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Preserving national minorities in Europe

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2198 (2021)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 2198 \(2021\)](#) “Preserving national minorities in Europe”. It has forwarded the text to the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI), for information and possible comments. The Committee of Ministers concurs with the Parliamentary Assembly that all stakeholders should invest renewed efforts in fully implementing the recommendations of the relevant Council of Europe monitoring bodies and that the dialogue with civil society should be further strengthened. It notes the first priority of the recent Hungarian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of “Promoting the effective protection of persons belonging to national minorities” and the events organised in Strasbourg and Budapest to highlight this topic.

2. Regarding paragraph 3.1. of the recommendation, which calls for investing renewed efforts in implementing fully the recommendations of the Council of Europe monitoring bodies, as a way of preserving linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, the Committee recalls that it has relatively recently established the CDADI to steer the Council of Europe’s intergovernmental work to promote equality for all. Among other things it has been given the mandate to contribute to safeguarding the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and the use of regional or minority languages. It has also recently adopted a “Study on the active political participation of national minority youth in Council of Europe member States”.² The CDADI, therefore, offers a new intergovernmental forum to work on the protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities and on the use of regional or minority languages.

3. With regard to paragraph 3.2. of the recommendation on the swift adoption of resolutions under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), the Committee of Ministers welcomes the reforms of the monitoring mechanisms not only under the FCNM but also under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) in 2018 and 2019. New measures such as the introduction of a confidential dialogue with the States Parties have already shown positive effects: the resolutions on the implementation of the FCNM by States Parties have been adopted more swiftly and the backlog of resolutions awaiting adoption has been eliminated.

4. As regards paragraph 3.3. of the recommendation on the co-operation between the Advisory Committee on the FCNM and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Committee notes that both regularly refer in their work to the other body and it welcomes the exchange between them. While it should be kept in mind that both bodies are independent and have distinct mandates, they could be encouraged to explore ways to further strengthen their co-operation regarding the protection of persons belonging to national minorities.

5. In the field of co-operation with civil society (paragraph 3.4. of the recommendation), the Committee of Ministers observes that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) already have a large platform for contributing to the achievement of the Council of Europe objectives in the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs). The Council of Europe also holds biannual dialogue meetings with Roma and Traveller civil society that include exchanges on the FCNM and the ECRML. The CDADI and its substructures

1. Adopted at the 1426th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies (23 February 2022).

2. See <https://rm.coe.int/prems-101821-gbr-2530-study-on-the-active-political-participation-of-n/1680a3bb30>



have involved civil society in an intense way in their work, including on the active political participation of national minority youth. NGOs also have direct access to the FCNM and ECRML monitoring bodies through a standing invitation to transmit shadow reports or any other information to them, and through their systematic invitation to meet the delegations of the bodies during their monitoring visits. To further facilitate co-operation with civil society, the summary and main recommendations of the recent opinions of the Advisory Committee on the FCNM are systematically translated into official languages of the State Party concerned and efforts are made to make available the reports of the Committee of Experts of the ECRML in official languages.

6. Whilst mindful of the Parliamentary Assembly's call for the establishment of a platform the Committee of Ministers considers that this large array of existing venues for co-operation with civil society currently functions effectively.