



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Committee of Ministers
Comité des Ministres

**Resolution CM/ResCMN(2007)11
on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of
National Minorities
by Norway**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 June 2007
at the 999bis 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 (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 (97) 10;¹

Having regard to the instrument of ratification submitted by Norway on 17 March 1999;

Recalling that the Government of Norway transmitted its state report in respect of the second monitoring cycle under the Framework Convention on 19 October 2005;

Having examined the Advisory Committee's second opinion on Norway, adopted on 5 October 2006;

Having also taken note of comments by other governments,

1. Adopts the following conclusions in respect of Norway:

a) Positive developments

Since the adoption of the Advisory Committee's first opinion on 12 September 2002 and the Committee of Ministers' resolution on 8 April 2003, Norway has taken further measures to improve the protection of national minorities.

The strengthening of the legislative and institutional framework for combating discrimination and promoting equality constitutes a significant step forward, likely to have a considerable impact on the situation of minorities in various fields.

The authorities have continued to support national minorities' efforts to preserve their identities and cultures. At the same time, further steps have been taken to improve the mechanisms and procedures established to compensate for the damage caused by past “norwegianisation” policies.

New opportunities have been created for increased participation in public affairs by persons belonging to national minorities, and it is to be hoped that the “Forum for contact between national minorities and the authorities”, established in 2003, as well as other existing means of consultation, will gain in effectiveness.

Positive developments have also been noted, in the legislation and in practice, regarding use of minority languages for personal names and topographical indications. Similarly, in the fields of education and research, specific measures have been introduced and are currently being implemented to support the revitalisation and learning of the Kven language. Although there is still considerable room for improvement, the authorities have paid greater attention to the educational situation of children belonging to the Roma and Romani/Tater communities.

¹ In the context of adopting Resolution (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”.

The authorities have also continued to develop and support projects and activities aimed at combating racism and intolerance, in particular through the National Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination for 2002-2006, which is currently being evaluated. In recent years targeted measures have been taken to facilitate the integration of persons of immigrant background, and a Social Inclusion Plan is being devised.

b) Issues of concern

Although efforts have been made to improve the situation of persons belonging to national minorities in different areas, the impact of these efforts remains limited. The lack of reliable statistics on the situation of the various groups and the insufficient participation of their representatives in decision making hinder the action taken by the authorities in the fields concerned, and the authorities' initiatives are not always suited to the minorities' views.

The representatives of national minorities also consider that insufficient regard is shown for their specific cultures and identities, whether in education or in the media, and additional efforts are needed to improve their public image.

Persons belonging to certain groups, such as the Roma or the Romani/Taters, continue to encounter difficulties and discrimination in the labour market and in access to housing and education. In particular, the problems experienced by Roma and Romani/Tater children in the field of education remain a cause for concern and must be treated as a matter of priority by the authorities.

Use of minority languages in relations with the administrative authorities is another area where additional efforts are needed, both from a legal standpoint and in practice. It also seems that, apart from the Kven, the needs of other groups as regards minority language teaching have not been adequately considered.

Despite a real heightened awareness on the part of the authorities and the many measures taken to foster tolerance and respect for diversity, instances of intolerance and discrimination towards persons of immigrant background continue to be reported. Successful integration of the growing number of persons of immigrant background remains a key challenge for Norway.

2. Adopts the following recommendations in respect of Norway:

In addition to the measures to be taken to implement the detailed recommendations contained in sections I and II of the Advisory Committee's opinion, the authorities are invited to take the following measures to improve further the implementation of the Framework Convention:

- Take the necessary steps, including from a financial standpoint, to enable the new institutions designed to strengthen the fight against discrimination to perform their tasks adequately; enhance information and awareness-raising measures on minority issues and the growing diversity of Norwegian society among the public at large, politicians, the media and the public authorities;
- Pursue with greater determination, in co-operation with the groups concerned and in accordance with personal data protection requirements, the initiatives to obtain reliable data on the situation of minorities in various sectors;
- Implement more resolute measures to eliminate the difficulties and discrimination encountered by the Roma and the Romani/Taters in various fields, such as employment and housing and, in particular, education; pay due heed to the Roma request concerning the establishment of a Roma community centre in Oslo;
- Pursue and develop measures in support of national minority cultures, adapting initiatives and resources to the specific needs identified in consultation with the groups concerned, not least as regards the minorities' museums, in the context of the implementation of the current reform of the museums' network;
- Continue and reinforce efforts to promote and support the learning of the Kven language and examine the needs of persons belonging to other minorities – notably the Roma and the Romani/Taters – in this field;

- Identify, in co-operation with minority representatives, the most effective means of enhancing minority participation in public affairs, including social and economic life, both at the central and local levels;
 - Maintain and reinforce the measures of support of persons belonging to various minorities, so as to foster successful integration in Norway.
3. Invites the Government of Norway, in accordance with Resolution (97)10:
- a.* to continue the dialogue in progress with the Advisory Committee;
 - b.* to keep the Advisory Committee regularly informed of the measures it has taken in response to the conclusions and recommendations set out in section 1 and 2 above.