

CoE calls on Cyprus to promote Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic language

By Nicos Rousis (CYPRUS NEWS AGENCY)

Strasbourg, Sep 24 (CNA) – The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe calls on Cyprus to adopt a structured policy to protect and promote the Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages on the island.

The position is outlined in the second report on the situation of minority languages in Cyprus. It has been drawn up by a committee of independent experts which monitors the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

It also proposes that Cyprus should also strengthen Cypriot Maronite Arabic-medium education and language courses and provide teacher training for Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic languages.

In detail, it is noted that the Representative of the Armenian Community demanded that any new constitution should recognize the minority groups as national minorities or communities in accordance with international legal instruments and not as religious groups as is the case at present.

The report encourages the authorities to make the funding procedure more transparent and to find a satisfactory solution to the allocation process of funds, in cooperation with the speakers. It also notes that any action plan should be embedded within a comprehensive language policy.

The Committee of Experts commends the authorities for initiating the process of codifying Cypriot Maronite Arabic which will enable its use in other areas of public life.

It also encourages the authorities to assist the Maronites in establishing a Culture and Youth Centre.

Furthermore, it regrets the termination of the annual Christmas television program in Armenian and encourages the Cypriot authorities to facilitate the broadcasting of television programs in Armenian and Cypriot Maronite Arabic.

With regard to the Melkonian Educational Institute, the Committee of Experts asks the Cypriot authorities to provide further information on new developments on the issue and remained concerned about the future existence of Armenian education in Cyprus. It further underlines the need to provide teacher training in Armenian.

On the Turkish language, the Committee of Experts invites the Cypriot authorities to give more information on the situation of the Turkish language, noting that it would welcome more information on the use of Turkish in hospitals and public services in the next periodical report.