



## Recommendation 1751 (2006)<sup>1</sup>

# Cultural diversity of the North Caucasus

Parliamentary Assembly

1. In the Russian Federation, the North Caucasus is a geographical, cultural, historical and linguistic area in which over 40 peoples with different cultures and religions have settled and co-exist. Their religions include Islam (Sunni, Shiite), Christianity (Orthodox, Monophysitic), Judaism and Buddhism, and they speak a multitude of languages of various origins.
2. The region comprises the following seven republics: Adygeya, Karachay-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia-Alania, Ingushetia, Chechnya and Dagestan.
3. The situation with regard to identity, ethnicity and religion and their exploitation by neighbouring states with various interests in the region, the lack of a genuine tradition of political democracy, the high level of corruption and nepotism, the systematic neglect of problems concerning culture and education and a lack of intercultural and interfaith dialogue have made this a region of instability and, as a result, of violence.
4. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, there has been a weakening and, in some cases, a complete breakdown of the political, economic, cultural and human links between the peoples of the North Caucasus in general and, more particularly, between the representatives of the cultural milieu, writers, teachers and researchers in the region. This state of affairs has had, and is continuing to have, a negative impact.
5. The North Caucasus is still a region with a very high level of secondary and higher education, with many academic research centres, including in the humanities. It is a region in which a good education for their children matters to families and is a source of pride for parents and grandparents, regardless of their standard of living, social class, nationality or religion. Each of the republics of the North Caucasus has a well-developed infrastructure of cultural establishments, theatres, museums, libraries and sports centres.
6. The Parliamentary Assembly would like the Russian federal and regional authorities to acknowledge the medium- and long-term importance of culture and education, cultural diversity and intercultural and interfaith dialogue as a possible basis for stability and democratisation in the North Caucasus region.
7. In this connection, it welcomes the initiative taken by the Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation to organise in 2005, in close co-operation with the Russian President's special representative for the regions of southern Russia, conferences of the ministers of culture and education of the North Caucasus and southern Russia with the aim of co-ordinating the activities of the various government bodies in the region more effectively.
8. The Parliamentary Assembly nevertheless regrets that the federal and regional cultural and educational policies have not yet taken sufficient account of the multi-ethnic characteristics of this region.
9. It is necessary to develop transfrontier cultural co-operation by organising various cultural events between the republics of the North Caucasus and with the regions of southern Russia and the South Caucasus states.

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1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 29 May 2006 (see [Doc. 10869](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mrs Anne Brasseur).



10. The problem of financing culture and education remains serious in spite of the federal government's recent efforts to increase wages and improve social conditions in these areas. The authorities could pay more attention to financing the fields of culture and education, especially in the multicultural and multifaith regions.
11. The Assembly strongly condemns religious fanaticism and the use of cultural identities for terrorist purposes. In this connection, it refers to its [Recommendation 1687 \(2004\)](#) on combating terrorism through culture. It repeats that it is necessary to promote interfaith dialogue, especially in youth circles, which are often prey to religious extremists from outside.
12. The Assembly stresses the need to preserve and develop the languages of the peoples of the North Caucasus and to encourage the learning of the Russian language, as the official language of the state, and foreign languages. It points out that Russia signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No. 148) in 2001 but has not yet ratified it, and it urges the country's authorities to speed up the ratification process.
13. The Assembly welcomes the initiatives of the Council of Europe and the European Commission for the region but considers that such initiatives should not be limited to Chechnya.
14. Consequently, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 14.1. develop, in close co-operation with the Russian Federation, a medium- and long-term strategy for cultural and educational policies for the North Caucasus with both federal and regional dimensions that take account of the multi-ethnic and multifaith characteristics of this region, in the framework of respect for human rights and drawing on experiences elsewhere in Europe;
  - 14.2. examine the possibility of launching a new programme for the Caucasus by drawing on the positive experience of the STAGE programme for the three countries of the South Caucasus;
  - 14.3. focus attention on the organisation of training seminars and other cultural and/or educational activities in the North Caucasus region, within the framework of the co-operation programmes between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation;
  - 14.4. encourage the drafting of a textbook on the history of the peoples of the North Caucasus;
  - 14.5. consider the case for involving the region in the Council of Europe's assistance and co-operation programmes, including the joint programmes with the European Union for the development of cultural tourism, for promoting its heritage in the rest of Europe and for job creation;
15. The Assembly calls on the authorities of the Russian Federation to:
  - 15.1. introduce the history of the peoples of the North Caucasus into the curriculum of the history courses taught at educational establishments in the republics of the North Caucasus and southern Russia as well as in other regions;
  - 15.2. set about organising a parliamentary forum with representatives of the cultural and educational sectors and the various faiths in the republics of the North Caucasus, in order to develop trust-building measures for the region;
  - 15.3. set about organising a parliamentary forum with representatives of the cultural and educational sectors and the various faiths in the republics of the North Caucasus, in order to develop trust-building measures for the region;
  - 15.4. encourage exchanges of students, trainees and lecturers between higher education establishments in the North Caucasus and other regions of the Russian Federation;
  - 15.5. encourage twinning arrangements between the museums and libraries of the republics of the North Caucasus and southern Russia, as well as with those in European countries, and to launch joint projects such as exhibitions, cultural routes and youth and student festivals;
  - 15.6. promote at regional level the production of television and radio broadcasting on the cultural and religious diversity, languages, literature and traditions of the peoples of the North Caucasus;
  - 15.7. consider the possibility of granting tax benefits to businesses and companies in the region for the funding of cultural and educational projects, sponsorship schemes or other suitable forms of partnership with the private sector.