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Addendum 1

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Initial Periodical Report
presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter**

SERBIA

***Comments/questions submitted to the Government of Serbia regarding its Initial
Periodical Report***

*Prepared by the Secretariat of the
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*

COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS FOR THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

Comments/questions submitted to the Government of Serbia regarding its Initial
Periodical Report

After a preliminary examination of the Initial Periodical Report on the Charter, it was found that additional information on some aspects of the report would be needed before the Committee of Experts could undertake a more detailed examination as required by the Charter.

The Serbian Government is therefore invited to reply to the following questions in order to allow the Committee of Experts to complete its examination. This questionnaire will additionally serve as a working document during the Committee of Expert's forthcoming on-the-spot visit to Serbia.

The structure of this document follows the Outline for Periodical Reports to be submitted by States Parties (printed in bold). The questions the Committee of Experts would like the authorities to reply to (presented in numerical order) are inserted into the original text of that Outline. General questions are listed at the beginning of the respective article.

PRELIMINARY SECTION

(...)

2. Please indicate all regional or minority languages, as defined in paragraph a of Article 1 of the Charter, which exist within your State's territory. Indicate also the parts of the territory of your state where the speakers of such language(s) reside.

Question 1: Since approximately when (decade) has Macedonian been used in Serbia?

Question 2: Please inform the Committee of Experts whether Yiddish is spoken in Serbia and if so, by how many people.

Question 3: Please inform the Committee of Experts of the number of Turkish-speakers, in particular in Sandžak.

(...)

PART I

(...)

2. Please indicate the bodies or organisations, legally established in your state, which further the protection and development of regional or minority languages. Please, list the names and addresses of such organisations.

Question 4: Please submit a list with the contact details (including telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) of all national minority councils as well as of other bodies and associations exclusively devoted to the promotion of the regional or minority languages covered by Parts II and III of the Charter.

PART II

Objectives and principles pursued in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1

Article 7 – Objectives and principles

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

(...)

f *the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;*

Question 5: The establishment of a class teaching a regional or minority language must be requested by at least 15 pupils. However, a request by less than 15 pupils may also suffice if the Ministry of Education approves it (cf. p. 138, 156 of the periodical report). Please elaborate according to what criteria the Ministry of Education approves or refuses such requests. In addition, please inform the Committee of Experts how many classes have been set up on the basis of such an exceptional approval by the Ministry of Education.

Question 6: How are parents and pupils actively informed of the possibility to set up a class teaching a regional or minority language? How are they actively encouraged to make use of this possibility?

Please note that questions 5 and 6 concern all regional or minority languages covered by the Charter (Parts II and III).

(...)

PART III

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

General question concerning Articles 9 and 10

Question 7: The periodical report states that “persons belonging to national minorities seldom insist on the use of their own language ..., owing to bilingualism” (p. 186). How are the users of regional or minority languages systematically encouraged to overcome this psychological barrier and use their languages in relations with judicial and administrative authorities as well as public service providers? What organisational measures have been taken to enable authorities and public service providers to deal with communications in regional or minority languages?

Article 9

Question 8: With regard to judicial authorities, the periodical report states “a shortage of young educated personnel who speak minority languages” (p. 186). What steps have been taken by the Serbian authorities to improve the knowledge of regional or minority languages among court personnel (e.g. granting of special leave to enable staff to attend language courses, organization of language courses by the authorities)?

Article 10

Question 9: Municipalities may provide in their statutes for the official use of a regional or minority language even if less than 15% of the population belong to the national minority concerned. Please submit a list of the municipalities where such a decision has been taken, and indicate the respective language and population share as well as its practical consequences.

Question 10: If persons belonging to a national minority represent at least 2% of the local population, they may communicate with public authorities in their own language and are entitled to a reply in that language (cf. p. 190). Please provide information on whether this rule is generally applied in practice. How are citizens systematically informed about this possibility and encouraged to make use of it?