

# SEVENTH EVALUATION REPORT ON THE NETHERLANDS

Committee of Experts  
of the European Charter  
for Regional or Minority  
Languages



Adopted on 18 November 2022

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages provides for a control mechanism to evaluate how the Charter is applied in a State Party with a view to, where necessary, making recommendations for improving its legislation, policy and practices. The central element of this procedure is the Committee of Experts, set up under Article 17 of the Charter. Its principal purpose is to report to the Committee of Ministers on its evaluation of compliance by a Party with its undertakings, to examine the real situation of regional or minority languages in the State and, where appropriate, to encourage the Party to gradually reach a higher level of commitment.

To facilitate this task, the Committee of Ministers adopted, in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 1, an outline for periodical reports that a Party is required to submit to the Secretary General. This outline requires the State to give an account of the concrete application of the Charter, the general policy for the languages protected under Part II and, in more precise terms, all measures that have been taken in application of the provisions chosen for each language protected under Part III of the Charter. The Committee of Experts' first task is therefore to examine the information contained in the periodical report for all the relevant regional or minority languages on the territory of the State concerned. The periodical report shall be made public by the State in accordance with Article 15, paragraph 2.

The Committee of Experts' role is to evaluate the existing legal acts, regulations and real practice applied in each State for its regional or minority languages. It has established its working methods accordingly. The Committee of Experts gathers information from the respective authorities and from independent sources within the State, in order to obtain a fair and just overview of the real language situation. After a preliminary examination of a periodical report, the Committee of Experts submits, if necessary, a number of questions to each Party to obtain supplementary information from the authorities on matters it considers insufficiently developed in the report itself. This written procedure is usually followed up by an on-the-spot visit by a delegation of the Committee of Experts to the State in question. During this visit the delegation meets bodies and associations whose work is closely related to the use of the relevant languages and consults the authorities on matters that have been brought to its attention. This information-gathering process is designed to enable the Committee of Experts to evaluate more effectively the application of the Charter in the State concerned.

Having concluded this process, the Committee of Experts adopts its own report. Once adopted by the Committee of Experts, this evaluation report is submitted to the authorities of the respective State Party for possible comments within a given deadline. A confidential dialogue may, at this stage, be requested by this State Party. The final evaluation report is made public, together with the comments, if any, which the authorities of the State Party may have made. This document is then transmitted to the Committee of Ministers for the adoption of its recommendations to the State Party, on the basis of the proposals for recommendations contained in the evaluation report.

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## Executive Summary

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages entered into force in the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1998 and applies to the following languages: Frisian, Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romanes and Yiddish. Frisian is the only language protected by Part III of the Charter.

The central authorities of the Netherlands have concluded administrative agreements with local authorities in the areas where Frisian, Limburgish and Low Saxon are used. They have delegated most of their responsibility regarding the implementation of the Charter to provincial level. There are no similar administrative agreements for Romanes and Yiddish. Discussions are currently being carried out for the Charter to apply for Papiamentu/Papiamentu.

The school curricula in the Netherlands give a lot of freedom to schools to use regional or minority languages as a medium of instruction or as a subject. Although Frisian is present at all levels of education and despite the implementation of the Frisian Language Plan (*Taalplan Frysk*), there are shortcomings in teaching in/of Frisian, especially at primary school level. Although education is formally a priority, and there are teaching materials since the signature of the Covenants on Low Saxon and Limburgish, the teaching in/of Low Saxon and Limburgish is not ensured at any level of compulsory education. They are usually not used at the preschool level. Financial support is given to schools teaching Yiddish. Formally, financial support can be granted to selected projects aiming to support Romanes.

Frisian can be used in judicial proceedings in all locations used by the Northern Netherlands District Court and the Arnhem-Leeuwarden/Ljouwert Court of Appeal, provided the person wishing to use Frisian lives, resides or has his/her registered office in the province of Fryslân. Actions have been taken to put an end to the shortage of Frisian interpreters in the judicial system. However, there are difficulties regarding interpretation in criminal proceedings that must be addressed without further delay.

Frisian local and provincial authorities strive to enhance the visibility of Frisian and allow Frisian speakers to exercise their rights as citizens before the administrative authorities and public services in Frisian. These positive developments should be further continued, especially regarding the adoption and use of bilingual place/street names.

Frisian is present on radio, television, and occasionally in regional newspapers and magazines. Several initiatives have been launched to encourage more use of Limburgish and Low Saxon in the media, such as collaboration with regional TV and radio broadcasters. Yet, their use is not regulated in the 2008 Media Act. Columns are rarely published in Limburgish and Low Saxon in newspapers. Generally, media do not publish about or in Yiddish and Romanes. Overall, Frisian, Limburgish and Low Saxon are included into research and study programmes on artificial intelligence and several applications have been developed to facilitate their use in public and private life.

Many cultural activities are initiated in languages covered by the Charter and in all parts of the Netherlands. Several prominent Frisian cultural institutions are co-funded by the provincial authorities and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The Province of Fryslân also supports a variety of innovative projects promoting the Frisian culture and language. Limburgish enjoys broad support in Limburg, and many projects and activities involving the language are organised in the field on the initiative of the speakers. Low Saxon is used to a large extent in cultural life and many cultural activities, music and song festivals are taking place, supported by regional funding and sometimes national authorities' funding.

While several initiatives aim at promoting the use of Frisian in economic and social life, further actions should be taken to strengthen the situation of Frisian in healthcare.

This seventh evaluation report is based on the political and legal situation prevailing at the time of the Committee of Experts' on-the-spot visit to the Netherlands in June/July 2022.

## **Chapter 1 The situation of the regional or minority languages in the Netherlands – Recent developments and trends**

1. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) is a treaty of the Council of Europe putting obligations on its States Parties to protect and promote the country’s traditional regional or minority languages in all fields of public life: education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, and transfrontier exchanges. The Kingdom of the Netherlands signed the Charter in 1992 and ratified it in 1996 for the Kingdom in Europe. The Charter entered into force for the Netherlands on 1 March 1998 and applies to the following languages: Frisian, Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romanes and Yiddish. Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romanes<sup>1</sup> and Yiddish are covered under Part II (Article 7) only, whereas Frisian receives protection in the province of Fryslân under both Part II and Part III (Articles 8-14).

2. States Parties are required to submit reports every five years<sup>2</sup> on the implementation of the Charter. The authorities of the Netherlands submitted their seventh periodical report on 31 May 2021, in parallel to the fourth state report on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereafter referred to as “FCNM”). This seventh evaluation report of the Committee of Experts is based on the information contained in the periodical report, additional information received from the authorities and statements made by representatives of the speakers of the minority languages during the on-the-spot visit (28 June-1 July 2022) and/or submitted in written form pursuant to Article 16 (2) of the Charter. Following the wishes of the Dutch authorities, the visit was co-ordinated with the monitoring visit of the Advisory Committee on the FCNM, which is producing in parallel its fourth opinion on the Netherlands.

3. Chapter 1 of this evaluation report focuses on the general developments and trends regarding the regional or minority languages in the Netherlands and the situation of these languages. It examines in particular the measures taken by the authorities of the Netherlands to respond to the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers at the end of the sixth monitoring cycle and also highlights new issues. Chapter 2 provides a detailed overview of the state of implementation of each undertaking of the Netherlands in respect of the given language as well as the recommendations addressed to the authorities of the Netherlands. On the basis of its evaluation, the Committee of Experts proposes, in Chapter 3, recommendations to the Committee of Ministers to be addressed to the Government of the Netherlands, as provided for in Article 16 (4) of the Charter.

4. As far as the detailed legal examination of each undertaking is concerned, the Committee of Experts refers to its **fifth evaluation report on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands (ECRML (2016) 4)**.

5. This report is based on the political and legal situation prevailing at the time of the Committee of Experts’ on-the-spot visit to the Netherlands in June/July 2022. This evaluation report was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 18 November 2022.

### **1.1 General developments in policies, legislation and practice concerning the regional or minority languages in the Netherlands**

#### ***Legislation, policies and practice at the national and provincial levels***

6. During the reference period, central, regional and local authorities in the Netherlands have taken several measures to promote and strengthen the regional or minority languages covered by the Charter. A dedicated website has been launched by the central authorities to facilitate access to relevant normative

<sup>1</sup> ‘Romanes’ is the term used by Roma and Sinti who have traditionally resided in the Netherlands to designate their language and also the term used by the authorities in their instrument of ratification of the Language Charter. It should be understood in the sense of ‘Romani’, the preferred term used at the level of the Council of Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Article 15.1 of the Charter provides that States Parties submit periodical reports every three years. However, following the entry into force of the reform of the monitoring mechanism of the ECRML on 1 July 2019, States Parties are now to submit their reports every five years instead of every three years.

sources in regional or minority languages.<sup>3</sup> The Committee of Experts commends the authorities for this initiative.

7. 'Language' is not considered as a specific ground for discrimination in the Dutch equal treatment laws. In a position paper submitted on 27 November 2020 to the Permanent Committee for the Interior and Kingdom Relations of the House of Representatives, the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, while acknowledging the position of the Dutch government that this is already included under the ground of 'race', as interpreted by the settled case law of the Supreme Court, considers that an explicit mention of the term 'language' in the Law could promote clarity and therefore reinforce the effectiveness of the Equal treatment act.<sup>4</sup> The Committee of Experts notes that Dutch citizens are not sufficiently aware that 'language' can be invoked as discrimination under the ground of 'race' and therefore do not make use of it in courts. The Committee of Experts, taking into account provisions of the Protocol No. 12 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 177), ratified by the Netherlands on 28 July 2004, recommends that an explicit reference of the term 'language' be made in Dutch equal treatment laws.

8. Frisian is protected and promoted by the 2014 Use of Frisian Act. This Act obliges national and provincial authorities to periodically enter into administrative agreements ("covenants") covering the use of Frisian in all domains covered by Part III of the Charter. The latest covenant is the *Bestjoersôfspraak Fryske Taal en Kultuer 2019-2023* (Administrative Agreement on the Frisian Language and Culture 2019-2023; hereafter referred to as "BFTK"). It entered into force on 1 January 2019.

9. Covenants were also signed between central and provincial authorities on Low Saxon and Limburgish, on 10 October 2018 and 6 November 2019 respectively. Although the signature of a covenant is a positive development, the Committee of Experts reminds that authorities should ensure that the requisite resources are available to achieve the objectives that have been jointly agreed. Furthermore, it should be recalled that the Dutch national authorities are responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the Charter under international law.<sup>5</sup> In particular, a national policy is needed for Limburgish and Low Saxon since some fields, such as education, fall into the competence of the national authorities. Implementing legal obligations under the Charter requires that the Netherlands takes positive measures, on its own initiative, with a view to protecting and promoting Limburgish and Low Saxon.<sup>6</sup> It should also be noted that there are no similar administrative agreements for Romanes and Yiddish.

10. In the previous monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended that the authorities of the Netherlands "**adopt a structured policy for the implementation of the Charter for Romanes and Yiddish, in co-operation with the speakers**" (**Recommendation No.2 - CM/RecChL(2020)3**). The Committee of Experts notes that a structured dialogue with representatives of the speakers of the four languages recognised under Part II of the Charter is still missing at national level and calls on the establishment of promoting bodies responsible for representing their interest at national level.

11. In their seventh periodical report, the authorities indicated that they were exploring the extension of the Charter to the island of Bonaire (Caribbean) with a view to promoting the Papiamentu/u language.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, on 11 March 2021, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations<sup>8</sup> and island commissioner of the Public Body of Bonaire signed a covenant on Papiamentu/u.<sup>9</sup> The ambition behind this administrative agreement is that, by 2030, all children leaving primary school should not only speak Papiamentu/u but also

<sup>3</sup> The website [www.erkendetalen.nl](http://www.erkendetalen.nl) offers information on all languages covered by the Charter in the Netherlands, as well as the answers to frequently asked questions. The site also lists the relevant legislation, administrative agreements and voluntary agreements pertaining to each language, and has links to documents on the languages shared with the House of Representatives.

<sup>4</sup> See [Position paper - Bestrijding van racisme en discriminatie in Nederland | College voor de Rechten van de Mens \(mensenrechten.nl\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> See 4th report of the Committee of Experts on the Netherlands, paragraph 21, 3rd report of the Committee of Experts on the Netherlands, paragraphs 29 and 31.

<sup>6</sup> See 1st report of the Committee of Experts on Bosnia and Herzegovina ECRML, (2013) 5, paragraph 26.

<sup>7</sup> On 8 April 2022, the Government of the Netherlands submitted a proposal to extend the application of the Charter to protect Papiamentu/u. On 12 September 2022, the opinion of the Council of State of the Kingdom (*Raad van State van het Koninkrijk*) was published. The Council of State advised to declare Papiamentu on Bonaire immediately applicable under part II of the Charter. It also invited the Government to make a new inventory of undertakings under part III since the minimum requirement of 35 undertakings is not met (as some measures that the government declares applicable are not in line with existing legislation or practice in Bonaire; the explanation of the Government accompanying the approval of the treaty does not show sufficiently that the use of Papiamentu/u is really promoted by existing legislation; the government does not provide sufficient information on how certain measures from the Charter would be implemented).

<sup>8</sup> Jointly on behalf of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Media, and the State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations

<sup>9</sup> Papiamentu/u language differs slightly depending on the place it is used, with variations in its standardised orthographies. Papiamentu is used in Aruba while Papiamentu is used in Curaçao and Bonaire.

read and write it. It also aims at ensuring that civil servants posted to Bonaire have a better command of Papiamentu/u. The establishment of a joint organisation to safeguard the Papiamentu/u language and culture is also being explored in this framework. The Committee of Experts welcomes these new developments and invites all relevant authorities to continue involving Papiamentu/u speakers in the current process to determine which provisions could be accepted under the Charter.

12. During the reporting period, the authorities continued to organise Symposia on Regional Languages. The third symposium recently organised in April 2022 in Wollega/Wolvege represented a good opportunity for all speakers of regional or minority languages to exchange views.<sup>10</sup> A specific conference dedicated to Low Saxon took place on the same day.

#### ***Use of regional or minority languages during the COVID-19 pandemic***

13. Covid-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on cultural activities and reduced possibilities for cross-border co-operation. Speakers have, nevertheless, shown responsiveness and adaptability, and developed new ways of communication via internet and social media.

14. At the beginning of the pandemic, the form developed at national level to provide a justification to go outside during curfew hours was not translated in Frisian and it is only at the second stage that the national coronavirus tracing app and the associated website were translated into Frisian, as well as information on the coronavirus vaccination campaign. The Fryslân provincial authority worked with the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity (NPLD) and other organisations to develop a cartoon poster informing the public of coronavirus measures in Frisian and other regional languages. It was widely distributed in Fryslân, Limburg provinces and areas where Low Saxon is spoken and in particular to all trilingual schools in the province of Fryslân. The regional broadcaster, *Omrop Fryslân*, transmitted an advert publicising the measures. The Committee of Experts considers that these actions have contributed to increased visibility of the language and encouraged the authorities to explore ways of providing public information in all languages covered by the Charter on a more structured basis.

15. Regrettably, no concrete information was provided by the authorities of the Netherlands on the consequence of Covid-19 pandemic for education.

#### ***Use of the regional or minority languages in education***

16. In the previous monitoring cycle, the Committee of Ministers recommended that the authorities of the Netherlands “**continue to strengthen the teaching of and in Frisian at all levels of education**” (Recommendation No.1 - CM/RecChL(2020)3) and to “**further develop the teaching of Limburgish and Low Saxon as regular school subjects and extend the offer of education in these languages, including at preschool level**” (Recommendation No.3 - CM/RecChL(2020)3).

17. In response to those and other recommendations concerning the use of Frisian in education, the authorities provided information stating that there have been no changes as regards Frisian in childcare, as childcare centres are not public services, unlike primary schools. They also indicated that the *Taalplan Frysk* is being implemented and its objective is that all primary and secondary schools should offer all attainment targets for Frisian at a satisfactory level by 2030, at the latest. Finally, they stressed that Frisian in higher education is offered in the form of minors at university (see para. 55 to 59).

18. In the light of the information provided and received during the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts asks the authorities to put an end to the existing distinction between the Frisian core objectives of the curriculum and the Dutch core objectives set in the national law, which can only amount to weaken the position of Frisian at schools and in society (see para. 50). It calls on the authorities to continue to intervene in a pro-active manner to promote the use of Frisian at preschool level, to make available a substantial part of primary education in Frisian and at secondary level, and to make sure that Frisian is taught as a subject at least three hours per week (see para. 49 and 51 to 54). Considering the existing general shortage of teachers, the authorities should continue to implement teacher training courses in Frisian (see para. 64). Positive actions should be taken to ensure that all pupils (including non-Frisian speakers) are offered lessons on Frisian history and culture (see para. 62-63).

19. At the same time, the Committee of Experts commends the establishment of a Frisian steering group in senior secondary vocational education, responsible for developing and implementing a language policy

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<sup>10</sup> Representatives of the Roma and Sinti communities did not participate.

and setting up working groups responsible for bringing attention to Frisian language and culture in citizenship education and in the professional context. The authorities of the Netherlands could consider the possibility of accepting Article 8.1.d of the Charter for Frisian in the future.

20. At higher education level, the Committee of Experts considers important that the current opportunities for studying Frisian be consolidated through a strong, visible and sustainable Frisian language and culture discipline at university level, independent from the BFTK which is negotiated every four years (see para. 55 to 59). Information provided to the Committee of Experts during the on-the-spot visit, and subsequently confirmed, indicates that the Chair of Frisian Language and Literature at the University of Groningen is now reduced to a 0,2 full time equivalent junior lecturer.

21. The authorities stated in their seventh periodical report that Dutch education allows the use of Low Saxon and Limburgish in education and childcare settings. It should nevertheless be pointed out that existing legislations<sup>11</sup> make indirect references to Limburgish and Low Saxon through the legal term of *streektaal*, a concept which is perceived as meaning 'dialect' for the general population, as opposed to the concept of *regionale taal*, currently used in the Dutch translation of the Charter. Although it is not clear what legal implication this distinction creates at the preschool and primary education level, it should be borne in mind that this difference between concepts must not prevent Limburgish and Low Saxon from being taught as regular subjects at any stage of education and from being offered as possible languages of instruction.

22. Furthermore, provincial authorities concerned have no statutory responsibility for Low Saxon and Limburgish in education. The school curricula in the Netherlands give a lot of latitude to schools to use regional or minority languages as a medium of instruction or as a subject. Therefore, Limburgish and Low Saxon are usually not used at preschool level and are not included in the attainment targets in primary and secondary education. These are not part of the primary school curriculum. At the university level, Limburgish and Low Saxon are not studied. There is a part-time Chair of Language/Culture of Limburg at the University of Maastricht and a part-time Chair of Low Saxon (primarily focusing on Gronings) at the University of Groningen, supported by the University of Maastricht and the Province of Groningen respectively. They organise research respectively on local and social identity constructions through language and cultural practices (for Limburgish) and on language and speech technology (for Low Saxon), but there are no courses nor study programmes of these two languages. They receive no financial support from central authorities. To preserve these two languages, the Committee of Experts calls on the authorities to act without further delay to ensure the teaching of Limburgish and Low Saxon as regular school subjects at all levels of education, its use in preschool education and to make the study of Limburgish and Low Saxon available at university level. The Committee of Experts invites all competent authorities, including national authorities, to raise awareness about the benefits of bilingualism, to consider the development of a language policy and to intervene in a pro-active manner to respond to the current shortcomings regarding teaching materials and the training of staff for Limburgish and Low Saxon.

23. Yiddish is currently in a weak position due to the sharp decline of students at the Cheider Jewish school in Amsterdam. The establishment of a Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Amsterdam in 2021 is a positive development to be underlined. Romanes remains in the private sphere and is absent from the Dutch educational system.

24. The Committee of Experts calls on the authorities of the Netherlands to include materials for teaching history and culture of all regional or minority languages covered by the Charter in the general curriculum regarding the history of the Netherlands and to raise awareness among the general public (see para. 62-63; 139; 159; 168). It invites the authorities of the Netherlands to consider the possibility of joining the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe of the Council of Europe.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Use of the regional of minority languages by judicial authorities***

25. According to the instrument of ratification, the right to use regional or minority languages before courts under Part III refers only to Frisian. Consequently, relevant information appears below under "1.2 *The situation of the individual regional or minority languages in the Netherlands – Frisian*".

<sup>11</sup> Article 9 para 13 of the Primary education Act; Article 26b para. 7d and Article 26c para. 6d of the Secondary education Act; Article 55, paragraph 1 of the Childcare Act.

<sup>12</sup> See [Observatory on History Teaching in Europe](#).



### **Use of the regional or minority languages by administrative authorities**

26. According to the instrument of ratification, the right to use regional or minority languages in contacts with administrative authorities under Part III refers only to Frisian. Consequently, relevant information appears below under “1.2 *The situation of the individual regional or minority languages in the Netherlands – Frisian*”.

27. No statutory or other legal provisions deal explicitly with Limburgish and Low Saxon in administration, despite the high number of speakers, the compact settlement area and the demand from the speakers. While official written responses are in Dutch, Limburgish and Low Saxon are occasionally informally used in communication with the authorities. Street signs in Limburgish and Low Saxon are not commonly used. Limburgish and Low Saxon local and provincial authorities and national authorities present at local level could consider establishing Limburgish and Low Saxon language policies in the future. The establishment of a *Taalskipper* could be an added value to that enterprise. Furthermore, the possibility for staff members or new staff members to follow Limburgish and Low Saxon courses could be envisaged.

28. The Committee of Experts recommends that the authorities, in cooperation with the speakers, discuss the possibility to use Limburgish and Low Saxon in contact with the administrative authorities. It also encourages all relevant authorities to adopt or use place names in regional or minority languages.

### **Use of the regional or minority languages in the media**

29. The 2008 Media Act provides that authorities do not have any influence on the form and the content of the media programmes in the Netherlands.<sup>13</sup> This means that media companies are free to produce, or not, their content in regional or minority languages. However, the Charter not only requires the authorities to permit the use of regional or minority languages in the media, but rather to ensure in the law that their use is part of the formal public task of the regional broadcaster and not leaving this decision at the discretion of the media itself.<sup>14</sup> In adopting the 2008 Media Act, the authorities of the Netherlands have already and rightfully considered that language requirements in the form of quota for content in a (regional) language do not infringe upon editorial freedom.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the authorities should make sure that the use of regional or minority languages is part of the formal public task of the regional broadcasters.

30. Frisian enjoys a considerable presence in the media, in particular because of the Agreement on the Use of the Frisian Language in the Media (2016) that provides extra safeguards for the position of Frisian in this field. In this framework, *Omrop Fryslân* produces television, radio and internet content in Frisian and is available across the whole country. Furthermore, two regional newspapers, *Friesch Dagblad* and *Leeuwarder Courant*, are issued in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert and both publish a small number of their articles in Frisian. *Omrop Fryslân*, *Leeuwarder Courant* and *Friesch Dagblad* newspapers have recently launched their own training programme to teach new journalists the Frisian language, culture and identity to compensate for the lack of regular teaching in and of Frisian in the education system. However, lack of financial support might affect the continuity of the programme in a near future. The Committee of Experts invites the authorities of the Netherlands to explore the possibility of accepting new undertakings under Articles 11.1.g and 11.1.e of the Charter.

31. Attention is frequently given to Limburgish and Low Saxon in regional TV and radio programming in the respective regional languages, and also in Dutch language regional newspapers. Broadcasters and newspapers have sometimes adopted internal policies regarding the use of regional languages, but they have no legal obligations to do so.

32. Cultural journal *Grine Medine* is issued twice a year in Yiddish. With regard to the use of Romanes in the media, the main organisation representing the Roma/Sinti communities (VSRWN) has created a media team to provide films, interviews and publish columns monthly, but also to fight against prejudices in traditional media. *Radio Patrin* has received support by national authorities for several years. *Radio La Benevolencija*, in co-operation with partners, has created in 2019 an educational platform, as part of the project Roma Genocide, Roma Identity, but also functions as an instrument for self-empowerment.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Articles 3.24 and 6.23(1) of the 2008 Media Act provide language requirements in the form of quota for content in Dutch/Frisian for public television and radio.

<sup>14</sup> See 7<sup>th</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on Germany MIN-LANG (2022) 7, paragraph 34.

<sup>15</sup> See Articles 3.24 and 6.23(1) of the 2008 Media Act regarding the language requirements in the form of quota for content in Dutch/Frisian for public television and radio.

<sup>16</sup> <https://tajsia.eu/>.

### ***Use of the regional or minority languages in cultural activities and facilities***

33. There are many cultural activities in languages protected under the Charter in the Netherlands (see paragraphs 82-89; 106; 129-131; 150-154; 162-163). Most of them are initiated by the civil society and the speakers themselves. Frisian, Limburgish and Low Saxon receive an increasing support by national and local authorities, which have played a more active role recently (more precisely in areas where Frisian and Low Saxon are spoken).

34. Existing cultural activities by the speakers of Yiddish and Romanes are most of the time neither supported nor promoted by the authorities. The Committee of Experts reiterates its previous recommendation to the authorities to further support the cultural activities of the speakers of Romanes and Yiddish by taking pro-active measures in that regard.

### ***Use of the regional or minority languages in economic life***

35. According to the instrument of ratification, the use of the regional or minority languages in economic life under Part III refers only to Frisian. Consequently, relevant information appears below under “1.2 *The situation of the individual regional or minority languages in the Netherlands – Frisian*”.

### ***Use of the regional or minority languages in transfrontier exchanges***

36. Central government funds for international cultural policy are used to promote and support international projects in the border regions by civil society organisations on Frisian, Limburgish and Low Saxon.

37. Frisians in Fryslân have regular and diverse contacts with Frisians of Germany, *inter alia* through the Inter-Frisian Council. The BFTK calls for the strengthening and further institutionalising of inter-Frisian contacts between the province of Fryslân and German federal States.

38. The speakers of Low Saxon in the Netherlands maintain close contacts with the speakers of Low German in Germany, at the provincial level and among associations, and coordinate their cultural and heritage policy.

39. *Vereeniging voor Limburgse Dialect- en Naamkunde* (Association for the Study of Limburgish Dialects and Onomastics, VLDN) is the only organisation with a focus on language that is active in the provinces of Limburg of Belgium and the Netherlands. It supports the study of the dialects and onomastic heritage of Dutch and Belgian Limburg. It holds annual conferences and is also involved in the organisation of regional language conferences. The activities of the VLDN have led to deeper academic understanding, and more knowledge sharing in the Limburg language area.

40. Yiddish and Romanes speakers do not benefit from any support for their transfrontier contacts and transnational exchanges in the fields covered by the Charter. The Committee of Experts reiterates its recommendation that the authorities take actions to encourage and support Romanes and Yiddish speakers in establishing transfrontier relations with speakers of Romanes and Yiddish outside of the Netherlands.

## **1.2 The situation of the individual regional or minority languages in the Netherlands**

### ***Frisian***

41. The entry into force of the Use of Frisian Act in 2014 resulted in the recognition of Frisian as an official language alongside Dutch in the province of Fryslân. Since its adoption, significant progress has been made in the promotion and protection of Frisian. According to the latest edition of the Fryslân provincial authority’s survey on the state of Frisian (*Fryske TaalAtlas*), 93,3% of Fryslân’s residents understand the language, 64.1% speak it well or very well and 15.9% write it well or very well.<sup>17</sup>

42. The latest version of BFTK 2019-2023 gives substance to the joint responsibility and duty of care of the central government and the province of Fryslân for the Frisian language and culture. It defines a vision for Frisian by 2030: the use of Frisian in public should increase and the number of people who speak, read

<sup>17</sup> *De Fryske TaalAtlas: Fryske Taal yn Byld* [The Frisian Language Atlas: Frisian Language in Image], province of Fryslân (2020)

and write in Frisian should grow considerably. With this objective in mind, the authorities of the province of Fryslân, assuming the role of '*Taalskipper*',<sup>18</sup> have adopted the '*Taalplan Frysk*' (Frisian Language Plan).

43. An interim evaluation report of BFTK 2019-2023 was presented to the House of Representatives and the provincial council in 2021.<sup>19</sup> The report found that most of the agreements had already been implemented halfway through the term, a smaller part had not yet been fully implemented and a number of agreements were of an ongoing nature.

44. In this context, the central government and the province have agreed to devote the rest of the term of the Administrative Agreement to the visibility of Frisian in the public space and in communications, and the use of Frisian in the judiciary and in education. Following the approval of a motion on 17 December 2020 by the House of Representatives to strengthen the visibility of Frisian and communication in Frisian, a 'visibility agreement' has been signed on 25 April 2022. This agreement will also serve as a basis for setting the new BFTK 2024-2028.

45. However, in the provincial official government agreement, a zero-based budget appropriation is foreseen, with a €5 million cut in structural expenses.<sup>20</sup> The Frisian Parliament has recently decided to postpone the cut after the provincial elections in March 2023. Information collected during the on-the-spot visit shows that, from this €5 million cut, €1,6 million will be cut for the Frisian language and culture budget starting in 2025. In addition, incidental funds will fall away by 2025 (+/- €3 million). The cuts (structural and incidental), which could amount to an overall reduction of 35% compared to the current budget, raise particular concerns among the speakers. In this context, the authorities should make sure that the cuts do not affect unproportionally the promotion of Frisian. Given the importance of the forthcoming BFTK 2024-2028, the authorities could invite all relevant stakeholders (including Frisian organisations and stakeholders from the field) to take part in the negotiation process.

## Education

46. Frisian is present at all levels of education. The *Taalplan Frysk* regulates the education strategies for every school. The plan is followed up by language co-ordinators who ensure the implementation of the multilingual trajectory from preschool to higher education, raise awareness among parents and teachers and strengthen language policy in schools. According to *Taalplan Frysk*, by 2030, Frisian shall be part of the curricula in all schools as a subject, without possible exemptions and become the widespread language of communication and instruction in the province. The achievement of this common goal is supposed to ensure a rise in the number of hours of teaching of and in Frisian in primary schools, and the number of secondary schools that offer Frisian. The provincial authority has also drafted goals for other levels of education (early years education, secondary vocational education, higher professional education and special education). Considering the foreseen structural cuts in the budget, the Committee of Experts asks the Dutch authorities to report on the progress made on *Taalplan Frysk* during its next report on recommendations for immediate actions.

47. Information collected during the on-the-spot visit shows that around 50% of day-care centres or playgroups in Fryslân are Frisian-medium, or bilingual. The seventh periodical report highlights that over the past few years, several local and regional childcare providers have made progress in the provision of bilingual childcare in towns and larger (predominantly Dutch-speaking) population centres in the province of Fryslân, in collaboration with *Sintrum Frysktalige Berne-opfang* (the centre for Frisian-language childcare provision, SFBO). However, the supply is still unable to meet the needs of the children and services are not equally accessible to all parents throughout the province. It appears necessary that national, provincial and local authorities intervene, in collaboration with SFBO, in a pro-active manner to respond to the current shortcomings.

48. In Fryslân, primary education and secondary education in Frisian are respectively guaranteed by the Primary Education Act (WPO) and the Secondary Education Act (WVO). BFTK 2019-2023 holds the province accountable for teaching Frisian as a subject at primary schools and for the lower classes of secondary schools. The core objectives that must be offered are anchored in the WPO and the WVO. However, since 2006, a distinction has been established between the Frisian core objectives (FCOs) and

<sup>18</sup> The 'Frisian language captain', i.e. the authority taking the lead in the preservation and promotion of Frisian. An [evaluation](#) of the role of *Taalskipper* was conducted in 2021. This evaluation showed that the parties involved are broadly satisfied with the way in which the province fulfils its role.

<sup>19</sup> This [report](#) was preceded by [recommendations](#) made on 30 June 2021 by *DINGtiid*, the official advisory body for Frisian.

<sup>20</sup> See [Bestuursakkoord | Fryslan](#).

the Dutch core objectives set in the national Law.<sup>21</sup> While 12 detailed points are developed regarding Dutch, FCOs were reduced to only six points, affecting reading, writing, speaking, and linguistic skills in Frisian.

49. *Taalplan Frysk*, which regulates the education strategies for every school, specifies that Frisian shall be part of the curricula in all schools as a subject and become a widespread language of communication and instruction in the province by 2030.<sup>22</sup> Schools are assisted by a *Skoalstiper* (school support worker) to that end. In 2016-2018 the *Taalplan Frysk* project performed an initial survey of how Frisian is taught in primary and secondary schools in Fryslân. The provincial authority assigned each school a 'language profile' (from A to G [in Primary Education] and A to D [in Secondary Education] – A being schools with no exemptions from teaching Frisian and G/D being fully exempted schools) on this basis. To be awarded the A profile, schools must offer attainment targets for Frisian that focus on listening and reading comprehension, reading and speaking skills, language awareness and writing skills.<sup>23</sup>

50. Although teaching Frisian is a legal obligation in the Province of Fryslân, primary and secondary schools can apply for full or partial (since 2014) exemptions if they have a justified reason to do so.<sup>24</sup> It is to be welcomed that BFTK 2019–2023 aims at removing all exemptions by 2030.

51. However, Frisian is taught in primary schools from 30 to 60 minutes per week depending on the language profile of the school. Frisian is also used as a medium of instruction in 40-50% of primary schools.<sup>25</sup> This remains too low to meet the requirements of the Charter undertakings accepted by the Netherlands.

52. In secondary schools, Frisian is also taught as a subject in the lower grades, but some schools only offer Frisian during "project weeks". In secondary vocational education, Frisian is taught as an optional subject to the students of various training courses. They used a grant scheme set up by the provincial authority for this purpose, which enabled secondary schools to appoint Frisian teachers, for example. The number of students taking Frisian as part of their school leaving examinations, although rising gradually, remains low, despite campaigns launched by *Afûk*, *Omrop Fryslân* and *SJB media* in that sense, with the goal that 25% of pupils do so by 2024.

53. Agreements signed under BFTK defined responsibilities for both the central authorities and the province regarding the promotion of study and research on Frisian and to provide facilities for the study of Frisian as university and higher education subjects.<sup>26</sup>

54. Teaching and research in Frisian in higher education institutions takes place as partial duties of several professorships and within different educational programs, at the University of Groningen, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Utrecht. Information collected during the on-the-spot visit shows that the current professor partly focusing on Frisian in Groningen retires in October 2022 and that the preservation of this chair is uncertain.<sup>27</sup> Thus, there is no full professorship dealing with Frisian in the Netherlands. Also, *Fryske Akademy* in Leeuwarden is concentrating on research on Fryslân, the Frisian people and their culture, including language. *Afûk* and *Tresoar* furthermore conduct research into Frisian.

55. English bachelor's program Minorities & Multilingualism offers a Frisian study track of 60 ECTS. Subjects include Frisian skills, History of Fryslân, Frisian literature, Frisian linguistics and Old Frisian. The *NHL Stenden hogeschool* offers the bachelor education for teachers of Frisian (second degree competence) with the possibility of further study (first degree competence). *NHL Stenden hogeschool* is the only higher

<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see Zoha Bayat, Ruth Kircher & Hans Van de Velde (2022): Minority language rights to education in international, regional, and domestic regulations and practices: the case of Frisian in the Netherlands, *Current Issues in Language Planning*, DOI: 10.1080/14664208.2022.2037291

<sup>22</sup> The Frisian route project "Kurrikulum.fr" has been postponed to a later stage.

<sup>23</sup> In terms of figures, *Taalplan Frysk* (2018) reports that only 31.7% of primary schools in Fryslân have an A profile, while 21.3% have a B profile with an exemption on writing, and 5% have a G-profile with full exemptions. The rest fall under C-E profiles with partial exemptions. All schools pertaining to the 3ts network (trilingual schools in primary education) must already meet the statutory core objectives for Frisian.

<sup>24</sup> Frisian is a legal obligation only in the so-called Frisian speaking areas (which exclude for instance the (Wadden) Islands or the municipality of Weststellingwerf, where other regional dialects/languages are spoken).

<sup>25</sup> *Inspectie van Het Onderwijs* [Inspectorate of Education]. (2017). Inspection framework primary education. Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

<sup>26</sup> Article 2.7.4 of the BFTK states that "Within the Minorities & Multilingualism program at the University of Groningen, there is a chair in Frisian language and literature. In addition to the government grant from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to the University of Groningen, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations budgets €110,000 annually for the term of the BFTK and the Province of Fryslân annually budgets €110.00 for the chair of Frisian Language and Literature. at the University of Groningen. Effort: State/province". See also the [consultative process](#) run by *DINGtiid* in 2020.

<sup>27</sup> At the end of May 2022, the vacancy published for the professorship of Frisian at the University of Groningen referred to "a possible new interdisciplinary master track Frisian Studies" (Profile Committee for Chair Frisian, 2022).

education institution in the Netherlands where bachelor students can study a minor in Frisian (30 ECTS). However, since 2012, there has been no complete university bachelor's program in Frisian Language and Culture in the Netherlands.

56. It is possible to do the educational master's in the language and cultural sciences (120 ECTS) to become a first-degree teacher of Frisian. With the broader master's degree of European Literature and Interculturality (60 ECTS) it is also possible to choose Frisian literature as a specialization and to write the master's thesis in Frisian (40 ECTS total).

57. Overall, the position of Frisian at universities has constantly weakened since the first evaluation report on the Netherlands in 2001. Frisian is no longer a separate subject and is now a study track in a broader study programme (see paragraph 20). While the authorities are willing to make Frisian more attractive, the study track represents a reduction in the number of ECTS in comparison to the previous bachelor's and master's structure for Frisian.

58. The Committee of Experts is of the view that the educational system for Frisian needs to be improved and asks the Dutch authorities to strengthen the educational structure for Frisian in cooperation with the speakers.

59. There are various Frisian courses for adults at *Afûk*. The University of Groningen (RUG) has developed a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for Frisian,<sup>28</sup> and is able to provide bespoke Frisian courses on request.<sup>29</sup> Fryslân provincial authority is also working on a Frisian version of the "Say something in Welsh" app, providing an easy way for adults who speak English or Dutch to learn Frisian.<sup>30</sup>

60. The authorities have indicated that there are no teaching materials (online or otherwise) on Frisian culture and history for schools outside the province of Fryslân.

61. In the province of Fryslân, the authorities pointed out that only a small proportion of the digital teaching material for Frisian (developed by *Afûk* in collaboration with educational support service *Cedin* and with the support of the Fryslân provincial authority) covers the teaching of Frisian history and culture. This online material, available in Frisian, is very limited, and is not designed specifically for history teachers. Furthermore, the authorities have indicated that the teaching material *Kanon fan de Fryske skiednis* is now outdated and is not always entirely suitable for use in today's online learning environments. Despite the publication of a book for primary schools on Frisian history in Frisian in 2014, there is a lack of attractive printed or online teaching material in Frisian for use in history lessons at secondary schools in Fryslân.

62. Fryslân's primary schools face a general shortage of teachers.<sup>31</sup> To tackle this issue, *NHL Stenden hogeschool* is providing teacher training for Frisian education, both for primary and secondary levels. NHL reorganised the curriculum of teacher training for secondary schools, aiming to offer a double qualification for Dutch and Frisian. The first three students graduated in 2020. As of 2021, *NHL Stenden hogeschool* has developed the *Klasse Frysk "WOW Frysk!"* course for teachers, in collaboration with *Cedin* and with funding from Fryslân provincial authority. At the end of the courses, participants receive a certificate.<sup>32</sup>

63. The authorities of the Netherlands have stressed that Fryslân provincial authority and the Inspectorate of Education hold regular consultations at inter-authority and official level. Certain arrangements incorporated into the BFTK are designed to ensure that the Inspectorate monitors Frisian. It has, for example, been agreed that the Inspectorate will conduct a special survey of Frisian in primary and secondary education every five years. In addition, consultations at official and administrative level are held on a regular basis with all inspectors working in Fryslân. Thematic reports are also written in Frisian and are made public. The next thematic report is expected in 2025. The Committee of Experts commends the authorities on the steps taken to improve the monitoring of Frisian and looks forward to receiving more detailed information in its next periodical report.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See [Introduction to Frisian | Massive Open Online Courses \(MOOC\) | University of Groningen \(rug.nl\)](#).

<sup>29</sup> See [Grut nijs! Frisian course starting at the Language Centre | News | Language Centre | University of Groningen \(rug.nl\)](#).

<sup>30</sup> The App What's it in Frisian/Say something in Frisian is part of one of the proposals for the Horizon call. It is still unclear at this stage whether this project will receive any funds or not.

<sup>31</sup> Recently, education Ministers, together with the education sector, have set up a national task force to boost efforts to tackle the general shortage of teachers.

<sup>32</sup> [Klasse Frysk | NHL Stenden](#).

<sup>33</sup> See 2<sup>nd</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on Poland, ECRML (2015) 7, paragraph 134.



64. In 2019, the Inspectorate of Education produced the thematic report *Sizzen is neat, dwaan is in ding* about Frisian in education.<sup>34</sup> Several recommendations were used by the province of Fryslân in its *Taalplan Frysk 2030* and to intensify contacts with school boards and umbrella organisations. In February 2021, *DINGtiid* published a report commissioned by the Fryslân provincial authority, recommending what the monitoring of Frisian as a subject should focus on.

#### Judicial authorities

65. The Use of Frisian Act states that residents of Fryslân may litigate in Frisian at all locations used by the Northern Netherlands District Court (Leeuwarden/Ljouwert, Assen and Groningen) and the Arnhem-Leeuwarden/Ljouwert Court of Appeal (Leeuwarden/Ljouwert, Arnhem, Almelo and Zwolle), the jurisdictions where Fryslân is covered. In accordance with section 15, subsection 2 of the Use of Frisian Act, suspects, parties, witnesses and interested parties will be reminded in correspondence of their right to speak Frisian at the hearing if they live, reside or have their registered office in the province of Fryslân. The judge in charge will decide by virtue of his or her office or on request whether the services of an interpreter are required. Central government covers the costs of hiring an interpreter.

66. Court buildings in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert also have signs inviting residents to speak Frisian. Information on the use of Frisian in judicial matters is also available on the court's website.

67. The district court and court of appeal require their staff to have a passive knowledge of Frisian or be prepared to learn the language. To improve staff knowledge of Frisian, both courts organise regular Frisian courses for their employees.

68. In 2020, to face the limited availability of Frisian interpreters in the judicial system, Fryslân provincial authority has made available resources that will allow several interpreters to be trained. There are now two sworn Frisian interpreters. In civil and administrative proceedings, the Frisian government pays for the services of A level interpreters at an appropriate rate. This fully covers the interpreting needs.

69. According to the information provided to the Committee of Experts during the on-the-spot visit, in case of civil cases the procurement of interpreting services is performed through local authorities, while in criminal cases, when a prosecutor from Central authorities is involved, the services are procured and paid by the national government. The information provided during the on-the-spot visit showed that the Frisian interpreters engaged after national procurement have seen their salary decrease by 35%,<sup>35</sup> resulting in court hearings taking place without qualified interpreters.

#### Administrative authorities and public services

70. Citizens may use Frisian when in contact with administrative bodies with responsibilities for the area of Fryslân. Administrative bodies in Fryslân that are not part of the central administration are under an obligation to prepare rules and policy plans concerning the use of Frisian. The administrative bodies situated outside Fryslân, but responsible for the province, may also set such rules, in particular for written communication. Ministries may also ask their local offices in Fryslân to adopt rules on the use of Frisian. The Committee of Experts asks the authorities to provide information about whether such administrative bodies have implemented them in practice in the next periodical report.

71. In 2019 *DINGtiid* performed a case study at the request of the Ministry of the Interior on the use of Frisian by central government services in Fryslân. It was found that their staff use Frisian in daily practice. They are aware of the Use of Frisian Act and the legal status of Frisian. Although they have no statutory obligation to draft a language policy, they were encouraged to draw up guidelines in that respect.

72. Under the terms of the Use of Frisian Act, BFTK also states that the *Veiligheidsregio Fryslân (Fryslân Safety Region)* is actively involved in the development, implementation and updating of Frisian language policies. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows that it remains difficult to contact police, fire brigade or ambulance services in Frisian.

<sup>34</sup> [SIZZEN IS NEAT, MAR DWAAN IS IN DING. Fries in het primair en voortgezet onderwijs - Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal](#). In this report, the Inspectorate of Education pointed out that many schools do not offer a high-quality Frisian education, despite the development of standardised tests and the expressed ambitions for 2030. Exemptions are still frequently granted. Frisian is often perceived as a small subject in secondary education and there is a lack of control of Frisian in school boards.

<sup>35</sup> Recently, the Government has promised to increase the minimum fee from €43,89 to €55,00 after protests by interpreters. However, it has simultaneously proposed to abolish the call-out charges. In practice, this has led to a lower 35% decrease in pay.

73. At the start of 2021 the provincial authority published its internal policy plan *Fanselssprekkend Frysk*, which includes the goal that by 2030 90% of staff with direct contact with the public should be able to speak and write Frisian. Vacancy notices will include a standard requirement that applicants have a positive attitude to Frisian. New staff will take a language test and, if necessary, be offered a language course. The provincial authority has indicated its willingness to publish provincial budget, accounts and policy documents in Frisian and for all information issued in the form of flyers and on social media and in campaigns to be bilingual by default.

74. With the support of the provincial authority, acting as *Taalskipper*, and with the *Mei-inoar foar it Frysk* financial scheme set up in that purpose, the majority of Frisian municipalities have now adopted language policies that include a focus on multilingualism and aims at using Frisian at least 25% more. This might take the form of an increase in the number of letters and municipal notices drafted in Frisian, the use of Frisian on the municipal website, a focus on command of Frisian in recruitment, a focus on the municipal authority's role for preschool age education using both Frisian and Dutch, the introduction of Frisian or multilingual signs to make Frisian more visible, or language courses for municipal officials and staff in contact with the public.

75. *Mei-inoar foar it Frysk* financial scheme is also opened to semi-public authorities in the province, such as *Wetterskip Fryslân*, but also to the safety region, the emergency control centre and subnational authorities like the Central Judicial Collection Agency (CJIB) and the Tax and Customs Administration.

76. Municipal authorities are free to use Frisian place names in documents or in public spaces. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows nonetheless that bilingual signs are not commonly adopted and used in Fryslân.<sup>36</sup>

77. No requests from Frisian-speaking public servants to work in a Frisian area have been received to date. Should any Frisian-speaking employees of central government express a preference to work in Fryslân, it would be decided on an individual basis to what extent this can be considered.

## Media

78. Frisian enjoys a considerable visibility in the media. It is present on the radio, television, and internet. The Agreement on the Use of the Frisian Language in the Media (2016) guarantees full, independent, wide-ranging programming and media in Frisian, available from several sources daily. It also regulates the funding of *Omrop Fryslân*, the only broadcaster that produces television, radio, and internet content in Frisian and is available across the whole country. Relevant regulations of the Agreement have been included into BFTK 2019-2023.

79. *Omrop Fryslân* broadcasts 24 hours a day mostly in Frisian. It broadcasts informative and cultural programmes during the daytime, and music programmes during the evening and at night. *Omrop Fryslân* also produces educational programs and documentaries. Its website and app are bilingual. In recent years, national public broadcaster *NOS* and regional broadcasters have increasingly worked together. *NOS* regularly uses footage from the Frisian broadcasting organisation, increasing the frequency with which subtitled interviews with people speaking Frisian are seen on its national news programmes.

80. Two regional newspapers, *Friesch Dagblad* and *Leeuwarder Courant*, publish a small number of their articles in Frisian. The provincial authority also promotes other innovative media products in Frisian, such as a magazine for young people (*LinKk*). The *Ried fan de Fryske Beweging* has launched a Frisian magazine called *de Nije*. The widespread use of Frisian on the internet and in social media is also to be underlined.

81. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit showed, however, the difficulty for the media to find and attract young journalists able to work and publish in Frisian. There is no training facility for journalists in Frisian in the province of Fryslân. Also, none of the existing journalism schools (outside of Fryslân) offers a programme to learn Frisian. To remedy the situation, *Omrop Fryslân*, *Leeuwarder Courant* and *Friesch Dagblad* have started a three-year pilot trainee program with the financial support of the province of Fryslân and the co-operation of *Afûk* and the University of Groningen. In this project three young journalists work as a trainee at the three Frisian media for one year (alternately 4 months at each medium).

<sup>36</sup> Information collected during the on-the-spot visit indicates that the Dutch traffic law would require amendments to facilitate to use of signs in regional or minority languages.

### Cultural activities and facilities

82. Art and culture are alive and flourishing in the province of Fryslân. To a significant extent, Frisian is the language for cultural activities. Several prominent Frisian cultural institutions, such as the Frisian theatre company *Tryater*, the research institute *Fryske Akademy*, and the Frisian Literature Museum and Documentation Centre *Tresoar*, are co-funded by the provincial authorities and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.<sup>37</sup> Other cultural institutions, such as the Centre for Frisian Art and Culture *Keunstwurk* and *Afûk* are supported by the province only. Alongside these facilities, there are hundreds of amateur dramatic associations, *Iepenloftspullen* (open-air theatres), music associations and choirs through the province.

83. Since Leeuwarden/Ljouwert was chosen as European Capital of Culture in 2018, many activities are still being carried out in Frisian and many efforts have been made to strengthen the Frisian literature infrastructure, such as the establishment of the *Fryske skriuwersskoalle* (school of creative writing), an international writer-in-residence programme.<sup>38</sup> Fryslân provincial authority also appoints a *Dichter fan Fryslân* (Frisian poet laureate) every two years, and offers several funding schemes for Frisian literature.

84. There are various publishing houses that publish Frisian books and digitisation is used to make literature more accessible and to increase its distribution. *Tresoar* is currently digitising its entire corpus of Frisian literature (approximately 20,000 titles). In 2020 the provincial authorities and the *Creative Industries Fund NL* awarded funding to *8D Games*, *Bureau Maalstroom*, *Tresoar*, *Afûk* and *Fers*, to develop the multilingual *Fryske digiTales*, which from 2021 provides a fun way for children aged 6 to 12 to access an innovative library where users can discover traditional tales and heritage online.

85. The Province of Fryslân supports a variety of innovative projects promoting the Frisian culture and language such as the smartphone application and booklet *Taal fan it hert* ("Language of your Heart") featuring information about Frisian culture and language, the "Mozilla week", whose focus is on developing language speaking technology, and the biennial Frisian song festival for young people *SjONG*, which includes a prize for the best YouTube video.

86. The *Fryske Akademy* has developed a translation website<sup>39</sup>, available since October 2021 and *Afûk* has developed the *Oersetter* app.

87. Explore the North<sup>40</sup> organises each year a wintry urban festival in Leeuwarden/Ljouwert, in particular to promote Frisian and to use literature, language and multilingualism as common features.

88. The Dutch Foundation for Literature (*Letterenfonds*) includes Frisian literature in its activities. The Foundation's stipends for authors and translators are also accessible to Frisian writers. The Cultural Participation Fund also has a 'regional talent' grant scheme that encourages cultural projects, which may also be related to Frisian. The Committee of Experts asks the authorities to provide information about the number of successful applications regarding Frisian in the next periodical report.

89. The Frisian language and culture, as set in BFTK, is promoted by the embassies of the Netherlands as a part of their public diplomacy and cultural policy. For instance, the foundation *Pier21* is working together with the Dutch Embassy in Rome. Their play is being translated from Frisian to Friulian. The point concerning the Frisian language and culture is included on an *ad hoc* basis in follow-up days and in professional development activities for cultural *attachés*.

### Economic and social life

90. BFTK calls for positive measures to be taken to facilitate and/or encourage the use of Frisian in economic life. The Committee of Experts notes that all efforts are currently concentrated to provincial issues.

<sup>37</sup> The situation regarding the funding of the Frisian history and literature centre *Tresoar*, despite the existing agreement under the BFTK and the guarantees provided by the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education and Media in June 2020, remain a source of concern. During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that the central authorities of the Netherlands have notified the Province of Fryslân of their intention of no longer taking part in *Tresoar*.

<sup>38</sup> See [Kennismakingsles Skriuwersfakskoalle - Leeuwarden City of Literature](#).

<sup>39</sup> See [Frisian dictionary, spell checker en translator \(frysker.nl\)](#)

<sup>40</sup> See [Explore the North festival | Explore the North \(explore-the-north.nl\)](#).



However, some measures facilitating and/or encouraging the use of Frisian in economic and social life should be made within the whole country.<sup>41</sup>

91. The seventh periodical report pointed out that, following the Fryslân provincial authority study of the economic benefits of Frisian, practical guidance would be implemented in the course of 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been difficult to implement the recommendations of this study. It is expected that a follow-up will be given in the second half of 2022. Furthermore, *Afûk* has encouraged use of Frisian in supermarkets. The *Club Diplomatique Fryslân*, a network of entrepreneurs who have the ambition to stimulate and promote the sustainable economic structure, innovative strength, activity and attractiveness of Fryslân, made an inspiration journey to Wales, with a focus on language, identity and culture.<sup>42</sup>

92. Despite the privatisation of the Dutch Railways,<sup>43</sup> concessions on the basis of tenders remain time limited. It is therefore possible to envisage the inclusion of conditions related to the use of Frisian in future tenders. The provincial government has concluded a tender on local transport with the transport company *Arriva*, where space is given for the promotion of Frisian (e.g. bus stop mentioned in Frisian).

93. The Province of Fryslân committed itself to implement an integral language policy in the social care sector. BFTK includes agreements concerning Frisian in healthcare. The *Frysk yn 'e soarch* (Frisian in care settings) project is important in that context to ensure the use of Frisian in maternity care, baby and toddler clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, general practitioners, emergency control centres and home help provided under the Social Support Act. There is, however, a clear distinction between care at institutions that are financed by the central government and care and support that is financed by the municipalities. The healthcare institutions that are financed by the government do not have a language policy regarding minority languages. In social care financed by the municipalities, policy rules have been drawn up by most municipalities. The rules have been included into the tender for the social domain, which often includes the requirement that users of social care services have the possibility to use Frisian.

94. As far as the training of staff is concerned, it is unclear whether optional courses of Frisian, which were introduced in the vocational training of health and care workers, are still in place. In 2020, *Afûk* published a magazine containing real-life examples illustrating how the use of Frisian can have clear benefits. It launched an online course for Frisian in the healthcare sector and an e-learning course to help care workers understand Frisian, and explaining Frisian terms used in the health and care sector. The Committee of Experts invites the authorities to set clear legal guidelines ensuring the possibility to use Frisian for both staff and persons concerned. It also requires them to establish a structured policy in the human resources field, which could include regulations governing the relevant qualifications and take account of a person's knowledge of Frisian, or facilities and incentives for the existing personnel to improve their skills in Frisian.

### Transfrontier exchanges

95. Relations with the Frisian language areas of Germany have long been of importance to Fryslân, including from a linguistic perspective. In practice, transfrontier exchanges are frequent and Frisians in Fryslân have regular and diverse contacts with Sater and North Frisians of Germany, inter alia through the Inter-Frisian Council that offers several civil society organisations the opportunity to arrange exchanges on subjects like history, culture and language. The *Fryske Akademy* and the Frisian department at the University of Groningen have a range of contacts with institutions and organisations such as the *Nordfriisk Instituut* (Bredstedt/Bräist), the *Ostfriesische Landschaft* (Aurich) and Kiel University.

96. The BFTK calls for the strengthening and further institutionalising of inter-Frisian contacts between the province of Fryslân and German Länder.

### **Limburgish**

97. According to a survey commissioned by *Veldeke Limburg* in January 2021, an NGO promoting Limburgish, 67% of all adult residents of the province of Limburg speak one of the Limburgish varieties fluently and another 11% indicate that they speak Limburgish but poorly. Meanwhile, 21% of the inhabitants

<sup>41</sup> Such measures can be the use by public authorities in incentives or prizes to reward initiatives that foster the use of Frisian in social or economic life; and/or public authorities, in order to carry out pilot projects for this purpose or give them publicity; and/or to make the granting of licences conditional on making room for Frisian in the economic activity covered by the licence etc.

<sup>42</sup> See [Club Diplomatique Fryslân // Home](#).

<sup>43</sup> See 4th report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter by the Netherlands, ECRML (2012) 6, paragraph 144.

of Limburg say they do not speak Limburgish, but they do understand it. Only a very small minority of 2% of the inhabitants of Limburg say they neither speak nor understand Limburgish.<sup>44</sup>

98. The signature of the Covenant on Limburgish on 6 November 2019 symbolises a strong commitment of central and provincial authorities in favour of the preservation of Limburgish as a regional language in the Netherlands, the promotion of its use and the strengthening of its status. An evaluation of the implementation of the Covenant is foreseen by the end of 2022.

99. In recent years, several strategy documents produced by various NGOs and a survey of stakeholders have highlighted a pressing need for further professionalisation in the Limburgish language field.<sup>45</sup> In 2020, *Huis voor de Kunsten Limburg*, as charged by Limburg provincial authority, prepared an action plan called *Aon de geng*. This action plan suggests a number of specific actions for Limburgish to be used in all areas of society in Limburg.<sup>46</sup> In priority, attention will be focused on children up to the age of 18 (through actions for instance in childcare, education) and in the media, communications and in public spaces.

#### Use in public and private life

100. No statutory or other legal provisions deal explicitly with Limburgish in administration. While official written responses are in Dutch, Limburgish is occasionally used orally by civil servants or in writing for informal communications such as email or texting.

101. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows that a letter written by the *Road veur t Limburgs* and *SONT* on 4 February 2022 asking the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to amend the General Administrative Law (AWB) to make Limburgish and Low Saxon admissible in administrative matters in addition to Dutch, remained unanswered to this date.

102. There is some bilingual signage in Limburgish. The province of Limburg has invited local authorities to voluntarily introduce place names in Limburgish on official signage. However, not all municipalities use bilingual signs.

103. A number of voluntary organisations, working with *Huis voor de Kunsten Limburg*, initiated a collaboration with regional newspaper *De Limburger*, which in 2021 began publishing a monthly column, *Limburgs accent*, about various aspects of Limburgish. The publication is, however, in Dutch.

104. In social media, Limburgish is used in Tweets, and often on Facebook in Limburg-themed groups. For digital media, in 2017 Microsoft and the Limburgish Academy developed a Limburgish predictive language model for the SwiftKey keyboard app to facilitate writing in Limburgish on mobile devices.

105. Regional public broadcaster L1 has developed an internal policy regarding the use of Limburgish in its programming.<sup>47</sup> It incorporates Limburgish into programming depending on target audience, topic and guests' preferred language usage (programmes such as *Kwizzele*, *Óngerwaeg*, *Plat-eweg*). The main news hour on L1, although traditionally presented in Dutch, has a current affairs program *Limburg Centraal* which incorporates some Limburgish.

106. Limburgish enjoys broad support in Limburg and there are many cultural activities taking place in this language, such as festivals (*Watbleef?!; De Nach van 't Limburgse Leed, Dag van de Moedertaal*), theatre plays (e.g. *TheaDOOR*), events during the *Vastelaovend* (Carnival) or publication of books (e.g. *Platboek, boekjes 100 mooiste woorden limburgs*). *Stichting LIMx* has developed a podcast series called *De Limburgse taal &...* to highlight the liveliness and use of Limburgish in a professional and personal atmosphere. *Troubadours van de toekomst* is a project to create a platform for sing-song writers in Limburgish.<sup>48</sup> The *Limburgish Academy* is developing a corpus in a free digital language platform to preserve and further develop Limburgish with all its varieties.<sup>49</sup> Many of these activities are carried out by volunteers

<sup>44</sup> See [Verslag van een onderzoek naar de stand van de Limburgse taal in opdracht van Veldeke Limburg](#).

<sup>45</sup> *Raad veur 't Limburgs*, a committee that advises the Limburg provincial executive on matters related to Limburgish, has set out its views on future language policy and its own role in that policy in a document entitled *Toekomstig taalbeleid: de verduurzaming van het Limburgs* (Future language policy: making Limburgish more sustainable), 12 April 2020.

<sup>46</sup> See [Plan van Aanpak Limburgse taal - Veldeke Limburg](#).

<sup>47</sup> Since 2016, the commercial station TV Limburg, with a large part of its programming in Limburgish, went bankrupt.

<sup>48</sup> See [Troubadours van de Toekomst - Accueil | Facebook](#).

<sup>49</sup> See [Corpus- Limburgse taal & Limburgs dialect | Limburgs.org](#).

who often use their own financial resources or rely on limited external funding from the Limburg provincial authority.<sup>50</sup>

107. Some actions have been undertaken by some municipalities in Limburg to preserve and promote the use of Limburgish in the economic and social life (e.g. Municipalities of Eijsden-Margraten and Beesel). This remains nevertheless isolated. The Committee of Experts concludes that local and provincial authorities could consider raising awareness on the promotion of Limburgish to relevant economic and social sectors more systematically.

108. A particular focus is paid to social care facilities in the *Aon de geng* action plan (see para. 100). It has been suggested in the action plan to take measures to invite patients to express themselves in Limburgish and to entitle staff members to use Limburgish. The possibility to use an interpreter for medical conversations is also mentioned. Authorities could envisage to establish specific guidelines to make sure that vulnerable and care-dependent people are able to express themselves in Limburgish.

#### Maintenance and development of links between groups in the State using Limburgish

109. *Huis voor de Kunsten Limburg* has played an important role in coordinating the work of all relevant NGOs and stakeholders related to Limburgish. *Aon de geng* action plan is also the product of a close collaboration with stakeholder organisations.

#### Education

110. According to the *Aon de geng* action plan, some childcare organisations (e.g. *Speelderwijs*) implement Limburgish in their day-to-day work and the language is actively used by the staff (reading and singing songs in Limburgish). But this model is not generalised and depends largely on childcare or preschool initiatives. The *Piepekoek initiative*, which consists of a series of short animation films and games to introduce children to Limburgish<sup>51</sup> and the work initiated by childcare organisation *MIK & PIW Groep* to identify needs in relation to reading, singing and teaching material (digital or otherwise) should be pointed out. Despite these initiatives, there are shortcomings regarding teaching materials and the training of staff in Limburgish.

111. Since the signature of the Covenant, and according to the *Aon de geng* action plan, several projects have been initiated on a voluntary basis to introduce Limburgish in schools. The Vincent van Gogh School in Roermond launched an after-school program for pupils with mainly foreign backgrounds, in which Limburgish was the language of instruction. The Association of Teachers of Living Languages set up a Limburgish Section in 2019 to develop professional educational material to enable stakeholders and interested parties to learn Limburgish. In 2020 it began preparations for a Limburgish version for primary schools of the 3M project for Frisian (a project to develop and implement an innovative approach for multilingual education in primary education for more connection between languages of instruction in education [Dutch, Frisian and English]).

112. Educational organisations were invited to meet and share experiences, identify the needs and develop new concrete educational material and guidelines for improving the quality of Limburgish courses. Nevertheless, the teaching of Limburgish is still not a regular school subject and history and culture which is reflected by Limburgish are not included in the general curriculum. The Committee of Experts is of the view that a structural approach for the teaching of Limburgish at all education levels is needed.

#### Courses for adults

113. The authorities of the Netherlands have manifested their willingness to facilitate and support the preservation of Limburgish and to have at least the same number of Limburgish speakers over the next decade.<sup>52</sup> Yet, there are no courses offered in Limburgish in regional training centres located in the province of Limburg, despite the existence of a legal basis to create such courses.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> See the [Limburg provincial authority 2022/2023 heritage policy](#). On 4 July 2022, the Limburgish Minister of Culture announced in the press that he will request the Limburgish Parliament for additional structural funding of €75,000 for Limburgish to finance the House for the Limburgish language (Hoes veur 't Limburgs). This extra budget will notably allow Huis voor de Kunsten Limburg to employ an educational expert in the Limburgish language.

<sup>51</sup> See [Piepekoek](#).

<sup>52</sup> See the policy document '[n Laeve lank Limburgs](#):'

<sup>53</sup> See section 7.1.1.a and b of the Adult and Vocational Education Act.

114. The Limburgish section of the Association of Teachers of Living Languages has organised a Limburgish as a second language course in Heerlen, with a focus on the Heerlen dialect. It is working on materials for learning Limburgish as a second language for newcomers to Limburg or people who grew up in Limburg but never had an active knowledge of the language (*Lt2 project*). The *Limburgish Academy* has developed free digital language products and in particular *D'n Dictionair*, which is the largest and most advanced free dictionary of Limburgish. It contains Limburgish words from Maastricht, Roermond, Sittard, Valkenburg and Venlo and is bilingual with translations into English and Dutch.<sup>54</sup>

### Study and research

115. Currently, there is no official policy supporting Limburgish in higher education and the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (*Nederlandse Wetenschapsorganisatie* or *NWO*) has no grant system specifically designated for the study and research of Limburgish. A part-time Chair of Language/Culture in Limburg exists at Maastricht University and is funded exclusively by the university. It focuses on local and social identity constructions through language and cultural practices, including Limburgish.

116. *Aon de geng* action plan indicates that Radboud University Nijmegen has launched *Radboud in'to Languages*, a program with expertise in the field of language and communication which also pays attention to Limburgish. The action plan foresees to enter in contact with scientists from the *Meertens Institute*, the Dutch Language Union, Radboud University Nijmegen and Maastricht University to use research results, develop language infrastructure and digital language resources (digitization of Limburgish).

### Consultative and advisory body

117. *Raad veur 't Limburgs* is the advisory body of the province. Its members are appointed based on their expertise. *Raad veur 't Limburgs* evaluates annually the effects of the language policy pursued, proposes measures that are necessary for the perpetuation of Limburgish and advises on the granting of subsidies with the aim of making Limburgish more visible, more tangible and more natural, especially in everyday life. *Raad veur 't Limburgs* is linked, through a language consultant, with *Huis voor de Kunsten Limburg*.

118. *Huis voor de Kunsten Limburg* receives a structural financial contribution from the province of Limburg and has played an important role recently in coordinating the work of many relevant NGOs and stakeholders related to Limburgish. It offers broad professional support in the field of participation, education and culture through its team of experts composed of one regional language officer and two language advisors. It supervises and supports a platform called *Hoes veur 't Limburgs*, created to unite representatives of associations, foundations, libraries, childcare, heritage and education that play a role in the promotion and protection of Limburgish. *Hoes veur 't Limburgs* actively initiates the development and launch of projects aimed at stimulating the use of Limburgish.

119. At national level a structured dialogue is still missing. Consultations that have taken place in the framework of the drafting of the State seventh periodical report is important but insufficient if not followed by regular meetings concerning the determination of the State policy with regard to Limburgish.

### **Low Saxon**

120. The number of speakers of Low Saxon is decreasing sharply, with a risk of an undesirable weakening of the language in the long term. While the majority of the residents of the provinces of Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel, Gelderland and Fryslân and the municipalities of Weststellingwerf and Ooststellingwerf have a passive knowledge of the language, a distinction should be made by category of age (40% of those aged 60 or more, 30% of those between 40 and 60, 17% of those below 40 speak the language).<sup>55</sup>

121. The signature of the Covenant on Low Saxon on 10 October 2018 symbolises a strong commitment in favour of the preservation of Low Saxon as a regional language in the Netherlands, the promotion of its use and the consolidation of its status.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See [Dictionary- Limburgse taal & Limburgs dialect | Limburgs.org](#).

<sup>55</sup> Information collected during the on-the-spot visit.

<sup>56</sup> The administrative agreement was signed by the Minister of the Interior; members of the provincial executive for Drenthe, Overijssel, Groningen, Gelderland and Fryslân; and the mayors of Ooststellingwerf and Weststellingwerf (the two Low Saxon municipalities in Fryslân). Other municipalities of the Low Saxon language area such as Bunschoten-Spakenburg in the province of Utrecht and the former island of Urk have also expressed their interest to take part in the covenant with the central authorities.

122. Low Saxon is also specifically mentioned in cultural policy documents and implementation programmes of the provincial authorities concerned. Together, provincial authorities consult on Low Saxon at official and inter-authority level.<sup>57</sup> The municipality of Weststellingwerf is currently chairing the group of signatories. Regional and local authorities have agreed that the chair will rotate between them every two years. However, according to the speakers, a more sustainable governance structure responsible for a clear joint vision and a plan of action, with an active participation of the central authorities would be preferable. The designation of a programme co-ordinating entity for the protection and development of Low Saxon in the long term is desirable to position this language with its own identity and culture, and to reinforce its presence in education, history, economy and other sectors of public life. There is more cooperation between NGOs (through the Low Saxon Steering Group created in 2020). They would like consultations with the coordinating Low Saxon authority to be more inclusive, particularly when it comes to joint programming and funding.

#### Use in public and private life

123. No statutory or other legal provisions deal explicitly with Low Saxon in administration. The way in which policy takes shape in respect of Low Saxon varies from province to province and depends strongly on regional or even local influences. The difference in approach between the provinces can be explained to a significant degree by the authorities concerned wishing their policy to reflect as far as possible whatever is occurring on the ground locally.<sup>58</sup>

124. *SONT* and *Road veur 't Limburgs* have written on 4 February 2022 a letter asking the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations to amend the General Administrative Law (*AWB*) to make Low Saxon and Limburgish admissible in administrative matters (see para. 102).

125. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows that bilingual signs are not commonly adopted and used in areas where Low Saxon is spoken.

126. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows that the attitude in the media regarding Low Saxon is more positive since the previous cycle. *RTV Drenthe* broadcasts few programmes with Drents-speaking hosts. In March 2021, *Huus van de Taol* has launched, in co-operation with *RTV Drenthe*, a new podcast series in Low Saxon (Drents). Up until now 25 episodes (each about 30 minutes) have been published. Low Saxon is used in occasional programmes, such as the language quiz *LOOS* (20 broadcasts) or *Drèents LiedtiesFestival*. Every Saturday morning, stories of 2 to 3 minutes are broadcasted on the Radio, with the help of *Huus van de Taol*.

127. Information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows that newspaper *Het Dagblad van het Noorden* is publishing one column weekly in Low Saxon (Drents).

128. There is more use of Low Saxon on social media. *Huus van de Taol* is exploring the possibilities to use several social media platforms in 2023.

129. Low Saxon is used to a large extent in cultural life. Every year in March, the *streektaelmaond* (regional language month) is the opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to shine a spotlight on Low Saxon.

130. Provinces of Drenthe, Groningen and Fryslân and the cities of Assen, Emmen, Groningen and Leeuwarden have launched *We the North*, a four-year program which aims at stimulating arts and cultural education.<sup>59</sup> In 2019, *We the North*, along with the provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel developed the *Proeftuin Meertaligheid* project, a network of stakeholders responsible for culture and language institutes to work with Low Saxon.<sup>60</sup>

131. In Drenthe, *Stichting REUR* organises song writing courses in Drents. *Huus van de Taol* promotes the use of the regional language through various activities and provides knowledge and expertise. The *Drèents Liedtiesfestival* has been broadcast LIVE (from the *Atlas Theater* in Emmen) for 10 years on TV, radio, internet and social media by *RTV Drenthe* and *ZO!34*. The *IJsselacademie* worked on a historical project in which farmers in the region were interviewed in the regional language. *Stellingwarver Schrieversronte* publishes a bimonthly magazine. The new activity plan of Overijssel History Centre includes

<sup>57</sup> Officials meet twice a year while civil servants of the authorities concerned meet four times per year.

<sup>58</sup> In Overijssel and Drenthe, provincial council meetings in March 2021 were conducted respectively in Low Saxon and Drèents.

<sup>59</sup> See [Homepage - We The North](#).

<sup>60</sup> See [Proeftuin Meertaligheid - We The North](#).



initiatives to enhance easy (online) access to Low Saxon. The promotion of Low Saxon is a goal of the grant scheme 2021-2024. In Gelderland, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek Liemers* promotes the use of the regional language and organises activities for this purpose. The Groningen Language and Culture Centre (“*Centrum Groninger Taal en Cultuur*”) runs various projects and courses in Gronings.<sup>61</sup> One example is *Woordwark*, a kind of living online dictionary which allows the use of Gronings. The province has also a subsidy scheme available for amateur art, cultural and heritage participation, which can include projects regarding Low Saxon.

132. Some companies use Low Saxon for advertising. In the spring of 2022, *Huus van de Taol* launched a project with supermarkets, putting texts in Low Saxon. The aim is to make the language more visible in public areas and to stimulate conversations about and in Low Saxon. This remains nevertheless isolated. Local and provincial authorities could consider raising awareness about the promotion of Low Saxon to relevant economic and social sectors more systematically.

133. A particular attention should be paid on social care facilities. Activities such as readings or music evenings in Low Saxon are organised in homes for the elderly. Both *IJsselacademie* and *Grunneger Sproak* run projects on regional language in healthcare. In addition, there is an ongoing project promoting the use of Low Saxon in hospitals in the Provinces of Drenthe and Groningen. In the Province of Overijssel, Low Saxon courses are offered as part of the vocational training. Authorities could envisage to set specific guidelines to make sure that vulnerable and care-dependent people are able to express themselves into Low Saxon.

#### Maintenance and development of links between groups in the State using Low Saxon

134. *SONT*, the *Stuurgroep Nedersaksisch* and *Huus van de Taol* have played an important role in coordinating the work of all relevant NGOs and stakeholders. The conference recently organised on Low Saxon in Wolvega/Wolvege in April 2022, represented a good opportunity for all speakers to meet and exchange views.

#### Education

135. Information collected during the on-the-spot visit suggests that Low Saxon is not part of the curriculum in preschools and that no progress had been made in this area since the signature of the Covenant.

136. Every year, the regional language institutes in Groningen, Drenthe, Overijssel and Achterhoek provide the free magazine *Wiesneus*, printed in four variations of Low Saxon. About 50.000 magazines find their way into preschools and primary schools.

137. However, the Committee of Experts is not aware of any childcare organisations using Low Saxon in their day-to-day work. It is of the view that there should be more work to develop educational material for childcare (songs and stories). The recent translation in Low Saxon of the *Tomke* project, a preschool and language stimulation program in Frisian for toddlers, is to be noted<sup>62</sup>, as well as the translation of the book *Et laompjen at een varken is*.

138. In primary, secondary and secondary vocational education, although legislation allows schools to offer Low Saxon as a subject, in practice it depends on the goodwill of individuals and Low Saxon is not part of the curriculum.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, history and culture which is reflected by Low Saxon are not included in the general curriculum. Projects on Low Saxon lessons in secondary schools are mainly individual initiatives by regional language institutes, together with individual teachers/schools.<sup>64</sup>

139. Several regional NGOs are providing material for lessons in Low Saxon. *Huus van de Taol* in Drenthe produces several study programmes, including *Wiesneus*, a teaching method for Low Saxon in primary schools which is available in Drèents and other variants of Low Saxon. Overijssel History Centre also provides teaching material (*Mijn Stad Mijn Dorp* – ‘My Town, My Village’). The Groningen Language and

<sup>61</sup> The Centre is subsidised by the province of Groningen with €358,100 per year.

<sup>62</sup> See [Home \(tomke.nl\)](https://www.tomke.nl).

<sup>63</sup> Information collected during the on-the-spot visit showed that in the two municipalities of Fryslan speaking Low Saxon benefiting from exemptions to teach the Frisian language, 6000 pupils receive a one-hour course in Low Saxon per year.

<sup>64</sup> For instance, in Groningen there is a project on Gronings for secondary schools. In Drenthe there is currently a pilot project within the *talentontwikkeling* hours project. *Streektaal in de Zorg*, the project in Overijssel has broadened to more professional educations due to successful implementation in nurses' school.

Culture Centre has developed materials for primary schools. In Stellingwerf there is the *De Veerkieler* – an education program for elementary schools. *Levende Talen Nedersaksisch*, the Low Saxon section of the broad-based Association of Teachers of Living Languages, is publishing these educational materials in its website.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, they have organised professionalisation seminars for teachers, awarding them with training certificates. The teachers come from primary and secondary schools, schools for secondary vocational education (MBO), and primary teacher training colleges.

140. In 2021, a plan for Low Saxon education has been developed by the steering group and submitted to the provincial authorities. Representatives of the provincial authorities present during the on-the-spot visit have indicated to the Committee of Experts that they were aware of the plan. They reminded that they had their own programmes and wanted to learn from each other before starting a project in common.

141. The Committee of Experts is of the view that a structural approach for the teaching of Low Saxon at all education levels is needed.

#### Courses for adults

142. The authorities in the Low Saxon area support various initiatives by NGOs that enable adults to learn the language. The *Stellingwarver Schrieversronte* was awarded funding by Fryslân provincial authority and Ooststellingwerf and Weststellingwerf municipal authorities in 2020, alongside its annual municipal and provincial grants, to develop an online programme which people can use to learn Stellingwarfs. However, there are no courses offered in Low Saxon in regional training centres located in the areas where it is spoken, despite the existence of a legal basis to do so.<sup>66</sup>

#### Study and research

143. Currently, there is no official policy supporting Low Saxon in higher education and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research has no grant money specifically designated for the study and research of Low Saxon.

144. In 2018, the University of Groningen appointed a professor of Low Saxon (part-time professorship of one day per week) to develop research on language and speech technology focusing on regional languages. The term of the professorship lasts until May 2023, but, in line with university policy, it will most probably be extended until 2028. Except with the province of Groningen (which finances the research projects on Gronings/Low Saxon), no such research collaboration exists with other authorities of the Low Saxon area. Central authorities do not finance the Low Saxon chair. The research budget is supplemented with various other sources (mostly regional).<sup>67</sup>

145. At university level there is no possibility to study Low Saxon. There are no courses, nor is there a study programme. Due to a financial contribution of a foundation, a MOOC course has been created on Gronings through which participants are taught some basics about Gronings (in nine hours total time investment).<sup>68</sup>

#### Consultative and advisory body

146. Although some co-operation and dialogue exist between provincial authorities and Low Saxon language speakers' organisations, neither *SONT*, as the umbrella organisation, nor the Low Saxon steering group are invited to participate in meetings organised at official and inter-authority level by provincial authorities.

147. At national level a structured dialogue is still missing. Consultations that have taken place in the framework of the drafting of the seventh state periodical report are important but insufficient if not followed by regular meetings concerning the determination of the State policy with regard to Low Saxon.

<sup>65</sup> See [Welkom - Walkom - Talennet Nedersaksisch](#).

<sup>66</sup> See section 7.1.1.a and b of the Adult and Vocational Education Act.

<sup>67</sup> The province of Fryslân has decided to make €224,978 available for the University of Groningen for the development of a Frisian speech technology. The sum allocated will partly fund a PhD student working under the direction of the Low Saxon professor, with a focus on Frisian language.

<sup>68</sup> This MOOC course is different from a single university course, which is usually composed of 140 hours.

## Romanes

148. The Committee of Experts, which organised its on-the-spot visit in coordination with the Advisory Committee of the FCNM, notes that Romanes is protected under the Charter as a non-territorial minority language since 1998 but that Roma and Sinti, who are the only speakers of Romanes in the Netherlands, are not recognised as national minority under the Framework Convention. It regrets that no explanation was provided by the authorities regarding this difference of protection under the two treaties and would welcome more information in the next periodical report.

149. Romanes is the most valuable and almost exclusive legacy of Roma and Sinti traditionally living in the Netherlands. It mostly prevails in the private sphere in the Netherlands. As a non-territorial language, there is no covenant preserving it, promoting its use or consolidating its status.

### Use in public and private life

150. *Radio PatrIn* has been broadcasting music in Romanes since 2008. *Radio La Benevolencija* is working on the Tajsja.eu project, a web-based collection of video/audio podcasts and educational resources, about the causes and the consequences of the Genocide of the Roma during WWII, the Roma identity building and the self-empowerment of the Roma communities around Europe.<sup>69</sup> This new-media series is produced in 12 countries around Europe as part of The Roma Genocide and the Roma Identity' project.

151. The Sinti, Roma and Travellers Netherlands (VSRWN) organisation also created a media team. The media team provides regularly traditional media with movies / interviews of Sinti and Roma people. They raise awareness regarding their situation in the Netherlands by contacting the media, through lobbying, organising events, providing information about their culture, raising complaints, and starting legal proceedings, especially toward articles in the press which are discriminatory.<sup>70</sup>

152. Romanes is relatively absent from the internet, but this corresponds to a wish expressed by the Roma and Sinti communities who keep it as an oral intra-community language.

153. The continuing work carried out by *O Lungo Drom*, whose travelling exhibition features information on the history and presence of Roma and Sinti in the Netherlands, is to be commended.<sup>71</sup>

154. However, information collected during the on-the-spot visit showed that representatives of Sinti and Roma organisations have difficulties in applying for funding regarding the promotion of cultural activities, such as music lessons, Sinti and Roma festivals and/or the making of documentaries.

155. Since the repeal of the *Woonwagenwet* (Caravan Act) in 1999, the Netherlands have not had a unified national policy concerning travellers' camps. As a result, municipalities are responsible for ensuring the right for travellers to reside in caravans. Until 2018 they implemented a policy, also known as the 'extinction policy', that intends to remove all camp sites when they become vacant, or by offering regular social housing to travellers living in caravans. This policy has led to a significant decrease in the number of caravan sites available and indirectly rendered the use of Romanes more difficult for speakers. Although a new policy framework (*Beleidskader*)<sup>72</sup> has been adopted in 2018 to remedy the situation, only a minority of municipalities is currently implementing the new set of standards.<sup>73</sup> During the on-the-spot visit, central authorities have shared to the Committee of Experts their intention to recentralise this matter. Furthermore, it should be recalled that the Dutch national authorities are responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the Charter under international law.<sup>74</sup>

### Education

156. In the Netherlands, Romanes is absent from the Dutch educational system, but this corresponds to a wish expressed by representatives of the speakers to keep it as an oral intra-community language.

<sup>69</sup> See [Home - Tajsja](#).

<sup>70</sup> [Pushing for Political and Legal Change: Protecting the Cultural Identity of Travellers in the Netherlands | Journal of Human Rights Practice | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#).

<sup>71</sup> See [O Lungo Drom: Sinti en Roma door de eeuwen heen in Nederland - Home](#).

<sup>72</sup> See [Beleidskader gemeentelijk woonwagen- en standplaatsenbeleid | VNG](#).

<sup>73</sup> See [Fundamental Rights Report 2021 | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(europa.eu\)](#).

<sup>74</sup> See 4th report of the Committee of Experts on the Netherlands, paragraph 21, 3rd report of the Committee of Experts on the Netherlands, paragraphs 29 and 31.



157. In the field of primary and secondary education, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has a support-structure for schools regarding pupils from vulnerable groups, including Sinti and Roma, in Dutch society.<sup>75</sup> This amount of money is available for each pupil or student from a vulnerable group to make additional human resources available for extra school-assistance. However, the Committee of Experts lacks reliable information as to whether these funds are used for promoting Romanes or the culture and traditions of the Roma and Sinti communities.

#### Promoting the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance

158. Information obtained during the on-the-spot visit indicates that awareness-raising measures are necessary in the media and in mainstream education to counter antigypsyism. Furthermore, the history and culture of the Roma and Sinti are not included in the general curriculum despite specific demands from the speakers. During the on-the-spot visit, representatives of the Roma and Sinti communities stated that they regularly visit schools on a voluntary basis to speak about their history and culture. The Committee of Experts draws the attention of the authorities to the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.<sup>76</sup> This contains guidelines on this issue, including ideas for teacher training and teaching materials. It invites the authorities to include the Sinti and Roma history and culture to the general curriculum on the history of the Netherlands.

#### Consultative and advisory body

159. The authorities of the Netherlands, which do not have a comprehensive national strategy for Roma and Sinti, but rather a limited number of specific policy measures, base their consultation policy on a so-called '*flexible dialogue*' with representatives from the Roma and Sinti communities. In 2020, a feasibility study revealed the broad consensus that exists around the creation of an advisory body of Sinti and Roma at the national level, despite differences among spokespersons from the communities involved about the way in which such an organisation might be shaped.<sup>77</sup>

160. In November 2020, in two letters sent to the Dutch Parliament regarding the European Commission proposals on the EU Roma Strategic Framework,<sup>78</sup> the Government suggested the establishment of a Platform of expertise/knowledge, serving as a flexible mechanism for dialogue twice a year with Sinti and Roma initiatives. Information collected during the on-the-spot visit showed that no further steps have been taken since then.

#### **Yiddish**

161. Yiddish mostly prevails in the private sphere in the Netherlands, and is spoken, according to the information gathered during the on-the-spot visit, by around 500 speakers, mainly in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. There is no covenant preserving it, promoting its use or consolidating its status.

#### Use in public and private life

162. Although not supported by public funds, the cultural journal *Grine Medine* continues to be published twice a year. It has 150 subscribers (out of whom 50% are in the Netherlands). During the on-the-spot visit, the Committee of Experts was informed that there is a "Yiddish social sphere" active on social media.

163. The Yiddish speakers organise different kinds of cultural events among which there are theatre plays, poetry readings, Yiddish music concerts and conferences.

#### Education

164. In the Netherlands, the Cheider Institute and the Maimonides Jewish school in Amsterdam are officially recognised as '*exceptional schools*'. The Cheider School is the only school in the Netherlands

<sup>75</sup>A [request for special funding](#) can be made by schools if they have a minimum number of four pupils with Sinti and Roma cultural backgrounds'. It should be noted that, until very recently (2020), the financial support scheme supporting it was using a discriminatory terminology (*Zigeunerkinderen* [Gypsy-children]). The new procedure seems to avoid any further stigmatisation and registration now happens on a local level, within the school administration, and only with the parents' consent via a special form (*Ouderverklaring*).

<sup>76</sup> [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2020\)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials.](#)

<sup>77</sup> See [Verkennd onderzoek naar centrale belangenbehartiging voor Roma en Sinti - Verwey-Jonker Instituut.](#)

<sup>78</sup> See [Informatie over Kamerstuk 22112, nr. IC | Overheid.nl > Officiële bekendmakingen \(officielebekendmakingen.nl\)](#) and [Informatie over Kamerstuk 22112, nr. 2977 | Overheid.nl > Officiële bekendmakingen \(officielebekendmakingen.nl\).](#)

teaching Yiddish and using the curriculum in Yiddish from preschool to secondary level education. Due to severe difficulties in its administration, the school is in a critical situation and its survival is at stake. The number of pupils is falling sharply. In Maimonides, where Hebrew is the primary language, the position of Yiddish is weak, although some students study it in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades.

#### Study and research

165. In 2021, the University of Amsterdam has appointed for four years a professor of Jewish Studies. The Chair is currently co-financed by the central authorities, the University and by extra funding. Yiddish studies are considered in that context as a strategic part of the Chair and constitute an exception to the situation where funding is based on the number of students. The Committee of Experts commends this initiative.

166. While Western Yiddish is mostly a field of research, Eastern Yiddish is also taught in free classes within the student association. The number of students is also rising at the bachelor's and master's degree levels. There is also one PhD student specialised in Yiddish studies.

#### Promoting the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance

167. Information obtained during the on-the-spot visit indicates that awareness-raising measures are necessary in the media and in mainstream education to counter against antisemitism. The Jewish history and culture should be more present in the general curriculum for the history of the Netherlands and not reduced exclusively to the holocaust period.

#### Consultative and advisory body

168. In their seventh periodical report, the authorities of the Netherlands stressed that the wishes and needs of Yiddish speakers have not been made known, except in one case in connection with a grant application for Yiddish. The only contact between the central authorities and the Yiddish community is made through the professor of Jewish Studies. The Committee of Experts underlines that, since Yiddish is a non-territorial language, the role of the national authorities is all the more important in order to ensure that the wishes and needs of its speakers are collected and respected.

## Chapter 2 Compliance of the Netherlands with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and recommendations

### 2.1 Frisian

#### 2.1.1 Compliance of the Netherlands with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Frisian

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle: ↗ improvement ✓ deterioration = no change

<b>The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:</b>						
Article	Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Frisian <sup>79</sup>	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
<b>Part II of the Charter</b>						
<b><i>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</i></b>						
<b>Art. 7 – Objectives and principles</b>						
7.1.a	recognition of Frisian as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Frisian	↗				
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Frisian	=				
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Frisian, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life	=	=			
7.1.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Frisian</li> <li>• establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups</li> </ul>	=				
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Frisian at all appropriate stages	=				
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Frisian to learn it	↗				
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Frisian at universities or equivalent institutions	=	✓			
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Frisian	=				
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Frisian	=				
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country</li> <li>• promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Frisian among the objectives of education and training</li> <li>• encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Frisian among their objectives</li> </ul>	=	✓			
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Frisian</li> <li>• establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Frisian</li> </ul>	=				
<b>Part III of the Charter</b>						
<b><i>(Additional undertakings chosen by the state for specific languages)</i></b>						
<b>Art. 8 – Education</b>						
8.1.a.ii	make available a substantial part of preschool education in Frisian	=				
8.1.b.ii	make available a substantial part of primary education in Frisian	=			=	
8.1.c.iii	provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of Frisian as an integral part of the curriculum	=				
8.1.e.ii	provide facilities for the study of Frisian as a university and higher education subject	=	✓			
8.1.f.i	Arrange for the provision of adult and continuing education courses which are taught mainly or wholly in Frisian	=				
8.1.g	ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by Frisian	=				
8.1.h	provide the basic and further training of the teachers teaching (in) Frisian	=				
8.1.i	set up a supervisory body responsible for monitoring the progress achieved in the teaching of Frisian and for drawing up public periodic reports of its findings	=				

<sup>79</sup> In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: <http://www.coe.int/en/Web/conventions/> (treaty No. 148).

<b>The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:</b>						
<b>Article</b>	<b>Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Frisian<sup>79</sup></b>	<b>fulfilled</b>	<b>partly fulfilled</b>	<b>formally fulfilled</b>	<b>not fulfilled</b>	<b>no conclusion</b>
8.2	in territories other than those in which Frisian is traditionally used, allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of Frisian at all the appropriate stages of education					↙
<b>Art. 9 – Judicial authorities</b>						
9.1.a.ii	guarantee the accused the right to use Frisian in criminal proceedings, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned			↙		
9.1.a.iii	provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible in criminal proceedings solely because they are formulated in Frisian, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned			↙		
9.1.b.iii	allow documents and evidence to be produced in Frisian in civil proceedings, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations	=				
9.1.c.ii	allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use Frisian in proceedings concerning administrative matters without thereby incurring additional expense, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations	↗				
9.1.c.iii	allow documents and evidence to be produced in Frisian in proceedings concerning administrative matters, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations	=				
9.2.b	In civil proceedings, allow the use of Frisian in oral and in writing without incurring additional expenses	=				
<b>Art. 10 – Administrative authorities and public services</b>						
10.1.a	Ensure that users of Frisian may validly submit a document in Frisian	=				
10.1.c	allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in Frisian	=				
10.2.a	use of Frisian within the framework of the regional or local authority	=				
10.2.b	possibility for users of Frisian to submit oral or written applications in Frisian to the regional or local authority	=				
10.2.c	publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in Frisian	=				
10.2.d	publication by local authorities of their official documents also in Frisian	=				
10.2.e	use by regional authorities of Frisian in debates in their assemblies	=				
10.2.f	use by local authorities of Frisian in debates in their assemblies	=				
10.2.g	use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language, of place names in Frisian		↙			
10.4.a	provide translation or interpretation	=				
10.4.c	comply with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of Frisian to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used			↗		
10.5	allow the use or adoption of family names in Frisian	=				
<b>Art. 11 – Media</b>						
11.1.a.iii	make provision so that public broadcasters offer radio and television programmes in Frisian	=				
11.1.b.ii	encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in Frisian on a regular basis	=				
11.1.c.ii	encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in Frisian on a regular basis	=				
11.1.f.ii	Apply existing measures for financial assistance to audio-visual productions in Frisian	=				
11.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guarantee freedom of direct reception of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in Frisian</li> <li>• do not oppose the retransmission of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in Frisian</li> <li>• ensure the freedom of expression and free circulation of information in the written press in Frisian</li> </ul>	=				
<b>Art. 12 – Cultural activities and facilities</b>						
12.1.a	encourage production, reproduction and dissemination of cultural works in Frisian	=				
12.1.b	foster access in other languages to works produced in Frisian by aiding and developing translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling	=				
12.1.d	ensure that the bodies organising or supporting cultural activities incorporate the knowledge and use of the Frisian language and culture in the undertakings which they initiate or for which they provide backing	=				
12.1.e	ensure that the bodies organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of Frisian	=				
12.1.f	encourage direct participation by representatives of the users of Frisian in providing facilities and planning cultural activities	=				

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Frisian <sup>79</sup>	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
12.1.g	encourage and/or facilitate the creation of a body responsible for collecting, keeping a copy of and presenting or publishing works produced in Frisian	=				
12.1.h	create and/or promote and finance translation and terminological research services, particularly with a view to maintaining and developing administrative, commercial, economic, social, technical or legal terminology in Frisian	=				
12.2	In territories other than those in which Frisian is traditionally used, allow, encourage and/or provide cultural activities and facilities using Frisian	=				
12.3	make provision, in cultural policy abroad, for Frisian and the culture it reflects	=				
<b>Art. 13 – Economic and social life</b>						
13.1.a	eliminate from the legislation any provision prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of Frisian in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations	=				
13.1.c	oppose practices designed to discourage the use of Frisian in connection with economic or social activities	=				
13.1.d	facilitate and/or encourage the use of Frisian in economic and social life		✓			
13.2.b	in the public sector, organise activities to promote the use of Frisian in economic and social life		=			
13.2.c	ensure that social care facilities such as hospitals, retirement homes and hostels offer the use of Frisian		=			
<b>Art. 14 – Transfrontier exchanges</b>						
14.a	apply bilateral and multilateral agreements with the States in which Frisian is used in identical or similar form, or conclude such agreements, to foster contacts between the users of Frisian in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education	=				
14.b	for the benefit of Frisian, facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory Frisian is used in identical or similar form	=				

\* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

**Fulfilled:** Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

**Partly fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

**Formally fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

**Not fulfilled:** No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

**No conclusion:** The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

### Changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle

169. **Article 7.1.b** is fulfilled since existing administrative divisions allow citizens to use Frisian, including in courts outside Fryslân with jurisdiction. **Article 7.1.g** is fulfilled as there are various Frisian courses for adults offered by *Afûk*. There is a deterioration of the situation regarding **Article 7.1.h**, which is partly fulfilled as study and research in Frisian in higher education institutions take place as partial duties of several professorships and within different educational programs and thus, there is no full professorship dealing with Frisian in the Netherlands. **Article 7.3** is partly fulfilled because there are not enough awareness-raising measures for mainstream society within the objectives of education and the media.

170. **Article 8.1.eii** is partly fulfilled as the situation is constantly deteriorating. Frisian is no longer a separate programme but rather a study track in a broader study model, which can create difficulties in the quality of knowledge transfer and opportunities for university development. Given the lack of information, the Committee is not in a position to assess whether the authorities of the Netherlands fulfil their undertaking under **Article 8.2**.

171. In criminal proceedings, the right of the accused to use Frisian is no longer guaranteed because of a long-lasting issue between interpreters and the public prosecutor's office regarding the applicable rate for interpreting assignments. As a matter of consequence, **Articles 9.1.a.ii** and **9.1.a.iii** are only formally fulfilled.

**Article 9.1.cii** is fulfilled as there are now two sworn Frisian interpreters. The Frisian government pays for the services of A level interpreters at an appropriate rate. This fully covers the interpreting needs.

172. **Article 10.2.g** is partly fulfilled because local authorities, although free to use Frisian place names in documents or in public spaces, do not commonly adopt and use bilingual signs in Fryslân. The Committee of Experts was not made aware of any cases of requests or refusal on **Article 10.4.c** and therefore this provision is formally fulfilled.

173. **Article 13.1.d** is partly fulfilled as positive measures to facilitate and/or encourage the use of Frisian in economic and social life are only taken in Fryslân and not throughout the whole country.

## **2.1.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Frisian in the Netherlands**

The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities of the Netherlands to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.1.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands<sup>80</sup> remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

### **I. Recommendations for immediate action**

- a. Continue to strengthen the teaching in and of Frisian at all levels of education and its use in preschool education, and ensure that there is a full-time professorship that carries out study and research in and of Frisian;**
- b. Take measures to guarantee the accused the right to use Frisian in criminal proceedings and ensure the assistance of a qualified interpreter;**
- c. Include representatives of Frisian speakers, in the negotiation process on the administrative agreement on the Frisian language and culture 2024-2028.**

### **II. Further recommendations**

- a. Continue to implement teacher training courses in Frisian to face the general shortage of teachers and increase their number in primary and secondary schools;
- b. Strengthen the study of Frisian at higher education level through a strong, visible and sustainable university Frisian language and culture university discipline, independent from the BFTK which is negotiated every four years;
- c. Raise awareness about Frisian and include Frisian culture and history in the general curriculum.
- d. Develop materials to ensure that Frisian history and culture is present in teaching materials to all pupils (including non-Frisian speakers) in the province of Fryslân;
- e. Further promote the adoption and use of bilingual signs and/or place names in Frisian in public spaces;
- f. Take additional measures to facilitate and/or encourage the use of Frisian in economic and social life in the whole country and in the province of Fryslân, including in the public sector and transport companies;
- g. Strengthen the use of Frisian in social care facilities;

<sup>80</sup> [CM/RecChL\(2001\)1](#), 19 September 2001, Ministers' Deputies 765th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2004\)7](#), 15 December 2004, Ministers' Deputies 909th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2008\)4](#), 9 July 2008, Ministers' Deputies 1032nd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2012\)5](#), 24 October 2012, Ministers' Deputies 1153rd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2016\)7](#), 14 December 2016, Ministers' Deputies 1273bis meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2020\)3](#), 23 September 2020, Ministers' Deputies 1384th meeting.

## 2.2 Limburgish

### 2.2.1 Compliance of the Netherlands with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Limburgish

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle: ↗ improvement ↘ deterioration = no change

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Limburgish <sup>81</sup>	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
<b>Part II of the Charter</b>						
<b>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</b>						
<b>Art. 7 – Objectives and principles</b>						
7.1.a	recognition of Limburgish as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Limburgish	=				
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Limburgish	=				
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Limburgish, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life		=			
7.1.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Limburgish</li> <li>• establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups</li> </ul>	=				
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Limburgish at all appropriate stages					↗
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Limburgish to learn it		↗			
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Limburgish at universities or equivalent institutions		=			
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Limburgish	=				
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Limburgish	=				
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country</li> <li>• promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Limburgish among the objectives of education and training</li> <li>• encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Limburgish among their objectives</li> </ul>		↘			
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Limburgish</li> <li>• establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Limburgish</li> </ul>		↘			

\* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

**Fulfilled:** Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

**Partly fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

**Formally fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

**Not fulfilled:** No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

**No conclusion:** The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

#### Changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle

174. The Committee of Experts does not have sufficient information on the teaching and study of Limburgish to evaluate the undertaking under **Article 7.1.f**. The situation regarding **Article 7.1.g** is improving. The Limburgish section set up by the Association of Teachers of Living Languages in 2019 has led to the development of education material for adults and several private initiatives offer the possibility to

<sup>81</sup> In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: [http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/\(treaty No. 148\)](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/(treaty%20No.%20148)).

learn the language. However, they lack dedicated financial support. The provision is partly fulfilled. **Article 7.3** is partly fulfilled because there are not enough awareness-raising measures for mainstream society within the objectives of education and the media. There is a platform of exchange with the provincial authorities. However, at national level, there is no body set up to advise the authorities on matters pertaining to Limburgish. Therefore, Article 7.4 is partly fulfilled.

## **2.2.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Limburgish in the Netherlands**

The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities of the Netherlands to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.2.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands<sup>82</sup> remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

### **I. Recommendations for immediate action**

- a. Prepare a strategy to ensure the teaching and study of Limburgish as a subject at all levels of education and promote its use in preschool education;**
- b. Set up a body responsible for representing the interests of Limburgish speakers at national level.**

### **II. Further recommendations**

- a. Strengthen the use of Limburgish in regional broadcasting;
- b. Establish the study of Limburgish at university level;
- c. Raise awareness about Limburgish and include Limburgish culture and history in the general curriculum;
- d. Support the development of educational materials for adults;
- e. Further strengthen/promote the use of bilingual signs and place names in Limburgish in public spaces;
- f. Facilitate and/or encourage the use of Limburgish in economic and social life.

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<sup>82</sup> [CM/RecChL\(2001\)1](#), 19 September 2001, Ministers' Deputies 765th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2004\)7](#), 15 December 2004, ministers' Deputies 909th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2008\)4](#), 9 July 2008, Ministers' Deputies 1032nd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2012\)5](#), 24 October 2012, Ministers' Deputies 1153rd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2016\)7](#), 14 December 2016, Ministers' Deputies 1273bis meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2020\)3](#), 23 September 2020, Ministers' Deputies 1384th meeting.



## 2.3 Low Saxon

### 2.3.1 Compliance of the Netherlands with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Low Saxon

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle: ↗ improvement ✓ deterioration = no change

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Low Saxon <sup>83</sup>	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
<b>Part II of the Charter</b>						
<b>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</b>						
<b>Art. 7 – Objectives and principles</b>						
7.1.a	recognition of Low Saxon as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Low Saxon	=				
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Low Saxon	=				
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Low Saxon, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life		=			
7.1.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Low Saxon</li> <li>• establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups</li> </ul>	=				
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Low Saxon at all appropriate stages				✓	
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Low Saxon to learn it	=				
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Low Saxon at universities or equivalent institutions		=			
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Low Saxon		=			
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Low Saxon	=				
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country</li> <li>• promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Low Saxon among the objectives of education and training</li> <li>• encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Low Saxon among their objectives</li> </ul>		✓			
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Low Saxon</li> <li>• establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Low Saxon</li> </ul>				✓	

\* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

**Fulfilled:** Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

**Partly fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

**Formally fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

**Not fulfilled:** No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

**No conclusion:** The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

#### Changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle

175. **Article 7.1.f** is not fulfilled. The use of Low Saxon at preschool level depends on private initiatives and is not structured. At primary and secondary education level, Low Saxon is not part of the curriculum and is practically non-existent. **Article 7.3** is partly fulfilled because there are not enough awareness-raising measures for mainstream society within the objectives of education and the media. **Article 7.4** is not fulfilled as information collected during the on-the-spot visit shows that representatives of speakers are not invited

<sup>83</sup> In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: [http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/\(treaty No. 148\)](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/(treaty%20No.%20148)).

to participate in meetings organised at official and inter-authority level by provincial authorities. At national level, there is no body set up to advise the authorities on matters pertaining to Low Saxon.

### **2.3.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Low Saxon in the Netherlands**

The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities of the Netherlands to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.3.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands<sup>84</sup> remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

#### **I. Recommendations for immediate action**

- a. Prepare a strategy to ensure the teaching and study of Low Saxon as a subject at all levels of education and promote its use in preschool education;**
- b. Set up a body responsible for representing the interests of Low Saxon speakers at national level;**

#### **II. Further recommendations**

- a. Strengthen the use of Low Saxon in regional broadcasting;
- b. Establish the study of Low Saxon at university level;
- c. Raise awareness about Low Saxon and include Low Saxon culture and history in the general curriculum;
- d. Further strengthen/ promote the use of bilingual signs and place names in Low Saxon in public spaces;
- e. Facilitate and/or encourage the use of Low Saxon in economic and social life;

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<sup>84</sup> [CM/RecChL\(2001\)1](#), 19 September 2001, Ministers' Deputies 765th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2004\)7](#), 15 December 2004, Ministers' Deputies 909th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2008\)4](#), 9 July 2008, Ministers' Deputies 1032nd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2012\)5](#), 24 October 2012, Ministers' Deputies 1153rd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2016\)7](#), 14 December 2016, Ministers' Deputies 1273bis meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2020\)3](#), 23 September 2020, Ministers' Deputies 1384th meeting.

## 2.4 Romanes

### 2.4.1 Compliance of the Netherlands with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Romanes

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle: ↗ improvement ✓ deterioration = no change

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Romanes <sup>85</sup>	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
<b>Part II of the Charter</b> <b>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</b>						
<b>Art. 7 – Objectives and principles</b>						
7.1.a	recognition of Romanes as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Romanes					=
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Romanes				✓	
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Romanes, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life		↗			
7.1.e	• maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Romanes • establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups					=
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Romanes at all appropriate stages					=
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Romanes to learn it					=
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Romanes at universities or equivalent institutions				✓	
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Romanes				✓	
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Romanes					=
7.3	• promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country • promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Romanes among the objectives of education and training • encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Romanes among their objectives					=
7.4	• take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Romanes • establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Romanes				✓	

\* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

**Fulfilled:** Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

**Partly fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

**Formally fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

**Not fulfilled:** No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

**No conclusion:** The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

In its evaluation of the application of Art. 7.1-7.4 to Romanes, the Committee of Experts has kept in mind that these provisions should be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

#### Changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle

176. **Article 7.1.c** is not fulfilled as there is no resolute action to promote Romanes. Cultural activities in Romanes are rarely supported by the authorities. Therefore, **Article 7.1.d** is partly fulfilled. Based on the repeated lack of information in the periodical report, the Committee of Experts concludes that **Article 7.1.h**

<sup>85</sup> In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: [http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/\(treaty No. 148\)](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/(treaty%20No.%20148)).

is not fulfilled. **Article 7.1.i** is not fulfilled as Romanes does not benefit from any support for the promotion of transfrontier contacts and transnational exchanges in the fields covered by the Charter. **Article 7.4** is not fulfilled as there is no body set up to advise the authorities on matters pertaining to Romanes at national level, and the authorities are basing their policy on a so-called “flexible dialogue”.

#### **2.4.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Romanes in the Netherlands**

The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities of the Netherlands to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.4.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands<sup>86</sup> remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

##### **I. Recommendations for immediate action**

- a. Set up a body responsible for representing the interests of Romanes speakers at national level;**
- b. Raise awareness about culture and history of Romanes speakers in the general curriculum;**

##### **II. Further recommendations**

- a. Support research on Romanes at university level;
- b. Raise awareness about Romanes and include Romanes culture and history in the general curriculum;
- c. Further support the cultural activities of the speakers of Romanes;
- d. Take actions to encourage and support Romanes speakers in establishing transfrontier relations with speakers of Romanes outside of the Netherlands.

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<sup>86</sup> [CM/RecChL\(2001\)1](#), 19 September 2001, Ministers' Deputies 765th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2004\)7](#), 15 December 2004, Ministers' Deputies 909th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2008\)4](#), 9 July 2008, Ministers' Deputies 1032nd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2012\)5](#), 24 October 2012, Ministers' Deputies 1153rd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2016\)7](#), 14 December 2016, Ministers' Deputies 1273bis meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2020\)3](#), 23 September 2020, Ministers' Deputies 1384th meeting.

## 2.5 Yiddish

### 2.5.1 Compliance of the Netherlands with its undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages concerning the protection and promotion of Yiddish

Symbols used to mark changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle: ↗ improvement ✓ deterioration = no change

The Committee of Experts considers the undertaking*:						
Article	Undertakings of the Netherlands concerning Yiddish <sup>87</sup>	fulfilled	partly fulfilled	formally fulfilled	not fulfilled	no conclusion
<b>Part II of the Charter</b>						
<b>(Undertakings which the state must apply to all regional or minority languages within its territory)</b>						
<b>Art. 7 – Objectives and principles</b>						
7.1.a	recognition of Yiddish as an expression of cultural wealth	=				
7.1.b	ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Yiddish					=
7.1.c	resolute action to promote Yiddish					=
7.1.d	facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of Yiddish, in speech and writing, in public life (education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, transfrontier exchanges) and private life		↗			
7.1.e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups in the State using Yiddish</li> <li>• establishment of cultural relations with other linguistic groups</li> </ul>	↗				
7.1.f	provision of forms and means for the teaching and study of Yiddish at all appropriate stages	=				
7.1.g	provision of facilities enabling (also adult) non-speakers of Yiddish to learn it	=				
7.1.h	promotion of study and research on Yiddish at universities or equivalent institutions	↗				
7.1.i	promotion of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for the benefit of Yiddish				✓	
7.2	eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Yiddish	=				
7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country</li> <li>• promote the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Yiddish among the objectives of education and training</li> <li>• encourage the mass media to include respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to Yiddish among their objectives</li> </ul>		↗			
7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the group which uses Yiddish</li> <li>• establish a body for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to Yiddish</li> </ul>				✓	

\* The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages evaluates the compliance of States Parties with their undertakings under the Charter as follows:

**Fulfilled:** Policies, legislation and practice are in conformity with the Charter.

**Partly fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are wholly or partly in conformity with the Charter, but the undertaking is only partly implemented in practice.

**Formally fulfilled:** Policies and legislation are in conformity with the Charter, but there is no implementation in practice.

**Not fulfilled:** No action in policies, legislation and practice has been taken to implement the undertaking.

**No conclusion:** The Committee of Experts is not in a position to conclude on the fulfilment of the undertaking as no or insufficient information has been provided by the authorities.

In its evaluation of the application of Art. 7.1-7.4 to Yiddish, the Committee of Experts has kept in mind that these provisions should be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

#### Changes in the evaluation compared to the previous monitoring cycle

177. **Article 7.1.d** is partly fulfilled because there are some education activities in Yiddish. However, it is not supported in other domains. **Article 7.1.e** is fulfilled as Yiddish speakers are invited to participate in symposia organised by the authorities on regional and minority languages. **Article 7.1.h** is fulfilled since it is possible to do research and to study Yiddish at the University of Amsterdam. **Article 7.1.i** is not fulfilled

<sup>87</sup> In order to facilitate readability, the provisions of the Charter appear here in a shortened and simplified form. The complete version of each provision can be consulted on the website of the Treaty Office: [http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/\(treaty No. 148\)](http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/(treaty%20No.%20148)).

as Yiddish does not benefit from any support for the promotion of transfrontier contacts and transnational exchanges in the fields covered by the Charter. **Article 7.3** is partly fulfilled because there are not enough awareness-raising measures for mainstream society within the objectives of education and the media. **Article 7.4** is not fulfilled as there is no body set up to advise the authorities on matters pertaining to Yiddish at national level.

## **2.5.2 Recommendations by the Committee of Experts on how to improve the protection and promotion of Yiddish in the Netherlands**

The Committee of Experts encourages the authorities of the Netherlands to comply with all undertakings under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which are not considered “fulfilled” (see under 2.5.1 above), as well as to continue to comply with those that are fulfilled. In doing so, the authorities should take particular account of the recommendations set out below. The recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the application of the Charter in the Netherlands<sup>88</sup> remain valid in their own right. Recommendations made in the monitoring procedure of the Charter aim to support the authorities in the implementation process.

### **I. Recommendations for immediate action**

- a. Ensure the continuity of support for the teaching of Yiddish at primary and secondary level;**
- b. Set up a body responsible for representing the interests of Yiddish speakers at national level;**

### **II. Further recommendations**

- a. Raise awareness about Yiddish and include Yiddish culture and history in the general curriculum;
- b. Further support the cultural activities of the speakers of Yiddish;
- c. Take actions to encourage and support Yiddish speakers in establishing transfrontier relations with speakers of Yiddish outside of the Netherlands.

<sup>88</sup> [CM/RecChL\(2001\)1](#), 19 September 2001, Ministers' Deputies 765th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2004\)7](#), 15 December 2004, Ministers' Deputies 909th meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2008\)4](#), 9 July 2008, Ministers' Deputies 1032nd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2012\)5](#), 24 October 2012, Ministers' Deputies 1153rd meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2016\)7](#), 14 December 2016, Ministers' Deputies 1273bis meeting; [CM/RecChL\(2020\)3](#), 23 September 2020, Ministers' Deputies 1384th meeting.

### Chapter 3 [Proposals for] Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Experts, while acknowledging the efforts the authorities of the Netherlands have undertaken to protect the regional or minority languages spoken in their country, has in its evaluation chosen to concentrate on some of the most important deficiencies in the implementation of the Charter. The recommendations forwarded by the Committee of Experts to the Committee of Ministers should not, however, be interpreted as diminishing the relevance of the other, more detailed observations contained in the report, which remain valid in their own right. The recommendations proposed by the Committee of Experts are drafted accordingly.

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, in accordance with Article 16 (4) of the Charter, proposes on the basis of the information contained in this report, that the Committee of Ministers makes the following recommendations to the Netherlands.

The Committee of Ministers,

In accordance with Article 16 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 2 May 1996 and to the supplementary declaration submitted on 19 March 1997;

Having taken note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts of the Charter with respect to the application of the Charter by the Netherlands;

Bearing in mind that this evaluation is based on information submitted by the Netherlands in its seventh periodical report, supplementary information given by the authorities of the Netherlands, information submitted by bodies and associations legally established in the Netherlands and on the information obtained by the Committee of Experts during its on-the-spot visit;

Having taken note of the comments made by the authorities of the Netherlands on the content of the report of the Committee of Experts;

Recommends that the authorities of the Netherlands take account of all the observations and recommendations of the Committee of Experts and, as a matter of priority:

1. Continue to strengthen the teaching in and of Frisian at all levels of education and its use in preschool education;
2. Take measures to guarantee the accused the exercise of his/her right to use Frisian in criminal proceedings and ensure the assistance of a qualified interpreter;
3. Set up bodies responsible for representing the interests of Limburgish, Low Saxon, Romanes and Yiddish speakers in the Netherlands at national level;
4. Prepare strategies to ensure the teaching and study of Limburgish and Low Saxon as subjects at all levels of education and promote their use in preschool education;
5. Ensure the continuity of the teaching and study of Yiddish;
6. Raise awareness about all regional and minority languages covered by the Charter and include their culture and history in the general curriculum.

The Committee of Ministers invites the authorities of the Netherlands to submit the information on the recommendations for immediate action by 1 December 2023 and the next periodical report by 1 June 2026.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> See Committee of Ministers' Decisions [CM/Del/Dec\(2018\)1330/10.4e - CM-Public](#), and "Outlines for the periodical reports on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to be presented by the States Parties", [CM\(2019\)69 final](#).

## Appendix I: Instrument of Acceptance



Netherlands

### **Declaration contained in the instrument of acceptance, deposited on 2 May 1996 - Or. Engl.**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands accepts the said Charter for the Kingdom in Europe.

### **Period covered: 01/03/1998 -**

Articles concerned : -

### **Declarations contained in a Note Verbale handed over by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands at the time of deposit of the instrument of acceptance, on 2 May 1996 - Or. Engl.**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands declares, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 2, and Article 3, paragraph 1, of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, that it will apply to the Frisian language in the province of Friesland the following provisions of Part III of the Charter:

#### In Article 8:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (ii), b (ii), c (iii), e (ii), f (i), g, h, i.  
Paragraph 2.

#### In Article 9:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (ii), a (iii), b (iii), c (ii), c (iii).  
Paragraph 2, sub-paragraph b.

#### In Article 10:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (v), c.  
Paragraph 2, sub-paragraphs a, b, c, d, e, f, g.  
Paragraph 4, sub-paragraphs a, c.  
Paragraph 5.

#### In Article 11:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a (iii), b (ii), c (ii), f (ii).  
Paragraph 2.

#### In Article 12:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a, b, d, e, f, g, h.  
Paragraph 2.  
Paragraph 3.

#### In Article 13:

Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs a, c, d.  
Paragraph 2, sub-paragraphs b, c.

#### In Article 14:

Paragraph a.  
Paragraph b.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands further declares that the principles enumerated in Part II of the will be applied to the Low-Saxon languages used in the Netherlands, and, in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 5, to Yiddish and the Romanes languages.

### **Period covered: 01/03/1998 -**

**Articles concerned : 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9**



**Declaration contained in a Note Verbale from the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands, dated 18 March 1997, registered at the Secretariat General on 19 March 1997 - Or. Engl.**

The Kingdom of the Netherlands declares, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1, of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 5 November 1992, that the principles enumerated in Part II of the Charter will be applied to the Limburger language used in the Netherlands.

**Period covered: 01/03/1998 -**

**Articles concerned : 2**

## Appendix II: Comments from the authorities of the Netherlands

The comments of the Dutch Authorities are focused on (1) the Frisian language and (2) the policy on Roma and Sinti communities.

### 1. Frisian language

In this chapter the Dutch Authorities would like to react on several topics regarding the Frisian language.

In subparagraph 20 the Committee mentioned that the Committee of Experts considers it is important that the current opportunities for studying Frisian are consolidated through a strong, visible and sustainable Frisian language and culture discipline at university level, independent from the administrative agreement on the Frisian language and culture (BFTK). The Committee of Experts also states that information provided during the on-site visit, and subsequently confirmed, indicates that the Chair of Frisian Language and Literature at the University of Groningen is now reduced to a 0.2 full time equivalent junior lecturer. Although the Dutch authorities agree that a strong, visible and sustainable Frisian language and culture discipline at university level is important, the Dutch authority would like to comment that the Chair of Frisian Language and Literature at the University of Groningen has been reduced to a 0.4 full time assistant professor and not to a 0.2 full time equivalent junior lecturer. It has to be added that this is only the case because the University of Groningen has been unable to find a suitable candidate for full replacement of the Chair. At the end of 2022 the University of Groningen announced their intention to come up with a concrete plan at the beginning of 2023 to compensate for the fact that the Chair of the Frisian language is currently vacant.

The Committee of Experts states in subparagraphs 30 and 81 that regional newspapers publish only a small number of their articles in Frisian. Although this is correct, the Dutch Authorities would like to add that often persons who are interviewed in Frisian are quoted in Frisian in the regional newspapers as well. In 2021 the regional newspaper Leeuwarder Courant even published a whole newspaper in the Frisian language in honour of the celebration of 70 years 'Kneppelfreed'. In their vacancies regional newspapers often ask for bilingual journalists.

The Committee of Experts states in subparagraph 52 that the number of students taking Frisian as part of their school leaving exams remains low, despite campaigns with the goal that 25% of pupils do so by 2024. The Dutch authorities would like to point out that this goal is not an officially formulated (provincial) goal, as in 2022 so far only 3% of the pupils are taking Frisian as an examination subject.

In subparagraph 62 the Committee of Experts states that online material that covers the teaching of Frisian history and culture is available to a very limited degree. Also, it was mentioned that there is a lack of attractive printed or online teaching material in Frisian for use in history lessons at secondary schools in Fryslân. The Dutch authorities would like to add that in 2023 a new book for secondary education about Frisian history will be published with financial support from the province of Fryslân. The book will be available in Dutch and Frisian.

In subparagraph 64 the Committee of Experts mentions that the Inspectorate will conduct a special survey of Frisian in primary and secondary education every five years. The Dutch authorities would like to correct this; this should be every six years.

The Committee of Experts states in subparagraph 74 that new staff at the provincial organisation has to take a language test. The Dutch authorities would like to nuance the answer. New staff will be encouraged to take a language course but there will be no general language test. The province of Fryslân prefers to stimulate the Frisian language in a more positive way.

In subparagraph 77 the Committee of Experts mentions that the information provided during the on-the-spot visit shows nonetheless that bilingual signs are not commonly adopted and used in Fryslân. The Dutch Authority would like to add that the visit of the Committee of Experts took

place in the capital of Fryslân, Leeuwarden. Compared to other regions, Frisian is less visible in Leeuwarden than it is in other municipalities. The Frisian Authorities would like to invite the Committee of Experts for a longer stay in the future to be able to get an impression of the visibility of the Frisian language outside of the capital of the province of Fryslân.

As one of the recommendations for immediate action, paragraph 2.1.2 / I.C, the Committee of Experts recommends including Frisian speakers in the negotiation process on the administrative agreement on the Frisian language and culture 2024 – 2028. The Dutch Authorities would like to express that this agreement, the '*Bestuursafpraak Friese Taal en Cultuur*', is a final administrative agreement between the national and provincial government. To be able to write the content of this agreement, the authorities have already been in contact with different relevant stakeholders in the Frisian field. Involving these stakeholders more actively in a negotiation process between different governments might not be desired. Nevertheless, the Frisian authority would like to try to involve the representatives of Frisian speakers even more actively in the preparation process of writing the administrative agreement on the Frisian language and culture. The Dutch Authorities would also like to emphasise that the advisory organisation DINGtiid (representing the wishes of the Frisian field as well) is actively involved in the agreement process.

#### *Frisian interpreters in criminal proceedings*

In the fourth paragraph of the executive summary (page 4), the Committee of Experts states that there are difficulties regarding interpretation in criminal proceedings that must be addressed without delay. The Committee of Experts considers that the compliance with both undertaking Article 9.1.a.ii<sup>1</sup> and Article 9.1.a.iii<sup>2</sup> has deteriorated to formally fulfilled.

With regard to the difficulties regarding Frisian interpretation in criminal proceedings and the deterioration of the compliance with undertaking Article 9.1.a.ii, the Dutch authorities state that it is not the case that Frisians currently cannot make use of the legally enshrined right to speak Frisian in the judiciary. The Northern Netherlands District Court and the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal employ judges and clerks who passively master the Frisian language. The Northern Netherlands district prosecutor's office and the branch of the Arnhem-Leeuwarden district prosecutor's office employ public prosecutors who also passively master Frisian. Prior to each hearing, litigants are asked in writing whether they want to exercise their right to speak Frisian at the hearing. The cases in which litigants have expressed this right, are as much as possible, scheduled with a judge who passively masters the Frisian language. As a result, it is often possible to use the Frisian language at a hearing without the intervention of an interpreter. In the event a Frisian interpreter is necessary, a sworn interpreter of the C1 level will, in principle, be requested. If there is urgency and/or no sworn C1 interpreter is available at that time, after approval of the client, a sworn interpreter from the register of the B2 level can be used or if this is not available, an interpreter who is not registered in the register. In 2021, the Public Prosecution Service engaged a Frisian interpreter 7 times; the Northern Netherlands District Court engages an interpreter on average twice a year and the Arnhem-Leeuwarden Court of Appeal has done so about 5 times in 16 years in the criminal law sector - never in the civil sector. The report's conclusion that there are difficulties regarding interpretation in criminal proceedings that must be addressed without further delay does not seem to be in line with the practice explained above.

With regard to the deterioration of the compliance with undertaking Article 9.1.a.iii, the Dutch Authorities would like to comment that in criminal proceedings, documents and evidence in Frisian are admitted, if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations.

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<sup>1</sup> Guarantee the accused the right to use Frisian in criminal proceedings, if necessary, by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.

<sup>2</sup> Ensure that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible in criminal proceedings solely because they are formulated in Frisian, if necessary, by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned.

Furthermore, in subparagraph 69 the Committee of Experts states that the information provided during the on-the-spot visit indicated that the Frisian interpreters engaged after national procurement have seen their salary decrease by 35%, resulting in court hearings taking place without qualified interpreters. The Dutch Authorities state that such a decrease is not the case. The procurement of the Public Prosecutor's Office includes additional conditions so that interpreters do not experience a disadvantage. The rate is a minimum rate that can be negotiated. At this time, the three C1 Frisian interpreters indicated that they do not agree with this rate and have resigned.

The Dutch authorities would like to emphasise that the use of Frisian interpreters is the second-best option. The best option to comply with the law is to employ judges, clerks and public prosecutors who passively master the Frisian language.

Under 'Judicial authorities' at points 69 and 70, the Committee of Experts mentions that in civil and administrative proceedings, the Frisian government pays for the services of level A interpreters at an appropriate rate. The Dutch Authorities would like to add that it is not the Frisian government who is paying for the services, but the national authority. The province of Fryslân recently did pay for the education to obtain extra C1 Frisian interpreters, but not for the services provided by the interpreters.

## **2. Policy on Roma and Sinti communities**

In this chapter the Dutch Authorities would like to respond to several points regarding the policy on Roma and Sinti communities.

In the report of the Committee of Experts it is mentioned that the Netherlands has limited specific policy measures in place for Roma and Sinti. It is also stated that no further steps have been taken besides the establishment of a flexible dialogue and a knowledge platform. In response to these statements, the Dutch Authorities would like to first of all stress that the Netherlands has a broad set of generic policy instruments to promote the equality, inclusion and participation of different social groups, including Roma and Sinti communities. Secondly, there is also a broad national strategy against discrimination and racism in place, which includes measures to counter anti-gypsy sentiment. Thirdly, the abovementioned efforts are supplemented with specific policy measures for Roma and Sinti communities.

The Dutch Authorities would like to hereby provide a short overview of some of the relevant policies in place for Roma and Sinti communities in the Netherlands.

### 1. Specific policy measures

#### *Dialogue*

- Roma and Sinti representatives are consulted on a variety of topics, which goes beyond the flexible dialogue mentioned in the report, for example as part of the participation emancipation subsidy scheme in place for Roma and Sinti.

Flexible dialogue: The Ministry of Social Affairs initiated a dialogue between representatives of the Roma and Sinti communities and the various ministries developing policies touching on these communities. Currently an evaluation of this dialogue is taking place, after which a new framework will be developed. The communities will be involved in the design of this framework. The aim will be to jointly work on projects to increase inclusion of Roma and to counter anti-gypsy sentiment.

#### *Remembrance*

- Remembrance  
In late 2021 the National Memorial Centre Camp Westerbork opened a digital exhibition of memories of the war of Sinti and Roma victims. In addition, since 2021 there is a Holocaust remembrance monument in Amsterdam with the names of victims, amongst them 220 Sinti and Roma. Additionally, there are numerous teaching materials available to schools on the

(Holocaust) history of Roma and Sinti.

- Education products and school tours

In general, when developing education products or organising school tours about the Holocaust, the National Committee for 4 and 5 May (responsible for Commemorating and celebrating) and the *Stichting Musea en Herinneringscentra WOII* (network of WWII museums and remembrance centres) always pay attention to the persecution of the Sinti and Roma. Furthermore, the exhibition in Remembrance Centre Camp Westerbork pays attention to the specific suffering of Sinti and Roma. For example, the centre developed:

- 'Een Lesson Up'; a lesson derived from the life story of survivor Mädie Franz.
- Teaching material developed for the book 'Opgejaagd' by Lydia Rood (primary education).
- Teaching material developed from the family story of Bluma Schattevoet.
- Schools can opt for a themed programme about Sinti and Roma in Camp Westerbork, at their location.
- The story of Settela Steinbach and the deportation of Sinti and Roma from Camp Westerbork are a permanent part of the educational program in Camp Westerbork. This is for all levels of education.

In addition, there is an online exhibition that can be used as a starting point for education:

<https://romasinti.eu/nl/>.

#### *Research and knowledge sharing*

- Research

Since 2013, the level of social inclusion of Roma and Sinti is investigated every other year in the Social Inclusion Monitor. Various qualitative methods are used to obtain a sound picture of the development and expectations for the future with respect to education, labour, health, housing, security and anti-gypsy sentiment/anti-Roma discrimination experienced within these domains.

- Knowledge platform Roma and Sinti

A Knowledge Platform Roma and Sinti has been incorporated into the Knowledge Institute for Inclusive Society (*Kennisplatform Inclusief Samenleven*). The Platform provides information to members of the Roma and Sinti community, as well as to policy makers and social workers who are in need of more knowledge about how to improve the living conditions of the Roma and Sinti and on how to combat anti-gypsy sentiment/anti-Roma discrimination.

#### *Grants, subsidies*

- Grant for promoting participation

Seven municipalities have been granted a decentralisation grant to implement a pilot study involving the deployment of intermediaries to promote the participation of Roma and Sinti youths in education and the labour market. The Dutch government has made a grant of in total €735,000 available. Due to the measures taken because of the COVID pandemic (for example, the lockdowns and closing of schools), the majority of the projects have incurred delay. The pilots will run from 2020 until 2023. An evaluation study is currently being conducted to identify the lessons learned.

- Subsidy to improve social position

In recognition of observed shortcomings in the post-war restoration of rights, the Netherlands has opened up a participation and emancipation subsidy scheme for Roma and Sinti. These subsidies are granted to fund projects and activities that, directly or indirectly, contribute to improving the social position of Roma and Sinti in the Netherlands. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has established an advisory committee comprised of members from the Roma and Sinti communities that provides advisory input when assessing project plans.

#### *Education*

- Subsidy for primary education

A special scheme for primary education school boards has been set up, allowing them to apply for subsidies if their school is attended by at least 4 pupils of a Roma or Sinti background. The objective of the scheme is for schools to be able to provide additional support to Roma and Sinti children. About €1 million in subsidies is applied for each year. As registering the ethnicity of these children is a sensitive subject, the decision was made to drop the requirement that

proof, such as a statement by the parents and logging this ethnicity in the pupil records, be submitted. Starting from the 2021-2022 educational year, schools no longer have to include proof in their records.

- National Education Support  
In addition, the National Government supports the *National Education Support for Traveller, Roma and Sinti Children* (OWRS) project. Schools in need of support can approach the OWRS in various and accessible ways. For example, the OWRS has set up a help desk which schools may contact when they have questions. It also organises annual meetings. The OWRS network is also comprised of partners active in the wider context of schools, such as compulsory education officers and municipal policy staff.

### *Housing*

- Municipal pitch policy  
In 2018, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations submitted the Policy framework on municipal pitch policy to the Dutch House of Representatives. The policy framework provides the municipal authorities with guidelines for developing the local pitch policy in the context of the human rights framework. It offers building blocks that municipal authorities can use to flesh out the municipal housing policy for travellers. The vision underpinning this new policy framework is centred on protecting travellers against discrimination, safeguarding their human rights, and offering legal certainty and clarity.
- Programme for municipal bottlenecks  
The National Government has rolled out a new support programme to tackle municipal bottlenecks. A total of €50 million has been made available by the National Government in 2021 for housing priority groups, including caravan dwellers. Municipalities submitted funds for more than 350 pitches. In 2023 a new review of the number of pitches will be carried out.

## 2. National strategy against discrimination and racism

### *Combating anti-gypsy sentiment/anti-Roma discrimination*

Efforts to counter anti-gypsy sentiment form part of the wide national strategy against discrimination and racism. By implementing a wide-ranging package of measures, the Netherlands endeavours to increase awareness and willingness to report, maintenance of a reporting system, and sanctioning proven discrimination. There are also anti-discrimination measures in place covering areas such as education, the labour market, and the housing market.

- Anti-gypsy sentiment guide for municipalities  
In 2022, a guide was developed that aims to help municipalities counter racism and discrimination. This guide includes a chapter on anti-gypsy sentiment. The guide was developed with the involvement of communities, including Roma and Sinti members.
- National action plan of the National Coordinator against discrimination and racism (NCDR)  
In October 2021, the Netherlands appointed a National Coordinator against Discrimination and Racism. His role is to boost the interdisciplinary approach against discrimination and racism, including the discrimination of Roma and Sinti communities. In 2022, the NCDR published a national action plan, which was drawn up with the involvement of all relevant actors, including representatives of the Roma and Sinti communities.
- State Commission against Discrimination and Racism  
In 2022, a State Commission against Discrimination and Racism was appointed for four years with the task of providing insight into the state of racism and discrimination in the Netherlands and advising the government on this topic. Research conducted by the State Commission will focus on all sectors of society, including a review for discrimination and ethnicity profiling within the government. Based on the investigation, the State Commission will advise the government on improving policies and regulations to combat discrimination and racism.
- Labour market discrimination  
The Labour Market Improved Integration (LMII) programme has been in place since 2021. This programme is comprised of eight pilot studies to figure out "what works" to improve the labour market position of persons with a non-Western migration background. The insights obtained from the Nudging in Recruitment and Selection pilot can also be effectively used to counter discrimination of Roma and Sinti on the labour market. The insights gained from this

programme will be used in the implementation of the 2022-2025 Labour Market Discrimination Action Plan.

### 3. Generic instruments

Generic instruments available to Dutch citizens are also available to people with a Roma and Sinti background and have often proven to be effective. Some examples include:

- Anti-(child) poverty policy  
The Netherlands has implemented a national policy aimed specifically at combating poverty in close cooperation between the National Government, municipal authorities, and social organisations. The municipal authorities hold discretionary powers on policy and spending in this respect. This allows for suitable, customised endeavours to be made on the local level, so that all residents, including those from the Roma and Sinti communities, receive appropriate aid. Particular attention is being provided to combating child poverty.
- Enforcement of compulsory education  
The municipal authorities are responsible for enforcing compulsory education of children from the age of five years old and employ compulsory education officers to monitor compliance with this obligation. Should children, be they of a Roma or Sinti background or not, be structurally absent, the compulsory education officer will take action - including legal action, if required - to make sure these children attend school.
- Labour market participation  
In order to promote labour market participation, assistance is provided to jobseekers. An investigation is conducted to determine which tools and procedures can be used to help the person concerned to find suitable paid work in as short a time as possible. This strategy is used equally for all jobseekers, including Roma and Sinti.
- Diversity in public health care  
The responsibility for public health is vested primarily in the government and initial action is, in the main, taken by the municipal authorities. The current system allows for taking account of the diversity of the population where relevant. This means that possibilities exist for taking account of the needs of specific groups, including the Roma and Sinti community.

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is an independent body that evaluates the compliance of the States Parties with their undertakings and, where appropriate, encourages them to gradually reach a higher level of commitment.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 25 June 1992 and entered into force on 1 March 1998, is the European convention for the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages. It is designed to enable speakers to use them both in private and public life and obliges the States Parties to actively promote the use of these languages in education, courts, administration, media, culture, economic and social life, and cross-border co-operation.

Regional or minority languages are part of Europe's cultural heritage and their protection and promotion contribute to the building of a Europe based on democracy and cultural diversity.

The text of the Charter is available in over 50 languages.

[www.coe.int/minlang](http://www.coe.int/minlang)

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