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Asking Spain to comply with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, particularly to use minority languages when informing about Covid-19 issues

Reply to Written question[1]: Written question No. 755 (Doc. 15172)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has established procedures to monitor the accomplishment by member States of their engagements in relation to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No.157). The latest opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Convention by Spain was adopted by the Advisory Committee on 25 May 2020. It monitors the implementation of the provisions of the Convention as regards the Spanish Roma[2] community, since, as has been duly notified by Spain while the notion of national minorities in the sense of the Framework Convention is not recognised in the Spanish legal system, the Spanish authorities apply the provisions of the Framework Convention to Roma, including foreign Roma, to the Spanish citizens of the *"comunidad gitana"* (Roma, Gypsies), although these citizens do not constitute a national minority. Following submission of comments by the Spanish authorities in October 2020, the opinion was examined by the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Human Rights (GR-H) and transmitted to the Committee of Ministers which adopted Resolution CM/ResCMN(2021)6 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Spain at its 1394th meeting on 3 February 2021.

2. More generally, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities adopted a Statement on the Covid-19 pandemic and national minorities on 28 May 2020 noting in that connection that persons belonging to national minorities have often faced a lack of relevant information in minority languages. It concluded that the provisions of the Framework Convention and relevant recommendations developed by the Advisory Committee, along with other Council of Europe standards on human rights and non-discrimination, should be seen by member States as guides on how to effectively address a variety of challenges faced during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. It also indicated that it is open to dialogue with the States Parties to the Framework Convention.

3. A more specific orientation concerning minority languages and the Covid-19 pandemic is set out in the statement of 25 March 2020 of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages on communication in regional or minority languages in global medical crises. In that statement, the Committee of the Experts emphasised the utmost importance of communicating relevant recommendations in regional and minority languages both for the measures adopted to control the Covid-19 pandemic to have full

1. Adopted at the 1395th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (10 February 2021).
2. The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "*Gens du voyage*", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

effect, and for the well-being of the speakers of those languages. It considered this as a requirement for the Council of Europe member States that have ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No.148), such as Spain.

4. Evaluation of the member States' commitments under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is carried out in accordance with the provisions of that convention. Spain is currently in its fifth monitoring cycle.