

Dear members of the Advisory Committee for the European Framework Convention (of National Minorities)!

I'm Sytze T. Hiemstra, member of the *Fryske Rie*. We are grateful having the opportunity to give you some information about the Fryske Rie, our aims en our desires in relation to the European Framework.

Our chairman, mr. Roel Kaastra, has given you already a lot of remarks on the application of the European Framework by sending you a letter before. We hope you did receive his information and had the opportunity to read it. For Mr Kaastra can not be here to day, unfortunately. I and the secretary of the Fryske Rie, Mrs Saapke Miedema have to replace him.

In short de *Fryske Rie* puts that there are still a lot of threats for the Frisians and the Frisian language. We think that whenever the Dutch language has to be protected by the constitution, it will be still more urgent for the threatened Frisian language to do the same.

With regard to article 3: We hope also that once it will be possible to be registered in official civil administration documents like passports as 'Fries' (Frisian).

About article 6 and 12: It should become normal that for instance most teachers, police officers, persons in judiciary functions, social and medical workers have a good command of the spoken en written Frisian language. That means it should become a job requirement. A lot has also to be done in the field of education, administrative authorities, a fully fledged Frisian national broadcasting, more Frisian in private broadcasting, newspapers in the Frisian language and more Frisian in economic and social sectors. Our organisation and some others did send last year their criticism on the application of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* in the Netherlands to some relevant ministries and to the parliament in The Hague.

We attached those critical letters to our contribution (Fryske Rie) to the hearing (of the Advisory Committee) of today. And we attached also a disappointing reaction of the Ministry of Education. We hope it will give you it good understanding of what we think that has to be done for the future of the Frisians as real 'Frisians' and of the Frisian language and culture.

We enclose also a plan of some Frisian-movement-organisations we are connected with: an 'Oanfalsplan Frysk', which will strengthen the juridical and economic basis of the Frisian language and the Frisians.

With reference to article 17: We ask especially attention for the continuation of the minor financial support that is given by the Province of Fryslân to the *Fryske Rie* (about €4400 pro year for structural activities, and some accidental support for special projects). That amount of money is an very small support when compared with the support from Berlin, Kiel and Copenhagen to our sister-board in North-Friesland (in Germany).

And second, we have experienced during many, many years that trans-frontier exchanges are proved means for making bridges and giving impulses to the related Frisian minorities in East-Friesland and North-Friesland in the Bundesrepublik of Germany. We plea for a better using of the possibilities for meetings between the Provincial authorities and the authorities of Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen than in the past decade.

And last, with reference to article 18: The Fryske Rie asks attention for entering into a treaty with de Länder Schleswig-Holstein, or with the Bundesrepublik itself, to give a more fundamental basis to the protection of their common minority of the Frisians. Such a treaty should give more opportunities for cultural and language-exchanges and support. The Fryske Rie does not agree with the conclusion of the comment of the Dutch Kingdom on article 18.2. Though the interfrisian contacts are good, it could be better and especially it should be more guaranteed for the future when they are based on a treaty between the governmental authorities.

Thank you!

Sytze T. Hiemstra,
member of the Fryske Rie

Ljouwert, Provinsjehûs, 25-02-2009