

**VOIVODINA CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
(VHRC)**

I

**NETWORK OF COMMITTEES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN
SERBIA
(CHRIS)**

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

**Alternative Report Submitted on the Basis of Article 15 of the Charter for
Regional or Minority Languages**

Second monitoring cycle

June, 2010

The basic idea of the Voivodina Center for Human Rights¹ and the Network of Committees for Human Rights in Serbia (CHRIS)² in drawing up the Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages³ was directly to include in its compiling representatives of national minorities', national councils, NGO representatives and experts dealing with this issue, for the purpose of obtaining a more objective presentation of the position of minority communities. In view of this, the report represents a synthesis of the individual reports.

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Organizations:

1. Voivodina Center for Human Rights
2. Network of Committees for Human Rights in Serbia (CHRIS)
3. National Council of the Hungarian national minority
4. National Council of the Romanian national minority
5. National Council of the Slovak national minority
6. National Council of the Ruthenian national minority
7. National Council of the Roma national minority
8. National Council of the Macedonian national minority
9. National Council of the Bulgarian national minority
10. National Council of the Vlach national minority
11. Roma Educational Center
12. Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo
13. Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, Novi Pazar
14. Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

The stands and opinions of VCHR are reflected only in the parts of the reports written by these organizations.

Individual reports of the national councils of national minorities represent the opinion and views of the minority national councils' representatives, who were elected until the elections for the national councils of national minorities in June 2010.

¹ Referred to herein as: VCHR

² The network consists of 5 organizations – Niš, Human Rights Committee – Negotin, Human Rights Committee – Valjevo, Civic Forum – Novi Pazar and Voivodina Center for Human Rights – Novi Sad, referred to hereinafter as: CHRIS.

³ Referred to hereinafter as: The Charter

Introduction

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

1. Monitoring the implementation of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages within the second reporting cycle lasted from November 2009 until June 2010.
2. The period from the former reporting was, *inter alia*, characterised by: the establishment of the Ministry of Human Rights and National Minorities, the enactment of the *Law against Discrimination*⁴, the enactment of the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*⁵ and the elections for the new national councils of national minorities⁶.
3. Likewise in the former reporting period, in collecting data, generally, there was a lack of information and statistical data about the use of minority languages in Central Serbia, contrary to the massive number of accessible data on minority language status in Vojvodina, which could be continuously and systematically followed up.
4. In this reporting period the state authorities of Serbia were also willing to cooperate with persons belonging to national minorities and the non-governmental sector in promoting the Charter⁷ and its practical application⁸.



Elections of the National Councils of National Minorities

With the *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedom of National Minorities* legal system of Serbia has, for the first time, foreseen the establishment of the national councils of national minorities as bodies representing national minorities as collectivities, which are partners of state authorities and take part in decision-making (or even make decisions) on issues in the field of education, culture, information and the official use of national minority languages, thus opening up a space for the efficient participation of minorities in public affairs of importance for maintaining their specificities. Using the legally provided opportunities, the first national councils were established through a system of electing electors.

⁴ Enacted in March 2009

⁵ FRY Official Journal No. 11/2002

⁶ The report's normative part does not include a detailed analysis of the indicated laws, it is dealt by the State's report.

⁷ On 28th November 2009 a conference was held in Novi Sad, in the Province's Assembly, under the title "*The Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Serbia – Monitoring Results and Recommendations with Special Aspect on Education and Participation of Minority in Public Life*" organised by the Vojvodina Centre for Human Rights and the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade and supported by the Secretariat for the European Charter and Secretariat for the Framework Convention.

⁸ On 27th November 2009 closed meetings were organised with the representatives of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the Secretariat for the European Charter, the Committee of Experts and the representative of the Ukrainian, Roma, German, Bunjevac, Macedonian, Czech and Vlach national minorities.

A milestone in further strengthening the influence of national minorities in fields which are vital to maintain their identity and the status of national minorities as well, is the too long (seven years) ago announced and expected *Law on National Councils of the National Minorities*⁹, which has elaborated in detail the competences, number of members, election procedure, financing and other important operational issues of these bodies. Although the term of the presidents and members of national councils established in accordance with the Law on Minorities formally ceased few years ago, they continued to operate. The new law on national councils has, in a certain way, “legalised” this status, as if there has never been a gap, and set new rules for electing the members of these bodies, as forms of carrying out minority self-governance in the above mentioned four fields. In contrast to the initial law on minorities, which had not stipulated that a special electoral roll of a national minority had to be made, but constituting councils linked to an electoral assembly system, the new law made a step forward in democratising the electoral procedure. According to it, national council members are elected through direct minority elections and the electoral assembly system is implemented only in the case of national minorities who do not have more than 50% of the total number of persons belonging to the given minority according to the last census voluntarily entered in the special, minority electoral roll and it is further decreased by 20%.

In line with the provisions of the law, the elections for (new) national councils on the territory of the Republic of Serbia were announced for 6th June 2010. Of the 19 national minorities in Serbia, 16 communities fulfilled the threshold for direct elections, while the national councils of the Macedonians, Slovenes and Croats were elected indirectly, through electoral assemblies.

On the elections in June, organised in a total of 161 municipalities (with almost 900 polling stations) in Serbia, the number of voters with a right to vote is 450 thousand who are entered in special, minority electoral rolls. Registering in these rolls was the most massive in the Hungarian and the Bosnian minority communities (over 138.000 and 80.000 respectively), who make up not only the largest part of the minority population in Serbia, but also succeeded with their active campaign to motivate persons belonging to these minorities to make this step. In case of some national minorities there is still some (luckily increasingly less) dismay at declaring themselves and registering in the special electoral roll for fear of possible stigmatisation or registering for some special “purposes”.

The largest number of ballot lists was put in by the Roma (10), Vlachs (9), Bulgarians, Bunjevac and Ukrainians (7 each). Democracy subsumes the opportunity of choice anyway, but the massive number of ballot lists – especially in the case of smaller population communities - indicates the existence of cleavage within the minority, and that the desire for position, fame and anticipated privileges is still a prevailing motivation for some.

Not only that the new law on the councils was enacted by delay, but it was also the case with by-laws defining thoroughly the law’s specific provisions and enabling its

⁹ The RS Official Gazette no. 72/2009

implementation. This also applies to the part of the law defining the election of council members. The inadequate preparedness of local bodies for the election procedure was obvious. Many persons belonging to national minorities, who registered in the special electoral rolls, have never received the respective decision on registering. Registering in the rolls is voluntary, but a more massive turn-out was not recorded even under such circumstances either. In the background of the relatively weak turn-out is that many voters did not receive the notice about the venue of the polling station, where they can cast their votes. Notices were printed bilingually - in Serbian and in the language of the given minority, but there were mistakes in the translation and even the address of the polling stations was indicated without translation, i.e. in Serbian and in Cyrillic script!

The whole electoral process was marked by competition and outwitting among political parties. Some parties have openly or covertly supported certain lists and involved their party apparatus in the election campaign, which was reflected on the results of the election.

Only the council of Macedonian has not been elected of the 19 councils (it was elected indirectly, through electors), due to the lack of quorum on the elector's assembly, hence these elections will be repeated.



Decision on the Province Administration

The Assembly of the Vojvodina Autonomous Province adopted a new *Decision on the Province Administration*¹⁰ regulating also the official use of language and script in the operations of the Province administration. According to this decision, the administration of the Province enables the official use of the Serbian language, of the Cyrillic and Latin script, of the Hungarian, Slovakian, Croat, Romanian and Ruthenian languages and their scripts in line with the law, the Statute and the Province Assembly Decision. Public servants in the Province are obliged to have a command of Serbian and also of the language of the national community in official use, if it is set by the rules on internal organisation and systematisation of jobs. If Serbian is not the mother tongue of the public servant and if primary, secondary or higher education was not acquired on the territory of the Republic of Serbia, i.e. in Serbian, the knowledge of Serbian is checked in a manner as set by the respective document of the Province Government.

According to the decision, written communication between the Province administration bodies and other bodies, organisations and institutions and foreign physical and legal subjects is conducted in Serbian, in Cyrillic script. Exceptionally, when a body, organisation, institution, foreign physical or legal subject applied in writing in a language of a national minority, the body of the Province administration to whom the application has been addressed, shall provide its translation and may answer in a language and script of the application.

Further, it is foreseen that if a party applies to a body of the Province administration in oral or written form in one of the languages, which is in official use in the

¹⁰ The Official Journal of the VAT no. 4/2010

administration's operations, the administration shall respond in that language. In case a Province administration body is not capable of communicating in a specific language, it may use the services of the translation service department, being part of the Province Secretariat for administration matters. Province administration bodies shall provide financial and technical conditions, likewise human resources to enable the official use of the language and script. The implementation of the official use of the language and script in the Province's administration bodies shall be monitored by the Province Government, which will undertake measures in order to provide the equality of languages.

1.3. Presentation of the regional or minority language situation in Serbia

The numbers and the statistical data are taken from the last census conducted by the Serbian authorities in 2002¹¹ as in the previous Shadow Report from 2006.

Bosnian

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

In the past, the territory of Sandžak was known as a region with extremely long migration movements of its ethnically diverse population, in various directions. It was even called the "Yugoslav Siberia" during the interwar period. Over the last decade of the 20th century, the Sandžak region was an area of intensified political tensions and challenges, in the vicinity of the two crisis- and conflict-stricken powder kegs (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo). Even though it took up a significant place in the history of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and bearing in mind the recent past, along with all other things that happened in that neuralgic region from 1991 – 1995, the events in the Sandžak area (violations of human rights, killings, lootings, abductions, threats of the sieging of towns and villages using tanks and cannons, massive displacements, massive police repression through so-called "informative talks", various forms of discrimination, judicial and political processes, preventive repression, etc.) generally remain overshadowed by the events in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and those in Kosovo. Bosniaks who stayed in Sandžak, or rather, in what was left of it, paid a high price to survive in a country that officially was not at war.

Migration movements did not cease subsequent to the dissolution of the Yugoslav state community and they have not stopped even after 2000. They are typical to all ethnic communities living in Sandžak, and their causes are complex and require an elaborate analysis. Aside from economic ones (emigration to Western European countries), migrations of Bosniaks to Bosnia and migrations of Serbs to other parts of Serbia are also typical. Each municipality in Sandžak has its own specificities in migrations. Emigration-related topics are extremely delicate and multi-layered, and are often politicized and used for daily political purposes. Proper analyses of contemporary migrations in the region have not yet been done. Only the City of Novi Pazar has an influx of population due to the migration of citizens from the neighbouring villages and smaller municipalities. The 2002 census results do not match the real situation in Novi Pazar, because, at present, the number of driving licences issued is more than the number of citizens according to the census from that year.

¹¹ The First periodical report, p. 11-12, 55-60 (p.11-12, 44-49)

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Due to the permanent assimilation of persons belonging to the Czech national minority on the territory of the Bela Crkva Municipality, their number is estimated to be even less during the next census. The percentage of Czech speakers is slightly increasing, primarily due to language courses organised in Serbia over the recent ten years with the assistance of the Government of the Czech Republic.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

Compared to the data from the former report, at present, Romanian is in use on the whole territory of Vršac Municipality and it has been also introduced in the Banatsko Novo Selo Neighbourhood Community in Pančevo Municipality.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

1.4. General issues arising from the evaluation of the report

1.4.1. Territorial application of the Charter

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The thresholds of 15% and 25% continue to be a potential issue in implementing the Charter in case of those regional and minority languages, which are not used officially, and it remains unclear, how will Serbia fulfil its undertaking in view of applying Articles 9 and 10 to Romani, because the protection of the Romani language is foreseen by Chapter III of the Charter, but Romani has not been introduced in any of the municipalities or local communities since the moment of ratification. Strict application of the thresholds may further aggravate the fulfilment of this undertaking in the future.

This problem is further burdened by the fact, that the introduction of minority languages into official use depends more so on the individual will of the concerned municipalities than on the clearly defined legal solutions. For example, *Slovak* has been introduced in official use in Bačka Topola (0.5% of the population), Pančevo (1.2%) and Zrenjanin (1.8%), *Ruthenian* in Novi Sad (0.6%) and *Romanian* in Zrenjanin (1.9%), while Macedonian, used by 22% of the persons belonging to the Macedonian minority, is not in official use in Kačerevo (Pančevo Municipality).

Considering the reports of the national councils of national minorities in the Alternative Report, Serbian authorities did not take steps to secure the implementation of the Charter in all municipal territories where the regional or minority languages are present in sufficient numbers for the application of provisions of the Charter, including where necessary changes to statutes of municipalities.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Czech has been in official use in the municipality of Bela Crkva for decades, although the number of persons belonging to this minority does not exceed the threshold stipulated by the law. This is an example of good practice exercised by the Republic of Serbia with regard to persons belonging to this national community. For practical reasons, members of this minority do not demand the use of Czech in judicial and administrative disputes.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

The National Council of the Macedonian National Minority fully agrees with the conclusion of the Committee of Experts, that thresholds of 15% and 25% may hamper the application of the Charter to those regional or minority languages, which are not in official use, but are still present in sufficient number in municipalities or neighbourhood communities for the implementation of the Charter's provision.

Owing to the efforts of the National Council of the Macedonian National Minority, Macedonian has been introduced in official use in the Jabuka Neighbourhood Community (Pancevo Municipality), where some 35% of the persons belonging to the Macedonian minority community live, but such an application was rejected in the city of Pancevo, where 4,15% of the Macedonian minority live, and in Kaceravo (Pancevo Municipality), where about 22% of the persons belonging to the Macedonian minority live. These data indicate unequal criteria for introducing Macedonian language as official in the same municipality (Pancevo). Macedonian is in official use in the settlement of Gudurica (Vrsac Municipality).

Macedonian speakers fail to enjoy the right to use their name and surname in their minority language in practice. Identity cards and other documents are not issued bilingually in Serbian and Macedonian languages. When issuing personal documents, the competent authorities do not respect the request of persons belonging to the Macedonian national minority to write their names and surnames according to the Macedonian orthography. For example, instead of "Petrovska" "Petrovski" is entered in the document.

Macedonian language is not used before courts and other administrative bodies.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

In view of the fact that mimicry is highly expressed among the Roma, and that they numerically do not meet the 15% and 25% thresholds in any of the municipalities, it is fully uncertain whether they will and under what conditions will exercise their rights foreseen by the Charter. Statutes of municipalities, where there is a realistically higher concentration of Roma compared to official statistical data from the 2002 census should be amended and supplemented and brought in line with the real number of the Roma.



Based on unofficial talks held so far, the Zabalj Municipality expressed its willingness to introduce Romani in official use.

According to the 2002 census, 768 declared themselves as Roma in the Zabalj Municipality. Based on the information at the disposal of the Roma NGOs and the local self-government representatives, there are about 2000 Roma who live in this municipality. The cooperation between the representatives of the Roma national community and the local self-government is at an enviable level and is reflected in a number of achieved results.

The first Roma co-op in Serbia was established in this municipality; the primary school put at the disposal of a Roma NGO part of its premises to organise various educations for children and adults and the local Roma Inclusion Office was founded, which implements projects aimed at the advancement of the status of Roma.

These fact prove the efforts invested by the local self-government in the field of Roma integration, hence it is fully realistic to expect that this municipality will be the first in Serbia to introduce Romani in the official use.

Roma Education Centre

In the period when public discussions were held about the contents of the Draft Statute of Vojvodina (2009), the initiatives of the Roma community to include Roma as an official language in the Statute of Vojvodina were not accepted.

Paragraph 3 of Article 26 of the Statute of Vojvodina AP, which defines the official use of language and script, reads: “The right to the official use of national community languages not indicated in paragraph 1 of this Article is exercised in line with the ratified international covenants, the law and the decision of the province Assembly.”

This Article provides an opportunity to introduce Romani as an official language in accordance with the Charter.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

In point of the Committee of Experts' statement in the former report, that “Several municipalities have introduced a regional or minority language in official use whose speakers do not fulfil the thresholds but have a sufficient presence for certain promotional measures” (1.4,1/30), a false conclusion may be reached that Romanian has been introduced in the official use based on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, recommendations of the Advisory Committee or based on the *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities*, or else, at the benevolence of a local self-government.

In this context, it should be noted that Romanian has been in official use in the Municipality of Zrenjanin ever since the late 1970s, since a period prior to the adoption of the *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities*, and that its use in the named municipality falls within the institution of vested rights.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Although there is a legal basis for the introduction of the Slovak language into official use in the community of Slankamenački Vinogradi, Municipality of Inđija, that has not been done up to date.

1.4. 2 Application of Part III of the Charter

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Although Serbia is of the opinion that the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is a process, which “may have, among others, a result of specifying new languages for which the undertaken articles and sub-articles shall be applied to”¹², in the period between the two reporting, no additional undertaking was assumed in view of protecting more languages than those already protected under Chapter III of the Charter.

Assuming the same undertaking for all languages protected under Chapter III of the Charter “in order to provide the same level of protection for all languages”¹³ undoubtedly disables readjustments to the specificities of a language. While Hungarian-speakers are affected by “weak” provisions undertaken under the Charter, since much more ambitious measures could be applied to them, in view of the Romani, it is still a matter in hand, how will these “weak” provisions be practically implemented, especially with regard to Articles 9 and 10 of the Charter.

The status of the Vlach and Bunjevac “languages” has not been clarified yet and continues to raise disputes in the public.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

The Czech minority is very interested in including Czech in Part III of the Charter, tending to gradually introduce learning Czech with elements of national culture into mainstream education, in a couple of settlements where there used to be schools providing teaching in Czech. Since there is an ongoing process of establishing the National Council of the Czech National Minority, a more successful cooperation with the authorities in charge of the above matter is to be expected.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

When adopting the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the Assembly

¹² First periodical report, pages: 42, 115-116, 120 (pp. 31, 101-102, 105).

¹³ First periodical report p. 41 (p. 30).

of Serbia and Montenegro did not define the Macedonian language as one of the languages to be protected under Part III of the Charter.

Since Serbia and Montenegro when depositing the instrument of ratification on 15 February 2006 declared that the notion “the territory where regional or minority languages are in use” shall refer to regions where regional or minority languages are in official use in line with the national legislation”, the National Council of the Macedonian National Minority is of the opinion that Macedonian could have been defined as one of the languages protected under Part III of the Charter, because it is in official use in Jabuka near Pancevo, in Duzine near Plandiste and Gudurica (Vrsac Municipality). Pursuant to the indicated facts, the National Council is of the opinion that Macedonian should be defined as a language protected under Part III of the Charter.

Chapter 2. The Committee of Experts evaluation in respect of Part II and Part III of the Charter

2.1. The evaluation in respect of Part II of the Charter

Part II – Objectives and principles pursued in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1 Article 7 – Objectives and principles

Article 7.1 a

1. In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

a the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth;

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Although Bulgarian was defined as a language in official use in localities where Bulgarians live in a significant number by the respective statutes of municipalities, the practice of local self-governments fails to stimulate and disables by their insidious measures the use of the Bulgarian language.

- Example: In the local self-governments in the municipalities of Bosilegrad and Dimitrograd, where the majority of the population is of Bulgarian nationality, documents from the registry are not issued bilingually and forms are not bilingual either. Bilingual documents are issued only on the explicit request of the party.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Owing to the assessment of Serbian authorities on the importance of using minority languages in multi-ethnic communities, the Czech language was recognized as a minority language and it has been in use in the municipality of Bela Crkva for decades.

Macedoniann

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

The National Council of the Macedonian National Minority is of the opinion that Macedonian should be covered by the Statute of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina as one of the languages in official use, since the Macedonian minority has established its national council.

Article 7.1 b

1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

b the respect of the geographical area of each regional or minority language in order to ensure that existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of the regional or minority language in question;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Administrative divisions still constitute obstacles to the promotion of particular minority languages in Serbia.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

The Serbian Government's Regulation on Administrative Districts¹⁴ is still in force in its unmodified form. The National Council of the Hungarian National Minority is unaware of any official arguments supporting the maintenance of this *status quo*, although political representatives of the Hungarian national minority in Serbia have expressed criticism on several occasions about the establishment of the administrative districts. The reason for the delayed change seems even more unclear having in mind the fact that this is a legal instrument of the Government that is extremely easy to be changed in terms of procedures. The President of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians has pointed out¹⁵ that it is not clear why the administrative districts have been created apart from other large systems, such as the judiciary. Namely, the municipalities of Kanjiža/Magyarkanizsa, Senta/Zenta and Ada are currently under the jurisdiction of the Primary Court and the Higher Court in Subotica (Subotica is also the centre of the North Bačka Administrative District), while in terms of the administration these municipalities belong to the North Banat Administrative District, having its seat in Kikinda.

¹⁴ Official Gazette of the RS, No. 15/2006

¹⁵ István Pásztor, please refer to *Večernje novosti* daily: "Regionalizacija, prekratak im lenjir" of 24.02.2010, the on-line edition:
http://www.novosti.rs/code/navigate.php?Id=1&status=jedna&vest=171891&title_add=Regionalizacija%3A%20Prekratak%20im%20lenjir&keyword_add=regioni%2C%20regionalizacija

Article 7.1 c

- 1 *In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:*
- c *the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;*

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The effective functioning of the national councils of national minorities is generally affected by the inadequate financing, subjected partially to the consequences of the world economic crisis and partially to political influence in the decision-making on budget appropriations.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

In the Republic of Serbia, under positive law, the National Council of the Bosnians National Minority was established. This body of self-government, *inter alia*, deals with education in the Bosnian language and the use of Bosnian in all bodies treated by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Regretfully, funds earmarked for the national council are insufficient to provide its appropriate work and neither are enough for the quality and full use of the Bosnian language.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

The Bulgarian community established its national council, which, in the period after founding (2004) attempted to carry through minority self-government functions in the field of its competence. However, the practical results were not satisfactory, because until the passing of the new *Law on National Councils of National Minorities*, the competences of councils had not been defined clearly, but had been limited to recommendations and conclusions only, without mandatory implementation for those institutions they referred to.

- In 2004, the National Council adopted a decision on launching an initiative that the Dimitrovgrad Municipal Assembly was to make the decision necessary for renaming the city. The Dimitrovgrad Municipal Assembly passed that decision and initiated at the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government in this regard, but the old name of the city has not been put back.
- The National Council requested from the public service media of the Republic, RTS, to re-introduce in its programme the news cast in Bulgarian, which has not been rejected by the RTS management, but has not been carried out either.

The new *Law on National Councils of National Minorities* is a step forward in regulating the relation with state institutions and ministries and an assessment on its implementation can be given after the elections for the new national councils.

As to the relations with respective competent ministries, they are formally maintained but problems are, in fact, solved tardily or postponed to infinity.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Besides inadequate financial support for financing the current work of the National Council, the problem is even more complex due to irregular payments of funds that are often overdue and therefore, obligations from the fields of competence of the National Council cannot be fulfilled adequately.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

Even during the procedure for the election of the first national councils¹⁶ conducted in accordance with the temporary rules stipulated by the *Book of Rules on the Method of the Work of Electoral Commissions for the Election of National Minority Councils*¹⁷ some problems occurred in the implementation of the adopted Law on the Protection of National Minorities. Namely, financial resources for the enforcement of the Law were allocated in the state budget neither for 2002 nor for 2003. The result of that inconsistency was that national minority communities found themselves in a position where the state that organized the sessions of the Electoral Commissions where the members of National Councils were elected was unable even to bear the costs of the electoral procedure.

On the other hand, National Councils having their seats in Vojvodina have been provided with the resources required for their work from the budget of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina since 2003. The Republic of Serbia started to fulfil its undertaking to provide financial resources for the work of National Councils in 2004. Every year the amount and the distribution of the financial resources for the work of National Councils were subject to political arrangements on various levels, and they were not based on the criteria prescribed by the law.

With the enactment of the *Law on Councils of National Minorities* the issue of financing the National Councils was only partially resolved. Under the Law the financial resources for the work of National Councils are to be provided for from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, the budget of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and the budgets of local self-government units, donations and other revenues. Financial resources provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia are distributed in such a way that 30% is distributed in equal amounts to all National Councils that are registered in the Republic of Serbia, while the remaining 70% is distributed proportionally to the number of members of a national minority represented by the National Council and the total number of institutions of that national minority in the field of culture, education, informing and official use of language and script and the scope of activities undertaken by these institutions.

The amount of financial resources from public sources that are provided for financing the work of the National Councils is specified every year in compliance with the *Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia*, i.e. the decisions on the budget of the Autonomous

¹⁶ The National Council of the Hungarian National Minority as the first national council of a national minority was elected at the session of the Electoral Commission convened on 21 September 2002 and the Council was constituted on 19 October 2002.

¹⁷ The Book of Rules on the Method of Work of the Electoral Commissions for the Election of National Minority Councils was published in the Official Gazette of the FRY, No. 11/2002.

Province of Vojvodina and local self-government units. Solutions stipulated by the *Draft Law on National Minority Councils* differ significantly from the adopted text. The Draft Law prescribed that the share of the budgetary financial resources allocated to financing the work of National Councils from the Republican and Provincial budgets and the budgets of the local self-government units should be determined and expressed in percentages. By this solution that was identical with the one stipulated by the *Law on Financing Political Parties*, the goal would have been achieved, so that the financing of the work of National Councils would not depend on the current will of the ruling coalitions at the moment of passing the annual budget. Unfortunately, when the Law was enacted there was no readiness to accept this solution and therefore, the amount of financial resources from the Republican and Provincial budgets and the budgets of local self-government units will still depend on political arrangements that will be made before the annual budget is approved.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

Taking into account that Roma are the poorest and one of the most numerous national minorities in Serbia, budget funds appropriated for the National Council of the Roma National Minority are insufficient to launch and implement a set of activities and projects, which would speed up Roma integration.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

While being aware of the impact of economic crisis on the country, the fact is to be pointed out that subsidies for the operation of national minority councils have not been raised even for inflation rate compared to 2009, while the establishment of another 4 new national councils (Ashkali, Slovene, Czech and Albanian) has been foreseen. Surely, it will be reflected in increased cutbacks in subsidies for the work of national councils in the forthcoming period.

We welcome the founding of a Budget Fund for financing programmes and projects via calls for proposals from the field of education, culture, information and the official use of language and script, yet we point out, that the appropriated funds in the amount of 2.000.000,000 dinars for all national councils are so symbolic that they would not be sufficient to cover a more serious project in each national minority.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council supports statements that it is necessary to ensure the adequate financing of national councils in the light of the new *Law on National Councils of National Minorities*, which has significantly broaden, i.e. delegated state body competences to these highest bodies of minority self-governments. The full and efficient accomplishment of all tasks related to new competencies necessitates the serious professionalization of the national councils' work, and it implies a more significant engagement of human and technical resources which certainly calls for a more significant level of financing.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

By the enactment of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, national councils have undertaken significant competences in the field of the use of the languages and scripts of national minorities. In accordance with the Law, the national council:

- 1) determines traditional names of local self-government units, populated areas and other geographical names in the language of the national minority if the language of the national minority is in official use on the territory of that local self-government unit or the populated area; the names determined by the national council become names in official use besides the names in the Serbian language and they shall be published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, and in case of National Councils having their seat on the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, they shall also be published in the Official Journal of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina;
- 2) proposes to the competent body the display of the name of a local self-government unit, populated areas and other geographical names in the language of the national minority;
- 3) proposes the determination of the language and script of the national minority as an officially used language and script in a local self-government unit;
- 4) proposes the change of the names of streets, squares, city quarters, hamlets and other populated areas and institutions for which it has been established that they are particularly relevant for the national minority;
- 5) gives its opinion about the procedure of determining the names of streets, squares, city quarters, hamlets and other parts of the populated areas if on the territory of the local self-government unit or the residential area the language of the national minority is in official use;
- 6) proposes to the competent body supervision over the official use of the language and script of the national minority;
- 7) proposes to the competent bodies measures and activities for the improvement of translation of regulations into the languages of national minorities that are in official use;
- 8) undertakes measures and activities aimed at the improvement of the official use of languages and scripts of the national minority;
- 9) makes decisions on other issues in this field assigned to it under the law or an act passed by the Autonomous Province or a local self-government unit.

The National Council of the Slovak National Minority has exercised its rights and obligations in accordance with the law in reference to expressing its opinion about the procedure of determining the names of streets, squares, city quarters and hamlets, and it has initiated the use of the Slovak language and script as an officially used language in local self-governments units, it proposed its members for the Municipal Inter-Ethnic Councils and initiated the issuance of bilingual personal documents in municipalities where the Slovak language and script are officially used.

Article 7.1 d

1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

d the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Compared to the data from the former report, the State has not invested enough efforts to encourage the use of the Czech, Macedonian and Vlach languages. While the use of the Czech language has been derogated in relation to the former period (by closing the Sunce Radio Station), persons belonging to the Macedonian minority deny the Committee of Experts' conclusion that Serbian authorities provide significant support to TV programmes in Macedonian. In view of the Vlach language, no structured policy has been established over the past three years, which could facilitate the use of the Vlach language in public life, while the Negotin-based TV Krajina ceased its operations in the meantime because the support by the Republic of Romania was suspended.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Compared to the data from the former reporting period, the situation has drastically changed in terms of the media in Czech at the expense of the members of the Czech minority.

In line with the frequency distribution plan for Serbia, the municipality of Bela Crkva was awarded only one broadcasting frequency with local coverage and within an open call of the Republic Broadcasting Agency the licence was awarded to the municipal radio station, while Sunce Radio, which used to broadcast a programme in Czech on a daily basis, was closed.

Due to the lack of funds, the publishing of the newsletter is also irregular and nearly all activities in the field of information have dropped off.

By establishing the National Council of the Czech national minority, in terms of television programme, conditions should be created for the TV productions and broadcasting. The establishment of the Council should also enable the re-launch of electronic media (radio, and later on, television, if possible) with a programme in Czech.

The cultural events of persons belonging to the Czech national minority are financed from their own assets and in part by the authorities of the Province, whereas the support by municipal authorities is mainly declarative.

So far, the Czech language did not have a more significant practical use in judicial and administrative proceedings due to a number of reasons:

- Lack of applications by persons belonging to the Czech national minority to conduct proceedings in Czech due to faster and simpler conduct of judicial procedures in Serbian.
- Lack of professional court personnel with the knowledge of Czech in the Municipality of Bela Crkva.
- General attitude of the members of the Czech minority that it is not necessary to additionally burden the budget of this underdeveloped municipality with such requests, when there are cutbacks within state authorities.

Persons belonging to the Czech national minority take up a similar position in relation to the names of streets and settlements within the municipality of Bela Crkva. Existing multilingual names of institutions date back from an earlier period.

Although there have been requests by the members of the Czech national community to issue personal documents (extracts from the register, ID cards, passports) in Czech, there are still no forms and documents printed in Czech. Enabling the exercise of this right, which does not demand significant costs, would be an important segment in the relations of the Czech minority - the local self-government - the State of Serbia.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

The statement of the Committee of Experts under point 51., i.e. that "Serbian authorities provide earmarked assistance to television programmes in Macedonian" is not correct. TV Vojvodina broadcasts a 30-minute programme a week in Macedonian ("Makedonsko sonce – Macedonian Sun) and there is a 30-minute programme on TV Pancevo ("Banatsko sonce" –The Sun of Banat).

RTV Vojvodina Radio broadcasts a 30-minute radio programme a week in Macedonian ("Makedonijum")

The National Council of the Macedonian National Minority welcomes the recommendation of the Committee of Experts under point 52. to submit data on the situation of Macedonian in Central Serbia in the next periodical report.

Vlach

The National Council of the Vlach National Minority

Romanian was represented in cultural activities of the cultural societies in Vlach settlements, likewise on cultural events financially supported by the National Council of the Vlach National Minority.

Informing in Romanian is almost non-existent in Central Serbia. There is no printed media in Romanian and from the broadcast media TV Krajina from Negotin broadcast a programme in Romanian, which is financed from the funds provided for projects from the Republic of Romania. News casts are also broadcast by TV Bor and Petrovac Radio (in a poor Romanian-Serbian language).

Article 7.1 e

- 1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:*
- e the maintenance and development of links, in the fields covered by this Charter, between groups using a regional or minority language and other groups in the State employing a language used in identical or similar form, as well as the establishment of cultural relations with other groups in the State using different languages;*

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

To the knowledge of the Vojvodina Centre, until the moment of submitting this report, no body or council has been established which could provide a space for minority representatives to meet. The functioning of the Republic of Serbia's Council for National Minorities, which could serve that purposes, similarly to the previous period, is unsatisfactory.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

In Serbia, links are maintained among groups using different variants of the Bulgarian language. These links are of diverse type: friendships, family links, cooperation on the level of societies and organisations in the field of culture. In order to maintain the national identity and culture of Bulgarians, cultural events, meetings of societies and cultural associations are organised. The umbrella organisation supporting the maintenance of these links is the National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority, which facilitates and financially supports events by covering organisational and territorial units mostly populated by Bulgarians, i.e. the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Bosilegrad and Bulgarians from Banat: from Ivanovo (Pancevo Municipality) and Belo Blato (Zrenjanin Municipality).

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority opened its offices in Dimitrovgrad, Bosilegrad and Ivanovo near Pančevo (Vojvodina) with the task to facilitate and encourage the Bulgarian community in exercising its rights in the field of culture, education, information and the official use of the Bulgarian language.

Article 7.1 f

- 1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:*
- f the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;*

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

From the previous reporting period till the moment of submitting this report, Serbian authorities has not provided for teaching and learning Czech, Macedonian and Vlach (Romanian) languages with elements of national culture, although it was requested and in spite of the minority parents' wish to organise this type of teaching. The attitude of state authorities to the requests of persons belonging to the Vlach national minority is especially alarming.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Teaching in Czech was provided in several schools in the municipality of Bela Crkva from the 1st to the 4th grades, from 1852 to 1974 in Češko Selo and until 1960 in Bela Crkva and until 1964 in Kruščica.

The teaching was abolished due to the lack of qualified teachers, the impossibility of continuing education in Czech and due to the drop in the number of pupils attending these lessons.

Ever since the Matica Češka in Bela Crkva (1997) was established, it was repeatedly asked to introduce the teaching of Czech with elements of national culture into elementary schools within the municipality of Bela Crkva. The request was submitted to the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia in 1999 and was supported by the Embassy of the Czech Republic to Belgrade. The talks with the Ministry of Education were carried out with relative success, but were discontinued due to the circumstances and the relating documents were lost.

Based on the information that a second foreign language could be included in the curriculum for the 2007/2008 school year as an optional course, Matica Češka¹⁸ had talks with 3 principals of primary schools, and also with the assistant head of the Agency for Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia and with the Consul of the Czech Republic to Serbia, related to the inclusion of Czech with elements of national culture. Although the schools concluded that there are no obstacles to introduce learning Czech within the municipality of Bela Crkva, in the meantime, the parliamentary elections in Serbia were scheduled and the survival of the Agency was questioned, so the solution of this issue was postponed.

Learning Czech has been enabled since 1999 through courses of Czech for pupils of primary and secondary schools. The number of attendees varies from 50 to 110. The courses are free of charge and so is the literature in Czech. These are part of the Government of Czech Republic official programme and the Czech Ministry of Education covers all expenses of the visiting lecturer in Serbia.

Czech language courses took place in the premises of the schools that the pupils of Czech nationality attended up to the year of 2003. Since 2003, the schools have ceased to provide these classrooms because of prolonged lesson schedules after regular school

¹⁸ March 27th 2008

hours and because of the additional expenses. For the mentioned reasons, Czech language courses were dislocated to the premises of Czech associations and the number of attendees plummeted significantly. Even though authorities declaratively pledged their support, they still haven't done anything in this matter.

A survey was conducted in 2009 by the Czech associations in the municipality of Bela Crkva and Kovin (Gaj settlement) about the need to introduce Czech with elements of national culture. Seventy-four parents approved the introduction of these classes (24 in Bela Crkva and 25 in Kruscica and Gaj), but we believe, far more parents would have supported the survey had it been organised in more schools and had the principals and teachers taken it more seriously.

Members Persons belonging to the Czech minority demand from the competent state institutions and establishments to enable the optional study of Czech with elements of national culture in primary schools where there is an interest for that, and they demand assistance in overcoming the bureaucratic barriers that disable them to exercise the right to education in mother tongue.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

Teaching Macedonian with elements of national culture has not been introduced in any of the settlements with higher concentration of Macedonian-speakers, hence the conclusion of the Committee of Experts that “the teaching of Macedonian with elements of national culture is apparently being introduced” is incorrect.

Courses of Macedonian are being organised by the National Council of the Macedonian National Minority on the whole territory of Serbia under the title “Welcome to Learn Macedonian”, which are attended by persons belonging to the Macedonian national minority in Serbian from 7 to 77 years of age. These courses were launched for practical reasons, because, according to the statistics, there are 14.082 persons belonging to the Macedonian minority in total and 10.203 persons Macedonian-speakers (from a total of 11.785 persons belonging to the Macedonian minority in Vojvodina, Macedonian is spoken by 4.152). The courses are financed by the National Council of the Macedonian National Minority and besides the members of the Macedonian community, they are also attended by a certain number of persons belonging to the majority nation and to other communities.

Vlach

The National Council of the Vlach National Minority

Since the former reporting period until the moment of writing this report, learning Romanian with elements of national culture has not been introduced as an optional subject in none of the primary schools in Serbia, although there were requests for that.

The National Council of the Vlach National Minority submitted an application to the Ministry of Education¹⁹ to introduce Romanian with elements of national culture in

¹⁹ 16. January 2009

locations with Vlach population. In this regard, the Ministry of Education informed the National Council²⁰ that in the matter of introducing this subject, the Ministry would proceed in line with its competences set by the law and that it would send the answer when informing school managements and schools during the elaboration of the list of optional subjects.

Accordingly, the National Council has undertaken all measures from its legally defined competences and, in line with the legal procedure, sent requests to schools in Eastern Serbia about the introduction of this subject, but before prior to that, the Council collected the signatures of those parents, who expressed their wish that their children attend this subject.

Parents' signatures supporting the introduction of Romanian with elements of national culture were collected in the following primary schools and their regional branches:

- Brana Paunović Primary School (PS) from Rašanc, department in Orljevo
- Jovan Šerbanović PS from Ranovac, departments in Kladurovo and Manastirica
- Branko Radičević PS from Golubac
- Ugrin Branković PS from Neresnice
- Ugrin Branković PS from Bukovska
- Jovan Šerbanović PS from Laznica
- Osanica, Branko Radičević PS from Sedlar, departments in Subotica and Busur
- 15. maj PS from Mali Jasenovac
- Joca Milosavljević PS from Bagrdan, department in Strizilo
- Jovan Jovanović Zmaj from Bobovo
- Dude Jović PS from Pordin.

In this regard the National Council has been in continuous, both written and oral correspondence with the Ministry of Education since early 2009, however, despite the persistent requests to bring about the introduction of Romanian in the above lists schools, the Ministry has not take up sufficient measures within its competence to make it happen.

Since the Council acted in line with the laws and regulations setting the matter of primary education and sent the request to primary schools at a time, when questionnaires related to optional subjects are filled in, the management of the primary schools had to fully respect the legal procedure and had to make the survey among the parents, who signed the request to introduce Romanian with elements of national culture. Despite all that, none of the schools observed the legal procedure relating to surveying, but made public surveys during which they made pressure on the parents to back down from their request. The only exception was the Mosa Pijade PS from Osanica. The rest of the schools failed to make the surveys.

We can conclude from the above, that the work of the school principals, school boards and the Ministry itself was contrary to the Constitution and the laws, and that the standards of Charter on languages and the Framework Convention in the area of the

²⁰ Act no. 610-00-00046/2009-06 from 18.02.2009

State's undertakings to protect and foster minority languages and culture, were not observed.

Although in some municipalities in Central Serbia there are legal conditions for the introduction of the Romanian language in official use, by the time of submitting this report, the ruling parties of the majority nation have not expressed willingness in their municipal assemblies to adopt amendments of statutes, which would enable the implementation of this right.

Article 7.1 g

1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

g the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

It has not been recorded, that Bosnian language lessons are attended by persons not belonging to the Bosnian national minority.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

In Sandžak, Bosnian lessons are not attended by students whose mother-tongue is not Bosnian. Since studying Bosnian with elements of national culture is an elective subject, parents hardly decide to enrol their children in these types of lessons. The implementation of the rights of the members of the Bosniak ethnic-minority to education in their mother-tongue was accompanied by a number of obstructions in some communities and this practice has not yet been fully stopped.

- *Prijepolje.* Bosnian is taught in only 1 school and in 2 classes. One class is located in the Župa central school and the other is in the affiliate department of the same school in Hrti. Since Bosnian is an elective subject, in this municipality, Bosniak children were put in the position to choose between the subject "from toys to computers" and Bosnian language. In a world where IT sciences are necessary, parents decide to enrol their children in the former. If Bosnian were a regular subject, children would attend both subjects. This may serve as the best example for the necessity of introducing Bosnian language as a regular subject.
- *Priboj.* Bosnian with elements of ethnic-culture is not taught in any of the schools, even though a significant number of the Bosniak population lives in that municipality, despite the legal obligation to introduce this language in teaching.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

The State, more precisely schools established by the State, does not provide teaching of Bulgarian to non-speakers, on the contrary, it (they) stimulate(s) pupils not to attend classes of mother tongue with elements of national culture. These classes are optional, and assessment grades are not included in the overall average of the pupil's achievement at the end of the school year.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

A significant percentage of persons belonging to the Serb and other nationalities apply for Czech language courses organised under the auspices of the Czech Republic's Ministry of Education. The programme is organised in separate groups according to the level of knowledge.

Twice a week, special classes are organised for adults and persons belonging to the Czech minority make up the highest percentage of attendees.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

Teaching Macedonian with elements of national culture has not been organised. A certain number of persons belonging to the majority nation attend Macedonian language courses organised by the National Council of the Macedonian Minority.

Until 1994, Macedonian was taught as the language of the social environment in Jabuka (Pancevo Municipality) as part of the regular teaching programme, and these classes were attended by pupils of the majority nation from the 1st to the 8th grade of primary school. This type of teaching was abolished without any rationale by the decision of the Pancevo Municipality in 1994.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

Under the decision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Education respectively, it was enabled in 1997 to introduce Romani and Romani with elements of national culture as an elective subject in primary schools.

The first schools to introduce this subject were the "Žarko Zrenjanin" Primary School in Obrovac and the "Mileta Protić" Primary School in Tovarisevo. In the "Žarko Zrenjanin" Primary School, there were some Serbian nationality pupils who attended these lessons in the first generation in 1997.

Roma Education Centre

In the "Vuk Karadžić" Primary School in Deronja (Odžaci Municipality), there are some non-Roma children who have chosen as an elective subject Romani with the elements of the national culture.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Article 7.1 h

1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

h the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

We are of the opinion that the future Czech Minority National Council will establish closer cooperation with the Slavic Languages Department of the University in Belgrade, and also with the Czech Republic in terms of university education of members of the Czech minority, especially in terms of scholarships.

Article 7.1 i

1 In respect of regional or minority languages, within the territories in which such languages are used and according to the situation of each language, the Parties shall base their policies, legislation and practice on the following objectives and principles:

i the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by this Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more States.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Aside from the cultural cooperation with the Czechs from the Romanian part of Banat, the Republic of Srpska and Croatia, interested students are sent to attend courses and one-term studies each year in limited numbers at the invitation of the Government of the Czech Republic. Free three-month study of the Czech language at the Masaryk University in Brno is organised two times a year.

The Association of Czechs in Vojvodina fosters good relations with academic institutions in the Czech Republic and they make use of every possibility to take interested students to this country.

Charles University in Prague organises every summer free one-month language courses for Czechs living in diaspora worldwide, and aside from studying languages the objective of the courses is also to get familiarized with the Czech culture and tradition, as a kind of promotion of the country.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

The National Council of the Macedonian National Minority in Serbia supports the

position of the Committee of Experts related to the statement under point 68. of the Committee's Report.

Article 7.2

2 *The Parties undertake to eliminate, if they have not yet done so, any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it. The adoption of special measures in favour of regional or minority languages aimed at promoting equality between the users of these languages and the rest of the population or which take due account of their specific conditions is not considered to be an act of discrimination against the users of more widely-used languages.*

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The *Law against Discrimination* was enacted in March 2009 and its adoption should disable discrimination on any grounds including the use of minority languages.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

The State has not adopted special measures for the protection of the Bulgarian language or any measures in its favour respectively, and has neither prescribed sanctions against those who discourage its use and development.

Affirmative measure endeavours targeted at fostering Bulgarian are generally considered as attempts of threatening the majority by the minority.

- Example: The unsuccessful effort to re-name Dimitrovgrad into its old name, Caribrod, because the old name puts in mind Bulgaria, as it hurts persons belonging to the Serbian nation.

Article 7.3

3 *The Parties undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.*

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The Republic of Serbia fails to work sufficiently on raising awareness and promoting tolerance to regional and minority languages and cultures these represent, as an integral part of Serbia's cultural heritage, both in curricula for all levels of education and in the media. Except for initiatives on the level of the Province (*Strengthening Tolerance and Multiculturalism* Project by the Province's Executive Council running for many years), there are no similar projects in other parts of Serbia. In this respect, the indifferent attitude of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights to launch such initiatives is especially worrying.

Unlike the media in Vojvodina, the state television is still short of programmes which would promote the culture and tradition of minorities, and it disables overcoming stereotypes and prejudices towards speakers of certain minority languages in Central Serbia. The situation is especially alarming in case of the speakers of the "Vlach language", who were, due to their national background, exposed to pressure exerted by the police during collecting signatures for national council elections²¹. Such an attitude towards persons belonging to a community shall, necessarily, have a consequence on the use of their language in the future.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The Serbian state television does not broadcast programmes in Albanian, nor does it promote Albanian culture and tradition in a positive manner. In regard to the traditionally ingrained stereotypes and prejudices of the majority of Serbian people towards the ethnic-Albanian minority, it is instrumental that the state television broadcast multicultural programmes in Albanian and work on curtailing the ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

Bosnians, and other minorities who does not live in Vojvodina (Albanians, Bulgarians and Vlachs) are not represented in the public service media of Serbia, nor have programmes in their mother tongues. Contrary to that, programmes in the languages of national minorities living in Vojvodina are extensively broadcast in the public service media of Vojvodina.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Representatives of the Bosniak National Council have repeatedly pointed out that the public service broadcaster, the Radio Television of Serbia (RTS), as the national public service, should assign time slots in the programme for the members of the Bosniak ethnic-minority in Serbia. The RTS was asked on a number of occasions to broadcast a programme in Bosnian that would be dealing with issues related to this minority once a week; but even though the initiative to form an editorial office in Bosnian has been present for a number of years, it still has not been realized. Issues related to Bosniaks and other ethnic-minorities in Serbia are often elaborated within the programme entitled "The Citizen", broadcasted on the RTS Programme 2 during weekends, however, the slot dedicated to Bosniaks is not in Bosnian, but in Serbian.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

On the territory of Central Serbia, the State fails to facilitate or to encourage through its bodies persons belonging to the Bulgarian national minority to speak and write in

²¹ Information about the discrimination of the Vlach national minority were submitted to the Council of Europe and the Secretariat for the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on 24th April 2010 by the National Council of the Vlach National Minority.

Bulgarian in public, or to use it before authorities. The situation is better in Vojvodina, because the achieved level of awareness of the authorities and the persons belonging to minorities on using minority languages is on a higher level.

The situation in the local media is significantly better, because local radio and TV programmes are equally broadcast in both languages. In media broadcasting on national frequency there are no Bulgarian-language news casts and educational programmes.

In cultural institutions, such as amateur theatres, libraries and cultural societies, Bulgarian is not sufficiently used and misused, i.e. a local dialect is used.

- Example: The amateur theatre in Dimitrovgrad has performed one production each year over the last three years in local dialect, which does not contribute sufficiently to promoting the Bulgarian language, while in State reports it is stated as the use of mother tongue.
- After the re-organisation of the courts, the same rules are applied in the judiciary as for any other foreign language, i.e. Turkish, that is, if the party wants a case to be processed in Bulgarian, he/she has to bear the costs of involving an interpreter.

The curriculum and syllabus for Bulgarian with elements of national culture is approved by the Ministry of Education on the proposal of the National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority, and the cooperation between these two is smooth. The problem is that learning Bulgarian language, history and culture is a massive subject taught in 2 school classes, which are not enough to provide adequate knowledge from these fields for the pupils.

Nation-wide broadcast media in Serbia have no programmes in Bulgarian. The National Council launched an initiative to introduce at least one news cast in Bulgarian in the public service media, RTS, which was accepted by the manager of the RTS, however by the time of writing this report, no practical implementation has come about.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

The National Council is of the opinion that the Republic of Serbia should make more efforts in promoting Croatian as a language which has its own special linguistic expression and not merely to transform the Serbian language and Cyrillic script into Latin letters only. The last promotion conducted by the State and relating to the judiciary system reform and the promotive material accompanying this reform for the purpose of informing the public was made on this very principle, and regardless of the fact that Croatian is in official use in Subotica the material was submitted in Latin script and in the Serbian language.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

In general, persons belonging to the Czech national minority do not encounter problems when using their mother tongue in everyday life. The multiethnic environment also contribute to this likewise the fact that they have lived in these regions for about 200 years.

Contrary to that, there is a lack of interest by primary schools and local governments for the needs of this national minority to learn mother tongue in schools.

Relaunching the radio in Czech would additionally encourage persons belonging to the Czech national minority to use and foster their mother tongue more extensively. The Republic Broadcasting Agency and its assessment on the significance and justification of the existence of media in Czech play a key role in that.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

We may state with disappointment that the establishment of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights did not imply taking steps and measures in order to promote multiculturalism and tolerance to the extent and as intensely as it could be justifiably expected from the central state authority. This particularly applies to the fact that the said ministry should have been the main stakeholder in fulfilling the undertaking of the state under Article 81 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*²² which relates to the development of the spirit of tolerance.

At the moment of writing this report, apart from the Multiculturalism and Tolerance Affirmation Program and the Tolerance Camp organized on a regular basis by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the past years, that have been established as projects having multi-year tradition, there are no other programs relating to multiculturalism in the Republic of Serbia.

Macedonian

National Council of the Macedonian National Minority

From the census in 1991 till the census in 2002, the number of persons belonging to the Macedonian national minority dropped from 45.068 to 25.874. One of the reasons behind it were the statements given by some politicians that persons belonging to the Macedonian national minority in Serbia were “Serbs with serious disorder of speech”, and all those who did not agree with that would be sent back to Macedonia.

The Macedonian minority is faced with similar statements even nowadays, since these are broadcast in some TV comedies thus spreading negative stereotypes about persons belonging to the Macedonian national minority. One of the examples of it is "The Police Station" TV programme broadcast on TV Pink, which, seemingly in a “funny way or with some longing for the former Yugoslavia”, sarcastically depicts persons belonging to national minorities, who – until the dissolution of the SFRY – lived in former Yugoslav republics and now live in Serbia. We are of the opinion that such negative connotations about persons belonging to the Macedonian minority may have a negative impact on persons belonging to this community as to their declaring themselves as Macedonians during the next census.

²² In the filed of education, culture and information Serbia provides incentives for the spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and undertakes effective measures for the improvement of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation among its inhabitants, regardless of their ethical or religious background, culture and language.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

About 100 hours of radio and television programmes are broadcast in Romani-Serbian language in the programmes of the Serbian Radio and Television and Vojvodina Radio and Television, and these programmes enable the presentation of the culture and national values of the Roma national community both to Roma and non-Roma population, likewise their getting familiar with each other, sloughing off prejudices about the Roma and getting acquainted with the issues faced by the Roma community.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Ruthenian language, history and tradition have been continuously promoted for years in primary schools Vojvodina-wide within the Ethno-Day Project by the Vojvodina Centre for Human Rights, which is supported by the Provincial Secretariat for Regulation, Administration and National Minorities within the Affirmation of Multiculturalism and Tolerance Project.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The Slovak language is promoted in various ways:

- Through a festival of reciters organized by the Association of Amateurs of Vojvodina and Serbia where reciters compete, reciting poems in Slovak;
- Through an international project titled "Youth for Youth" (*Mladi mladima*) that was presented in the media and implemented in cooperation with the University of Matej Bel in Banska Bistrica, Slovakia;
- By presenting naive painters of Kovačica (in the field of culture);
- By organizing the Slovak Ethnic Day in primary schools in Vojvodina, which is an event with a long tradition, within a project by the same name, that is implemented by the Vojvodina Center for Human Rights and supported by the Province Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities;
- Through direct and indirect forms of promotion of the Slovak culture and language and ever-growing festivals and cultural gatherings of members of the Slovak national minority in Bački Petrovac, folklore festival "Dance, Dance" (*Tancuj tancuj*), music festivals at Selenča, Pivnice and Kulpin, and other cultural events that are supported financially and organisationally by the National Council of the Slovak National Minority.

Article 7.4

4 In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Similarly to the former reporting period, the Republic of Serbia's Council for National Minorities still fails to be efficient and productive sufficiently.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The Albanian national minority in Serbia was not represented in the Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Serbia, because in the former period it had not established its own national minority council.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

The National Council convenes on an irregular basis and therefore its articulation of the interests of communities of this national minority is inadequate through the established bodies of this minority's self-government.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

Having engaged Czech associations and individuals, the members of the Czech national minority succeeded in gathering a sufficient number of signatures through a campaign for establishing the National Council of the Czech Minority and participating in the direct elections for the Council. As agreed, all Czech associations in Vojvodina have participated in the elections with a joint list.

According to the members of the Czech national community, the establishment of the Czech National Council presents a historic moment for this minority in Serbia, for it opens the possibility to achieve the defined objectives expeditiously, first and foremost, in the field of education, language, culture and tradition.

Upon the establishment of the National Council of the Czech Minority, the intention of the council is to participate in the work of the Council of the Republic of Serbia for National Minorities, which is expected to offer good coordination and resolution of vital common problems.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

The Republic of Serbia Council for National Minorities was established in the period of increased violence against members of national minorities²³, primarily as a kind of the state's response to the emerging violence, and not for the purpose of maintaining, improving and protecting national, ethnic, religious and cultural specificities and languages of national minorities in the Republic of Serbia as prescribed under Article 1 of the *Decree on the Establishment of the Republic of Serbia Council for National Minorities*. The most evident basis for this conclusion is the fact that in the period when the number of inter-ethnic incidents declined²⁴, the Council did not convene a single session, thus violating the provision of the *Decree on the Establishment of the Council* under which it is prescribed that the Council should convene minimum twice a year²⁵.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

The National Council of the Roma National Minority has a more complex role than the other national minority councils, since, besides cultural autonomy-related issues, it also deals with the integration of Roma into the broader social community and with poverty reduction. Hence, the Council's role should be strengthened and promoted through legal regulations.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

Adopting the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities* created stable legal grounds for the operation of national councils, which will, however, solely depend on subsidies intended to provide its coherent implementation and building partnership with the Ministry for Human and Minority rights, likewise with other ministries directly or indirectly addressing issues of persons belonging to national minorities. A key role should be played by the recently established Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Serbia. Comments on further activities of the Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Serbia can only be given after the elections and establishing the new composition of national councils.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Many state institution consultative bodies (foreseen by laws) wherein the active participation of persons belonging to national minorities has been envisioned should be made functional and their continuous and effective work should be enabled. The re-establishment of the Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Serbia is indeed a positive step in this direction if it is going to work in its full constitution, as foreseen by the Decree and the Rules of Procedures.

²³ Starting from the second half of the year 2003 until the end of 2004 the number of inter-ethnic incidents marked a permanent growth, and the number of incidents based on the ethnical or religious background started to decline in 2005.

²⁴ In period from 23 December 2005 through 30 October 2009

²⁵ Article 5 Paragraph 1 of the Decree on the Establishment of the Republic of Serbia Council for National Minorities.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority:

The Council of the Republic of Serbia was not active in the previous period. In 2009 only one, i.e. the constitutive session of this governmental body was organized.

2.2. The evaluation in respect of Part III of the Charter

Part – Measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life in accordance with the undertakings entered into Article 2, paragraph 2

Article 8 – Education

General issues

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Likewise in the former reporting period, inadequate teaching material and textbooks and the lack of teachers for certain subject continue to influence the quality of education in minority languages in Serbia.

There is no coherent state strategy for teacher upgrading in minority languages, and the care about upgrading teachers is, generally, taken over by the national councils. The initiative to open up the opportunity of educating teachers for two subjects, which would surmount the issue of the minority teachers' insufficient engagement, has not been accepted.

The practice of employing school supervisors for teaching in minority languages continues to be non-existent.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The upgrading and training of teachers in Serbia who teach in Albanian are not organised. Teachers of Albanian language and literature participate in seminars organised in Prishtina on their own private initiative.

Teaching materials for pre-school education taught in the Albanian language are in Serbian.

Likewise in the former reporting period, ethnic-Albanian pupils in primary and secondary schools use Serbian textbooks and handbooks translated into Albanian with a vast number of grammar mistakes. Serbian culture and tradition are dominant in these books

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

There are adequate textbooks in Bulgarian for the first and second grades of primary schools since their import from the Republic of Bulgaria is fully permitted. For the third

grade import is not permitted for all subjects (social sciences), while for the fourth grade there is still a lack of answer as to the application for import, but teachers use those textbooks, which were proposed by the committee to the Ministry of Education for the approval of import. For higher primary school grades, teams were formed to translate all textbooks from Serbian. The National Council's Committee for Education is of the opinion, that fifth grade pupils will have all textbooks in Bulgarian by the beginning of the new school year.

There are no textbooks in Bulgarian in secondary schools, and these will neither be translated nor printed, because the reform of secondary education is expected to happen next year, so the Ministry of Culture assessed that it was not worth translating and printing textbooks for just one or two generations of pupils.

Schools dispose of educated teachers for teaching, who have completed part of their studies in Bulgaria, since this country facilitated their upgrading.

There is no teacher training strategy for education in Bulgarian; however, there was no need for that in the reporting period, because schools educating persons belonging to the Bulgarian minority have teachers trained to teach in Bulgarian.

Part of the teaching material is provided through import, while textbooks and teaching materials not approved to be imported are being translated from Serbian to Bulgarian.

Croatian

The National Council of the Croatian National Minority

The acknowledgement of certificates on additional education acquired in the Republic of Croatia for licenses in the Republic of Serbia should be enabled and the training of teachers in the Croat language should also be made possible within the Teacher Training Faculty in Subotica.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

We believe that the shortage of professional teaching staff is mostly caused by the outdated educational policy applied by teacher training colleges according to which students are traditionally educated as teachers who will teach only one subject. The teacher's quota cannot be filled by work engagements in small schooling institutions and therefore, the introduction of the curricula for the education of teachers who would teach two subjects in the future would improve the presence of tutoring in the languages of national minorities by the professionally qualified staff.

We believe it is necessary to mention herein that publishing the textbooks translated into the languages of national minorities, including Hungarian is lagging behind for months as compared to the textbooks in Serbian.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

There is an obvious lack of textbooks for children attending these classes. Although Romani teachers are organised in the Romani Teachers' Association, there are no initiatives by the Roma community, nor provided material resources to prepare the needed textbooks.

“Roma assistants” trained so far at the initiative of the Ministry for Education have been classified as “pedagogical assistants” under the *Primary Education Act*. The problem they are faced with is the irregular payment of their wages.

The training of new assistants is underway, and it is expected that in the forthcoming 2010/2011 school year 40 assistants will be included in pre-school institutions and 50 assistants into primary schools. Assistant education is implemented by the Centre for Interactive Pedagogy from Belgrade and is monitored by the Ministry for Education.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

The issue of training and upgrading Romanian language teachers and professors has not been solved yet. The (Serbian-Romanian) Joint Committee had only one constitutive meeting, but, so far, no specific cooperation has taken place in this field.

There are textbooks in Romanian for all classes of primary school, and an additional text on Romanian national history for the history textbook. Special textbooks were written for music and arts, and programmes and textbooks were made and written by experts of Romanian nationality recommended by the National Council of the Romanian National Minority.

There are technical problems, because the textbooks are received from the printing house with delay.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Fostering the Ruthenian language should be financially stimulated and regulated, bearing in mind that a certain number of teachers are engaged in teaching only to 20%, 30% and 80%, and sometimes, this type of support is deduced merely to the school management's approval given by principle, while financial support is absent and an example is the learning of Ruthenian with the elements of national culture in Šid.

The situation is even worse in pre-school education, since the subsidy is minimal or even non-existent.

The prior practice of employing a school supervisor for the Ruthenian language, and adviser for the Ruthenian language and literature respectively, should be re-established, since such positions have not existed for Ruthenian and Romanian recently. Their employment and role in the pedagogical work of schools teaching and fostering Ruthenian is very important both in professional and in organisational aspects: in

preparing syllabus and curriculum, in the professional upgrading of teachers, in organising knowledge-based competitions for Ruthenian pupils, in publishing textbooks etc.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The Slovak National Minority solves the issue of the lacking professional staff by providing scholarships in the field of education, information and use of language and script. In the 2009/2010 school year, the National Council of the Slovak National Minority has granted 14 scholarships to students and 7 scholarships to pupils attending secondary schools.

In terms of the obligation of teachers to attend professional training courses and the proposal of the National Council of the Slovak National Minority in cooperation with the Association of Slovak Pedagogues and the Association of Slovak Pre-School Teachers in Vojvodina, the Ministry of Culture has approved 3 programmes of professional training courses for school and kindergarten teachers starting from the school year 2008/2009 and 6 programmes starting from the 2010/2011 school year in the Slovak language.

In the 2008/2009 school year 283 certificates were issued to teachers who attended licensed professional training courses in the Slovak language.

Pre-school education

Article 8 – Education

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| <p>1 <i>With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:</i></p> <p><i>a iii to apply one of the measures provided for under and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;</i></p> |
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Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Realising pre-school education in minority languages would be facilitated by adopting a law on pre-school education, because this field is only partially regulated by the *Law on the Basis of the Education System*.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

In the 2009-2010 school year, 910 children attended pre-school education taught in Albanian, in Bujanovac, Preševo/Preshevë and Medveđa/Medvegjë. The decrease in the number of children compared to the former reporting periods is due to emigration of ethnic-Albanian inhabitants to western European countries.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The data indicated by the Committee of Experts in the former report refer to private pre-school institutions (owned by Bosnians) and these are only in Novi Pazar. Pre-school education in Bosnian is not organised in mainstream education in any of the pre-school institutions in Serbia.

We are of the opinion, that this undertaking is not fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

According to the Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, Bosnian is not used in state kindergartens in Sandžak at all, and children attend classes in Bosnian only in private kindergartens in Novi Pazar and in pre-school institutions founded by the Islamic religious community.

The Sandžak Committee is of the opinion that the undertaking related to Bosnian has not been fulfilled.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

In pre-school institutions in Dimitrovgrad and Bosilegrad all children, regardless of their national background, attend pre-school education according to a programme which equally treats the learning of Bulgarian and Serbian.

In other locations (Babušnica, Pirot, Surdulica and schools in the villages of Zvonce, Klisura, Kozica) where Bulgarians are not in majority, education is provided in Serbian and there are no classes in Bulgarian, and pre-school institutions do not offer such an opportunity to parents either.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

The preparatory preschooling programme in Croatian is attended by 27 children: in Subotica – 13, in Tavankut – 8 and in Đurđin – 6 in the 2009/2010 school year.

The State of Serbia, i.e. the local self-government, should open groups for the preparatory preschooling programme in Croatian-German, Croatian-Hungarian, thus providing for a larger number of children.

All suburban settlements, Srem and Podunavlje should have groups in the Croatian language in the preparatory preschooling program.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

In Vojvodina, 70 Roma children were included in 8 inclusive pre-school groups in Subotica in the 2009/2010 school year and in these groups conditions were created for the Roma (and non-Roma) children to foster Romani. Supported by the Roma Education Centre, 4 Roma assistant-teachers are included in these groups.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

In the 2009/2010 school year, only 136 children were enrolled into pre-school institutions with Romanian teaching language, which is the result of the low birth rate of Romanians in Vojvodina.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Pre-school education in Ruthenian has a tradition longer than a century and it has continuously been taught in Ruski Krstur since 1902 and in Kucura since 1905. Teaching of and educational activities for pre-school children in Ruthenian are held in Ruski Krstur, Kucura and Durdevo (3 settlements, where Ruthenians live in the largest number).

In regions, where there is no opportunity to organise regular pre-school teaching in Ruthenian, the languages is taught optionally as fostering the Ruthenian language: in Novi Sad, Vrbas and Kula. It is planned to include children in fostering Ruthenian in pre-school classes in the Sid Municipality in the following settlements: Šid, Bačinci, Berkasovo and Bikić Do.

Slovakian

The *Law on Fundamentals of the Educational System and Upbringing* (2009) partially regulates pre-school education. The *Law on Pre-school Education* has not been adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia yet.

In 11 locations in Vojvodina, 976 children attended 43 preschool groups in the Slovak language. In 3 locations bilingual groups have been created.

Primary education

Article 8 – Education

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| <p>1 <i>With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:</i></p> <p><i>b iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;</i></p> |
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Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

For some inexplicable reasons, the Republic of Serbia has for years failed to meet the national minorities' request to include learning mother language with elements of national culture in the group of mandatory subjects in primary and secondary schools. By fulfilling this request, minority pupils would be additionally stimulated to foster their mother languages, because the grading for this subject would be considered in their annual average achievement, i.e. there would be no dilemma for them whether to attend this class or IT or any other foreign language, more favoured by modern market demands.

Fulfilling this request would especially positively influence pupils belonging to those minority communities for whom attending this subject is the only form of education in mother language.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

In the 2009-2010 school year, primary schools teaching in Albanian in Bujanovac, Preševo/Preshevë and Medveđa/Medvegjë were attended by 8153 children.

The drop in the number of primary-school children (1020 pupils compared to the former reporting period) – similarly in the case of pre-school children – is a consequence of the emigration of persons belonging to the Albanian minority to western European countries. The data also indicates the economic status of the inhabitants in the three southern Serbian municipalities mentioned above.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The Bosnian language with elements of national culture as an elective subject is taught in 4 municipalities: Novi Pazar, Tutin, Sjenica and Prijepolje. Since local authorities in Priboj and Nova Varos persistently rejected to introduce Bosnian into official use besides the Serbian language on their territories, Bosnian with elements of national culture was not introduced in primary schools in these two municipalities.

In the opinion of the National Council of Bosnians, learning Bosnian as a subject should have a status of a compulsory, and not of an elective subject, because pupils and their parents are often in a dilemma whether to attend Bosnian or, say, any other elective subject, such as a foreign language or IT, and it puts learning Bosnian in an unenviable position.

According to the data at disposal, the total number of pupils attending Bosnian with elements of national culture as a subject in primary schools, from grades 1 to 7 is as follows:

Novi Pazar: Of the total of 9944 pupils 8804 are Bosnians by nationality. Of the 8804 Bosnian nationality children 5396 attend Bosnian language with elements of national culture as an elective subject, which makes 61% of the total.

Sjenica: Of the total of 2264 pupils 2050 are Bosnians by nationality. Of the 2050 Bosnian nationality children 1777 attend Bosnian language with elements of national culture as an elective subject, which makes 87% of the total.

Tutin: Of the total of 3572 pupils 3488 are Bosnians by nationality. Of the 3488 Bosnian nationality children 3471 attend Bosnian language with elements of national culture as an elective subject, which makes almost 100% of the total.

Prijepolje: There are 8 primary schools in Prijepolje and Bosnian language with elements of national culture is taught only in two with a total of 37 pupils. The poor response is

the result of the negative attitude and resistance of the teaching staff and the school system towards introducing this subject in Prijepolje and also the non-acceptance of the fact, that Bosnian is an official language in this municipality and as such it can be used.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Owing to the advocacy of the National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority and NGOs, over the last four years in Bosilegrad, one class with Bulgarian teaching language is opened in the first grades of primary school for a minimum number of pupils (from 11 to 14 pupils), below the legal threshold.

Except for Bosilegrad, in other schools where persons belonging to the Bulgarian minority are educated, there is no systematic and organised education in Bulgarian planned in advance, and it is not offered to parents who neither get any explanation about the advantages of learning in mother tongue. In Bosilegrad and Dimitrovgrad, before enrolling the children in the first grade, the school principal invites the parents to get them familiar with the educational opportunities for their children, and after that, parents declare in writing in which language they want their children to be educated.

Croatian

The National Council of the Croatian National Minority

In the 2009/2010 school year in Subotica and its surroundings in 5 schools 330 pupils attend teaching in the Croatian language. The reason for such a small number of pupils are textbooks that are missing and the lack of the appropriate teaching staff.

There is no sufficient support by the state for teaching in the Croatian language, especially with regard to the creation of classes where priority is given to education, not to economic justifiability.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

On the territory of Vojvodina, 1500 Roma children attended Romani with the elements of national culture as an elective subject in 31 municipalities in the 2009/2010 school year. Thirty-three Roma teachers were involved in the teaching process.

The number of Roma children included in the teaching of Romani with the elements of national culture is further increasing, and would be higher if the subject were mandatory and not elective, i.e. if the grades for this subject were taken into account for the average grade at the end of the school year.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

Teaching in Romanian is provided in 13 primary schools, whereof in 5 primary schools the overall teaching is provided in Romanian (Kuštilj, Grebenac, Barice, Nikolinci and Lokve). Bilingual education is organised from 1st to 8th grade in Vršac, Alibunar, Seleuš, Vladimirovac, Banatsko Novo Selo, Uzdin, Torka and Ečka, while from 1st to 4th grade in 14 primary schools.

Teaching in the Romanian language was attended by 1.266 pupils in the 2009/2010 school year, which makes 60% of the total number of Romanian nationality pupils. The reason behind not attending teaching in Romanian by a larger number of children is the disperseness of this national minority, since many families living in cities (Pančevo, Zrenjanin, Novi Sad) do not have the opportunity of education in Romanian and also the decrease in the birth rate of this national minority.

Due to the small number pupils, the Ministry for Education adopted the decision to merge two classes in the primary school in Kuštilje (2nd and 4th grades). Although the National Council of the Romanian National Minority informed the Ministry for Education about its stand that the school in Kustilje is of special importance for the Romanian minority, that its existence is sustainable in the future, and that it celebrates the 100th anniversary of introducing primary school education in Romanian in 2011, no response whatsoever has been received by the time of writing this report. We would note, that merging classes is the first step to abolish a school.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Likewise in the case of pre-school education, regular teaching in Ruthenian for grades from 1 to 8 is provided in 3 settlements, where Ruthenians make the majority. Teaching in Ruthenian for all subjects is provided in Ruski Krstur, while the schools in Kucura and Đurđevo are bilingual with classes learning in Ruthenian and in Serbian teaching language.

In regions with Ruthenian population, where there is no opportunity to provide teaching in Ruthenian due to the low number of pupils and the territorial principle of enrolling pupils, learning of Ruthenian with the elements of national culture is organised as an optional subject.

It is to be noted, that the status of the “Mother tongue with elements of national culture” subject very low as an optional subject in group V.

Although the Ministry of Education²⁶ promised that all first grade pupils regardless of their attending regular or optional classes would be provided free textbooks, it was not the case for the textbooks for optional subjects. Pupils had to buy them.

The remark of the Ministry of Culture that generally there are fewer pupils is partly correct, because a large number of pupils moved to Canada with their parents and it is an expressed phenomenon in Ruski Krstur and because of the unfavourable demographic picture in the Republic of Serbia and lower birth rate in rural environments and minority communities.

There is an obvious increase in the number of pupils learning mother tongue with the elements of national culture especially in Vrbas Municipality (Savino Selo and Backo

²⁶ The application was sent to Vesna Fila, assistant to the Minister for education.

Dobro Polje settlements), while there are attempts to introduce this subject in Kruščić (Kula Municipality).

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

In 17 schools in Vojvodina, 3,226 pupils attended teaching in primary schools in Slovak, as well as 59 disabled pupils. In these schools 377 teachers teach in Slovak.

The subject “Slovakian language and elements of the national culture” is attended by 616 pupils. In the town of Boljevac in Central Serbia the subject of the Slovak language with the elements of the national culture was attended by 45 pupils, and starting from the school 2010/2011, the subject will also be introduced in Dobanovci.

Secondary education

Article 8 - Education

- 1 *With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:*
- c iv *to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;*

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

In the 2009-2010 school year, secondary education taught in Albanian was attended by 1525 pupils.

The increase in the number of pupils (484 compared to the former reporting period) is due to improved conditions for education, in Albanian, in 2 municipalities populated primarily by Albanians (Preševo/Preshevë and Medveđa/Medvegjë). Namely, in the 2007/2008 school year, the grammar school in Bujanovac was separated from the one in Preševo/Preshevë (until then, classes in Bujanovac taught in Albanian belonged to the Preševo/Preshevë grammar school). The rise in the number of pupils in Albanian language secondary education is also due to the continual increase of ethnic-Albanian girls continuing in this type of education.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

On the territory of Serbia, learning Bosnian with elements of national culture is not organised in any secondary educational institution founded by the state.

This undertaking is not fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

In mainstream secondary schools in Sandžak, where Bosniaks make up the majority, classes are held only in Serbian. It is only in religious secondary educational institutions

(madrasah) founded by the members of the Islamic religious community, where classes are held in Bosnian.

The Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms is of the opinion that the State's undertakings related to secondary education in Bosnian has not been fulfilled.

Bugarski

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

The Republic of Serbia does not enable continuous education in Bulgarian. In the 2009/2010 school year, the opening of 1 class in a grammar school and 1 class for assistants in tourism in Dimitrovgrad was approved in a secondary school in Dimitrovgrad in Bulgarian teaching languages, while opening grammar school classes with Bulgarian teaching language is not approved in the enrolment plan for 2010/2011.

At least half of the graduated secondary school pupils from Dimitrovgrad and Bosilegrad apply for enrolment at universities in Bulgaria.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Teaching in the Croatian language on the level of secondary school education is provided only in Subotica, in the Grammar School, from grade I to grade III, and it is attended by 73 pupils. Teaching will also be organized in the next 2010/2011 school year, and the opening of a class in the Polytechnic School is expected where 15 future printing technicians and 15 photographers will be enrolled. In other vocational schools teaching in Croatian is not organized.

Textbooks are missing for the secondary school education in the Croatian language.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

Due to the lack of an adequate plan and programme for learning Romani in secondary education and lack of qualified teachers for teaching it, learning Romani with the elements of the national culture is not organised.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

According to the data received from the secretary of the grammar school in Vršac, during the 2009/2010 school year, 119 pupils attended the teaching in Romanian language (1st grade: 32, 2nd grade: 23, 3rd grade: 34 and 4th grade: 30)

Ruthenian

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Secondary school education in Ruthenian is organised in a grammar school with dormitories in Ruski Krstur. This grammar school is the only Ruthenian secondary school in the Republic of Serbia. Besides teaching in Ruthenia, there have been classes with Serbian teaching language since the 1990s.

In settlements where teaching in Ruthenian is impossible, language teaching is provided as an optional subject, especially in Novi Sad (32 pupils) and Šid (37 pupils).

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

In Kovačica and Bački Petrovac, teaching in the Slovak language in secondary schools is attended by 344 pupils and it is taught by 38 teachers.

In Kovačica, Bački Petrovac and Stara Pazova the teaching of the Slovak language with elements of the national culture is attended by 138 pupils. Since March 2010, a group of 20 pupils started to work in the secondary school in Šid.

Technical and vocational education

Article 8 – Education

1 *With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:*

d iv to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

In this reporting period, compared to the former period, the fact that Albanian nationality pupils were given the opportunity to attend teaching in mother language in so far non-existent secondary school courses, i.e. general medicinal course for nurses and for nurses in the pre-school in Bujanovac, was a positive step forward. Opening classes for new courses providing teaching in minority languages has been foreseen for Croats and Slovaks in the future.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Vocational education taught in Albanian was attended by 2179 pupils in Bujanovac, Preševo/Preshevë and Medveđa/Medvegjë, in the 2009-2010 school year.

The rise in the number (by 348) of ethnic-Albanian pupils attending this type of education compared to the data from the former reporting period is due to the opening of two departments in the secondary medical school in the municipality of Bujanovac (one for general medicine and another for nurses and kindergarden nurses). Until the establishment of these two departments, pupils from the Bujanovac Municipality attended secondary medical schools in Kosovo. The above-mentioned affirmative actions enable ethnic-Albanian pupils to attend secondary medical school in Albanian on the territory of Serbia.

Bosnian

Natioanal Council of Bosnian National Minority and Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Teaching of Bosnian language with elements of national culture is not organised in technical and vocational education in any of the schools in the territory of Sandžak.

This undertaking is not fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Except for the tourism assistant class within the Dimitrovgrad grammar school, there are no other possibilities of technical and vocational education in Bulgarian. One of the reasons behind is the set threshold of minimum 15 pupils, necessary to establish a class.

Roma Education Centre

Preconditions to apply the measures from this point are neither created in the Roma community, nor in the education system.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

During the 2009/2010 school year, teaching in Romanian in schools of this type was attended by 119 pupils (1st grade: 30, 2nd grade: 30, 3rd grade: 28 and 4th grade: 31).

The Provincial Secretariat for Education ordered the National Council of the Romanian National Minority to conduct a survey among the pupils of the 8th grade in primary schools, in order to find an opportunity of opening another class besides the existing ones in Vršac and Alibunar.

However, at the very beginning of the implementation of the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*, we experienced problems with the Ministry for Education, because the Draft Law on Pupils' and Students' Standards derogates the competences of national councils stipulated by the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*. After applying to each MP groups, the President of the Republic, the President of the Government and the President of Assembly, the amendments²⁷ were adopted after voting.

Although the case has been resolved, the problem of cooperation with the Ministry for Education is still present, since this Ministry does not recognize national councils as its partners.

²⁷ The amendments referred to participation in managing pupil and student standard institutions. Namely, in those environments where the language of a national minority is in official use, the national council gives opinion or proposes a managing board member – representative of the founder, or a manager (Article 12, paragraph 2, points 1,2,3, and 4). This article of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities was not discussed at all in the proposed first draft version of the law.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Since a new vocational course for assistants in tourism has been introduced in the Ruski Krstur grammar school in Serbian, in a perspective, it would be desirable to create conditions for teaching this course in Ruthenian.

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority is of the opinion that technical and vocational education in mother language should be encouraged more significantly.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Starting from the 2010/2011 school year an experimental class will be introduced in the secondary school of agriculture in Futog in the Slovak language, and the branch of studies is "General Agriculture".

University and higher education

Article 8 – Education

1 *With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:*

e ii to provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects;

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Likewise in the former reporting period, the Department for Albanian Language and Literature at the Belgrade University was attended by 12 students in the 2009-2010 academic year.

A multiethnic faculty was opened in the Municipality of Medveđa/Medvegjë in the 2009-2010 academic year and it enrolled 9 ethnic-Albanian students and 50 Serbs. Though the opening of this faculty represents an example of good practice, the faculty headquarters should have been located either in the Preševo/Preshevë or Bujanovac municipalities, where ethnic-Albanians make the majority population and not in Medveđa/Medvegjë, where only 800 ethnic-Albanians live at the moment.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

At the state university in Novi Pazar, in the Department for Philosophy and Philology, each year 40 students are enrolled for the course "Serbian/Bosnian language". As this course has been organised for the recent four years, the overall number of students is about 160.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

The universities in Novi Pazar, both the state and the international, have departments for Bosnian and Serbian languages. At the state university, documents are submitted solely in Serbian, but students have been offered the possibility to write in both the Cyrillic and Latin scripts.

The entire teaching at the Faculty for Islamic Studies in Novi Pazar is carried out in Bosnian.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Attending higher education in Bulgarian is not enabled in Serbia. The Bulgarian language is studied at academic level only at the University of Belgrade – Group for the Bulgarian Language and Literature.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

It is not possible to study Croatian, since there is no university department where the Croatian language could be studied. Croatian is partially studied at the departments of the Faculty of Philosophy within the studies of the Serbo-Croatian language that used to be practiced in former Yugoslavia. The problem is the lack of the political will at the University, i.e. the Faculty to establish a department of the Croatian Language and that is obvious.

There is a need to establish instructorship for the Croatian language at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad, which would satisfy the need to educate the future teaching staff for lower levels of education in the Croatian language.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

In October 2006 the Teacher Training College in the Hungarian language started to work in Subotica. Students are educated to become school and kindergarten teachers, and the College also organizes master's studies.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

On the initiative of the Roma Inclusion Office, the Government of the Vojvodina AP and the Roma Matica, a study programme was launched for the education of nursing teachers in the Romani language at the Teacher Training Higher School in the 2009/2010 school year.

The studies last for 3 years and on the first year 5 Roma nationality students were enrolled. Teaching is bilingual, in Serbian and Romani, and it is for the first time in Serbia that Roma have the opportunity to study on their mother tongue.

Roma Education Centre

In the School of Romani language and culture (School of Romology) at the University of Novi Sad, 56 Roma and non-Roma students acquired the diploma of the School of Romology in the 2009/2010 school year²⁸, which was organised by the Ženske studije /Gender Studies/ NGO and the Faculty of Philosophy from Novi Sad.

A School of Romology was also started in Bor, Eastern Serbia, where 17 students were awarded diplomas so far.

In 2007, the Senate of the University of Novi Sad accepted the initiative of the Novi Sad-based Ženske studije /Gender Studies/ NGO, which is implementing a School of Romology Project, to institutionalize the initiative and to implement it in the future within the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad.

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

During the 2009/2010 academic year, a total of 17 students enrolled in the Department for Romanian Language with the University of Novi Sad (whereof on the first year of studies: 5 students, second year: 2 students, third year: 7 students and fourth year: 3 students).

There are 51 students enrolled in the Romanian Language Department of the University in Belgrade on BA studies, 26 students attend courses in Romanian as an additional language, 10 students are enrolled in the "instant master" courses and four are on PhD studies.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

In the 2009/2010 school year, 6 students were enrolled in the first year of studies. Over 20 students study at the Department for Ruthenian at the University of Novi Sad. A new course of journalism has been introduced for two Ruthenian nationality students, who attend basic and professional subjects in Ruthenian and Serbian languages in a proportion of 50%-50%.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The Slovak Language Group at the Department of Slavic languages at the Belgrade University is opened for students every year. The Slovak language may also be studied at the Slovak Language Department of the University of Novi Sad, the Faculty of Pedagogy in Sombor and the Department at Bački Petrovac (this year the Department is not opened for the enrolment of students in the first year of studies).

There is the Slovakian Language Group at the Vocational College for Kindergarten Teachers in Novi Sad.

²⁸ The School of Romology has existed for six years now.

Adult education

Article 8 – Education

1 *With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:*

f (iii) of the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of adult education to favor and/or encourage the offering of such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Adult education in the Albanian language is not organised in Preševo/Preshevë and Bujanovac.

There is no need among the adults to learn Albanian, since the ethnic-Albanian population is compactly settled in three municipalities in the south of Serbia (Bujanovac, Preševo/Preshevë and Medveđa/Medvegjë), and they speak Albanian as their mother tongue.

National Council of Bosniak National Minority and Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

There is no adult teaching in Bosnian in Sandžak.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

There is no adult education in Bulgarian, nor been any need or initiative for that so far.

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Adult education in Croatian is not organized and it is implemented by the Open University in Subotica in the Serbian language only.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

Learning Romani is not organised within adult education.

The National Council of the Romanian National Minority

Learning Romanian is not organised within adult education, because persons belonging to the Romanian national minority have not expressed their wish for this type of education.

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

There is no adult education in Ruthenian, hence technical and vocational education in mother tongue, likewise adult education should be stimulated more significantly, bearing in mind the need for new skills and knowledge required of all residents, especially those active in business, by EU accession processes.

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Although the law has a provision for that and although some schools in which teaching is provided in Slovak are licensed for adult education, adult education in the Slovak language has not been organized yet, nor there were any demands to do so.

Article 8 – Education

1 *With regard to education, the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the State:*

g to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Teaching of the Albanian language for Serbs living in these three municipalities in the south of Serbia, mostly populated by Albanian minority, is not organised. Learning Albanian as an elective subject existed two decades ago.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

In order to provide equal treatment in the field of education, the subject “Bosnian language with elements of national culture” should be transformed from elective to compulsory subject as “Bosnian language and literature” on primary and secondary education level as the first stage in implementing the bilingual model of education for national minorities pursuant to the law. The State should provide the printing of textbooks for implementing the “Bosnian language and literature” subject.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

The legal framework for teaching and study of the language is the *Law on Primary Education*, which, *inter alia*, enables education in national minority languages, too. However, beside the fact that there are settlements where only Bulgarians live (Zvonci, Klisura, Božica, Smilovci and other villages, where there are school branches, and in the cities of Dimitrovgrad and Bosilegrad), at enrolment it is not asked from the parents to state in which language do they want to educate their children and parents are not encouraged to educate their children in mother tongue; on the contrary, they are presaged of the opportunity of easier education in Serbian.

In primary schools in Central Serbia Bulgarian is taught as a "Mother tongue with elements of national culture", while in Vojvodina it is taught in Bulgarian cultural societies, who employ teachers to teach the children off the regular school activities.

The present level of education in Bulgarian, i.e. learning Bulgarian, generally seen, is unsatisfactory for the efficient use of and further education in Bulgarian.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Croatian language with the elements of the national culture should be introduced into curricula regardless of other elective courses in primary and secondary schools.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

The Roma Information Centre in Kragujevac accredited a seminar for teachers on a topic of Roma culture and tradition. So far, one seminar was held for teachers and assistants from schools with a higher percentage of Roma children. After that, trained seminar-participants held workshops in their respective schools about Roma culture and tradition.

On the territory of Vojvodina, the Vojvodina Centre for Human Rights in cooperation with the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities continuously organises within the Etno Day Project the presentation of Roma culture and tradition in primary schools. Within the project, non-Roma pupils present the Roma, their life, history and tradition.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Learning Ruthenian as an optional subject should be introduced as an integral part of the compulsory teaching, and the grades for this subject should be part of calculating the average in order to stimulate children to learn the language.

The problem professors teaching this language face is the low percentage of acknowledged quota or the complete absence of it, depending on school management decisions²⁹.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Early 2010 elapsed in the re-organisation of judiciary in Serbia and re-appointment of judges.³⁰

Article 9 of the Charter may not be applied to Romani and Ukrainian languages, since they are not in official use in any of the municipalities.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The coming into effect of the new law on judicature resulted in a set of problems for ethnic-Albanians in the Preševo/Preshevë and Bujanovac municipalities. Five ethnic-Albanian judges were appointed in the Primary Court in Vranje which comprises, as judicial units, the as yet municipal courts in Preševo/Preshevë and Bujanovac, and it

²⁹ As a negative example we indicate the allowance paid for the teacher of the Ruthenian language with elements of national culture in Šid.

³⁰ For details see the report by the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority.

makes 11.62% of the total number of 43 judges foreseen to be appointed in the Primary Court. Since the Primary Court covers 7 municipalities of the Pčinja District, where ethnic-Albanians make up over 25% of the total population, the indicated number of ethnic-Albanian judges is insufficient to provide the quality application of bilinguality.

By the time of the writing of this report, all court proceedings were administered in Serbian only.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Pursuant to the Constitution and the laws, it is enabled in the judiciary that the client uses his/her mother tongue in the proceedings, but proceedings are not conducted and documents are not kept in that language. After the re-organisation of the judiciary in Serbia, criminal and other proceedings are conducted in the Primary Court in Pirot, and in case there is an application for enabling the use of Bulgarian, a court interpreter is used and the relating costs are borne by the party in the proceeding.

Bulgarian is not in official use in Pirot. The situation is the same in Bosilegrad, which has lost its Primary Court after the re-organisation of the judiciary, hence Bulgarian nationality citizens lost the opportunity to have proceedings in their mother tongue.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Many promotive materials that were printed and submitted to courts are only printed in Latin letters and therefore, the need to inform the citizens who do not use Cyrillic in their mother tongue is not satisfied. For example, the Ministry of Justice has published informative leaflets for the judicial system reform that is currently in process in Subotica in the Serbian language and in Latin letters, whereby the opportunity to inform members of the Croatian national community about the judiciary system reform that is in process has not been provided.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

In the spring session of the National Assembly amendments and supplements to the *Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts*³¹ were enacted under which the harmonization of the provisions of this Law with the provisions of the Constitution and the previously enacted *Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities*³² was performed and under which, among other things, mandatory introduction of the language of a national minority on the territory of a local self-government unit is prescribed if the members of that national minority account for 15% of the population. Also, the possibility to address all the authorities of the Republic and to

³¹ Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 45/91, 53/93, 67/93, 48/94, 101/2005) and the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 30/2010)

³² Official Gazette of the FRY, No. 11/2002

receive their replies in the mother tongue of a national minority is prescribed if the national minority accounts for 2% of the total population of Serbia, and alike.

Unfortunately, we have to say that the introduction of the notion: "equal official use of the language of a national minority" seems almost ironical due to the amendments of the Law, because although it implies the possibility of conducting a procedure in the mother tongue of a national minority, the amendments to the Law did not go into the outdated provisions under which concurrent drawing up of decisions, minutes and other legal instruments in the Serbian language is prescribed if the language of the procedure is the language of the national minority, that is in equal official use. The general prohibition to conduct second-instance procedures in the languages of national minorities has also remained, even if the procedure of the first instance court was conducted in the language of a national minority. Because of all these circumstances we have concluded that major obstacles to conducting the procedure in the languages of national minorities have not been removed.

Due to the aforementioned facts, we believe that it is necessary that the Secretariat for Legislation of the Republic of Serbia, as the public administration body competent for the preparation of the law relating to the official use of languages and scripts should urgently start drawing up a new and contemporary proposal of the *Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities* that would, among other things, guarantee the possibility to conduct procedures in the languages of national minorities under the same conditions as the procedures conducted in the Serbian language, provided that the said language of the national minority is officially used. Namely, the current solutions neither comply with the provisions of the Constitution relating to the rights of national minorities to preserve their specificities³³ nor with the international undertakings of Serbia.



From 1 January 2010 the application of a set of new laws started, under which the whole system of the judicial institutions in Serbia is completely changed. Municipal courts that used to exist in almost every municipality up to the year 2010 are now transformed into court units of primary courts that have their seats in major cities, and the total number of judges and members of the court staff is reduced. The National Council of the Hungarian National Minority intends to pay special attention to the monitoring of the effects of the judiciary system reform and its impacts on exercising the right to the official use of the Hungarian language and script in the newly established institutions.

We use this opportunity to call the attention to the imprecise data given by the authorities of the Republic of Serbia in Item 139 of the Comments of the Republic of Serbia on the Report of the Committee of Experts about the Application of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Serbia. It is not the same to "speak" the language of a national minority and to conduct a procedure in the language of the national minority since that requires the knowledge of the legal terminology of the national minority's language. The following imprecise data may also lead to a wrong conclusion: e.g. "in the Municipal Court in Novi Sad – 43 employees speak Hungarian" or "in the Municipal Court in Vrbas

³³ Article 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia

– everyone speaks Hungarian"³⁴. This is how the wrong image is created about the capacities of the professional staff to communicate with clients in that language. Namely, the term "employees" is extremely wide and it covers persons who do not have any contact with clients according to the description of their positions.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

Until now, some 30 interpreters and translators were appointed for Romani in Serbia, of whom interpreters for the Romani languages were appointed only in 2 municipalities in the Vojvodina AP.

When Romani is introduced in the official use, then conditions will be created to implement Article 9 of the Charter. Generally, there is a need for an increased number of Romani-language interpreters and translators in courts.

Roma Education Centre

The Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Administration and National Minorities publishes calls for applications for translators in minority languages. There is only one person authorised as a certified interpreter of the Romani language in Vojvodina. As an example of good practices, we notice that the Court in Subotica asked two times the President of the Roma Education Centre to interpret late 2009 and early 2010, because the parties in the hearing were Roma nationality persons and could not speak fluent Serbian.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

During the re-appointment of judges and prosecutors in the Republic of Serbia, the National Council of the Romanian National Minority established that the constitutional and legal provisions on the adequate representation of persons belonging to the Romanian national minority³⁵ were not applied consistently.

No judge belonging to the Romanian national minority was re-appointed in the Vršac Primary Court, while in Zrenjanin, no persons belonging to the Romanian national minority were re-elected either in the Primary Court, Higher Court or in the Prosecutor's Office. The situation is similar on the level of the Vojvodina AP. The National Council is of the opinion, that its community has such professionals, who meet the conditions of appointment.

The National Council of the Romanian National Minority pointed out this problems when applying to the High Judicial Council and the Ministry of Justice and provided its support

³⁴ According to the 2002 census the Municipality of Vrbas has 45,852 inhabitants in total, out of which 2,885 (6.29%) declare themselves as members of the Hungarian national minority. Therefore, we believe that it is wrong and inappropriate that in the Comments of the Republic of Serbia it is assumed that every employee of the court in Vršac speaks the Hungarian language.

³⁵ Article 77 of the Constitution of the RS and Article 46 of the Law on Judges.

to two judges during the second appointment³⁶. Since appointments are in process, there is still no feedback on the outcome.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council has no information that the authorities stimulated and informed citizens about the opportunity of using Ruthenian in courts.

This issue is not topical, due to the fact that most Ruthenians are bilingual or have a good command of the Serbian language. In our opinion, the lack of human resources belonging to the Ruthenian national community and Ruthenian-speakers in the judiciary, is not due to the intention or strategy of the state authorities, but the result of the economic status of employed in the judiciary over the past period and it should be redressed in the future.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

In communities where the Slovak language is in official use, members of the Slovak national minority have expressed their dissatisfaction with the reinstatement of judges since the knowledge of the Slovak language was disregarded as one of the criteria for the election of judges in the respective communities.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

1 *The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:*

a in criminal proceedings:

ii to guarantee the accused the right to use his/her regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

From the former reporting period until 2010, persons belonging to the ethnic-Albanian minority did not use the Albanian language before the courts in Bujanovac, Preševo/Preshevë and Medveđa/Medvegjë.

³⁶ Petar Mohan - proposed to be appointed for the judge of the Appeal Court in Novi Sad and Marijana Trifu proposed to be appointed for the judge of Pančevo High Court.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

In the primary and higher courts and in the prosecutor's office in Novi Pazar and Prijepolje, where Bosnian is in official use, the Bosnian language and the Latin script are not used in court proceedings.

Employees in courts insist on the use of the Serbian language and Cyrillic writing.

This undertaking is not fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

All litigations in the judicial authorities of Sandžak are proceeded in Serbian, while the summons and the entire documentation are in Serbian and in Cyrillic script. Even though Serbian is comprehensible to Bosniaks, the mentioned right could have been fully enjoyed if document copies and case documents were written in Latin script.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

Before the Novi Sad Municipal Court, a trial in Romani was provided to a Roma person, on his request, in the process of administering justice.

Roma Education Centre

In Subotica, the presence of an interpreter for the Romani language was provided in two cases.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The National Council of the Slovak National Minority has no information about the use of the Slovak language in criminal procedures.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

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| <p>1 <i>The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:</i></p> <p><i>a in criminal proceedings:</i></p> <p><i>iii to provide that requests and evidence, whether written or oral, shall not be considered inadmissible solely because they are formulated in a regional or minority language; if necessary by the use of interpreters and translations involving no extra expense for the persons concerned;</i></p> |
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Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The mentioned undertaking has not been fulfilled for the Albanian language.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

1 *The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:*

b in civil proceedings:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense;

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Litigants, witnesses and other persons were not notified about the opportunity to use the Albanian language in litigation proceedings before the courts in the municipalities of Preševo/Preshevë, Bujanovac and Medveđa/Medvegjë.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The use of the Bosnian language in Latin script is not implemented in civil proceedings.

This undertaking is not fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Civil law cases are also proceeded only in Serbian and it does not cause any problems, since Serbian is comprehensible for Bosniaks. The mentioned right could have been fully enjoyed if document copies and case documents were written in Latin script.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

The National Council had no opportunity to examine the use of the Romanian language in civil proceedings. In view of the fact, that the Primary Court in Vršac (covering both Bela Crkva and Plandište) has no Romanian-speaker judge, and the situation is the same in Zrenjanin, we can presume that Romanian will not be used in civil proceedings.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The indicated provisions on criminal, civil and administrative proceedings in the Ruthenian language are observed in most cases.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The Slovak language was used in civil proceedings in the Municipality of Bački Petrovac (the municipality in which Slovaks are the majority). The National Council has no information about the use of the Slovak language in other municipalities.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

1 *The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:*

c in proceedings before courts concerning administrative matters:

ii to allow, whenever a litigant has to appear in person before a court, that he or she may use his or her regional or minority language without thereby incurring additional expense;

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Since there are no ethnic-Albanians employed in the Vranje Municipality District Court, the opportunity to use Albanian language documents in the administrative proceedings has not been created either.

Neither municipal courts, nor municipal authorities for offences use documents in the Albanian language.

Bosnian

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

As in the case of criminal and litigation proceedings, all court records in administrative proceedings are kept in Cyrillic script in Serbian.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

During the processing procedure in Romani before the Novi Sad Municipal Court, Romani was used only orally.

Roma Education Centre

In court processes in Subotica, Romani is used in oral form in the presence of a certified interpreter.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The National Council has no information about the use of the Slovak language in administrative procedures.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

1 *The Parties undertake, in respect of those judicial districts in which the number of residents using the regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below, according to the situation of each of these languages and on condition that the use of the facilities afforded by the present paragraph is not considered by the judge to hamper the proper administration of justice:*

d to take steps to insure that the application of sub-paragraphs i and iii of paragraphs b and c above and any necessary use of interpreters and translations does not involve extra expence for the persons concerned

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

In locations, where the statute of the local self-government defines that Bulgarian is in official use, it is enabled to use interpreters involving no extra expenses for the persons concerned in the departments of the Primary Court.

However, by the new organisation of courts in Serbia, the courts in locations, where Bulgarian is in official use, lost the status of primary courts and became departments of primary courts seated elsewhere. Therefore, parties are sent to primary courts seated in settlements where Bulgarian is not in official use, thereby Bulgarians lose their right to proceedings in their language free of charge.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

On request of a party to a court or administrative procedure, an interpreter should be provided for if that is necessary in order to understand the procedure, and all the decisions, summons or other communication that are submitted and that fall under the jurisdiction of the judiciary or administrative competence should be submitted also in the Croatian language on request of a client.

Article 9 - Judicial authorities

2 *The Parties undertake:*

a *not to deny the validity of legal documents drawn up within the State solely because they are drafted in a regional or minority language; or Without prejudice to the application of treaties and conventions on mutual assistance in legal matters:*

b *not to deny the validity, as between the parties, of legal documents drawn up within the country solely because they are drafted in a regional or minority language, and to provide that they can be invoked against interested third parties who are not users of these languages on condition that the contents of the document are made known to them by the person(s) who invoke(s) it;*

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

No cases were recorded that courts rejected or contravened the validity of documents submitted by parties in the proceedings because these were in Bulgarian.

Article 9 – Judicial authorities

3 *The Parties undertake to make available in the regional or minority languages the most important national statutory texts and those relating particularly to users of these languages, unless they are otherwise provided.*

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities* and the *Law on the National Council of National Minorities* were both translated into Albanian. Despite the existing need, other laws, such as the *Primary School Act*, *Secondary School Act* or the *Act on Identification Card* have not been translated into Albanian.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

None of the essential legal texts were translated to the Bulgarian language, nor published in printed or electronic versions as such. The only exception is the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities* translated by the National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority and submitted to the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights to publish it on the Ministry's website.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Laws that have been enacted up to date, referring partially or in its entirety to national minorities are not available in the languages of the national minorities. Instead, the members of the national minorities have to translate them in order to make them available to more general public of that national minority.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

Up to the moment when this alternative report is submitted, the Republican authorities have not started translating and publishing the most important laws in the Hungarian language. The competent authorities of the Republic, in the light of the Recommendation given by the Committee of Experts, should take into consideration publishing the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia in the Hungarian language, i.e. primarily the issues relating to the most relevant legislation. In the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia there was an obligation of publishing the Federal Official Gazette in the Hungarian language, but that practice was abandoned after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Currently there are individual cases of translating the text of some laws, e.g. the *Law on National Councils of National Minorities* by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights. Based on the aforementioned, we may conclude that on the level of the Republic, where the most important legislation is enacted, there is a gap in publishing the legislation in the

Hungarian language on a regular basis by the competent Republican authorities and without official translations of a law it is hard to imagine the official use of the Hungarian language in administrative bodies and courts.

We also have to observe herein that a good opportunity was missed to establish the obligation to publish laws and other regulations in the languages of national minorities because on the same day³⁷ the National Assembly has adopted the amendments and supplements to the *Law on Publishing Laws and Other Regulations and General Acts and on the Issuance of the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, and amendments and supplements to the *Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts*³⁸ and due to that fact there was no harmonization between them. Namely, although the amendments to the *Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts* prescribe that laws and regulations should also be published in the languages of national minorities, according to a special law, i.e. in the amendments to the *Law on Publishing Laws* (which is the law that regulates the field of publishing laws and other regulations) there is no such provision. In that way this chronic problem of the official use of languages of national minorities in Serbia is unnecessarily delayed and prolonged.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

It is a fact, that, at present, it is not realistic to expect the translation of all the most important national statutory texts to Romani, since it requires assured human resources and technical equipping, however State authorities should provide maximum support to the implementation of this article of the Charter.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

The following has been translated to Romanian: the *Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*, the *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities*, the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*, the *Statute of the Vojvodina AP* and all documents adopted by the Assembly or the Executive Council of the Vojvodina AP, which are published in Romanian in the Official Gazette of the Vojvodina AP. Translations are made by the Translation Department of the Vojvodina AP Assembly.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The Executive Council of the Vojvodina AP has a translation service for Ruthenian, which provides translations of the most important decisions and by-laws of the Vojvodina AP, likewise laws of significant importance (for example: the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*).

³⁷ On 05 May 2010

³⁸ Both laws were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 30, published in 2010. Article 4 of the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on the Official Use of Languages and Scripts (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 30/2010) that came into force on 05.05.2010.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Texts of laws are translated into the Slovak language by the bodies of Province ex officio and on request of the National Council.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

1 *Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:*

a iv to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may submit oral or written applications in these languages; Within the administration of the authorities of the State (as opposed to local and regional authorities) in the areas where sufficient users of a regional or minority language live

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

This undertaking is not fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Since March 2010, the Police Branch Office in Novi Pazar has issued an announcement stating that citizens may request their documents to be issued in Latin script in Bosnian, but they must first apply.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

In administrative procedures relating to the reregistration or registration of associations with the Agency for Business Registers, when one submits applications and submissions to regional units of this body, the documentation has to be submitted only in Serbian, in Cyrillic script.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

Up to the present no data have been revealed about the achieved results relating to the Conclusion of the Government of the Republic of Serbia about the measures to be taken in order to increase the number of members of national minorities in public administration³⁹, nor the control mechanism for the enforcement of the Conclusion is provided for. Without that there is a risk that this act passed by the Government will remain an empty word.

Recommendation: The National Council proposes to the Committee of Experts to ask for the relevant data from the competent services of the Government according to which the results achieved up to now may be determined, including the effects of the Conclusions passed by the Government.

³⁹ Official Gazette of the RS, No. 40/2006

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted a Clause on the measures for increasing the participation of national minorities in state administration bodies⁴⁰, which foresees that the Government will, directly and through its competent authorities and services, permanently take up measures in order to increase the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the state administration. In coordination with the Human Resource Management Service, an activity plan was established for the implementation of the Clause.

Nevertheless, by the time of writing this report, no report has been received on the implementation of the Clause, nor have the national councils received any information in this regard.

In the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights no person belonging to the Romanian national minority, nor a speaker of Romanian is employed.

There are neither translation service departments on the level of the Republic, nor on the municipal level where Romanian is in official use. The Vojvodina AP is an exemption, where applications written in Romanian can be submitted.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

According to the information available to the National Council, written and oral requests are rarely submitted in Slovak.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

1 *Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:*
a v to ensure that users of regional or minority languages may validly submit a document in these languages; Within the administration of the authorities of the State (as opposed to local and regional authorities) in the areas where sufficient users of a regional or minority language live

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

No cases of submitting oral or written applications to State authorities in the Romani language were registered.

⁴⁰ On 12th May 2006.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

1 Within the administrative districts of the State in which the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages justifies the measures specified below and according to the situation of each language, the Parties undertake, as far as this is reasonably possible:

- c to allow the administrative authorities to draft documents in a regional or minority language.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

In the Republic of Serbia, it is not possible to use documents in the Bulgarian language before the authorities but translations of the Bulgarian language original documents to Serbian verified at the party's expense are demanded.

- Example: Certificates of universities about regular student status, to be submitted by students to the Ministry of Defence in order to postpone regular military service, should be translated to Serbian and verified by sworn-in-court interpreter in municipalities, where Bulgarian is in official use.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

There are noticeable problems relating to the implementation of the *Law on Associations*⁴¹ in practice and the procedure of registering associations of national minorities⁴² and also in notifications published in the Internet presentation of the Agency for Business Registers (that is also in charge of keeping the Register of Associations). Namely, in the official Internet presentation of the Agency there are no notifications or forms necessary to submit a request in the languages of national minorities that are used officially on the territories of municipalities covered by organizational units of the Agency for Business Registers⁴³.

The Law on Associations only prescribes under its Article 13 that: "The name of the association, if stipulated by the Articles of Association, may be in the language and script of a national minority. The name in the language and script of the national minority is to be entered in the Register after the name in the Serbian language and in Cyrillic script". However, neither the Law, nor the accompanying Book of Rules of the Ministry of Public Administration about the Manner of Making Entries and Keeping the Register of Associations⁴⁴ contain no provisions that regulate the way in which an authorized officer should handle requests and incorporation acts submitted in the language of a national minority. Therefore, members of a national minority are practically deprived of exercising their right to submit documents in their own language having a full legally

⁴¹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, No. 51/2009

⁴² A person addressed the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority after he was asked by the organizational unit of the Agency for Business Registers in Subotica to translate the incorporation acts of the Association of Citizens from the Hungarian into the Serbian language, and to certify them by a sworn-in-court interpreter.

⁴³ Please refer to the Internet presentation of the Agency for Commercial Registers: www.apr.gov.rs

⁴⁴ Official Gazette of the RS, No. 80/2009

binding effect, if these languages are officially used on the territory covered by that body or service, which in this case is an organizational unit of the Agency for Business Registers.

The removal of these shortcomings by the competent authorities would be in accordance with the Priority Recommendation No. 5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe relating to the application of the Charter in Serbia under which it is recommended to the state authorities in Serbia to ensure that the languages listed in Part III may be used in communication with local offices of state authorities – in this case the organizational unit of the Agency for Business Registers.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

2 *In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:*

b the possibility for users of regional or minority languages to submit oral or written applications in these languages;

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

It is possible to submit applications in the Bosnian language and in Latin script only in those local self-government bodies, where Bosnian was introduced in official use. Regretfully, this is not the case for submitting application to local branches of the institutions of the Republic.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Centralised state institutions demand that written petitions are submitted in Serbian, in Cyrillic script. However, it is unbeknown to the Sandžak Committee that persons are denied the right to submit a petition in Bosnian, in Latin script in local level.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Local authorities do not encourage persons belonging to minorities to submit applications to their services in the Bulgarian language. Application forms, offered in the municipal services are in Serbian only, such as: forms for excerpts from the register of births, certificates issued by the tax office or the land register.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

Initiated by the Roma Inclusion Office, over the last one year, the Government of the Vojvodina AP has systematized the job of “Coordinator for Roma Issues” in 13 local self-governments in Vojvodina and such a person is a tie between the Roma and the local institutions. Practically, these coordinators are public servants of the municipality and seminars are organised for them periodically for acquiring new knowledge and skills, which contribute to their higher quality and more successful work.

Roma Education Centre

During 2009, the job of "Roma coordinator" was introduced in eight municipalities/cities on the territory of Vojvodina, and 8 Roma nationality persons were employed for that job. These employees are a tie between the local self-governments and the Roma community.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

2 *In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:*

c the publication by regional authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Regional and local authorities in municipalities where Bulgarian is in official use do not publish the official documents in Bulgarian in the local official gazette or on information boards.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

In case of many Provincial Secretariats of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Internet presentations have not been made in compliance with the provisions of the Statute of the Vojvodina AP which stipulates the official use of the Hungarian, Slovakian, Croatian, Romanian and Ruthenian languages.⁴⁵

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

2 *In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:*

d the publication by local authorities of their official documents also in the relevant regional or minority languages;

⁴⁵ Please refer to the links for the Province Secretariat on the Internet presentation of the Government of the AP Vojvodina:

http://www.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=150&Itemid=72

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Decisions by the Preševo/Preshevë Municipality Assembly were published only in Serbian (written in Cyrillic) until the end of 2010.

The editorial office of the Pčinja District Official Journal seated in Vranje refused the application of the Preševo/Preshevë local authorities from 2009 to publish municipal Assembly decisions in Albanian as well as in Serbian. The situation is the same with publishing municipal Council decisions.

The 0.2% rise in the employment of ethnic-Albanians in the Preševo/Preshevë, Bujanovac and Medveđa/Medvegjë municipalities, due to the use of bilinguality in the municipal administration presents a positive step. The comprehensive application of bilinguality requires additional financial sources.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

In municipalities, where Bosnian is in official use, ballots are printed bilingually.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Decisions by the local authorities are printed in Bosnian, in Latin script only, in the Tutin Municipality; whereas they are published bilingually in the Official Gazette.

In Novi Pazar decisions are published in Serbian and in Latin script, whereas the Official Gazettes in this town and in Sjenica are bilingual.

In the other 3 municipalities in Sandžak, documents are published solely in Serbian, although there are grounds for bilingualism.

The Municipality of Prijepolje adopted a Statute on the Official Use of Languages, but it is not implemented. In April and May this year, in that municipality the printing of municipal assembly materials in Latin script started. The fact that the materials had not been printed in Cyrillic writing brought about the heated reaction of some Serb nationality delegates.

Although it is a legal obligation, the decision on the official use of language and script for Bosniaks has not been included in the Statute of Priboj.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

The rationalisation of administrative bodies of local self-government units has had a negative impact on the operation of translation services of local self-governments. Translation services that used to exist traditionally in the Municipal Assemblies have

been closed down or reduced to just a few employees, even in municipalities where the composition of the population does not justify such actions.⁴⁶

Due to the lack of staff on the local level, there is a tendency of an increasing number of demands of local self-governments referred to the Translation Service of the Provincial Secretariat for Regulations, Governance and National Minorities to do some translations.⁴⁷

Local official gazettes are most often printed by the local self-government in minimum edition, without involving a professional printing office, in order to reduce the costs. For the same reason, in some municipalities the gazettes are printed only in the Serbian language, regardless of their Statutes which prescribe the official use of minority languages.⁴⁸

The situation is the same in terms of official Internet presentations where usually the option of changing the script from Cyrillic into Latin is provided for and some data are available in the English language.⁴⁹

The National Council observes that common translation services that would render services to several municipalities have not been established in order to reduce the costs, although this option is possible under Article 9 of the Provincial Decision on Detailed Regulation of Certain Issues Relating to the Official Use of Languages and Scripts of National Minorities on the Territory of the AP Vojvodina⁵⁰.

Romani

Roma Education Centre

Romani language is not in official use in any of the regions, hence there are no legal grounds for the application of this recommendation.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

By now, most municipalities in Serbia has set up their web-sites which serve to promote the most significant activities in the settlement and to inform the citizens about matters essential for the daily functioning of the community. We believe that in this sense it is vital that web-sites are published in all languages in official use in a given municipality, including Ruthenian. Ruthenian is in official use in 6 local self-governments and none of the official sites of these municipalities has an option in Ruthenian.

⁴⁶ In the Municipality of Bečej (according to the census 2002, there were 40,987 of inhabitants in total, out of which 20,018 (48.83%) of the Hungarian national minority), there is only one interpreter for the Hungarian language employed in the expert service of the Municipal Assembly of Bečej.

⁴⁷ This was concluded from the discussions with the Director of the Province Translation Service in February 2010.

⁴⁸ E.g. Novi Sad, Zrenjanin

⁴⁹ Please refer to the Internet presentation of the cities of Novi Sad, (www.novisad.rs), Zrenjanin (www.zrenjanin.rs), Sombor (www.sombor.rs), the Municipality of Novi Kneževac (www.noviknezevac.rs), etc.

⁵⁰ Official Gazette of the APV, No. 8/2003, 9/2003

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Members of the Municipal Assemblies (at Bačka Palanka, Kovačica) have demanded to receive assembly documents in the Slovak language and the fulfilment of their right to speak in their mother tongue. Due to the lack of financial resources for interpreters the issue has been resolved only partially and in some segments. Except for the one in Bački Petrovac, in other municipal assemblies there is no translation to and from Slovak.

Official documents, i.e. decisions rendered by the municipal assembly in the Official Journal of the Municipality, are not published in Slovak in any municipality.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

2 *In respect of the local and regional authorities on whose territory the number of residents who are users of regional or minority languages is such as to justify the measures specified below, the Parties undertake to allow and/or encourage:*

- g the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.*

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

Street names, place-names and other toponyms, likewise names of institutions should be written bilingually on the territory of municipalities and cities where the Bosnian language is in official use.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

A bilingual sign was put on the building of the Novi Pazar Municipality three years ago. In Tutin and in Sjenica, the names of the municipalities are written bilingually too, whereas in the municipalities of Prijepolje, Nova Varoš and Priboj, institutions' names are indicated only in Serbian.

Except for Tutin, the settlement and street names are written in Serbian, in Cyrillic script, in every municipality.

In the municipality of Prijepolje, an initiative was launched to alter the symbol of the city, for it does not reflect the true picture of the population's multi-ethnic composition⁵¹. However, the Municipal Assembly of Prijepolje has failed to put this issue on the agenda, even though the initiative was already included in the programme of the Assembly's work in 2009.

⁵¹ The municipal coat of arms of Prijepolje comprises a shield with Serbian symbols, among others: House of Nemanjić Coat of Arms, the two double-headed eagles that represent Medieval Serbia, and two angels. The flags have the flag of Serbia and the city flag on them, whereas the number 1332 marks the year of the eldest commemoration of Prijepolje at Gijom Adam. Prijepolje, as a name, is written in Cyrillic script.

The text of the banner in the Prijepolje Municipality, set up in February 2010, on the occasion of the anniversary of the kidnapping of 19 Bosniaks in the 1990s, was written in Serbian, in Cyrillic script. The text included the term “pomen” (commemoration), which is not used by Bosniaks in their language.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

In municipalities where Bulgarian is in official use place-names are not written bilingually. The Bulgarian National Council adopted a decision and launched an initiative to rename the city of Dimitrovgrad into Caribrod, but the Government keeps on disregarding this application.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Place names in the Croatian language are still not used in the community of Novi Slankamen (Indija Municipality), although Croatian is traditionally present in that place.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office and Roma Education Centre

There are no Romani place-names in the Republic of Serbia.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

In relation to the former report, only Vršac Municipality has partly met the obligation of designating plac—names in Romanian (all eleven settlement-names are designated in Romanian), however the name of the city itself is not designated in Romanian.

In the settlement of Uzdin (Kovačica Municipality) sign-posts are written in English and Serbian, while the Romanian names are not designated for the following settlements: Kovin, Bela Crkva, Žitište, Kovačica, Plandište, Sečanj.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The indicated provisions are observed in most of the cases.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The insignia of populated areas at the point of entry into a populated area is written in Slovak in all communities where according to the statute of that municipality the Slovak language and script are in official use. This obligation is not observed in terms of direction indicators within the settlements.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

<p>4 <i>With a view to putting into effect those provisions of paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 accepted by them, the Parties undertake to take one or more of the following measures:</i></p>

- c *compliance as far as possible with requests from public service employees having a knowledge of a regional or minority language to be appointed in the territory in which that language is used.*

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Persons belonging to national minorities are not represented proportionally in state administration bodies and their regional units respectively on the level of the province.

Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

- 5 *The Parties undertake to allow the use or adoption of family names in the regional or minority languages, at the request of those concerned.*

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Persons belonging to the ethnic-Albanian minority born in Vranje Municipality are issued birth certificates in Cyrillic. The Police Department enters names and surnames in the identity card of ethnic-Albanians based on their birth certificates. Consequently, a number of mismatches occur when writing the names in Albanian.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

Lately, identity cards are also issued in Latin script, but not in Bosnian and only on a territory in the scope of the Novi Pazar police department. It should be enabled on the whole territory of the State of Serbia that those persons who request it are issued personal documents in the Bosnian language and in Latin script.

The full and effective exercise of the right to the use and public use of the Bosnian language as a mother tongue and as one of the essential elements of the national identity of Bosnians living in Sandzak, can be achieved by introducing this language in official use in all municipalities and cities in the Republic of Serbia where Bosnians from Sandzak live in a significant number, in line with the law. The Bosnian language is in official use in the City of Novi Pazar and Tutin, Sjenica and Prijepolje municipalities. The local authorities in Priboj and Nova Varos are persistent in rejecting the official use of Bosnian on their respective territories, although the number of Bosnians living there is significant.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

The Committee has no information that anyone has been denied this right. Earlier, Bosniak names with double-letters were not written accordingly; for example Muhammed was registered as Muhamed, with only a single “m” in the middle. Nowadays names are written in their original form, even in Latin script, if it has been applied for. In Priboj and Nova Varos Bosnian is not used as an official language, hence there is no opportunity to write place-names in their original forms.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Bulgarian language, nomenclature and script are not used in the registers of births and marriages, because, under the law, if someone wants to have his/her name and other data entered in the Bulgarian language, he/she should apply for the change of his/her personal name.

- Example: If a woman wants to take her husband's family name at marriage with a suffix for female family names typical for Bulgarian (for example: the husband's name is "Aleksov", the wife's name should be "Aleksova"), it will not be done so, but the husband's name will be entered and the requested suffix will be added later, if the application on changing personal names is submitted.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

The state should ensure the consistent application of the use of Croatian when issuing personal documents, so that the inscription of the text and personal names is not simply copying the text in Latin letters, but a consistent application of the Croatian language.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

The new *Law on Registers*⁵² stipulates in its Article 17 that members of national minorities are entitled to the right to enter into a register the personal name in the language and script of the national minority, which does not exclude a concurrent entry of the personal name in the Serbian language, in Cyrillic.

Under the new Guidelines of the Ministry of Public Administration for keeping personal registers and forms of personal registers⁵³ it is prescribed that local self-government units in which it has been stipulated by their Statutes that the language of a national minority is in official use may print on the back of an excerpt from personal registers, the names of sections of the excerpts from personal registers in the language and script of that national minority. If several languages of national minorities are in official use, the text in these languages shall be written in the alphabetical order. The Regulation also prescribes how the forms of these excerpts should look like.

According to the new regulations there are visible deviations from the practice that has been applied up to date and was created in 2001 on the territory of the AP Vojvodina in accordance with *the Province Decision on Multilingual Forms of Excerpts from Personal Registries and Manners in Making Entries into the Registries*⁵⁴. According to the provisions of this Decision, in a municipality where the language and the script of a national minority are in official use, on request of a member of the national minority, excerpts and certificates from Personal Registries are issued in two languages, i.e. in Serbian and in the language and script of the national minority, on bilingual forms which appearance and content are regulated by the very Decision.

⁵² Official Gazette of the RS, No. 20/2009 which application started on 27.12.2009

⁵³ Official Gazette of the RS, No. 109/2009

⁵⁴ Official Gazette of the APV, No. 1/2001, 8/2003

Contrary to this solution, new regulations prescribe the form of an excerpt in the Serbian language, on the back of which the names of sections in the language and script of a national minority are written. We deem that such appearance of the excerpt abolishes the practice applied up to date of having bilingual forms, because in this case this is the form in the Serbian language that contains only an explanation in the language of the national minority that is in official use regarding the names of its sections. Bilingual forms are used in practice primarily when members of the Hungarian national minority in Serbia address the authorities of the Republic of Hungary that accept the bilingual forms as legally valid, thus significantly facilitating the communication of members of the Hungarian national minority with its kin state.

The National Council shall carefully follow up the new system of keeping personal registers that is currently at the stage of becoming established and it will note down possible negative consequences and deviations from the recent practice of issuing bilingual forms.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office and Roma Education Centre

Romani language is neither used in birth/death registers nor in identity cards.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Personal ID Cards in the Slovak language are issued rarely, except at Bački Petrovac, on bilingual forms. Personal names in Slovak cannot be entered into the Personal ID Card if they have not been entered in Personal Registry Books.

Član 11 – Media

Article 11 – Media

1 The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

a to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:

a iii to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Scholars, likewise the law-makers (state administration) still fail to show sufficient sensibility to define clearly what, in fact, are media in national minority languages. In the period from the last reporting, some of the earlier existing practices have disappeared from the media, such as agency services in national minority languages.

◇◇◇

All deadlines for media privatisation, set by the law, have expired, while the appropriate regulation of the media sector in Serbia is still absent.



After the two-year training programme by the BBC, which was financed by the UK Government and the OSCE to raise the professional standard of journalist in the Serbian-language editorial offices of the Vojvodina radio and television, several trainings were organised for editorial offices in national minority languages as well. Beyond that, only eight (8) journalist have been employed in the radio of the Vojvodina RTV in editorial offices in minority languages from 2008 through 2010 (most of them in the Hungarian, then in Slovak and Romanian language editorial offices), and, numerically, it has been the most massive employment since 2000.



After the extremely poor results in privatising municipal media, especially the multi-lingual ones, the Government approved the prolongation of deadlines until March 2008. Proposed by the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority and the Democratic Party, which proposal was adopted by the Government of Vojvodina and then submitted to the Republic Government for adoption, the Government of Serbia adopted a decision having the effect of suspending the privatisation procedures in certain broadcast media with multi-lingual programmes.

Under the *Privatisation Act of Serbia*⁵⁵, the privatisation process may be suspended only for 180 days if it is noted that, due to objective circumstances, the privatisation cannot be implemented. Upon these 180 days, the privatisation process goes on automatically. Even though this deadline had expired long time ago, the process has not be re-started. According to the law, if there were a will to launch the privatisation of any multi-lingual media now, it could be done. However, there is a lack of political will in Serbia to change matters, because there is no clear media strategy.

It should be noted, that there is an ongoing survey on the status of the media sector in Serbia, conducted by independent media experts engaged by the EU Delegation in Serbia.

After the report of the Task Group of the EU Delegation in Serbia will have been adopted sometime in September 2010 and approved by a certain form of public debate, it will serve as a basis for the working body within the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia to develop a media strategy, which will clearly define the status of the media in national minority languages. At the same time, the Government of Vojvodina is also developing a media strategy, because it falls within its competences under the new *Law on Competences*⁵⁶ and after the adoption of the new *Statute of Vojvodina* in 2009⁵⁷. These two strategies will be harmonised, provided that it is realistic to expect that the Strategy Developing Committee, formed by the Secretariat for Information in April 2010,

⁵⁵ *Privatisation Act of Serbia* Official Gazette of the RS, No. 38/2001; 18/2003; 45/2005; 123/2007. adopted 27.06.2001.

⁵⁶ *Law on Competences*, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 99/2009-3

⁵⁷ *Statute of Vojvodina*, The Official Journal of the VAT, 17/2009.

will pay special attention to the status of media providing information in national minority languages. Very likely, the privatisation of the local media, hold up long time ago, will not be continued. This process has lasted much too long and it is exhausting the media while their vague position and future makes them additionally unsafe and without any clear prospect, and all this is, in fact, an aspects of implicit pressure on local broadcasters, especially the multi-lingual ones.

The adoption of three new laws, which are fully in collision with the media acts, additionally complicates the situation of the media in national minority languages and contributes to the instability of the media sector providing information in minority languages. Namely, the *Law on Local Self-Government*⁵⁸ and the *Law on the Capital City*⁵⁹ were passed in 2007, while the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*⁶⁰ was adopted in 2009. This latter enables local authorities and the councils of national minorities respectively to establish broadcast media, which is fully inconsistent with *the Law on Radio-Diffusion* (2002) and *the Law on Public Information* (2003)⁶¹, regulating this field in a different way.



Public service media are financed from rate collection, while local, multi-lingual media from municipality budgets or from a combination of these two.

The extremely difficult financial situation of the Radio TV in Vojvodina is caused by the permanent instability of its budget due to a legal stipulation (*Law on Radio-Diffusion*, 2002), i.e. that the rate collected on the territory of the Vojvodina Province is directly sent to the public service media in Serbia, and 70% of the collected rates is sent back to the Public Service Media of Vojvodina three days upon submission, while the rest of 30% is kept by the Radio TV of Serbia. The problem is that, although both broadcasters are of public importance⁶², the public service media of Vojvodina has never had an opportunity to have an insight in the amount of rates collected in Vojvodina. In other words: how much money has the Public Service Media of Serbia collected from the rates and whether really 70% of the rates collected in Vojvodina are paid back to the public service of the Province.

This legally very poorly defined method of appropriating funds from rate collections is an additional pressure on the multi-lingual Public Service Media of Vojvodina, which could hardly get out of a decade-long crisis due to inappropriate financing. The status of this public service media was more extensively reported, especially its programmes in national minority languages, in the former report.



⁵⁸ *Law on Local Self-Government* Official Gazette of the RS, No. 129/07, od 29.12.2009.

⁵⁹ *Law on the Capital City*, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 129/07, 29.12. 2007.

⁶⁰ *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities*, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 72/2009. 31.08.2009.

⁶¹ *Law on Public Information*, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 43/2003; 61/2005; 71/2009, 22.04..2003.

⁶² By definition, public service media are established by the citizens, financed by the citizens (subscription fee), hence should be controlled by the citizens.

The radio-signal coverage of the Radio Broadcasting Service of Vojvodina does not reach the legally set minimum of 92% of the Province's territory.

The Table on the fulfilment of the standard from the former report, with minor changes, corresponds to the one for the present reporting period

RADIO	Length	Quality of sound	Quality of the programmes	Percentages of broadcasts in the language
Hungarian	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Almost fulfilled	Fulfilled
Slovak	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Partly fulfilled
Romanian	Partly fulfilled	Formally fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled
Ruthenian	Fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Fulfilled
Ukrainian	Fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Fulfilled
Roma	Fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly Fulfilled	Fulfilled
Croatian	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Albanian	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
Bulgarian	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Bosnian	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled

Table 2

TELEVISION	Length	Quality of sound	Quality of the programmes	Percentages of broadcasts in the language
Hungarian	Almost fulfilled	Almost fulfilled	Almost fulfilled	Almost fulfilled
Slovak	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Partly fulfilled
Romanian	Partly fulfilled	Formally fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled
Ruthenian	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled
Ukrainian	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Roma	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Partly Fulfilled	Partly Fulfilled
Croatian	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Albanian	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
Bulgarian	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled	Not fulfilled
Bosnian	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled	Partly fulfilled

The Province Public Service Media RTV in relation to the former reporting period, has slowly raised its standard in the editorial offices and programmes in national minority languages, which is proved by researches, first and foremost, the monitoring on transforming Novi Sad Radio TV into the Public Service Media of Vojvodina⁶³. This

⁶³ Since 2006, the Province Executive Council has financed a team of 10 monitors trained to conduct qualitative and quantitative analyses of media discourses in Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian and Romani. Nine monitoring cycles were implemented until the end of 2009 and the results were published in the following publications:

- Public Service Media of Vojvodina, Monitoring the transformation of Novi Sad Radio-Television into the public service of Vojvodina, 2007, Novi Sad School of Journalism, Novi Sad Volume 1
- Media about Every Days, The monitoring of the Public Service of Vojvodina and of regional televisions, 2008, Novi Sad School of Journalism, Novi Sad. Volume 2

monitoring indicated that most Vojvodina RTV programmes in national minority languages function as an element of fostering collective identity and not as sources of a topical, whole and balanced picture of the ethnic community and its social context.

It is to be especially emphasised, that channel two of the Vojvodina TV, aimed to inform national minorities –although the only one in the Serbian media sector for information on national minority languages both "about" and "for" national minorities – serves, at the same time, as a time slot to replay programmes in the Serbian language.

Minority languages have different representations in the programmes of the Radio TV Vojvodina 2 (RTV 2) according to the monitoring of the programme schedules (truly broadcast). In the observed period covered by this report, the largest share of the programmes by the Public Service Media of Vojvodina (TV programme) were in Hungarian: 21 hours during the week, i.e. 3 hours a day (54 programmes, 17,9% of the channel's total programme time), followed by the programmes in the Slovak language, which are half as short as the Hungarian ones and amount to 10 hours weekly (19 programmes, 8,2 of the total broadcast time of Channel 2). Programmes in Romanian are broadcast for a little more than 6 hours a week (13 programmes), likewise in Ruthenian (12 programmes) and Romani (even 11 programmes) and these are about 5-6% of the total broadcast time of RTV Channel 2.

Programmes in other languages (Ukrainian, Macedonian, Croat, Bunjevac) are represented by less than 1% in the total broadcast time of RTV Channel 2. Usually, one or two half-an-hour long programmes are broadcast in these languages.

Despite their numerous shortcomings observed during the three-year systematic monitoring (small scale and poor genre structure, relatively low production standards typical for TV stations with poor human and financial resources, content reduced to traditional, mostly folkloristic elements), the elaboration of programme slots (informative, educational, cultural and entertaining), by their diversity, is still far beyond the very modest offer by the Public Service Media of Serbia in view of national minorities, although the *Law on Radio-Diffusion* (2002) in its Article 78 clearly defines that it is the duty of the public service media to address these communities of the society as well.

The public service media of the Republic, RTS, has hardly any programmes in the languages of national minorities and programmes "for" and "about" national minorities respectively. The exception is the programme in Romani broadcast by Radio Belgrade (at 8 pm which is a fully inadequate time for radio programmes, since it is a prime time for television programmes) and by TV Belgrade (in early morning hours on Sundays, which is a fully inadequate time for TV programmes) and there is collage TV programme broadcast

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- Women-Candidates, The monitoring of women-candidates in the media during the pre-election campaign for local and province elections in 2008, Novi Sad School of Journalism Novi Sad. Volume 3, 2008 (in cooperation with the Gender Institute).
 - Media Scanner, 2009, Novi Sad School of Journalism: Novi Sad. Volume 4

on Saturdays at 1 pm about the life of national minorities, which represents minorities on the level of folklore with idealised pastoral approach without problematizing their every days. At the same time, there are increasingly clearer demands addressed to the RTS to incorporate in its time slots contents about the Vlach, Bulgarian, Albanian and Bosnian minorities as well.

What is fully missing in both public service media, both RTS and RTV, are contents designed as platforms for building common multicultural identity and affirmation in the programmes in the language of the majority about literature and artistic achievements of persons belonging to national minority communities. RTV broadcasts a multilingual programme, “Zajedno” /Together/, on air twice a month, but the broadcast of this programme is irregular (it is often not broadcast in the time slot or a concert of a cultural society is broadcast instead, which is not the original idea behind the concept of the programme). RTS television also broadcasts only one collage programme, as indicated above, with an idealised picture about minorities.

It is to be especially emphasized, that in Serbia, commercial media, mostly TV stations, have no interest in satisfying the communication needs of national minorities. For example, the best audience rated commercial television in Serbia over the last decade, TV Pink, has no content aimed at national minorities, nor has B92 television, clearly profiled to provide information, and which, according to its programme structure, should have been more attuned to such contents. Although one should not expect from commercial broadcasters to reflect the multiethnic structure of Serbia’s population, *the Law on Radio-Diffusion* determines the need to respect the national and ethnic pluralism of ideas and thoughts⁶⁴.



In view of television programmes by the public service media in RTV, programme in minority languages is “in minority” compared to the programmes in the Serbian language. If the overall broadcast programme is taken in consideration, including commercials and programmes used to fill in time between programme slots, programmes in Serbian make up 54,6% of the total broadcasting time. We would note, that this is the only television station in Serbia, which indeed broadcasts programmes for national minorities in the languages of national minorities.



The public service media of Vojvodina still broadcasts radio programmes on 3 channels. Channel one is in Serbian, channel 2 is in Hungarian and the third is a shared channel among programmes in Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian, Ukrainian and Roma languages.



It is to be added to the former report that the number of programmes in relation to language on Vojvodina public service media television is different. On a weekly level, the largest number of programmes is in Hungarian (54) and the smallest is in Bunjevac (1).

⁶⁴ Article 77 of the Law on Radio-Diffusion, 2002

The public service media of Serbia still has an unparalleled modest programme offer for national minorities, as mentioned earlier.



Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

In relation to the former report “Informative programmes in minority languages in APV are uniformly scheduled in prime time slots both on the radio and the television. In Serbia, the public service broadcast does not provide prime time programmes in minority languages, while private broadcasters schedule the contents in line with their needs”



Replay slots are frequent on television, less frequent on the radio.



News cast are predominant in programmes in minority languages (49,5% weekly), likewise cultural and artistic contents (27%). News cast are broadcast on the TV programme of RTV channel 2 in Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian and Romani, and there are weekly news magazines and cultural programmes about the customs and folklore of national minorities. The latter ones are typical, studio-made collage programmes, very similar to each other, technically-technologically old fashioned and mostly focused on the promotion of folkloristic contents.

News desks in minority languages (except for the Hungarian one) usually do not use the time slots (15 minutes daily) fully, but fill in the last few minutes left with national dance and music clips.

Hungarian-language programmes, as the most versatile ones, include several genres but by type all are uniform (sport, children’s programme and free-time).

Besides the news cast and the cultural programmes, the programme in the Slovak language also includes a film-programme and a children's programme.

The programmes of other minority communities are either a mixture of news and cultural programmes (Romanian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Ukrainian) or are only news casts (Ruthenian, Romani, Bunjevac).

It has been noted as a practice, that audio inserts in Serbian are not translated into the languages of national minorities during the program when the insert is broadcast, while programmes in Romani are always bilingual, Romani and Serbian, and the dominant language is Serbian.

In a research in the origin of TV production⁶⁵, it has been noticed, that from all minority languages in official use in Serbian, foreign productions are broadcast on national level

⁶⁵ Monitoring made by the Novi Sad School of Journalism in the programme slots of 6 Tv channels with highest audience ratings in Serbia (RTS1, RTS2, RTV1, RTV2, TV Pink and TV B92) from november

only in Croat and these programmes are imported by two commercial televisions (Pink/5 serials, and B92/10 serials) with the highest audience rating. So, those televisions which had seen no interest in informing national minorities in their own languages, import Croat productions as commercial offers to the viewers in Serbia and not as an offer to meet the communication needs of a national community (Croats). During the monitored week in November 2009, 7 days throughout the whole month, the public service media of the Province broadcast 4 programmes of Hungarian production, 4 Slovakian, one Macedonian and one Ukrainian production according to a specified research “step”.



There is no digital broadcast by either radio or TV stations in Serbia at the moment.

For the time being, only the Serbian public service media broadcasts experimental digital programmes, exclusively in the Serbian language. According to the valid law, it has been foreseen that digital broadcast of all television programmes would start in April 2012, while for radio programmes this deadline will be determined additionally.

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Serbia has backed down from the privatisation of the local media lately. The new law on the national councils provides an opportunity for national councils to establish or co-establish local media. This is in collision with the *Law on Information*, and so far, nothing has been done to settle this matter.

One local television station broadcasts half of its news casts in Bulgarian every day. The situation is the same with two local radio stations, while there is one radio station broadcasting one half-an-hour long programme in Bulgarian.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

At present, there is no TV channel which has a full-time programme broadcast in Bosnian. Tutin TV broadcast more than 50% of its programme in Bosnian, while Novi Pazar RTV and Jedinstvo TV from Novi Pazar have a low percentage of programmes in Bosnian.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

Three public TV channels and 19 public radio stations broadcast programs in Hungarian. While Novi Sad Radio and Subotica Radio broadcast programs 24 hours a day in Hungarian, the duration of programs of other (local) radio stations is in the range of 15 minutes up to 17 hours a day.⁶⁶ Television programs in Hungarian are repeated by Radio TV Novi Sad (3 hours a week). Radio programs are repeated less often.

2008. Results published in *Medijski skener* (2009), Ed. D. Valić Nedeljković. Novi Sad School of Journalism, Novi Sad.

⁶⁶ First Periodical Report, p. 224-227 (p. 209-212)

The Committee of Experts has already been notified by the representatives of Hungarian speakers that the time of program broadcasting in the Hungarian language has been dramatically reduced since 1990.



Radio Subotica that used to broadcast programs in 3 languages and on 3 special frequencies, while programs in Serbian and Hungarian were broadcast 24 hours a day, after the distribution of radio frequencies pursuant to the amendments to the *Law on Radio-Diffusion*⁶⁷ has only one frequency to broadcast its program, thus practically being forced to reduce the broadcasting time of its programs and transfer itself to production and broadcasting of so called "sandwich programs" where the program in the Hungarian language (and programs in other languages) would get about 8 hours of broadcasting, instead of previous 24 hours.

As a temporary solution, Novi Sad Radio has let one of its frequencies to the program in the Hungarian language of Subotica Radio, thus ensuring (although unlawfully) that the already acquired rights are not curtailed.

Recommendation: A solution to this problem should be found, and it should be provided for that the regional radio - Subotica Radio, which has the biggest audience, retains its special frequencies for 24-hour programs in Serbian, Hungarian and Croatian.

Novi Sad Radio broadcasts three 24-hour programs: the first one is in Serbian, the second in Hungarian and the third in the languages of other national minorities that have their National Councils in Vojvodina.

However, the conditions of producing minority programs, especially those that are being produced and broadcast in Hungarian are far less favourable than the conditions for the production of program in Serbian. Namely, 24-hour program in Hungarian is produced by 47 employees in total, while the same 24-hour program in Serbian is produced by 74 employees, meaning that for making the program of the same duration and similar content, the Hungarian program has 27 journalists less at its disposal than the program in the Serbian language, which inevitably leads to a decline in the quality of the program of the national minority, the impossibility to fulfil the tasks required from the public service and to great dissatisfaction of employees due to the overload of tasks assigned to them in the Editorial Office of the program in the Hungarian language.

Recommendation: The same conditions for the production and broadcasting of programs in all languages of the Vojvodina Broadcasting Public Service should be ensured.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

⁶⁷ Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 42/2002, 97/2004, 76/2005, 79/2005, 62/2006, 85/2006, 86/2006, 41/2009

According to the opinion of the National Council, the privatization of the Subotica Radio that broadcasts a programme in Croatian 3 hours a day would put at risk the dissemination of information in the Croatian language.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

The Romani language radio programme broadcast by Novi Sad Radio is very poor in quality and fails to cover the territory it should have to, because of the outdated and inadequate equipment.

The public media service, i.e. the Radio and Television of Serbia, broadcasts a weekly programme in Romani called “Amen adjes” /We today/ from 2,30 pm till 3 pm, lasting for 30 minutes covering the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia. The programme is prepared and broadcast from a studio of the Vojvodina Radio and Television.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

Programmes by the Vojvodina Radio and Television cannot be watched in southern Banat. Transmitters have not been repaired yet.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

In Serbia, programme slots in the languages of national minorities have not been protected systematically and permanently by a special fund or by appropriating a certain percentage of funds and it is especially the case on local and regional level.

The status of local media broadcasting programmes in national minority languages has not been solved in practice.

The outreach of the radio and TV signal of the Ruthenian language programme is not sufficient and can hardly be watched and listened to (especially in Srem).

First and foremost, editorial offices in minority languages are affected by the issue of exceptionally outdated technical equipment they work with.

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority is of the opinion that additional efforts and sources should be invested in the field of information, in order to increase the signal outreach, the quality of reception and the general technical standards in the electronic media, especially in RTV public service, to a fair and satisfactory level, bearing in mind the importance of the public service for all national minorities.

At the same time, we believe that a more intensified communication and consultations with the representatives of the national councils when making vital decisions regarding programme contents, personnel solutions and general business decisions of key importance relating to the management bodies of the Vojvodina RTV. We highlight as a good practice and a step in the right direction the most recent initiative, i.e. invitation by the RTV Vojvodina management to prepare a list of possible problems related to

programme schemes, times of broadcasting and others for the session of the Programme Committee.

We are of the opinion that it is necessary to continuously monitor the functioning of minority programmes and the situation of the staff in electronic and written media, which have been privatized in the meantime on local and regional level. If possible, special funds should be earmarked for an increased number of translations, dubbing and subtitling to the language of the majority and other languages used on the territory of Serbia and for the promotion of projects affirming interculturalism.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Two public TV channels broadcast programmes in the Slovak language (2 hours a day). Besides that, one public TV channel in the Slovak language broadcasts programs half hour a week, one half hour a month, while one cable channel of a local self-government unit broadcasts programs in the Slovak language up to 24 hours a day. Besides that, 8 public radio stations broadcast programs in Slovak (up to 24 hours a day).

As for the professional qualifications of journalists, the Slovak national community solves this issue by providing scholarships for the lacking staff in the field of information. In the 2009/2010 school year the National Council of the Slovak National Minority has granted 3 scholarships to students of journalism.

Article 11 – Media

1 The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

b ii to e to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of radio programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Noticing that the media law package does not satisfy a modern approach to media regulation, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Telecommunication of the Republic of Serbia established task groups to draft new and to re-define the old laws. The Ministry of Telecommunication formed a task group, which drafted the new *Law on Electronic Communications*, while the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia formed a working group of independent experts⁶⁸ tasked to finalize the *Law on the Illicit Joining and the Publicity of Ownership of Public Media* and to propose the amendments and supplements of the *Law on Radio-Diffusion*. At the time of writing this report, the working group has been still working under the auspices of the OSCE and the Ministry of Culture.

⁶⁸ In October 2008.

The draft of the *Law on Illicit Joining and the Publicity of Ownership of Public Media* is especially important for national minorities, because, according to it, if and when this law will be adopted, the national councils of national minorities will not be able to have in their ownership all printed and broadcast media in their respective languages. Let's remind ourselves that the *Law on the National Councils of National Minorities* provides an opportunity for national councils to establish media and publishing houses, founded by the Province administration and having long tradition, have already been transferred to the ownership of national minority councils⁶⁹.

The Law on the Illicit Joining and Publicity of Ownership of Public Media, although one of the laws of key importance for regulating the media sector in Serbia, has not been entered in the parliamentary procedure yet, although the comprehensive public debate has been brought to an end and the law has been verified by the public.

Beyond defining issues of relevance for the operation of media in the languages of national minorities, the second law addressed by the working group is the *Law on Radio-Diffusion* (2002). Although it has not been submitted to the competent Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia, if it passes the public debate, it will define some of the essential elements in national minority information in the best manner. Some amendments should be highlighted: 1. It is clearly defined, that the national councils of national minorities shall propose their common candidate for the Council of the Serbian Radio-Diffusion Agency and for the Management Board of the Public Service Media of Vojvodina. 2. In view of the Vojvodina public service media, when establishing and selecting independent production (10% of the programmes should be allocated to that), the linguistic diversity of the radio and television programmes should be reflected in percentage, i.e. the content shall be of public interest. 3. Local self-governments shall assume the responsibility to support programmes in national minority languages and to provide their sustainability. It is very important, that through these new suggestions, national minorities are made visible also in the sphere of decision-making and in programme sustainability, unlike so far when it was only in formal, legal stipulations which defined the non-discriminatory relation towards all vulnerable groups, including national minorities, and in programme directives for public service media, which affirmed all social groups, including minority and which protected all languages, including minority ones.

The second problem identified in the former report and partly tackled in this one as well, is the privatisation and provision of broadcast permits for local broadcasters, whose founders are municipal assemblies. There were more bi- and multi-language radio and television stations in Vojvodina, hence most of the issues occurred there. The problem has not been resolved since 2006 and presents a huge burden to the Serbian media sector with a focus on a multi-national Vojvodina. In this sense, some typical examples can be sorted out, which remained unsolved until the submission of this report.

⁶⁹ This was extensively elaborated in the former Alternative Report (the papers in question are: Magyar Szó, Hlas Ludu, Ruskem Slovu and Libertatea).

Most of the problems both in frequency allocation and media privatisation occurred in the “Subotica” and “Apatin” radio stations. The “Zrenjanin”, “Kikinda”, “Kovin” and “Backa Topola” radio stations had frequency-related problems, while “Srbobran”, “Sombor” and “Backa Topola” had privatisation-related ones. That does not mean that other radio stations did not have similar or identical problems, but the occurrence of the cases of these radio stations in public over a three-year period made their problems far more visible and attracted the interest of other broadcast and printed media, professional associations, experts and politicians, authorities and opposition.

Among the first local media where the privatisation process was launched were two multi-lingual stations from Vojvodina, two public companies: “Srbobran Radio” and “Subotica Radio”. The Privatisation Agency published a leaflet on local media companies in early 2007 in order to collect data about the number of potential buyers. It was indicated, that the value of the “Srbobran Radio” is 15 thousand Euros, and that the company operated with a minimum of profit in the former year. In the meantime, the Government of Serbia approved the “initiative to start the privatisation” of the “Subotica Radio”. However, it was not justified who and when had initiated that this radio station be among the first in the privatisation process. The management and the journalists of this media house had a negative attitude towards the way of privatisation, and the local self-government had also rejected to support the start in the change of ownership, although the whole process was in line with the law.

None of these two stations from Vojvodina had a permit for broadcasting in the period of beginning the privatisation process. More precisely, none of the radio stations in Vojvodina had such permits, since the application procedure for permits was finalised only for the national and Belgrade region level, and the application procedure for regional permits was ongoing and the procedure for local frequencies was not published at that time. Some raised the question: who would risk and buy a media house, when it is uncertain that it would surely be granted a permit?

In the forthcoming months, these two radio stations will draw a lot of public attention, because the privatisation of the Srbobran Radio was accompanied with problems and there were problems with the initiative for the privatisation, and later, the non-allocation of regional frequency for the Subotica Radio.

The attention of the public was also focused on the case of Zrenjanin, as a territorially largest municipality in Serbia, because, at the beginning, no local frequencies were foreseen for this municipality at all, although it had a multi-lingual radio. The public had also followed up what was going on in those municipalities, where radio stations, despite their experience of many decades, were left without permits after the application period ended, and some of them were multi-lingual. Also, there were cases, when the sales agreement with the irresponsible new owner had been terminated and the State, again, became the owner of a radio station, e.g. Sombor Radio, which is also a multi-lingual radio station.

The issue of the tri-lingual Subotica Radio had drawn the largest attention of system institutions, politicians, minority communities and professional associations, and its problems have not been solved by the time of writing this report, hence it deserves special consideration.

The decision of the Government of Serbia to start with the privatisation of multi-lingual media, like “Subotica Radio”, among the firsts, was disapproved by the Government of Vojvodina, who also demanded from the Serbian Government to suspend henceforth the privatisation of all multi-lingual media in the Province. The Province’s Prime Minister⁷⁰ said that “the decision to start with the privatisation of the Subotica Radio is unacceptable without waiting for the frequency allocation procedure to end, without asking for the opinion of the founder and without considering the consequences of such a serious decision”. The Province Government concluded that “in the privatisation process of regional broadcast media certain problems occurred, because in many settlements in Vojvodina these broadcast multi-language programmes, and this multilingualism is not guaranteed in the forthcoming period when these media will be in private ownership, thereby the rights of persons belonging to national minorities granted in multiethnic environments are potentially curtailed”.

Some 95% of the employees in this media, the President of the Vojvodina AP Assembly, the president of the Subotica City Assembly, the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority and the Vojvodina Association of Independent Journalist asked to postpone the started privatisation process in Subotica Radio⁷¹. The local parliament in Subotica even decided to initiate the amendment of the *Law on Radio-Diffusion* in order to enable that local community media can be transformed to local level public service media, especially in the case of multilingual media. The assembly also concluded, that these media should be enabled to obtain at least two frequencies for broadcasting. Pursuant to the law, no media, except for the public service media of Serbia and Vojvodina which do not apply for frequency, can broadcast programme on more than one frequency. The tri-lingual Subotica Radion, Stara Pazova Radio (bilingual) and a certain number of radio stations from Vojvodina, had broadcast, until then, programmes even on two frequencies.

The case of the Subotica Radio started up a number of professional tribunes and discussions in the public about the best way for the transformation of multilingual media and about radio and television stations in larger cities, which are also regional centres, like Subotica and Kragujevac. One of the first meetings, where the initiative was officially launched that there should be local and regional public service media as well – which is contrary to the valid media law – was held in Kragujevac organised by the Kragujevac Radio and Television founded by the City’s Assembly.

The managers and editors-in-chief of the broadcast media, whose founders are the city of Kragujevac, Nis, Subotica and Novi Pazar announced to launch an initiative on amending

⁷⁰ Bojan Pajtić, after the session held 17th January 2007.

⁷¹ Later the National Council of the Hungarian National Minority and the Vojvodina Association of Independent Journalist changed their stand in view of privatising multilingual broadcast media.

the legal stipulations by which these media would be enabled to survive by transforming them into regional public service media in order to maintain the existing system of information in Serbia and thereby to satisfy the interest of the public in Serbia proper to obtain timely and objective information about the events in their local communities.

A message was sent to the state authorities from this panel discussion titled "Regional Public Service Media or Privatisation" stating that the privatisation of local media according to the valid criteria will destroy the system of local and public information and it will have detrimental consequences especially in Vojvodina." Participants of the panel discussion held in Kragujevac noted that establishing regional public service media in Serbia would not be a novelty, because there are broadcast media with a status of regional or local public service both in the USA and in Europe.

The case of the Subotica Radio was further tangled up when this renowned radio station was not granted the expected regional frequency, on which it had broadcast by then. The multilingual radio from Subotica, until then the strongest local radio station in Serbia with the best equipment and the largest number of journalists, broadcasting for four decades, was left without permit for regional frequency without any due reason. At present, Subotica Radio has a local frequency and an unsettled status.

Radio stations, for which the suspension of privatisation is requested until a strategy is developed, according to the data of the Province's Government, are the following media, i.e. 20 radio stations:

1. Novi Bečej Radio PC (Public Company) (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian and Romani)
2. BC Info – bela Crkva Radio PC (programmes in Serbian, Romani, Hungarian, Romanian and Czech)
3. Indija Radio and Television PC (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian, Ukrainian and Romani)
4. Pančevo Regional Radio and Television PC (programmes in Serbian, Macedonian, Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian)
5. Informativni centar – Kikinda Radio PC (programmes in Serbian and Hungarian)
6. Subotica Radio PC (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian, Croat and German)
7. Stara Pazova Radio PC (programmes in Serbian and Slovak)
8. Šid Radio PC (programmes in Serbian, Slovak and Ruthenian)
9. Radio Zrenjanin PC (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and Romani)
10. Vrbas Radio PC (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian, Ruthenian and Ukrainian)
11. Kovačica Municipality Information Institution Kovačica Radio and Television (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian)
12. Information Centre – Kovin Radio PC (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian and Romanian)
13. Sečanj Radio PC for Radio-Diffusion Activities (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian and Romanian)
14. Cultural and Information Centre Kisač Radio (programmes in Serbian and Slovakian)

15. Lukijan Mušicki Cultural and Information Centre – Temerin Radio (programmes in Serbian and Hungarian)
16. Bačka Palanka – Radio BaP PC (programmes in Serbian, Hungarian and Romani)
17. Glas komune – Apatin Radio PC (programmes in Serbian and Hungarian)
18. Bačka Radio PC for Radio-Diffusion Activities, Bač (programmes in Serbian, Slovak and Croat)
19. Bačka Topola Information Centre Stockholders Company (programmes in Serbian and Hungarian language), and
20. Bačka Topola – Radio regije (Radio of the region) PC for Information (programmes in Serbian and Hungarian).

After the decision of the Government on suspending the privatisation of multilingual stations, a number of the media applied for the Agency for Privatisation and used the Government's decision as an argument for backing down from the sale. Therefore the Agency decided to cancel all auction as long as it is not established whether other media have programmes aimed at national minorities. A committee has been formed, which is dealing with that at the moment. Many media abused this decision of the Government, and started to broadcast some programmes in minority languages literally overnight, which comprised only short news translated from Serbian, in most cases, to Romani.

A total 1.170 broadcasters applied to the competition for the allocation of republic, province, regional and local broadcasting permits. Four hundred four permits were granted, and about 770 radio and television stations were left without permit, while some 300 broadcasters did not apply for the competition at all. A novelty in the Serbian media sector is that two religious radio stations were granted broadcasting permit. One of them is Marija Radio of the Roman Catholic church, which broadcasts programmes in five national minority languages.

When allocating local frequencies, the Republic Radio-Diffusion Agency has practically abolished stations which used to have minority language programmes, such as the radio stations in Apatin, Bačka Topola and Kovin. These stations have been brought to a close-down situation, although privatisation in such stations was suspended by the decision of the Serbian Government.

In the present analogous system of distribution there are about 1.200 television and over 800 radio channels in Serbia, i.e. about 2.000 frequencies verified by the Distribution Plan adopted by the Serbian Ministry of Telecommunication. Changing to digital diffusion can increase this number to 10.000 and the number of possible broadcasters, according to the present regulation, may exceed 2.000. This is also a chance for broadcasters in national minority languages, especially if they take advantage of the legal framework under which it is possible to establish radio and television stations of the civil sector, which provides special incentives but significant commercial limitations as well. However, the interest in such solution has been rather poor so far (only one permit was granted for a broadcaster in Romanian, for Alibunar Radio).

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

There are two private radio stations, broadcasting programmes in Bosnian (5 and 12 hours daily), which are local ones.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Due to financial and technical problems there are no privately owned radio channels that would broadcast programmes in the Croatian language, because there is no sufficient support for the establishment of such a radio station.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

There is only one private radio station (Viktorija from Vršac) broadcasting solely in Romanian and there are another five radio stations broadcasting programmes also in Romanian.

Ruthenia

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

None of the private radio stations broadcasts programmes in Slovak. The practice applied up to date reveals that many private radio and TV stations, and even the printed media have introduced programmes in the Slovak language into their programme slots only to obtain the required frequency or grants from various state and international funds, but they have never kept these slots. Unfortunately, the National Council of the Slovak National Minority and the Association of Slovak Journalists do not have mechanisms by which they could control the current situation in the Slovak language media.

Article 11 – Media

1 The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

c ii to encourage and/or facilitate the broadcasting of television programmes in the regional or minority languages on a regular basis;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Channel 2 of the Vojvodina public service media broadcasts programmes in 10 languages within a share model. Besides the Vojvodina public service media, there are some local broadcasters having programmes in national minority languages. For example, Bački Petrovac Television broadcasts only in Slovakian, VK Kikinda broadcast besides Serbian, also in Romani and Hungarian, etc. The general conclusion is, that there are far less multilingual television broadcasters than radio broadcasters.

Albanski

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

In the field of Albanian language broadcast media, in relation to the former reporting period, the most significant progress has been achieved on a local level. There are two radio and television stations in the Bujanovac Municipality broadcasting in Albanian, while in Preševo/Preshevë Municipality there is 1 radio and 1 television station with programmes in Albanian. A call for applications for allocating a TV frequency has been published for the Preševo/Preshevë Municipality.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The Bosnian language is not sufficiently represented in the programmes of either the central or the regional and local media.

In the opinion of the National Council, this undertaking is not fulfilled.

It would be necessary that the State, through the public service media of Serbia, establishes programmes in the Bosnian language.

Such an editorial office would prepare programmes in Bosnian, which would be then broadcast on the public service media. Such a good example already exists in the public service media of Vojvodina, which broadcasts programmes in the languages of national minorities living in Vojvodina.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

The use of the Bosnian language is insufficient both in the programmes of the central and of the regional and local media.

The Novi Pazar regional television (founded by the Novi Pazar City Administration) is bilingual, although Bosnian is not represented as much as it should be.

Only three out of over 20 journalists (whereof 3 are Serbs and 17 are Bosniaks) employed at the Novi Pazar RTV, edit programmes and reportage in Bosnian. Some beginning sequences of programmes are written in Bosnian in Latin script, for example “Vijesti” (news) and “Vrijeme” (weather).

Bosnian is used also by the Universa TV, founded by the International University.

Jedinstvo, the private television from Novi Pazar broadcasts no informative or any other programme in Bosnian. The announcers of this media observe the authenticity of the written information and press releases, which they read out in the language they are written in. Moreover, TV Jedinstvo broadcasts programmes produced by other Bosnian institutions, which are in Bosnian.

Sto Plus Radio broadcasts a programme in Serbian, and likewise TV Jedinstvo observes the authenticity of the written information.



Sandžačke Novine, started by the Bosniak National Council is published in Bosnian, but it has not been on the news-stands for several months due to lack of funds. Its publishing was financed by the Ministry of Culture. The Bosniak National Council also edits the Bošnjačka Riječ magazine, which should have been published four times a year, but due to the lack of funds it is neither published regularly nor according to the Council's plan.

Glas Islama is published twice a month in Bosnian, but it provides information about the work of the authorities and institutions of the Islamic community in Serbia only.

Nearly all of the abovementioned television stations and printed media in Novi Pazar are characterised by political colouring, and it is only the Sto Plus Radio that can be assessed as highly objective.

Bosniaks also find their media space in the Danas daily paper's weekly supplement that comes out on Fridays, named "Sandžak Danas". The supplement often deals with problems and issues related to Bosniaks. It keeps the authenticity of the written information and authorial texts, but is written in Serbian language and script.



In the municipality of Prijepolje, only Polimlje, the weekly newspaper publishes information in Bosnian. The editor-in-chief is a Bosniak, and the editorial office employs 3 Bosniaks and 1 Serb. Owing to the "Mostovi, ćuprije – identitet bošnjačke manjine" (Bridges – The Identity of the Bosniak Minority) Project supported by the Ministry of Culture, numerous texts about the topic of the project were published in the weekly during 2009.

Electronic media in Prijepolje broadcast programmes in Serbian. During Islamic religious holidays they broadcast special programmes, but in Serbian.

Tutin Television, founded by the local self-government in Tutin, broadcasts its programme in Bosnian, whereas the local radio stations in the municipalities of Sjenica, Nova Varoš and Priboj broadcast programmes only in Serbian.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

The State fails to sufficiently encourage and financially adequately support the broadcast of programmes in the Bulgarian language. Once a year, the Ministry of Culture, its Media Sector, publishes a call for project proposals from the field of information in minority languages, but the funds appropriated for this purposes are inadequate for a more significant improvement of information and programme making in Bulgarian.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

There is only one private TV channel broadcasting a whole-day programme in Romanian (TV Viktorija from Vršac) while TV Pančevo, TV Kovačica and TV Banat from Vršac broadcast weekly programmes in Romanian.

A certain number of TV channels broadcast programmes in Romanian within paid programming time slots (TV Lav from Vršac) or based on a project (TV Kladovo).

The core problem of private radio and television channels is their scope and quality.

Broadcasting in Romanian was a precondition for obtaining frequency, however broadcasters assuming this responsibility had done it only formally, in order to get frequency more easily. The quality, the scope, the offer in Romanian-language programmes and the use of Romanian in the programmes is well below the standard.

Ruthenia

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

One privately owned TV channel broadcasts programmes only in the Slovak language – TV Petrovac.

Article 11 – Media

1 The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

d to encourage and/or facilitate the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional or minority languages;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The Secretariat for Information of the Vojvodina AP and the Serbian Ministry of Culture regularly publish annual calls for project proposal from the field of audio and visual production.

The Secretariat for Information of the Vojvodina AP annually publishes calls for equipment funding.

It has also been planned, that the State of Serbia will provide support in process of switching to digital broadcast by investing in the equipment of public service media and other broadcasters, which is specified in the amendments of the law on Radio-Diffusion.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The Serbian authorities supported the Bosnian National Council website only for one year. There were no other cases when support was provided for the production or distribution of audio-visual works in Bosnian language. The implementation of this undertaking would be of high importance for Bosnian-speakers.

Ruthenia

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

Up to the moment of drawing up this report, Serbian authorities have supported the production of a few CDs and audio tapes (which is also mentioned in the former report) and only one or two documentary video records in the Slovak language. Due to the size of the Slovak national minority group, these measures are still insufficient.

Article 11 – Media

1 The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

e i to encourage and/or facilitate the creation and/or maintenance of at least one newspaper in the regional or minority language;

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The State supports national minority media. The Vojvodina AP allocates a high percentage of its budget for the permanent financing of the media whose ownership has been transferred from the Province's to national councils'.

What can be considered as a novelty in the practice compared to the former report is that the Secretariat for Information of the Province Executive Council and the Serbian Ministry of Culture now request programme and financial reports from the media they support, in order to create a more responsible attitude towards the granted funds, bearing in mind that the funds are very often spent not as earmarked, for example, in the case of the Roma THEM magazine, the funds earmarked for the magazine were re-allocated for the purchase of a cars.



Local printed media in Vojvodina has been fully devastated in the period between the two reports with newspapers mostly dying off. Even the two province-level dailies, *Dnevnik* in Serbian and *Magyar Szó* in Hungarian can hardly survive. The issue of Magyar Szó was elaborated in the former report and has not been solved yet.



There are still no accurate records on publications in national minority languages, because many printed publications are irregular.

The situation of Roma has not changed, except for THEM which experienced an economic collapse.



The lack of profiled editorial policy in the national minority language media provides grounds for special concerns, likewise the fact that they are often the “victims” of their own communities, which impose on them contents not fulfilling the basic threshold of informativeness, i.e. they lack “news value”. Special media trainings were held for some of the media (e.g. Hrvatska Riječ, Hlas Ludu).

Religious printed media in national minority languages make a special group, such as, e.g. Hitélet in Hungarian and Evanhelicki Hlasnik in Slovakian and Dzvoni in Ruthenian. Thematically these focus on the spiritual life of the national minority, which is prevailing in the given church. In Serbia these religious media have modest human resource capacities (journalists), while the capacities of the ones in minority languages are even more modest.

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

The weekly publication printed in Albanian has a circulation of 1000 copies, not 3000, as indicated in the former report.

A children’s monthly magazine and 2 school journals written in Albanian do not meet the needs of the ethnic-Albanian minority in the south of Serbia.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia supported the printing of „Sandžačke novine“ /Sandzak News/, an independent weekly in Bosnian. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Serbia supported the printing of „Glas Islama“ /The Voice of Islam/, the journal of the Muslim community in Serbia. Besides these two magazines, the printing of another Bosnian language newspaper, „Vakat“ /Times/ has started recently.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Several times, the Ministry of Culture provided support to the Bošnjanska Riječ magazine and the Sandžačke Novine weekly, both published in Bosnian. However, the two media depend solely on the funding sources of that Ministry, which are granted via open calls, hence it often happens that they are not published regularly if they are not granted funds.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

Newspapers in the Hungarian language, especially Mađar So (Magyar Szó) daily, Het Nap (Hét Nap) weekly, and magazines for children Jo Pajtaš (Jó Pajtás) and Mezeškalač (Mézeskalács) are having massive financial problems since their printing runs are rapidly dropping down, while the state subsidy remains the same or is reduced. Due to these problems, the publisher was forced to continually increase the prices of the magazines and therefore, they have become the most expensive ones in whole Serbia, which additionally leads to the reduction in the number of subscribers and permanent readers. Due to the said difficulties, a limited liability company Magyar Szó, also publishing the magazines for children, may quickly find itself in a hopeless situation.

Recommendation: The only way out from the said situation would be to increase the amount of state subsidies since such printed media of the national minority cannot be let to the rules of the market.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

Under the decision of the Vojvodina AP Assembly, a publishing company, “Them”, was established in Romani in 2003 and it issues two publications: “Them”/World/ two times a month in 1500 copies and “Chavorengi them” /Children’s World/ once a month in 1500 copies.

The National Council of the Roma National Minority is the founder and publisher of “Romano nevipe”/Roma News/ issued once a month.

The tendency is that Romani papers are to be issued weekly, and on a longer run, even daily. At present, there is a lack of sufficient funds for that.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

The problem of financing the magazines indicated in the previous report has not been solved.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The National Council agrees with the data from the former report.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

As in the former reporting period, Serbian authorities support one weekly and 2 monthly publications in the Slovak language (having the printing run of 1,600 to 4,600 copies). In the Slovak language one two-month, one annual, one two-week, and one periodical publication are published and they cover news, culture and religious issues as well as topics that are interesting for children, the young and the adult.

Article 11 – Media

1 The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:

f ii to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages;

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The State of Serbia should provide Bosnians from Sandzak the necessary conditions for information in mother tongue, i.e. Bosnian, by co-financing and promoting the printed media and publishing activities, by a more appropriate representation on the public service media through establishing a special editorial office in Bosnian within the Serbian RTV, and also by co-financing special productions with the National Council of Bosnians, which would be broadcast on local and regional media.

Article 11 – Media

2 The Parties undertake to guarantee freedom of direct reception of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in a language used in identical or similar form to a regional or minority language, and not to oppose the retransmission of radio and television broadcasts from neighbouring countries in such a language. They further undertake to ensure that no restrictions will be placed on the freedom of expression and free circulation of information in the written press in a language used in identical or similar form to a regional or minority language. The exercise of the above-mentioned freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

Serbia ratified the Convention on Cross-Border Television and the most significant stipulations of this document are fully being integrated in the amendments of the *Law on Radio-Diffusion* and also in the Law on Advertisement being prepared.

%

SOKOJ is an agency dealing with copyrights in Serbia, and it does it very efficaciously.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

Programmes from Bosnia and Hercegovina can be received undisturbed on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

In Sandžak, there are no obstacles to publish and re-broadcast contents from the neighbouring countries in Bosnian. Regional TV Novi Pazar and TV Jedinstvo often rebroadcast programmes of televisions and productions from Bosnia, whereas the printed media from Bosnia can also be found on the private news-stands in Sandžak.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

Satellite broadcast operators included a sufficient number of channels in Bulgarian in their offer, so persons belonging to this minority have an opportunity to watch/listen to programmes in Bulgarian.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The Slovak community may listen to programmes in the Slovak language from Slovakia via satellite or cable operator (e.g. at Bački Petrovac the local cable operator takes over several programs in Slovak from the Slovak Republic, while in Novi Sad and major cities that is not possible).

Article 11 – Media

3 The Parties undertake to ensure that the interests of the users of regional or minority languages are represented or taken into account within such bodies as may be established in accordance with the law with responsibility for guaranteeing the freedom and pluralism of the media.

Vojvodina Center for Human Rights

The amendment proposal of *the Law on Radio-Diffusion* includes that the national councils of national minorities propose one person in the membership of the Council of the Republic Radio-Diffusion Agency and the Managing Board of the Vojvodina public service media.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

The Committee of Experts' statements are partially correct due to the fact that although there are minority representatives in managing bodies, the opinion of the national councils was not respected and in view of the new law on national councils it should be redressed during the next call for applications for the managing bodies of the Novi Sad RTV and the public service of Serbia.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

1 With regard to cultural activities and facilities – especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies – the Parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used and to the extent that the public authorities are competent, have power or play a role in this field:

a to encourage types of expression and initiative specific to regional or minority languages and foster the different means of access to works produced in these languages

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Fostering the culture of persons belonging to the ethnic-Albanian minority is unsatisfactory. There is not a single professional cultural association or theatre in the municipalities of Preševo/Preshevë, Bujanovac and Medveđa/Medvegjë. The founding of the National Council of the Albanian National Minority should contribute to a better cooperation with the competent institutions of the Republic of Serbia and, also, with the cultural institutions in Albania and Kosovo.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The National Council of Bosnians agrees with the assessment of the Committee of Experts that this undertaking is fulfilled for the Bosnian language.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

There is cultural cooperation with institutions from Bosnia, but it is initiated by local institutions, the Bosniak Council or the Islamic religious community. The State does nothing to promote this cooperation. The only thing known is that the state partially supports the funding of a literary gathering organized once a year by the Bosniak Council.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

Financing of cultural activities of Croats is symbolic – last year the City Library in Subotica purchased only 37 books in Croatian, and city libraries in other places populated by Croats (Sombor, Apatin, Novi Sad, Srijemska Mitrovica) did not purchase a single book.

For the purpose of other cultural activities in the professional institutions, the City Museum, the City Library and the National Theatre issue a large number of publications in Serbian without their translation to the Croatian language, i.e. simply the Serbian language and Latin script are used without the consistent application of the Croatian language.

In terms of providing financial resources for cultural events, in 2009, the City of Subotica has never published the results of the announced competition for the allocation of funds to cultural events of national minorities nor has it ever co-financed projects of national minorities.

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

The Novi Sad City Library established its branch office in Sangaj settlement in Novi Sad under the name "Trifun Dimić" (the most well-known Roma writer and romologist in Serbia).

Almost all works published in Romani, likewise many books in Serbian and other languages tackling Roma issues can be found in this library. Two Roma women are employed in the library.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

Funds foreseen for the operation of the cultural institutions for fostering the Romanian language and culture has been decreased drastically in relation to the former report. It is best proved by the fact that only 4 amateur theatres took part on the Days of Romanian Theatres in Vojvodina AP this year, while their number was 12 merely a decade ago because, due to the lack of funds, their number had been decreasing year by year (there were 5 performances in 2008 and 2007 and 7 to 8 performances in 2006, 2005 and 2004).

The same refers to publishing houses and the professional Romanian theatre.

The National Council suggested the Minister for culture of the Republic of Serbia to buy up part of the books published in Romanian and to donate them to libraries Serbia-wide. On the one hand, it would be a direct co-financing of the publishing activities in national minority languages (by buying several hundred copies from each book), and each library in Serbia would be enriched by a certain number of publications in Romanian, on the other hand.

The co-financing of the work of the professional theatre company in Romanian was also proposed, but both suggestions were rejected.

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

Issues in the field of theatrical activities

Early 2003, the Vojvodina AP attempted to stimulate the organised theatrical activities of national minorities by establishing national theatres for the Ruthenian, Slovak and Romanian national minorities through project-based financing of their operations. Such a general approach without a deeper examination of the minorities' cultural needs has, already at the beginning, indicated the following drawbacks:

- The organisation of the theatres' work and their technical equipping is insufficient (adequate and functional stage, technical equipping of theatres, and human resources in management, in the artistic, technical and general sector).
- Due to modest financial sources, post-productions (presenting the activities to members of community and other national communities, presenting activities on events and festivals in the country and abroad) are not possible.
- Due to the same problems, it is impossible to stimulate theatrical activities in the language of a minority national community.
- Education of human resources needed for theatrical activities (at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, for the time being, there are no classes for actors in Slovak, Romanian and Ruthenian languages, although when the Academy was formed one of the arguments for its establishing was that it would educate personnel for theatrical activities in the languages of national minorities). It is to be noted, that

the province authorities adopted a recommendation to create conditions at the Academy of Arts for opening classes in national minority languages, because, at present, there are no conditions for extension within the institution, mostly due to problems with the lack of premises.

The commitment to finance minority language theatres based on projects would be stimulating and justified if all the above mentioned segments, which are vital for quality theatre production, were fulfilled. However, if it is not the case, the projects should include the above mentioned segments and it requires far more sources than those appropriated at present.

The theatre is financed solely by the Province Secretariat for Culture through projects.

In 2009, only one project was financed, i.e. one performance, in the amount of 1.250.000,00 dinars, instead of two projects and the same is planned by the financial plan of the Secretariat for Culture for 2010.

Year by year, there has been an obvious and continuous drop in the funds for theatre-projects of the Ruthenian and other national minorities instead of an increase in the amount of the projected inflation (8-10%) at least.

Year by year, since 2003, there has been an obvious and continuous drop in the total approved funds for theatre productions of the Ruthenian and other national minorities instead of an increase in the amount of the projected inflation (8-10%) at least.

If it is taken into account that the real needs of a theatre for a normal functioning in all segments (gross wages for three employees, material expenses, equipment, full production costs of two performances with post-production) amount to some 10 million dinars, then the real picture of the work and operation of the Ruthenian National Theatre is very negative with uncertain future.

If this practice and method of financing is continued, all circumstances will, beyond all dispute, compel the management and the founder of the theatre, likewise the National Council, to revise whether the existence of a professional Ruthenian theatre is justified, or to abolish it and change it to an amateur theatre, because it is not possible for the existing professional theatre to meet its obligations adequately and qualitatively.

The issues of financing the cultural needs of minorities in local self-governments

The basic activities in settlements where persons belonging to national minority communities live are implemented through cultural societies and rarely through institutions established by a local self-government body. In practice, the organised work of institutions is mostly financed from the budget of a local self-government body, while the financing of cultural societies is symbolic or these are not financed at all. This method of financing affects to the largest extent persons belonging to minority communities, because if the lack of financing the cultural needs of the majority nation may put at risk the majority culture, in case of minorities it may mean their full disappearance.

The issues of financing events of national importance

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority joins the observations and recommendation of the Advisory Committee that, as urgent as possible, it is necessary to establish the budget fund for national minorities as foreseen by the Law. By the time this budget is formed and starts to be operative, the existing funds and budgets on the level of the Republic should provide a minimum for continuous, predictable and sufficient financing of minority cultural activities and cultural institutions, especially of those defined - in line with *the Law on National Councils of National Minorities and the Law on Culture* - by the national councils as institutions and events of special importance for the national minority (for example: national theatres in national minority languages).

Slovački

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

The cultural life of members of the Slovak national community evolves to the greatest extent via cultural and artistic events, cultural halls and cultural centres. The allocated financial resources for cultural activities are insufficient with regard to the needs and the activities, and that is the major problem faced by Slovaks.

At the moment 2 amateur theatres are active, 2 theatrical scenes, and within each cultural and artistic association there is a theatrical department, sections that face the lack of financial resources.

Currently there is a need to make independent the gallery which operates within the professional Slovakian Theatre of Vojvodina at Bački Petrovac.

Almost every school having the Slovak language as a teaching language has its library.

Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

2. In respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the Parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage and/or provide appropriate cultural activities and facilities in accordance with the preceding paragraph.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

In relation to the Bosnian language, no cases were recorded, when the State, through its bodies, has done anything in any way on the implementation of the mentioned undertaking.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Economic and social factors are the main obstacles in implementing the rights of the Bosniak community in Serbia. Hence, a logical question may be raised: what is the extent to which it is possible to implement the cultural rights of minority communities in underdeveloped and marginalized parts of Serbia such as Sandžak, where the population is faced, day by day, with an elementary lack of conditions for quality life,

dysfunctional economy and agriculture, with a lack of adequate social welfare, health centres, maternity wards, kindergartens, an increasing unemployment rate and consequently, with an increasing number of persons wanting to leave the region. In such a difficult situation, state aid is generally absent in the organisation of any cultural manifestation that fosters the culture, tradition and language of Bosniaks.

Article 13 – Economic and social life

1 *With regard to economic and social activities, the Parties undertake, within the whole country:*

c *to oppose practices designed to discourage the use of regional or minority languages in connection with economic or social activities;*

Ruthenian

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority

A comprehensive and thorough analysis should be implemented and practical measures should be foreseen for carrying through the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the public life and their representation in legislative, executive and judicial authorities respectively. In this sense, a system of granted seats for minorities in local, province and republic parliaments, likewise their necessary representation in the most important ministries and bodies and state administration agencies should be entrenched.

In this sense, the translation of calls for applications for employment to minority languages is commendable, but not sufficient and should be followed by their representation and employment, which will express not only statistical but also practical effectiveness. In this regard, it would be desirable to revive and make functional many state institutions consultative bodies (foreseen by laws) wherein the active participation of persons belonging to national minorities has been envisioned, and to enable their continuous and effective work.

The re-establishment of the Council for National Minorities of the Republic of Serbia is indeed a positive step in this direction if it is going to work in its full constitution, as foreseen by the Decree and the Rules of Procedures.

The National Council of the Ruthenian National Minority joins the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that increased attention should be devoted to the economic status of persons belonging to national minorities living in economically underdeveloped areas and it should be enabled that their representatives are represented adequately also in identifying priority projects in order to provide their financing and in their realisation in areas of interest for them. This recommendation refers to most rural areas on the whole territory of Serbia, where most of the persons belonging to national minorities live and a continuous economic migration from these regions have been noticed over the recent decades.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

- a to apply existing bilateral and multilateral agreements which bind them with the States in which the same language is used in identical or similar form, or if necessary to seek to conclude such agreements, in such a way as to foster contacts between the users of the same language in the States concerned in the fields of culture, education, information, vocational training and permanent education;*

Albanian

Center for Multicultural Education, Preševo

Between the Republic of Serbia and Albania no bilateral agreement has been concluded on the protection of minorities, hence no intergovernmental joint committees aimed at implementing such an agreement have been formed. Persons belonging to the Albanian minority in Southern Serbia have no cooperation with institutions in charge of culture, education or media in Kosovo either.

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

The cooperation of Bosnians from Sandžak with Bosnians from Bosnia and Hercegovina is unperturbed in the field of culture, education and information. However, no cooperation agreement has been signed between the officials of Serbia and Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

Bosniaks in Sandžak are in many ways connected to Bosniaks in Bosnia and Hercegovina and in Montenegro, thus there is a need to maintain these relations and to enhance them institutionally; as well as to work on the affirmation of Sandžak as a cross-border region. However, this gives the impression that none of the three countries take this need nor its actual significance in due measure. The Bosniak National Council could also contribute more to connecting Bosniaks and its responsibility in this sense is not insignificant.

Bulgarian

The National Council of the Bulgarian National Minority

It is not known, that there is a cooperation agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria regulating the field of promoting the use of language. Cooperation is carried out between the society of Bulgarians “Palcena” from Vojvodina with a partner from Romania, and it is the result of the partnership between the village of Ivanovo and the municipality of Besenovo (Dudesti Vek) from Romania. Bulgarians from Banat in Serbia and Bulgarians in Romania speak the same language: archaic Bulgarian.

Croatian

National Council of the Croatian National Minority

The Committee convened in 2009 and passed joint conclusions that are not being observed by the Serbian party, primarily in terms of education, i.e. issues relating to the import of textbooks.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority:

The provisions of bilateral agreements according to which the subscribing states have undertaken an obligation to convene sessions of inter-governmental joint commissions for national minorities at least once a year have not been observed. The inter-governmental joint commission for national minorities of Serbia and Montenegro (later the Republic of Serbia) and the Republic of Hungary e.g. convened only three sessions⁷² in the past six years, and the sessions of other⁷³ inter-governmental commissions for national minorities were not convened more frequently. On the other hand, recommendations that have been accepted by the representatives of the Republic of Serbia Government in the form of minutes from these meetings were not forwarded to the competent ministries, and therefore, they have not been implemented.

Also, Serbia has entered into cooperation agreements in the field of education, culture and sport that comprise the provisions relating to the promotion of the *Croatian, Hungarian and Romanian language*, including trainings for teachers.⁷⁴

Romani

Roma Inclusion Office

So far, no official cooperation has been established with the neighbouring countries in the field of culture, education and information in Romani. The idea is to build cooperation with countries already having university departments of Romani, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, France and Spain, in order to take over and exchange good practices in the process of establishing a department of Romani in Serbia.

Romanian

National Council of the Romanian National Minority

The bilateral agreement with Romania was signed in 2003 and ratified in 2004. The joint committee has recently been established, but has not started its activities.

Slovakian

National Council of the Slovak National Minority

- The Slovak Republic through the Office of Slovaks Living Abroad finances cultural projects of Slovaks in Serbia which is an important kind of assistance and cooperation without which many cultural events and activities could not be possible.
- At the last meeting of the Ministers of Culture of Serbia and Slovakia⁷⁵ it was agreed that both ministries should provide support to the theatrical festival in

⁷² The second session of the Inter-governmental Mixed Committee for National Minorities in Serbia and Montenegro (later Republic of Serbia) and the Republic of Hungary was held on 10 October 2005, and the next one was held on 21-22 May 2009.

⁷³ The first session of the Intergovernmental Mixed Committee for the Protection of Minorities of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Romania was held on 23 November 2009, more than 5 years after the enactment of the intergovernmental agreement concluded between the two states.

⁷⁴ First Periodical Report, p. 110-112 (p. 95-97).

⁷⁵ Mr. Nebojša Bradić and Mr. Marek Mad'arič in March 2010.

Bački Petrovac in which the productions of theatres from the Slovak Republic and Serbia are presented.

- Slovak cultural and artistic associations, folk associations, theatrical and music bodies take part in festivals and reviews in the Slovak Republic on a regular basis.
- The National Council of the Slovak National Minority, various vocational organizations and associations of Slovak cultural workers, pedagogues and journalists ensure the participation of members of the Slovak national minority in various seminars, trainings and other forms of professional improvements in the Slovak Republic.
- There is a long friendly cooperation between some local Slovak communities in Serbia and in the Slovak Republic.
- Some cultural and artistic groups from the Slovak Republic take part in ceremonies, festivals and gatherings of Slovaks in Serbia.
- Regardless of the proposals made by the National Council of the Slovak National Minority referred to the Ministry of Culture of Serbia and the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic the proposals that would directly deal with the support to the culture of the Slovak national minority in Serbia have not been entered into the bilateral agreement on cultural cooperation.

Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

The Parties undertake:

- b) for the benefit of regional or minority languages, to facilitate and/or promote co-operation across borders, in particular between regional or local authorities in whose territory the same language is used in identical or similar form.*

Bosnian

The National Council of Bosnian National Minority

In order to implement the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and to use Bosnian more efficaciously and effectively, constitutional and legal conditions should be created, so that in the process of decentralisation and regionalization and in the process of the new territorial organisation of the Republic of Serbia respectively, the municipalities of Novi Pazar, Tutin, Sjenica, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje and Pribor are within one region.

Summary

Bosnian

Sandžak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms

All that has been done so far in Sandžak is just the beginning of a long and uncertain process. There are no instant solutions or quick results. Compared to other minority communities, the Bosniak national minority still fails to enjoy equal treatment in exercising its rights to education, culture and language. The state should provide resources to build up professional staff for the implementation of these rights, in order to avoid mistakes such as textbook errors (insufficiently qualified authors were chosen for that job). At the same time, there is an entire range of unimplemented legal solutions in practice, such as the lack of exercising the right to education and the right to the official use of Bosnian in the municipalities of Priboj, Prijepolje and Nova Varoš, and frequent obstructions by the local authorities in exercising rights.

Bosniaks still fail to have strong institutions which could be strongholds to foster and maintain their culture, language, history and tradition.

Defining the process of learning the Bosniak language with elements of ethnic-culture as an elective and not as a regular subject in the standard school programme is still a major impediment, and as a result fewer pupils enrol for these classes; likewise the non-existence of classes taught in Bosnian in secondary schools and at the universities.

Judicial organs should issue summons and written documents in Bosnian, in Latin script.

Local self-governments should be held responsible for employing experts in the Bosnian language and to introduce Bosnian into official use, equal to the Serbian language.

Local and regional media should use Bosnian in their programmes, whereas the national public service should establish an editorial office in Bosnian.

The state should allocate more resources to foster the language, culture and tradition of Bosniaks in Sandžak, and work on enhancing international cooperation, since Bosniaks from Sandžak are in many ways linked to Bosniaks from Montenegro and Bosnia.

The Bosniak Council should become a representative body of the Bosniak minority, and a creative and intellectual potential of the Bosniak minority, guided by cultural policy and not politicians.

Czech

Radio Sunce – Voice of Southern Banat, Bela Crkva

The state of the Czech media in the media worsened immensely following the cancellation of the radio station that broadcast a programme in Czech. By the establishment of the National Council of the Czech Minority this problem could be solved and opportunity would be created for learning Czech with elements of national culture in primary schools. Improved support of cultural events of the Czechs is also expected.

Hungarian

National Council of the Hungarian National Minority

We fully agree with the stand of the Committee of Experts in its previous report. We deem it necessary to include this remark into the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers at the end of this reporting term. The National Council of the Hungarian National Community is concerned about the maintenance of the achieved level of use of the Hungarian language in the provisions specified under the Part III of the Charter. Since the Charter Ratification Instrument of the Republic of Serbia does not make a difference between the listed ten languages of the national minorities, and since the state opted for the items of the Charter prescribing less strict obligations than the ones stipulated by the applicable legislation of the Republic of Serbia, we believe that it is justifiable to point out that there is a risk of reducing the level of the already achieved results in the field of the use of the Hungarian language due to the lack of a higher level of international obligations.