
Council of Europe: Advisory Committee, “steps back on minorities’ rights weaken democracy”

“The xenophobic populist discourse in the name of ‘majority’ tries to further reduce space” for participation of those who belong to national minorities in cultural, economic and public life. An intolerant or even hate discourse “dissuades” such people from looking for an active role or participating in public life. This has been stated by the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe, which today published its two-year report for 2018-2020. And it points out: “The political leaders of the far right and traditional political parties often fail to condemn or actively participate in intolerant statements or even in hate discourse against national minorities”. The problem: “When divisions are created among different ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious groups, democracy is weakened”. A “step forward” in minorities’ rights – the Advisory Committee points out – lies in the fact that “formal laws and structures for the participation of minority members in public matters” now apply in many states, though there are “barriers on the full enforcement of such rights”: from max limits that prevent access to parliaments to disregard for the results of consultative processes, through to “poverty, illiteracy or low levels of education, lack of identity documents, social exclusion and local segregation”, which are the greatest obstacles.

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