

CYPRUS

THIRD PERIODIC REPORT ON THE APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

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INTRODUCTION

The present Report is the Third Periodic Report of Cyprus and should be read together with all background information provided in the Initial and the Second Report as well as during the on-the-spot visit of the Committee of Experts which took place on 2 - 4 April 2007.

2. The Second Cycle Opinion on Cyprus of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention was adopted on 7 June 2007 (hereinafter the "Opinion") and made public on 9 July 2008. The Second Cycle Committee of Ministers' Resolution CMN(2008)5 was adopted on 9 July 2008 (hereinafter the "Committee of Ministers' Resolution"). Hence, the present Report is the Third Periodic Report of Cyprus (hereinafter "the present Report") covering the results of the second monitoring cycle of the implementation of the Framework Convention by Cyprus and the measures taken by the Cypriot authorities in the light of the Opinion of the Advisory Committee, as well as the issues raised in the Committee of Ministers' Resolution. The Comments of the Government of Cyprus on the Opinion were submitted in November 2007 and made public on 9 July 2008.

2.A. Since the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains no definition of the notion of "national minorities", it is up to the individual contracting parties to determine the national minorities to which it shall apply the Framework Convention.

2.B. For the Republic of Cyprus, the term "national minorities" within the meaning of the Framework Convention is understood to designate only those national minority groups who had a traditional presence on the island at the time of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 and have Cypriot citizenship.

3. The present Report has been prepared by the Law Commissioner of the Republic, who, pursuant to a Decision of the Council of Ministers, has been designated to ensure Cyprus' compliance to its reporting obligations under International Human Rights Instruments. The information and data, on the basis of which the present Report was compiled, was provided by the Ministry of the Interior, the competent authority for the overall implementation of the Framework Convention, and by other Ministries/Services

competent for the specific matter (i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Police and the Statistical Service), as well as the Law Office of the Republic. Information was also obtained from the Representatives of the religious groups of Cyprus, namely the Armenians, Maronites and Latins and their respective Offices, to whom the present Report will be communicated upon submission. Furthermore, the present Report will be translated into the national official languages and disseminated.

4. The present Report was due by 1 February 2009. The delay in submitting the present Report is regretted. This is due to bureaucratic deficiencies encountered by small administrations with limited resources.

PART I - PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS MADE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOR FOLLOWING UP THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND MONITORING CYCLE

a. Please provide information on the participation of minority organisations and other non-governmental organisations in the authorities' implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention, and indicate the impact of their involvement;

The Ministry of Education and Culture is constantly willing to intensify its efforts in order to meet the relevant needs of all members of the National Minorities of Cyprus and to ensure that their rights concerning the highlighted areas of the Advisory Committee's Second Opinion on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities are exercised in full. To this end, the Ministry cooperated as closely and effectively as possible with the Representatives of the relevant groups, in a joint effort to promote the common aim of living peacefully together in a multicultural society and nurture positive attitudes towards all the people living on the island.

Since 2006 until 2008 former Ministers of Education and Culture, late Pefkios Georgiades and Mr. Akis Kleanthous had several individual meetings, usually held in September -beginning of the school year- and June -end of the school year-, with the Representatives of the relevant groups in order to address issues related to the specific needs of each group in areas within the competence of the Ministry of Education and Culture. However, certain administrative and practical problems often arouse from the implementation of the abovementioned policy. The new Minister of Education and Culture, Professor Andreas Demetriou, held a meeting with an open agenda, with the Representatives of the minority groups in the presence of competent senior officials of the Ministry (April, 2008). The Minister was briefed on common key issues faced by the minority groups and a decision was taken to the effect that the Ministry of Education and Culture will consider favorably any proposals promoting the cultural development and the preservation of the cultural identity of the minority groups. It was agreed that the Representatives will be in close and direct contact with the competent Directorates of Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (a number of letters of requests with

answers provided by the Directors of the Divisions of Education indicates the effectiveness of these measures.

The Ministry of the Interior, being the competent Ministry for the overall issues of concern to the religious groups, continues to be in constant consultation and dialogue with the Representatives of the groups as well as with non-governmental organisations in the implementation and monitoring of the Framework Convention. Also refer to para 63 of the Second Periodic Report and to comments under c. below.

b. Please indicate what steps have been taken to publicise the results of the second monitoring cycle (Opinion, State comments, Resolution): publication, dissemination and translation into the official language(s) and the minority language(s) where appropriate;

The results of the Second Monitoring Cycle have been posted on the official website of the Ministry of Interior (www.moi.gov.cy), as well as on the official website of the Press and Information Office (www.moi.gov.cy/pio).

c. Please provide information on any follow-up activities organised at national, regional and local levels.

The following events were organized:

- (i) On September 28th, 2007, a Lecture on International and European Standards on Minority Rights was organized by the Association of Maronite Graduates in Cyprus, in collaboration with the Office of the Maronite Representative in the House of Representatives.
- (ii) On the 9th and the 10th of November 2007, the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture organized a Symposium for the codification of the Cyprus- Maronite Arabic Language. The Ministry of Interior covered all the expenses for the Symposium which amounted to the sum of €7458,95; whereas the Ministry of Education and Culture undertook the responsibility and cost to organize the Symposium and invite the note speakers.

(iii) On the 24th and 25th of November 2007, the European University of Cyprus organized a Conference entitled “The Minorities of Cyprus: Past, Present and Future”. The conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Interior with the amount of €1,709.00, and the Ministry of Education and Culture with the amount of €3,417.00.

Furthermore the Ministry of Interior sponsored Xi Fi Sanna (NGO) with the sum of €4.591,54 for the expenses of: a Christmas event organized by them on 30.12.2007, the annual subscription for their website, the publication of their 1st book on Cyprus Maronite Arabic language as well as for an event that was to be organized, in collaboration with the Municipality of Nicosia, in October 2008.

The Ministry of Education and Culture on July 2008, subsidized the summer camp for young students, between the ages of 12 and 15 years of age, which took place in the village of Kormakitis, with the amount of €8,000.00. The objective of the camp was to teach *the* Cyprus Maronite Arabic language to the younger generation.

On September 2008 the Ministry of Education and Culture, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Law Commissioner, developed and presented to the Council of Ministers a proposal regarding the Declaration by the Republic of Cyprus on the Cypriot Maronite Arabic, a recommendation brought forward by the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Council of Ministers with its Decision No. 67.823, dated 17/10/2008, decided to declare the Cypriot Maronite Arabic as a language within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and to appoint a Committee of Experts (18 members) with the task to develop a strategic plan for the codification, teaching and future of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic. It is noted that the members of the Committee of Experts were proposed by the Representative of the Maronite religious group.

See also comments in relation to para. 73 of the Opinion, below.

d. Please provide information on any other measures taken to promote awareness of the Framework Convention.

All relevant information is given under c. above.

PART II - MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION

A. MEASURES TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

Recommendation 1

“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;”

The Government appreciates the fact that the Committee of Ministers recognises the Constitutional binding obligations, eliminating the possibilities of taking certain measures to remedy situations appearing to be incompatible with the Framework Convention for which constitutional amendments would be required. Under the current delicate political situation related to the Cyprus issue, any amendment of this kind would be politically incorrect, if not practically impossible.

The Constitutional obligation of religious groups to opt to belong to one of the two Communities, either the Greek or Turkish Community, should not be viewed in isolation of other Constitutional provisions which go to the root of the constitutional structure of the state. The Constitution provides for organs of state which must be bi-communally composed. Participation in them is by reference to Community in constitutionally allotted percentages/numbers for each community. The obligation of religious groups to opt to belong to one of the two communities, because of their small numbers, is the means provided for by the Constitution for safeguarding that they have a right to participate in the bi-communally composed organs of the state, as members of the community to which they belong. Had the Constitution left it open for religious groups, or individual members of such groups, to opt not to belong to a community, the group or person so opting would have no right to participate in the bi-communally composed state organs. In this context, by way of an example, it is pointed out that, the now President of the

House of Representatives, is a member of the Armenian religious group, elected as a member of the Parliament, at general Parliamentary elections.

It is emphasized that the bi-communal structure is set up by Articles of the Constitution which are “basic” and under its explicit provisions (Article 182) “cannot, in any way, be amended, whether by way of variation, addition, or repeal”.

With regard to the legal obligation to vote in elections, the following should be noted: The provisions of Article 109 of the Constitution do not afford the right of representation of religious groups through elected representatives of the group in Parliament. The right is afforded with reference to the Communal Chamber of the Community to which the groups opted to belong, that is, the Greek Communal Chamber, and concerns legislative functions over specific subjects, (religion, education, and matters of personal status) over which the Greek Communal Chamber, has legislative competence under the Constitution. Owing to the abnormal situation and the resultant non-functioning of the Communal Chambers, the legislative functions of the Greek Communal Chamber over the said specific subjects were temporarily transferred by Law to Parliament. The right of religious groups to elect a representative in the Greek Communal Chamber was retained vis-à-vis the Parliament, pending the abnormal situation, and concerning the above subjects. The role of the elected representatives of religious groups in Parliament concerning legislative work on the above subjects is an advisory one. The reason is that, the Parliament, in which they are elected, by their religious groups to represent them concerning the relevant subjects, under temporary arrangements, is a totally different organ from the state of affairs established by the Communal Chamber. This is so, because the two bodies have been differently composed, elected, and functioning, under constitutional provisions, which envisage participation in the Parliament’s work by elected representatives of the two communities, and do not envisage participation by elected representatives of religious groups (the Constitution provides for a bi-communally composed Parliament, by contrast to the Greek and Turkish Communal Chambers, each of which is composed only of Greek and Turkish community elected members respectively).

In general, despite, the relevant constitutional and other legal limitations, the subject of compulsory voting is under review by the Ministry of Interior and a relevant amendment will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for decision.

Recommendation 2

“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 centers; promote their increased presence in the media and in educational materials;”

As indicated above, in Part I, paragraph a, the Ministry of Education and Culture is willing to pursue and intensify its efforts to meet the needs of all members of the religious groups and to ensure that their rights, concerning the highlighted areas of the Advisory Committee’s Second Opinion, on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, are exercised in full. The Government, in particular, the Ministry with competence on the specific issues, will cooperate as closely and effectively as possible with the Representatives of the religious groups in a joint effort to promote the notion of living peacefully together and with full respect to each other’s cultural special identity, within a multicultural society of tolerance and nurture positive attitudes towards all the people living on the island.

Regarding the financial assistance for the establishment of cultural centers, information is provided by the comments in relation to paragraph 15 of the Opinion, below.

With regard to the issues raised in respect to the educational materials, the Ministry of Education and Culture is in close cooperation with the Representatives of the religious groups in order to overcome any obstacles that might occur. The policy of importing textbooks and educational manipulatives from abroad is being examined and continuous consultations are held and specific suggestions are expected to be brought forward by the Representatives of the religious groups. Upon evaluation of the proposals, the Ministry will proceed to the immediate materialization of the selected project.

Furthermore, in order to support and promote the preservation of the identity, the culture and history of the three religious minorities in Cyprus, the University of Cyprus is in direct contact with the Representatives of the religious groups. As a result, joint PhD grants are offered to students who are interested in studying the culture of a specific religious group. Additionally, special arrangements are implemented for the acceptance and the facilitation of students from the abovementioned religious groups at all the Public Universities of the island as well as the State Funded Institutions of Higher Education and the Adult Education Centres.

Recommendation 3

“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;”

The Government considers that effective measures can be implemented to this end, as long as the dialogue between the parties concerned continues. For information on relevant policies developed and implemented and actions taken see comments in relation to paragraph 73 of the Opinion, below.

Recommendation 4

“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;”

In an environment where «the only factor that remains stable is change¹», the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has initiated an ambitious Educational Reform Program, inviting dialogue among all stakeholders (Political Parties, Teacher Unions, Parents Associations, Associations of Students, and the Government, represented by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Planning Bureau), with a view to turn into reality the vision of a better and more modern educational system that would meet the needs and challenges of the twenty first century.

¹ As stated by the Greek Philosopher Heraclitus.

The ongoing Educational Reform is an effort for a comprehensive introduction of changes and innovations at all levels and all aspects of the educational system. The main objective of this effort is to create a democratic and student-focused educational system, which includes all students irrespective of social, racial or ethnic background, gender, or physical or mental ability and offers high quality education to each student, thus assisting him/her to maximize his/her potential and acquire skills and knowledge which will enable him/her to become an active and democratic citizen.

The objective is to create an integrated continuum of early childhood education, pre-primary education, primary education, secondary general and secondary technical and vocational education. Within this framework, special emphasis will be given to defining aims and key contents of different subjects and thematic entities in order to form a more unified educational approach. The new core curriculum will be developed so as to provide all students with the opportunity for individual choice and supporting services, including supplementary instruction in areas of need. The key competencies that Europe's citizens should acquire to enable them to adapt to changes will be effectively addressed.

For the upgrading of the curriculum, the Government has set up a Committee of Experts which is currently preparing its recommendations and suggestions. Suggestions from all stakeholders that participate in the process are warmly welcomed and highly considered. It should be noted, in this regard, that on the first draft of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts for the upgrading of the curriculum, specific references are made in relation to the right for access to education, as well as to children's rights (Preface pg25-27).

Recommendation 5

“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;”

The Ministry of Interior supports the efforts made by persons belonging to the three religious groups to preserve their culture and identity and allocates substantial financial resources in the relevant sectors. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior is willing to

pursue and intensify its efforts to meet the needs of all members of the religious groups and to ensure that their rights, concerning the highlighted areas of the Advisory Committee's Opinion, are exercised in full. To this end, the Ministry cooperates as closely and effectively as possible with the Representatives of the religious groups.

Recommendation 6

“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;”

The Municipality of Limassol in co-operation with the Government of Cyprus has created the Bi-communal Multi-Functional Center on the premises of the old Turkish Cypriot Elementary School which is situated in the old Turkish Cypriot quarter. The Center is offering mostly social services to both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, including Cypriot Roma / Gypsies of Cyprus, hereinafter Cyprus Roma, who are living in Limassol.

In the District Administration Office a Turkish Cypriot is employed as a translator helping Turkish speaking persons, including Cyprus Roma, who visit the Office for the issue of various documents, such as Identity Cards, Passports etc.

The District Administration Office is in direct contact on a daily base with the Cyprus Roma to solve any problems in housing, education and any other problems faced by them within the Government controlled area of the Republic. In this respect, they are offered every assistance in exercising their rights in full respect with the principle of free self-identification.

The Ministry of Education and Culture in its effort to enhance the achievement of Cyprus Roma pupils, has developed a strategic plan, which represents part of the government's agenda for Educational Reform and aims to improve the quality of education offered in public schools, by closing the achievement gap of Cyprus Roma and other minority students. The Ministry of Education has implemented special support measures for Cyprus Roma pupils in every school they attend. (For more information on this see comments in relation to paragraph 92 of the Opinion, below).

Recommendation 7

“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.”

A major effort has been undertaken within the policies applied by the Ministry of Education and Culture, to raise awareness concerning the principles of non-discrimination and equality. These elements are outlined in the key points and major objectives of the National Strategy for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which was by far the major academic goal for the academic year 2007-2008 and the predominant idea governing every dimension of the Education Reform in the country. The same principles guide the changes envisaged within the framework of the ongoing Educational Reform Program.

(See also comments in relation to paragraph 58 of the Opinion, below).

Also refer to comments in relation to paragraphs 52, 53, 80 and 90 of the Opinion, below.

B. MEASURES AND POLICIES TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO THE FINDINGS CONTAINED IN THE OPINION OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE - ARTICLE - BY-ARTICLE INFORMATION

(Re para 14 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture has already exhibited its commitment to transform the current education system into a democratic and student focused one, that will address the needs of all students, irrespective of social, racial or ethnic background, gender or physical or mental ability by offering quality education to every student, thus assisting them to maximize their potential and acquire skills and knowledge, which will enable them to become active and democratic citizens. This is the reason why the Ministry of Education and Culture welcomes the active participation of the Representatives of the Religious Minorities in subcommittees of the Committee of Experts for the Upgrading of the Curriculum. The major goal is the promotion of the notion of living peacefully together in a multicultural society and nurture positive attitudes towards all the people living on the island. Regular contacts in this respect continue to take place.

(Re para 15 of the Opinion)

In addition to the availability by the University of Cyprus, of PhD grants, to students who wish to continue their studies in areas related to the culture, history or language of the religious groups, special arrangements are made for the acceptance and the facilitation of students from such groups at the Public Universities of Cyprus, the State Funded Institutions of Higher Education, as well as the Adult Education Centers.

Concerning the request for the establishment of a Maronite Cultural Centre, the minutes of the relevant meeting of the Committee on Cultural Issues of May 2007, read as follows:

- “Following the suggestions forwarded by the Planning Bureau, alternative ways for meeting the demands have been considered. It has been observed that in the primary school of Saint Marona in Anthoupolis, which was built in 2002, there is a

hall for multiple purposes with the capacity to host approximately 400 persons. This hall consists of a stage and changing rooms, as well as lobby, which can be converted into a display room. This room can be used as a cultural centre for the satisfaction of the cultural needs of the Maronite religious group. Therefore, the Committee suggests that this hall can be adequately used in the future for cultural activities”.

Irrespective of the above suggestion, the Ministry of Education and Culture is re-examining the request in order to offer the best possible solution that addresses the needs of the Maronites. In addition to the above, it should be noted that the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education and Culture grant financial assistance to a number of Maronite Associations for cultural activities. The Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture frequently satisfy the relevant requests submitted by religious groups upon fulfillment of certain criteria.

Regarding the establishment of an Armenian Cultural Center, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education and Culture has appointed an ad hoc committee, in which representatives of the Cultural Services of the Ministry and representatives of the Armenian community are currently examining different scenarios for the realization of the abovementioned plan. The Representative of the Armenian community has committed himself in presenting to the Committee a fiscal study with financial analysis of the cost of the project. A final decision, as well as a blueprint of the strategic action for its gradual implementation will be finalized within the current fiscal year (2009-2010).

(Re para 18 of the Opinion)

See comments in relation to paragraph 92 of the Opinion, below.

(Re para 20 of the Opinion)

CyBC's First Radio Channel has for years been airing programmes for the Maronite and Latin religious groups. Until September 2006, their duration was 30' and 15' respectively. Since then and to this day, the two programmes' respective durations have been increased to 50' for the "Voice of the Maronites", aired every Friday at 17:10, and

30' for the "Latins of Cyprus – yesterday and today", aired on the same day at 16:30. In addition to the standard issues covered by the two programmes, current events concerning the two groups, should they arise, are covered on other informative programmes aired on CyBC's First Radio Channel.

As regards the Armenian religious group, a 1-hour programme has for decades been aired on CyBC's Second (Foreign Language) Channel.

Additional time may be allocated, if a well established need arises.

(Re para 21 of the Opinion)

The efforts undertaken in this respect, mentioned by the Advisory Committee in paragraph 21 of the Opinion, indicate the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Culture to work together with the Representatives in order to develop policies which address the individual needs of each minority group. The Advisory Committee notes the progress made in this regard, however the Ministry, within the framework of its measures for Education Reform, will intensify its efforts in the direction of providing quality education to all students.

(Re para 22 of the Opinion)

(See also comments in relation to Recommendation 4 above).

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus recognizes that all students have the right to an education, appropriate to their needs and great efforts have been made to achieve this aim. The Ministry of Education and Culture adopts UNESCO's views on inclusion to embrace students, such as children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, children in rural and remote areas, children from ethnic and linguistic minorities, children affected by conflict and natural disasters, children of migrants and children with additional and/or special needs. Educational Requirements and support services are provided for in an inclusive and least restrictive learning environment.

Education in all schools is increasingly focused on the acceptance of difference, tolerance, the respect for other cultures, as well as to prepare tomorrow's citizens for

living in a multicultural environment. In order to raise awareness concerning the principles of non discrimination and equality, the Minister of Education and Culture has issued a circular in September of 2008, by which great emphasis is placed on this year's priority goal, which is the: "Enhancement of mutual respect and understanding among the different cultures of the island for nurturing peaceful coexistence". For the current school year (2008-2009), educators, students and parents will receive information and will be encouraged to participate in planned events (conferences, seminars, plays, book clubs) related to the above objective and plan further special activities that shall include:

- Creating cross curriculum approaches in order to highlight cooperation, mutual understanding and love between individuals and peoples and generations, free from the specter of intolerance and chauvinism, while aiming at safeguarding freedom, justice and peace.

In an environment where constant improvement is the ultimate goal, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has initiated an ambitious Educational Reform Program, inviting dialogue among all stakeholders (Political Parties, Teacher Unions, Parents Associations, Associations of Students, Representatives of the Religious Minorities and the Government, represented by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Planning Bureau) with a view to materialize, the soonest possible, the vision of a better, more humanistic, and modern educational system, that would meet the needs and challenges of the twenty first century. This initiative was launched in January 2005, following a report by a Committee of seven academics, which identified the weaknesses of the Cyprus Education System and the areas in need of reform and made relevant recommendations.

As indicated above, the process of reform is based on a structured dialogue among all interested stakeholders. For this purpose, three Councils were set up:

- Council for Primary and Secondary Education: This includes representatives of the Government, the teachers, the students, the parents and major political parties and discusses issues of interest to the school system.
- Council for Higher Education: This includes representatives of the Government, the Universities and other Higher Education Institutions, the students, the parents,

the Bodies responsible for quality assessment in higher education and major political parties and discusses issues of interest to the higher and university education.

- Education Council: This consists of representatives of the Government and major political parties. It sets the agenda for issues to be addressed within the dialogue at hand, reviews issues which have been discussed at the other two Councils and makes final recommendations to the Government.

The participation of political parties in the above mechanism is an innovative feature which aims at building consensus to the broader possible degree and at securing the continuity of the educational policy, through participatory collective and extensive discussion of the main issues.

The major policy changes carried out within the process of educational reform that are related to national minority education subjects are outlined below:

- Establishment of a Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation and Restructuring of the Pedagogical Institute; (identification of areas of need to be addressed for the education of students belonging to national minorities).
- Revision of National Curriculum (inclusion of subject matter areas regarding education of students belonging to national minorities, inclusion of subject matter areas regarding the education of all students about national minorities).
- Teacher Training (in-service and pre-service training for teachers in order to address the educational needs of students belonging to national minorities, in-service and pre-service training regarding instructional methodology of classrooms with mixed student population, etc).

(Re para 26 of the Opinion)

Having in mind the serious legal and political consequences of amending the Constitution under the current difficult and complicated political circumstances, it is not possible to have any re-examination of the designation of the Maronite religious group as one belonging to one of the two communities of the Republic of Cyprus. There cannot

be such a drastic change to the Constitution, especially during a sensitive period when negotiations are taking place with the objective to end the illegal foreign occupation, which is the main reason for most of the issues of violations of human rights and discriminations occurring within the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, and bring about a comprehensive settlement of the political issue, by reuniting the country, its people and its institutions.

Under the 1960 Constitution, the Maronites chose at that time to integrate themselves with the Greek Cypriot community. Respect of the Maronites' language, culture and religion is one thing, which is fully observed; but institutional amendment of a Constitutional nature with the particularities of the Cyprus problem is another, which touches upon strong sensitivities and has serious political implications.

In 1960, the Armenians residents of Cyprus chose to belong to the Greek Cypriot community. Respect of the Armenians' language, culture and religion is guaranteed. It is appreciated that there is an understanding by the Armenian Cypriot Representatives that a demand to re-examine the status of the Armenians in Cyprus as more than a religious group would complicate matters vis-à-vis the negotiations which are taking place with the objective to end the foreign occupation and bring about a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue. Similar comments to the legal and political ones presented for the Maronites, apply mutatis mutandis to the Armenians.

As to the wish of the Latins to be designated by a term reflecting the Roman Catholic Religion see comments under para. 15(1)(2) in the Second Periodic Report.

(Re para 30 of the Opinion)

(See also comments in relation to Recommendation 1 above).

As to the constitutional obligation, according to which a married woman shall belong to the community to which her husband belongs, the same political and legal considerations with regard to amending the Constitution apply.

(Re para 34 of the Opinion)

“ ...a difference in treatment concerning the right to separate representation in the House of Representatives, between persons who acquire Cyprus citizenship and belong to the Catholic church and those who acquire Cyprus citizenship and belong to another church which is not mentioned in the Constitution, as for example the Protestant church, may raise an issue of discrimination under Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights in conjunction with other Articles and/or violate autonomously Article 1 of the Convention’s Protocol No.12 which secures the enjoyment of any right set forth by law without any discrimination on any ground, including the ground of religion”.

Article 3

(Re paras 37, 43 and 50 of the Opinion)

The religion of respondents to the questionnaire, is based on the replies given by them on a specific question, which is posed to all people residing in Cyprus.

More specifically:

1. The religious affiliation question posed in the 2001 Population Census, was not of a restrictive nature, but it was an open ended question, based on the principle of free choice of affiliation, which was addressed to all residents of Cyprus. (Question 8 of the Census questionnaire).
2. The same answer applies to the question on nationality/citizenship (Question 8 of the Census questionnaire).
3. As regards Question 10, it was addressed to the official communities of the island, as they are defined by the Constitution of Cyprus and was posed only to Cypriot nationals. It has to be stressed that this question is irrelevant to the religious affiliation of the respondent.

Recommendations

(Re para 41 of the Opinion)

See also comments under Recommendation 1 of the Resolution of the Committee of Ministers, above.

It is noted that after marriage, both spouses have the possibility to maintain their respective community, ethnic and religious affiliation.

(Re para 42 of the Opinion)

(See also comments in relation to paragraph 26 above)

Also refer to our reply under para. 15 (1) (2) in the Second Periodic Report.

(Re para 44 of the Opinion)

All national minority groups, as defined in the Introduction to the present Report have unrestricted access to the protection of the Framework Convention, provided they are residents in the territory of the Republic of Cyprus under the effective control of the Government.

This applies also to Cyprus Roma, whose situation as a minority group is somewhat more complicated due to the military occupation of a significant part of the territory of Cyprus, as a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion.

The situation may be summarised as follows:

According to the “Census of Population and Agriculture of 1960” conducted by the Republic of Cyprus on 11 December 1960, few months after the establishment of the Republic, the Cyprus Roma population amounted in total to 502. Cyprus Roma are more closely related to the Roma / Gypsies of Europe, particularly those of Turkey. This population is estimated today to be over 1000, but no statistics are available. Since 1974, as a result of the ongoing forcible division of the national territory and the resulting imposed separation of the population of the island, Cyprus Roma moved with the Turkish Community to the area under Turkish occupation. The reason for this is

believed primarily to be that Cyprus Roma speak Turkish and secondarily because they are of Muslim religious persuasion. It should however be noted that Cyprus Roma who are known in the Turkish Cypriot community as “Kurbet” have their own unwritten language “Kurbetcha”. Apparently, with the passing of time, Turkish has displaced Kurbetcha. The larger groups of Cyprus Roma have settled in the towns of Morphou and Famagusta, towns located in the Turkish occupied area.

In the last decade, a large number of Cyprus Roma claiming discrimination and poor employment opportunities in the occupied area have crossed over the division line to the Government-controlled area. They have settled in the city of Limassol and in the vicinity of the city of Polis in the Paphos District. The authorities provide the Cyprus Roma housing, healthcare, a welfare subsidy, schooling for their children as well as employment. As citizens of Cyprus they have the right to vote and/or to be elected in national and European Parliament elections. Cyprus Roma problems are receiving increased attention from the authorities also in the framework of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

(Re para 45 of the Opinion)

The Framework Convention is applied to the national minorities defined in the Introduction to the present Report.

In the present circumstances and the precarious demographic situation prevailing in Cyprus, no flexible approach to the application of the Framework Convention can be envisaged.

The situation can be summarized as follows:

Over 200,000 illegal colonisers from Anatolia have settled in the Turkish occupied area which is controlled by over 40,000 Turkish military troops. In addition to this disastrous situation for the Cypriot indigenous population be it Turkish or Greek, illegal immigrants flow by the thousands into the Government controlled area coming from all directions, using the Turkish occupied area as a springboard. It now appears that channelling

illegal immigrants to the territory of the Republic under the effective control of the Government is part of the policy of the occupying power.

As a result of the combination of the elements mentioned above, the Republic of Cyprus is facing a demographic and a national security threat putting a strain beyond its resources. Cyprus being a Member State of the European Union, there is an EU dimension to the problem as well, which is also being tackled within the framework of the EU institutions for a collective approach.

(Re para 50 of the Opinion)

A population census is conducted every 10 years. The recording of the population occurs within the framework of a traditional census. The enumerator method is employed for collecting the data. Information for each living quarter and its occupants is collected and entered on the Census questionnaire by trained enumerators of the Statistical Service. Census district offices are set up and a district officer and deputy officer are allocated to each district. The district officers are responsible for the organisation and supervision of the fieldwork in the district. Additionally, regional supervisors are appointed to coordinate, supervise and check daily the work of the enumerators.

The system of optical data capture was implemented for the last Census of 2001. The main objective of the data capture system was to transform the questionnaires through scanning into digital images and after processing, into data files ready for further processing and tabulation. The system carried out various checks on the validity, consistency and coherence of the data and displayed the errors by field, enabling the operator to intervene and key-in the correction.

One week after the completion of the Population Census 2001 enumeration, the Statistical Service launched a post enumeration survey. Its principal objective was to determine the degree of coverage of the number of persons enumerated in the census.

The following questions were included in the last census:

- Where did your mother reside at the time you were born?
 - Municipality/village & District
 - Abroad (specify country)
- Where was your father born?
 - In Cyprus
 - Abroad (specify country)
- Where was your mother born?
 - In Cyprus
 - Abroad (specify country)
- What is your religion?
 - Christian orthodox
 - Armenian church
 - Maronite church
 - Roman-catholic church
 - Moslem
 - Agglican church
 - Other (specify)
- What is your citizenship?
 - Cypriot
 - Other (specify)
- *If the person had a Cypriot citizenship:*
 Are you:
 - Greek Cypriot
 - Armenian
 - Maronite
 - Latin
 - Turkish Cypriot
- What language do you speak fluently?
 - Greek
 - Other (specify)

The above questions were compulsory. Detailed information can be obtained from Volumes I & IV of the Census, available at the website of the Statistical Service of Cyprus, at the following address: www.mof.gov.cy/cystat.

It should be noted that the answers given below refer only to the data collected via the Population Census.

The legal framework is the Statistics Law (L. 15(I)/2000), which covers also all other forms of data collection by the Statistical Service. All data collected, irrespective of the affiliation to a national or ethnic, linguistic or religious minority are considered as confidential data within the framework of the Statistics Law. The regulatory measures for the registration and processing, as presented in the Statistics Law, do not distinguish between data on the affiliation to a national, ethnic, linguistic or religious minority and other types of data, as they are all considered confidential within the framework of the Statistics Law. In general, the relevant provisions of the Law are the following:

“...the data collected for the production of statistics are used by the Statistical Service only for statistical purposes, unless the persons who have given these data have given their consent so that they may be used for other purposes as well...”

“...13.(1) (a) The data collected and processed by the Statistical Service for the production of statistics are considered as confidential, as long as they allow the direct or indirect identification of statistical units and disclose personal data:

Provided that data which have been gathered from sources which are accessible to the public are not considered as confidential.

For the purposes of this section “personal data” means data concerning natural or legal persons.

(b) A statistical unit is identified directly by its name and address or by a registration number which has officially been granted to it.

(c) A statistical unit is identified indirectly, if it is possible, to ascertain its identity in a manner other than that which is provided in paragraph (b). In order to ascertain

whether a statistical unit may be identified indirectly, all the means shall be considered which may reasonably be used for the identification of the specific statistical unit.

(2) It is possible to have access to confidential statistical data which allow the indirect identification of statistical units following the permission of the Director, where these statistical data are necessary for specific scientific research programmes, the results of which do not disclose specific statistical units and will not be used for commercial purposes.

(3) The statistics compiled on the basis of the data resulting from a survey shall be published in such a manner as to render impossible the direct or indirect disclosure of the identity of those who provided the data or of the persons to whom the data relate.

(4) All the data collected during a survey or work shall continue to be considered as confidential, despite the fact that the statistical results of the specific survey or work have been published...”

Ethnic data collected in the Population Census are not used for purposes other than the purpose for which they have been originally collected.

The data are analysed by the Statistical Service of Cyprus. They are kept in electronic and paper forms indefinitely. The paper questionnaires are kept at the State Archives.

The Office of the Commissioner for Personal Character Data Protection is an independent authority responsible for the supervision of the collection of sensitive (ethnic, national, linguistic or religious) data, for data protection.

It is at the free discretion of the individual concerned to choose and mention the fact that he/she belongs to a national minority.

In the last Population Census of 2001 there was no legislation concerning the collection of ethnic data. In the next Population Census of 2011, the “Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Population and Housing Censuses” will be in force.

Article 4

(Re paras 52 and 53 of the Opinion)

On 24 November 2006 the Equal Treatment (Ethnic and Racial Origin) Law of 2004 was amended in order to comply with the European Commission's recommendations as regards proper transposition into national legislation of the Racial Equality Directive (par.1 of article 8 of Directive No.2000/43/EC), relating to the principle of the reversal of the burden of proof.

A National Action Plan on Gender Equality for the years 2007 - 2013 has been drawn up. This was formulated on the basis of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as EU policies, and in particular the Road Map, the European Pact for Gender Equality and the Lisbon Strategy. It was approved by a Decision of the Council of Ministers on 29 August 2007.

The Plan aims at a holistic approach of gender equality issues and the implementation of gender mainstreaming in six priority areas: (i) Equality in employment and vocational training, (2) promotion of gender equality in education, science and research, (3) promotion of equal participation and representation of men and women in the political, social and financial sector, (4) combating all forms of violence against women including trafficking, (5) promotion of equal access to services and equal enjoyment of social rights for men and women, (6) changing of stereotypes and forming of a collective and social attitude towards women, as well. The above priorities further breakdown to various actions which will be implemented through the National Machinery of Womens' Rights and the competent authorities.

On 11 July 2008, a one-day seminar was held dealing with the Equality policy between men and women and its implementation in Cyprus. The seminar was held under the auspices of the Minister of Justice and Public Order in his capacity as the President of the National Machinery of Womens' Rights.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order, in collaboration with the Law Office of the Republic, is currently considering the introduction of provisions in our domestic

legislation enabling the racist motives of the offender to be taken into account as an aggravating factor in sentencing.

(Re para 58 of the Opinion)

The major effort of the Ministry of Education and Culture to raise awareness concerning the principles of non-discrimination and equality are outlined in the key points and major objectives of the National Strategy for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue designed by the Ministry for, but not limited only to, the academic year 2007-2008. These efforts aim to:

- Raise awareness of people living in Cyprus, local and immigrants, especially the young generation, of the importance of intercultural dialogue (ID) in their everyday life, promote knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of each other and sensitize people to get involved in activities aiming at a continuous intercultural cooperation;
- Involve different society partners, governmental administration and NGOs in intercultural activities at local, national and European level;
- Foster ID in education, which is the most important means of developing skills about diversity as well as for increasing the respect and understanding of other cultures;
- Celebrate cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and European solidarity and foster long term and sustainable mechanisms for intercultural dialogue.

The action plan's targeted population consisted of all students and educators attending formal education (primary and secondary education approximately 130.000 people, that is 17% of the total population of the Republic), young people in general, all civil society through NGOs and other organizations, the wider public, other stakeholders, Cypriots and non- Cypriots living in Cyprus.

Recommendations

(Re para 60 of the Opinion)

On June 18th, 2008 the Office of the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman), presented the results of a public opinion Survey it conducted regarding the “Attitudes and Beliefs of Greek-Orthodox Cypriots Towards People with Different Religious Affiliations who Live in Cyprus”. Following the presentation, the Dean of the University of Cyprus made a speech on the results of the Survey and the phenomenon of religious discrimination in general.

Further to the above, since the beginning of year 2008, Officers of the Ombudsman’s Office gave speeches/presentations to various seminars/conferences, regarding the competences assumed by the Office - in compliance with article 13 of the Directive 2000/43/EC - as the competent independent authority to deal with discrimination matters in Cyprus.”

(Re para 61 of the Opinion)

In 2004 the President, at the time, of the National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights (NIPHR) identified the incompatibility of the Memorandum of Establishment of NIPHR with the Paris Principles and held consultations with the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva in an effort to bring the Institution into conformity, which would allow for the NIPHR’s accreditation by the ICC. Following that, suggestions have been made to the Government in the Annual Report of the NIPHR for the period 2003-2006 for modifications to the constitution of the Institution to safeguard its complete independence. Efforts are being currently carried out in order to bring the structure of the NIPHR into line with the Paris Principles.

The term of office of the President of the NIPHR expired on 17 June 2008 and of its other members on 17 October 2008. In view of the considerations referred to above, the appointment of the new President and members is at the concluding phase, pending final approval by the Council of Ministers. The NIPHR is expected to resume full function in the very near future.

Article 5

(Re para 62 of the Opinion)

Measures developed and implemented under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture are set out in detail in the comments in relation to paragraph 73 of the Opinion, below. Furthermore, the establishment and operation of the St. Maronas Elementray School, as well as the establishment and operation of a Maronite School Board, further enhances the efforts and measures to preserve the culture and identity of the community.

(Re para 63 of the Opinion)

Information is given under paragraphs 73, 119, 120, and 133 of the Opinion, below.

(Re para 65 of the Opinion)

See also comments in relation to paragraphs 28.1, 28.2, and 28.3 of the Second Report of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Since the 21.3.2006, the Ministry of Interior has granted Euro 45.000 – 50.000 for the newspapers and other print media published by Maronites, Armenians and Latins. Furthermore, in 2007 the Ministry of interior has granted the amount of CYP £15.000* to the three religious groups (CYP £5.000* each) in order to create and strengthen their individual websites. In September 2008, the Ministry of Interior granted the sum of €24.000 (€8.000 to the Representative of each religious group) for the maintenance of their respective websites.

In addition to the above, the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education and Culture have developed a strategy for the subsidization of printed publications. Financial assistance has been awarded to organizations, institutions as well as individuals.

* The national currency until 31.12.2007 was CYP£ pound. As from 1.1.2008 Cyprus adopted the euro (£1=€1.709).

(Re para 66 of the Opinion)

See comments in relation to para 73 of the Opinion below.

(Re para 67 of the Opinion)

The Council of Ministers decided (Decision No. 63.847) to provide free afternoon lessons for the History, the Language and the Culture of the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins at the State Funded Educational Institutions which operate in all areas under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. The Ministry of Education and Culture had continuous consultations with the Representatives of the abovementioned religious groups, who indicated that this decision is extremely difficult to apply for practical reasons. As a result the Ministry of Education and Culture has asked the interested parties to bring forward alternative solutions. The Representatives responded positively to this request, by mainly asking for books to be written about their history and culture. The Directorate of Secondary Education, of the Ministry of Education and Culture has been appointed as the coordinator for the abovementioned action and specific contributions were brought upon. Currently all suggestions are being evaluated and the Ministry will proceed to the materialization of the specific project.

(Re para 68 of the Opinion)

See above

(Re para 70 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture stresses the fact that all efforts are geared towards alleviating any problems specified in paragraph 70, which are mainly caused by certain administrative weaknesses of the Ministry. They have been identified in numerous studies that have examined the Cypriot Education System (UNESCO's Report, Report of the Committee for the Educational Reform), other institutions commissioned by the Government (Report of the General Controller of the Government), as well as organizations directly involved with the Education System

(Educational Organizations), which concluded that they are due to the strictly centralized, bureaucratic and inflexible nature of the administrative system.

As part of the ongoing Educational Reform, the Council of Ministers, has decided the restructuring and upgrading of the Ministry. This will have an immediate impact on the coordination of the educational policy regarding the educational needs of all students, in achieving better results in a timely manner.

(Re paras 71 and 72 of the Opinion)

See above under Part II, Recommendation 2 and comments in relation to para. 15 of the Opinion.

Moreover, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education and Culture agrees with the suggestion of the University of Cyprus to offer Armenian and Maronite Language and Culture courses as electives, but objects to the suggestion to offer the abovementioned course at the Department of Turkish and Middle East Studies. It is the Ministry's position that such classes should be provided under the Department of Linguistics, for obvious reasons.

See also comments in relation to para. 26 of the Opinion, above.

Recommendations

(Re para 73 of the Opinion)

Despite the serious constraints imposed by the Turkish occupation of a significant part of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, the Government will continue, to the maximum of its ability, to economically and culturally support its Maronite citizens. The Government considers that effective measures can be implemented if the ongoing constructive dialogue between interested parties continues.

Concerning the request of the Maronites for actions to be taken for the revival of the Maronite language, the Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Law Commissioner of the Republic promoted a

series of scientific conferences, whose objectives were the codification of the Cyprus Maronite Arabic language (CMA). The general discussion focused on measures to be taken for the codification of CMA and future steps towards this goal. This led to a relevant Decision of the Council of Ministers. More precisely:

- ▶ On 28 September 2007, a Lecture on “International and European Standards on Minority Rights” was organised by the Association of Maronite Graduates in Cyprus, in collaboration with the Office of the Maronite Representative. Professor Dr. Patrick Thornberry, a distinguished expert on international minority rights, was the keynote speaker. The Law Commissioner and at the time President of the National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights, Ms Leda Koursoumba, made the opening address and answered the participants’ questions. The Law Commissioner expanded on the human rights instruments with special emphasis to those relevant, in particular, to the Maronite Community in Cyprus, and informed the participants about the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. She pointed out that, as a result of a recommendation made by the Committee of Experts in its Report of the Initial Monitoring Cycle of the Charter, the competent authorities were planning to hold, in November 2007, a specialised meeting in linguistics, aiming at the codification of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic language.
- ▶ On 9 and 10 November 2007, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Education and Culture co-organised a Symposium for the codification of the Cyprus-Maronite Arabic under the auspices of the Law Commissioner. The Law Commissioner, in her opening remarks, stressed that this Symposium was an expression of the continued commitment by Cyprus to the protection of its cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. Taking this opportunity, she informed the participants of the progress of the Monitoring Cycles under the Framework Convention and the Charter inviting them to give their views, by either contacting the appropriate Government Ministries or the Office of the Law Commissioner; A Representative of the Council of Europe as well as linguistic experts added value to the Seminar. Its findings were expected to enhance the capacity of the

Government to engage in a constructive and sustainable dialogue with institutional representatives of the speakers of the CMA and civil society actors.

- ▶ On 24 and 25 November 2007, the European University Cyprus organised a Conference entitled “The Minorities of Cyprus: Past, Present and Future”, sponsored by the Ministries of Interior and Education and Culture.
- ▶ In its effort to intensify actions in order to meet the needs of the Maronite community, in response to the request for the preservation of their language, the Cyprus Maronite Arabic (CMA), the Ministry of Education and Culture subsidized, on July 2008, the summer camp for young students in the village of Kormakitis. The objective of the camp was to teach CMA to the younger generation.
- ▶ The Council of Ministers by its Decision No. 67.823, dated 17/10/2008, decided:
 - (a) To declare the Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA) a language within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to which it will apply the provisions of Part II of the European Charter in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1.
 - (b) To approve the establishment of a Committee of Experts on CMA Language, the members of which were proposed by the Representatives of the Maronite Community, with terms of reference to look into the issue of codification of the CMA and advise the Government accordingly.

(Re para 74 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture will consider favorably any additional proposal that promotes the cultural development and the preservation of the identity of the minority groups. Regarding the financial assistance for the establishment of cultural centers, information was provided in answer to paragraph 68 above.

Article 6

(Re paras 76 and 101 of the Opinion)

The Turkish Cypriots are not a national minority within the context of the Framework Convention, but they are citizens of the Republic of Cyprus, members of the one of the two Communities recognized by the Constitution. Cyprus fully agrees as to the necessity of safeguarding their rights, but this is done pursuant to other international and legal instruments. In this context, the Government stresses that Turkish Cypriots enjoy the same treatment as all citizens of the Republic.

Regarding the relevant recommendations on Police related issues, the following actions taken, should be noted.

By The Police (Independent Authority for the Investigation of Complaints and Allegations) Law (L. 9(I)/2006, as amended), enacted on 17.2.06, a mechanism was established for investigating complaints against police for any misconduct (including human rights violations).

Appointment of ethnic liaison Police officers at every Divisional Police Headquarters to liaise with the local leaders or members of ethnic communities and to focus on issues of race/ethnicity. These liaison officers act in close cooperation with the staff of the Office for Combating Discrimination at Police Headquarters, Department C', in handling racially motivated offences/incidents.

Establishment of an internal official system for recording incidents/offences which are racially motivated within the police. The Police Crime Report form provides for the recording of racism/discrimination as a crime motive and, furthermore, it allows for the sub-categorization of the motive on the abovementioned characteristics.

Furthermore, Cyprus Police in cooperation with associations or the leadership of various Ethnic Communities residing in Cyprus periodically organize open to public social events in an attempt to bring the Ethnic Communities and the Police closer to each other and to build better mutual understanding and respect.

The Chief of Cyprus Police has through circulars given orders to Police Officers to avoid conducting wide searches for suspects or wanted people on the mere basis of their specific ethnic, racial, or other characteristics, but to rather narrow down and focus their operations by collecting more information on the individual.

Moreover, members of the Police are ordered to avoid disclosing to the public information on the ethnic, racial, or other background of offenders, with the exception of wanted people.

Cyprus Police also produced a leaflet containing information on the rights of persons in custody entitled "Notice to persons in Custody". The leaflet which was printed in English, Arabic, Russian, Chinese and Turkish handed to persons placed under detention provides information to detainees as to their rights to inform a relative, access to a lawyer and access to a doctor. The leaflet was distributed to police stations with the aim that police officers hand it to detainees.

(Re paras 76 and 95 of the Opinion)

As regards the alleged cases of ill-treatment and excessive use of force by members of the Police against refugees, immigrants and asylum-seekers, it should be noted that, the Police is very sensitive on issues regarding ill-treatment and use of force by members of the Police. If a person believes that he/she has been discriminated, ill-treated, or his / her human rights have been violated by the Authorities, he/she has the right to file a complaint directly to the Chief of Police, to the Independent Authority for the Investigation of Allegations and Complaints against the Police and to the Ombudsman Office. Usually, such allegations are investigated by the Independent Authority for the Investigation of Allegations and Complaints against the Police. Furthermore, the Police takes disciplinary and administrative measures against its members, who seem to be involved in such violations.

Furthermore, police officers during their training at the Cyprus Police Academy, are trained on issues concerning human rights, police ethics, use of force, relevant

legislation, as well as the treatment and rights of detainees. Also, occasionally specialised seminars are organized by the Police Academy concerning human rights.

Additionally, the Code of Ethics was prepared and is part of the basic training of the police recruits at the Cyprus Police Academy. In the Police Code of Ethics, importance has been attributed on the protection of human rights, on issues surrounding police custody, police action and respect of the citizens' rights.

Finally, the Chief of Police is currently preparing a new circular based on all issues related to the Framework Convention, to be issued in the immediate future, urging all members of the force to act accordingly.

(Re para 80 of the Opinion)

CyBC allocates time to the three religious groups for the presentation and airing of matters concerning them. CyBC's programmes are always compiled and aired with full respect to religious or ethnic identities and, generally, differentiability.

The duration of the programmes for the Maronite and Latin religious groups has been increased.

The increase in duration of the two programmes enables more information to be presented as regards the respective groups' histories, cultures and identities, with the aim of increasing interest among the public, both young and old.

Further time allocation increases could be considered, in case valid proposals to that effect are submitted.

(Re para 90 of the Opinion)

Information regarding the contribution of the Ministry of Education and Culture has been provided previously on the paragraphs referring to Intercultural Dialogue (paragraph 58), the Enhancement of Mutual Understanding and Respect, priority goal for 2008-2009 (paragraph 22) and the Education Reform (paragraph 22).

Within this framework, special emphasis will be given to defining aims and key contents of different subjects and thematic entities in order to form a more unified educational approach. The new core curriculum will be developed so as to provide all students with the opportunity for individual choice and provision of supporting services, including supplementary instruction in areas of need. The key competencies that Europe's citizens should acquire to enable them to adapt to changes will be effectively addressed. Minority-specific education issues will be also addressed within the framework of the abovementioned effort.

For the development of the new curriculum, the Government has set up a Committee of experts which is currently preparing its recommendations.

With regard to the role of the Media and their contribution to rapprochement and intercultural understanding, it should be noted that the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) has shown great sensitivity towards promoting intercultural relations and understanding between the two communities and the three religious groups of Cyprus. In this respect, CyBC has for many years included programmes especially prepared for the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins in its radio airing, a practice also contributing to the promotion of their linguistic and historical identity.

Recently, CyBC has received requests from the religious groups for special television programmes directed towards the members of these groups, and also for dedicated news bulletins on television. The CyBC is currently assessing the impact, cost and value of such programmes and news bulletins. Once the assessment is completed, a proposal will be made to the Board of directors of CyBC, which is the body responsible for policy matters.

In addition, the Board of directors at its last meeting, decided to dedicate the Year 2009 as the year of Cohabitation (living together) and its context, both existing and new programmes on TV and Radio, will be devoted to the history, culture and language of the two communities and the three religious groups in Cyprus, as well as of groups of immigrants from other countries.

See also comments in relation to para 58 of the Opinion, above.

(Re para 91 of the Opinion)

One of the many negative consequences of the military occupation of a significant part of the Republic of Cyprus' territory by the Republic of Turkey, has been the forcible and artificial separation of the two Cypriot communities. The Cypriot Government treats all its citizens equally and provides for the political, economic, social and cultural needs of its Turkish Cypriot citizens who reside in the Government controlled areas. Turkish Cypriots may elect and be elected in the Government controlled area. Turkish Cypriots work in the thousands in the Government controlled area without discrimination. Turkish Cypriots are free to visit and have worship in any Mosque in the Government controlled areas. Turkish Cypriots are also provided free education and healthcare in the Government controlled areas, while they are also given the right to sit Government exams in the Turkish language. It must also be noted that all official documents include the Turkish language and the Government systematically strives to build trust between the two communities.

(Re para 92 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture in its effort to enhance the achievements of Cyprus Roma pupils, as indicated previously under Part II of the present Report, Recommendation 6, above, has developed a strategic plan which represents part of the governments agenda for Educational Reform, and aims to improve the quality of education offered in public schools by closing the achievement gap of Cyprus Roma and other minority students. The Ministry of Education has implemented special support measures for Cyprus Roma pupils in every school they attend.

The majority of the schools with high numbers of Cyprus Roma students and other non-native language speakers operate as "Zones of Educational Priority". The policy of the Zones of Educational Priority derived from the strategy of positive discrimination (UNESO) i.e., the unequal treatment of inequalities. The Ministry of Education and Culture provides additional resources to members of the vulnerable groups which are attending schools within the "Zones of Educational Priority".

The Ministry of Education and Culture in developing and implementing programs for the Cyprus Roma and other non-native language speaking students, puts the emphasis in priority areas based on the following guidelines, which emanate from empirical and theoretical research related to minority education and specific educational initiatives:

- ▶ Students who are less than fully proficient in the language used in school will have difficulty deriving academic benefit from their educational experience, since the inability to understand the language in which instruction is given interferes with the comprehension of the content of the instruction. Therefore, extra tutoring, in subjects such as Language Arts, Math and Science is provided to these students.
- ▶ Instruction in the native language of students allows them to participate in school and to acquire the skills and knowledge covered by the curriculum, while also learning Greek. In addition, it allows Cyprus Roma students to make use of the skills, knowledge and experience they already have and to built on those assets in school. Evaluating the above assessments and after examining all available means, the Ministry of Education and Culture initiated the employment of Bilingual Teachers.
- ▶ Students need adequate exposure to the language of instruction in order to master it as a second language. This exposure to Greek materializes, when it takes place in settings in which language use is geared to the learners special linguistic need, as long as it is appropriately tailored for them. Subject matter instruction in the school language is an essential component in bilingual Education. Therefore, free private lessons in Greek are given to Cyprus Roma pupils in the afternoon at the State Funded Institutions for Further Education.
- ▶ Formal instruction in Greek as a Second Language (GSL) can help students begin learning the language. GSL instruction, whether formal or informal, is an integral part of all bilingual education programs. In order to help students acquire more knowledge, books, printed material and manipulatives on the subject are provided to teachers, students, parents and schools at no charge by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

- ▶ Children, including those served by bilingual programs, have the best chance of realizing their full academic potential when the language skills, social and cultural experience, and knowledge of the world are affirmed in school; these are the foundations of academic development. Instruction in public schools in Cyprus takes into consideration students' linguistic and cultural attributes across grade levels throughout the entire curriculum.
- ▶ Even though the National Curriculum has a clear focus on the acquisition of basic skills (such as reading, writing, math, language and arts), in schools where the percentage of minority (Cyprus Roma) pupils is high, educators have the liberty to adapt the curriculum to the Cyprus Roma populations' specific needs in order to attend lessons regarding their heritage in their mother language.

Other measures and strategies for the Cyprus Roma students, include, inter alia:

- Provision of bilingual teachers who facilitate the communication between teachers, students and parents;
- Provision for breakfast to all Cyprus Roma students;
- Provision of special support and attention to Cyprus Roma students from the Service of Educational Psychology and the Social Welfare Services.
- Organization of a number of intercultural programs and events.

With regard to the housing facilities provided to the Cyprus Roma, reference should be made to the relevant parts of the Initial and Second Periodic Report, while the following should be noted:

- In 2005, 2006 and 2007 the repairs/improvements for 20 Turkish Cypriot houses inhabited by the Cyprus Roma in the Limassol District cost CYP80.000, CYP71.000 and CYP65.342, respectively.
- The Government of Cyprus has also created two housing projects, one in Limassol and the other in Pafos, consisting of 16 and 24 prefabricated housing units respectively, for the Cyprus Roma. The aforementioned housing units, are equipped with all basic amenities, such as water (drinking water incl.) and

electricity supply, telephone line installation, sewage etc. The cost for the 16 prefabricated housing units in Limassol amounted to CYP 320.675.

- In 2006, the repairs, as well as the creation of a children's playground, amounted to CYP17.000.
- In 2007, the Government paid CYP20.000 for the installation of solar water heaters.
- In 2003, the cost for the housing project in Pafos together with the repairs for 3 Turkish Cypriot houses inhabited by the Cyprus Roma amounted to CYP270.000.
- Furthermore, in 2004 the Government of Cyprus paid CYP80.000 for the repairs/improvements for 10 Turkish Cypriot houses where Cyprus Roma reside.
- In 2006 and 2007 the Government of Cyprus paid for the same purpose CYP 10.000 and 2.924, respectively.
- The Ministry of Interior continues to subsidize the school meals, school uniforms, school books and stationary in order to encourage school attendance by Cyprus Roma children.

(Re para 93 of the Opinion)

The right to education and training is a basic human right and is treated as such in the Cyprus Educational System, since “the overall aim of education in Cyprus is the development of free and democratic citizens...who contribute...to the promotion of cooperation, mutual understanding, respect and love among individuals and people for the prevalence of freedom, justice and peace²”.

Article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus safeguards the right to education. Cyprus, as a Member State of the European Union, fully abides by and promotes international principles, as they are set forth in the International Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention for Human Rights which form part of the European Acquis.

² As specified in the current Cyprus Educational Curricula.

Practical modalities have been set in place in terms of implementing the human right to education and training, with the aim to inform and sensitize all stakeholders involved in the educational process. In schools during the past few years, this important issue was approached using the interdisciplinary method in a variety of subject matters, such as Greek, History, Civics and Geography. In this effort, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations were involved, which offered their expertise and valuable knowledge. The methods and activities used were as follows:

- Participatory teaching and active learning methods;
- Projects, group work and simulations;
- Use of drama, role playing, case studies;
- School visits and excursions;
- Use of research techniques in the school and the community;
- Debates on human rights with the participation of the students, parents and teachers;
- Developing school, class and family charters of rights- making comparisons with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Preparation of educational material;
- Essay and drawing competitions.

The priorities addressed in developing the framework of human rights education and training are permeating in all aspects of the educational system with emphasis on multidisciplinary approaches and experiential learning (more information is provided under the subtitle Good practices, Ayios Antonios, Elementary School, below) and are as follows:

- Raising the public awareness for human rights education and democratic procedures;
- Educating stakeholders in the related areas;
- Differentiating teachers' and students' attitudes;
- Strengthening of Human Rights Education in the educational system at all levels;
- Clarifying the role and strengthening the capacities of the mass media for Human Rights Education, using the appropriate language and pictures;

- Promoting active involvement of NGO's in the realization of the goals of Human Rights Education at different levels.

Examples of Good practices

Ayios Antonios Elementary School

Within the context of the “Commonwealth Education Good Practice Awards 2006” Agios Antonios Primary School was a second place winner of the Education Good practice Award. Cyprus’s candidature, which was one of the 47 initially submitted, presented the educational innovations carried out by the school unit after its inclusion in the Educational Priority Zone of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Agios Antonios Primary School is situated in a deprived and underdeveloped area of Lemesos, with a population which consists of Greek Cypriot refugees, Turkish Cypriots, Cyprus Roma and economic immigrants with limited education exposure, most of whom at a low educational and socioeconomic level. The school’s Education Good Practice is aiming at promoting equal opportunities and quality in education, whilst respecting the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of students, fostering inclusion and fighting racism. The abovementioned area is a mosaic of social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversities. The school’s basic targets were set to be the improvement of quality in education offered, promotion of equality in schooling and fighting exclusion and racism.

The school faced many challenges, such as dealing with foreign speaking students, persuading Cyprus Roma families to enroll their children to school and create an environment of cooperation, mutual understanding and respect between students and parents of different ethnic origins. Integrating Turkish Cypriot students and other students at risk of exclusion into the school’s society were also equally important. The school unit developed several actions and introduced a number of educational innovations in this respect. The school received in this process substantial material, guidance and help from several governmental and other nonprofit bodies and organizations.

Zones of Educational Priority

The Ministry of Education and Culture in its effort to promote tolerance and dialogue and in order to eliminate stereotypes through education has set in place the program for Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP). The policy for the Zones of Educational Priority derived from the strategy of positive discrimination (UNESCO), which is based on the unequal treatment of inequalities.

Each ZEP consists of one Gymnasium (lower secondary school), the main primary schools in its capture area and the main kindergartens linked with these primary schools, in degraded areas with a pupil population coming from families of a low socioeconomic and educational level. The criteria for defining an area as ZEP is a high record of school failure and functional illiteracy in the area's school units, a high share of migrant or foreign language speaking pupils, a high number of drop-outs and high incidence of violent and anti-social behavior (young delinquency).

The Ministry of Education and Culture provides additional resources to the vulnerable groups of schools which are included in the Zones of Educational Priority.

Three Zones of Educational Priority were established in 2003-4 in the towns of Lefkosia, Lemesos and Pafos. A fourth ZEP has been established, during the current school year 2008-2009, in the town of Larnaka.

The ZEP specific objectives are:

- The democratic school that functions for the social inclusion of all children and for combating dropping out of the system and social exclusion.
- A school system that respects difference, pluralism (cultural, linguistic, religious) and multiple intelligence.
- The reduction of functional illiteracy until completion of primary education and its elimination until the end of the ten year compulsory education.
- The elimination of the dropout phenomenon, especially during the ten year compulsory education.

- The drastic reduction of school failure at all levels of education.

Actions taken within the framework of ZEPs include:

- Reduction in the number of children per classroom.
- Employment of teachers speaking the mother tongue of foreign language speaking pupils.
- Offer of free meals to underprivileged pupils of the kindergartens and primary schools.
- Offer of afternoon activities (groups, clubs) at the Gymnasiums included in ZEPs.
- Posting of two educationists in each ZEP as coordinators.
- All-day functioning of the primary schools and Gymnasiums covered by ZEPs.

The operation of ZEPs has had positive results, such as a reduction of pupil drop-outs, of school failure (referrals and repetitions) and of referrals to the Educational Psychology Service, as well as improvement of school success.

Prospects for the future

The qualitative upgrading of the system in order to become more flexible and adaptable, the revision of the content of the curricula and the unification of the whole education system ensuring unity, continuity and consistency between all levels and services are among the policies and practices setting the framework for better prospects for the future. Within the same framework, this program will also deal with evaluating, assessing and re-organizing, if needed, of its general planning of the prospects for the future.

Challenges

New challenges for the education system arise from the increasingly multicultural nature of Cyprus society. Education is considered as the means for social mobility, inclusion and active participation of all in our society and a basic tool for effectively combating inequalities, various social problems and achieving social cohesion.

(Re paras 95 and 96 of the Opinion)

The Police cooperates with relevant stakeholders of the society in order to better defend human rights and the principles of equality and non-discrimination. It also guides its personnel to fight racism, prejudices and preoccupations. Whenever a complaint is received against any person, relevant procedures and measures are taken by the Police.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order had been designated by the Council of Ministers as the National Implementing Body for the European Year of Equal Opportunities for all 2007. Three meetings were held at the Ministry of Justice and Public Order to which 42 organizations were invited, including NGOs and other stakeholders dealing with the issues of non-discrimination. During these meetings a national strategy and an action plan were drawn up and 12 activities were pre-selected, covering almost all grounds of discrimination (equality of men and women, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, age employment with emphasis to the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees, religion etc.). All activities were performed by NGOs and/or associations that expressed their willingness to collaborate with the NIB to promote and implement the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007. The total estimated cost of activities was maximum €240.000. The activities were financed by EU funds (50%), and by Government budget (50%).

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order, as the National Implementing Body of the previous Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007 and following the legacy of the Year, supports the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (Progress) acting as the PROGRESS anti-discrimination contact point. Also, as the responsible national authority for the EU information campaign on antidiscrimination and diversity, has established an ad hoc National Working Group for 2008, which drafted the National Framework document on priorities and challenges 2008. The PROGRESS anti-discrimination contact point supports two Projects for funding by the European Commission one Project led by the Ministry of Education and Culture which might include awareness raising activities addressed to pupils, educators, parents and community associations and another led by the European Institute of Cyprus which might deal with complimentary awareness raising activities tailored to specific target

groups and a wider audience including businesses, NGOs/civil society, workers/employees, third country nationals (with emphasis to migrant women) and also people at risk of being discriminated against.

The general aim of the two Projects will be to promote the debate on discrimination and diversity in Cyprus and to foster the dissemination of information on EU and national policy and legislation in the antidiscrimination field.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order actively participated and still participates in the implementation of the Community Action Programme to Combat Discrimination, the Stop Campaign “For Diversity Against Discrimination”, the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007 and the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (Progress, 2007-2013) through various national awareness raising activities such as campaigns, seminars, press-conferences, releases, educational programmes, festivals, publications, etc. Cyprus has achieved valuable and sustainable results: permanent horizontal networks, structural changes within the educational system and the police, training of teachers and police officers, data-base and other information material, website (www.mjpo.gov.cy) etc.

According to data kept at the Office of the Equality Body (Ombudsman), it becomes evident that the activities organized in Cyprus within the framework of the European Year (2007), raised significantly the awareness on issues of discrimination and contributed to the increase in the number of complaints both to the Cyprus Anti-Discrimination Body and the Equality Authority.

Other positive outcomes of this campaign were, inter alia, the following:

- Closer co-operation, comprehensive websites and web-links among all the members of Governmental and non-governmental organizations and bodies.
- Establishment of a link to the Commission Year’s webpage <http://equality.2007.europa.eu>, as well as direct link to the Anti-discrimination unit http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental-rights/index-de.htm and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) <http://fra.europa.eu>. As the Ministry of Justice and Public Order is also dealing with Gender Equality, its website

was upgraded and includes a direct link to the webpage http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_de.html

On 13 December 2007, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus announced the launching of the activities concerning the Programme “Dialogues”. The Social Welfare Services, since the beginning of the year 2008, have organized conferences, seminars, national awareness activities, national exhibitions etc. related to diversity, discrimination and equality issues, provided face to face information concerning the Programme, published newsletters, disseminated informative material etc. The Programme was successfully completed in November 2008.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus organized in this respect many events/activities. The activities involved: distribution of leaflets on the world day of combating discrimination (21/03/08), conference on the transposition of Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC (27/03/08) in Nicosia; seminar on diversity, discrimination and equality issues (26/03/08) in Limassol; seminar on diversity, discrimination and equality issues on the grounds of race and ethnic origin (28/05/08) in Larnaca; distribution of leaflets during the Cyprus National Exhibition (23 – 31/05/08); seminar on diversity, discrimination and equality issues on the grounds of age or sexual orientation (01/07/08) in the village of Galata; seminar on diversity, discrimination and equality issues on the grounds of religion (24/09/08) in Nicosia; seminar on diversity, discrimination and equality issues on the grounds of disability (30/09/08) in Paphos; a competition of children’s book on discrimination has been completed in October 2008 and will be disseminated by the end of 2008; finally, in cooperation with the Police (Neighborhood Police Officers) and the Citizens Services Bureaus there has been distribution of the information material.

On 14 December 2007 the Technical Assistance Information and Exchange Office (TAIEX) with the financial support of the European Commission and in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Law Office of the Republic, the Supreme Court and the Cyprus Bar Association organized a Seminar on the implementation of the EU acquis on non-discrimination.

Within the same framework, political antidiscrimination commitments and/or messages were made and/or sent by politicians (e.g. the Minister of Justice and Public Order, the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Finance), and by independent Officials (e.g. the Commissioner for Administration/Ombudsman and the Law Commissioner) during various relevant public events and publications.

Recommendations

(Re para 97 of the Opinion)

There is no hostility of Greek Cypriots towards Turkish Cypriots. It is a completely different issue, to have a negative pre-occupation against the illegal Turkish invasion and occupation, which is the cause of numerous atrocities and massive violations of human rights, as attested by the European Court of Human Rights. On the contrary, the declared policy of the Government is to take measures to reunify the country, which belongs to both the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots and to terminate the illegal inhuman military and political occupation, resulting in multifaceted discriminations, ethnic cleansing and inhuman treatment. It is the Turkish occupation the source of such condemnable racist and religious discrimination in Cyprus, which violates, inter alia, the rights of the Turkish Cypriots (particularly, the Cyprus Roma, as well as those of the Armenians, the Maronites and the Latins). Despite, the artificial and enforced segregation imposed by the occupation forces and their “subordinate, local administration”, as also proclaimed by the ECHR, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus encourages Turkish Cypriots to participate in various sectors of public life and takes all necessary steps to combat the remote possibility of discrimination or hostility towards them. Examples of concrete measures are the following:

- ▶ A special law was enacted in 2006, “The Exercise of the Right to Vote and be Elected by Members of the Turkish Community with Ordinary Residence in the Free Areas of the Republic (Temporary Provisions) Law, 2006” (L. 2(I)/2006) by virtue of which Turkish Cypriots in the government controlled area are given the right to vote and stand for election for all national elections (municipal, parliamentary and presidential). In the Parliamentary Elections of

May 2006, there was a Turkish Cypriot candidate standing as MP with a Greek Cypriot Political Party (United Democrats).

- ▶ By virtue of the “Election of Member of the European Parliament Law, 2004 (L. 101(I)/2004, as amended)”, Turkish Cypriots were given the right to vote and stand for election in the elections for the members of the European Parliament, irrespective of their place of residence in Cyprus. In fact, a Turkish Cypriot stood for election in the 2004 elections. In view of the forthcoming 2009 elections, the Ministry of Interior is taking special measures to inform Turkish Cypriots of the practicalities of participating in the said elections and to facilitate their participation (to stand as a candidate and/or to vote).
- ▶ The broadcasting -since March 2004- by the Cyprus Broadcasting Cooperation of a Bicomunal Television Program (Εμείς-Biz-We) portraying friendly discussions on unifying aspects between Greek and Turkish Cypriots on cultural and social issues.
- ▶ The February 2008 participation of the former Foreign Minister at the opening ceremony of a ceramic art exhibition of a Turkish Cypriot sculptress which has since been put on exhibition at the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (3rd floor).
- ▶ The 1st of October 2008 opening by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, in Strasbourg, of a painting exhibition by women artists from all the communities of Cyprus, including Turkish Cypriots.
- ▶ The January 2009 supply of natural gas to the Turkish Cypriots living in the territory under Turkish military occupation.

(Re para 98 of the Opinion)

Supportive measures for the Cyprus Roma will be continued and developed in the various sectors concerned (housing, education, access to employment and social welfare). Also prejudices and difficulties they face will be duly addressed.

See also comments in relation to paragraphs 90 and 92 of the Opinion, above.

(Re para 99 of the Opinion) integration policy

Measures for the protection of non-nationals are and will be implemented within the context described, however the Government believes that these measures do not fall within the spectrum of competence of the Convention at hand. These measures are taken by the Government in compliance with other treaty obligations of the Republic.

(Re para 100 of the Opinion)

With reference to the authorities' efforts to step up their awareness raising campaign, many initiatives have already been taken in this direction. In the field of education, the new circular issued by the Minister of Education and Culture, as well as, the media coverage of the matter, and the subsequent and still ongoing extensive public debate that followed the circular, contribute enormously to the right direction on the specific issue. During the relevant public debate, the President of the Republic himself repeatedly emphasized his support to every anti-racist and anti-discrimination policy, including the one promoted through the circular of the competent Minister.

In the same vein, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has taken the decision to contribute to the Government's efforts to raise awareness on the issues at hand, by assigning senior diplomats to lecture on the subject in international schools of Cyprus.

Their message will be, the need to fight racism and discrimination and to promote tolerance and intercultural interaction. The first school to be visited will be the English School of Nicosia, a high standard international school, where Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, Armenian, Maronite, Latin and foreign students attend in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural school an international curriculum. It should be stressed at this point that the Greek Cypriot students of the school pay on their own very high tuition fees, whereas the Turkish Cypriot students are subsidized by the Government of the Republic.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order supports the promotion and implementation of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and actively participated in many activities organized within the framework of that Year, by disseminating the 4

publications that were edited and co-financed within the framework of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. The co-ordination of this Year has been undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Culture which has set a National Co-ordination Body in this respect.

A comprehensive program for the integration of immigrant students in schools was adopted recently by the Council of Ministers (Decision No. 67.598, dated 30/7/2008). The main features of the program are: special classes for the rapid learning of Greek, the preparation of material with information about Cyprus and the educational system in eight (8) foreign languages for the students and their families, the training of language teachers in the teaching of Greek as a foreign and/ or as a second language and the monitoring of the needs and the progress of the students.

Furthermore, in its effort to address the problem of high migrant student enrollment in specific schools and in order to promote tolerance and dialogue, as well as to eliminate stereotypes through education, the Ministry of Education and Culture has set in place the program for Zone of Educational Priority (ZEP). The policy for the Zones of Educational Priority derived from the strategy of positive discrimination (UNESCO), which is based on the unequal treatment of inequalities. Each ZEP consists of one Gymnasium (lower secondary school), the main primary schools, in degraded areas with a pupil population coming from families of a low socioeconomic and educational level. The criteria for defining an area as ZEP is a high share of migrant or foreign language speaking pupils, a high number of drop-outs and high incidence of violent and anti-social behavior (young delinquency). In September 2008 a new ZEP was established in the Larnaca area, in addition to the three that were previously established in Lefkosia and Pafos.

This school year (2008-2009) has been declared as the “Educational Reform Year” and will focus on promoting a culture of peaceful cohabitation, mutual respect and cooperation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. The Ministry of Education and Culture has appointed a committee of representatives of the Ministry (senior educational officers), teacher unions and parent associations to make suggestions and prepare material for the implementation of this policy by the school units. In a statement to the

press, the Minister of Education and Culture, referred to the “target of developing a spirit of reconciliation within the schools with the Turkish Cypriots, so that this reconciliation occurs within the consciousness of all citizens of Cyprus regardless of the community”. This will involve revision of the text books on the history of Cyprus in the last 50 years, something that will be implemented within the next few years. The Minister stated that it was “very important that we have an informed youth that understands that different communities live in Cyprus”.

(Re para 101 of the Opinion)

As regards the raising of awareness among the police forces, it should be noted that, police training is an area of utmost importance, where effective and proactive measures continue to be taken, in order to prevent and combat any discrimination or violations of human rights related to the performance of policing duties. At the Cyprus Police Academy, human rights issues are included in its programmes for all trainees and new recruits, and relevant courses are reinforced with the presence of professionals who have either an academic background or are experienced in the area of human rights. Such professionals are criminologists, lawyers, judges, psychologists, members of non-governmental organizations, university professors, etc. An additional comprehensive training program to cover Police Standing Order 3/38 on Combating Discrimination, as well as to further sensitize police officers, is a part of Police training curricula.

Moreover, Police Officers of different ranks are constantly trained abroad on issues concerning human rights, racism, discrimination, corruption etc and they actively participate at different CEPOL (European Police College) courses and other courses organized by foreign competent organizations. For the year 2008, representatives of the Police have participated to CEPOL courses, organized abroad, concerning human rights practices, police ethics and anti-corruption practices.

Additionally, the “Citizens Rights Charter” has been issued and released by the Police in an effort to maximize the knowledge of citizens regarding police issues in relation to their rights, and furthermore to facilitate public access to Police establishments,

procedures and services, through the inclusion of police reporting forms necessary for several purposes. Both the Charter and the forms are available in printable and also downloadable form on line, as part of the Cyprus Police Web page at <http://www.police.gov.cy>. Link to the Charter is available at the Home Site.

Furthermore, a new version of *the* Code of Ethics has been prepared by the Human Rights Office of the Police, which is available in a downloadable form on line as a part of the Cyprus Police Web Page at <http://www.police.gov.cy>. A Police Standing Order is also issued on the subject.

The Police also translated and published leaflets and booklets on issues concerning human rights, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, which were distributed to all police officers.

As regards the mechanisms for supervising the work of the Police, it should be stressed that the Independent Authority for the Investigation of Allegations and Complaints Against the Police was established, aiming at the objective investigations of complaints, as well as the reduction or even the elimination of any inappropriate behaviour from the members of the Police.

Article 8

Recommendation

(Re para 105 of the Opinion)

On 19 June 2007, the Council of Ministers, based on proposition 786/2007, dated 11/6/2007, decided (Decision No.65.732) the following:

- a. Military Service is no longer voluntary for the religious groups of the Maronites, the Armenians and the Latins in Cyprus. Therefore, as from 2008 onwards, all persons who fulfill the requirements for enrolment in the National Guard and belong to the religious groups of Armenians, Maronites and Latins, should present themselves to pre-selected army camps for the commencement of their military service.

- b. The said Decision was based on Article 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, with regard to the elimination of racial discrimination as well as on other articles of relevant national legislation.
- c. The Minister of Defence is authorized to handle practical issues which may appear during the implementation of this Decision. Furthermore, the Authorities will make every effort to protect the right of the members of the minority groups, who perform military service, to manifest their own religion, without this resulting in any negative consequences to them. The right of any person to opt himself/herself out of religious activities of other ethnic /religious groups, will be protected.

Article 9

(Re para 108 of the Opinion)

At the first meeting between the Maronite Committee and Radio representatives, certain decisions were taken and already – following a joint decision – a series concerning the history of the Maronites is being aired, as is the one addressed to the expatriate Maronites. In addition, a new series about Maronite Religious Music will soon be launched, while the programmes often host Committee members willing to talk on a variety of issues.

(Re para 110 of the Opinion)

CyBC radio does not confine itself to certain or specific events. In the weekly programmes addressed to the Maronite and Latin groups and in the daily programme addressed to the Armenians, a wide range of issues concerning all three religious groups is presented. As regards the airing of a brief news bulletin exclusively for the Maronite group, the Director's of CyBC opinion is that this is not feasible given that there is no news – in the strict sense of the term – on a daily and/or weekly basis.

Recommendation

(Re para 112 of the Opinion)

As already mentioned, the duration of the respective CyBC radio programmes has been increased. Regular contact exists with the respective religious groups' representatives, who from time to time appear on the programmes as guests.

The Decision of the Council of Ministers dated 21/3/2006 to grant annual financial support for the publications of the three religious groups continues to be effectively implemented. See also comments in relation to para 65 of the Opinion, above.

Article 12

(Re para 119 of the Opinion)

It must be noted that the majority of Maronite students are not enrolled at the Saint Maronas Primary School. Both the parents and the students prefer the attendance in public primary schools near the place of their residence and the establishment of multicultural schools in which the emphasis will be stressed on pupils' ethnic, religious and cultural diversity and at the same time will prepare them in an inclusive manner for continuing their education at university level, entering the labor market and coexisting in the society in general.

The teaching of the Cypriot Maronite Arabic during the regular school curriculum is currently under examination by the Directorate of Primary Education which is forming a new policy in collaboration with the Representatives of the community. Regarding the training of teachers as well as the production of teaching materials, the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizes its will to support the relevant efforts of the Maronite community and encourages the community to take initiatives towards the realization of this project and also to submit specific proposals.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus and the Government of the Lebanese Republic have signed a bilateral agreement regarding cultural, educational and scientific cooperation. Among the provisions of this agreement is the exchange of teachers, scientists, specialists as well as scientific delegations in order to participate in

conferences and symposia, exchange ideas and methodologies concerning the abovementioned areas. The two countries do collaborate by exchanging publications in the fields of science, education, technology, and literature, the study of the two countries' history, geography, culture and art. The Ministry of Education and Culture will engage all possible efforts to promote and strengthen this cooperation; however it should be noted that the spoken language in Lebanon is different from the spoken language used by the Cyprus Maronite community.

(Re para 120 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture has committed itself to revise the existing textbooks used for the instruction of the subject matter of History within the mandate of the appointment of the Committee of Experts for the Upgrading of the National Curriculum (information on the specific subject matter is provided in paragraph 22, above).

(Re para 121 of the Opinion)

As indicated in paragraph 90, the modernization, restructuring and upgrading of the national curriculum from pre-primary education to upper secondary general technical and vocational education, with the aim of better addressing the needs of the students for the 21st century, is one of the major parameters of the Educational Reform Program. The objective is to create an integrated continuum of early childhood education, pre-primary education, primary education, secondary general and secondary technical and vocational education. Within this framework special emphasis will be given to defining aims and key contents of different subjects and thematic entities in order to form a more unified educational approach. The new core curriculum will be developed so as to provide all students with the opportunity for individual choice and supporting services, including supplementary instruction in areas of need. The key competencies that Europe's citizens should acquire to enable them to adapt to changes will be effectively addressed.

For the development of the new curriculum, the Government has set up a Committee of Experts which is currently preparing its recommendations and suggestions. Recommendations and suggestions related to the abovementioned issues will also be considered in this context.

See also comments in relation to paragraph 22 under Education Reform.

(Re para 122 of the Opinion)

Concerning the history curricula, the Committee of Experts will be in close cooperation with the Representatives of the communities in due time. Additionally, as referred under paragraph 67 of the present Report, the Directorate of Secondary Education has undertaken the action for the development of supplementary history materials in which the Representatives of the communities have submitted their contributions.

Recommendations

(Re para 123 of the Opinion)

The upcoming school year has been declared as the “Educational Reform Year” and will focus on promoting a culture of peaceful cohabitation, mutual respect and cooperation between all the communities of the island. The Ministry of Education and Culture has appointed a committee of representatives of the Ministry (senior educational officers), teacher unions and parent associations to make suggestions and prepare material for the implementation of this policy by the school units. In a statement to the press, the Minister of Education and Culture Andreas Demetriou referred to the “target of developing a spirit of reconciliation within the schools with the Turkish Cypriots and the other minorities living in the island, so that this reconciliation occurs within the consciousness of all citizens of Cyprus regardless of the community they belong to”. This will involve revision of the text books on the history of Cyprus in the last 50 years, something that will be implemented within the next few years. The Minister stated that it was “very important that we have an informed youth that understands that different communities live in Cyprus”.

(Re para 124 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture holds continuous consultations with the Representatives of the three groups and has asked for specific suggestions to be submitted, evaluated and acted upon. The proposal for exchanges or recruitment of teachers as well as experts on curricula development for minority issues is under serious evaluation by the Ministry.

Article 13

(Re para 126 of the Opinion)

With regard to the delays reported for the availability of school books and the difficulties regarding the training and recruitment of teachers, it is mentioned that the Ministry of Education and Culture does everything possible to overcome such obstacles, although some of them are due to objective difficulties.

Recommendations

(Re para 127 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture holds continuous consultations with representatives of the three groups and has asked them to provide specific suggestions; upon evaluation of the proposals, the Ministry will proceed to the materialization of the specific project.

Article 14

(Re para 129 of the Opinion)

In relation to the specific area of concern, the Ministry of Education and Culture commits itself to examine the possibility to offer Armenian Language Courses under the new revised syllabuses for Life Long Learning. See also comments in relation to paragraph 121, above.

(Re para 130 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture through its corresponding agencies, such as the Department of Primary Education, the Department of Secondary Education and the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training, as well as the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus offer in-service training to educators that are employed at the Armenian Schools. The training includes subjects such as, teaching Greek as a Second Language, Teaching Practices and Methodology, Classroom Management as well as subjects that are identified by the schools themselves as areas of concern. Under the plan for Educational Reform that is being materialized by the government, the Ministry of Education and Culture will examine the possibility of offering training in Armenian.

(Re para 131 of the Opinion)

The Council of Ministers with its Decision No. 63.718, dated 3/5/2006, approved the establishment of an Upper Secondary School for Cypriot Armenian students, within the premises of the primary Armenian School “NAREG”, in Nicosia. However, upon their request, the majority of the students previously enrolled at Melkonian Educational Institute decided to attend classes at the American Academy school in Nicosia, a private educational establishment.

Also refer to the answer provided under paragraph 67 of the present Report regarding the proposal of the Ministry of Education and Culture for free language course for the minority groups offered by the State Funded Educational Institutions.

(Re para 132 of the Opinion)

See also comments in relation to para. 119, above.

(Re para 133 of the Opinion)

See comments in relation to paragraph 73, above.

Recommendations

(Re para 134 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture will examine the possibility to adopt the suggestion of the Advisory Committee in paragraph 134 of its Opinion.

(Re para 135 of the Opinion)

See also comments in relation to paragraphs 73, 90, 119 and 133, above.

Article 15

Recommendation

(Re para 143 of the Opinion)

(See information given under Recommendation 1).

Furthermore, the request of improving the effective participation of the Representatives of the religious groups in the House of Representatives on Religious and Educational issues is being discussed between the Representatives and the President of the House. The President of the House of Representatives promised that he will examine the issue and he will inform the Representatives of the relevant outcome in due course. The issue was also being discussed within the framework of the relevant dialogue with the Co-ordinator at the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of Interior has asked for the legal opinion of the Attorney General on the matter.

Article 17

(Re paras 147 and 148 of the Opinion)

The practical, political and physical restrictions imposed by the illegal Turkish military occupation of Cypriot territory, including Maronite Villages, hinder significantly the ability of the Government of Cyprus to facilitate, to the desirable extent, the travel and material wellbeing of the Maronites in that area.

Article 18

(Re para 151 of the Opinion)

See also comments in relation to paragraph 152 of the Opinion, below.

Recommendation

(Re para 152 of the Opinion)

The Ministry of Education and Culture intends to more effectively involve the representatives of the minority groups in the development of strategic plans for bilateral cooperations, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which primarily has competence for the conclusion of international agreements.