

**Resolution CM/ResCMN(2011)6  
on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities  
by Latvia**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 30 March 2011  
at the 1110th 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 Res(97)10 of 17 September 1997 setting out the 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 Res(97)10;<sup>1</sup>

Having regard to the instrument of ratification submitted by Latvia on 6 June 2005;

Recalling that the Government of Latvia transmitted its state report in respect of the first monitoring cycle under the Framework Convention on 11 October 2006;

Whereas the Advisory Committee accepted the invitation of the Government of Latvia to send a delegation to gather further information in Latvia, this visit taking place from 9 to 13 June 2008;

Whereas the Advisory Committee's opinion on the implementation of the Framework Convention by Latvia was adopted on 8 October 2008 and then transmitted to the Permanent Representative of Latvia and communicated to the permanent representatives of all member states as document CM(2008)180;

Whereas the Government of Latvia submitted its written comments on the opinion of the Advisory Committee, these written comments having been communicated to the delegations of all member states on 25 May 2009 as document CM(2008)180 add;

Having examined the Advisory Committee's opinion and the written comments of the Government of Latvia;

Having also taken note of comments by other governments,

1. Adopts the following conclusions concerning the implementation of the Framework Convention by Latvia:

(1) Latvian authorities have made commendable efforts, in recent years, to promote the integration of society. Steps have also been taken to improve the legal and institutional framework for protection against discrimination and racism and the monitoring of the actual situation in this field should receive increased attention in the future. While efforts have been made by the government to support the preservation of the national minorities' specific cultures and identities, the significant reduction, in recent years, of state financial support for the organisations of national minorities is a source of concern.

(2) The inclusion of "non-citizens" identifying themselves with a national minority in the personal scope of application of the Framework Convention is to be welcomed. It is important to underline that such an approach is in line with the spirit of the Framework Convention. Nevertheless, due to specific exceptions under the Latvian law, these persons regrettably do not benefit from the protection of a number of provisions of the Framework Convention, in particular those relating to effective participation in public life. Given the very large number of persons concerned, the authorities are encouraged to interpret and apply the relevant national legislation so as not to entail any disproportionate restrictions of the protection offered by the Framework Convention in respect of "non-citizens" identifying themselves with a national minority.

(3) Persons belonging to national minorities in Latvia do not fully benefit from important provisions of the Framework Convention relating to the use of their minority languages in dealings with the administrative authorities and to the use of minority languages alongside Latvian in local topographical indications. Efforts are needed in the legislative sphere and at the practical level to enable persons belonging to national minorities to use their languages in dealings with the

administrative authorities and in topographical indications, according to the needs, in line with the conditions set out in Articles 10.2 and 11.3 of the Framework Convention. More generally, while protecting and strengthening Latvian as the state language is a legitimate aim, all due attention should be paid to the effective enjoyment of the right of persons belonging to national minorities to use freely their minority languages.

(4) It is essential to avoid language-based discrimination of persons belonging to national minorities in the labour market. In this respect, strengthening the language proficiency requirements in the employment field, especially with regard to private sector occupations but also with regard to certain occupations in the public sector, and the frequent use of punitive measures regarding monitoring of their observance, is a matter of deep concern. Increased public funding should be allocated to the teaching of Latvian for persons belonging to national minorities. Latvia is encouraged to favour a more constructive approach in this sphere, in particular through measures aimed to improve the accessibility of quality Latvian language teaching for those concerned. More generally, the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in social and economic life should receive increased attention. The situation of the Roma, who continue to face difficulties in employment, education and access to services, should be adequately addressed without further delay.

(5) Positive developments and challenges have been noted in the field of education. It is to be welcomed that in the state-funded education system, eight minority languages – Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Polish, Hebrew and Romani – are used as languages of instruction. The Latvian authorities have undertaken efforts to train teachers for bilingual education and develop appropriate educational programmes. However, difficulties are reported as regards the availability of qualified teaching staff for bilingual education and of adequate educational materials, and the availability of teaching in minority languages in public schools is diminishing. Increased efforts are needed to ensure that the quality of instruction provided in minority education establishments is not lower than in schools with Latvian as a language of instruction. Adequate consultation with the representatives of national minorities is essential in this context. The obligation to use Latvian in the context of the secondary school final examination and the plan to introduce compulsory and exclusive use of Latvian in state funded private universities that have been using minority languages as languages of instruction, are a source of concern for national minorities. The promotion of the state language and its teaching as an instrument for integration in society is a legitimate aim. Nevertheless, measures taken in this context should be more balanced and take better account of the needs and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

(6) Shortcomings relating to the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the decision-making process need to be addressed. The participation through the Council for Minority Participation or equivalent structures should be strengthened and made more efficient. A governmental structure in charge of national minority issues should be maintained, with an increased decision-making role on minority-related issues. The question of the participation in public affairs of “non-citizens” identifying themselves with national minorities, including the possibility for them to vote in local elections, remains a matter of serious discussion.

(7) In spite of the efforts made to accelerate the naturalisation process and notwithstanding progress noted in this regard, the number of “non-citizens” remains high and the lack of citizenship continues to have a detrimental impact on the enjoyment of the full and effective equality and social integration. The considerable number of children born in Latvia after 21 August 1991 who are still ‘non-citizens’ is a matter of deep concern. Particular efforts are required in order to promote conditions more conducive to a genuine motivation for naturalisation. Latvia should address this situation as a matter of priority, to identify its underlying causes and to take all the necessary measures, including further language-training for the persons concerned, to promote naturalisation.

2. Recommends that Latvia take appropriate account of the conclusions set out in paragraph 1 above, together with the various comments in the Advisory Committee’s opinion.

3. Invites the Government of Latvia, in accordance with Resolution Res(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 paragraphs 1 and 2 above.

<sup>1</sup> In the context of adopting Resolution Res(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".

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## Related Documents

### Meetings

- [1110th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies \(CM Room\)](#) / 30 March 2011

### Other documents

- [CM/Del/Dec\(2011\)1110/4.10aE](#) / 04 April 2011 