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

**COMMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA
ON THE SECOND OPINION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
IN ROMANIA**

(received on 5 December 2006)

**REMARKS AND COMMENTS OF THE ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES ON THE
SECOND OPINION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**

Following the ratification of the Framework Convention of National Minorities by Romania and the adoption of the first resolution on Romania by the Committee of Ministers in 2002, the authorities continued the dialogue with the representatives of the national minorities in order to address the issues related to this matter.

- **Consultations with organizations members of the Council of National Minorities on the 2nd draft opinion**

After receiving the 2nd draft opinion, the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations (DIR) organized a consultation session with organizations members of the Council of National Minorities (CNM) for discussing and commenting the text of the draft opinion. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the OSCE, Council of Europe, and Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the National Agency for the Roma, as well as by the Information Office of the Council of Europe in Bucharest.

Both positive and negative developments mentioned in the draft opinion were discussed; the following issues were considered priorities for short and medium term:

- The adoption of the appropriate measures at local and central level, for the better implementation of existing legislation on the status of national minorities, as well as for a more efficient resource management in multi-ethnic communities; the faster application of the Law on local public administration in the areas where a lack of preoccupation of local authorities is noticeable;
- The increase of the presence in the mass-media of national minorities both by diversification and improvement the quality of existing broadcasts, and by setting up additional local radio and TV stations;
- The allocation of higher amounts for education, especially for schools with a smaller number of pupils and for textbooks, strengthening the body of specialists and inspectors for minority languages, introducing new languages in the educational system (e.g. Tartar language);
- The follow-up of the dialogue with political parties on the issue of the draft law on national minorities.

- **Observations concerning the opinion**

General legal framework

The main activity aimed at improving the existing legal and institutional framework has focused in the last years on promoting the draft law on the status of national minorities. The Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations has elaborated this draft law, in conjunction with the parliamentary groups of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians of Romania and of the national minorities,

respectively. Also, DIR was assisted in drafting the law by international organizations such as the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) and Project on Ethnic Relations (PER). The European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) played an important role in shaping this draft law, by formulating opinions and recommendations following a visit to Bucharest.

Currently, discussions continue in the specialised committees of the Parliament, where approximately 500 amendments have been put forward. At the level of the governmental coalition, measures have been taken to reconcile diverging points and to find a commonly acceptable legal solution. Non-governmental organizations have contributed intensively to the debates.

Another important step was the fact that on 2 March 2006 the Government approved the draft law on the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, initiated by Department for Interethnic Relations and Ministry of Foreign Affairs after consultations with institutions and organizations interested, as well as with the specialized compartment of the Council of Europe.

The draft law protects ten minority languages used on the Romanian territory, in the areas specified by Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, and transboundary exchanges. The minority languages thus protected are Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, German, Hungarian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Turkish and Ukrainian.

The provisions in the Charter concerning judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, education, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transboundary exchanges will be applied in accordance with existing Romanian legislation.

Article by article comments

Article 3

Scope of application

The Romanian authorities encourage the dialogue with groups and associations that do not hold Council for National Minorities membership but are interested in being covered by the Framework Convention. In this respect, the Romanian authorities consider that the law on the status of national minorities, still under public debate to date, can act as an important tool since it includes the definition and the criteria according to which a group may be recognised as national minority in Romania.

The situation of the Aromanian community must be considered by taking into account its full complexity. The Aromanian Community from Romania (ACR), a non-governmental organisation founded in 1991, requested the recognition of the Aromanian community as national minority.

Nevertheless, this organisation represents a singular opinion in the Aromanian community. Two other Aromanian cultural associations, the Society for Macedo-Romanian Culture and the

Aromanian Society of Dobrogea 'Picurarlu di la Pind' issued public statements in June and December 2005, protesting against this initiative and stating that Aromanians form part of the Romanian culture. The two statements emphasise the fact that Aromanians form a part of the Romanian culture and that Aromanians in Romania are the descendents of those persons who chose to live in Romania because they considered themselves part of the Romanian nation. The statement of the Society for Macedo-Romanian Culture is appended.

Nonetheless, the organisations of Aromanians of Romania benefit of the same freedom of action as any other organization. As the opinion mentions, the Romanian media also broadcasts in Aromanian dialect. The Aromanians took part many times in cultural events presenting their specificity and their contribution to the diversity of the modern-day Romania.

We have to emphasise that the Aromanians who declare themselves Romanians maintain also their self-identification as Aromanians.

b) The situation of Csango community may be understood by taking into consideration the results of 2002 census. 1769 persons declared themselves Csango. Most of them live in Bacau County, Romania, and belong to the Roman Catholic Church. During the last years, some statements identified all Catholics in Bacau County (119.618 persons according to 2002 census) as Csango. This identification is rejected by most of them, who did identify themselves as Romanians.

Nevertheless, a part of them did declare themselves as Csango or Hungarians in the 2002 census. The Association of Hungarian Csangos is the main representative of the persons who consider themselves as Csango or Hungarian Csangos. The Association is part of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania and identifies itself as "the representative of Hungarians east of Carpathian Mountains" (website www.csango.ro).

The Catholics who identify themselves as Romanians are represented by the Association of Roman Catholics in Moldova "Dumitru Martinas" (website www.asrocatholic.ro).

In 2004 no Csango organisation presented candidates for the local or general elections. Csango communities received support from the Ministry of Education and Research to set up education units for the study of the Hungarian language as mentioned in the opinion of the Advisory Committee.

The Romanian authorities respect both self identifications and provided support for the study of Hungarian language where this was requested.

Data collection

The Housing Population Census (HPC) 2002 registered the national minorities represented in the Council of National Minorities according to the list presented by the Department for Interethnic Relations. Also, some other groups not represented in the Council were listed.

Some ethnic groups, less numerous, were included in Romanian (Macedo-Romanians and Aromanians), Hungarian (Szecklers) and German (Saxons of Transylvania and Swabians) nationalities in accordance with the criteria of the common identity.

Article 4 - Prevention and protection against discrimination

On 17 July 2006, Romania ratified the Protocol no. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights. The protocol entered into force for Romania on 1 November 2006.

Also, the draft Criminal Code includes provisions criminalising the discrimination. The bill is currently pending before the Parliament.

Situation of the Roma

a) The social assistance (social benefits and social services) are provided without discrimination as stipulated by art. 10 of the Law no. 705/2001 concerning the national social assistance system which stipulates:

"(1) The social assistance eligibility is guaranteed for all resident Romanian citizens, regardless of age, education level, sex, religious belief, opinion, political affiliation, income or social origin."

At the same time, the Social Assistance and Family Policies Department of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Family is responsible to monitor the implementation of the key priorities identified in the Joint Inclusion Memorandum. The implementation of this document will create the premises to ensure the social inclusion for all disadvantaged groups, including the Roma.

b) Referring to **the absence of identity documents for Roma ethnic persons** and starting from the fact that the authorities try to improve the situation of Roma people, the National Inspectorate for Persons Record (INEP) within the Ministry for Administration and Interior has been actively involved in the activity of legalizing the civil status and identity documents for Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity, according to the provisions of the Romanian Government Strategy on improving the situation of Roma, approved by Government Decision no 430/2001.

The record of population, an extremely important activity, presupposes the legalization through issuing of such documents to all citizens, including those of Roma ethnicity, with their rights and obligations. The existence of identity documents represents a compulsory condition for access at the protection and realization of the fundamental rights, their absence obstructing, mainly, the access to education, labour and health. It is recognized that any strategic approach of the Roma topic should have as a priority the offering of support for acquiring these documents.

In order to support the citizens whose dwellings were affected by the 2005 floods, INEP send information referring to exemption of tax for issuing of new identity cards for the disaster's victims.

Furthermore, taking into account the situation of aged, non-transportable persons, or persons who reside in isolated areas INEP established mobile teams who would help these persons.

Also, in order to facilitate the issuance of documents proving the residence, special employees were appointed in municipalities in order support the clarification of the situation of Roma that live in different dwellings and that do not have any document that certifies a residence, document necessary for the identity cards.

As to the persons who do not have all the necessary documents for issuing the identity cards, may benefit from a **temporary identity card**, issued for a maximum of one year.

In spite of all the initiatives of the authorities, at present, there are persons that either are not registered at the civil status or have expired identity cards. Specialised units of the Ministry of Administration and Interior and the police act to identify specific measures to this aim.

The number of citizens whose situation needs clarification on the civil status cannot be accurately estimated.

At each county level there are counselors on Roma issues who assist the Roma in obtaining identity cards. In this respect, the Roma representatives were informed about the documents necessary to be registered in the civil status records, including the working schedule of the public unit for personal records.

A Cooperation Protocol between the Ministry of Administration and Interior, the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family and the Roma Centre for Social Interventions and Studies – Romani Criss aiming to assist the Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity to obtain civil status documents and identity cards was signed in 2005

Article 5 - Support for the minority culture and identity

In 2005, the Department for Interethnic Relations initiated and carried out, through its territorial representatives in Constanța, Suceava, Cluj, Timișoara and Turnu Severin, a large scale monitoring exercise on the application of the legal provisions concerning national minorities. The following minorities were monitored, through visits in of the country: the Bulgarian, Czech, Croat, Greek, Polish, Roma, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Tartar, and Ukrainian. The monitoring of the application of legal provisions concerning the Hungarian and German minorities will be finalized in 2006.

The above-mentioned monitoring was carried out in the settlements listed in the Annex to Governmental Decision 1206/2001 for the approval of the application norms of dispositions concerning the right of citizens belonging to national minorities to use their mother tongues in dealings with the local public administration, as mentioned in the Law on local public administration 215/2001, with all subsequent modifications and completions. In these places, the experts monitored the application of legal provisions in the field of public administration, education, and culture.

Thus, the application of the provisions concerning the right of citizens belonging to national minorities to use their mother tongues in dealings with authorities of local public administrations as regulated in the Act on local public administration 215/2001, in GD 1206/2001, as well as the application of legal provisions concerning the right of citizens belonging to national minorities to education in their mother tongues, as provided in the Education Law 84/1995.

The data obtained in the 2005 monitoring was processed, verified, and completed by the Resource Centre for Inter-Ethnic Relations in Cluj Napoca. The monitoring was concluded through the research study "The application of the legislation on the rights of national minorities in Romania", which presents a general outlook of the current situation in all counties. The study will be useful for taking measures where appropriate. In this respect, DIR will approach prefectures in a series of counties.

Budget funds were granted to the organizations members of the National Council of National Minorities. In order to function properly and to be able to develop activities for the preservation of their languages, traditions and cultures, the 19 organizations members of the CNM were allocated funds from the State Budget, as follows:

- 2001: LEI 90 billion
- 2002: LEI 126,5 billion
- 2003: LEI 190 billion
- 2004: LEI 240 billion
- 2005: LEI 264,5 billion
- 2006: LEI 363.8 billion (36,380,000 RON - Romanian New Lei).

The legality of the utilization of these funds is monitored, whilst the control on the spending of the allocated budgets is carried out exclusively by the Romanian Court of Audit.

Separate financing is reserved each year for DIR in order to promoting diversity and intercultural communication through inter-ethnic projects.

2001: LEI 4.8 billion

2002: LEI 7.1 billion

2003: LEI 9 billion lei

2004: LEI 15 billion

2005: LEI 25 billion

2006: LEI 25 billion (2,500,000 New Romanian Lei).¹

During the Romanian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (15 November 2005 – 15 May 2006), the Romanian authorities organised the international conference *Participation of National Minorities in the Public Life; the Role of Consultative Bodies* organised in partnership with the Council of Europe and the third meeting of DH-MIN.

Restitution of church property and assets that belonged to the communities

Following the enacting of Act no. 247/2005 and the modifications and completions brought to the legal frame regarding the restitution of the real estates abusively taken over; there will be restitution in kind for all the real estates presently owned by the state, including those excepted from restitution in kind by the previous legislative acts.

Restitution of the real estates that belonged to religious denominations

At the end of the deadline for submitting of the restitution applications by the religious denominations, 14.716 restitution applications have been submitted at country level.

The structure of the claims was:

¹ 1 EURO = Approximately 35.000 LEI

- **Orthodox Church – 2215 restitution applications;**
- **Roman-Catholic Church – 1203;**
- **The Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic) – 6723;**
- **Reformed Church – 1208;**
- **Evangelic Church – 1147;**
- **Jewish Community (religious buildings) – 1918;**
- **Other religious denominations – 303.**

The situation, up to June 2006, **of the real estates approved for restitution** by the Special Commission, is the following:

No.	Claiming cult	No. of real estates approved for restitution
01.	Orthodox Church	186
02.	Roman-Catholic Church	246
03.	The Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic)	92
04.	Reformed Church	253
05.	Jewish Community	71
06.	Evangelic Church C.A (Germans)	82
07.	Evangelic Lutheran Church S.P. (Hungarians)	14
08.	Unitarian Church	32
09.	Armenian Church	2
10.	Islamic Community	2
11.	Christian Adventist of the Seventh Day Church	3
	TOTAL	984

Situation of the public buildings

The real estates serving public interest activities (schools, hospitals) must keep their public utility destination for a period between 1 and 5 years according to its destination. Sometimes the public authorities assessed that is more convenient to build new buildings than to compensate the previous owners

In this respect some municipalities or counties started the negotiations with representatives of the European Investments Bank (BEI) and European Reconstruction and Development Bank (BERD) in order to obtain the necessary funds, without burdening their own budgets.

In order to protect the persons who live in the buildings object to restitution, the Government has already drafted a bill which regulates the social protection of the persons (tenants) who live in the buildings which will be restituted to the former owners. Among the adopted solutions there are the subsidizing of a part of the rent and the construction of social apartments.

The draft is currently under debate by the Government.

Article 6 of the Framework Convention Tolerance and intercultural dialogue

Study of the Holocaust

Since 1998, the Ministry of Education and Research introduced the provisions for the study of the Holocaust in the pre-university education, by including this subject in the new History curricula. This subject will be included in the alternative History manuals that will be edited.

As until 1998 this subject had not been studied in schools, the completion of the curriculum represented the primary urgency. In this respect, History curricula include themes which tackle this historical fact:

- in the seventh grade, topic no. 8, "Second World War", the issue to be tackled is "War dimensions";
- in the eleventh grade, topic no. 9, "Second World War", the issue called "The Holocaust";
- in the twelfth grade, topic no. 8, "State, Society and Culture", the issue "Romania 1938-1947", the problem to be tackled is the situation of the Jews in Romania between 1940-1944.

The topic "Second World War", issue to be tackled "Holocaust" (including Romania), is included in the new curriculum for the tenth grade and it is approved by the National Commission for History and the Minister.

This subject is also included in the curriculum for the eleventh grade (additional year), the topic called "Second World War", issue to be tackled "Holocaust" (including Romania).

In 2004, a curriculum for an optional course at the secondary school level on the study of Holocaust was approved by Order of the Minister. The content of the curriculum was modified in 2005, in close relation with the recommendations made by the *Final Report of the International Historians Commission*. This year, 330 secondary school classes opted for this course. A curriculum for an optional course at the gymnasium level was elaborated and it will be submitted for approval, by Order of the Minister.

We would like to mention the apparition of the first manual for teaching the secondary school optional course, which has been officially launched on 10 October 2005 under the auspices of the Romanian Presidency. In the same respect, Romania translated and published in 15 000 copies the *Guide for Teaching Holocaust*, which was distributed free of charge in the high schools.

The formation of teachers represents the second relevant issue.

The formation of teachers was carried on in Romania and abroad. Thus, the teachers in History were invited to participate in training courses in Paris (2001 and 2003) and at Yad Vashem (2000 and 2004). Another group has been at Yad Vashem, between 21 November and 5 December 2005. In Romania, all these activities took place in the university centers of Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest, Craiova, Iași or Bacău.

The Ministry of Education and Research coordinated the program by means of an inter-departmental and inter-ministerial commission. 18 types of activities have been organized at secondary school level, in which all the schools in Romania took part. As it is known, both 2004 and 2005' commemorations of Holocaust took place in schools around Romania.

In order to receive a qualified support in teaching Holocaust, the Ministry of Education and Research renewed, in 2005, the protocol signed in 2003 with the *Association of the Romanian Jews Victims of the Holocaust*.

For the year to come, the Ministry of Education and Research intends to:

- organize 4 new centers for the secondary education, on the formation of teachers in History on the Holocaust issues;
- adopt a curriculum for an optional course called *The History of Jews in Romania*, for the gymnasium cycle;
- continue the protocol with the *Association of the Romanian Jews Victims of the Holocaust*, in order to publish and spread auxiliary materials (two books in both Romanian and Hungarian and CDs/DVDs on the release of the concentration camps);
- create information points on the Holocaust at the Teachers' Training Centers around the country.

Police conduct

Participation of national minorities in the police has been a current issue on the agenda of the Romanian authorities.

On 31 January 2006 a working session on the access of national minorities in the police forces was convened with relevant public administration decision makers. Participants included the State Minister in charge with coordination of the activities in the field of culture, education and European integration, Mr. Markó Béla, the Minister of Administration and Interior Affairs, Mr. Vasile Blaga, the General Inspector of the Romanian Police, Mr. Dan Fătuloiu, the State Secretary for Interethnic Relations, Mr. Markó Attila, and executives from the Democratic Alliance for Hungarians from Romania (DAHR) and the DAHR Parliamentary Group. This first session suggested the need to outline a strategy for promoting the career in the police forces to national minorities, particularly to the young.

The DAHR also started a campaign under the slogan "The Choice of the Strong" to inform, particularly at local level, the persons belonging to the Hungarian minority on the advantages of a career in the police forces, on the one hand, and of a better communication between authorities and citizens, on the other. This campaign also intended to encourage the persons belonging to national to participate in the competitions organised by the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police. As registration requirements, each candidate should have Romanian citizenship, be a holder of a Bacculaureate diploma, respond to certain height requirements, hold a driving license and speak Romanian.

As the opinion mentions, the Ministry of Administration and Interior set -up a mechanism for investigation of the alleged abuses of human rights by members of police force. If the alleged actions may be considered a crime, the investigation is done by the Prosecution Office.

If the action is likely to be a breach of the code of conduct, the police official may be sanctioned with a fine or by a disciplinary sanction.

In 2005, as a result of the investigations conducted in the cases of alleged human rights violations committed by police officers, in **three cases**, there were criminal sanctions, in **three cases** there were administrative punishments and in **thirteen cases** there were disciplinary punishments.

Also in 2005, all the personnel of the Romanian Police were informed on the **behavior rules** that must be abided by in performing their duty. A set of notorious cases of breaking of human rights judged by The European Court on Human Rights and the *Guide on correct practices in police work with a view to forbidding torture and maltreatment* were presented to the territorial structures of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police and to its Educational units (the cases "Bursuc and Barbu Anghelescu against Romania" and "Velcea, Cobzaru and Iambor against Romania").

The general training of the personnel of the Ministry of Administration and Interior is focused on the necessity to manifest a civilised behavior towards all citizens and on implementation of a climate of mutual trust and respect, and of developing and maintaining correct relationship.

In the educational institutions of the Ministry of Administration and Interior there are certain disciplines regarding the human rights that represent the fundament of respecting the customs, traditions and the way of life of Roma, and disciplines studying ways and procedures of specific investigation conducted in Roma communities. It is also worth mentioning that there are presently under way certain training projects for policemen with a view to the human rights, non-discrimination and solving of conflicts in partnership with the civil society and with a view to promoting of good practices in the multicultural communities – police relationship.

As such, it has been established a project in partnership with the Danish Center for Conflict Resolution and with Iasi Regional Center for Facilitation and Negotiation – "Improvement of the Romanian Police ability for conflict resolution" – project that is integrating in the "Neighborhood Program" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Denmark for bilateral assistance with South-Eastern Europe States. The project is under way from June 2005 to October 2006 and it is focused on **training activities for the policemen working with Roma minority, on conflict resolution.**

Within the same context and taking into consideration that the *OSCE Action Plan for improvement of Roma and Sinti situation in the OSCE area*, adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Maastricht (3/2003), between the Ministry of Administration and Interior, OSCE/ Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti and Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies, it was adopted a Memorandum of Understanding whose aim is to assist the Ministry of Administration and Interior in implementing the objectives mentioned in the action field "Justice and Public Order" of the Strategy of the Romanian Government for improvement of Roma situation and development of a model of positive practices with a view to the implementation in Romania of the recommendations of the OSCE Action Plan referring to police and to disseminating this model in the OSCE area.

There is a set of activities based on projects oriented to Roma minority protection, as follows:

- Establishing some common teams of negotiators for actions aimed to solve tensed situations;
- Inviting representatives of Roma minority to participate in activities of public interest and in other events organized by the Ministry of Administration and Interior;
- Training of the police officers with a view to the improvement of the relationship with Roma;
- Training courses for police officers aiming at developing the communicating abilities with Roma;
- Organization of periodical meetings, at the level of local communities, to better know and respect the legislation referring to public order and public administration.

In order to establish the principles and the rules governing the policemen and gendarmes behavior and their way of behaving in special situations, such is public relations, use of force or investigation of suspects and of illicit acts, it was prepared the Code of ethics and professionalism of the policeman, with support of French and Belgian experts of the Council of Europe, document approved by the Government Decision 991/2005.

This code has rules to ensure the limitation of rights to the minimum necessary time to accomplish the legitimate objective that determined adoption of such measures, for the cases where the policeman or gendarme's intervention requires the temporary restriction of some of the freedoms and rights of persons. Among its aims, it is worth mentioning ensuring the ethical behavior of the policeman by formation and promotion of an adequate professional culture and by this, achievement of the equilibrium among the rights of the citizens. It should also be stressed the principle of equality, impartiality and non-discrimination. In this respect the police or the gendarme officers have to apply equal treatments to all persons, taking the same actions for similar situations of breaking the legal norms, without being influenced by ethnical considerations, nationality, race, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, age, sex, sexual orientation, national or social origins or pertaining to any other situation.

By order of the Minister of Administration and Interior there were established the structures responsible for the application and evaluation of the Code of ethics and professionalism of the policeman and the specific responsibilities in this field.

Referring to the representation of Roma in police force, it must be mentioned the **Order of the minister of Administration and Interior 300/2004 on human resources management activity within the units belonging to the ministry**, with the subsequent amendments, that establishes the general conditions for recruiting and selecting the personnel of the ministry. There is no discriminatory provision in this order.

The General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police is making efforts to hire Roma persons in the police force. In 2005 and early 2006, there were 30 jobs allotted especially for representatives of national minorities who want to join the police force.

Article 10 of the Framework Convention

Use of minority languages in relation with local authorities

A general picture of the situation in this field is provided by the research study carried out by DIR in the inter-ethnic regions throughout 2005 - 2006, finalized through the study „The application of the legislation concerning the rights of national minorities in Romania" (see chapter on *Preservation and promotion of culture and identity*). Based on the resulting observations, DIR will request local authorities from various counties to take measures in order to apply the legislation in force regarding the use of minority languages in local public administration.

The ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages will strengthen the framework for the application of these provisions.

Article 15 of the Framework Convention

Participation in public affairs

The Romanian authorities encourage the participation of organizations of national minorities in public life.

Also, in order to enhance the participation in public life of youth belonging to national minorities, in 2006 the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations will develop a range of activities in the framework of the European Youth Campaign "All Different, All Equal". The activities will have as a main focus encouraging young people to take an active part in shaping the future of their communities.

With regard to the access to the resources granted by the state for the protection of national minorities, we have to add that as representative entities, the organizations of the Council of National Minorities benefit from support. Over the past few years increasing financial resources were directed to other organizations of minorities or to organizations taking interest in inter-ethnic issues, including to a public utility foundation. Such initiatives will continue in the next period, DIR being prepared to grant them all necessary support.

On the other hand, the funds distributed to organizations members of the Council of National Minorities are redistributed through an internal project financing system to their branches or other component entities.

For example, the *Communitas* Foundation, which manages the budget received by the Hungarian community from the state, distributes these amounts on a project basis to a high number of Hungarian organizations from different counties. In 2005, the cultural calendar of DAHR included events initiated by approximately 200 organizations. The calendar of events financed by DAHR in 2006 includes approximately 300 organizations. Such experiences, which exist in the German, Jewish and Greek communities, are encouraged.

Appendix

Statement of the Society for Macedo-Romanian Culture which opposes the project of declaring Aromanians as a national minority
Friday 10 June 2005

The Society for Macedo Romanian Culture took notice recently of the actions of some self-proclaimed representatives of Aromanians from Romania who are asking the granting of the status of minority for themselves.

The Society for Macedo Romanian Culture has roots in Romania since the reign of Alexandru Ioan Cuza (19th century) and has officially represented for long time the aromanians/macedo-romanians/macedo- Vlachs from the Balkan area and from diaspora. It stated permanently the idea existing since Middle Ages that Aromanians, wherever they were or are represent a part of the Romanian people and their dialect is a dialect of the Old Romanian language. As sole descendent of the Eastern Latinity, the Romanian people, with its' different branches was born equally on North and South of Danube. The unity of the Romanian people and of its' language existed and asserted itself, being known and recognized as such by scientists from Romania and abroad. The above mentioned initiative seem absurd and at same time, provocative and dangerous. The Aromanians settled north of Danube after the establishment of the Romanian states and their number grew through the time. They have considered, without exception that they settled among their brothers, in their own country, being aware that they are part of the Romanian nation. Their own great personalities enriched the Romanian cultural treasure, which would have been poorer without them. Furthermore, the names of these personalities would be ousted from history.

We hope that the situation of our own brothers living in different Balkan countries will evolve in accordance with the European standards, being recognized as minority, not by conjuring an invented ethnic reality as it seem to be intended for Romania. We want to emphasise that many associations, organizations and foundations and Aromanian communities from Bucharest and other towns are against this initiative stating now, as in the past the fact that they belong to Romanian people and that they are revolted with the prospective that they may be declared a minority in their own land.

We think that it is time to stress that, through the time the Romanian State was the only one that undertook the responsibility for the fate of Aromanians from home and from the world and a possible recognition of them as a distinct minority/ethnicity would leave them without a support vital for their present and their future. We seize this opportunity to express the hope that the relevant authorities of our State will further support the wishes of our Aromanian brothers, loyal citizens of their country to preserve the specificity of the Aromanian dialect, culture and tradition. We express the hope that the authorities of our State will not agree with a request that is alien to the feelings and interests of the Aromanians.

Note: The views expressed in this statement are solely those of the author