

**List of declarations made with respect to
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
Status as of: 5/10/2005**

Austria :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 31 March 1998 - Or. Engl.

The Republic of Austria declares that, for itself, the term "national minorities" within the meaning of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is understood to designate those groups which come within the scope of application of the Law on Ethnic Groups (*Volksgruppengesetz*, Federal Law Gazette No. 396/1976) and which live and traditionally have had their home in parts of the territory of the Republic of Austria and which are composed of Austrian citizens with non-German mother tongues and with their own ethnic cultures.

Period covered: 1/7/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Azerbaijan :

Declaration contained in the instrument of accession deposited on 26 June 2000 - Or. Eng.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, confirming its adherence to the universal values and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, declares that the ratification of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and implementation of its provisions do not imply any right to engage in any activity violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty, or internal and international security of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Period covered: 1/10/2000 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Belgium :

Reservation accompanying the signature of the instrument on 31 July 2001 - Or. Fr.

The Kingdom of Belgium declares that the Framework Convention applies without prejudice to the constitutional provisions, guarantees or principles, and without prejudice to the legislative rules which currently govern the use of languages. The Kingdom of Belgium declares that the notion of national minority will be defined by the inter-ministerial conference of foreign policy.

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Bulgaria :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 7 May 1999 - Or. Eng./Bulg.

Confirming its adherence to the values of the Council of Europe and the desire for the integration of Bulgaria into the European structures, committed to the policy of protection of human rights and tolerance to persons belonging to minorities, and their full integration into Bulgarian society, the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria declares that the ratification and implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities do not imply any right to engage in any activity violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the unitary Bulgarian State, its internal and international security.

Period covered: 1/9/1999 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Denmark :

Declaration contained in a Note Verbale dated 22 September 1997, handed to the Secretary General at the time of deposit of the instrument of ratification, on 22 September 1997 - Or. Engl.

In connection with the deposit of the instrument of ratification by Denmark of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, it is hereby declared that the Framework Convention shall apply to the German minority in South Jutland of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Period covered: 1/2/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Estonia :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification, deposited on 6 January 1997 - Or. Est./Engl.

The Republic of Estonia understands the term "national minorities", which is not defined in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as follows: are considered as "national minority" those citizens of Estonia who

- reside on the territory of Estonia;
- maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with Estonia;
- are distinct from Estonians on the basis of their ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics;
- are motivated by a concern to preserve together their cultural traditions, their religion or their language, which constitute the basis of their common identity.

Period covered: 1/2/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Germany :

Declaration contained in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Germany, dated 11 May 1995, handed to the Secretary General at the time of signature, on 11 May 1995 - Or. Ger./Engl. - and renewed in the instrument of ratification, deposited on 10 September 1997 - Or. Ger./Engl.

The Framework Convention contains no definition of the notion of national minorities. It is therefore up to the individual Contracting Parties to determine the groups to which it shall apply after ratification. National Minorities in the Federal Republic of Germany are the Danes of German citizenship and the members of the Sorbian people with German citizenship. The Framework Convention will also be applied to members of the ethnic groups traditionally resident in Germany, the Frisians of German citizenship and the Sinti and Roma of German citizenship.

Period covered: 1/2/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Latvia :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 6 June 2005 - Or. Engl.

The Republic of Latvia

- Recognizing the diversity of cultures, religions and languages in Europe, which constitutes one of the features of the common European identity and a particular value,
- Taking into account the experience of the Council of Europe member States and the wish to foster the preservation and development of national minority cultures and languages, while respecting the sovereignty and national-cultural identity of every State,
- Affirming the positive role of an integrated society, including the command of the State language, to the life of a democratic State,
- Taking into account the specific historical experience and traditions of Latvia,

declares that the notion "national minorities" which has not been defined in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, shall, in the meaning of the Framework Convention, apply to citizens of Latvia who differ from Latvians in terms of their culture, religion or language, who have traditionally lived in Latvia for generations and consider themselves to belong to the State and society of Latvia, who wish to preserve and develop their culture, religion or language. Persons who are not citizens of Latvia or another State but who permanently and legally reside in the Republic of Latvia, who do not belong to a national minority within the meaning of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities as defined in this declaration, but who identify themselves with a national minority that meets the definition contained in this declaration, shall enjoy the rights prescribed in the Framework Convention, unless specific exceptions are prescribed by law.

Period covered: 1/10/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 6 June 2005 - Or. Engl.

The Republic of Latvia declares that it will apply the provisions of Article 10, paragraph 2, of the Framework Convention without prejudice to the *Satversme* (Constitution) of the Republic of Latvia and the legislative acts governing the use of the State language that are currently into force.

Period covered: 1/10/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 10

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 6 June 2005 - Or. Engl.

The Republic of Latvia declares that it will apply the provisions of Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Framework Convention without prejudice to the *Satversme* (Constitution) of the Republic of Latvia and the legislative acts governing the use of the

State language that are currently into force.

Period covered: 1/10/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 11

Liechtenstein :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 18 November 1997 - Or. Fr.

The Principality of Liechtenstein declares that Articles 24 and 25, in particular, of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1 February 1995 are to be understood having regard to the fact that no national minorities in the sense of the Framework Convention exist in the territory of the Principality of Liechtenstein. The Principality of Liechtenstein considers its ratification of the Framework Convention as an act of solidarity in the view of the objectives of the Convention.

Period covered: 1/3/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 24, 25

Luxembourg :

Declaration contained in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Luxembourg, dated 18 July 1995, handed to the Secretary General at the time of signature, on 20 July 1995 - Or. Fr.

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg understands by "national minority" in the meaning of the Framework Convention, a group of people settled for numerous generations on its territory, having the Luxembourg nationality and having kept distinctive characteristics in an ethnic and linguistic way.

On the basis of this definition, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is induced to establish that there is no "national minority" on its territory.

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Malta :

Reservation contained in the instrument of ratification, deposited on 10 February 1998 - Or. Engl.

The Government of Malta reserves the right not to be bound by the provisions of Article 15 insofar as these entail the right to vote or to stand for election either for the House of Representatives or for Local Councils.

Period covered: 1/6/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 15

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification, deposited on 10 February 1998 - Or. Engl.

The Government of Malta declares that Articles 24 and 25, in particular, of the Framework Convention for the Protection of

National Minorities of 1 February 1995 are to be understood having regard to the fact that no national minorities in the sense of the Framework Convention exist in the territory of the Government of Malta. The Government of Malta considers its ratification of the Framework Convention as an act of solidarity in the view of the objectives of the Convention.

Period covered: 1/6/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 24, 25

Netherlands :

Declaration contained in a Note verbale from the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands deposited with the instrument of acceptance, on 16 February 2005 - Or. Engl.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands will apply the Framework Convention to the Frisians.

Period covered: 1/6/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Declaration contained in a Note verbale from the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands deposited with the instrument of acceptance, on 16 February 2005 - Or. Engl.

The Government of the Netherlands assumes that the protection afforded by Article 10, paragraph 3, does not differ, despite the variations in wording, from that afforded by Article 5, paragraph 2, and Article 6, paragraph 3 (a) and (e), of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Period covered: 1/6/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 10

Declaration contained in the instrument of acceptance deposited on 16 February 2005 - Or. Engl.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands accepts the Framework Convention for the Kingdom in Europe.

Period covered: 1/6/2005 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 30

Poland :

Declaration contained in a Note Verbale, handed at the time of deposit of the instrument of ratification on 20 décembre 2000 - Or. Fr.

Taking into consideration the fact, that the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities contains no definition of the national minorities notion, the Republic of Poland declares, that it understands this term as national minorities residing within the territory of the Republic of Poland at the same time whose members are polish citizens.

Period covered: 1/4/2001 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Declaration contained in a Note Verbale, handed at the time of deposit of the instrument of ratification on 20 décembre 2000 - Or. Fr.

The Republic of Poland shall also implement the Framework Convention under Article 18 of the Convention by conclusion of international agreements mentioned in this Article, the aim of which is to protect national minorities in Poland and minorities

or groups of Poles in other States.

Period covered: 1/4/2001 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : 18

Russia :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 21 August 1998 - Or. Rus./Engl./Fr.

The Russian Federation considers that none is entitled to include unilaterally in reservations or declarations, made while signing or ratifying the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a definition of the term "national minority", which is not contained in the Framework Convention. In the opinion of the Russian Federation, attempts to exclude from the scope of the Framework Convention the persons who permanently reside in the territory of States Parties to the Framework Convention and previously had a citizenship but have been arbitrarily deprived of it, contradict the purpose of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Period covered: 1/12/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Slovenia :

Declaration contained in a Note Verbale from the Permanent Representation of Slovenia, dated 23 March 1998, handed to the Secretary General at the time of deposit of the instrument of ratification, on 25 March 1998 - Or. Engl.

Considering that the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities does not contain a definition of the notion of national minorities and it is therefore up to the individual Contracting Party to determine the groups which it shall consider as national minorities, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, in accordance with the Constitution and internal legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, declares that these are the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian National Minorities. In accordance with the Constitution and internal legislation of the Republic of Slovenia, the provisions of the Framework Convention shall apply also to the members of the Roma community, who live in the Republic of Slovenia.

Period covered: 1/7/1998 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Sweden :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 9 February 2000 - Or. Eng.

The national minorities in Sweden are Sami, Swedish Finns, Tornedalers, Roma and Jews.

Period covered: 1/6/2000 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Switzerland :

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 21 October 1998 - Or. Fr.

Switzerland declares that in Switzerland national minorities in the sense of the framework Convention are groups of individuals numerically inferior to the rest of the population of the country or of a canton, whose members are Swiss nationals, have long-standing, firm and lasting ties with Switzerland and are guided by the will to safeguard together what constitutes their common identity, in particular their culture, their traditions, their religion or their language.

Period covered: 1/2/1999 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Declaration contained in the instrument of ratification deposited on 21 October 1998 - Or. Fr.

Switzerland declares that the provisions of the framework Convention governing the use of the language in relations between individuals and administrative authorities are applicable without prejudice to the principles observed by the Confederation and the cantons in the determination of official languages.

Period covered: 1/2/1999 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia :

Declaration contained in a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated 16 April 2004, registered at the Secretariat General on 2 June 2004 - Or. Engl.

Referring to the Framework Convention, and taking into account the latest amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Macedonia submits the revised declaration to replace the previous two declarations on the aforesaid Convention:

The term "national minorities" used in the Framework Convention and the provisions of the same Convention shall be applied to the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia who live within its borders and who are part of the Albanian people, Turkish people, Vlach people, Serbian people, Roma people and Bosniac people.

Period covered: 2/6/2004 -

The preceding statement concerns Article(s) : -

Source : Treaty Office on <http://conventions.coe.int>