

Monitoring the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

For more information see individual country profiles:

Chapter 4.2.1 “Provisions for Cultural Minorities”

Chapter 4.2.3 “Language Issues and Policies”

Legend: * National language may have been or is under threat or has recently been re-established as the national official language.

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language*
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Austria	1992	2001	German	Croatian, Hungarian and Slovene.	“Minority Education Right” for Slovenes living in Carinthia. For other linguistic minorities, language of instruction in a school depends on the number of students.	No	<i>2001 Broadcasting Act</i> obliges ORF to broadcast programmes in languages of minority groups; small (non-commercial) free radio stations primarily aimed at minorities and immigrants are supported by the government (2007)	-
Azerbaijan	2001	Expected	Azerbaijani	Russian, Georgian, etc.	The language of instruction for more than 6.7% pupils is Russian and 0.1% is Georgian, in the 2004-2005 school year.	The Ministry of Culture and Tourism carries out a concrete programme of activities connected with safeguarding and development of cultural values of national minorities and ethnic groups.	There are no official language quotas in the mass media.	YES

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Belgium	Not signed		Flemish, French and German.	NO	NO	In 2000, Flemish Minister instructed new Literature Fund to fund works by immigrants.	NO	YES
Bulgaria	Not signed		Bulgarian	Turkish and Romani.	Educational Bill stating that mother tongue learning is a "compulsory optional subject"; state obliged to pay for students who want to study their mother tongue.	Government provides funding to cultural projects such as theatre productions and festivals for minority cultural groups.	Support for periodicals, media events and live performances of various cultural groups given by NGOs such as Open Society Institute.	-
Canada	Not signed		English and French are national official languages. Quebec has one official language (French). New Brunswick has two official languages (English and French). All other provinces unilingual English	In context of Official Languages, Anglophones in Quebec and Francophone outside Quebec are regarded as official language minorities Seven Aboriginal languages in the Territories	Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes Aboriginal languages Enhancement of Official Languages Program in Department of Canadian Heritage: 2nd Language Learning	Aboriginal Friendship Centres Multicultural Support Programs	Aboriginal radio and television stations/networks Cultural minorities are served by 4 licensed conventional TV stations, and 21 analog and digital specialty TV services which broadcast in "third languages" 15 third language radio stations	YES: See Action Plan for Official Languages (2003) at http://www.pch.gc.ca/offlangoff

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Croatia	1997	1998	Croatian	Italian, Hungarian, German, Slovenian, Ukrainian, Czech and Serbian.	Supplementary minority language classes in schools. Optional programmes for mother tongue learning at various summer schools.	YES	Croatian Radio and Television have special and regular news programmes in several minority languages. Local radio stations also have special programmes in minority languages.	YES
Estonia	Not signed		Estonian	NO	Primary and secondary educations are available in both Estonian and Russian. Universities have special language support schemes for students from Russian secondary schools.	Russian Drama Theatre located in Tallinn. Community centres in municipalities host activities of minority cultural organizations.	Public radio channel in Russian. Private radio channels and private press operate in minority languages (mainly Russian).	YES
Finland	1992	1998	Finnish and Swedish	Sami languages, Roma and Sign Language	YES Sami language is also provided as teaching language in Sami homeland municipalities for comprehensive (basic) education. Sami, Sign and Roma language can be taught as mother tongue instead of Finnish/Swedish or foreign languages; they are also legitimate teaching languages	YES	The Finnish Broadcasting Company is supposed to "...serve Finnish and Swedish speaking populations on equal terms and provide services in Sami, Roma and Sign languages". This legal obligation is fulfilled by the Sami Radio, Romano Mirits radio programme and television news and documentary programmes in Sami and Sign languages.	YES, in terms of language research and development support by the Research Institute for the Languages in Finland. In addition to Finnish and Swedish, these activities cover also Sami, Roma and Sign languages

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Georgia	Not signed	Georgian and Abkhazian	Abkhazian	<p><i>Law on Secondary Education (2005)</i> The state support: languages of minorities in the educational system. In Georgia, there are public primary and secondary schools for minorities (Azeri, Armenian, Russian). The publication of textbooks for minorities is provided by state procurement.</p>	<p><i>Law on Culture (1997)</i> The state support: maintenance of minority cultures and development of their creative activities</p>	<p><i>Law on Broadcasting (2004)</i> Under the <i>Law on Broadcasting (Article 16, paragraph 1)</i>, public broadcasting shall "place programmes in the languages of minorities, about minorities and prepared by minorities in accordance with their share in the total population". Accordingly, Georgian radio and TV have special news programmes in some languages (Abkhaz, Azeri, Armenian, Russian and Ossetian). In addition, there is special public broadcasting in Abkhaz and Ossetian languages, which covers a part of Abkhazia and the total region of "South Ossetia".</p>	YES	-

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Hungary	1992	1998	Hungarian	Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Greek, Polish, Romanian, Romani, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian and Ukrainian.	<i>1993 Act on National and Ethnic Minorities.</i> Official efforts to encourage minorities to retain their linguistic identity. Support is given for mother tongue teaching.	<i>1997 Act</i> to support museums, libraries and art institutions for minority groups. <i>2000 National and Ethnic Minorities Foundation</i> established to allocate funds for cultural activities and projects of minority groups.	Public Foundation for Minorities subsidises periodicals, gives grants to local television stations for programmes in minority languages and funds publication of books in minority languages. Regular TV and radio broadcasts in minority languages.	YES
Ireland	Not signed		Irish & English	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Italy	2000	Expected	Italian	German, Ladin, French and Slovenian.	-	Slovenian Theatre in Trieste created by the autonomous region Friuli Venezia Giulia and subsidised by the Italian State.	-	-
Latvia	Not signed		Latvian	Livonian language	Primary and secondary education available in Latvian and there are also about 200 minority / bilingual schools in Latvia; public support is available for education programmes in Russian, Byelorussian, Polish, Ukrainian, Jewish, Estonian, Lithuanian and Roma languages.	More than 200 cultural NGOs of minorities registered in Latvia and supported by public financing both on regular and project competition basis; Russian language theatres; Municipalities are implementing their own integration programmes.	Public radio channel in Russian; Commercial radio and TV channels and private press – mostly in Russian but available also in other languages (e.g. Polish, Ukrainian).	YES

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Lithuania	Not signed		Lithuanian	Russian, Polish, Jewish, Tatars, Ukrainian and Belorussian.	<i>Law of Education</i> (2003) guarantees the right of national minorities to have access to pre-and post-grade schools funded by the state, including lessons in their own language.	<i>Law on National Minorities</i> (1991) guarantees the right of national minorities to receive state support to foster their national culture and to support cultural organisations (e.g. the state provides financial support for institutions such as the Russian Drama Theatre of Lithuania).	<i>Law on National Minorities</i> (1991) guarantees the right of national minorities to have access to information and press in their native language. Lithuanian state TV and radio broadcast programmes in minority languages. Books and newspapers are available in the languages of national minorities.	-
FYR of Macedonia	1992	1992	Macedonian	Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, Romani and Vlach.	YES	Government provides funding to cultural projects such as book publishing, theatre productions, exhibitions, festivals etc., for minority cultural groups.	National TV and radio provide special programmes in languages of national minorities.	YES
Moldova	2002	Expected	Romanian	Russian (special status)	N/A	Local level organisations created to protect and develop cultural traditions of minority communities including mother tongue language.	Sub-system of cultural institutions for ethnic minorities based in the state library, museum and theater network. "Teleradio-Moldova", Department "Comunitate" to broadcast in the languages spoken by ethnic minorities.	-

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Netherlands	2005	2005	Dutch	Frisian	2005 <i>Covenant on the Frisian Language and Culture</i> includes articles on education in the Frisian language.	2005 <i>Covenant on the Frisian Language and Culture</i> includes articles on the promotion of Frisian language in cultural activities and amenities.	2005 <i>Covenant on the Frisian Language and Culture</i> includes articles on the promotion of Frisian language in the media.	YES
Poland	2003	Expected	Polish	German, Ukrainian, Belarussian, Lithuanian, Russian Latvian, Slovak, Romani, Hebrew / Yiddish) and Czech.	-	Several festivals and competitions are also organised by the state and local authorities for minority groups.	Government support for periodicals and radio broadcasts of minority groups.	-
Russia	2001	Expected	Russian for the Russian Federation, title languages for national Republics.	All languages including those of minority groups.	<i>Article 26 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation</i> (1993) establishes the right to use mother tongue languages and the freedom to choose the language of communication, education, learning and creativity.	The legal instrument for cultural self-organisations is the <i>Law on National Cultural Autonomy</i> introduced in 1996. It produced 662 bodies (01.01.2007). <i>Law on the Rights Guaranteed for Indigenous Peoples</i> (1999); the <i>Law on General Principles of Organising Communes among the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and of the Far East of the RF</i> (2000)	Governmental bodies fund related broadcasting programmes. State support for publishing in minority languages is not sufficient to create a viable industry.	YES The "Russian Language" Federal Target Programme (2006-2010) is aimed at establishing Russian as the state language.

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
San Marino	Not signed	Italian	No	No	The number of foreigners is limited. The minorities which have established cultural associations enjoy, like all those participating in the Council of Cultural Associations and Cooperatives, special benefits, also of an economic nature. Moreover, the State periodically sponsors the organization of some events to highlight habits, traditions, cuisine, etc, of an ethnic or cultural group located in San Marino	No	-	San Marino
Serbia	2005	2006	Serbian	Croatian, Bosnian, Albanian, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovakian, Ruthen (Rusin), Ukrainian, Bulgarian	Teaching in mother tongue at primary school level for all recognized minorities and at secondary school level in mother tongue for hungarians, slovakians, romanians and albanians.	Support to amateur cultural associations (choirs, folklore groups and amateur theaters) of all national minority groups, cultural centers and institutions (houses of culture)	Obligation to broadcast in all languages of minority group including Romani. Support for political / information periodicals and special support for cultural periodicals.	-

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
Slovakia	2001	2002	Slovak	9 languages of national minorities – according to ECRML divided into 3 groups: 1 - Hungarian, 2 - Ruthenian and Ukrainian, 3 – others (Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Polish, Roma)	Teaching in mother tongue at primary school level and at secondary school level for Hungarians, Ukrainians, Ruthenians, Germans. Special education programmes for Roma minority. University with Slovak and Hungarian teaching language (Janos Selye University in Komarno).	Support for cultural activities of national minorities (special grant programme as a part of Grant System, Ministry of Culture).	Public TV and Radio - obligation to broadcast in languages of national minorities.	YES
Slovenia	1997	2001	Slovenian Hungarian, Italian	Romani	Pre-school, primary and secondary education for officially recognised minorities and study of their languages as university subjects.	Cultural centres and special programmes of local cultural institutions for officially recognised minorities, public funding of cultural projects of other ethnic groups.	TV and radio broadcasting for officially recognised minorities Print media for both, officially recognized minorities and other ethnic groups.	YES
Spain	1992	2001	Castilian, Basque, Catalan, Galician, Valencian.	Basque, Catalan, Galician and Valencian. It might be also considered regional or minority languages those protected by the regional laws in the territories where they are spoken.	<i>Law of Education</i> (2006) guarantees the use of minority languages in all educative levels in bilingual communities.	National and regional governments provide funding to cultural projects (museums, archives, libraries, theatres cinema, festivals, popular culture, public shing, etc.) in regional or minority	According to the 2006 <i>State Radio and Television Act</i> , the Corporation of State Radio and Television (RTVE) must promote territorial cohesion and Spain's linguistic and cultural diversity; broadcast international	YES-

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
						languages.	radio and TV channels that disseminate the languages and cultures of Spain in other countries and promote the production of audiovisual contents in the languages of minority groups. National broadcasting coexists with regional and local state-funded radio and TV broadcasting in territories with own languages. Regions also support the publishing of periodicals in minority languages.	
Sweden	2000	2000	Swedish	Sami (all forms), Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornedal Finnish), Romani Chib (all forms) and Yiddish.	-	Municipalities provide support to associations, theatre, music and festivals.	State project funding available for publication of literature and periodicals. Radio and TV programmes in languages of ethnic minorities are supported by the government.	YES
Switzerland	Not signed		German, French, Italian, Retromansh	-	-	-	New <i>Law on radio and television</i> to preserve minorities with official languages.	New <i>Law on Radio and Television</i> . It guarantees the independence and autonomy of radio and television as well as consideration for Switzerland's cultural communities

Country	Signatory of European Charter		Official Language(s)	Legally Recognised Languages of National Minorities	Examples of Government Measures to Support Languages of National Minorities (which reflect provisions outlined in the ECRML)			Special Government Support given to the Development and Protection of the National Language *
	Signing	Entry into Force			Mother-Tongue Teaching (Article 8)	Cultural Activities and Facilities (Article 12)	Mass Media (TV, Radio, Press) (Article 11)	
UK	2000	Ratified 2001	English	Welsh (Wales), Scots and Gaelic (Scotland), Ulster Scots and Irish (Northern Ireland) Manx Gaelic (Isle of Man - Crown Dependency), Cornish, British Sign Language, Irish Sign Language, ethnic minority languages.	National Gaelic Language Plan – incl. national education strategy, Gaelic Secondary ICT Implementation Group, Guidance on Gaelic Education, Gaelic-medium Education Short-life Action Group; Cornish Language Strategy; Irish Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, Ulster-Scots Academy; Isle of Man Government Plan - extend Manx language teaching in schools; Welsh Assembly - Iaith Pawb (Everyone's Language) National Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales.	Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 - establishment of the Gaelic development agency, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, and Gaelic Arts Agency, Book Council and festivals; Lá - Arts Council NI Irish language magazine; Welsh Mercator - Literature Abroad project.	Irish : Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement - fund for Irish film and TV (GBP12m '05-09), increase TG4 reception; Isle of Man Government Plan - support the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee, Communications Act 2003 - Gaelic Media Service (GBP8.7m funding '05-06); Welsh radio stations and TV channel (S4C), Sgrin - Media Agency for Wales.	-
Ukraine	1996	2003	Ukrainian	Russian, Crimean Tatar, German, Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian, Hungarian, Romanian, other ethnic minority languages	The <i>Law on Education</i> grants families the right to choose their native language for schools and studies.	About 30% of periodicals aimed at national minorities are published in their mother tongue.	National TV and radio provide special programmes in languages of national minorities. Language TV quotas.	Government Programme “Securing Development and Use of the Ukrainian Language”.

Source: Council of Europe/ERICarts, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, 10th edition, 2008.