

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES**

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**Comments of the Government of Italy
on the Fourth Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the implementation of the Framework
Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Italy**

(received on 12 July 2016)

Rome, 30th June, 2016

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL
MINORITIES**

**Fourth Opinion on Italy, adopted on 19th November, 2015
Written comments by the Italian Authorities**

BACKGROUND

The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (below: the Committee) adopted its IV Opinion (below: the Opinion) in Strasbourg on 19th November, 2015. The Opinion focuses on the Report of Italy on historical linguistic minorities and new minorities (below: the Report).

The document was recorded under number ACFC/OP/IV(2015)006.

In this connection, the following comments are forwarded. They were drafted relying on the support of competent central and local Administrations, involved in the implementation of the Convention.

Preliminarily, the Italian Government was again committed to continuing the constructive comprehensive interaction with the Committee, in order to preserve a dialogue aimed at the protection and promotion of fundamental liberties and human rights, which are priority objectives of the Convention itself.

For easier reading, the following comments refer to the issues listed in the Fourth Opinion, subdivided by paragraph, which are put in brackets.

Executive summary

Over the years Italy carried on and strengthened its actions aimed at the protection and promotion of the rights of linguistic minorities members, including through specific regional pieces of legislation aimed at providing incentives to local languages and cultures, in the spirit of the more far reaching regulatory framework based on Laws No. 482/1999 and 38/2001.

The establishment and strengthening of linguistic helpdesks, upon a proposal by the Advisory Technical Committee, made it possible to create a real point of contact between the minority speaking population and the public administration, even when opening hours and human resources were limited. In this connection, it is worth stressing that the present economic crisis affected to a considerable extent the generalized reduction of State Budget items, including those for linguistic minorities.

In the framework of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (below RSC) UNAR, the National Contact Point, is updating its intervention and monitoring capacity in cooperation with local and regional entities, including by availing itself of the opportunities and resources included in the new programming of European Funds (2014-2020) which envisages specific instruments aimed at the condition of marginalized communities, including the RSC communities that live in camps or in other inadequate types of housing. In line with the principles and guiding criteria of the Strategy, the NOP "Città Metropolitane"

(Metropolitan Cities) supports integrated actions aimed at overcoming existing camps and at favouring the inclusion of RSC individuals and families in the wider community of residents.

The MIUR-ISMU report, published in May 2016, shows that there is a considerable increase of RSC minors enrolled in primary and secondary education.

In the framework of the National Strategy, UNAR is updating its intervention capacity through the opportunities and resources present in the 2014-2020 programming period. More specifically, within the NOP Inclusion, in the framework of actions connected to the implementation of the National Strategy, a number of actions are dedicated or linked to the inclusion in education of Roma.

Furthermore, the Panel for the Study of Issues concerning the Legal Status of RSC, established at the Ministry of the Interior continues to function, including through legislative initiatives e.g. the Bill on Statelessness (No. A.S. 2148) submitted to the Chamber of Deputies. In this connection, Italy ratified the 1961 U.N Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by means of Law No. 162 of 9.9.2015, published in the Official Journal No. 237 of 12.10.2015.

An additional important area of intervention is the sector of communication, mass media, publications, the WEB and the modalities whereby racial and xenophobic phenomena in the most general sense are being countered.

This sensitive aspect is being dealt with by Italy including through the new guidelines that Agcom is about to issue and the specific policies adopted in this connection by OSCAD and UNAR.

Article 3 of the Framework Convention

Personal scope of application of the Framework Convention

The Italian Authorities draw inspiration from the guidelines of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of RSC, in this connection they continue to commit themselves to overcoming the hindrances identified by the Committee in the various areas of application.

As regards the process of **delimitation of municipalities** to which the protection laws are applied (par. 18) , there has been an increase of the metropolitan areas where provisions for the safeguarding, enhancement and spreading of languages and socio-cultural traditions of linguistic minorities that are present and recognized are implemented; more specifically reference is made to the municipality of Tavenna (CB) (Croatian minority), Lusernetta, Salbertrand (TO) (French minority) and Caprie (TO) (Franco-Provençal minority).

As regards the recognition as a separate linguistic minority of the inhabitants of the Resia, Natisone and Torre valleys (UD), distinct from the Slovene minority (par. 19), in keeping with the Resolution of the European Parliament of 11th September 2013 on endangered European languages (201372007(INI)), the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia granted Resian and its linguistic varieties the right to protection and provided for corresponding funds, by means of Regional Law No. 26 of 16th November 2007.

As regards the **status of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti** (paragraphs 23-29), one of the typical problems relating to these communities, is the **limited presence of reliable data**, which, in any case, also exists in many other European countries.

This hindrance is also stressed by the National Strategy in the framework of systemic action 1 “Increasing the institutional and civil society capacity-building for the social inclusion of the RSC people”, which indicates an essential prerequisite to give practical implementation to the Strategy itself, namely the establishment of an ad hoc working group at UNAR to fill the information and statistical data gap.

In this area, a **housing-related mapping exercise** carried out by ANCI, with UNAR's support, came to an end in 2015; also a similar exercise, which has been carried out by ISTAT, came to an end. Both have been discussed in meetings held in Vienna and Rome during the Italian Presidency of the EU. From the above mapping exercise, aimed at Municipalities with over 15,000 inhabitants, it has emerged as follows: 738 Municipalities (59% of the Italian population) out of approx. 8,000 Italian Municipalities participated in this exercise. 606 Municipalities specifically replied to the questionnaire submitted by ANCI. 206 Municipalities confirmed the presence of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti on their territories and do implement specific measures, as follows: 55% of the Municipalities concerned finances and/or manages targeted school-related measures; 30% confirmed the supply of other school-related services (transports); 62% confirmed specific social services; 26% confirmed access to specific socio-health services; 12% launched literacy courses for adults; 19% has activated vocational trainings for vulnerable groups, including Roma, with the aim of facilitating their job access; and 26% has launched socio-economic inclusion pathways. ANCI is re-doubling its efforts to match the instances of local authorities and central Administration with the aim to help overcome Roma settlements.

Article 4 of the Framework Convention

Anti-discrimination legislation and its implementation

Since the establishment of **OSCAD** (Observatory for security Against Discriminatory Acts) (par. 34) the training of Police personnel has been a priority in the related activities, in the awareness that a better understanding of the complex issue of discrimination is a necessary prerequisite to raise the awareness of law enforcement authorities concerning the need to improve preventive and countering activities of all forms of discrimination.

The courses organized by OSCAD have been compulsory since 2013 and they are mainly dedicated to students training to become members of the various ranks of the National Police; at the same time, however, more specialized training activities are being increasingly organized, including on-line ones, for serving personnel.

OSCAD is partner of the following most recent initiatives organized at European level with the aim of training

Police Forces in the area of prevention and countering of hate crimes:

“PRISM” project. In October 2015 a seminar for members of the Police Forces and legal experts was held in which about 20 National Police/Carabinieri members participated in order to increase their knowledge of prevention and repression modalities of discriminatory acts, particularly hate crimes. The subjects dealt with range from the analysis of the concepts of racism and anti-discrimination, the international, European and national legal framework to the specific modalities of investigative and reporting activities, with a focus on

the assistance to victims. The same approach to training was used for the project entitled “Experience Crime”, made up by training seminars in Rome and Florence, involving on the whole 40 National Police/Carabinieri members. Many other partnerships have been launched over the last few months to carry out similar initiatives.

In December 2014 OSCAD, in collaboration with the Council of Europe, Amnesty International and UNAR organized a seminar for 100 National Police superintendents specifically aiming at developing the understanding and the skills of National Police members as regards the complex issues connected to the Roma and Sinti populations. Furthermore, in September 2015, again in the framework of the Council of Europe, a brainstorming exercise was organized in this connection, involving experts from 17 Countries and representatives of Italian Police Forces.

As regards the implementation of the National Strategy (paragraphs 37-42), UNAR paid heed to the contents of European Commission Communication No. 173/2011 and to the Council recommendation of December 2013 on “Effective Roma Integration Measures in the Member States” (together with other recommendations issued at international level over the past years); in doing so in 2015 it started a verification process of the implementation measures of the National Strategy for the Integration of the Roma Communities, at a moment when the previous programming period of the European Funds was replaced by the present one (2014-2020). In this context, UNAR, the National Contact Point, started a revision of the Strategy in order to improve its ability to achieve the expected results and to align it with the above mentioned programming period.

Upon conclusion of the Italian Presidency of the EU in 2015, UNAR decided to take action in two key sectors: the new **programming and its 9.5 Objective**, in consideration of the fact that many projects that were carried out at national level have reached an end, on the one hand; updating of projects, actions, and measures introduced by the Strategy for the 2012-2020 period in view of a re-adjustment in terms of objectives/results, on the other. Thus UNAR focused attention on the best allocation modalities of available resources, namely the management of about 15 million Eur, for interventions in a number of priority sectors (non-discrimination, gender perspective, human rights based approach) and for additional sectors as against the previous programming period (urban development, targeted integrated actions for social inclusion in connection with housing, employment, medical care and education).

At the beginning of 2016 UNAR launched a series of **consultations** with relevant actors at central level, including the Ministries of Health, Education, Infrastructure and Transports and of the Interior, with the main objective of starting fruitful forms of cooperation in the management of settlements and in the process of their overcoming. UNAR verifies and monitors interventions carried out by local authorities, in order to develop them further by relying on European and local financial resources; furthermore it worked together with the managing authorities of the National Operational Programmes (“Inclusion/Metro” Programmes) and with a number of Regions to promote synergic consistent actions. To this end a technical meeting has been organized to launch the Inter-institutional Working Group on Housing in which the above mentioned Ministries and the main concerned municipalities are involved (Rome, Milan and Turin), including in the framework of the respective local plans, together with other municipalities that recently planned specific projects including measures for the management of inclusion in ordinary housing (Cagliari, Alghero and Bologna, which already has a specific local plan); ANCI has also been involved and it will present the final results of its survey on settlements.

In connection with this latter item, in 2015 UNAR dealt with the aspects of **monitoring, evaluation and participation in the completion of a web site** aimed at the launching of a specific national platform that

involves the key stakeholders in addition to the governance system in order to step up both the representativeness and the number of participants - in the form of a working group – in view of the implementation of social inclusion local plans. In this connection, UNAR promoted targeted meetings with a number of regional and local authorities (Piemonte, Liguria, Toscana, Emilia Romagna, Sardegna, Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Veneto, Sicilia; Genova, Milano, Rovigo, Bologna, Torino, Bari, Palermo, Catania, Rome and Naples). In 2015 the Region Emilia Romagna adopted Law No. 11/2015 on Roma inclusion, in line with the National Strategy.

UNAR also carried out its institutional mandate in this sector by **stepping up the Contact Centre**, promoting the awareness raising activity, the information campaigns and training in view of a real integration of these Communities, in line with the campaigns of the Council of Europe and with the twinning and cooperation opportunities offered at international level and with reference to initiatives on the Shoah/Porrajmos on International Roma Day, in the framework of the weeks against violence and racism and in collaboration with bodies including CAHROM, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights, EuRoma and others.

Article 5 of the Framework Convention

Support for the cultural activities of persons belonging to national minorities

As regards the allocation of state funds as envisaged by law No. 482/1999 (**par. 47**), allocations for financial year 2016 were reduced by 2.5% from 1,658,948.32 Eur to 1,617,516 Eur., in compliance with the financial laws that implement the stability pact.

Notwithstanding, at local level there exist manifold initiatives to enhance Roma culture.

By way of an example, in Corigliano d’Otranto, one of the municipalities of “Grecia Salentina”, the captions of monuments written in the minority language have been translated in order to favour the understanding of this culture on the part of the numerous tourists that come to Salento.

A very active foundation, *Romani Italia*, on the territory of Abruzzo has been organizing cultural initiatives aimed at the integration of the Romani community for a long time.

In view of raising the citizens’ awareness against all forms of discrimination against members of the RSC community, in February 2015 the municipality of Bologna organized three day long activities devoted to mutual understanding between Roma and Sinti on the one hand and the remaining population on the other.

During the activities young Roma and Sinti described many successful stories of inclusion in employment as well as a documentary shown at the Rome Cinema Festival which makes it possible to better understand what life is like in camps at the margins of our large cities.

Article 6 of the Framework Convention

Tolerance and intercultural dialogue

As regards the fight against racism and xenophobia (**paragraphs 54-65**), UNAR provides advice and legal assistance to associations with legal personality and which belong to the relevant Register (including about 400 NGO's). UNAR's intervention can be summarized as follows: informing victims about the procedure to file an appeal and encouraging them to do so, including through the above mentioned associations; assisting victims and associations by issuing opinions; monitoring the legal proceedings that were initiated following an indication coming from the Contact Centre. In November 2014, the Department of Equal Opportunities established a Solidarity Fund for the protection of the victims of discrimination in court cases, through the provision of financial support: over the last two years UNAR provided this support in 15 litigation cases.

As far as the Contact Center of UNAR is specifically concerned, in 2015 411 cases were handled, 78% of which refer to on-line hate crimes and the media, in this connection UNAR continues to cooperate with numerous counterparts in the wake of the Charter of Rome. In June and July 2015, UNAR organized two important seminar on this issue involving representatives of Twitter and Facebook, with the objective of defining the procedures of deletion and the countering modalities of hate speech; the main Italian NGO's were also involved.

Recently, the **Observatory of the media and the social networks** for hate speech was set up, in order to deal with the increasing cases, especially occurring on-line; the Observatory is funded by UNAR and it began its activity in January 2016 by identifying online hate speech and acting to delete it; the Observatory also analyzes, understand and learns, as it is equipped with a software that functions on the basis of key-words identified by UNAR and in line both with scientific literature and with the practical experience of UNAR. Thousands of data are monitored daily and they are then catalogued and summed up in thematic reports (hate speech and politics, hate speech and the Roma, hate speech and migrants, etc.), another part of the monitored data, smaller in size but relevant in terms of discrimination, has been removed from the social networks to eliminate them from the web or for investigative and repressive purposes by law enforcement. In 2015 only, UNAR identified 1,700 illegal contents in connection with enterprises active on-line.

On the whole, UNAR has acted effectively in order to fight discrimination, by strengthening its capacity building and its monitoring mechanisms; for many years it has been promoting the "National Week against Racism" (in March), in which a growing number of important stakeholders is participating as well as the "National Week against Violence" (in October) particularly promoted in schools.

As far as the collection of data by UNAR Contact Center is particularly concerned, in 2015 its activities were revised in order to widen the range of its action and to strengthen, at the same time, the operational capacities of the experts that deal with immediate assistance when answering incoming calls. This is an integrated form of assistance to support victims (carried out also through the Memorandum of Understanding with OSCAD) which takes the form of appeals and reports on hate crimes which are subsequently forwarded to the competent authorities. As mentioned above, in January 2016 an ad hoc Observatory on Media and Social Networks was set up to tackle this growing phenomenon. In the near future, the Observatory will be able to share data and information produced by the calls and messages to the Contact Center and by the monitoring of all the media, thus functioning as early warning mechanism.

As a result of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNAR and the Ministry of Justice, as of 2016 a databank on hate crimes will be launched in the framework of the National Action Plan against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

Article 9 of the Framework Convention

Access of persons belonging to national minorities to the media

(paragraphs 66-71) The issue of the protection of minorities in terms of information and knowledge and of their representativeness in the civil, democratic society is one of the basic principles of the regulatory framework governing fundamental rights in the sector of communication and of audiovisual media.

As regards the access to media by persons belonging to national minorities, which is encouraged by the Advisory Committee, Agcom stressed the importance of a regulatory framework that highlights the pivotal role of mass communication means in protecting, promoting and granting visibility to the linguistic minorities living on the national territory, as envisaged by Law No. 482/1999.

As regards the programming of RAI (Radiotelevisione Italiana S.p.A.) public service, the provisions of the contract, concluded between RAI and the Ministry of Economic Development, explicitly envisage specific initiatives for the enhancement of local institutions and cultures. The programme schedule of the public television company includes programmes in German, Ladin, French, Slovenian and Friulian, which RAI broadcasts “on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the basis of relevant conventions”. In view of the protection of the minority languages existing on the national territory the Joint Commission will define the most effective operational modalities.

Furthermore, the new AGCOM guidelines are about to be issued - they will deal with the sensitive aspects related to growing xenophobia in the media, which increasingly use discriminatory language.

Within the limits set by legislation in force, AGCOM tends anyway to create favourable economic conditions for local broadcasting entities typical of respective communities (according to the definition of the Consolidated Text: the local broadcasting entities include recognized and non recognized associations, foundations or cooperative non profit making societies that broadcast self produced original programmes of cultural, ethnic, political and religious type), as it considers them as effective instruments for the enhancement and promotion of local cultures and as audiovisual media services tasked with the enhancement of information and communication concerning minority communities existing in the various areas of the Country.

In connection with the media, a recent initiative of May 2016 is worth mentioning – the edition of Tg Rom, the first Italian news programme addressed to Roma young people. The programme was realized by *Idea Rom Onlus* as a result of the Invitation to tender *Giovani 2015* issued by the *Compagnia di San Paolo*, in collaboration with journalists of the daily *Nuovasocietà* and under the auspices of the Region Piedmont; it is a news programme made by young people for young people between 14 and 25 years of age; the objective of the programme is speaking directly about oneself to fight prejudice and it is visible at www.tgrom.it and on social media (www.ansa.it).

Articles 10-11 of the Framework Convention

The use of minority languages in dealings with administrative authorities Surnames and first names in minority languages

Through the funding envisaged by law No. 482/1999, the municipalities where linguistic minorities live have developed projects aimed at the promotion of their cultures and languages. The most numerous of the financed projects related to the establishment and implementation of linguistic helpdesks and to linguistic training.

par. 80) Preliminarily, it has to be said that Law No. 107 of 13th July 2015 entitled “Reform of the National System of Education and Training and Delegation for the Reorganization of Legislative Provisions in Force”, according to article 1 paragraphs 197 and 198, lays down that the Minister of Education, University and Research issues a decree, to adapt the application of the provisions of the above mentioned law to the schools with Slovenian as teaching language or with bilingual teaching in the Region Friuli Venezia Giulia; for these schools special provisions concerning, in particular the teaching and recruiting of teachers as well as the adjustment of the educational offer to the specific needs of the schools with Slovenian as teaching language must also be introduced.

To implement art. 1 par. 197, MIUR relied on the Office for Teaching in Slovenian and issued decree No. 809 of 8th October 2015, which envisages, among others, the adjustment of both the National Plan for Digitalized Schools and the Data Single Portal to the specific needs of schools with Slovenian as teaching language and of Slovenian-Italian bilingual schools; the Special Office set up at the Regional Education Agency took care of the adjustment (art. 3). The above mentioned Plan, mentioned in art. 1, par. 56 of Law No. 107/2015, envisages interventions and activities to improve the digital skills of students as well as to implement the digital innovation of the education system.

The above mentioned decree also provides for the translation of the existing software to enable the beginning of the on-line school enrollment procedures by the concerned community members that refer to the above mentioned schools. Furthermore, the digitalization must be based on the correct spelling of first names and surnames of school users and school staff, as well as use the correct denomination of schools in Slovenian.

Articles 12-14 of the Framework Convention

Teacher training and curricula. Availability of minority language education

The above mentioned Law No. 107/2015 envisages a strengthening of school autonomy with a view to improve both the educational offer and project activities, at the same time it identified the following as one of the priority training objectives: “enhancement and strengthening of linguistic skills, with particular reference to Italian, English and to other languages of the European Union, including by using the Content Language Integrated Learning method”. Individual schools are then tasked to include in their three year Educational Policy Plan (P.O.F.) initiatives to strengthen the Plan itself and relevant project activities, in a way that takes account of the needs arising from the cultural, social and economic situation of the local community.

The law also introduced the concept of posts identified within the staff of autonomous schools with a view to strengthening the educational offer enabling schools to initiate projects that they consider a priority – these posts make up the so called “reinforced staff” (*organico potenziato*). As a result, each school can indicate the number of posts needed to reinforce the educational offer and subsequently they can utilize the teachers already belonging to its staff and who possess specific linguistic skills to teach the minority language within the sphere of autonomy of 20% of the curriculum. This is the case in a number of Calabrian schools that intend to introduce the teaching of Arbëreshe in primary schools by relying on teachers already belonging to the schools themselves, who are certified teachers of Albanian with a specialization in Arbëreshe.

As regards the recruiting and training of teachers, the above mentioned decree No. 809/2015 envisages various provisions concerning the training and recruiting of teachers as well as the adjustment of the educational offer to the specific needs of schools with Slovenian as teaching language.

- The schools with Slovenian as teaching language or with bilingual teaching identify the requirement in term of posts within the staff of the schools themselves, which are granted a given degree of autonomy, also in consideration of the need to reinforce the teaching of Slovenian, which is considered a priority educational objective;
- The three-year Educational Policy Plan (P.O.F.) can include activities and interventions to be carried out in collaboration with schools, institutes and bodies of the Republic of Slovenia;
- The students of schools with Slovenian as teaching language and with bilingual Slovenian-Italian teaching can follow part of their didactic, educational pathway attending schools of the Republic of Slovenia, according to modalities laid down in the three-year Educational Policy Plan;
- The National Plan for Digitalized Schools and the Data Single Portal are being updated. More specifically, the “online enrollment” service for enrollment in schools at all levels of education (with the exclusion of nursery schools and kindergartens) is already active as of this year for schools with Slovenian as teaching language;
- The National Evaluation System is being updated to make it possible to use Slovenian to translate and fill in the papers included in the National Survey on the level of learning attained as well as using Slovenian for the single national written paper which is part of the State Examination at the end of the first cycle of education;
- The teachers of schools with Slovenian as teaching language can use their training electronic cards also to enroll in courses and activities aimed at refreshment of knowledge and certification of professional skills, organized by Slovenian entities accredited with the Special Office, which is empowered to conclude conventions with the Universities of the Republic of Slovenia and/or with external experts.
- As far as the Special Employment Plan for school-year 2015/2016 is concerned, the Regional Education Agency of Friuli Venezia Giulia allocates the number of posts, both for ordinary and special education teachers, for schools with Slovenian as teaching language or with bilingual teaching, with reference to the regional overall number of posts mentioned in table I of the above mentioned law.
- In order to guarantee the right of representation and participation to the schools of the Slovenian linguistic minority a given number of posts is devoted to them in collegiate bodies, both at national and at local level.

Recently, in order to monitor the linguistic competences of teachers of minority languages, when issuing the Plan of Interventions and Funding for National and Local Projects relating to Linguistic Minorities, MIUR asked schools to specify what are the linguistic qualifications (e.g. master’s degree, specialization course, training course) of the teachers tasked with the teaching of minority languages.

It is finally necessary to specify that the examinations for the recruiting of teachers to be assigned to bilingual Italian-Slovenian schools or schools with Slovenian as teaching language are held in Slovenian (with the exclusion of the certification procedure of teachers of Italian).

Every year the Plans of Interventions and Funding for the Realization of National and Local Projects relating to the Study of the Languages and Cultural Traditions of Linguistic Minorities are published with the invitation to school headmasters of first cycle institutes (including nursery schools and kindergartens) located in “delimited territories and parts of municipalities where the protection provisions for historical linguistic minorities are applied” to set up networks and submit two year projects.

MIUR issued its note inviting the submission of projects also for the 2015-2017 period. 28 projects were submitted, of which 20 have been approved ; they cover 8 regions and address 9 minority languages and will receive funding amounting to 168,278.00 Eur in total. All the minority languages covered by the projects (particularly the less spoken ones) have received support and funding has been allocated at least to one project for each protected language.

Recently MIUR issued its note No. 4843 of 5th May 2016 inviting the submission of projects for the two year period 2016-2017. In order to provide incentives for schools and increase their capacity to submit projects (especially in areas where the minority language is little used), the Regional Education Agencies, in collaboration with MIUR, organized in-depth study seminars as for example the seminar entitled “*Lingue e linguaggi nella scuola globale*”, which was held on 10th March 2016 in Campobasso for schools using Arbëreshe and Croatian.

As far as the National Indications and the Certification of Competences are concerned, no national curriculum for the minority languages exist; however, the national Indications for the curriculum of nursery schools and kindergartens and for the first cycle of education special attention is given to the value to be attached to the mother tongue and to the origin culture in view of a multilingual and intercultural education.

A few excerpts are quoted below:

“The mother tongue is part of the child’s identity, however the knowledge of other languages paves the way to the encounter with new worlds and cultures. Children start nursery schools with a meaningful linguistic wealth, but with differing competences that must be carefully observed and given importance to.” *...+ “Children often live in a multilingual environment - if they are adequately guided they can familiarize with a second language, in spontaneous situations including dialogues and daily life and become increasingly aware of different sounds, tones and meanings”.

“In our country language learning occurs in an anthropological space characterized by a variety of elements: the presence, though unequal and diversified, of dialects; the wealth and variety of minority languages; the co-existence of various languages from all over the world; finally the presence of Italian, both spoken and written with very differing levels of fluency and with considerable regional varieties. The constant care devoted to the acquisition of an increasing fluency in the use of Italian implies that the learning of Italian occurs by starting off from the linguistic and communication skills that the pupils already developed in their native languages - the learning of Italian must be improved not only in view of a better school performance but also as an essential part of the abilities required in life.”

In the framework of accompanying measures to the 2012 National Indications for Nursery Schools and Kindergartens and for the first cycle of education a specific meeting for the examination of linguistic skills was organized (IV Seminar on National Indications, Rovereto 21-22 May, 2015). De facto multilingualism , the attention to the mother tongues, as well as immigration on the one hand and globalization on the other have

led schools and the entire community to ask themselves basic questions concerning the learning of languages in epistemological and didactic terms. Special attention was devoted to minority languages.

The most relevant aspects that emerged from the presentations of experts and from the experiences illustrated by schools can be summarized as follows:

- Attaching value to the mother tongue and to the native culture (be it a minority language, a foreign language or a dialect) to attain a firm construction of the personal identity;
- Starting from the mother tongue to pass gradually and spontaneously to the official language, also by means of comparisons of lexical, semantic and syntactic elements;
- Giving visibility to and spreading knowledge about a multiplicity of languages and recognizing that they have equal dignity in scientific/cognitive terms;
- Favours early exposure to multilingualism through a communicative/playful approach;
- Involving families by giving value to the “language of the home”.

At present a new model of competence certification is being tried on the basis of the National Indications with reference to the Key Competences envisaged by the Council of Europe Recommendation. More specifically, a blank space has been introduced which can be used to include the linguistic skills referred to the minority language. Furthermore, schools were explicitly asked to include appropriate certifications and to test the national model during the drafting of projects with a view to ensuring the certification of the minority language.

It is not possible to talk about textbooks in the minority languages, in the strictest sense, with the exception of cases in which the language is part of the curriculum of Slovenian –Italian bilingual schools (“The available books and media must reflect the multilingual and paritarian organization of the school; teachers commit themselves to enabling pupils to use these books and media in all the languages of the school including outside the school itself”: Provincial Indications on Ladin Schools of the Province of Bolzano).

In the majority of cases there exist didactic materials that are an alternative to textbooks (illustrated dictionaries, fiction for teenagers and other types of texts), often they are self-produced with the scientific and financial contribution of associations and local agencies. Some of them are devoted to language literacy and to the learning of languages, both as mother tongue and as L2, while others deal with the teaching of other subjects, e.g. history, science and mathematics at various educational levels. At times these materials are designed and realized by schools, but bearing in mind a possible circulation among the public at large; often they are produced by entities outside schools: Regions, Provinces, private publishers. Friulian schools can rely on materials made available by ARLEF, as is the case for the design and production of didactic material, the drawing up and realization of training activities of staff, as well as the definition of the criteria and evaluation modalities of the effectiveness of instruments and didactic activity of the teaching of the Ladin language and culture, including of a vehicular type. On the contrary, in the Southern part of Italy, schools are the main publication centres of materials, which, although produced within schools, often address various groups of users: the community of adults, the Church or local institutions.

Article 15 of the Framework Convention

Participation of persons belonging to linguistic minorities at the national and regional level

As regards the hindrances in the involvement of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities in the framework of the National Strategy and in thematic tables or in working groups (**paragraphs 118-122**), UNAR is about to

establish the Roma National Platform (RNP), which is an operational instrument to make dialogue between UNAR – National Contact Point – and RSC and sector associations possible.

The main objective of the platform is facilitating dialogue between Roma institutions and associations and sector associations and among the associations themselves, filling an existing gap. To this end, national, regional and local administrations interested in entertaining a dialogue with associations will be involved in the meetings and during the entire period of activity. A secondary objective is facilitating the setting up of networks of associations and federations.

As regards the access to health services, the “National Panel on Health”, initially coordinated by INMP (National Institute for the Promotion of Migrant Population Health and the Fight of Diseases linked to Poverty) and subsequently by the General Directorate of Medical Prevention of the Ministry of Health, defined the Action Plan on Health for and with the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti communities.

In short, the Plan subdivides the area of intervention in three macro-areas: 1) Training of medical and other staff; 2) Understanding of and access to services for RSC; 3) Services of prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

As regards aspects concerning the Slovenian minority, the active role of the Permanent Institutional Panel on Issues concerning the Slovenian-speaking Minority is worth mentioning; it was established in 2012 to discuss, analyze and provide guidance on the issues and protection concerning the above mentioned minority, on the basis of Law No. 38/2001.

Article 16 of the Framework Convention

Territorial reform

As regards the reform introduced by Law No. 56/2014, which modified the functions of Provinces and consolidated municipalities, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee concerning the need to avoid a negative impact on the protection of minorities is acknowledged.