the Republic, establishes for all peoples, ethnic, confessional and other groups the right to preserve and develop their cultural and national identity, to protect, store and maintain their native cultural and historical environment, to form and develop social and cultural infrastructures. The Law stipulates that the policy of creation, preservation and promotion of cultural values of a certain nationality should not damage the cultures of other nationalities living in the territory of the republic. The Law secures the state policy of protectionism aimed at developing the culture of the Bashkir people and, at the same time, at maintaining cultural identity of other ethnic entities through exclusive measures of protection and promotion. These measures are provided for in the federal and republican state programs of social, cultural and economic development. The opportunities for cultural development of national minorities in Bashkiria can be realized through realization of the right to cultural and national autonomy provided for in Article 21 of the said Law.

³ See Annex. 3.

In a number of entities of the Russian Federation the laws regulating the legal status of national and territorial units in the territory of these entities were adopted. So, for instance, the Law of Buryat SSR of October 24, 1991 on Legal Status of the Evenk Village (Settlement) Soviets of the People's Deputies in the Territory of Buryat SSR and the Law of the Republic of Karelia of November 22, 1991 on Legal Status of the National Districts, National Village and Settlement Soviets in the Republic of Karelia were adopted to promote a revival of restore the Evenk people in the territory of Buryatia and the Finns in the territory of Karelia, to satisfy the national, cultural, spiritual and linguistic needs of these ethnic groups. Both Laws deal with the issues of establishment of administrative and territorial units, such as the procedure and terms of determination of borders, etc., the issues of economic development, self-finance and financial aid.

The legal status of national minorities is also regulated by the treaties and agreements between the entities of the Russian Federation. Recently the practice of signing inter-regional treaties and agreements has become widespread. Among other things the parties to such instruments guarantee all citizens living on their territories equal rights and freedoms regardless of nationality, language and religion and undertake to facilitate mutual enrichment of cultures of the be peoples (including cultural exchange), to secure preservation and functioning of the native languages, cultures, customs and traditions, to promote the development of national self-consciousness. The treaties contain special provisions on mutual commitments of the parties to create the conditions necessary that would allow to satisfy the needs and to serve the interests of the national communities living in the parties' territories. The following examples can be cited: the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Udmirtian Republic of June 16, 1992; the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Republic of Marij El of September 18, 1992; the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the Chuvashi Republic and the Republic of Bashkortostan of March 24, 1994; The Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation between the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic and the Krasnodarskiy Krai of May 21, 1994, and other bilateral agreements.

National and cultural autonomies which are, in fact, public associations of citizens that identify themselves with certain ethnic communities, occupy a special position in this process. Such associations operate on the basis of voluntary self-organization and take an active part in tackling all issues related to the development of the language, education and culture of the respective ethoses. This practical form of self-determination and realization of the rights of national minorities is of special importance for those ethoses that do not enjoy territorial autonomy in view of their geographical dispersion.

The status of a national and cultural autonomy is defined in the Federal Law on National and Cultural Autonomy of 19 June 1996, the Federal Law on Public Associations of 19 May 1995, as well in the Basic Principles of the Russian Federation's Legislation on Culture.

According to the judicial authorities, there are over 250 national and cultural autonomies (NCA) registered in the entities of the Russian Federation: 7 at the federal level (Belourussian, Korean, Lezghin, German, Serbian, Tatar and Ukrainian autonomies), 73 at the regional and 175 at the local levels. Today the biggest number of NCA in the entities of the Russian Federation is registered in Moscow (45), Sverdlovskaya oblast (25) and Krasnodarkiy krai (8). Of 30 nationalities which have created their autonomies most active are the Tatars (30 NCA), Jews (20 NCA) and Germans (19 NCA).

There are plans to work out a program of actions to enhance further the development and preservation of culture, language and traditions of national minorities. For the time being only one such program - the Federal Task Program for the Development of Social, Economic and Cultural Basis for the Renaissance of the Russian Germans for the period of 1997-2006 - is realized at the federal level. This program was prepared in pursuance of the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation on Additional Measures to Secure the Rehabilitation of the Russian Germans of 6 June 1996 and the respective instruction of the Government of the Russian Federation of 13 June 1996 and is funded jointly by Russia and Germany.

99 million rubles were allocated to the program activities in 1998. The sum actually appropriated for the implementation of the Program by the end of 1998 amounted to 61.8 million rubles.

In the framework of this program practical measures have been taken in particular to create a single information space which would secure the process of renaissance of the Russian Germans' culture and language; the concept of national education and training of Russian Germans, as well as the basic education plan for national schools were elaborated. In six RF regions of compact Russian Germans' residence a system of special institutions to implement national programs in the field of education and culture of the Russian Germans has been created - Russian-German houses and centres of culture (which are at the same time the centres of inter-ethnic communication). The national and cultural autonomies of the Russian Germans has been created in 24 entities of the Russian Federation, as well as at the federal level. This program has been implemented on the basis of bilateral arrangements.

Similar federal task programs for the development and renaissance of the Turkic and Ugro-Finic peoples are being finalized.

In developing the concept of the state national policy the republics, krais, oblasts and areas (altogether 61 entities of the Russian Federation) have started to develop and implement regional concepts of national policy taking into account social, economic, ethnic and demographic features of each entity of the Federation. The concepts and programs of this kind are being developed and implemented in Bashkiria, Buriatia, Kareliya, Komi, Mariy-El, Mordovia, Sakha (Yakutia), Tatarstan, Udmurtia and Chyvasia, as well as in the Stavropolski krai, the Kaliningradskaya, Kurganskaya, Orenburgskaya, Permskaya, Samarskaya, Saratovskaya, Tyumenskaya and Chelaybinskaya oblasts, as well in a number of other entities of the Federation. These concepts are backed up by practical measures aimed at preserving and developing the culture and the language of the peoples living in this or that region. The budgets of a number of the Russian Federation's entities contain a special position on funding the cultural and educational institutions and the activity of the national and cultural associations. For example, the Russian government has allocated 150 ml. rubles for the activities to promote the national and cultural development of gypsies. The assistance was extended on an ad hoc basis to one of the gypsy organizations in accordance with a special order of the government of the Russian Federation.

We would like to note especially the efforts undertaken by the government of Moscow to create and secure the necessary conditions for the preservation and development of the national minorities' culture and language in a specific environment of this multiethnic and multireligious capital megapolis.

One of the main directions of the national policy in Moscow is the development of the ethno-cultural educational system, which is realized in practice through secondary schools, cultural and educational centres, teaching and educational complexes (TEC), Lycées, colleges and the kindergartens. Up to now the Moscow Committee for education has opened 15 secondary schools with an ethno-cultural (national) educational component - Azerbaijani, Armenian, Jewish, Korean, Lettish and Tatar, as well as a number of Russian culturologist schools; 7 teaching and educational complexes (TEC) in which the Armenian, Georgian and Jewish cultures are studied, Russian culturologist and multinational TEC with 17 national associations; for pre-school educational institutions where the Russian, Jewish, German and Tatar culture is studied; 10 cultural and educational centres (e.g. Azerbaijani, Armenian, Dagestani, Polish, Russian, Tatar, Ukrainian and Gypsy), as well as 4 Lycées specializing on crafts development. All educational institutions are state institutions. They are funded from the state budget.

As far as the so called processes of assimilation are concerned, Russia has a centuries-old experience of preserving unique national cultures including those of small ethnic groups. The legislative measures, policy and practice of the Russian state allow to achieve a sufficiently high level of preservation of the cultural and linguistic identity of ethnic groups and to prevent their assimilation unless the latter is a free and voluntary choice of such groups.

Article 6

1. The Parties shall promote the spirit of tolerance and dialogue between cultures, as well as take efficient measures to facilitate mutual respect, mutual understanding and cooperation between all persons living in their territory irrespective of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious affiliation, especially in the field of education, culture and information media.

2. The Parties shall undertake to take all appropriate measures to protect the persons who could become victims of threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence on the grounds of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious affiliation.

The legal basis of national relations and the concept of the state national policy lay a solid foundation for the successful efforts of the state aimed at strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation between the peoples living in the Russian Federation.

Respective action programs in this field are being implemented in many regions which allows to maintain a sufficiently high level of interaction and intercultural cooperation between the representatives of various groups. Thus, in the Omskaya oblast a project aimed at resolving the ethnic and cultural problems existing in this oblast has been developed; in the Orenburgskaya oblast an integrated task program to support the development of national cultures of the peoples living in the Orenburg oblast for the period 1996-1997 was implemented, in the Permskaya oblast an integrated task program to support the development of national cultures of peoples living in the basin of the Kama river for the period of 1996-1998 was implemented; a program to foster national development and interethnic accord in the Tomskaya oblast for the period of 1997-2000 is being implemented, etc. Draft programs to promote national development and interethnic cooperation between the peoples of Udmurtia and national development and interethnic cooperation between the peoples of Mordovia have been finalized.

There are plans to create the Moscow House of Nationalities in Moscow, which would allow to bring together representatives of various nationalities and make it possible for these representatives to communicate with their fellow-townsmen or fellow-villagers and representatives of other ethnic groups. There are plans to open national arts studios.

It has become a tradition to carry out joint activities in Moscow such as celebration of the Day of "Friendship Constellation", in which artistic groups and eminent representatives of national cultures take part. The days of the Russian entities culture, as well as the days of the CIS member-states culture are regularly celebrated in Moscow. The unifying power of cooperation is the focus of many conferences and "round tables" held to discuss the topics that concern not only the representatives of a given ethnic community, but also other peoples. It is, for example, the traditional "round table" on cultural dialogue between the Caucasians in Moscow held jointly by the Committee for public and interregional relations of the Moscow government and the Association "Women of Caucasus" at which the aspects of stabilizing interethnic relations and the role of cooperation and mutual understanding are discussed. The Moscow radio company "Moscow Radio Centre" informs in its program "The capital" in the Russian language about the life of national communities in Moscow, activities of national and cultural associations and other institutions.

Positive changes are observed in highlighting by mass-media the problems of national policy (new programs devoted to the culture of peoples living in Russia, problems of federalism, national intolerance and extremism have been launched). In perspective we intend to create federal information space for interethnic communication and forming public opinion in the spirit of cooperation, solidarity and friendship between all the peoples of Russia.

Today the leading role in the system of federal electronic media is played by the All-Russian state television and radio broadcasting company (WGTRK), which actively cooperates with many regions of Russia, as well as with the Republic of Belarus and the Baltic states. Its audience is over 96% of the country's population. It is on this state channel, that most programs on national problems are made. The problems of everyday life of ethnic groups in the post-Soviet area, and of representatives of diaspora in Russia are treated by the Inter-state television broadcasting company "Peace", the programs of which are broadcast by the radio station "Beacon" and the first television channel (ORT).

The acting legislation contains sufficient safeguards to protect those persons, who could fall or have fallen victims to threats, discrimination, hostile attitude or violence in connection with their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious affiliation.

In particular, the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Article 136) stipulates that violation of equality of citizens on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, birth, property and official status, place of residence, attitude to religion, beliefs, affiliation to public associations which has inflicted damage to the rights and legitimate interests of citizens is a punishable offense. Article 282 of the Code contains provisions on liability for inflating national, racial hostility, abasement of national dignity. Committing of crimes from national, racial and religious motives is an aggravating circumstance.

Annually, approximately 20-25 actions of persecution are instituted in Russia on corpus delicti specified in Articles 136 and 282 of the Criminal Code of Russia. Public prosecutor's offices of the entities of the Federation, territories and regions respond to the facts of violation of the rights of national minorities, and to the acts committed on the basis of interethnic conflicts. Only in 1992-1995 the Rostov regional public prosecutor's office

appealed against more than 30 illegal orders of the Cossack atamans and decisions of the Cossack circles, relating to national issues, which contained demands for deportation of the Dargin, Meskhetian Turk, Chechen families and persons of other nationalities from the region. Twice the public prosecutor's office demanded the Rostov regional court to put an end to the violation of rights of national minorities. The demands of the public prosecutors of the territory were satisfied. Due to the measures taken the interethnic situation in the territory of this entity of the Russian Federation has been stabilized.

In 1998-1999 representatives of the regional branch of the interethnic society of the Meskhetian Turks "Watan" addressed repeatedly the public prosecutor's office of the Krasnodarsky krai asking it to determine finally the status of this ethnic group members inhabiting Kuban. More than once the regional legislative authorities adopted normative acts aimed at limiting the rights of the Meskhetian Turks who migrated to Russia from Kirgizia, as regards their registration at the place of residence and acquisition of dwelling. As a result of the prosecutor's intervention all these anti-constitutional acts were brought in conformity with the federal legislation.

A number of proceedings were initiated by the regional bodies of the public prosecutor's office in connection with the acts aimed at sowing interethnic dissension (the Republic of Ingushetia, the Krasnodarsky krai and Stavropolskaya oblast).

The judicial practice of the recent years has underlined the need to strengthen the mechanism of protection of rights of national minorities, including on the basis of Article 136 of the Criminal Code of Russia (violation of equality of citizens).

Article 7

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Freedom of assembly and association of national minorities is ensured by the Constitution of the Russian Federation (Articles 30 and 31), the Federal Laws on Public Associations, on National and Cultural Autonomy and a number of other laws, continuous specific provisions which concern creation of associations aimed at preserving and developing national and cultural identity.

At present various associations at the federal, inter-regional, regional and local levels count to a few thousand in the territory of the Russian Federation. National associations account for a considerable number among them and their activity is aimed at preserving culture, language, traditions and customs of peoples of Russia. National public associations have been created and are actively working practically in all entities of the Russian Federation. Thus, in Moscow there are approximately 80 such associations, in St. Petersburg - more than 100. There are more than 50 associations in the Samarskaya oblast, uniting members of more than 20 ethnic groups: Azerbaijani - 3, Armenian - 2, Georgian - 1, Jewish - 23, Kazakh - 1, Korean - 1, Mordvinian - 3, German - 3, Polish - 1, Russian - 7, Tajik - 1, Tatar - 3, Ukrainian - 2, Gypsy - 1 and Chuvash - 3. As of 1 January, 1999 more than 30 national associations and cultural centres has been working in Novosibirskaya oblast. The largest of them (German, Tatar and Ukrainian) were founded under the aegis of the Committee for culture of the Administration of the oblast and enjoy the status of governmental cultural institutions.

Most famous associations at the inter-regional and federal level are: the All-Russian Moslem public movement "NUR"; the All-Russian social and political movement "Union of the Moslems of Russia"; the All-Russian social and political movement "Bashlam"; the International union of Greek associations "Pontos"; the Uzbek fellow-countrymen association "Vatandosh"; the Circassian (Adyghe-Abaza) National House; the Association of the Koreans of Russia, the "Birlik" society of the Nogay people; the International union of the Assyrian public organizations "Assyrian Congress"; the society of the Georgians in Russia; the Uighur scientific and cultural association; the Association of Finno-Ugric peoples; the Association of Greek Societies of Russia; the Congress of the Poles in Russia.

Administrative bodies of the entities of the Russian Federation provide national associations with all kinds of support in holding conferences, competitions, festivals of literary and thematic evenings, exhibitions and other events and arrangements, such as: financing (at present on a limited scale), allocation of premises, cooperation in organization of ethnic radio and television broadcasting. In a number of entities of the Russian Federation (Moscow, Tumen, Orenburg and other oblasts) financing of the activity of national associations is foreseen.

Thus, for example, the head of administration of the Ulyanovskaya oblast allocated on favorable terms premises, material and technical means, equipment, as well as means of communication to the Ulyanovsk Tatar national and cultural autonomy. It has been decided to allocate annually from the budget a certain amount to maintain the autonomy and to conduct some of its activities. Financial support was also provided to the Chuvash national and cultural autonomy.

The merger of various public organizations in larger ones has become a growing tendency. Thus, in the Republic of Tatarstan the association of national and cultural societies of the Republic of Tatarstan was created comprising 22 public organizations. In the Kamchatskaya oblast the Kamchatka center of national cultures functions, uniting more than 30 national and cultural organizations of the oblast. In Yamalo-Nenets autonomous district the Turkic national and cultural autonomy was set up, uniting representatives of different nationalities.

At the federal level in 1994 a public union of All-Russian and inter-state organizations of national diasporas was set up - the Congress of national associations of Russia (KNOR), which supports a constructive interaction with governmental structures. On the basis of the Presidium of KNOR the first Advisory council on national and cultural autonomies under the Government of the Russian Federation was constituted - consultative body functioning on a voluntary basis (established by the Decree of the Government of December 18, 1996).

The Advisory council was set up in pursuance of Article 7 of the law "On National and Cultural Autonomy". It consists of representatives of various national associations - Russian-Azerbaijani, Armenian, Assyrian, Greek, Georgian, Jewish, Korean, Kurdish, Moldovian, German, Polish, Ukrainian and other national public organizations existing at the federal level.

According to Article 38 of the Law On Public Associations, the general public prosecutor's office supervises the compliance with the laws by public associations. The body registering public associations execute control over the conformity of their activity with the purposes laid down in their statutes; "financial bodies execute control over sources of income

of public associations, amounts of means they receive and payment of taxes in accordance with the tax legislation of the Russian Federation".

Article 8

The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organizations and association.

The right of citizens to manifest openly any religion or belief is stipulated by Article 28 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Moreover, all these provisions are set forth in details in the Federal Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations" of September 26, 1997. The law says, in particular, that "freedom of conscience and religion is guaranteed in the Russian Federation, including the right to manifest individually or together with other persons any religion or none, to choose and change freely, to have and disseminate religious and other convictions and to act according to them..." (Article 3, para 1). "Imposition of privileges, restrictions or other forms of discrimination on the grounds of religious affiliation shall not be permitted" (Article 3 para 3).

"The state shall regulate the granting to religious organizations of tax and other privileges and shall provide financial, material and another assistance to religious organizations in restoration, maintenance and protection of buildings and objects that constitute monuments of history and culture as well as in ensuring teaching the general subjects in educational institutions established by religious organizations in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation on education" (Article 4, para 3).

Russia is a multiconfessional state with its peoples practicing more than 50 religious believes, all kinds of religions.⁴ Altogether there are more than 55 million orthodox believers in the Russian Federation, approximately 15 million Muslims, over 2 million old-believers and approximately the same quantity of Jews, 1 million Buddhists, Protestants, over 1 million believers of other confessions. In some regions the share of persons practicing one or another religion is as high as 40 % of inhabitants.

Russian Orthodox Church is the largest confession in the Russian Federation. During the last 10 years the amount of cloisters has drastically increased (from 21 in 1988 up to 438 in 1998), the amount of institutions of religious education has increased almost by ten times: from 5 in 1988 up to 52 in 1997.

There are about 7 000 mosques in Russia today. As of 1 January 1999 there were 3 072 registered Muslim associations. The main aspect of their activities is participation in the process of building up and developing the system of religious upbringing and education. In 1997 there were over 100 religious Muslim educational institutions in Russia.

The last decade was marked by a sharp rise in quantity of Jewish religious associations (from 26 in 1991 up to 130 in 1999). In February 1993 the Congress of Jewish religious communities and organizations in Russia was established. At present it includes 74 communities of traditional Jewish orientation. Beside that there are communities of "progressive Israelites" and Hasidim. To date there are 37 functioning synagogues in the

⁴ See Annex 5.

country (5 of them in Moscow). The largest synagogue in Russia is the Choral synagogue of Moscow. This synagogue accommodates a cultural center with a reading-hall. On 2 September 1998 there was an inauguration of the Memorial synagogue in Moscow – the first Jewish cult edifice built since 1917.

The regions of traditionally prevailing Buddhism the believers of which appeared in Russia in the 15th century are Buryatia, Kalmykia, Tuva, the Irkutskaya and Chitinskaya oblasts. One of the largest Buddhist organizations is the Traditional Sangha of Russia (Buryatia). As of 1 January 1999 there were 167 registered and functioning religious communities of such kind.

There are also 227 registered organizations of Roman Catholic Church in Russia which have their parishes practically in all regions of the country.

The state provides assistance to religious communities through the transfer of cult buildings, construction of sites and facilities intended for religious/cult purposes, granting land for the construction of such sites and facilities, financing certain activities conducted by religious organizations.

Public authorities pay much attention to the role of religion in the development of interethnic relations. They cooperate with religious associations trying to achieve national reconciliation and consent. To this end regular meetings are held with leaders of Muslim Spiritual Boards, Russian Orthodox Church, religious Israelite organizations, Buddhist Traditional Sangha, associations of religious minorities, in particular with the Krishnaites, Jehovah's Witnesses and other organizations.

Public authorities provide organizational and financial assistance in holding scientific conferences and seminars. For instance the outcome of the All-Russian conference "Islam in Russia: traditions and perspectives" was highlighted in special issues of the newspaper "Minbare Islam"; all speeches and materials of the conference were published in the collection "Islam in Russia". A book dedicated to the 200-th anniversary of imam Shamil was released; practical assistance was provided in holding the workshop "Christianity and Islam on the verge of 21st century" organized by the administration of the Orenburgskaya oblast (April - May 1998).

Article 9

1. The Parties undertake to recognize that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound, radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound, radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the

provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

Article 29 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees everyone “freedom of thought and speech”, “the right freely to seek, receive, transmit, produce and disseminate information by any legal means”, ensures freedom of mass media. These principles are elaborated further in the Law on Mass Media, Law on National/Cultural Autonomy and in some other normative acts. Beside that the Law on Mass Media does not contain any limitations concerning the language of the mass media to be registered and prohibits the use of mass media to arouse national and religious intolerance and hatred.

At present over 400 newspapers and magazines in 59 languages of the peoples of Russia are published in various regions of the Russian Federation.⁵

So for instance in Moscow printed information materials are issued in 9 languages (Armenian, Georgian, Yiddish, Kurdish, German, Tatar, Ukrainian, Gipsy, Chechen); in the Krasnodarskiy krai – in 6 languages (Adygei, Armenian, Greek, Georgian, Kurdish, German); in the Orenburgskaya oblast – in 4 languages (Bashkir, Kazakh, German, Tatar); in the Astrakhanskaya oblast – in 3 languages (Kazakh, German, Tatar); in the Samarskaya oblast – in 3 languages (Polish, Tatar, Chuvash); in the Ulyanovskaya oblast – in 3 languages (German, Tatar, Chuvash); in the Chelyabinskaya oblast – in 3 languages (Bashkir, Tatar, Ukrainian); in the Sakhalinskaya oblast – in 2 languages (Korean and Nivhskian); in the Karachayevo-Cherkessian Republic – in 2 languages (Abasean and Nogaiskian); in the Rostovskaya oblast – in 2 languages (Armenian and Gipsy); in the Altaiskiy krai – in German. In the Stavropolskiy krai 2 newspapers are published in the Armenian language (3 issues); in the Tyumenskaya oblast – 2 newspapers in the Tatar language; in the Kamchatskaya oblast – 1 newspaper “Kamchatka’s aboriginal” in 4 languages (Aleutian, Itelmen, Koryak, Evenk); in the Koryak Autonomous District – 1 newspaper “Power of people” in 4 languages (Itelmen, Chukchi, and Even).

The costs of publishing of newspapers and broadcasting radio programs in the native languages are covered through local budget appropriations and partly through sponsors and contributions made by public associations.

In the Russian Federation radio programs are broadcast in 43 languages, and television is broadcast in 33 national languages. All republican and many regional TV and radio companies together with the programs in the Russian language broadcast their programs in the corresponding national languages.

So the State TV and radio company (STVRC) “Daghestan” broadcasts in the Avarian, Azerbaijani, Dargin, Lakskian, Lezghin, Nogaiskian, Tabasaran, Tatskian, and Chechen languages; STVRC “Bashkortostan” – in Bashkir, Mari, Tatar, Udmurt and Chuvash; STVRC “Orenburg” – in Bashkir, Byelorussian, Kazakh, Mordvinian, German, Tatar and Ukrainian; Evenk STVRC “Heglen” – in Ketskian, Evenk and Yakut.

⁵ See Annexes 6, 7, 8.

In the programs broadcast by regional TV and radio companies (TVRC) where the volume of broadcasting in national languages is limited information genres prevail: news, interviews, reports. TVRC which broadcast significant volume of such programs use also other forms of TV and radio journalism including feature-stories, audio and video films, TV and radio magazines, programs about literature, music and theatre.

So the Kalmykian STVRC screens canonized chapters of the national heroic epos “Jangar”, STVRC “Chuvash” is preparing a serial about outstanding figures of national culture and art, STVRC “Udmurtia” – a serial entitled “Marzan” about ethnic traditions and modern art.

Regional TVRC endeavor to cooperate with each other in highlighting common national problems. As an example one can cite a serial entitled "Finno-Ugric world" which is broadcast by STVRC “Udmurtia” and made by TV journalists of this community.

STVRC “Kabbalkteleradio” in cooperation with the journalists of Adygeya, Karachaevo-Cherkessiya and Stavropol prepares the program “Consent” (broadcast in Nalchik). It is broadcast in 3 official languages – Balkarian, Kabardin and Russian.

The appropriate federal services of Russia assist federal and regional electronic media in covering all aspects of life of small ethnoses, as well as events and facts of the republican level which serve the purpose of fostering mutual relations and cooperation among the peoples of Russia; in providing the television and radio programs of regional companies broadcasting in native languages with necessary audio and video materials from the State Fund; in preparing joint television and radio programs and exchanging of television and radio programs among the TV and radio companies broadcasting in the national languages; in financing from the state budget regional television and radio companies, including those broadcasting in native languages; in providing material, administrative and scientific support to national television and radio broadcasting; in training national specialists in the Institute of Radio and TV Personnel Advanced Studies.

Article 10

1. *The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.*

2. *In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.*

3. *The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.*

In the Russian Federation everyone has the right to use his native language and to a free choice of the language of communication, upbringing, education and creative work (Article 26 of the Constitution).

The implementation of the principle of equality and self-determination of peoples which is the foundation of the federative structure of the Russian Federation in the sphere of language relations is expressed in the stipulation by the republics of the right to establish their own state languages which are used in state government bodies, local government bodies and state institutions of republics together with the state language of the Russian Federation (Article 68 of the Constitution).

The Federal Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation of 24 July 1998 provides for the possibility for each citizen of the Russian Federation to use the language he knows. Citizens of the Russian Federation who do not know the state language of the Russian Federation or the state language of a republic have the right to speak at meetings, conferences, assemblies of state bodies, organizations, enterprises and institutions in the language they know. An adequate interpretation should be provided. Citizens who do not know the language of the meetings, conferences, assemblies of state bodies, organizations, enterprises or institutions, if necessary, can be provided with interpretation to the language acceptable for such citizens or the state language of the Russian Federation. Citizens have the right to address state bodies, organizations, enterprises or institutions of the Russian Federation with proposals, applications or complaints in the state language of the Russian Federation, native language or any other language of the peoples of the Russian Federation they know (Article 15).

The Law provides for the use of languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation in the official sphere. In particular, the Law determines the state language of the Russian Federation as the working language of the highest legislative bodies of the Russian Federation. At the same time the people's deputies have the right to use in their work the state languages of the republics and, if necessary, any other language of Russia with interpretation into the state language of the Russian Federation (Article 11).

The Law regulates the use of languages while conducting elections to the legislative bodies and of the President of the Russian Federation as well as referenda, involving the state language of the Russian Federation, state languages of republics or other languages determined by the legislation of the Russian Federation and republics (Article 14).

The Federal Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Small Peoples of the Russian Federation also stipulates that persons who belong to small peoples, associations of small peoples established for the purpose of preserving and developing their unique culture and in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation have the right to preserve and develop native languages, receive and disseminate information in the native languages and establish mass media.

A number of republican laws on language stipulate the right to use languages in the areas of compact residence of national minorities. Article 12 of the Law of the Republic of Buryatia on the Languages of the Peoples of the Republic of Buryatia establishes the right of the small peoples (Tatars, Evenks, etc.) in case of compact residence to use the language of the majority of the population of that area in the work of government bodies, document processing, conducting elections and referenda. A similar norm is provided for the national minorities by the Law of the Republic of Tatarstan where the language of a minority in the

areas of compact residence can be used along with the state languages while conducting official business (Articles 3 and 15). The laws on languages of some other republics open additional possibilities of using the languages of national minorities taking into account the interests of local population. Language guarantees of the peoples and national minorities are contained not just in the special laws on languages, but also in other laws of the constituent entities of the Federation. For example, the legislation of the Republic of Tatarstan provides for publication of all the decisions of government bodies concerning the organization of referenda in the state languages of the republic, while in the areas of compact residence of other peoples whose native languages are not the state languages of the peoples of Tatarstan - in the languages of these peoples as well.

In accordance with Article 17 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) of the RSFSR judicial proceedings are held in the Russian language or in the language of the autonomous republic, autonomous oblast, autonomous okrug, or in the language of the majority of the population of that area.

The persons involved in the proceedings who do not know the language of the proceedings are ensured the right to make a statement, testify and speak in court in the native language and to use the services of interpreter according to the procedure laid down in Article 8 of the CCP.

According to the procedure established by the CCP of the RSFSR, investigation and judicial documents are presented to the accused person translated to his native language or other language he knows (Article 17).

One of the basic constitutional principles of justice is the provision of the defendant, who does not know the language of the proceedings, with an interpreter. Non-observance of this principle leads to a repeal of the sentence.

When a person who is suspected of committing a crime is detained or put in custody as a measure of restriction before arraignment and if the detainee does not know the language of the court proceedings the participation of a defense counsel and an interpreter is mandatory.

The person who does not know the language of the judicial proceedings, irrespective of his status (suspect, accused, victim, witness, civil claimant, civil defendant) is subject to the same provisions of the CCP which apply to the above-mentioned category of persons.

Thus, any restriction of the rights of the accused, defendant or defense counsel resulting from lack of knowledge of the language of the judicial proceedings, as well as failure to provide such persons with the possibility to use their native language at any stage of the process, constitutes a breach of the norms of criminal procedure.

The interpretation service is used in the Russian judicial practice, yet, due to widespread knowledge of two languages and free command of the Russian, such a need occurs relatively rarely.

Article 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the

minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

2. *The Parties undertake to recognize that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.*

3. *In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is a sufficient demand for such indications.*

The legislation of the Russian Federation does not limit the rights of persons belonging to national minorities to use their surnames, first and second names, or the rights of the said persons to display in their native language signs, inscriptions and other private information visible to the public.

According to the Federal Law on the Civil Status Acts a person upon reaching the age of fourteen has the right to change his name, including the surname, personal and/or second names.

The procedure of changing the surname, first or second names as set by Chapter VII of the Federal Law on the Civil Status Acts in the territory of the Russian Federation is the same for all citizens irrespective of their nationality.

The documents identifying a citizen of the Russian Federation, civil registrations, and other documents are processed with due respect to national traditions of denomination in the state language of the Russian Federation, and in the territory of a republic that has established its own state language the processing of the said documents permits the use of the state language of the republic together with the state language of the Russian Federation (Article 16, Part 4 of the Law of the Russian Federation on the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation).

In accordance with Article 8, Part 3 of the Federal Law on Denomination of Geographical Objects and Article 23 of the Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation the constituent republics of the Russian Federation are also entitled to write geographical names, inscriptions and signs in the native languages of its peoples in the territories of their compact residence.

Article 5, Part 2 of the Federal Law on Advertising provides for advertising in the territory of the Russian Federation in the Russian language and, at the discretion of advertisers, in the state languages of the republics and native languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

However, in accordance with the International Convention relating to Automobile Traffic as regards creating a single system of installing traffic signs and signals in the territory of states, the Russian Federation establishes inscriptions on signs and indicators in the Russian language alone. On the international routes they are duplicated in English. Russia's

regulations do not provide for any inscriptions on signs and indicators written in the languages of national minorities.

Article 12

1. *The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.*

2. *In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.*

3. *The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.*

Recently we have witnessed dramatic positive changes in this field. While five or seven years ago in the field of history was the education limited to a uniform course of domestic and universal history for all schools of the country, and textbooks on the history of culture and religion didn't exist at all, today all – Russia schoolbooks happily co-exist with education programs developed and regional textbooks published in all constituent entities of the Russian Federation, where the historical past of the native peoples, their culture and religious beliefs, customs and traditions have received a fairly complete coverage.

Such educational courses are given within the framework of regional and school components of the basic curriculum and naturally supplement the compulsory federal courses in history, world art and history of religion, taking into account national and regional, ethnic and cultural features of a specific territory.

At present the number of textbook and educational aid options in the said courses provides both teachers and pupils with the widest possibly choice. We can state that on the whole the objective has already been achieved, and now the established base is being improved to complete transition to a full – fledged polycultural education.

Higher educational institutions of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the humanities field have departments or sections to training teachers of native languages and history. For instance, the Buryat State University has an Evenk Section, the Orenburg University has a Kazakh Section, etc. Federal and regional national and cultural autonomies are working on programs aimed at preserving and further developing languages and cultures, plan to prepare textbooks incorporating studies of the country of origin, for example textbooks of the Ukrainian language and history for Ukrainians residing in Russia. Unfortunately, the problems of financing seriously hamper full implementation of these objectives.

As to teachers, their training excludes any national discrimination whatsoever, and cases when the language, history and culture of a given ethnic group are taught by a teacher of some other ethnic group are not uncommon. This applies to teaching both the Russian language and the languages of the peoples of Russia. Special attention is given to the problems of educating small peoples of the North pursuing their distinctive way of life. In 1998 Russia's Ministry of Education elaborated the Concept of Reforming the System of Pre – School and General Secondary Education and Training of Personnel from among the

Indigenous Small Peoples of the North. The Concept was approved by the Government of the Russian Federation. Its implementation is in part carried out in cooperation with the Ministry for Federation and Nationalities, Ministry of Culture and specialized committees of the State Duma and the Federation Council. Thus, a State Polar Academy has been set up in St. Petersburg with a view to educating the indigenous small peoples of the North.

The Constitution (Article 43) guarantees general access to free pre – school, secondary and secondary vocational education in state and municipal educational institutions to all residents of the Russian Federation.

Basic general education is compulsory in the Russian Federation. Every resident of the Russian Federation has the right to a free higher education.

According to Article 2 of the Law of the Russian Federation on Education of 10 July, 1992, the fundamental principles of the state policy in the field of education are “general access and adaptability to...the levels and peculiarities of background and development of students”. One of the functions of the education system consists in protecting national cultures as well as regional and cultural traditions in a multinational state (Article 2 (6)).

Article 13

1. *Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognize that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.*

2. *The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.*

The Russian Federation does not have any special legislation regulating activities of private educational establishments set up and managed by persons belonging to national minorities.

In accordance with Article 11, para. 1 of the Federal Law on Education an educational establishment can be founded by citizens of the Russian Federation and other states. An educational establishment is set up by the founder on his or her own initiative and is subject to compulsory registration (Article 33 (1)). Registration of an educational establishment cannot be denied on inexpediency grounds (Article 33, para 2). According to the law the founders are entitled to apply to court within a month.

In accordance with the Law on National and Cultural Autonomy, the national and cultural autonomies have the right “to set up educational, scientific and cultural establishments and to provide for their functioning in compliance with the legislation of the Russian Federation” (Article 4).

The competence of federal executive bodies also includes providing material, legal, organizational and other assistance in setting up non – state educational establishments (Article 12).

Today a system of ethnic and cultural education is being developed in many regions but it is being established primarily within the framework of the state education system. Thus,

47 establishments of ethnic education are functioning in Moscow, namely, pre-school establishments, educational complexes, general secondary schools, optional Sunday schools for both children and adults, lycea, colleges, etc. Only four of them are private: the Jewish schools “Bet Eghudit” and “Migdal Or”, and two Georgian lycea.

Provided there are sufficient financial means, any community can establish an education system of any level, including that of higher education.

Article 14

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavor to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.

3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation (Article 68, part. 3) guarantees all of its peoples the right to preserve their native language and to create conditions for its study and development.

The rights of national minorities to preserve and develop their native languages and to receive instruction in those languages are laid down in detail in the Federal Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation.

The Law on Education of the Russian Federation, while specifying relevant constitutional provisions, guarantees equal rights to education for all people, including representatives of national minorities. It provides specifically for the possibility to receive basic general education in the native language and for the introduction of state educational standards including both federal and national components.

The Ministry of Education is involved in practical activities for providing conditions and support to all the languages of the peoples of the country as languages of education and learning (as a subject of studies).

The functioning format of native languages in the educational system (up to which grade, as a subject or as a language of education, etc.) is determined by the constituent entity and falls within its competence. It is at this level that educational programs and textbooks are developed, teacher training and advanced training are organized. Small peoples of the North are an exception hereto: educational and methodological support to teaching their native languages is within the competence of federal authorities.

The education in Russia's schools is now available in 38 languages (in the primary school only; under a program of eight years of education; during the whole period of secondary education). As many as 75 national languages are a part (including languages of national minorities) of the secondary schools curricula. The total number of such schools

across the country amounts to 9,000⁶. For example, the Ukrainian language as an academic discipline is studied in three schools of Bashkiriya, one school of St-Petersburg and one at Vorkuta. Ukrainian is taught in classes in Krasnodar, Murmansk, Novy Urengoy, Penza and Tomsk. A large Ukrainian school (for more than 1000 pupils) is to be opened in Tyumen.

The Ukrainian language is optional in six schools of the Belgorod oblast and in six schools of the Republic of Komi. It is also taught in seven Sunday schools in Ufa. There are similar schools in Vladivostok, Yekaterinburg, Kazan, Nijnevartovsk, Nijnekamsk, Omsk, St. Petersburg, Sochi, Surgut, Syktyvkar and Tobolsk.

An Ukrainian Institute (with a branch in Ufa) began functioning at the State Open Pedagogical University in Moscow. Extra-curricular study of the Ukrainian language was organized in the Volgograd and Voronezh Pedagogical Universities. A specialization in the Ukrainian language and literature was introduced at the philological departments of the Novosibirsk State Pedagogical Institute and the Tyumen University. An Ukrainian department is to be opened in the Tomsk Pedagogical Institute.

In the Republic of Tatarstan there are 140 Chuvash, Chuvash-Russian, Chuvash-Tatar schools, 40 Udmurt and Udmurt-Russian schools, 20 Mari and Mari-Russian schools, four Mordovian schools as well as 56 Chuvash, 18 Udmurt and nine Mari pre-school educational establishments.

As many as 224 national (non Russian) schools are functioning in the Samara oblast: six Bashkirian, seven Kazakh, 51 Mordovian, three German, 26 Tatar, four Ukrainian, 87 Chuvash schools, as well as 40 mixed schools and 36 Sunday schools. Five of this oblast schools have acquired the status of a pilot site of "the National Schools Development" UNESCO project.

Education at the schools of the Republic of Bashkortostan is available in the Russian, Bashkirian, Mari, Tatar, Udmurt and Chuvash languages, other six languages are studied as a separate subject: Byelorussian, Greek, Yiddish, Mordovian, German and Ukrainian. The number of schools where languages of the national minorities are being taught has increased considerably since 1995. It was promoted by the Decree on the Republican Programs of National and Cultural Development of the Peoples of Bashkortostan issued by the President of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Sunday schools, national schools and lycea are being opened in the republic's cities and districts, material and administrative support for teaching native languages is being strengthened. Covered by national education are 75 per cent of all the Bashkortostan's pupils.

Higher educational establishments of the republic provide training of experts in the Bashkirian, Mari, Russian, Tatar, Udmurt and Chuvash languages. It is necessary to note a trend towards the rise, though not very significant, in the number of state schools where native language is the language of instruction or an academic discipline in the places of compact residence of diaspora peoples. Such forms of national education as cultural and educational centres on the secondary schools basis with optional classes and state financing are becoming common practice. Thus, 66 Azerbaijani, 47 Armenian, 85 Kazakh and 19 Turkmen centres are functioning in Russia.

⁶ See Annex 9.

Worth mentioning is innovative experience of the multinational Moscow where pre-school educational establishments, educational complexes, general secondary schools, Sunday schools for children and adults, as well as lycea and colleges have been created and are successfully functioning with financial assistance of the city's government. Their mission is to satisfy cultural and language demands of representatives of various ethnic groups.

In accordance with Article 12, the Federal Law on the National and Cultural Autonomy, executive authorities are to finance measures aimed at ensuring the right to education in the native language in the state and municipal educational establishments using appropriate budgets and extra-budgetary resources. Expenditures are covered from the funds allocated to education. Besides federal executive authorities consider proposals from national and cultural autonomies and include them into the state standards of programs in the national (native) language, courses in history, culture and ethnography (Article 14).

Article 15

The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.

The right of persons belonging to national minorities to participation in political, social, economic and cultural life is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Russian Federation and Russian legislation.

The right to participation in managing State affairs is one of the citizens' rights and freedoms regardless of his or her nationality. Article 32 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation says: "Citizens of the Russian Federation shall have the right to participate in managing State affairs both directly and through their representatives". Citizens can fully exercise their right to participation in elections and referendums if it is done on the basis of a comprehensive, equal and direct electoral right by secret ballot and is free and voluntary.

Both chambers of parliament, the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, and representative authorities of constituent entities of the Russian Federation comprise deputies representing various nationalities and elected under the acting electoral system.

The following national administrative and territorial units have been established since early 1990s: the Kuisk national Veps village council in the Vologda oblast, Eveno-Bytantaik national district in the Republic of Sakha, German national districts in the Altai kray and the Omsk oblast, the Baikal and Verkhneangarsk Evenk rural settlements in the Republic of Buryatia, the Veps national district in the Republic of Karelia, the Korean national "Su-Chang" microdistrict in the city of Partisansk in the Primorie kray and so on. Such national settlements, being places of compact residence of representatives of national minorities still remain administrative and territorial units. The local government authorities of these settlements enjoy the same rights as the relevant authorities of regular administrative and territorial units. However, exercising of power by these authorities in the national settlements is by far more linked to meeting specific national needs of the population. Thus, respective national minorities are better represented in the local government authorities.

To tackle issues concerning national minorities executive authorities of different levels establish consultative bodies with participation of representatives of national minorities.

Pursuant to Article 7 of the Federal Law on the National and Cultural Autonomy there was established a Consultative Council on National and Cultural Autonomies Affairs under the Government of the Russian Federation. The terms of reference of this institution allow it to protect cultural and social interests of ethnic communities and to participate in drafting federal programs aimed at the preservation and development of national language and national culture.

In many constituent entities of the Russian Federation there exist now consultative interethnic councils and various deliberative bodies attached to the executive branch, which make it possible for ethnic communities to take an active part in the process of decision-making related to national groups.

Such processes are actively encouraged by state authorities in the Republic of Bashkortostan and in the Komi Republic, as well as in the Novosibirsk, Orenburg and Perm oblast and in many other constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Indeed, the role and functions of such councils have now been strengthened and they act as social partners in accordance with special agreements concluded between local administrations and ethnic communities.

For instance, in the Magadan oblast, representatives of various ethnic groups from five associations make up a Public Council on Ethnic Affairs which also includes representatives of the executive branch. The Council plans activities to preserve languages, culture and traditions of ethnic groups and discusses budgetary appropriation for that purpose. In the Tyumen oblast, there exist a Coordinating Council of Regional Ethnic Associations and Societies, a Consultative Council on National and Cultural Autonomies, a Social and Political Consultative Council, an Expert Council for the Protection of the State Language, a Commission on Religious Communities and a Theological Expertise Council, all of them attached to the oblast Administration. The Social and Political Consultative Council consists of representatives of 22 social and political associations, as well as heads of executive and legislative bodies. In 1998 the Council discussed, *inter alia*, issues related to local government, modalities of participation of public associations in the preparation of the oblast budget, the concept of the regional policy in ethnic affairs, etc. In the Saratov oblast, there function a Public Chamber attached to the Governor, and a Coordinating Interethnic Council. The administration and representatives of public associations have developed and concluded "an Agreement on Social Accord and Social Partnership in the Saratov oblast". An agreement on social and interethnic accord has been also concluded in the Astrakhan oblast. It was signed by representatives of 150 public organizations, political parties, ethnic cultural communities, mass media, as well as heads of supreme legislative and executive bodies of the oblast.

Effective work has been carried out by the Moscow Interethnic Conference (MIC), a consultative and deliberative body comprising the heads of more than 80 ethnic associations. The Conference was established to ensure interaction between the executive branch and ethnic communities.

The MIC holds its sessions on a quarterly basis, while between the sessions the interaction is achieved through meetings on specific issues and activities carried out by the associations with the participation of competent departments of the Moscow Government and the Ministry of Federation and Nationalities Affairs of the Russian Federation. The MIC forms working groups to study complex issues which require collective decisions. Meetings and round tables became an effective means of cooperation with Moscow authorities.

In April of 1999, a decision was taken to establish permanent All-Russian Interethnic Conference as a joint consultative and deliberative body of the Ministry of Federation and Nationalities Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Peoples of Russia Assembly. This body is to become an efficient mechanism of dialogue and interaction between the central and local authorities and the civil society with a view to promoting and implementing the Concept of the Policy in Ethnic Affairs and to working out solutions to prevent and settle crisis situations in the area of interethnic relations.

Article 16

The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present Framework Convention.

The Constitution of the Russian Federation (Part 3, Article 67) establishes that boundaries between the constituent entities of the Russian Federation may be changed only by their mutual agreement.

In addition, Part 2, Article 131, of the Constitution of the Russian Federation stipulates that the borders of territorial entities under local self-government shall be changed only with the consent of their population.

Decisions to change the boundaries between the constituent entities of the Russian Federation may be taken only by The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. In recent years, boundaries between the constituent entities of the Russian Federation were changed only once. On February 3, 1994, the Federation Council approved changes in the boundaries between the Ivanovo and the Nizhni Novgorod oblasts.

This decision did not entail any changes in the proportions of the population of those entities.

Article 17

1. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

2. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons, belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organizations, both at the national and international levels.

In the Russian Federation, the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons permanently residing in other States (including those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic heritage) is guaranteed by relevant norms of the Russian legislation, provisions of bilateral treaties, and special instruments to facilitate contacts in border areas, for example in the Kalinigrad oblast (Lithuania) and the Orenburg oblast (Kazakhstan).

Also, there are no obstacles of legislative or administrative nature to the participation in the activities of non-governmental organizations, both at the national (for more details, see the section related to Article 7 of the Convention) and international levels.

More than one thousand ethnic associations acting at the federal, inter-regional, regional and local levels, are registered in the Russian Federation. A number of Russian organizations are members of international unions and associations, such as, the Arctic Council established by the Arctic countries and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). Many organizations cooperate with international non-governmental organizations in implementing joint projects in the field of education, languages and preservation of culture.

The last decade was characterized by the active upspring in the Russian Federation of non-governmental human-rights organizations pursuing, among other things, the objective of protecting human rights.

Article 18

1. The Parties shall endeavor to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighbouring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons, belonging to the national minorities concerned.

2. The Parties shall adopt where necessary, measures in order to encourage transfrontier co-operation.

On December 8, 1991 the Russian Federation signed the Agreement on the Creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In accordance with the Article 2 of the Agreement, the Contracting Parties (Belarus, Russia and Ukraine) have undertaken to guarantee their citizens equal rights and freedoms irrespective of their ethnic origin. Each Party also guarantees all rights and freedoms in accordance with generally recognized international rules on human rights to the citizens of the other Parties residing in its territory.

On October 21, 1994 the CIS member-states (with the exception of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) signed in Moscow the Convention on Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities (Azerbaijan signed it subject to a reservation and Ukraine - subject to its laws). The Parties guarantee persons belonging to national minorities civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms in accordance with generally recognized international standards in the area of human rights and their legislation (Article 3). They agreed to facilitate the codification of rights of national minorities at bilateral, regional and global level and to use the rule-making experience of international organizations in the field of protection of national minorities rights (Article 11). Persons belonging to national minorities are entitled, individually and collectively to freely express, preserve and develop their ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious identity (Article 4); to establish various educational, cultural and religious organizations (associations, communities, etc.) (Article 3); to maintain contacts among themselves in the territory of the State of residence, as well as with nationals and organizations of states, to which they relate ethnically, culturally, linguistically and religiously (Article 6); to use their mother tongue and to study it (Articles 7 and 10).

Each Contracting Party has undertaken to pursue its policy with due regard for the legitimate interests of national minorities and to take all necessary measures in order to create

favourable conditions for preserving and developing their ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identity and for their participation in public and political life, etc. Article 9 of the Convention identifies some sources of funds for national minorities organizations, including voluntary donations in cash and other contributions, state subsidies in accordance with the law and assistance from state and public organizations of the Contracting Parties.

The Convention has entered into force for Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus. The issue of its ratification by Russia is under consideration in the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation has concluded treaties on friendship, cooperation and mutual security with almost all CIS States: Azerbaijan (Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation of June 6, 1995), Armenia (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Security of December 29, 1991), Belarus (Treaty on Friendship, Neighbourliness and Cooperation of February 21, 1995), Georgia (Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighbourliness and Mutual Assistance of February 31, 1994); Kazakhstan (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of May 25, 1992), Kirgizia (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of June 10, 1992), Tajikistan (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of May 25, 1993), Turkmenistan (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of July 31, 1992), Uzbekistan (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance of May 30, 1992), and Ukraine (Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership of May 31, 1997).

All these large-scale treaties of a comprehensive nature include articles or sections on humanitarian cooperation with provisions on the protection of national minorities. Intergovernmental commissions on cooperation are being set up to implement the treaties. One example is the Sub-Commission on Humanitarian Cooperation of the Joint Russian-Ukrainian Commission on Cooperation. Similar commissions have been set up with Latvia and Estonia.

There developed a practice of interdepartmental agreements (such agreements exist with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Estonia). Similar agreements are also concluded between ministries and departments of constituent entities of the Russian Federation and the CIS States. For example, the Ministry on the Affairs of Ethnic Groups of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) has concluded a package of agreements with the State Committee on Policy with regard to Ethnic Groups of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ministry on the Affairs of Ethnic Groups and Migration of the Republic of Ukraine and the Ministry of Culture and Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Belarus. The agreements set forth mutual obligations of the Parties in the area of ethnic affairs, including with regard to minorities. In addition to concrete obligation to render practical assistance to ethnic centers, communities and others associations in establishing ethnic Sunday schools, training teachers and creating their own information bases, they include obligation to improve legislation related to national minorities and to create legal mechanisms to guarantee equal rights of all ethnic groups and their effective participation in state structures.

We have also accumulated certain experience in the area of cooperation with our traditional foreign partners. The most systematic experience has been gained by Russia in solving, in cooperation with Germany, problems of Russians of German origin (for details, see comments related to Article 5 of the Convention), as well as in interacting with Hungary (in 1993, the Parties signed the Declaration on Cooperation in Protecting National Minorities Rights).

In January 1992, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Finland signed a treaty on the basic principles of their relations, in which they undertook (article 10) to facilitate efforts to preserve the identity of people of Russian origin in Finland and vice versa, and to protect the related linguistic, cultural and historical (monuments) heritage. In the spring of the same year an intergovernmental treaty on cooperation in the field of education, culture and science was concluded and seminars were organized for teachers of Finno-Ugric languages, textbooks writers, librarians and museum staff.

In addition, authors of dictionaries and textbooks, as well as literature translators and publishing houses were granted assistance in the form of scholarships and subsidies.

Assistance to the people of Polish origin living in Russia is provided in accordance with the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Poland on Cultural, Scientific and Educational Cooperation of August 25, 1993; the Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland of February 24, 1994. In 1993, a joint workshop conference was held to discuss the issue of meeting educational needs of Polish people in Russia. In accordance with the recommendations of the conference, teachers from Poland are sent to Polish language schools in areas populated by poles and a textbook of Polish language has been published due to a grant provided by the Fund for National and Cultural Renaissance of peoples of Russia.

Article 20

In the exercise of the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present Framework Convention, any person belonging to a national minority shall respect the national legislation and the rights of others, in particular those of persons belonging to the majority or to other national minorities.

Article 21

Nothing in the present Framework Convention shall be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity or perform any act contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and, in particular, of the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Article 22

Nothing in the present Framework Convention shall be construed as limiting or derogating from any of the human rights and fundamental freedoms which may be ensured under the laws of any other Contracting Party or any other agreement to which it is a Party

Article 23

The rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present Framework Convention, in so far as they are the subject of a corresponding provision in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms or in the Protocols thereto, shall be understood so as to conform to the latter provisions.

Article 30

1. Any State may, at the time of signature or when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, specify the territory or territories for whose international relations it is responsible to which this Framework Convention shall apply.

2. Any State may at any later date, by a declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, extend the application of this Framework Convention to any other territory specified in the declaration. In respect of such territory the Framework Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of such declaration by the Secretary General.

3. Any declaration made under the two preceding paragraphs may, in respect of any territory specified in such declaration, be withdrawn by a notification addressed to the Secretary General. The withdrawal shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of such notification by the Secretary General.

The adoption of this principle made it possible to directly invoke the rules of international law in various State institutes, including courts. Any international legal obligation of the Russian Federation automatically becomes part of its national legal system and, hence, can be directly applied by various bodies, including courts.

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