



**MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE SERBIE
AUPRES DE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE**

26, Avenue de la Foret Noire
67000 STRASBOURG
France

No: 9/08

Strasbourg, January 8, 2008

Dear Mr. Mazza,

With reference to your letter dated 2 October 2007, regarding the Initial Periodic Report on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the respect of the Republic of Serbia and the questionnaire of the Committee of Experts regarding additional information in that respect, I would like to submit, enclosed herewith, requested information prepared by the relevant authorities of the Republic of Serbia.

I hope that this information will facilitate "on-the-spot visit" of the Committee of Experts to the Republic of Serbia, scheduled from 6 to 8 February 2008.

Sincerely,

Amassador
Stadjana Prica
Stadjana Prica

Mr. Gabriele Mazza
Director of School, Out-of-school and Higher Education
Directorate General for Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport
Council of Europe

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

The modern Macedonian language was standardized as literary language in 1945 and has been used in the Republic of Macedonia, which had been one of the former SFRY's federal units until the break-up of SFR Yugoslavia. In the Republic of Serbia, even before standardization, Macedonian language was used among persons belonging to the Macedonian national minority since the period of formation of the former common state. As stated in the Report, according to the 2002 census conducted among Macedonians, 50.6% declared that their mother tongue was Serbian and 48.5% Macedonians declared that their mother tongue was Macedonian. The share of other languages was marginal.

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

According to the 2002 census, there were 1,158 persons belonging to the Jewish national minority, which accounted for 0.02% of the total population of Serbia. Of the total number of Jews, half are domiciled in Belgrade (634 or 54.7%) and the rest live in the municipalities of Vojvodina, mainly in the towns of Novi Sad (189 or 16.32%) and Subotica (95 or 8.20%). The number of Jews living in other municipalities is negligible. As the Committee of Experts was informed by the Report, section 3.3.2., page 57, 83.68% of Jews declared that their mother tongue was Serbian and 10.62% declared that it was Hungarian, whereas the share of other languages was marginal. According to the 2002 census, no persons belonging to other ethnicities spoke Yiddish as their mother tongue.

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

According to the 2002 census, there were 522 persons belonging to the Turkish national minority, which accounted for 0.01% of the total population of Serbia, not including Kosovo and Metohija.

From the regional viewpoint, Turks are territorially widely dispersed: one fourth of persons belonging to the this ethnic group live in the city of Belgrade, one fourth lives in the municipality of Bujanovac, every tenth Turk lives in Novi Sad, 4.6% of the total number of Turks live in the municipalities of Zrenjanin and Novi Pazar each and some 3% live in the municipality of Presevo. It is noteworthy that Turks living in the municipality of Bujanovac are concentrated in one settlement – Biljaci. Therefore, the total number of Turks living in Sandzak is very small.

The number of Turkish language speakers among the Turks is shown in the table given below.

Population according to mother tongue, 2002 (%)									
Total	Serbian	Turkish	Albanian	Bosnian	Macedonian	Roma	Other languages	Undeclared and unknown	
Republic of Serbia	100.00	88.30	0.00	0.85	1.80	0.19	1.10	6.90	0.85
Turks	100.00	25.67	68.58	1.34	1.34	0.96	0.38	0.96	0.77

The difference between the mother tongue and ethnicity that characterizes all less numerous national minorities in the Republic of Serbia is also obvious with the Turkish national minority. Of all ethnic Turks, 68.6% declared that their mother tongue was Turkish and 25.7% declared that their mother tongue was Serbian. The share of other languages is negligible, below one percentage point. Of the total number of Turks who declared that their mother tongue was Serbian, 87% lived in urban settlements.

Among Bosniaks and Muslims, who are the most numerous populations in Sandzak, according to the 2002 census there were no native speakers of the Turkish language.

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.

Name of the organization/institution	Contact person	Phone	Mail	Address
Nacionalni savet madjarske nac. manjine Hungarian National Minority National Council	Joza Laslo	+ 381 24 524 534	office@mnt.org.yu	Age Marnuzica 11/2, 24000 Subotica
Nacionalni savet rumunjske nac. manjine Romanian National Minority National Council	Daniel Petrović Ana Tomanova Makanova	+ 381 21 457 583 + 381 21 422 989	consiliul_roman@yahoo.com	Bul. Mihaila Pupina 28, 21000 Novi Sad
Nacionalni savet slovačke nac. manjine Slovak National Minority National Council	Slavko Oros	+ 381 25 704 605	rusovik@eunet.yu	Rusinska 75, 25233 Ruski Krstur
Nacionalni savet rusinske nac. manjine Ruthenian National Minority National Council	Vitomir Mihailović	+ 381 63 62 95 96	vitamihailovic@yahoo.com"	Vinaverova 46, 18000 Nis
Nacionalni savet romske nac. manjine Macedonian National Minority National Council	Jovan Radeski	+ 381 13 351 023	nsmakedonacaa@pantel.co.yu	Trg kralja Petra I br-2-4, 26000 Pancevo
Nacionalni savet bunjevačke nac. manjine Bunjevac National Minority National Council	Nikola Babić	+ 381 24 554 881	pns.sccq@anonnet.net	Trg Cara Jovana Nenada 15/V, 2400C Subotica
Nacionalni savet bugarske nac. manjine Bulgarian National Minority National Council	Angel Josifov	+ 381 10 360 931	nacsavbog@bankerinter.net	Naiden Kirov 9, 18320 Dimitrograd
Nacionalni savet vlaske nac. manjine Vlach National Minority National Council	Zivoslav Lazic	+ 381 19 546 288	office@cmnr.org	12. septembra 5, 19300 Negotin

Nacionalni savet grcke nac. manjine	+ 381 11126-				
Greek National Minority National Council	26-697	riofstereos@gmail.com	Karadjordjeva 69/4, 11 000 Beograd		
Nacionalni savet hrvatske nacionalne manjine	+ 381 24 556 898	ured@hmv.org.yu	Preradovićeva 4, 24. 000 Subotica		
Croatian National Minority National Council					
Nacionalni savet ukrajinske nacionalne manjine	+ 381 21 64 27 128	unr@neobee.net	Vojvodjanskih brigada 17/4, 21. 000 Novi Sad		
Ukrainian National Minority National Council					
Nacionalni savet egipatske nacionalne manjine	+ 381 64 11 85 901	egipcani_ns@yahoo.com	Decanska 8, 11. 000 Beograd		
Egyptian National Minority National Council					
Nacionalni savet bosnijske nacionalne manjine	+ 381 20 315 608	bhv@verat.net	28. novembra bb, 36.300 Novi Pazar		
Bosniak National Minority National Council					
Savez Jevrejskih opstina Srbije Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia	+ 381 11 2624 359	office@saveszscg.org	Kralja Petra 71a, 11. 000 Beograd		
Kulturno-informativni centar bugarske manjine	+ 381 10 360 150	kiceledom@ptt.yu	Balkanska 7, 18320 Dimitrovygrad		
Carbrod Cultural-Information Centre of the Bulgarian Minority	+ 381 23 889 022		Ribnicarska 16, 23205 Belo Blato		
Bugarško kulturno društvo "Tradafar" Tradafar Bulgarian Cultural Society					
Centar za multikulturalno obrazovanje Presevo	+ 381 17 666 9269	bhasuf@yahoo.com	Terik Salimi 44, 17523 Presevo		
Centre for Multicultural Education					
Odbor za ljudska prava Bujanovac Committee for Human Rights	* 381 17 653 981	shajpk@yahoo.com	Trg Karadjordja Petrovića 2/36, 17. 520 Bujanovac		
Sandzacki odbor za zastitu ljudskih prava i sloboda					
Sandzak Committee for the Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms from Bosnia	+ 381 20 323 011	sanodbor@eunet.yu	1. maja 85/a, 36300 Novi Pazar		
Bosnjacka zajednica kulture Preporod Preporod Bosniak Association for Culture in Sandzak	+ 381 20 313 270	korrektor_sveznadar@hotmail.com	Rifata Burdžovića bb, 36300 Novi Pazar		
Gradjanski forum Novi Pazar Civil Forum	+ 381 20 312 461	gradjanski@verat.net	Rifata Burdžovića bb, 36300 Novi Pazar		
Gradjanska akcija za ljudska prava Priboj Civil Action for Human Rights	+ 381 33 452 622	emilprozegat@yahoo.com	Miskovac bb, 31330 Priboj		
Nemacko udruzenje "Donau", Novi Sad German Association "Danube"	+ 381 21 505 507	dvdonau@eunet.yu	Kozaracka 6, 21 000 Novi Sad		
Nemacki narodni savez German National Alliance	+ 381 24 670 626	de.weiss@tjppnet.co.yu	Trg Lazara Nesica 10/6, 24. 000 Subotica		
Udrzenje gradjana makedonske nacionalne manjine juznobanatskog okruga "Vardar" Vardar Association of the Citizens of Macedonian Nationality of the Sothem Banat District	+ 381 13 624 197		Trg Borisa Kidrica 9, 26. 201 Jabuka		
Društvo za ukrajinski jezik, književnost i kulturu "Prosvita" Prosvita Association for the Ukrainian Language, Literature and Culture	+ 381 64 161 0432	daceshen@neobee.net	Devet Jugovića 3/3, 21. 000 Novi Sad		
Savez Rusina i Ukrajinaca Srbije Alliance of Ruthenians and Ukrainians in Serbia	+ 381 21 6313 909	sazvon@eunet.yu	Jovana Subotića 8, 21. 000 Novi Sad		
Matica rusinska Ruthenian Cultural Society	+ 381 25 703 357	matka@eunet.yu	Marsala Tita 59, 25. 233 Ruskii Kstur		
Društvo za rusinski jezik, književnost i kulturu Association for the Ruthenian Language, Literature and Culture	+ 381 21 432 734	paupunai@eunet.yu	Vojvode Putrika 2, 21. 000 Novi Sad		
Rusinsko kulturno-prosvetno društvo Ruthenian Cultural and Educational Society	+ 381 21 529 626	rkpdns@eunet.yu	Jovana Subotića 8, 21. 000 Novi Sad		
Rumunsko društvo (fondacija) za	+ 381 13 35		Zarka Zrenjanina 7/1, 26. 000 Pančevo		

sinografiju i folklor iz Vojvodine		34 01		
Romanian Association (foundation) for Ethnography and Folklore from Vojvodina		+ 381 21 63 94 412	luciamarina@yahoo.com	Bulevar Slobodana Jovanovića, 21. 000 Novi Sad
Društvo za rumunjski jezik iz Vojvodine	Lucijan Marina	+ 381 13 823	crnyu@fimo.net	Sterijino sokace bb, 26.300 Vrsac
Association for the Romanian Language in Vojvodina	Jon Cizmas	+ 381 13 673	barbu@panet.co.yu	Tudor Vladimiresku 176 b, 26.216 Uzdin
Zajednica Rumuna iz Srbije	Vasilje Barbu	262	radiosunce@pt.yu	Deljana Brankova 1, 26.340 Bela Crkva
Knježno-umetničko društvo "Tibiscus"	Krisan Vlastenka	689	matica@panet.co.yu	1. oktobra 42, 26.340 Bela Crkva
Tibiskus Literary-Artistic Society	Stefan Klepecek	+ 381 13 853	csapo@eunet.yu	Ferenca Fehera 1, 21.000 Novi Sad
Czechs from Southern Banat Cultural Educational Association	Lasto Molnar Cikos	+ 381 21 456		Strosmajerova 24/4, 24. 000 Subotica
Matica Ceska	Salata Zoltan	+ 381 24 526	umk@eunt.yu	Cara Lazara 43, 21. 000 Novi Sad
Czech Cultural and Publishing Society	Lenke Erdelj	422	mslbp@eunet.yu	Marsala Tita 18, 21.470 Backi Petrovac
Društvo za mađarskukulturu	Karoli Kasas	+ 381 21 63	krizbai@hemo.net	Cara Lazara 43, 21. 000 Novi Sad
Association for Hungarian Culture	Rastislav Surovi	+ 381 21 780		Marsala Tita 18, 21.470 Backi Petrovac
Savez mađarskih učenika Vojvodine	Mihail Tir	+ 381 21 780		Dr Zorana Djindjica 2, 21. 000 Novi Sad
Alliance of Hungarian Pupils in Vojvodina	Dujlo Runje	+ 381 24 547	had@tjipnet.co.yu	BEOGRADSKI PUT 52, 24.000 Subotica
Centru za metodiku	Svetislav Milanković	+ 381 63 566	lrfjtosip@pt.yu	Hanibala Lucića 38, 24. 000 Subotica
Centre for Teaching Methods	Milanković	538		Beogradski put 31, 24.000 Subotica
Društvo za slovačku Vojvodine	Slipan Stanić	+ 381 24 524-977		
Association of Slovaks in Vojvodina	Zvonko Tadjan	+ 381 25 792-738	ossontata@neqbee.net	Vuka Karadžića 22, 25264 Sonta
Hrvatsko-akademsko društvo	Ibrahim Osmani	+ 381 17 660	iboosmani@yahoo.com	15. novembra 91, 17. 523 Presevo
Croatian-Academic Society	Salm Demirović	+ 381 17 65	crs_salm@yahoo.com	Moravska 94, 17.520 Bujanovac
Udruzenje gradjana "Krov"	Kenan Rastović	+ 381 63 80	crs_kenan@hotmail.com	Moravska 104, 17.520 Bujanovac
Krov Citizens Association	Rastović	55 698		
Matica hrvatska	Stevan Nikolić	+ 381 24 553	kulturicentarroma@yahoo.com	Skerićeva 35, 24. 000 Subotica
Croatian Cultural and Publishing Society		267		
Association of Romanians in Vojvodina				
Kulturno-prosvetna zajednica Hrvata				
"Sokadija"				
Sokadija Croatian Educational Association				
Multikulturni centar "Narajan"				
Narajan Multicultural Centre				
Romski humanitarni centar				
Roma Humanitarian Centre				
Omladinski forum za edukaciju Roma				
Youth Centre for Roma Education				
Kulturni centar Roma				
Roma Cultural Centre				

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 criterion 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.

The Law on Primary School, as stated in the Report (pages 139 and 156), stipulates that the curriculum and syllabus of all subjects, namely the entire program of study, in addition to the Serbian language, is also taught in the minority language or bilingually even if less than 15 pupils are enrolled in first grade, with the *approval of the Minister of Education*. The Law on Establishing Particular Competences of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Article 12) stipulates that the *Provincial Secretary*, in agreement with the Minister of Education approves the implementation of curricula

and syllabuses also in the languages of national minorities for less than 15 pupils. The Minister always grants the approval and the only criterion that results in the refusal of the establishment of such classes is of financial nature. For granting the approval, the Minister of Education requests the approval of the Minister of Finance. For example, at the time when these replies were drafted, conditions were met for establishing a class in Bosilegrad for 4 pupils belonging to the Bulgarian national minority, whose request had previously been refused.

According to the information obtained from the Provincial Secretariat for Education and Culture of AP Vojvodina, not a single request for the establishment of classes with less than 15 pupils with teaching in minority languages in this school year was refused.

The table given below shows classes in primary schools in the territory of AP Vojvodina with less than 15 pupils for which the approval was granted in the 2007-2008 school year.

School	Place	Language	No. of pupils
Primary School "Milos Crnjanski"	Subotica	Hungarian	12
Primary School "Djuro Salaj"	Subotica	Hungarian	9
Primary School "Jovan J. Zmaj"	Subotica	Hungarian	6
Primary School "Bratstvo-jedinstvo" ("Brotherhood and Unity")	Sombor	Hungarian	4
Primary School "Miroslav Antic"	Palic-Supljak	Hungarian	6
School for Design "Bogdan Suput"	Novi Sad	Hungarian	10
Primary School "10 October"	Subotica	Hungarian	5
Primary School "Matija Gubec"	Tavankut	Croatian	4
Primary School "Kis Ferenc"	Sviljojevo	Hungarian	8
Primary School "Bratstvo"	Aradac	Slovakian	11
Primary School "Bratstvo-jedinstvo"	Svetozer Miletic	Hungarian	10
Primary School "Jovan J. Zmaj"	Djurdjevo	Ruthenian	8
Primary School "Jozef Atila"	Bogojevo	Hungarian	5

Primary School "Gligorije Popov"	Rusko selo	Hungarian	5
Secondary School of Philology "Kostolnji Deze"	Subotica	Hungarian	14
Primary School "Sonja Marinkovic"	Subotica	Hungarian	2
Primary School "Petefi Sandor"	Doroslovo	Hungarian	7
Primary School "Sonja Marinkovic"	Zrenjanin- Mihajlovo	Hungarian	8-12
Technical School	Temerin	Hungarian	8
Agricultural school	Futog	Hungarian	8
Primary School "Sonja Marinkovic"	Novi Sad	Hungarian	5
Grammar School "Veljko Petrović"	Sombor	Hungarian	7
Primary School "Ivan Milutinovic"	Subotica Mala Bosna	Croatian	7 6
Primary School Marko Vukovic	Subotica	Croatian	11
Primary School "Sveti Sava"	Subotica	Hungarian	Combined (3+4)

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

When a child is enrolled in school, in May-June, parents are informed about the possibility to apply legal provisions. Secondary schools also ask students to declare themselves about teaching in minority languages, which survey is organized at the time of enrollment.

Since teaching in minority language has been decades-long practice in the Republic of Serbia, persons belonging to national minorities are informed whether teaching in their mother tongues is offered in their place of residence or elsewhere, regardless of whether primary or secondary education is concerned. Considering that persons belonging to national minorities are also entitled to establish private educational institutions, schools and universities, with education organized in minority languages and bilingually, their founders undertake to inform both persons belonging to the national

minority in whose language teaching is envisaged and other citizens of the Republic of Serbia about the possibility to attend classes in the minority language.

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 organizational measures have been taken to enable authorities and public service providers to deal with communications in regional or minority languages?

Persons belonging to national minorities do not insist on the use of minority languages in relations with judicial and administrative authorities and public service providers mostly for practical reasons, namely in order to speed up judicial and administrative proceedings. In the communities with a larger number of persons belonging to national minorities, a larger number of persons employed in the said authorities have knowledge of minority languages, which encourages persons belonging to national minorities to more frequently use their mother tongue in relations with these authorities.

The Conclusion on measures to increase the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public authorities, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, in its item 9, envisages that public authorities for which it has been envisaged that more than one third of the total number of job holders work in units established for the territory in which under the decisions of competent local self-government units language(s) of national minority (or minorities) are used, shall undertake, in line with Regulations on job classification and description to envisage a number of job posts for which one of the prerequisites for employment is the knowledge of at least one of the national minority languages and scripts that are in the official use in the territory for which the local self-government unit from that territory has been established. Item 10 of the Conclusion envisages that, within the selection procedure under the open competition for filling a vacancy in regional units under item 9 of that Conclusion, a written test of competences and skills is conducted. Written tests or other verifications in writing will be made available also in the respective national minority language(s).

The Service for Human and Minority Rights and Human Resources Service of the Government of the Republic of Serbia have taken specific steps to implement the above mentioned provisions contained in the Conclusion. It has been agreed, in that respect, that in the first stage all public competitions for filling job vacancies are submitted to the national councils of national minorities for translation, as well as that their publication in minority languages in the media specified by the national councils of the national minorities will be financed from the budget.

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)?

A shortage of young educated personnel who speak minority languages, as one of the problems that hinder an increase in the number of proceedings conducted in minority languages, has been recognized by the state and provincial authorities. Certain steps towards resolving the problem have been taken, bearing in mind primarily the need to do it on a long-term basis. Job description in certain courts envisages the knowledge of minority languages that are in the official use in the territory of the local court jurisdiction. Each year a workshop is organized on the official use of Hungarian and Romanian languages in judicial and administrative authorities, intended to provide training for lawyers, attorneys and other employees in the said two languages. It is a normal practice in the public administration of the Republic of Serbia to offer free-of-charge courses for employees, in what used to be foreign languages, and with growing needs, mainly in AP Vojvodina, courses in minority languages are organized.

In cooperation with OSCE and NGOs, a two-month training course was organized for passing the bar examination in the languages of national minorities, in order to impart on persons belonging to national minorities the highest possible level of competences and skills for work in their mother tongues. Thus far, two programs of this kind have been implemented under the auspices of OSCE, one in Bujanovac and one in Sandzak, including 125 candidates for the bar exam.

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 belongs 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.

The table given below shows the local self-government units in which languages of national minorities that account for less than 15% of the total population are in the official use (in the entire local self-government unit territory).

Municipality	Minority languages in official use	The share of persons belonging to national minorities in the total population
1. Alibunar	Slovakian	Slovaks 8.34%
2. Bačka Topola	Ruthenian, Slovakian	Ruthenians 0.76% Slovaks 0.52%
3. Bac	Hungarian	Hungarians 6.09%
4. Bačka Topola	Slovakian	Slovaks 9.57%
5. Bela crkva	Hungarian, Romanian, Czech	Hungarians 2.25% Romanians 5.4% Czechs 3.99%
6. Beocin	Slovakian	Slovaks 5.96%
7. Vrbas	Hungarian and Ruthenian	Hungarians 6.29% Ruthenians 8.21%
8. Visac	Romanian and Hungarian	Romanians 10.87% Hungarians 4.18%

9. Zabalj	Ruthenian	Ruthenians 5.11%
10. Zlatiste	Romanian	Romanians 9%
11. Zrenjanin	Hungarian, Romanian and Slovakian	Hungarians 10.76% Romanians 1.9% Slovaks 1.81%
12. Kikinda	Hungarian	Hungarians 12.85%
13. Kovacica	Hungarian, Romanian	Hungarians 10.52% Romanians 6.99%
14. Kovin	Hungarian Romanian	Hungarians 9.26% Romanians 3.71%
15. Kula	Ruthenian Hungarian	Ruthenians 11.16% Hungarians 8.44%
16. Novi Sad (town)	Hungarian Slovakian Ruthenian	Hungarians 5.23% Slovaks 2.41% Ruthenians 0.67%
17. Odzaci	Hungarian Slovakian	Hungarians 4.41% Slovaks 2.81%
18. Pančevo	Hungarian Slovakian	Hungarians 3.17% Slovaks 1.24%
19. Plandište	Hungarian Slovakian Romanian	Hungarians 12.10% Slovaks 5.41% Romanians 7.21%
20. Secanj	Hungarian Romanian	Hungarians 12.63% Romanians 3.72%
21. Sombor	Hungarian	Hungarians 12.73%
22. Sremska Mitrovica	Croatian	Croats 2.96%
23. Subotica	Croatian	Croats 11.24%
24. Stara Pazova	Slovakian	Slovaks 8.86%
25. Titel	Hungarian	Hungarians 5.29%
26. Sid	Slovakian Ruthenian	Slovaks 6.46% Ruthenians 3.38%

In the Municipality of Apatin, in the settlements of Kupusina and Svilojevo, the Hungarian language and script are in the official use, and in the settlement of Sonta, Croatian language and script are in the official use, and the share of persons belonging to these minorities in the entire territory of the local self-government units is lower than 15%.

The practical importance of the introduction of minority languages into the official use in local self-government units in which the share of persons belonging to national minorities is lower than 15% is enormous. In communities where the number of persons belonging to minorities is small, such measures make it possible to preserve their identity and influence in social life.

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?

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, in its Article 56, guarantees that everyone shall have the right to put forward petitions and other proposals alone or together with others, to state bodies, entities exercising public powers, bodies of the autonomous province and local self-government units and to receive reply from them if they so requested. If that right is exercised by persons belonging to national minorities whose share in the total population is minimum 2% according to the most recent census, then under Article 11, paragraph 7 of the Law on the Protection of Rights and Freedoms of National Minorities, they may communicate with the state bodies in their mother tongue and shall have the right to receive reply in that language. In practice, there were no cases in which persons belonging to national minorities would submit petitions to state bodies in their mother tongue. Of course, there have been submissions in minority languages relating to instigation of court and administrative proceedings, on which the Committee has been informed in the Report.