

**Resolution CM/ResCMN(2011)16
on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of
National Minorities
by Cyprus**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 September 2011
at the 1121st 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 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;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 third monitoring cycle under the Framework Convention on 30 April 2009;

Having examined the Advisory Committee's third opinion on Cyprus, adopted on 19 March 2010, as well as the written comments of the Government of Cyprus, received on 8 October 2010;

Having also taken note of comments by other governments,

1. Adopts the following conclusions in respect of Cyprus:

a) Positive developments

Since the entry into force of the Framework Convention, Cyprus has pursued a constructive approach towards the monitoring process of this Convention and has taken useful steps to publicise, discuss and implement the results of the two first cycles of monitoring.

While there is scope for improvement in different sectors, it appears, as stated by the representatives of the "religious groups" protected under the Framework Convention – the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites – that the entry into force of the Convention in respect of Cyprus and its monitoring have had an overall positive impact on the situation of these groups.

The fact that the Roma living on the territory under the effective control of the government now have access to the protection of the Framework Convention is a

positive development. A number of practical measures have been taken in recent years to protect and support them.

In view of the growing diversity of Cypriot society, efforts have been made to improve and complete the anti-discrimination legislative and institutional framework and to increase awareness about human rights, tolerance, and the principles of equality and non-discrimination. Additional measures have been taken to enable Turkish Cypriots to more effectively participate in public affairs and social, economic, and cultural life.

The authorities have continued to support the preservation and promotion of the culture of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, including by providing subsidies to their respective websites and written publications. Increased attention has been paid to the particularly vulnerable situation of the Maronites and their cultural heritage, mainly situated in the territory not under government control.

Public radio has increased its broadcasting time devoted to the "religious groups" and these groups' main community events have benefitted from good media coverage.

Efforts are being made to increase the multicultural dimension of education and to raise awareness of the history and culture of the "religious groups". Public support continues to be provided to children belonging to "religious groups" for access to private schools catering to their specific needs.

Armenians, Maronites and Latins are reportedly well integrated and, in general, take an active part in the Cypriot society's life. Positive and constructive relations have been maintained between them and the public authorities involved in minority protection.

b) Issues of concern

The follow-up of a number of previous recommendations was apparently hindered by complex constitutional provisions or by political and other developments.

The constitutional obligation of persons belonging to the three "religious groups" to affiliate themselves either with the Greek Cypriot Community or the Turkish Cypriot Community, as well as their members' statutory obligation to vote to elect their representative to parliament, are still in force. The implementation of the principle of self-identification thus remains problematic. The 2011 population census will provide a key opportunity for the authorities to ensure proper implementation of this principle in respect of all and to obtain up-to-date information on the ethnic, linguistic and religious composition of the population.

More adequate conditions are needed for the effective participation of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites in decision making on issues of interest to them, notably in parliament.

The demand by the Armenians and the Maronites for government support for the establishment of cultural centres is still pending but the Government of Cyprus is

working towards the realisation of this project. Increased transparency is needed as regards the funding available for minority cultural projects and related procedures. The Maronites continue to be in a vulnerable situation in terms of preservation of their cultural heritage, notably the language, and still face practical difficulties in maintaining links with members of their group and their place of origin, in the territory out of the government effective control.

Difficulties persist concerning the availability of schoolbooks and training and recruitment of teachers for minority education. While the Armenians continue to face difficulties in their efforts to maintain the teaching of Armenian, the necessary conditions for the teaching of Cypriot Maronite Arabic are yet to be put in place.

The Roma are still facing prejudice and serious difficulties in various sectors and the establishment of a dialogue with them remains problematic.

The growing diversity of the Cypriot society is a particular challenge for the authorities. A government integration strategy remains to be adopted. In addition, increased efforts are needed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ombudsman Office and to ensure the operational independence and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Institution.

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:

Issues for immediate action:²

- take adequate measures to ensure, during the population census in 2011 and other forthcoming processes, effective implementation of the principle of self-identification, especially in respect of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, as well as the Roma;
- take urgent action to combat and sanction effectively all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including misconduct by members of the police force;
- take additional measures to provide a more adequate response to the educational needs of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites, in particular as regards the availability of teaching materials and qualified teachers; provide the support needed to enable adequate minority language teaching for the Armenians and the Maronites.

Further recommendations:³

- re-examine, in the light of the principle of free self-identification and in view of any subsequent revision of the Constitution, the obligation of the Armenians, the Latins and

the Maronites to affiliate themselves with either the Greek Cypriot Community or the Turkish Cypriot Community, as well as their statutory obligation to vote to elect their representative in parliament;

- pursue the dialogue with the Armenians and the Maronites concerning their possible recognition as a national minority rather than "religious group", and with the Latins to find a designation more acceptable to them;

- while stepping up measures to protect and support the Roma under the Framework Convention, identify ways to establish a structured dialogue with them and to obtain up-to-date information regarding their ethnic, linguistic and religious affiliations;

- take more resolute measures to increase awareness on the equality and non-discrimination principles, focusing in particular on journalists, law enforcement forces and members of the judiciary; ensure the operational independence and effectiveness of the National Human Rights Institution and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ombudsman Office;

- make efforts to adjust public support to the preservation and development of the culture of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites to their actual needs, and effectively assist these groups in the establishment of cultural centres;

- take effective measures, including of a financial nature, to support the revitalisation and promotion of the language of the Maronites as well as their culture, religion and traditions and increase efforts to facilitate their contacts with persons who share their identity and their place of origin;

- take further steps to promote mutual respect and understanding within Cypriot society;

- identify ways to enable a more effective participation of the Armenians, the Latins and the Maronites in public affairs in parliament and through improved consultation mechanisms.

3. Invites the Government of Cyprus, 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 sections 1 and 2 above.

¹ 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".

² The recommendations below are listed in the order of the corresponding articles of the Framework Convention.

Related Documents

Meetings

[1121st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies \(CM Room\)](#) / 21 September 2011

Other documents

[CM/Del/Dec\(2011\)1121/4.5E](#) / 23 September 2011 