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## Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

### *Sub-Committee on the Rights of Minorities*

# Minutes<sup>1</sup> of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 November 2017 in Bucharest (Romania)

#### 1. Opening of the meeting

**Mr Badea** welcomed the participants to Bucharest and underlined the importance of protecting the rights of minorities. Two aspects would be explored at this meeting: first, the representation of minorities in decision-making processes, and second, legal and other obstacles to the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157) by those states that were not already parties to it. Europe was still feeling the effects of the economic crisis, and migration flows were creating challenges for the EU regarding the free movement of workers. Political parties needed to find new solutions in this context, and politicians should seek to create more solidarity and unity in diversity. Living together was not an empty notion but a daily reality. One month earlier, following the initiation of an urgent debate by the Romanian delegation, the Assembly had adopted a resolution drawing the attention of the Ukrainian authorities to the impact on persons belonging to national minorities of certain amendments to Ukraine's Law on Education and calling for an opinion of the Venice Commission as well as for conformity with the requirements of the Framework Convention. A fine balance had to be struck to protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities while ensuring that they were integrated in the society of the state where they lived. Maintaining one's cultural and linguistic identity was not incompatible with integration in the fabric of society. To prevent antagonism and ensure integration of minorities, knowing both one's mother tongue and the national language was crucial.

**Mr Popa**, Vice-President of the Senate of Romania, stressed the importance of the Parliamentary Assembly as a forum for dialogue in Europe and the role played by the Council of Europe in the last decades in setting key standards in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The morning's round table would focus on how persons belonging to national minorities were involved in decision-making processes at local and national level in member states. In his county of Bihor there were persons belonging to several national minorities and holding various faiths. The Romanian constitution guaranteed to persons belonging to national minorities the right to develop and express their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identities, in line with the principle of equality and non-discrimination. The Romanian authorities also had an obligation to encourage relations with Romanian minorities outside its borders, while observing the legal framework of the states where they lived. Romania's own legal framework for protecting minority rights was comprehensive, covering all elements that made up minority identities. In the Romanian parliament, 17 deputies formed a parliamentary group of national minorities and 8 senators belonged to national minorities. The right to learn one's mother tongue at pre-school, school and university level was guaranteed and there was a State Secretary for Education in the Languages of National Minorities. The rights of persons belonging to national minorities to use their minority language in the fields of justice, culture, information and religion were protected, and the state gave substantial financial support to this. A number of institutional stakeholders were

<sup>1</sup> Declassified by the decision of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of 1 March 2018.

directly involved in national minority issues and many were represented at this meeting. He hoped that the measures adopted by Romania would be duplicated in other states, based on the principle of reciprocity.

**The Chairperson** thanked the Romanian Senate for its invitation and its interest in this important subject. There was much to be learnt from Romania's example. The meeting should allow participants to exchange views on the matters described by the two previous speakers, in a spirit of constructive dialogue. Living together sounded like such a simple thing that sometimes there was a tendency to forget how much effort it required. Where dialogue existed, problems could be resolved. Minorities needed to be involved in decision-making and to be heard; otherwise the seeds of conflict were sown. He looked forward to active contributions from all participants to the day's discussions.

**2. Agenda**  
[AS/Ega/Min (2017) OJ 04 rev]

The draft agenda was **adopted**.

**3. Minutes**  
[AS/Ega/Min (2017) PV 03]

The Sub-Committee **approved** the draft minutes of its meeting held in Strasbourg on 12 October 2017.

**4. Round Table: Representation of persons belonging to national minorities in decision-making processes**  
[AS/Ega/Min (2017) PV 02]

**Mr Alexandru-Victor Micula**, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, said that the concept of national minorities as developed after World War II had helped to ensure social harmony and allowed the European project to flower. Romania was recognised as an example in Europe in terms of its protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including their cultural, religious and linguistic identities. It was important to promote intercultural dialogue and to respect and allow for the expression of diverse cultural identities. The high level of protection afforded to national minorities in Romania was a strong argument for its external policies promoting the rights of Romanians abroad. Persons belonging to national minorities in Romania enjoyed the same rights; the aim was not total autonomy but preservation of minorities' linguistic, cultural and religious identities in compliance with international standards. As a neighbouring state, Romania's position concerning the question of a distinct Moldovan identity was that self-identification should not be applied in such a way as to create new groups. The situation of persons identifying as belonging to a Moldovan minority remained a major concern of Romania in its foreign policy. National minorities had been a priority for Romania during its presidency of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, and the Assembly played a key role in promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities. To face today's challenges one had to come back to the core issues, focusing on minority rights as individual human rights not linked to territorial autonomy; access to education and cultural rights; loyal cooperation with the state; and predictability.

**Mr Varujan Pambuccian**, Deputy, Leader of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities, said that Romania had a long history of recognising minority rights. Despite fluctuations in the intervening century, today's system had its roots in a proclamation made in the aftermath of World War I. Electoral laws today guaranteed minorities a lower threshold for entering parliament, on behalf of a nationwide constituency; the national budget provided subsidies to support the cultural and linguistic identities of minorities as well as religious entities that were part of their identity. The mechanisms governing education in minority languages worked well, although there was still room for improvement. There were also a number of mechanisms allowing minorities to participate in decision-making processes. Although it was rarely used, an exception to the normal threshold was provided for in order to allow national minorities to participate at local level. All members of the Romanian parliament elected by national minorities thanks to the threshold exception existing also at this level had the same rights as other MPs and the right to form a distinct parliamentary group. Both national minorities and society as a whole benefited from this recognition of diversity and from the social harmony this engendered. As regarded the rights of Romanians abroad, it was important to have symmetry. Schooling and education were crucial to the preservation of ethnic identity and it was to be hoped that bilateral contacts could help to preserve the rights of Romanians, Hungarians and other smaller minorities living in Ukraine.

**Mr Attila Korodi**, Deputy, Leader of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, stated that without Council of Europe and other international instruments, the steps taken to protect national minorities would have taken much longer. Each national minority in each country had distinct features and needs. The number of Hungarians in Romania had declined in the past decades and an adequate framework had to be provided in

order to turn this trend around. Supporting national minorities contributed to the life of the nation. While Romania's successive accessions to the Council of Europe, NATO and the EU had provided impetus for strengthening the protection of national minorities, there had been little progress in this field since 2007. In 2012, the Committee of Ministers had recommended that Romania reconsider the thresholds for official use of minority languages in administration. A bill proposing to reduce the current threshold and increase flexibility in this field had been submitted to the Romanian parliament some years earlier, but not approved. What was currently missing, from the viewpoint of the Hungarian minority, was dialogue. Trust was crucial to constructive dialogue between the majority society and national minorities and it was regrettable that some Romanian politicians expressed fears that there may be attempts to break Romania apart; such fears were ill-founded as the Hungarian minority had a positive history within Romania. Nonetheless, a minority of over 1 million inhabitants had needs that had to be responded to at the level of the community as a whole. Instruments of autonomy could lead to positive developments without any need for secession. The Catalanian example was regrettable and was rejected by Hungarians in Romania. Dialogue was the way to bring people closer together while recognising the specific needs of minorities. Laws protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities should be both applicable and applied, including in the fields of minority language education, universities, the health sector, and the use of minority languages by public authorities and for topographical signs. Loyalty to a country should, in the case of national minorities, be understood as their contributing to the identity of the country through their own specific identities; otherwise, tensions would be created between the majority and minorities. Recognising diversity and using it as a tool for development was positive for a country.

**Ms Mariana Buceanu**, Advisor, Public Policy Directorate, National Agency for Roma, noted that this agency was a specialised public administrative body. Since 2001 the government, working together with representatives of Roma, had adopted several strategies for Roma based on combating discrimination and promoting social inclusion. The current strategy, for 2015-2020, aimed to close the gaps between the Roma population and majority society. Five main steps were needed here: to operationalise the right to be free of discrimination; to consolidate the structures for implementing the strategy at local level; to implement trust-building measures; to establish viable relationships between Roma and local authorities, in particular as regarded property rights and ensuring access to electricity, water, sewerage systems etc; and to improve access to social rights, especially with regard to employment and health. Furthermore, many Roma still lacked identity documents, an issue which had to be addressed urgently. Despite the fact that there were 400 Roma health mediators in Romania and 40 representatives for Roma in county offices, the life expectancy of Roma women and children in Romania was still the lowest in Europe. Dialogue was essential to build trust and improve relationships between Roma and public authorities, and enable public policy to be improved. Roma were part of the human capital of society that could contribute to the development of Romania and Europe, and it was crucial that this be understood by all.

Opening the floor for discussions, **the Chairperson** noted with interest the previous speakers' insistence on the importance of dialogue and trust.

**Ms Kovács** said that Serbia had an excellent legislative framework which guaranteed a broad range of rights with respect to the representation of national minorities. There were currently 21 national minority councils in Serbia, which were directly elected every four years and were competent to deal with issues of concern to national minorities. Problems that arose concerned the implementation of the law in practice, rather than the law itself. The key question was how to encourage persons belonging to national minorities to remain in Serbia – which meant ensuring that they could find a job. In practice, everyone had to master the state language in order to be able to prosper. Thanks to the exemption of national minorities' parties from the 5% threshold for entry into the national parliament, larger minorities such as Hungarians and Bosniacs were able to be represented at national level. However, smaller minorities still struggled in this respect. Implementation of the legislative framework on representation of national minorities in other bodies, including the judiciary, was also unsatisfactory.

**Mr Cilevičs** observed that both the OSCE's Hague Recommendations of 1996 and the first thematic commentary of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2006 had dealt specifically with education rights, recognising that this was a key issue for persons belonging to national minorities. Today, national minorities were not perceived as a major threat to peace and security in Europe; different challenges such as radicalisation, fundamentalism and terrorism had to be addressed, and integration was increasingly emphasised. As a result, states were increasingly teaching the state language as a priority and restricting opportunities for preserving and promoting distinct identities, which risked penalising national minorities. Integration was always complex and required striking a balance, something Romania had been quite successful in doing. He asked how national minority education was organised, who paid, to what level instruction was provided in minority languages, and how integration was achieved.

**Mr Fabritius** noted that Germany recognised four national minorities, all of which were autochthonous groups. There were debates with respect to the possibility of recognising a Polish national minority in Germany, as well as some requests to provide schooling in Romanian in Germany, both on the basis of reciprocity. Given the importance of the mother tongue for a person's identity, he asked how minority language education was guaranteed in Romania, in particular where no textbooks for teaching a minority language were available and/or where children spoke Romanian to each other during breaks.

**Mr Grin** welcomed the existence of a dialogue between minorities and the Romanian government. Regarding language-learning, he pointed out that Switzerland had four national languages. There was currently much debate around the fact that some schools were giving more weight to teaching English than to ensuring that pupils learned the national languages; this was a very important issue as for some students whose mother tongue was a dialect, they first had to learn *Hochdeutsch* when they began school. Maintaining a dialogue on such matters was crucial. He asked whether Roma in Romania were sufficiently heard and what role should be played by local authorities in resolving the lack of identity papers of many Roma.

**Ms Buceanu** stressed that the right to an identity is a fundamental right of all persons; without identity papers, people were invisible. Some local governments had great difficulty managing such situations. Roma advisors were present in most city halls but the legislative framework was sometimes lacking. She was confident that the current Roma member of parliament would find ways to overcome these hurdles, however.

Replying to Mr Fabritius, **Mr Pambuccian** observed that the bill previously referred to (but never enacted) had drawn a distinction between those long-established groups that were part and parcel of the fabric of Romanian society, who were recognised as national minorities, and other more recently arrived ethnic groups whose cultural and linguistic rights were recognised but who did not have political rights as such in Romania. This distinction did not constitute discrimination. As concerned textbooks, the situation varied from one national minority to another but even pupils studying in Romanian sometimes lacked textbooks. The situation of Roma was highly complex and difficult to address, including in parliament, due to lack of unity among Roma representatives. Proposals to create a Roma high school had been rejected by Roma NGOs who had viewed it as segregation. The National Agency for Roma had a difficult task and a sufficient budget was needed to achieve progress.

**Mr Korodi** stressed the importance of minority-language education from kindergarten to university. Students belonging to the Hungarian minority who were obliged to study medicine in Romanian, for example, would find it hard to return to work with patients belonging to the Hungarian minority. It was important to have accurate data and government support when defining needs as regarded education in minority languages. Improvements were needed regarding flexibility of access to vocational schools in minority languages. Where schooling in minority languages was only provided in bigger towns or cities, minority languages would die out in smaller localities. Government support was also needed when it came to printing textbooks in minority languages, as often the number of pupils requiring such material was insufficient to make it profitable for printers. Finally, the principle of reciprocity was problematic; the reports and opinions produced under the Framework Convention and the Language Charter, however, provided a good basis for ensuring a balanced and appropriate level of protection for persons belonging to national minorities.

**Ms Buceanu** said that the overall number of Romanians (not only Roma) lacking identity papers was 550 000. She agreed that financing the strategy for Roma inclusion was the key issue and emphasised that the government must take responsibility for this. Access to education remained a challenge. There were around a dozen different groups of Roma and a consultative body (task force) had been set up to help ensure that all had a voice.

**Mr Radu Baltasiu**, Director, European Centre for Research on Ethnic Issues, cited Dobruja as an example where interethnic communication worked well between the national minorities present. For minorities, much depended on social status and access to rights. "Minorities" was a political concept; "communities" might be a more appropriate term. Trust had to be established between the state and the communities that belonged to it in order to ensure social harmony. Difficulties arose when there was a perception in society that minorities could be politically or geopolitically instrumentalised. This happened when states promoted their own interests via minorities living on the territory of neighbouring states. Large migration flows placed strains on positive discrimination and the concept might need to be redesigned in order to preserve social peace. Romania was surrounded by a halo of Romanian communities in neighbouring countries, including Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova and Bulgaria. With the exception of Vojvodina, the identity of Romanian communities was often under great pressure, for example when another identity (such as Vlach) was ascribed to them. Romanian communities in neighbouring countries could serve as a bridge between the two states, but it was difficult to argue for

improvements in their rights without this being perceived as seeking territorial gains. Respecting the rights of national minorities was however the precondition for social peace.

**Mr Micula** said that new migration was raising the question whether existing instruments could be adapted to promote integration or whether this would negatively affect the rights of autochthonous minorities. Romania's system was progressive but still had to be open in order to protect the rights of persons belonging to national minorities effectively. The state had to meet the needs of all minorities, from the largest to the smallest, and to learn from experience how best to implement existing legislation. It was important to work together to achieve progress and avoid ethnic tensions. Regarding reciprocity, it should never be used as an argument for decreasing the level of protection of rights of minorities present in Romania, but only as a basis for exporting good practices. Measures to improve the situation of minorities also served to strengthen society as a whole. Despite concerns about the current situation regarding education in minority languages in Ukraine, the Ministry of the Interior had made clear that the rights of persons belonging to the Ukrainian minority in Romania would not be restricted. It was natural that citizens of Ukraine should speak Ukrainian but the measures introduced in the new law on education of Ukraine were disproportionate, damaged trust between the state and minorities and harmed the position of the Romanian community in Ukraine. Minority languages could be well taught without this negatively affecting the learning of the state language. The Romanian and Hungarian communities in Ukraine were most affected as they stood to lose rights acquired centuries ago during the Habsburg period. The hostile attitude shown by the authorities to the communities in their state was of concern.

**The Chairperson** pointed out that the Assembly was closely following the situation in Ukraine and stressed that dialogue was important. The Assembly had taken a stance at its October session and the Venice Commission was due to adopt an opinion soon.

**Ms Benkő** said that there was a need to distinguish between long-established national minorities and groups that had arrived more recently. The Hungarian community in Romania wished to integrate in society as a community rather than individually. There were however different mentalities in different counties, depending on whether the Hungarian community was in the majority or a minority in each county, and these differences had to be acknowledged. Where minorities constantly had to defend their rights, there was no room for innovation. It was worrying when minorities were instrumentalised for geopolitical reasons. States must have a thorough understanding of the minorities on their territory and show generosity towards them. The responsibility lay with the majority of society, which had the means either to suppress or to enable minorities and to strengthen links and the sense of being welcome and at home.

**Ms Enikő Katalin Lacziko**, State Secretary, Department for Interethnic Relations, noted that the current system had been developed over 25 years. Despite its resilience, it still did not include a clear-cut definition of national minorities. Nonetheless, Romania recognised the existence of 20 national minorities. Electoral legislation provided for national minorities to have a representative in the Romanian parliament and at local level. Unfortunately the Tatar minority did not have a member of parliament. In contrast, the Hungarian minority fulfilled the conditions to create its own political party and therefore had a much higher number of MPs. Czechs and Slovaks were in contrast both represented by a single MP. It was insulting to national minorities to label their desiderata as geopolitical considerations.

**Mr Ilie Dinca**, State Secretary, Member of the Steering Committee, National Council for Combating Discrimination, observed that although official figures did not reflect this, Roma were the most numerous minority in the European Union. They needed representation at all levels – local, national and European. The task force mentioned earlier had been established to combat various forms of discrimination, especially those occurring at local level. The highest number of complaints received by the Council for Combating Discrimination concerned the grounds of HIV+ status and disability; Roma submitted only the third-highest number of complaints. The Council played a mediating role, seeking to combat discrimination and achieve better outcomes, for example when conflicts occurred with local authorities around evictions. Human resources in the form of Roma health mediators and representatives in county offices were also helping to combat discrimination, and anti-discrimination legislation had been improved.

**Mr Adrian Bulgaru**, Executive Director, Romanian Institute for Human Rights, explained that this body, set up in 1991, was the national human rights institution and covered all fundamental rights and freedoms. Providing education and training was a core part of its work. It invited representatives of national minorities to its training sessions and to meetings of its general council. It would also be including representatives of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians and of Roma, as well as of the parliamentary committees for religious denominations and ethnic groups, to participate in its work.

**Ms Kovács** said that the official position of the Serbian authorities was that the right to self-identification must be respected. Although this was admittedly a sensitive issue, if 30 000 people declared that they were Vlachs then

this had to be officially recognised and they had the right to have their own national minority council. There was a body that coordinated the work of national minority councils and the ongoing work to amend the laws on national minorities and on national minority councils could also contribute to resolving some issues. Textbooks in minority languages were an issue everywhere but the government was very much open to discussion on this matter.

**The Chairperson** thanked all the participants for their contributions to the round-table and noted that there would be time for further exchanges in the afternoon session.

#### 5. Promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities

*Rapporteur: Mr Viorel Riceard Badea, Romania, EPP/CD*

[AS/Ega (2017) 23; AS/Ega (2017) 42]

**The Chairperson** noted that the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was a powerful tool for constructive dialogue. Thanks to the monitoring process it set up, it was possible not only to pinpoint problems that arose but also to highlight what was working well. In the context of Mr Badea's report, the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination had sent a questionnaire to the eight Council of Europe member States that were not parties to the Framework Convention. The compilation of five written replies received was available in members' files. One of the Committee's objectives in deciding to launch work on this report had been to open up a dialogue with States that were not parties to the Framework Convention, and he thanked Greece for having accepted the invitation to engage in today's discussion. He also looked forward to hearing from the President of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention, in the light of the nearly twenty years of experience that this body had now built up.

**Mr Badea** recalled that the five written replies received in response to the Committee's questionnaire contained highly useful information for his report. They flagged up various obstacles faced by States that were not parties to the Framework Convention, such as constitutional issues in France or the fact that nationals were in the minority in Monaco and Luxembourg. Turkey had emphasised that the rights of certain non-Muslim minorities in its territory were recognised and protected under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. Andorra had stated that since it had become easier to acquire Andorran nationality, the proportion of the population holding Andorran nationality had increased, making it more likely that this State might one day ratify the Framework Convention. With this possible exception, the situation had not evolved a great deal since the Assembly had last discussed this issue directly with member States. However, it should be noted that whether or not any national minorities were recognised by a given State, some provisions of the Framework Convention, notably its Article 6 on tolerance and intercultural dialogue, applied to all people within the territory of a state regardless of their ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic identity. Dialogue with States not parties to the Framework Convention remained extremely important in all cases, and the Greek authorities' acceptance of the Sub-Committee's invitation to discuss the situation in Greece was therefore particularly welcome.

**Ms Petra Roter**, President of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, recalled that the Committee of Ministers had adopted this treaty 23 years ago, and it had now been in force for nearly twenty years. Although it was not a long text, it had led to many significant achievements. Two phrases in its Preamble encapsulated what this treaty was about. First, "*Considering that a pluralist and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity*" – the latter part of the phrase made clear that all of society should be involved in this process. Second, "*Considering that the creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society*". These phrases summarised the core of the Framework Convention, namely the aspiration towards an integrated society, and reflected the notion that it was not minorities that were expected to integrate in society, but societies as a whole that were expected to integrate. This treaty and other international instruments made clear that diversity management would not happen on its own but required purposeful efforts and continuous attention, as well as constant adaptation to ongoing societal change. Population movements and digitalisation were two examples of such change of which the impact and importance could be seen in the Advisory Committee's monitoring process. When talking to governments in this process, the Advisory Committee consistently sought to take a balanced approach, meeting minorities and authorities at all levels. Fear of centrifugal tendencies was misplaced: problems did not occur because of the recognition of more rights but because of less rights or lack of access to rights. The Framework Convention had a number of advantages. First, what set it apart from earlier approaches was that it considered minority rights as the human rights of individual persons and addressed them in a universal manner. Thus, recognition and protection of minority rights no longer depended on the existence of a kin State, and notions of reciprocity had no place in this instrument: rather, it was based on the duty of States to protect the rights of the minorities within their jurisdiction. This was done precisely to take minority rights out of the sphere of bilateral relations and ensure that they were protected

internally (by the State having one or more minorities within its borders) and collectively. It was in this multilateral context that the Advisory Committee advised the Committee of Ministers. While bilateral work could support the process, increases in bilateralist tendencies were not good news, as it was a universal approach to minority rights that was needed. Second, the Framework Convention provided States with an opportunity to manage diversity in a systematic, conscious and continuous manner, which was reinforced through the regular monitoring process. Third, societies were subject to continuous change and it was always better to address such changes as they occurred, rather than to wait until they boiled over. The Advisory Committee had been set up to provide independent and objective advice; while its far-reaching approach was sometimes criticised, its role was that of a friend, providing not only praise but also advice. Looking back on earlier opinions of the Advisory Committee, it could be seen that it had often pinpointed key sticking points in advance. It was currently seeking to place increased emphasis on mid-cycle follow-up dialogues, which provided an opportunity for dialogue between minorities and States, with the Advisory Committee playing a mediating role rather than assessing States. This could often allow simple and not very costly solutions to be found through discussion rather than pressure. Finally, the Advisory Committee's thematic commentaries sought to help States understand, through a comparative perspective based on lessons learned through the Advisory Committee's monitoring work, how they could better respond to modern challenges and developments. In reply to a question from **Mr Grin**, she stressed that minorities must be understood as part and parcel of the society of the State in which they lived. While the Framework Convention did not ignore the additional contribution that cross-border contacts and good neighbourly relations could bring, its conceptual framework was based on the view that it was first and foremost in States' interests to protect the rights of those living within their jurisdiction. They should not focus on what was wrong across borders but rather look to see what was needed in their own societies, while of course working collectively to ensure that human rights were protected everywhere.

**Ms Marina Telalian**, Head of the Legal Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, welcomed the opportunity to discuss with the sub-committee a subject of great importance to Greece. The Framework Convention was indeed important as it took the protection of minorities out of the sphere of bilateral (i.e. essentially political) relations that had formed the basis of treaties drafted in the aftermath of World War I, and instead placed minorities squarely within the ambit of human rights protection. As the European Court of Human Rights had emphasised many times, reciprocity indeed had no place in matters of protection of human rights. Greece had explained many times that there was no need for it to ratify the Framework Convention in view of the fact that very advanced legislation was already in place and a wide variety of tools to protect minority rights already existed. Greece officially only recognised one minority, that being the religious (Muslim) minority residing in western Thrace. Even though the Framework Convention allowed scope for States to define the national minorities within their jurisdiction that were covered by its provisions, it was difficult for Greece to ratify this treaty as the recognised religious minority in Greece included three components, namely individuals of Turkish, Pomak and Roma origin, who shared the common element of religion. It was true that the Lausanne Treaty was frequently cited as the applicable framework for the protection of this minority, but in fact Greek legislation went far beyond this. Greece moreover never applied the principle of reciprocity when it came to protecting the rights of members of the Muslim minority, but placed their protection in the context of human rights. A series of positive measures were in place to protect and promote the rights of the Muslim minority, in a wide range of fields:

- (i) Freedom of religion: there were 300 mosques in Thrace and 370 Muslim preachers, who had been appointed as a positive measure to respond to the request of the Muslim minority.
- (ii) Participation in public life: candidates belonging to the Muslim minority in Western Thrace had been elected to the Greek national parliament, often on different sides of the political spectrum; in the last local and regional elections, 120 candidates belonging to the Muslim minority had been elected to local and regional councils, including 3 mayors. This showed that the right to participate in public life was respected.
- (iii) Right to education: the Greek government was committed to upholding the right to education, in line with European standards and the Framework Convention. Minority students were being taught in their language (Turkish) in 130 primary schools, and there were two secondary schools where many subjects were taught in Turkish. There were also two Koranic schools. In order to increase access to the public school system, a law had been passed in 2013 introducing voluntary classes on the Koran in Western Thrace. There was a quota of 0.5% for Muslim students to enter higher education (university or technical institutions), in order to encourage them to continue their education at Greek universities. In the 2016-7 academic year, a four-year Programme of Islamic Studies had also been introduced at Thessaloniki University.
- (iv) Freedom of association: Many minority associations had recently been registered. Moreover, in the context of executing judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, law n° 4491/2017 had recently been passed, making it possible for applicants to have their case reopened before the Greek courts following a finding by the European Court of a violation of their freedom of association.
- (v) Cultural diversity: Youth councils involving young Christians and Muslims had been established to promote mutual understanding and friendly coexistence.

(vi) Muftis: Three muftis appointed by the Greek authorities exercised judicial authority in inheritance and family law disputes (only). It was rare for Sharia law to be applied in Europe but this was done in Greece at the request of the Muslim minority. The law provided that Greek courts should not enforce decisions of muftis if they were contrary to the constitution or to international instruments to which Greece was a party. The Prime Minister had just announced new legislation that would guarantee that Sharia law would apply in cases involving members of the Muslim minority only where they consented to it; otherwise ordinary Greek law would apply. A case involving such issues would moreover be heard by the Grand Chamber of the European Court on 6 December 2017.

(vii) Freedom of expression: There were five minority radio stations in Western Thrace and seven minority newspapers, working in a pluralistic media environment without restrictions.

(viii) Dialogue with civil society: the authorities attached great importance to dialogue with civil society, which also tied in with efforts to enhance prosperity.

(ix) Non-discrimination legislation: New non-discrimination legislation had been passed in 2016. It established a single, comprehensive framework for protection against discrimination on all grounds, including religion, monitored by the highly respected Ombudsman institution. In 2014, Greece had strengthened its legislation as regards offences of incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence against an individual or group of individuals based on grounds such as their "race", colour, national or ethnic origin or religion. It had also criminalised the establishment of or participation in organisations that systematically pursued the commission of such acts. These crimes could be prosecuted *ex officio*. Five special prosecutors had been appointed to investigate racist offences and measures had been taken to address under-reporting. 35 NGOs now participated in documenting racist incidents and a National Council against Racism and Intolerance had been established to work with national and international bodies to strengthen to fight against these phenomena. Greece had furthermore ratified the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe's Cybercrime Convention in 2016.

In the light of all the above it could be seen that although Greece had not ratified the Framework Convention, there were no gaps in the legislative protection afforded to minorities. The lack of ratification did not mean that Greece placed no importance on this instrument; rather, the question of ratification needed to be considered in the light of the specific situation of Greece, including the question of the existence or not of certain minorities. There were various ways to address the protection of minorities but there were no gaps in minority protection in Greece.

**The Chairperson** thanked the speaker for her detailed exposé of the situation in Greece and observed that progress could be achieved in protecting minority rights even in states that were not parties to the Framework Convention. He welcomed the fact that the door was not completely closed to the possible future ratification by Greece of this treaty. The sub-committee was working precisely to understand each situation fully and identify ways in which it could assist states.

**Mr Badea** thanked the President of the Advisory Committee for her expert advice on and common-sense approach to the issues at stake, which it should not be difficult for states to take on board. It was regrettable that not all states had yet understood the principles underlying the Framework Convention. He welcomed the efforts described by the representative of Greece, which could help towards ratifying this treaty. The Assembly should help states to overcome obstacles they encountered. It was also important to recognise that the continuing absence of ratification of the Framework Convention by some states weakened the protection it could provide. His report would take account of all views expressed.

**Mr Cilevičs** welcomed this debate on the fundamental issue of minority protection. A decade ago, the Assembly had called on states to withdraw restrictive interpretations of the scope of application of the Framework Convention made in declarations or reservations. The Advisory Committee itself had consistently stressed the need to analyse such matters on a case-by-case basis so as to avoid denying rights in an arbitrary or disproportionate way. He asked Ms Roter to what extent restrictive interpretations were still in place, and how states parties had reacted to the Advisory Committee's fourth thematic commentary, which had tackled this very sensitive issue. It seemed that there was currently a return towards considering minorities essentially from a security perspective. Bloodshed in the Donbas region of Ukraine was one reason for this. The Framework Convention had however been drafted and ratified quickly precisely in response to security-based approaches to minorities. He asked how current security concerns were affecting the situation of minorities in member states. He thanked Ms Telalian for her presentation. Regarding the importance (or not) of ratifying the Framework Convention, he noted that ratification was about more than the monitoring exercise – it meant engaging in a regular and constructive dialogue on minority rights. It was disappointing that Greece was not part of that. He asked whether the Muslim minority was the only minority in Greece and, referring to the case of *Sidiropoulos v. Greece*, asked what was the current status of persons wishing to be recognised as members of a Macedonian minority. The world had changed a great deal since 1923 and it was encouraging that Greece was going beyond what was required under the Treaty of Lausanne. It would be a shame if ratification of the Framework Convention by Greece were to be perceived as a unilateral withdrawal from the Treaty of Lausanne. He asked



whether there was any possibility of concerted action by Greece and Turkey towards ratification of the Framework Convention.

**Ms Roter** observed that the Advisory Committee's fourth thematic commentary made clear that acceding to the Framework Convention did not imply taking an all or nothing approach, but allowed states to apply the convention on an article-by-article basis. Persons belonging to different communities could thus benefit from different provisions. This approach enabled states to address changes occurring in practice, for instance as a result of migration from rural areas to large cities. The commentary did not suggest that migrant communities must be recognised as national minorities but showed how the Framework Convention could be used to provide so-called "new" minorities with access to certain rights. Some states had openly expressed disagreement with this analysis; others had strongly agreed. The commentary did not take a normative approach but examined the positions taken by the Advisory Committee in a comparative perspective, showing how it could be used in our contemporary societies. It was helpful for states to be aware that some articles had a narrow scope of application and that others, in particular as regards creating the conditions for tolerance (respect) and intercultural dialogue, were broad in scope. A trend towards re-politicisation/instrumentalisation and securitisation of minority issues could indeed be seen. This tended to create an "us-v-them" dynamic and to re-open dangerous arguments justifying external interventions to protect minorities. Yet it was a multilateral, human-rights-based approach that was needed. It should be every state, and not only kin-states, that cared about minorities and voiced concerns when the opportunities for persons belonging to national minorities to learn and use their language decreased.

**Ms Telalian** emphasised that although the Treaty of Lausanne was an old treaty, it was nonetheless binding on Greece. Treaties had to be either respected or denounced. The Treaty of Lausanne was a peace treaty. Reciprocity was a part of it but Greece consistently went beyond reciprocity, considering it to have no place in human rights or minority protection. It respected customs and traditions as part of its treaty obligations, but the legislation described earlier went much further. Regarding other minorities, there was no obligation under international law to recognise any specific minorities and this was why many states had made declarations or reservations when ratifying the Framework Convention. The lack of a definition of national minorities in this convention was intended to facilitate ratification; although a statement of objective and subjective criteria might have helped states to determine which national minorities were present in their territory, there had been no willingness to adopt a definition when the convention was drafted. States were therefore free to recognise (or not) any given group as a national minority within their territory. The existence of minorities was however also a question of fact and objective criteria such as the number of persons, the fact that they identified themselves as not belonging to the ethnic majority and/or their using a different language were relevant. The assessment of the Greek state in the case of the so-called Macedonian minority was that although individuals may identify differently from the majority, the numbers or intentions of these people did not constitute objective criteria that would enable Greece to identify them as a national minority. Moreover, the qualifier "Macedonian" created many problems as it had also been used by Greek Macedonians for more than 2500 years. The Committee of Ministers had long ago closed its examination of the execution of the judgment of the European Court in the case of *Sidiropoulos v. Greece*. There was a more recent case, *House of Macedonian Civilisation v. Greece*, concerning the refusal to register an association due to confusion created by its name. However, the issue in this case was freedom of association, not the recognition of a national minority. The law mentioned earlier, providing for similar cases to be re-opened before the Greek courts following a finding by the European Court of a violation of the freedom of association, was a measure to execute this judgment.

**Mr Grin** asked whether the position of France, namely that because its constitution recognised the equality of all citizens, it could not sign a treaty granting rights to a group, was not misinterpreting the Framework Convention. Welcoming the steps taken by Greece to promote minority rights, he asked whether Greek law had priority over Sharia courts only in civil cases, with criminal matters being dealt with only under Greek law.

**Mr Kronbichler** noted that Italy officially recognised 12 minorities. Only three were protected in practice in his view. The system of autonomy set up in the South Tyrol region created a state within a state, within which people were obliged to declare their linguistic affiliation as German, Italian or Ladino, with no other options, despite changes in the population due for example to migration flows. This was not free self-identification. Moreover, the Italian system worked in favour of the majority (who in this region were German-speakers), not the minority. A system like this did not promote living together and should not be held up as an example.

**The Chairperson** observed that states having joined the Council of Europe after the adoption of the Framework Convention had been required to ratify it, whereas states that were already members had not. He wondered whether those that had so far refused to ratify it were doing so because they were afraid of the monitoring process it set up. Thanking Greece again for its presence, he wondered what could be done regarding the two states that had neither replied to the Committee's questionnaire in writing nor attended this meeting.

**Mr Badea** announced that the Romanian Chamber of Deputies had just approved by an overwhelming majority a draft law declaring 18 December to be National Minorities Day, a national holiday. Cultural events organised by national minorities on this occasion would be supported by the state budget. This day had been chosen as it was the date on which the United Nations General Assembly had in 1992 adopted its Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

**Ms Roter** agreed that the interpretation of the Framework Convention described by Mr Grin was incorrect. Even in states that did not recognise any national minorities, Article 6 of the convention still applied. Moreover, its very purpose was to bring about effective equality between all citizens. Many inequalities existed in France, and discussion on this, without necessarily changing the constitution, could be beneficial. As concerned the principle of free self-identification, Article 3 made clear that everyone had the right to identify or not to identify as belonging to a national minority, with no negative consequences. States had to create the conditions in society where no one was afraid to identify (or not to identify) as belonging to a national minority. This was why the Advisory Committee emphasised the importance of data collection, provided it was done under appropriate conditions, as this was one means through which states could identify whether a minority existed and could be legally recognised. It had to be possible to declare multiple affiliations, and, in accordance with UN guidelines, to specify one's affiliation freely (not merely select from a pre-existing list). The Advisory Committee had criticised the Italian situation in its fourth opinion on Italy. It was important to find the right balance, and systems had to evolve in line with changes in society. The monitoring process was not about giving good or bad grades but providing an objective assessment of where progress had been made and where there was room for more. Dialogue on what could be done better was key, and states were therefore encouraged to translate the Advisory Committee's opinions into their languages. For the Advisory Committee, the absence of a definition of national minorities in the Framework Convention was a good thing as it provided enough flexibility for individuals to have access to rights on an article-by-article basis. This had to be the priority when it came to diversity management and minority protection. Minorities' needs and demands were often very simple, but it was important to take account of the diversity within minorities and to implement the Framework Convention based on needs assessments rather than simply considering groups as uniform blocks. The Framework Convention could also apply to majorities in a minority situation, as discussed in the Advisory Committee's opinions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to indigenous peoples, as in Finland. "Folklorising" minorities should be avoided, as it shifted attention away from the need to integrate societies and from seeing minorities as part of "us", and not as "them". Finally, double standards were often referred to. For the Advisory Committee, it was clear that it was states where minorities lived that had the responsibility to protect them, but it was also true that treaties worked best where there was universal consensus, going beyond moral support to action. Regarding states that had not replied to the Committee or Sub-Committee's invitations, there were two issues. States that were already implementing many of the standards of the Framework Convention could be invited to take part in a mock monitoring exercise, showing what it would mean to prepare a state report and receive advice, as had already been done in some States with respect to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It was also important to look for political ways to bring this matter forward: experts were always ready to explain what the Framework Convention stood for, but what was needed for ratification was political will. It was hoped that the present discussions could help in this respect.

**Mr Cilevičs** welcomed this discussion as an opportunity for an open dialogue. He noted that the Greek cases referred to were not only about freedom of association or national minorities but related to the official name of a neighbouring state. Where diversity management was at stake, a formalistic approach was not always helpful. Reasons for reluctance existed and his aim was not to criticise the authorities but to seek solutions in an open-minded way and look for ways in which the Assembly could provide assistance in tackling these issues.

**The Chairperson**, noting that the initiatives taken by Greece went beyond the requirements of the Treaty of Lausanne and that Greek legislation appeared to be in conformity with the Framework Convention, asked what was still preventing Greece from ratifying this treaty. He asked if there were constitutional obstacles, and if so, if a modification of the constitution was envisaged in the short or medium term. Regarding minorities not recognised under the Treaty of Lausanne, he asked if there was a demand on their part to be recognised as national minorities and, if this were the case, how it was being handled.

**Ms Telalian** confirmed that only civil law elements of Sharia law (notably with respect to inheritance and marriage) applied; the Criminal Code applied in the same way to everyone in Greece. Greece sought to ensure that minority protection issues were not based on interstate relationships, as the moment a bilateral approach was taken, the quality of minority protection became directly dependent on the quality of the bilateral relationship. Greece did not identify the Muslim minority as a national minority because it included three distinct components: Turkish, Pomak and Roma. If the whole minority were identified as Turkish or as a single ethnic minority, this would be at the expense of some components. Regarding other minorities, there were two aspects. Individuals were free to identify as belonging to a Macedonian minority – this was their individual right to self-identification.

However, the objective criteria that might allow the state to officially recognise the existence of a national minority did not exist. There were no constitutional impediments to ratification of the Framework Convention and no gaps in the protection of individuals. Greece was however also dealing with absorbing high numbers of foreigners arriving as migrants or asylum-seekers, and many efforts were focused there. For the time being, ratification of the Framework Convention was not on the cards, but Greece did not reject the possibility its future ratification.

**The Chairperson** welcomed this information and thanked Ms Telalian for her constructive approach. He noted that the discussion with Ms Roter had highlighted inter alia that the absence of a definition of national minorities in the Framework Convention was not an impediment to its ratification and that the Advisory Committee's role was a supportive one, helping to improve the protection of the rights of national minorities. It should never be forgotten that minority rights were an integral part of the universal human rights framework. Dialogue was the way forward to full ratification of the Framework Convention.

**Mr Badea** concluded that these discussions would provide highly useful input for his report and would help to ensure that it was objective and balanced, and could provide a stepping-stone to protecting the rights of national minorities in all 47 member states of the Council of Europe.

## **6. Other business**

There was no other business.

## **7. Next meeting**

The Sub-Committee left it to the Chairperson to fix the date of the next meeting.

## Appendix 1

### List of decisions

**The Sub-Committee on the Rights of Minorities**, meeting in Bucharest on 21 November 2017, with Mr Damien Thiéry (Belgium, ALDE) in the Chair, as regards:

- **Welcome address:** heard introductory addresses by Mr Viorel-Riceard Badea (Romania, EPP/CD), Mr Cornel Popa, Vice-President of the Senate of Romania and Mr Damien Thiéry, Chair of the Sub-Committee on the Rights of Minorities;
- **Representation of persons belonging to national minorities in the decision-making process:** held a round table with the participation of Mr Alexandru-Victor Micula, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Mr Varujan Pambuccian, Deputy, Leader of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities, Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania, Mr Attila Korodi, Deputy, Leader of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania and Ms Mariana Buceanu, Advisor, Public Policy Directorate, National Agency for Roma;
- **Promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities** (*Rapporteur: Mr Viorel-Riceard Badea, Romania, EPP/CD*): held a hearing on ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities with the participation of Ms Petra Roter, President of the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention and Ms Maria Telalian, Head of Legal Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece.
- **Date and place of the next meeting:** left it to the Chairperson to propose the date and time of the next meeting.

## Appendix 2

## Attendance list / Liste de présence

**Chairperson / Président**

**THIERY, Damien [M.]** Belgium / Belgique

**Vice-Chairperson / Vice-Présidente**

**KOVÁCS, Elvira [Ms]** Serbia / Serbie

**Full Members / Titulaires**

1.	RIBERAYGUA, Patricia [Mme]	Andorra / Andorre
2.	<b>WURM, Gisela [Ms]</b>	Austria / Autriche
3.	<b>THIERY, Damien [M.]</b>	Belgique / Belgium
4.	MAGAZINOVIĆ, Saša [Mr]	Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosnie-Herzégovine
5.	BEUS RICHEMBERGH, Goran [Mr]	Croatia / Croatie
6.	EROTOKRITOU, Christiana [Ms]	Cyprus / Chypre
7.	JENSEN, Mogens [Mr]	Denmark / Danemark
8.	PARVIAINEN, Olli-Poika [Mr]	Finland / Finlande
9.	DURRIEU, Josette [Mme]	France
10.	TSKITISHVILI, Dimitri [Mr]	Georgia / Géorgie
11.	<b>FABRITIUS, Bernd [Mr]</b>	Germany / Allemagne
12.	PSYCHOGIOS, Georgios [Mr]	Greece / Grèce
13.	<b>HARANGOZÓ, Gábor [Mr]</b>	Hungary / Hongrie
14.	HIGGINS, Alice-Mary [Ms]	Ireland / Irlande
15.	<b>KRONBICHLER, Florian [Mr]</b>	Italy / Italie
16.	<b>CILEVIČS, Boriss [Mr]</b>	Latvia / Lettonie
17.	TRUSKOLASKI, Krzysztof (Mr)	Poland / Pologne
18.	<b>BADEA, Viorel-Riceard [Mr]</b>	Romania / Roumanie
19.	<b>KOVÁCS, Elvira [Ms]</b>	Serbia / Serbie
20.	JOHANSSON FORNAVE, Lotta [Ms]	Sweden / Suède
21.	<b>GRIN, Jean-Pierre [M.]</b>	Switzerland / Suisse
22.	ŞAHIN USTA, Leyla [Ms]	Turkey / Turquie
23.	UNHURIAN, Pavlo [Mr]	Ukraine / Ukraine
24.	PRITCHARD, Mark [Mr]	United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

**Alternates / Remplaçants**

DE BRUYN, Piet [Mr]
LAMBERT, Jérôme [M.]
ZECH, Tobias [Mr]
VARVITSIOTIS, Miltiadis [Mr]
BLAŽINA, Tamara [Ms]
BENKO, Erika [Ms]
ENGBLOM, Annicka [Ms]
LOMBARDI, Filippo [M.]
YAŞAR, Serap [Mme]
DAVIES, David [Mr]

**Ex officio / Ex officio:**

Ms Elena CENTEMERO (Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination / *Présidente de la Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination*)

### INVITED SPEAKERS / INTERVENANTS

Mr Varujan PAMBUCCIAN ..... Deputy, Leader of the Parliamentary Group of National Minorities,  
..... Chamber of Deputies, Parliament of Romania /  
..... *Président du Groupe parlementaire des minorités nationales,*  
..... *Chambre des Députés, Parlement de Roumanie*

Mr Attila KORODI ..... Deputy, Leader of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania,  
..... Chamber of Deputies, Member of the Parliament of Romanian Delegation to the Assembly  
..... *Député, chef de l'Alliance démocratique des Hongrois en Roumanie*  
..... *Chambre des Députés, Membre du Parlement de la Délégation Roumaine auprès de l'Assemblée*

Mr Alexandru-Victor MICULA ..... State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania  
..... *Secrétaire d'Etat, ministère des Affaires étrangères*

Ms Mariana BUCEANU ..... Adviser, Public Policy Directorate, National Agency for the Roma  
..... *Conseillère, Direction des politiques publiques, Agence nationale pour les Roms*

Ms Petra ROTER ..... President of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention  
..... *Présidente du Comité consultatif de la Convention-cadre*

Ms Maria TELALIAN ..... Head of the Legal Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic  
..... *Cheffe du Département des affaires juridiques, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Parlement hellénique*

### OTHER MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT / AUTRES PARLEMENTAIRES

Mr Cornel POPA ..... Vice-President / *Vice-Président*

Ms Severica-Rodica COVACIU ..... Member of the Committee on Human Rights, Religions and Minorities  
..... *Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme, des cultes et des minorités*

Mr Constantin-Bogdan MATEI ..... Member of the Committee on Human Rights, Religions and Minorities  
..... *Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme, des cultes et des minorités*

#### Delegation of the Parliament of Romania to the Assembly / *Délégation du Parlement de la Roumanie à l'Assemblée*

##### Members / *Membres*

Mr Cezar-Florin PREDĂ ..... Chamber of Deputies / *Chambre des Députés*

Mr Corneliu ȘTEFAN ..... Chamber of Deputies / *Chambre des Députés*

Ms Adriana Diana TUȘA ..... Chamber of Deputies / *Chambre des Députés*

##### Substitutes / *Suppléants*

Ms Erika BENKŐ ..... Chamber of Deputies / *Chambre des Députés*

Mr Andrei NICOLAE ..... Chamber of Deputies / *Chambre des Députés*

Mr Ion POPA ..... Senate / *Sénat*

Mr Ionuț SIMIONCA ..... Chamber of Deputies / *Chambre des Députés*

General Division for External Parliamentary Cooperation / *Division générale de la coopération parlementaire externe*

Mr Gruia JACOTĂ ..... Director-General / *Directeur Général*

### OTHER PARTICIPANTS / AUTRES PARTICIPANTS

#### Ministry of Foreign Affairs / *Ministère des Affaires étrangères*

Ms Alina-Maria OROSAN ..... Director-General, Legal Affairs Directorate /  
..... *Directeur général, Direction des affaires juridiques*

Ms Oana ROGOVEANU ..... Director, Division on Human Rights, Council of Europe  
..... and Protection of National Minorities /  
..... *Directeur, Division des droits de l'homme, Conseil de l'Europe et Protection des minorités nationales*

Mr Octavian ȘERBAN ..... First Secretary, Division on Human Rights,  
..... Council of Europe and Protection of National Minorities  
..... *Premier secrétaire, Division des droits de l'homme, Conseil de l'Europe  
..... et protection des minorités nationales*

**Ministry of Culture and National Identity /  
Ministère de la Culture et de l'Identité Nationale**

Ms Elena DORNESCU ..... Counsellor on European Affairs, National Minorities Department  
..... *Conseiller aux affaires européennes, Département des minorités nationales*  
Ms Magdolna GROSU ..... Expert, National Minorities Department  
..... *Expert, Département des minorités nationales*

**Department for Interethnic Relations /  
Département pour les relations interethniques**

Ms Enikő Katalin LACZIKO..... State Secretary / *Secrétaire d'Etat*

**National Council for Combating Discrimination /  
Conseil national de lutte contre la discrimination**

Mr Ilie DINCĂ ..... State Secretary, Member of the Steering Committee /  
..... *Secrétaire d'État, membre du comité de direction*

**Romanian Institute for Human Rights / Institut roumain des droits de l'homme**

Mr Adrian BULGARU..... Executive Director / *Directeur exécutif*

**European Center for Research on Ethnic Issues of the Romanian Academy /  
Centre européen de recherche sur les questions ethniques de l'académie roumaine**

Mr Radu BALTASIU..... Director / *Directeur*  
Ms Ovidiana BULUMAC ..... Researcher / *Chercheuse*

**Fresh Community Association / Association « Fresh Community »**

Ms Alexandra BOGDAN ..... Chairperson / *Président*

**SECRETARIAT OF THE ROMANIAN DELEGATION TO THE ASSEMBLY /  
SECRETARIAT DE LA DÉLÉGATION ROUMAINE AUPRES DE L'ASSEMBLEE**

Mr Răzvan TĂNASE ..... Delegation secretary (Senate) / *Secrétaire de délégation (Sénat)*  
Ms Alina ILIE, Delegation ..... Delegation secretary (Chamber of Deputies) /  
..... *Secrétaire de délégation (Chambre des Députés)*

**SECRETARIAT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE /  
SECRETARIAT DE L'ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

**Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination / Commission sur l'égalité et la non-discrimination**

Ms Sarah BURTON ..... Secretary / *Secrétaire*  
Ms Kirsty McDOWALL ..... Assistant / *Assistante*