

# Council of Europe

## Resolution CM/ResCMN(2017)1

on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Finland

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 March 2017 at the 1281<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter referred to as “the Framework Convention”),

Having regard to Resolution [Res\(97\)10](#) of 17 September 1997 setting out rules adopted by the Committee of Ministers on the monitoring arrangements under Articles 24 to 26 of the Framework Convention;

Having regard to the voting rule adopted in the context of adopting Resolution [Res\(97\)10](#);<sup>[1]</sup>

Having regard to the instrument of ratification submitted by Finland on 3 October 1997;

Recalling that the Government of Finland transmitted its State report in respect of the fourth monitoring cycle under the Framework Convention on 27 January 2015;

Having examined the Advisory Committee’s fourth opinion adopted on 24 February 2016;

Adopts the following conclusions in respect of Finland:

The authorities are invited to take account of the observations and recommendations contained in Sections I and II of the Advisory Committee’s Fourth Opinion. In particular, they should take the following measures to improve further the implementation of the Framework Convention:

Recommendations for immediate action<sup>[2]</sup>

- Engage in a constructive and high-level dialogue with the Sámi people, possibly in a government-led platform, to ensure that the interests of all parties are adequately addressed both in national legislation and through the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples; strengthen the knowledge of the Sámi languages, maintain and develop the cultural identities of the Sámi in the Homeland while targeting also Sámi living outside of the Homeland;

- Intensify efforts to adopt and implement the Action Plan related to the 2012 Strategy for the National Languages of Finland in order to guarantee that the knowledge, visibility and presence of the Swedish language is maintained in education, in the administration, in the labour force and in the public at large;
- Defuse the climate of increasing interethnic prejudice and tension by stepping up efforts to combat all forms of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and hate speech, in particular in social media; promptly condemn all instances of racism and ethnic hostility in public discourse; raise public awareness of the legal remedies available against hate crime and hate speech; strengthen the role of law enforcement and the judiciary to detect and sanction hate speech and hate-motivated offences; raise the level of recruitment of persons belonging to minorities in the police.

#### Further recommendations<sup>[3]</sup>

- Facilitate the expression of multiple identity and language affiliations in population registries; collect disaggregated equality data as a means of adopting and implementing effective minority protection and equality promotion policies; take the steps necessary to guarantee the registration of Sámi names respecting the language diacritic signs in public registries, passports and other public documents;
- Provide adequate political and financial support to the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman to enable it effectively to pursue its well-established role of protecting minorities within its broader mandate;
- Earmark resources to continue implementing the National Roma Action Plan;<sup>[4]</sup> foster equal opportunities for access to education for the Roma, in particular as regards equal access to upper secondary and higher education by providing incentives to municipalities; focus on adult education and employment, including by reducing discrimination as regards access to the labour market;
- Intensify efforts to ensure that first language access to social welfare and health services is adequately available, in particular in Swedish and Sámi, and that any administrative reforms guarantee the linguistic rights of persons belonging to minorities;
- Continue to support effective access to education in the Sámi languages in the Homeland, and develop additional opportunities in the rest of the country's territory where Sámi children are present in substantial numbers and if there is sufficient demand;
- Ensure that, while respecting the decentralisation of education, the newly developed curricula at local level and the textbooks reflect appropriately ethnic diversity and the historical presence of all minorities in Finland; and that teachers are effectively trained in accommodating diversity and promoting intercultural respect in the classroom;
- Provide for an effective and inclusive channel of communication, consultation and influence on the decision-making process by all minority groups, in particular Russian and Karelian speakers, within the existing consultation mechanisms; engage in dialogue

with minority linguistic groups, including Estonian speakers to the extent to which they express an interest in being protected under the Framework Convention;

- Enhance the opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities to participate in public affairs as well as for their recruitment into public service, in particular law enforcement and the judiciary at central and local levels, so as to send a clear message that diversity is valued in Finnish society; strive to eliminate discrimination in the labour market against persons belonging to national minorities, including Russians.

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[1] In the context of adopting Resolution [Res\(97\)10](#) on 17 September 1997, the Committee of Ministers also adopted the following rule: "Decisions pursuant to Articles 24.1 and 25.2 of the Framework Convention shall be considered to be adopted if two-thirds of the representatives of the Contracting Parties casting a vote, including a majority of the representatives of the Contracting Parties entitled to sit on the Committee of Ministers, vote in favour".

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

[3] The recommendations below are listed in the order of the corresponding articles of the Framework Convention.

[4] The terms "Roma and Travellers" are being 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.