

# EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES



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Classroom activities

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Classroom activities

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# Foreword

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**A**s Chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, I have great pleasure in presenting this publication, which has been prepared to mark the 20th anniversary of entry into force of the Charter in 1998. The Charter is the only legally binding international convention exclusively dedicated to the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages. So far about 80 languages of more than 200 language communities are covered by the Charter.

This document comes as a result of a thoughtful reflection on the importance of enhancing the visibility of the Charter in particular through the school system. Its main purpose is to provide the educational community with a useful tool to disseminate information about the Charter and minority languages, and in this way raise awareness about language diversity.

I would like to thank Fernando Ramallo (Universidade de Vigo), Claudine Brohy (Université de Fribourg/Universität Freiburg), Vicent Climent-Ferrando (European Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity, NPLD) and Aleksandra Oszmiańska-Pagett (Wyzsza Szkoła Języków Obcych, Poznań), members of the working group who have been entrusted by the Committee of Experts to prepare this inspiring publication.

I hope that this publication will assist in better understanding the strengths and difficulties surrounding the situation of minority languages and the need to further promote them as a common cultural heritage.

Vesna Crnić-Grotić

Chair of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages





# About the classroom activities

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**T**his publication is composed of three parts. Part A is a general presentation of language diversity and a description of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as a legal instrument. Part B includes three prototypical examples of country profiles of states that ratified the Charter, i.e. Poland, Spain and Switzerland, with different administrative structures. Part C contains ten teaching activities on minority language issues. Bearing in mind that the educational systems across Europe are diverse and also in a continuous process of change, the activities contained here have been designed to allow adaptation to the particular country contexts. A glossary defining the main terms used in the document and a bibliography are included at the end.

This publication is intended as a starting point for a Council of Europe web-based project which will include additional country profiles and teaching activities. As the project develops, it will reflect a better picture of language diversity and will contribute to raising awareness about minority language issues in our societies.

We encourage all stakeholders to consider translating this publication into as many languages as possible with the aim of providing broad access to the information contained herein.



# Part A. General introduction

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## 1. LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Language is a faculty common and specific to humans that sets us aside from the rest of nature. This universal capacity is projected in the diversity of languages all over the world as a consequence of an evolutionary and continuous process of adaptation to the different physical, cultural and social contexts that determine the day to day lives of every human group. Each language is the manifestation of this human faculty. Language diversity is testimony to the plurality and wealth of humankind and it is the plural expression of this human capacity which enables everyone to contribute to humanity.

Languages have made it possible to adapt to different natural and cultural environments as they allow us to code, categorise and register the realities around us. We use languages for different purposes: communicating is one of the main functions of languages but it is not the only one. Languages allow people to form bonds with each other. They are used to symbolise reality, to express emotions, for creativity and for recreational purposes. Languages are one of the traits that define a community, expressing and reinforcing their cultural identity. As vehicles of communication and complicity, they allow for contact and exchanges with other tongues and communities. They strengthen cohesion within a community as well as contacts with other languages.

All languages reflect and reveal a society's evolution, its structure, its way of life, its outlook on the world, its cultural expressions. The different perspectives of the world offered by each language are an invaluable source of wealth. The advantage of languages is that they can be taught and learned and thus facilitate communication between communities.

Although the exact number of languages in the world is not known, they are estimated to be around 7000. Their distribution is very uneven in the different continents and does not follow a pattern related to demography. In fact, a territory like Oceania, with only 42 million people, has more than 1300 languages. This means that 18.5% of the total number of languages in the world are located in a territory that only represents 0.6% of the total world population.

Although all languages serve the same purpose, regardless of their structure or the number of speakers, not all of them are used in the same domains. For political, military and economic reasons, a few languages have expanded over large parts of the world, becoming international languages, which means that they are widely spoken and learned as *lingua francas* all over the world. Other languages are less widely spoken but are supported by the state as official languages. These languages are used in all spheres of life, both in public and in the private domain. The vast majority of languages, however, are spoken by communities within a region or a territory of a country. They are often referred to as "minority languages", as opposed to "majority languages", which are often state languages that co-exist with the minority and immigrant languages.

This distinction between majority and minority languages is not always based on the number of speakers, but rather, in some cases, on the degree of political power that languages enjoy. Historically, the languages that were often perceived as the most important languages were those belonging to powerful states. These states portrayed them as great languages spoken by great cultures, to the detriment of smaller language communities.

Except in very specific cases, languages do not disappear due to natural causes. It is actually more accurate to speak of languages being substituted rather than disappearing. Such substitution is typical of processes of political and economic predominance. The process whereby a language is replaced by a bigger one involves major ruptures in terms of intergenerational integration and a community's social cohesion. There is a blurred timeline between a language evolving and a language being slowly replaced by another. A phenomenon frequently explained as a natural process often has negative consequences on a language community and on the language richness of

the planet. Urgent efforts are needed to counteract this situation. Otherwise, by the end of the 21st century, many languages spoken today will have disappeared.

Most European languages need protection and promotion, which will serve as a guarantee that these languages will be used by the next generations of the communities in which they have survived for centuries. This is because recent experience has led to a discouraging conclusion: the disappearance of languages is a fact all over the world, most of the time because there has been a displacement and, finally, an abandonment on the part of their speakers due to the preference for another language in competition.

Languages disappear because other languages occupy their spaces as a result of complex processes of cultural, political or economic expansion, not exempt from conflict. We know that if a language is legally well protected, the chances of its maintenance over time are greater. This is what happens with official languages, which enjoy guarantees absent for most languages that do not enjoy this legal status. With its intercultural and multilingual approach, the Charter is the most efficient instrument for the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages in Europe.

### **1.1. Why is it important to promote language diversity?**

The substitution of a language not only entails the loss of a basic element of communication, but also of an entire knowledge system developed over time. The disappearance of a language also implies the loss of a unique, unreproducible universe connected to a specific environment. It means the loss of diversity. Depriving a people of its language means depriving it of its most outstanding and natural manifestation of its form of being human. Nobody wins when a language is lost.

The preservation of languages, regardless of numbers of speakers and regardless of their definition as majority or minority languages, requires a new approach on how to conceive language diversity. We must work towards combatting prejudices and ideologies on minority languages, so that diversity and difference are viewed in a positive light and languages are regarded as valuable assets that can be actively promoted.

Special attention must be given to those minority languages that struggle to survive and need more support. It is only by giving this support that these languages will be able to thrive. Efforts should be made to help those speakers who need it most so that they are able to participate and contribute to human development on an equal footing.

It is important to consider the key role of schools to adopt a positive approach on language diversity and of all languages as valuable assets to be actively promoted. Responsibility for this task also lies, first and foremost, with local, regional and state authorities, as well as with international organisations. For this reason, schools are the suitable context to promote language diversity as a reality and a valuable asset, particularly in contexts of official monolingualism, to raise awareness and to combat any discrimination towards minorities and regional and minority languages.

## **1.2. What can be done in the education system?**

Schools have a pivotal role in promoting minority languages, not only in the territories where they are spoken, but especially in monolingual areas. They can do so by raising awareness of their existence within the country and adopting a model of coexistence in which language diversity becomes the central argument. For this reason, it is essential to develop pedagogical materials to help adopt a strategy to conceive language diversity as an asset.

It is often the case that some international languages such as English or Spanish are considered more important and more useful languages while minority languages are often given more identity or emotional value, without much room for utility. The school system must combat these prejudices and engage in an inclusive approach towards all the languages, highlighting their value and richness.

The third part of this publication includes a whole array of activities to be developed in classrooms, which will help foster a broader, more inclusive view over language diversity.

## **2. THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES**

### **2.1. What is the Charter?**

The Charter is an international convention. It is supposed to help regional or minority languages develop, i.e. help users of these languages to have an opportunity to use them at school, at work, in the media, in courts and administration, in economic and cultural settings, etc. It also helps states to understand what they can do to make it happen and create such opportunities for their speakers. Any member state can sign and then ratify this convention; the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe may invite any state not a member of the Council of Europe to accede to this Charter. It

is important to note that the Charter needs to be not only signed but also ratified to enter into force. By 2018, 25 of the 47 Council of Europe member states ratified it. A further eight states have only signed it.

The Charter contains five parts, of which only Part II and Part III include obligations related to the protection and promotion of minority languages. Part II covers all regional or minority languages in the state whereas languages covered by Part III depend on the choice of the state. This means that in some cases a language will only be covered by Part II, for example, Francoprovençal in Switzerland or Aragonese in Spain. Part I, Part IV and Part V deal with the technical application of this convention.

## **2.2. What are minority languages according to the Charter?**

The Charter applies to regional or minority languages traditionally spoken in one or more regions of a state. The Charter defines minority languages as those languages “traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State’s population”; and languages that are “different from the official language(s) of that State; it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants”.

Even if these languages are considered as minority languages, it could be the case that they happen to be the majority language in the region where they are spoken, but not in the state as a whole. An example of this would be Galician in Galicia (Spain).

Frequently, minority languages have a limited use in public domains: schools, justice, media, administration or hospitals, for example. Thus, both the number of speakers and the legal status of the language are decisive criteria to consider a language as minority or majority. A language may be numerically dominant in a region and yet be a minority language from the perspective of its legal status or social visibility compared to other state languages. In a Europe characterised by extraordinary mobility, the nuance “traditionally spoken in a State” is fundamental to understand that the languages of recent immigration do not fall within the protection of the Charter.

The process of language minorisation can have several origins. In some cases, there are regions within European states that have traditionally used a language different than the state language (e.g. Welsh in the United Kingdom or Frisian in the Netherlands). The other reason is that throughout the history of Europe, borders have constantly changed and some territories have often belonged to different states (e.g. Lithuanian in Poland and Polish

in Lithuania, German in Poland). The other obvious example is that of mobility, that is, the increasing number of people moving live and work in another territory. In this case their language would be labelled as immigrant minority language, a typology that is not covered by the Charter.

Although the territorial criterion is fundamental when considering the languages protected by the Charter, there are other languages in Europe that lack a territory but are historically spoken by citizens of the state. These languages, known as “non-territorial languages”, are also protected by the Charter, in particular, Yiddish and the language of the Roma communities, spread throughout Europe for hundreds of years and whose vitality is unequal in different states. The number of protected languages in the respective states varies from 1 to 20. For example, Denmark protects only one language while Bosnia and Herzegovina protects 15 and Romania 20 languages.

### **2.3. Why do we need the Charter?**

The aim of the Charter is to change this situation and make sure that opportunities for using traditional regional or minority languages really exist, not only at home. In other cases, it also helps speakers to learn the language of their grandparents and great-grandparents because they did not have such an opportunity at home.

Learning the minority language, however, is not enough. It is important to assure its presence in other domains, like justice, administration, media, culture and economic and social life.

The Charter’s main intention is to help people learn the language not only in the classroom. It is also intended to give them an opportunity to develop their language skills through reading news and books, listening to songs, watching theatre plays or films, or through becoming journalists, film-makers and performers themselves.

### **2.4. How does the Charter work?**

When a state ratifies the Charter, it examines which “regional or minority languages” in the sense of the Charter are used in the country and will be promoted under the treaty. The state is also asked to choose from the list of obligations contained in the Charter on different areas such as school, court, media, administration, culture, business life and cross-border exchanges (they are all contained in Part III of the Charter). As an example, a state can choose to make it possible either to learn all or some school subjects using this language or to learn the minority language as a school subject. When it



comes to media, as another example, a state can choose to provide finance towards the creation of the whole minority language TV or radio channel or instead just to give support for programmes. In order to decide how much will be done in a particular field of public life, the state should consult the speakers of the minority language, i.e. their non-governmental organisations.

The other option that the state has is to indicate which regional or minority languages will be covered only by Part II of the Charter. This part of the Charter includes the promotion of the minority languages in the same fields of public life as Part III, but they are put in more general terms and all of them have to be accepted. For example: a state is obliged to provide for the teaching in/of the minority language at all appropriate levels of education. In this case, the state, in co-operation with the speakers of the minority language, decides the best way of teaching and studying this language and at what levels of education.

States Parties to the Charter must report to the Council of Europe on the application of the treaty. From 1 July 2019, they shall present a comprehensive periodical report every five years, and then two and a half years thereafter information on priority measures taken. Following receipt of the periodical report, a delegation from the Charter's Committee of Experts then visits the country to be able to speak with minority language non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government authorities in order to evaluate whether measures have been put in place and also whether they have worked.

After the visit, the Committee of Experts adopts its own evaluation report which is transmitted to the state for comments. The process is finalised by the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of recommendations on the most important actions necessary to improve the situation of the minority languages in the state and the publication of the report.



## Part B. Case studies: Switzerland, Spain and Poland

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**E**ach of the 25 states that have ratified the Charter has its own historical background, cultural diversity and legal framework. For reasons of space, this book contains information on three states that, without losing their singularity, constitute paradigmatic examples. These three states are Switzerland, Spain and Poland. The main criterion used to justify this selection has been the administrative structure of the state. Switzerland can be considered a model of a federal state, where each canton has a high level of autonomy, including its own Constitution (similar to Austria or Germany). Spain is defined as a state with different autonomies with a high decentralisation, including language competences, which are mainly in the hands of the regions, called Autonomous Communities. Finally, Poland is an example of a centralised state somewhat similar to many of the states that have ratified the Charter.

### 3. SWITZERLAND

#### 3.1. Background information

Switzerland developed gradually over time from an alliance between three cantons in 1291 to a highly decentralised confederation of 26 cantons today. The first fully-fledged French-speaking territory to join the federation was the bilingual Canton of Fribourg/Freiburg (1481). The last three cantons (Valais/Wallis, Neuchâtel, and Geneva) joined in 1815. The last cantonal change occurred with the creation of the Canton of Jura in 1978, which split from the bilingual Canton of Bern/Berne. The loose federation of cantons which existed until the French Revolution was a German-speaking entity. However, it never germanised the allied cantons nor the occupied territories. In 17 of the 26 cantons, German is the official language at cantonal and local levels, and in three cantons this is the case for French. In two cantons, French (Jura) and Italian (Ticino) respectively are the official languages at cantonal

level, while German is used in one municipality respectively. Three cantons are bilingual (French and German) and one canton is trilingual (German, Romansh and Italian).

The federal status and the subsidiarity principle of the country with its 26 cantons, which all have a constitution, a parliament and a government, and are sovereign regarding education and culture, among other language-sensitive issues, are considered to be the guarantee of social cohesion and the protection and maintenance of all national languages. Switzerland promulgated a federal Language Act in 2007, and a federal Language Ordinance in 2010, which settle the details of the provisions of Art. 70 of the Federal Constitution regarding the official languages.

Articles regarding language diversity and use in the Federal Constitution (1999)<sup>1</sup>

### **Preamble**

...

determined to live together with mutual consideration and respect for their diversity

...

### **Art. 4 National languages**

The National Languages are German, French, Italian and Romansh.

### **Art. 18 Freedom to use any language**

The freedom to use any language is guaranteed.

### **Art. 31 Deprivation of liberty**

2. Any person deprived of their liberty has the right to be notified without delay and in a language they can understand of the reasons for their detention and of their rights.

### **Art. 69 Culture**

3. In the fulfillment of its [the Confederation's] duties, it shall take account of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country.

### **Art. 70 Languages**

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1. English is not an official language of the Swiss Confederation. This translation is provided for information purposes only and has no legal force.

1. The official languages of the Confederation are German, French and Italian. Romansh is also an official language of the Confederation when communicating with persons who speak Romansh.
2. The Cantons shall decide on their official languages. In order to preserve harmony between linguistic communities, the Cantons shall respect the traditional territorial distribution of languages and take account of indigenous linguistic minorities.
3. The Confederation and the Cantons shall encourage understanding and exchange between the linguistic communities.
4. The Confederation shall support the plurilingual Cantons in the fulfillment of their special duties.
5. The Confederation shall support measures by the Cantons of Graubünden and Ticino to preserve and promote the Romansh and the Italian languages.

#### **Art. 175 Composition and election**

4. In electing the Federal Council [federal government], care must be taken to ensure that the various geographical and language regions of the country are appropriately represented.

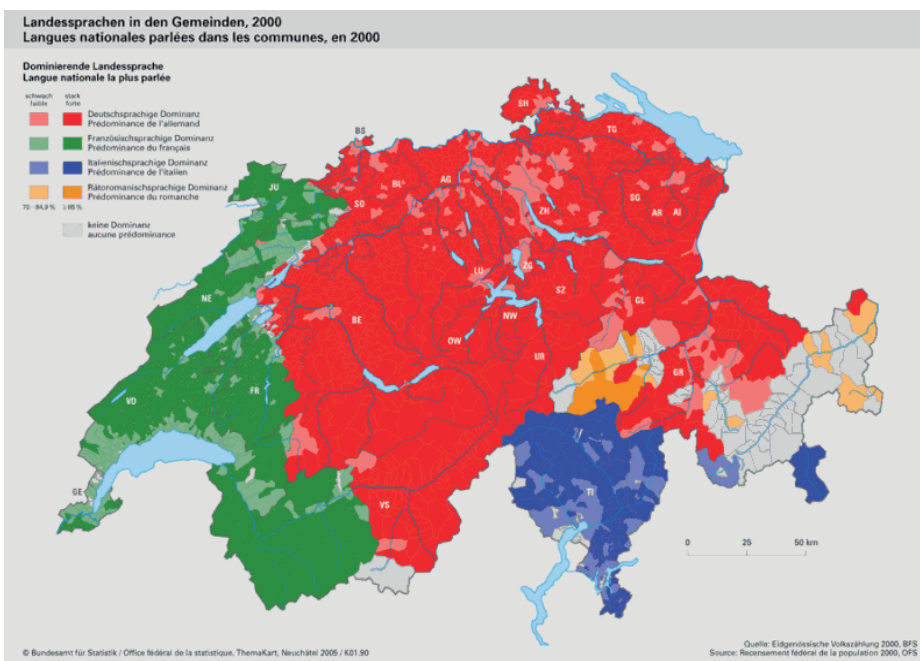
A number of legal texts at national level concern languages and multilingualism, e.g. in the domains of media, federal assembly, education, culture etc. All multilingual cantons have provisions, to a varying degree, concerning the use of their official languages and other varieties in their constitutions and legislative apparatus. The Canton of Graubünden/Grischun/Grigioni has a Language Act (2006) and a Language Ordinance (2007), which regulate the details regarding translation and the use of the three official languages as the languages of administration, politics and education, as well as the promotion and protection of the two cantonal minority languages, Romansh and Italian.

According to the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education, which co-ordinates education issues given that there is no Ministry of Education at national level, all students have to learn at least two foreign languages during compulsory school (a national language and English), the chronology of which has been the subject of intensive debates across the language communities. The learning of these languages has to secure mobility as well as social, cultural and economic contacts both inside and outside the

country. National and cantonal bodies organise school, student and teacher exchanges and activities across the language borders.

Switzerland has a total population of around 8.4 million inhabitants, 63% of which use German, 22.7% French, 8.1% Italian, 0.5% Romansh, and 23.3% other languages (Federal Office of Statistics, 2015). Around 25% of the population does not hold a Swiss passport, 36.8% of the population over 15 have a migration background, and 21.5% have languages other than the national languages as their main language. The principal non-national “main languages” are English, Portuguese, Albanian, Serbian, Croatian and Spanish.

### Map 1. Geographical distribution of the four national languages



Source: Federal Office of Statistics

In addition to migrant languages, the Charter also excludes “dialects of the official language(s) of the State” (Art.1a). In a country with a wide linguistic variety inside the language communities, this issue is crucial. The German varieties of Switzerland, which diverge considerably from (Swiss) standard German and are spoken by all social classes, in rural as well as in urban areas in all societal domains, and are also used for informal written purposes,

especially in communication and social media, and for literature and cultural activities, are not protected separately under the Charter, but as part of German in the areas where German is covered by the Charter. The same applies to the Italian dialects in the Canton of Ticino (Alpine Lombard and Occidental Lombard) and the Canton of Graubünden/Grischun/Grigioni (Alpine Lombard dialects variably influenced by Romansh).

Regarding Romansh, a language used by approximately 50 000 people and related to Ladin and Friulian (Italy), the Charter protects all five written *idioms*, the oral varieties as well as the standardised and unified language *Rumantsch Grischun* which was developed in 1982 by the Zürich Romanist Heinrich Schmid. It is, however, not unanimously accepted, especially not in the domain of education.

Romansh has been a national language since 1938, accepted in a national vote by a large majority (91.6%) and all cantons, as a reaction against fascist and irredentist movements. The number of speakers of Romansh, however, is decreasing; in many domains, a command of Swiss German and standard German is an absolute necessity, thus, all speakers are at least bilingual in Romansh-German, and in many cases, they also have competencies in Italian, French and English.

In the French-speaking part of Switzerland, Francoprovençal (called *Patois* by the users) has been considered by linguists as a separate and independent Gallo-Romance language since the 19th century. The 5th evaluation report (2013) on the application of the Charter in Switzerland encouraged the Swiss authorities to examine whether Francoprovençal is a regional or minority language. The 6th evaluation report (2016) concluded that “[t]here seems to be a general consensus in Swiss society that Francoprovençal is a language in its own right which has been traditionally used in Switzerland, therefore Part II applies to it” (2016: 19). The Committee of Ministers recommended that the Swiss authorities “recognise Francoprovençal as a regional or minority language traditionally used in Switzerland and apply the provisions of Part II to it, in co-operation with the speakers” (2016: 23). Thus, in their 7th periodical report, the Swiss authorities declared that they wanted to protect and promote Francoprovençal and also Franc-Comtois used in the Canton of Jura (2018: 13), with which it shares the same sociolinguistic features and which is mentioned in its Constitution as cultural heritage.

### **3.2. Switzerland and the Charter**

Switzerland signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1993 and ratified it in 1997; it came into force for Switzerland in 1998. The

Swiss case is particular, in the sense that the two languages covered by Part III, Italian and Romansh, are national languages at federal level alongside German and French, and also official languages at cantonal level in two cantons (Italian and Romansh in the officially trilingual Canton of Graubünden/Grischun/Grigioni, and Italian in Ticino). In addition, Italian is also an official language at federal level with German and French, while Romansh is considered a semi-official language at state level. In this sense, the two Part III languages, Italian and Romansh, are not regional or minority languages, but are considered as official languages which are less widely used on the whole or part of the territory (cf. Art. 3 al. 1 of the Charter). Switzerland had both national and international reasons to ratify the Charter. From a national point of view, it wants to preserve national quadrilingualism, which is the major aim of its language policy, and from an international standpoint, it is committed to resolving issues regarding cultural pluralism and the protection of minorities in Europe.

In Part II, all four national languages are protected insofar as they are embedded in a minority context, e.g. in the multilingual cantons (French in the Canton of Bern/Berne, German in the Cantons of Fribourg/Freiburg and Valais/Wallis) and language islands near the language borders, i.e. German in Bosco-Gurin (Canton of Ticino) and in Ederswiler (Canton of Jura). The non-territorial Yenish language of travelers (roughly 35,000 people) with a settled, semi-nomadic or nomadic lifestyle is also protected under Part II, as well as Francoprovençal and Franc-Comtois.

Most recommendations by the Committee of Ministers concern the protection of Romansh, especially in the domains of courts and administration, and they also relate to the administrative use of Italian in the Canton of Graubünden/Grischun/Grigioni, while the situation for Italian in Ticino is excellent. The Committee of Experts commends the efforts being done for Romansh in the areas of media and education.

### 3.3. Future challenges

The challenge in Switzerland will be to further protect and promote Italian and Romansh, especially outside the traditional areas of the cantons of Graubünden/Grischun/Grigioni and Ticino, and to motivate non-speakers to learn these minority languages. Italian should also be more widely used in federal policies and administration. In the three bilingual cantons, both German and French have to be protected when they are minoritised at cantonal, district and municipal level. Future municipality mergers in the Canton of Graubünden/Grischun/Grigioni and on the language borders can also



affect and weaken the status of minority languages and should be carefully planned and monitored. The present developments in the domain of media, such as the concentration or disappearance of newspapers can also have a severe detrimental effect on minority languages, and solutions to strengthen this important domain should be found.

A roadmap for the protection and the revitalisation of Francoprovençal and Franc-Comtois should be designed, as well as for German in Bosco-Gurin (Ticino), where many of the inhabitants speak the old Ggurijnartitsch, a Walser dialect which is severely threatened. Concerning Romansh in schools, it seems that a *modus vivendi* between the use of the traditional idioms and Rumantsch Grischun has been found.

## 4. SPAIN

### 4.1. Background information

Since its configuration as a modern state, Spain has been a multilingual territory. In fact, many of the languages that are currently spoken in the different Autonomous Communities existed prior to the configuration of the state, but it has not been until very recently that their status as socially legitimised languages has been recognised. The main progress has been made since the last three decades of the 20th century, with the change of regime from dictatorship to a parliamentary monarchy. During the Spanish dictatorship period under Franco (1939-1975), languages other than Spanish suffered severe discrimination and repression, being marginalised in public use. Speakers were punished and repressed if they were heard speaking a minority language in public.

The Spanish Constitution (1978) gave birth to a more advantageous period for languages other than Spanish, although there are still notable differences between them. While the Statutes of Autonomy of some Communities strongly supported their protection and promotion, others have been rather passive in promoting their own languages over the past 40 years.

As in any other state in Europe, language diversity in Spain is a value to be recognised, respected and protected as intangible heritage. Variation in languages – both intralinguistic and interlinguistic– is an asset to be supported in all spheres of life, education being of paramount importance. The education system is vital in ensuring that language diversity is properly promoted, valued and managed, and in teaching it in a positive and creative way to ensure mutual acceptance, peaceful coexistence and recognition on an equal footing.

Other than Spanish, the only official language nationwide in Spain, there are other languages spoken on a daily basis in different regions. While some of these languages are spoken by millions of people, others are in a more difficult situation demographically speaking. Even those with large numbers of speakers need legal and political support to guarantee their existence in the medium and long term. Also, while some of these languages enjoy certain legal recognition and considerable promotion from regional governments and public institutions, others have little or no public recognition and are hardly known by the population of the territory where they are traditionally spoken. There are different types of languages, the so-called territorial languages – those developed historically in a specific geographical area of the state – and the so-called non-territorial languages, those used indistinctively in any part of the state.

The languages used in Spain are the following: Amazige, Arabic of Ceuta, Aragonese, Aranese, Asturian, Basque, Caló, Catalan/Valencian, Galician, Leonese and Portuguese. The status of some of them under the Charter is yet to be clarified.

**Table 1. Languages, territories and legal status<sup>2</sup>**

Language	Territory	Legal status
Amazige	City of Melilla	Non-official
Arabic of Ceuta	City of Ceuta	Non-official
Aragonese	Aragon	Non-official
Aranese (also known as Occitan)	Catalonia (Aran Valley)	Official
Asturian	Asturias	Non-official
Basque	Basque Country	Official
	Navarre	Official in part of the territory
Caló	Non-territorial language	Non-official

2. In addition, apart from these languages, there are two sign languages in Spain, Catalan Sign Language (official in Catalonia) and Spanish Sign Language (official throughout Spain). However, sign languages are not covered by the Charter.










Language	Territory	Legal status
Catalan	Aragon	Non-official
	Balearic Islands	Official
	Catalonia	Official
	Valencia (as Valencian)	Official (under the name of <i>Valencian</i> )
	Murcia (as Valencian)	Non-official
Galician	Asturias	Non-official
	Castile and Leon	Non-official
	Galicia	Official
	Extremadura (also known as Fala)	Non-official
Leonese	Castile and Leon	Non-official
Portuguese	Extremadura	Non-official

As we can see from the map below, minority languages are spoken in 11 of the 17 Autonomous Communities of Spain and in the two Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla. Actually, around 45% of the population of Spain lives in a territory where an autochthonous minority language is spoken. This does not mean that almost half of the Spanish population speaks a minority language on a regular basis. It shows, however, that a remarkable percentage of the population is exposed to bilingual or multilingual contexts to a greater or lesser degree.

## Map 2. Geographical distribution of the minority languages in Spain



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	Amazige		Basque
	Arabic of Ceuta		Catalan/Valencian
	Aragonese		Galician (including Fala in Extremadura)
	Aranese (also known as Occitan)		Leonese
	Asturian		Portuguese

The use of minority languages in the different territories of Spain is quite heterogeneous. A remarkable part of the population makes use of a minority language on a regular basis, particularly in Aragon (in the territories in which Catalan is spoken), Asturias, the Balearic Islands, Basque Country, Catalonia, Ceuta, Extremadura (in the territories in which Galician/Fala is spoken), Galicia, Melilla and Valencia. The minority languages with lower use are Aranese in Val d’Aran (Catalonia), Aragonese in Aragon, Basque in Navarra, Catalan/Valencian in Murcia, Leonese in Castile and Leon and Portuguese in Extremadura. Most people who are bilingual in Spain are minority language speakers. It is important to highlight that all nationals in Spain are fully com-

petent in Spanish whereas not all people born in minority language regions use the minority language.

Amazige in Melilla, Arabic in Ceuta, Galician/Fala and Portuguese in Extremadura and Valencian in Murcia are not recognised in the Statutes of Autonomy. To maintain, strengthen and recover their vitality, they need a structured language policy.

## 4.2. Spain and the Charter

Spain signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1992 but ratified it almost 10 years later, in 2001. Prior to this, some languages already had an acceptable degree of protection, as some were granted co-official status in their territories, along with Spanish, in the different Regional Statutes of Autonomy (see Table 1). It is important to note that article 3.2 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 grants the possibility for minority languages to become co-official “in the respective Autonomous Communities according to their Statutes of Autonomy”. In other words, the Spanish Constitution delegates the official recognition of minority languages to the Statutes of Autonomy of the different regions. It is up to the different Autonomous Communities to legislate – or not – and grant the right for people to use their language in the public sphere. While some Autonomous Communities have actually developed this capacity to legislate, offered by the Constitution, others have not done so.

This difference is of paramount importance in the case of Spain: in order to be able to fully apply the Charter, its instrument of ratification stipulates that “Spain declares that, for the purposes of the mentioned articles, are considered as regional or minority languages, the languages recognised as official languages in the Statutes of Autonomy of the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country, Catalonia, Balearic Islands, Galicia, Valencia and Navarre”. Given that Aranese in Catalonia, Catalan in Catalonia, Balearic Islands and Valencia (as Valencian), Galician in Galicia and Basque in the Basque Country and part of Navarre are official in their Statutes of Autonomy, they are covered under Part II and Part III of the Charter. Other languages are only protected by Part II because they have no official status; however, they are protected by the Statutes of Autonomy. This is the case for Aragonese and Catalan in Aragon, Asturian in Asturias, Galician in Asturias and in Castile and Leon, and Leonese in Castile and Leon. Finally, some languages are also covered by Part II only, but without any protection in the Statutes of Autonomy (for example, Amazige in Melilla or Valencian in Murcia). In addition, the Charter protects Caló (a language related to Romani) as the only non-territorial language.

### 4.3. Future challenges

There has been some progress since the entry into force of the Charter as well as some steps back. Progress can be seen in the degree of competences achieved by some regions, although there is a substantial difference between them. As stated in the Fourth Evaluation Report issued by the Committee of Experts: “The languages that are protected under Part III of the Charter enjoy strong support in general from the regional and local authorities. Although some problems still persist, most undertakings under the Charter are fulfilled.”

Although there are significant differences between some regions and others, since the ratification of the Charter by the Spanish authorities (2001), progress has been observed in the fields of education, administration and public services, the media and cultural services, especially in the case of competences attributed to the Autonomous Communities. In education, there has been significant progress although in recent years, problems have been detected in some of the Autonomous Communities with minority languages. Regarding media (Article 11 of the Charter), there have been positive steps forward in the use of minority languages in digital media. There are hardly any problems in cultural activities, with very high compliance concerning the commitments made.

As for the main challenges, they appear mainly in the area of justice (Article 9) as well as the use of minority languages in the state administration (Article 10). A recurring problem is the lack of staff that can use the relevant languages in some areas of the state administration as well as in public services, particularly in health care. This hampers the use of minority languages in these domains.

There is also concern over the increase of Spanish in the education systems (Article 8) of those regions with minority languages, as well as over the extension of trilingual education models (Spanish, English plus a minority language) in some Autonomous Communities, which hamper the knowledge of the minority language. The adoption of these education models should, therefore, be fully analysed before implementation to ensure the proper teaching and learning of the three languages. Other problems include the presence of minority languages in media.

For the non-official languages, one option that would be beneficial for their protection would be to grant them official status. This would imply modifying the Statutes of Autonomy in the territories where they are spoken,

something that has been repeatedly requested by their speakers. The future of these languages is very uncertain in the midterm.

In any case and while actions in this respect are taken, it is necessary to elaborate an official database on the real situation of the non-official languages of Spain. For this reason, the Fourth Evaluation Report urges the authorities to provide statistics enabling policy makers to develop adequate language policies, along with their speakers.

All in all, it can be said that much has been done, especially by the Autonomous Communities themselves, to support Spain's regional languages. Being a state with a very high level of commitment, Spain ought to ensure that it fulfills its obligations and that challenges are properly addressed.

## 5. POLAND

### 5.1. Background information

Through its complicated history, where for the last 200 years borders would move a couple of times within one person's biography, the Polish state has included various ethnic groups that inhabit central Europe. The communist era, which started in Poland after the Second World War and continued for 44 years until 1989, was the time of attempts to eradicate or at least forget about the multi-ethnic nature of the Polish society. After Poland's rejection of communism in the 1990s there was finally space and means to recognise the numerous ethnic, national and regional groups, their languages and cultures. It is no surprise then that the Polish legislation recognises as many as 14 minorities. These minorities are categorised into 3 groups:

- 1) Nine national minorities: Armenian, Belarusian, Czech, German, Jewish, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian;
- 2) Four ethnic minorities: Karaim, Lemko (Ruthenian), Tatar, Roma;
- 3) One community using a regional language: Kashubian.

With the 2005 Act on Minorities,<sup>3</sup> all of them have been granted certain rights related to the use of their languages. In effect 15 minority languages have been officially recognised, i.e. one for each recognised minority and the Jewish community with both Yiddish and Hebrew.

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3. Full name: Act on National, Ethnic Minorities and the Community Using the Regional Language

At this point it is important to highlight the fact that Polish is the only official language of the state and there are no autonomous regions that would envisage the official use of other languages in public domains. Nevertheless, the freedom for national and ethnic minorities to use and promote their languages was already granted in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland in 1997. The main difference that the Act on Minorities of 2005 brought about was specifying how this freedom could turn into practice, especially with regards to particular fields of public life such as education, local administration and bilingual signage, media and cultural life.

The 2005 Act puts obligations on the Polish state to provide for these rights to be exercised in practice by specifying the conditions under which they apply. For instance, a minority language can be used in contacts with the local authorities at municipality level on condition that a minimum of 20% of its population declares that it belongs to this particular minority. It also sets the rules and procedures for the application of bilingual place names and family names. The Act also obliges the state to support and promote minority language education, publication of books and periodicals, broadcasting media in the minority language, cultural facilities and activities.

The legal framework seems to provide quite favourable conditions for the promotion of minority languages in Poland. Yet, the situation of each minority group and their language is quite different and not as positive as envisaged by the law. The fact that all minorities account for around 2% of the total population of Poland<sup>4</sup> already points to their 'numerical minority' situation as compared to the society on the whole. Most minority languages in Poland suffer from problems with their ethnolinguistic vitality to a varying degree. The German minority, despite being the biggest national minority, suffers from problems with intergenerational transmission of the German language, i.e. most children do not acquire German at home and therefore only start learning this language at school. The other two biggest minority communities, i.e. Ukrainian and Belarusian, seem to have the most balanced situation in the sense that those who identify with the minority are also able to use the minority language, as do the Lithuanian, Lemko and Kashubian groups, although smaller in numbers. However, with the intensified mobility, especially to bigger cities and out of the traditional geographical areas, these minorities are also potentially in danger of breaking the intergenerational transmission of their languages. The smallest minority groups in Poland either no longer use their languages (Tatar, Karaim), have a very low number

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4. In the 2011 Census, which allowed identification with two national or ethnic groups, 2.26% declared identity other than Polish at least in one of the choices.



of speakers (Czech, Slovak, Yiddish and Hebrew) or those who are competent in the minority language are the new immigrants rather than the members of the traditional minority (Armenian, Russian). Languages used by the Roma communities in Poland probably enjoy the best condition in terms of their vitality. Due to the non-territorial nature of their languages, however, it is difficult to exercise the right to use their languages with the local authorities (as is also the case with Armenian, Yiddish and Hebrew).

The rights to use minority languages envisaged by the Polish legislation should in theory help reverse the negative trends and foster the use of minority languages. However, in practice a lot depends on the particular minority community's ability to exert enough pressure especially on the level of local authorities. Bearing in mind that there are very few localities where minorities would reach the 20% threshold, and only the Lithuanian minority represents a majority in one small municipality area, it becomes clearer why exercising the rights enshrined in the legal framework stumbles against practical problems.

Yet another obstacle that seems to halt the promotion of minority languages in Poland is low awareness about minorities in Polish mainstream society. At local administration level this sometimes translates into lack of knowledge about the rights of minority language speakers and therefore obligations put on the authorities. At the level of the average Polish citizen, this means either very little awareness about the multi-ethnic nature of the Polish society or it results in stereotypical - and in the worst cases - even hostile attitudes towards minorities.

## 5.2. Poland and the Charter

Poland signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2003 and it came into force in June 2009 after ratification. In its official declaration Poland stated at the time that it intends to apply the Charter in accordance with the rights enshrined in the 2005 Act on Minorities. On the one hand this meant that all of the 15 recognised regional or minority languages were declared as covered by the Charter.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, taking the content of the Act as the guide also resulted in covering all languages under one and the same set of undertakings from Part III, instead of trying to adjust the selection to the particular situation of each of the languages. The following

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5. In the end 14 languages are covered by the Charter because Hebrew was identified by the Committee of Experts as not meeting the requirements of the language used as a traditional means of communication.

paragraphs will point to the most significant fields of minority language promotion contained in the Charter.

In education, Poland decided to select the most ambitious of choices, i.e. the state obliged itself to provide for the teaching in the regional or minority language for all languages covered, i.e. children are supposed to learn almost all school subjects in their regional or minority language at all levels of compulsory education. At present there are only two languages for which teaching in the minority language takes place, i.e. children can learn through the medium of Lithuanian and Ukrainian. The paradoxical situation of Ukrainian is that it is the medium of instruction in areas that are not traditional, because they are the places in the west of Poland where large parts of Ukrainian population were forced to move after the Second World War. The German minority has been struggling to establish bilingual education in its traditional territories but unfortunately with no success as yet. From a legal point of view, it is theoretically possible in Poland to provide teaching in all minority languages and the system of funding is quite generous.<sup>6</sup> However, so far it covers the teaching of regional or minority languages as subjects for Belarusian, German, Kashubian, Lemko, and Ukrainian in their traditional areas. Most minority languages can be studied at university level, some of them as BA or MA studies (e.g. German, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Russian), yet these do not necessarily include teacher training that would enable the graduates to become qualified teachers of or in the minority language.

In the field of administration Poland obliged itself to accept oral and written applications in the regional or minority languages at local administration level. At present it is possible to contact the municipal authorities in oral and written form (and receive a reply) for German, Kashubian, Lithuanian and Belarusian language speakers. There are bilingual place names in municipalities for German, Kashubian, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Lemko minorities.

As enshrined in the Act on Minorities, the Polish state obliged itself to support minority language media. Most minority communities have at least one periodical funded by the state. Only one of them, the Ukrainian weekly periodical, meets the requirements of a newspaper within the Charter. There are some TV and radio programmes targeting particular minorities but they are irregular and they have also been criticised about their content.

There are various cultural activities and as well as cultural facilities funded by the state available for all minority languages. The only problem is the fact

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6. It is possible to grant up to 150% of the standard educational funding per pupil in very small schools where regional or minority language education takes place.

that their financing is project-based, which makes it hard to maintain cultural institutions for minorities.

Bearing in mind the ratification of the Charter and the contents of the Act on Minorities, it is clear that from a legal point of view minority languages are treated as an important value and part of Polish cultural heritage. The voice of the minority language speakers is also taken into consideration through regular meetings of a Joint Commission of the government and minority communities' representatives. Nevertheless, minority issues receive very little coverage in the mainstream media targeting the whole Polish society.

### 5.3. Future challenges

From the point of view of fulfilling the Charter obligations, the following seem to be the most pressing issues to solve:

- ▶ Provide teaching in the minority languages whose speakers express such a wish
- ▶ Extend regional or minority language education as subjects to ensure continuity at all levels of compulsory education for all languages covered by the Charter in Poland
- ▶ Provide for newspaper and other media outlets (e.g. online media)
- ▶ Provide for regular funding for cultural activities
- ▶ Extend the number of municipalities where bilingual place names can be installed and contacts with the local authorities can be provided in the minority language.

For the relatively 'strongest' of the regional or minority languages in Poland, e.g. German, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Kashubian, Lemko and Roma languages the selection of the Charter undertakings made by Poland may serve as a helpful guidance as to the direction in which the promotional measures should go as well as for establishing midterm strategies. For those in a very weak position, mainly Armenian, Czech, Slovak, Karaim, Tatar and Yiddish the fulfilment of a lot of the obligations selected becomes, unfortunately, a difficult task. Therefore, a consultation with the representatives of the speakers is essential in order to find flexible solutions that would best fit the situation of each of those languages.

A very positive image emerges from the analysis of the legal framework for the promotion of minority languages in Poland. It serves as an essential basis for acknowledging a rich multi-ethnic heritage within the Polish society also on the part of the average citizen. For the mainstream Polish society this

is still a challenge though, but if it is possible to raise awareness about the value of minority cultures and languages in the Polish society at large then it will also be easier to bridge the gap between the rights and their actual implementation.

## Part C. Teaching activities

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**A**s a practical complement to what has been explained above, this section contains a repertoire of activities to be carried out in the classroom. It is a set of activities conceived from a flexible perspective with varying duration according to what each teacher considers appropriate. Some can be carried out in a school day; for others it is recommended that they have a little more continuity. Taking into account the different educational systems in Europe, it is advisable that each school/region adapts the activities to the different levels of education in a flexible way. Most of them are designed for students of between 11 and 16 years of age.

The proposed activities are the following:

- ▶ Activity 1: What is a minority language?
- ▶ Activity 2: Language prejudices
- ▶ Activity 3: Biography of a famous minority speaker
- ▶ Activity 4: Minority language day(s) or week
- ▶ Activity 5: Toponymy, linguistic landscape and signage in a minority language
- ▶ Activity 6: Edit-a-thon in a minority language
- ▶ Activity 7: New speakers of minority languages
- ▶ Activity 8: Variety of writing systems of minority languages in your country
- ▶ Activity 9: Non-territorial languages
- ▶ Activity 10: Sign languages

## ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS A MINORITY LANGUAGE?<sup>7</sup>

### Introduction

In all European countries, along with the official languages, which enjoy legal status, protection and social legitimacy, many other languages are traditionally used. These languages are called minority languages which often have neither the legal protection nor the social legitimacy of the majority or official languages of the state. In most cases, minority languages are used by a limited number of speakers. In fact, approximately 50% of these languages have less than 10 000 speakers. Although they are hundreds of years old and even have a millennial presence, the changes that Europe has undergone in recent decades mean that over a short period of time almost all minority languages have become vulnerable languages, which will seriously compromise their future in the short or medium term.

Of the languages with less than 10 000 speakers included in the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in danger ([www.unesco.org/languages-atlas](http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas)), a large majority are in clear danger of disappearing. In many cases, a structured linguistic policy could change this trend.

How to identify a language as a minority

Although most minority languages have few speakers, the quantitative criterion is not the only one that we must take into account when considering a minority language. In fact, there are minority languages with millions of speakers, sometimes more than some majority languages. Therefore, along with the quantitative criteria, it is necessary to take into account the legal status, that is, the implicit or explicit recognition of a language as an official language in a given state. According to the Council of Europe,<sup>7</sup> for a language to be considered a regional or minority language, the following conditions must be met:

- i. It must be a language traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population;
- ii. Different from the official language(s) of that state;
- iii. It does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the state or the languages of migrants.

Keep in mind that the reference is the entire state population, not the population of the specific territory where the language is spoken. Take the following example to understand this nuance: Galician is an official language in Galicia (a region of Spain), along with Spanish. In that territory, it has more speakers than Spanish, the only official language of the Spanish state. Due to the differences of legal status in the whole of the state, Galician is a minority language in Galicia and in a clear situation of vulnerability, while Spanish is not.

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7. See Article 1 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Task	Introduce the concept of minority languages for the mainstream population
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a positive perception of minorities in general and minority languages in particular</li> <li>• Identify all regional or minority languages of the state</li> <li>• Look for examples of oral and written forms of minority languages.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	Depending on the degree of complexity and abstraction of the task, 12-16
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher presents a brief description of all regional or minority languages used in the state in accordance with the Charter, using statistical data from censuses or other official state/regional data. It is recommended to use the reports of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (all available at <a href="http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/reports-and-recommendations">www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages/reports-and-recommendations</a>)</li> <li>• Debriefing and discussion (class).</li> </ul>
Duration	2 to 4 lessons
Disciplines involved	First and foreign languages, history, social sciences
Working mode	Class work, pair work
Material	Poster (big solid sheet of paper), digital presentation
Sources of information	Library, personal contacts, interviews, internet
Evaluation	Poster presentation; teacher and self-assessment
Further possible activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hang the poster in the school corridor</li> <li>• Publish the poster in the school newspaper.</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITY 2: LANGUAGE PREJUDICES

Introduction	<p>Language diversity has been the focus of many debates, sometimes based on prejudices and myths, which the educational system needs to overcome. Linguistic prejudices are assessments or opinions about languages that are not based on real evidence but on a simplifying and generalisable stereotype. They are usually commonplace, built from ignorance and fear of the difference. For this reason, it is difficult to move them because the arguments aimed at deactivating them are not accepted as valid. On many occasions, they exert a considerable influence on the consideration and social prestige of the speakers. Therefore, any classification of languages based on a hierarchy ranging from excellence/usefulness to insignificance, as it is often the case, is only based on prejudices and has no scientific basis. According to the Article 7.2 of the Charter, it is necessary to eliminate any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language.</p>
Task	<p>Identify linguistic prejudices and provide arguments to combat and deactivate them</p>
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase their language awareness</li> <li>• Are able to identify language prejudices</li> <li>• Acquire solid arguments in favour of the equality of languages.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	<p>Upper secondary education, 14-16</p>
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the topic</li> <li>• Identify some prejudices (about languages or society, in general)</li> <li>• Draw up a list of five prejudices about languages and submit them to the discussion of the students in two groups, one that is in favour and another that is against: then, exchange the roles</li> <li>• Each student should use that same list and make an inquiry amongst their family, to see who and why they agree and who are not</li> <li>• Identify discriminatory attitudes towards linguistic minorities and propose measures to improve the consideration of their languages and, more importantly, of their speakers</li> </ul>
Duration	<p>2 to 4 lessons</p>
Disciplines involved	<p>First and foreign languages, history, geography, social sciences, interdisciplinary project</p>
Working mode	<p>Class work, pair work, family work, individual work</p>
Material	<p>Poster (big solid sheet of paper), digital presentation</p>



Sources of information	Library, media, interviews, internet
Evaluation	Poster presentation; teacher and self-assessment
Further possible activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hang the poster in the school corridor</li> <li>• Publish the poster in the school newspaper.</li> </ul>

## Some examples

Prejudice	Counterargument
Monolingualism is the norm whereas language diversity is the exception, both in terms of territory and people.	Monolingualism is the exception. Throughout the world, it is exceptional to find a monolingual state. If we think of individuals, the vast majority of the world's population uses more than one language.
There are people who speak with an accent.	We all have an "accent" when we speak. It is impossible not to have an accent.
The deaf community around the world uses a single universal sign language.	Sign languages have as much inter- and intralinguistic variation as oral languages. Signatory people have to learn other sign languages if they want to communicate with people who do not use their same language.
Some languages are capable of expressing any level of complexity, but this is not possible for most of them. In fact, minority languages are codes valued for colloquial and familiar uses but they are not so useful for science, business and new technologies.	All languages are equally valid to categorise and communicate about any field of knowledge. There are no better and worse languages for science or poetry. The lack of offers of new technologies or video games in a certain language is a consequence of the low social prestige of this language and not of its potential for that purpose.
A high number of speakers in a language guarantee their long-term subsistence.	All languages have internal variety. The greater the variety, the greater the possibility of fragmentation, as has historically occurred with Latin, for example.
The words that are not included in a dictionary are incorrect or do not exist.	The lexical richness of the languages is extraordinary and the dictionaries, even the most complete ones, only collect a part of it. Words exist to the extent that they are used and not because they are in a dictionary or not.
The standard variety is better than other varieties of a language.	The standard variety is one among many. In fact, the large majority of the world's languages do not have a standard variety. That fact that the standard is the variety used in the educational system and in the media does not make it a better or perfect variety.

### ACTIVITY 3: BIOGRAPHY OF A FAMOUS MINORITY SPEAKER

Introduction	<p>The recognition of intellectual and creative products and the social respect and admiration they convey are echoed by media and social networks. However, in many cases, the identity and belonging of the authors and creators to a minority culture and language are concealed by the majority or state culture, sometimes to weaken the influence and recognition of the minority group. History books often do not mention these personalities, or they do not mention them as representatives of the minority group, in order to show a picture of national unity and/or in order to merge the minority community into mainstream society. Conveying visibility to the works of minority speakers enhances the recognition of minority and regional languages and, at the same time, acknowledges diversity, creativity and originality of society as a whole.</p>
Task	<p>Create a poster with the biography of a famous minority language speaker, with biodata, pictures, publications, outcomes/results/samples of his/her work, reception of the public (exhibitions, newspaper articles), etc. This person can work/have worked in any domain such as media, sports, literature, culture, arts, painting, photography, film, politics, economics, society, philosophy, research, inventions, etc.</p>
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are aware of the existence of minority languages and cultures</li> <li>• Realise that minority language speakers contribute to nation building</li> <li>• Acknowledge the fact that linguistic and cultural diversity is an integral part of society</li> <li>• Realise that history and social disciplines are an interpretation of reality and subject to discussion and negotiation</li> <li>• Consider working, living and creating in several languages as a normality</li> <li>• Read in a minority language and use intercomprehension strategies (according to interlingual distance of majority/minority languages)</li> <li>• Use translingual techniques and mediation</li> <li>• Are able to find, choose, hierarchise, and present written and graphic information</li> <li>• Are able to deliver a poster presentation.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	<p>Depending on the degree of complexity and abstraction of the task, 5th to 9th grade, 10 to 15</p>

Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the topic, discussion (class)</li> <li>• Brainstorming, make a list of potential people (individual work)</li> <li>• Choose a person on the list (pair work)</li> <li>• Gather and select the information, make the poster (pair work)</li> <li>• Present the poster (pair work)</li> <li>• Debriefing and discussion (class).</li> </ul>
Duration	2 to 4 lessons
Disciplines involved	First and foreign languages, history, geography, social sciences, interdisciplinary project
Working mode	Class work, pair work, individual work
Material	Poster (big solid sheet of paper), computers, printer, newspapers, pens, glue, etc.
Sources of information	Library, personal contacts, interviews, internet
Evaluation	Poster presentation; peer, teacher and self-assessment
Further possible activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hang the posters in the school corridor</li> <li>• Publish them in the school newspaper</li> <li>• Send a copy to the minority language associations, newspapers and internet sites</li> <li>• Compare the posters with a partner class in another region/ country.</li> </ul>

## ACTIVITY 4: MINORITY LANGUAGE DAY(S) OR WEEK

Introduction	<p>This project combines a multidisciplinary and multilingual perspective, with language across the curriculum, as well as activities on and in the minority language, in the form of a school project, since all teachers, students, and school services such as the library, the cafeteria, exhibition corner etc. are involved.</p> <p>According to the teachers' competencies and interests, the different disciplines can be taught completely or partially in a minority language, or authentic materials can be used receptively with work being carried out in the school language, or history, geography, social, scientific, cultural content on the minority language on the minority language speakers can be dealt in the different disciplines. A crescendo move is possible, with a longer project in and on the minority language the next years.</p>
Task	<p>Teachers and students follow the regular schedule during one day, two days or one week, with shorter or longer periods dealing in or on the minority language.</p>
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discover the richness, the variety of multiple documents in a minority language, and the culture and environment of the minority speakers</li> <li>• Apply intercomprehensive and translingual strategies, in combination with content</li> <li>• Are aware that learning in several languages is a normality</li> <li>• Realise that teachers are not perfect and that they are also in a learning process</li> <li>• Accept that minority language-speaking students in the class function as experts.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	<p>Can be implemented at all school levels, although, schools at lower secondary level (12-16) are particularly adequate.</p>
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staff chooses a minority language, the date and the length of the project (1 day, 2 days, 1 week)</li> <li>• The school board is informed</li> <li>• All teachers are informed</li> <li>• The parents are informed</li> <li>• Realisation of project</li> <li>• Debriefing</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> <li>• Adaptation for the next year.</li> </ul>
Duration	<p>1 or 2 days, or 1 week</p>

Disciplines involved	All disciplines
Working mode	Class, pair work, individual work, like the regular school activities
Material	Different documents, texts, songs in a minority language
Sources of information	Library, personal contacts, internet
Evaluation	Evaluation of the project with questionnaires and interviews
Further activities	1 day can be chosen as a trial balloon, then it can be extended to 2 days and then to one week. The project can be repeated on a regular basis every year at the same period, with teacher gradually increasing the amount in the minority language

## ACTIVITY 5: TOPONYMY, LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE AND SIGNAGE IN A MINORITY LANGUAGE

Introduction	<p>Texts and names in the domains of toponymy and signage are a good possibility to gauge the official and individual recognition of minority languages and groups. They give evidence of historical and social facts surrounding the cohabitation of majority and minority groups and are strongly related to identity issues. They are subject to severe social conflicts. Knowing more about the subject can enhance the sensitivity for the claims for minority languages to be re-presented in public and virtual space.</p>
Task	<p>Give evidence of examples of bi- and multilingual toponymy, linguistic landscape and signage, or toponymy, linguistic landscape and signage in minority languages, in a historical, political and social context, on maps, plates, walls etc.</p> <p>According to the localisation of the minority groups (mono, bilingual region or remote area) the task can be modulated (statistics with pictures taken or work with maps and the internet).</p>
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know different terms associated with (mono, bi-multilingual) linguistic landscape</li> <li>• Can cluster the different types of signage examples, e.g. public (authorities and administration, public logos, place names, street names, institutions); semi-public (shop windows, ads, corporate identity of companies, internet addresses and sites); private (telephone books, private logos, restaurant menus), transgressive (tags, graffiti, stickers)</li> <li>• Are aware of the different functions of language (inform, represent, regulate, entertain, manipulate)</li> <li>• Make the difference between macro-toponymy and micro-toponymy</li> <li>• Can compare bi- and trilingual toponymy (semantic or phonetic congruence)</li> <li>• Can semiotically interpret ads (puns, code-switching, use of substandards)</li> <li>• Link the issue of (multilingual) signage to historical, cultural and social contexts</li> <li>• Link signage to political issues (legislation, thresholds regarding number of speakers/users, legitimate languages, language status and legitimation)</li> <li>• Can use simple methods of quantitative and qualitative research.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	<p>Depending on the degree of complexity and abstraction and on the localisation of the minority groups, 7th to 9th grade, or 10th to 12th grade; 12-14, or 15 to 18</p>

Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the topic and the issue, examples (PowerPoint, teacher)</li> <li>• Brainstorming on why mankind has the propensity to name and label the close and remote environment (class)</li> <li>• Make a mind map with the ways language is presented in public space (pair work)</li> <li>• Write a report on the subject chosen (ads, street names, place names etc.) with an appropriate method, such as statistics, oral history, case study (individual work)</li> <li>• Present the report to the class (PowerPoint, class)</li> <li>• Discussion.</li> </ul>
Duration	4 to 8 lessons
Disciplines involved	First and foreign languages, geography, social sciences, interdisciplinary project
Working mode	Class, pair work, individual work
Material	Maps, internet, camera, cell phones, computers, printer and projector
Sources of information	Library, personal contacts, internet
Evaluation	Evaluation of the report and the presentation
Further activities	Move from landscape to audioscape

## ACTIVITY 6: EDIT-A-THON IN A MINORITY LANGUAGE

<b>Introduction</b>	An edit-a-thon, organised as a school activity, is an event where a specific subject is chosen and students learn how to write and edit content on this specific subject through the medium of a minority language. An expert (usually the teacher) must ensure that the content is of high quality and must provide support to students given that the content will be uploaded to Wikipedia.
<b>Task</b>	To produce quality content in a minority language and post it on Wikipedia
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice the writing of quality content in a minority language</li> <li>• Link the use of new technologies (Wikipedia) to regional/minority languages</li> <li>• Become an active subject in the promotion of regional/minority languages</li> <li>• Work in constant collaboration and discussion with peers</li> <li>• Witness the utility/possibility of using regional/minority language.</li> </ul>
<b>Degree/age</b>	Upper secondary level
<b>Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choosing a subject that can be of interest for the minority language community</li> <li>• Providing a brief tutorial on how to upload information to Wikipedia</li> <li>• Select and edit the specific information to be uploaded</li> <li>• Establish roles (writer, editor, Wikipedia expert, etc.)</li> <li>• Co-ordinate the students (who posts what)</li> <li>• Visualise the final content on Wikipedia.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration</b>	3-5 lessons
<b>Areas involved</b>	New technologies, peer discussion, group problem-solving, interdisciplinary project
<b>Working mode</b>	In groups/teams
<b>Material</b>	Materials regarding the subject chosen, laptops, internet
<b>Sources of information</b>	Material gathered to collect information on the specific subject
<b>Evaluation</b>	Best information uploaded online (in terms of language quality, content quality, editing)
<b>Further activities</b>	None



## ACTIVITY 7: NEW SPEAKERS OF MINORITY LANGUAGES

Introduction	<p>What is a new speaker?</p> <p>In demographic terms, most regional or minority languages in Europe are in decline, so in many cases, the intergenerational transmission does not guarantee their maintenance. Therefore, in addition to language transmission within the family, it is essential to incorporate new speakers, that is, people who learned the minority language outside of family relationships, and who are active users of it, sometimes as the language of priority use. In many cases, without new speakers, the future of minority languages is compromised. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages includes offering facilities to enable new speakers to learn the minority language as one of their objectives (Article 7.1g). This activity addresses the need to encourage the increase in the number of new speakers of regional or minority languages as a fundamental objective to guarantee their future.</p> <p>How to identify a new speaker?</p> <p>Although anyone who has learned a new language as an adult could be considered a new speaker, this term usually refers to people who have actively incorporated that language into their everyday language repertoire. The new speakers often use the new language daily. In the case of minority languages, the new speakers are usually active users and aware of the delicate situation in which these languages are found. Hence the relevance of their practice.</p>
Task	<p>Introduce the concept of “new speaker” of minority languages and encourage critical awareness of the need for new speakers as legitimate and authorised subjects for the use of languages that have not been familiar languages.</p>
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the role of the new speakers in the vitality of minority languages</li> <li>• Can identify a new speaker</li> <li>• Promote the active use of a minority language in the communicative repertoire.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	<p>Upper secondary level of minority language communities</p>

Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present the topic and address the challenges and opportunities of this new sociolinguistic subject</li> <li>• Open a group discussion about the present and future of minority languages, placing the role of the new speakers at the centre of the debate</li> <li>• Identify in the classroom both new speakers with a family background that includes people who use or have used minority languages (heritage speakers) and new speakers without background but with a favourable position towards the minority language spoken in the region and/or the municipality</li> <li>• Know family experiences of people who have replaced the minority language by the majority and/or who have become new speakers of minority languages</li> <li>• Select 2-3 volunteer students to be new speakers for a day. Reflect and discuss in a group the results of these micro-ethnographies.</li> </ul>
Duration	2-3 lessons
Areas involved	First and second language
Working mode	In groups/teams
Material	Videos, internet
Sources of information	Material gathered to collect information on the specific subject
Evaluation	Public discussion on the subject
Further activities	Motivate students to be a new speaker of a regional or minority language for a day

## ACTIVITY 8: VARIETY OF WRITING SYSTEMS OF MINORITY LANGUAGES IN YOUR COUNTRY

Introduction	<p>The multicultural and multilingual character of a particular territory is most immediately visible through the visual differences in the writing systems used by various languages. In some European countries the various alphabets used by the minority languages are part of everyday life reflected in the linguistic landscape (e.g. in the form of bilingual place names). But very often the rich variety of these interesting visual differences between minority languages remains a 'hidden' and unknown wealth that most people in the mainstream society are not aware of.</p> <p>Teaching students how to recognise the various alphabets is seen here as a simple way of raising awareness of the variety of minority languages in a particular country. Obviously in some territories the differences between alphabets will be very clear and striking, whereas in other cases being able to identify a particular language will be a matter of just a few extra diacritics or even just letter clusters. For this reason the proposed activity will obviously have to be adapted. This task can also be extended beyond Europe to cover other systems used for natural languages in the world.</p> <p>Being able to identify minority languages based on at least their written form, contributes to the development of students' plurilingual competence on the level of receptive skills.</p>
Task	<p>Identifying various minority languages through the visual differences in their written form; Optional: identifying various writing systems.</p>
Objectives	<p><b>Main</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make pupils acquainted with the visual aspect of the written minority languages in their country of residence</li> <li>• Make pupils familiar with some systems of writing used for natural languages</li> <li>• Raise awareness about the existence of minority communities in their country.</li> </ul> <p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and identify particular minority languages in their written form</li> <li>• Recognise and identify names of places as written in particular minority languages</li> <li>• Know the regions/areas where bilingual names exist in their country</li> <li>• Are aware of the negative attitudes towards bilingual signage</li> <li>• (Extra) Recognise the characteristic features of the particular writing systems</li> <li>• (Extra) Can experiment with writing in the particular writing systems.</li> </ul>

Degree/ age	All educational levels, depending on the degree of complexity and abstraction and the localisation of the minority groups.
Steps	<p>Recognition exercise (pair or group work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students match pieces written in particular writing systems with names of the minority languages</li> <li>• Students match place names with the particular minority language</li> <li>• Students identify the most 'visible' features of the writing systems that help distinguishing them; identify their type (the type of alphabet or other)</li> <li>• 'Beauty contest': which of the systems do you like best?</li> </ul> <p>Discussion (group work, then class)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all the languages listed as minority present in bilingual signs from photos?</li> <li>• What regions of your country do you expect to find these place names in?</li> <li>• What relevance/importance do these place names have for the local community?</li> <li>• What is your attitude towards them?</li> <li>• Why do you think they sometimes get vandalised? (if relevant).</li> </ul> <p>Experiment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'Secret message'</li> </ul> <p>Using an alphabet of a minority language creates a simple message for others to 'decode' (Note: works best with latin and cyrillic alphabets).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Art competition</li> <li>• Who can copy a text in a minority writing system the best?</li> <li>• Create an ornament or other piece of art using fragments of texts.</li> </ul>
Duration	4 to 8 lessons

## ACTIVITY 9: NON-TERRITORIAL LANGUAGES

Introduction	Non-territorial languages and their speakers very often face particular problems and discrimination. Knowing more about them reduces fear and prejudice and offers the possibility of peaceful cohabitation and more social justice.
Task	Brainstorming and information collecting on non-territorial languages and their speakers, prepare an invitation and questions for non-territorial language speakers.
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know the difference between territorial and non-territorial languages</li> <li>• Know non-territorial languages inside and outside the country</li> <li>• Know the environment, the history, the problems of non-territorial languages and their speakers</li> <li>• Learn about the culture, lifestyle and associations of non-territorial language speakers</li> </ul>
Degree/age	Lower or upper secondary level (12-19).
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming and discussion in plenary, if relevant, discuss family history</li> <li>• Seek more information in the library and on the internet</li> <li>• Formulate questions for the invited non-territorial language speakers (pair work)</li> <li>• Organise the meeting</li> <li>• Make a poster with the information collected</li> <li>• Present the poster</li> </ul>
Duration	4-6 lessons
Disciplines involved	Language disciplines, history, social studies, interdisciplinary project
Working mode	Class work, individual work and pair work
Material	History books, information from associations, documents of the Council of Europe, literature, dictionaries
Sources of information	Interviews, internet, various documents
Evaluation	Poster presentation
Further activities	Motivate students to prepare presentations or scientific work about non-territorial languages and their speakers, write an article in the school newspaper, exchange with families, exchange with other countries on the same or different non-territorial languages.

## ACTIVITY 10: SIGN LANGUAGES

Introduction	Sign languages are not protected by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. However, associations, researchers and states are discussing the possibility of integrating them into the protection scheme of the Charter. As sign languages are often associated with a disability rather than being seen as fully-fledged languages, this activity deals with the legal, linguistic and social recognition of sign languages at large.
Task	Brainstorming and information collection about sign languages and sign language users' issues and challenges (legal framework, associations, discrimination, culture, biographies etc.), prepare an invitation and questions for sign language users and interpreters.
Objectives	<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are aware of the fact that language can be transmitted in an oral, written and signed form</li> <li>• Learn that there are different sign languages</li> <li>• Know constitutional and legal mentions of sign language</li> <li>• Get to know people using sign language</li> <li>• Know literature, films etc. dealing with sign language</li> <li>• Learn a couple of signs</li> <li>• Know how sign language interpreters work.</li> </ul>
Degree/age	Depending on the degree of complexity and abstraction, end of primary school to beginning of upper secondary school (12-17)
Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the topic, brainstorming about the transmission of messages in an oral, written and signed form, name people, literature, film associated with sign languages, explaining what "bilingual"/"multilingual" means in this context (class)</li> <li>• Game or contest: How would the students translate into sign language messages like: "I'm hungry", "I'm leaving tomorrow", "What time is it?" The class guesses</li> <li>• Organise the invitation of a deaf person and a sign language interpreter (find the persons, invite them, formulate the questions etc.) (pair work)</li> <li>• Meet the people and ask the questions (class)</li> <li>• Write a short paper, poster or report on the topic and put it on an electronic platform (pair work)</li> <li>• Mutual assessing of the product (class).</li> </ul>
Duration	2 to 4 lessons

Disciplines involved	Languages or social sciences, interdisciplinary project
Working mode	Class and pair work
Material	Internet, library
Evaluation	Paper, poster or electronic platform
Sources	Library, associations, personal contacts, internet

# Glossary<sup>8</sup>

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## 1. Bilingual education

Teaching and learning content, disciplines, part of disciplines or interdisciplinary projects in at least two languages, at any stage of education, on a voluntary or compulsory base.

## 2. Council of Europe

International organisation whose main goals are the defence and safeguard of human rights, democracy and rule of law. It was founded in 1949 and comprises 47 member states and about 800 million people. Its headquarters are in Strasbourg.

## 3. Dialect

A linguistic variety whose grammar and vocabulary reflect the geographical and/or the social background of its speakers.

## 4. Endangered language

A language whose future is compromised in the short or medium term. There are different degrees of endangerment, ranging from slight to severe threat.

## 5. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Council of Europe international convention whose aim is to protect and promote regional and minority languages. It came into force in 1998.

## 6. Language legislation

Legal norms adopted by public bodies regarding the status and use of language(s) in different environments: schools, media, administration, politics, culture, and economic and social life. In the case of regional or minority languages, an adequate legal framework is necessary to safeguard them.

## 7. Language rights

Civil rights related to the use of languages within a particular territory, organisation or institution. One example is the right every person has

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8. The definitions in the present glossary do not necessarily reflect those in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.



to be informed in a language one understands before a court, or the right to use any language or variety (freedom of language), which is part of the fundamental rights.

## 8. Linguistic landscape

Observable written and oral traces of language in public space, which can be official (road signs, street names, information in/on public buildings, etc.), private (menus in restaurants, information in shops, advertisements, etc.) or protestative (sprayings, tags). The linguistic landscape is a solid indicator of language issues of a given territory as well as the vitality of the languages in contact. The situation in urban surroundings is sometimes referred to as *cityscape*, and that of oral traces as *audioscape*.

## 9. Linguistic prejudice

A biased perception concerning languages and their speakers, based on a lack of knowledge, a feeling or an explicit ideological position. Prejudices are often widely accepted by society, which makes them difficult to be detected.

## 10. Majority language

In a multilingual context, it is a language which usually boasts a higher number of speakers. Very often, this goes along with greater prestige and legitimatisation, as compared to minority languages.

## 11. Migrant language

Languages used by immigrant communities, or by people who for various reasons (fleeing conflict or persecution) have to leave their country of origin.

## 12. Minority language

A language which is traditionally used within a given territory of a state, different from the majority language(s). In general these languages have a lower number of users. See *regional language*.

## 13. Multilingualism

Coexistence of more than one language in a specific group or society, which does not imply that they are widely used by the whole population. All societies are in fact multilingual. See *plurilingualism*.

#### **14. New speaker**

A person who includes in his/her communicative repertoire a language that is not his/her language acquired in childhood or is not the language of his/her family. In general, these are languages learnt during the secondary socialisation (education system, work, social networks). New speakers of regional or minority languages help to secure their preservation and revitalisation.

#### **15. Non-territorial language**

A language used by a community which is not traditionally assigned to a specific territory within a state.

#### **16. Official language**

A language that is explicitly acknowledged as such in legislation of a state, region or any other public or private institution.

#### **17. Plurilingualism**

Ability of an individual to use more than one language. See *multilingualism*.

#### **18. Language policy**

Any intervention concerning language issues carried out by a specific institution, either public (e.g. governments, education system, courts), or private (e.g. companies, families, media) through the implementation of laws, norms and practices whose goal is to actuate on the structure, function, use and acquisition of language(s).

#### **19. Regional language**

Language spoken in a specific geographical region but not throughout the entire territory of a state. See *minority language*.

#### **20. Sign language**

Language of a visual, spatial, gestural and manual nature traditionally used by deaf and deafblind people.

#### **21. Toponymy**

The place names and the study of them. Microtoponymy deals with names of streets and smaller places, while macrotoponymy deals with larger units such as cities or provinces or countries.

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[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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