

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 25 May 2020

MIN-LANG (2020) IRIA 4

EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

**Information Document
on the implementation of the
Recommendations for Immediate Action
based on the 5th monitoring cycle**

Submitted by Denmark

on 25 May 2020

25-05-2020

COMMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF DENMARK ON THE GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

The Danish Government is pleased to respond to the general comments on the implementation of The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Danish government is also pleased to learn that no recommendations for immediate action were given following the reporting mechanism for Denmark. Therefore these comments are based on the following general recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers CMR/RecChl(2017)4:

- 1. Increase the level of radio broadcasting and provide television broadcasts in German, in co-operation with the German speakers**
- 2. Take measures to increase awareness and appreciation of German as a minority language of Denmark throughout the country**

To the extent possible, this report has been prepared in accordance with the outlines for State Reports and the decision of the Committee of Ministers (2018), which stated that countries should not go more than 5 years without reporting.

Before commenting on the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Danish Government would like to reiterate its position, with respect to the personal scope of the European Charter for regional or minority languages that the international obligations, which Denmark has assumed according to the charter specifically, relate to the German national minority in South Jutland. It is the opinion of the Danish Government that the distinctive mark of a national minority is that it is a minority population group, which above all has historical, long-term and lasting links to the country in question – in contrast to refugee, and immigrant groups in general. Therefore, Denmark has identified the German minority in South Jutland as a national minority covered by the charter for regional or minority languages. With this said, the Danish government is always ready to improve and strengthen the dialogue with the German minority in order to fulfil the obligations comprised by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which Denmark has ratified.

Specific Comments

- 1. Increase the level of radio broadcasting and provide television broadcasts in German, in co-operation with the German speakers**

The Danish national public service broadcasters DR and TV 2 and the eight regional television public service broadcasters – including TV SYD – all have public service obligations relating to social coverage of Denmark. Details of the public service remit of DR and the regional TV 2 television public service broadcasters – including TV SYD – is regulated in public service contracts, whereas the details of the public service remit of TV 2 is regulated in a license for TV 2 to perform public service program activities. DR and the regional TV 2

television public service broadcasters are financed almost exclusively by public funding, while TV 2 is financed by advertising revenue and subscription payment.

DR is by virtue of its public service contract obliged to provide a broad social coverage of Denmark, thereby reflecting the diversity of culture, philosophy of life and living conditions in different regions of the country. DR is furthermore obliged to place emphasis on the coverage of the minorities in the Danish/German border area. TV 2 is by virtue of its license to perform public service broadcasting like DR, committed to providing a broad social coverage of Denmark, thereby reflecting the diversity of culture, philosophy of life and living conditions in different regions of the country. Pursuant to public service contracts, the regional TV 2 stations – including TV SYD – are required to emphasize on regional affiliation by programming. Thus, the programming should reflect the diversity of culture, philosophy of life and living conditions that are in the region. TV SYD shall furthermore place emphasis on the conditions in the Danish/German border area.

The German newspaper “Der Nordschleswiger” aimed at the German minority annually receives a subsidy from the Danish media subsidy scheme. The subsidy is given to production of content independent of platform (printed/digital). Any new written media aimed at the German minority can receive subsidy on the same conditions as the newspaper “Der Nordschleswiger”. The subsidy to the written media granted via the Danish media subsidy scheme alters from year to year depending on the total of the newspaper’s editorial costs. As for “Der Nordschleswiger”, the total subsidy was DKK 3.5 million in 2019 and is in 2020 expected to be DKK 3.5 million.

In addition, “Der Nordschleswiger” is also financed by means of an appropriation under the Finance Act for 2018. “Der Nordschleswiger” was granted 1.7 million DKK annually in 2018 and 2019 and receives 2.4 million DKK annually in 2020 and 2021 (2020-price level). The grant is given to further the development of media digitalization thus ensuring that persons belonging to the German minority have access to digital media in their own language. Der Nordschleswiger also receives a subsidy from “*udlodningsmidlerne*” for cultural purposes. The subsidy is used to producing and buying airtime to broadcasting news programs in German in the local radio in southern Denmark. The aim is to make the German minority able to produce and broadcast news in German in Southern Jutland.

2. Take measures to increase awareness and appreciation of German as a minority language of Denmark throughout the country

Denmark has granted the German minority project “Grenzgenial” a funding of 650.000 DKK in 2020 and in 2021. The project is a digital teaching platform, which aims to support teaching of German in the Danish primary schools. This means that the project by the end of 2021 will have received approximately 2 million DDK in funding. In addition, in November 2017 the Government announced a strategy for strengthening foreign languages in the Danish educational system. Following these two strategies, the Danish National Centre for Foreign Language was established in 2018. Moreover, the Ministry of Education is in the process of negotiating an exchange agreement for students in upper secondary school with the German authorities to enhance language sufficiency.

In 2018, the Danish Government launched “The Germany Effort”, a three-year strategy focusing on strengthening the framework conditions for Denmark's economic cooperation with Germany. Amongst other things, the strategy seeks to create an easier access for Danish companies in Germany and increase the knowledge about Germany and of the German language. Better knowledge in German and of Germany could strengthen Danish trade with Germany. The strategy therefore also includes new initiatives aimed at the Danish

education sector as well as exchange programs etc. In 2020, the Germany effort culminates with the Danish-German Year of Friendship, which is coordinated along with projects that celebrates The Centenary of Denmark's Reunion with Southern Jutland in 2020. Unfortunately, the current Covid-19 situation has led to some of the projects being postponed to 2021.

In 2019, the Minister for Culture decided to nominate the Danish-German minority model in their common border region to UNESCO's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices under the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Denmark and Germany has been collaborating on refining the joint application and the nomination files are ready for submission to UNESCO in 2020.

In addition, the Ministry of Culture has invited representatives of various relevant Danish authorities to meet with representatives of the German minority, in order to discuss matters of importance to the minority. The Danish Contact Committee for the German minority consists of members from each of the political parties represented in the Danish parliament and members of the German minority. The aim is to ensure a continuous discussion of matters that the German minority deem important, also including issues concerning the European Charter for Languages. The next and 56th session of the Danish Contact Committee for the German minority is, at the time of writing, scheduled to be held in 2020.

Finally, the Danish Government wishes to express its appreciation of the constructive dialogue with the Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and appreciates the continued dialogue and exchange of information and views.