

**Resolution CM/ResCMN(2008)5
on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
by Cyprus**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 9 July 2008
at the 1032nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as “the Framework Convention”);

Having regard to Resolution (97) 10 of 17 September 1997 setting out rules adopted by the Committee of Ministers on the monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention;

Having regard to the voting rule adopted in the context of adopting Resolution (97) 10;¹

Having regard to the instrument of ratification submitted by Cyprus on 4 June 1996;

Recalling that the Government of Cyprus transmitted its state report in respect of the second monitoring cycle under the Framework Convention on 27 October 2006;

Having examined the Advisory Committee's second opinion on Cyprus, adopted on 7 June 2007, and the written comments of the Government of Cyprus, received on 27 November 2007;

Having also taken note of comments by other governments,

1. Adopts the following conclusions in respect of Cyprus:

a) Positive developments

Following the adoption of the first opinion of the Advisory Committee in April 2001 and the Committee of Ministers' resolution in February 2002, Cyprus has taken new steps to improve the implementation of the Framework Convention.

The legal and institutional framework for tackling discrimination has been strengthened. Specific measures have also been taken to increase awareness about human rights and diversity, including within the police forces. Mechanisms for independent investigation of complaints against the police have been established.

The government has continued to provide support for the cultural activities of the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins. The government reports that information on their culture and identity has been included in history textbooks and new support initiatives have been taken for these groups in the field of media.

Although there is scope for improvement in this area, the authorities have continued to support minority education. A public primary school has been set up to respond to the specific needs of the Maronites and, in spite of difficulties, efforts have been made to maintain adequate educational opportunities for the Armenians. The annual subsidies provided to the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins for private education have been increased.

A series of measures have been taken to facilitate participation of persons with different community, religious and ethnic affiliation in economic and social life. There have also been positive legislative developments in relation to voting rights and to the right to contract a civil marriage.

¹ In the context of adopting Resolution (97) 10 on 17 September 1997, the Committee of Ministers also adopted the following rule: “Decisions pursuant to Articles 24.1 and 25.2 of the Framework Convention shall be considered to be adopted if two-thirds of the representatives of the Contracting Parties casting a vote, including a majority of the representatives of the Contracting Parties entitled to sit on the Committee of Ministers, vote in favour”.

Steps have also been taken to facilitate movement across the Green Line.

Specific measures have been adopted by the Government of Cyprus to assist Maronites in their efforts to maintain contacts with members of their group living in their traditional villages, in the northern part of the island, and to preserve their cultural, religious and historical heritage.

b) Issues of concern

In spite of the efforts made to promote tolerance and intercultural dialogue, Cypriot society remains divided and this is a matter of concern. More resolute measures are needed to enhance dialogue and trust between the Greek Cypriot Community and the Turkish Cypriot Community.

Notwithstanding the complex constitutional situation and current political context in Cyprus, the obligation imposed on the three minority groups and their members to affiliate to either the Greek Cypriot Community or the Turkish Cypriot Community, as well as the obligation to vote for their representative in parliament, remain problematic.

Despite government support, the preservation of the culture and identity of the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins remains a challenge, for reasons linked, *inter alia*, to their diminishing numbers. The Maronites still face difficulties in their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage and to maintain contacts with members of their group, and links to their place of origin, in the northern part of the island.

The opportunities available for minority education need to be adjusted to provide a more adequate response to the specific needs of the three minority groups, and their participation in decision making in this sphere needs to be enhanced. In particular, difficulties are reported with regard to the availability of schoolbooks and training and recruitment of teachers. Information about the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, and their cultures, in the media and in mainstream educational materials also remains limited.

Although the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins are well integrated in Cypriot society, there still appear to be insufficient opportunities available for them to participate effectively in decision making on issues of interest to them.

Despite efforts in recent years, the Roma continue to face prejudice and particular difficulties in various sectors. The implementation of the principle of free self-identification in respect of the Roma remains a source of concern.

More resolute measures are needed in order to strengthen mutual understanding and integration in the society, and the measures taken to facilitate the participation of Turkish Cypriots in the different sectors of public and social life should be pursued further. The role played by the media and the education system in this regard needs to be developed further.

2. Adopts the following recommendations in respect of Cyprus:

In addition to the measures to be taken to implement the detailed recommendations contained in sections I and II of the Advisory Committee's opinion, the authorities are invited to take the following measures to improve further the implementation of the Framework Convention:

- look for possibilities to review the obligation to affiliate to either the Greek Cypriot Community or to the Turkish Cypriot Community imposed on the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, as well as the legal obligation to vote in elections for their representatives in parliament;
- make further efforts to support and promote the preservation and development of the culture of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, and assist them in the establishment of cultural centres; promote their increased presence in the media and in educational materials;
- take additional measures to support the revitalisation and promotion of the cultural, religious and linguistic heritage of the Maronites, as well as their contacts with persons who share their identity and with their place of origin;

- identify ways to provide a more adequate response to the specific needs of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites in the field of education, in consultation with the persons concerned; take additional measures to ensure the availability of adequate teaching materials and qualified teachers for the schools concerned;
- review existing processes of consultation and participation of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites in public affairs, with a view to strengthening these processes and making them more effective;
- pursue and develop further the measures taken to address the problems faced by the Roma in various sectors; identify ways to secure implementation of the principle of free self-identification in their respect;
- take more resolute steps to promote mutual respect, understanding and integration within Cypriot society; encourage the education system and the media to play a more active role in combating racism and intolerance.

3. Invites the Government of Cyprus, in accordance with Resolution (97) 10:

- a.* to continue the dialogue in progress with the Advisory Committee;
- b.* to keep the Advisory Committee regularly informed of the measures it has taken in response to the conclusions and recommendations set out in sections 1 and 2 above.