Finally, there are numerous opinions issued by the relevant committees, such as the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Working Group on Minorities as well as on Indigenous Populations, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and the Advisory Committee to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Increasingly important are also the Thematic Commentaries issued by the Advisory Committee to the Framework Convention:

- Commentary on Education (2006)
- Commentary on Participation (2008)
- Commentary on language rights (2012)

The fundamental aim of the ECMI’s work is therefore to investigate how minority standards are implemented and operationalized.
The “added value” of the ECMI’s work lies in the Centre’s approach to accumulating knowledge and making sure that this reaches the beneficiaries. According to our Vision Statement, the aim of our work is:

Promoting high-quality research, policy-relevant analysis, training, and co-operation in the minority field, the ECMI seeks to bridge the gaps between theory and practice, research and politics, mainstream politicians and minority activists as well as between different academic traditions. This is pursued through interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical studies that improve the understanding of the dynamics of minority issues and promote new agendas in research and public debates. Drawing on the synergy between standards, research and action, the ECMI is Europe’s leading institution to implement the roadmap for minority protection and empowerment because we believe minorities matter.

The synergy between standards, research and action is therefore core to the methodology that the ECMI applies in all projects and programmes. We see this as a cyclic relationship going in both directions.

... European Standards
By “standards” we mean the global regime of minority protection pertaining to Europe spanning from the highest level of international standard-setting to the local statutes and policies put in place in regions where minorities live. The most relevant international standards include but are not excluded to:

- The European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms (1948)
- UN International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966), Art. 27
- The European Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (2000)
- The Treaty of Lisbon (2007)

Included in hard law standards is also relevant case law emanating from the Permanent Court of International Justice, the International Court of Justice, the European Commission and Court of Human Rights as well as the European Court of Justice.

... European “soft law”
Minority standards increasingly include the so-called “soft law” instruments that international organizations and governments adopt on the basis of moral commitment to protecting minorities. Standards in the ECMI environment therefore also include documents on minority protection and non-discrimination issued by the UNESCO, the European Parliament and the Commission, the European Council of the