

## 1551<sup>st</sup> meeting, 25 February 2026

10 Legal questions

### 10.9 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

a. Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action contained in the Committee of Experts' sixth evaluation report on Denmark

Item to be considered by the GR-J at its meeting on 12 February 2026

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been classified restricted at the date of issue. In accordance with the Deputies' decision (CM/Del/Dec(2001)765/10.4), it will be declassified after examination by the Committee of Ministers.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 18 November 2025

MIN-LANG (2025) 23

**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES**

**Evaluation by the Committee of Experts  
of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action  
contained in the Committee of Experts' sixth evaluation report on**

**DENMARK**

## Introduction

1. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereafter referred to as “the Charter”) is a treaty of the Council of Europe putting obligations on its states parties to protect and promote the country’s traditional minority languages in all fields of public life: education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life, and transfrontier exchanges. The Charter entered into force in respect of Denmark on 1 January 2001 and applies to German, a language which receives protection under both Part II and Part III (Articles 8-14).
2. The Committee of Experts monitors the implementation of the Charter. Each state party shall present a periodical report on the implementation of the Charter every five years. On the basis of the periodical report, the Committee of Experts adopts an evaluation report in which it makes “**recommendations for immediate action**” and “further recommendations” on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in the state concerned. Based on this evaluation report, the Committee of Ministers adopts its recommendations to the state party.
3. Two and a half years after the due date of its periodical report, the state party shall present information on the implementation of every recommendation for immediate action<sup>2</sup> that the Committee of Experts has made in its evaluation report. The Committee of Experts then adopts an evaluation of the implementation of these recommendations. The “further recommendations” by the Committee of Experts are examined after reception of the next periodical report and the on-the-spot visit to the state party. Five-yearly periodical reports shall contain comprehensive information about the implementation of all Charter undertakings and all recommendations by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers.
4. Denmark submitted the **information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** contained in the Committee of Experts’ sixth evaluation report<sup>3</sup> on 8 September 2025. This **evaluation of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** is based on the information received from the Danish authorities, as well as from representatives of the regional or minority language speakers pursuant to Article 16.2 of the Charter.<sup>4</sup> As far as the compliance of Denmark with all its undertakings under the Charter is concerned, the Committee of Experts refers to its sixth evaluation report. The Committee of Experts will examine the implementation of all the undertakings concerning the minority language in the next evaluation report.
5. This evaluation was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 18 November 2025.

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<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Committee of Ministers Decisions “Strengthening the monitoring mechanism of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), para. 1.a.

<sup>3</sup> Sixth evaluation report on Denmark, MIN-LANG(2023)23.

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Experts (MIN-LANG(2019)7), Rule 17, paras. 1-6.

## Examination of the implementation by Denmark of the recommendations for immediate action

### I. General issues

#### Extension of the protection of German under the Charter

7. The Committee of Experts observed since 2010 (third monitoring cycle)<sup>5</sup> that the Charter undertakings chosen by Denmark for German do not adequately reflect the situation of that language and encouraged the authorities to accept additional undertakings in its subsequent reports.<sup>6</sup> Technical preparations for the extension of the ratification instrument have been ongoing since 2011, including in co-operation with the Council of Europe. In 2019, the umbrella association of the German minority (*Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger – BDN*) submitted an application to the national authorities proposing the acceptance of several additional Charter undertakings. After the on-the-spot visit,<sup>7</sup> the Committee of Experts was informed by the state authorities, that effective steps were taken in order to fulfil the internal legal procedure necessary for such an international commitment, and to deposit the declaration of Denmark's ratification document to the Council of Europe. In light of this information, the Committee of Experts encouraged the Danish authorities to complete this process before 1 September 2025.<sup>8</sup>

8. In its letter addressed to the Minister of Culture of Denmark in March 2025,<sup>9</sup> the BDN expressed concerns that the process had still not been finalised despite many years of preparation. In his reply,<sup>10</sup> the Minister expressed his openness in principle to a possible extension of the obligations. However, no concrete commitments were announced. The Ministry of Culture announced the organisation of a meeting with the BDN to discuss further steps. The Committee of Experts was informed that while a meeting took place in June 2025, no concrete steps were presented by the Danish authorities.

9. The Committee of Experts regrets that the procedure has not been completed since 2011, and that no progress has been achieved amid the calls expressed by the Committee of Experts and the concrete proposals of the BDN.<sup>11</sup> It equally regrets that no information was provided by the Danish authorities on its current state of affairs. The Committee of Experts therefore reiterates its long-standing call on the Danish authorities to complete the extension of the ratification to further undertakings and consequently the better reflection of the needs of the German speakers as soon as possible.

#### Reporting

10. Representatives of the German speakers informed the Committee of Experts that they were not consulted by the Danish authorities when preparing the submitted report. They however confirmed the information therein. The Committee of Experts reiterates that, in conformity with Articles 6 and 7.4 of the Charter, it is necessary to inform the organisations concerned of the recommendations made during the

<sup>5</sup> See: Third evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Denmark MIN-LANG (2010)11 para 13.

<sup>6</sup> See: Fifth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Denmark, CM(2017)117, para. 8; Fourth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Denmark, ECRML(2014)9, para. 13.; Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action in the fifth monitoring cycle for Denmark, MIN-LANG(2020)13, para. 20.

<sup>7</sup> The last on-the-spot visit of the Committee of Experts was conducted in June 2023.

<sup>8</sup> See Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Denmark, MIN-LANG(2023)23, para. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Nach über 5 Jahren Wartezeit – Kulturminister schiebt Sprachencharta erneut auf die lange Bank | Der Nordschleswiger.

<sup>10</sup> Minister antwortet auf BDN-Schreiben zur Sprachencharta | Der Nordschleswiger.

<sup>11</sup> To ratify Articles 8.1.ai, bi, ci; 9.1.a.ii, a.iii, a.iv, b.ii, c.ii, d; 10.1.a.iii, b, c, 2.a, b, g, 3.c, 4.b; 13.2.b., See: Sixth evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on Denmark, MIN-LANG(2023)23, para. 5.

monitoring, and to take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by them in the implementation and related reporting.<sup>12</sup> The Committee of Experts calls on the Danish authorities to consult the speakers of German prior of the submission of the upcoming periodical report.

## II. Recommendation for immediate action

### 1. German – Part II and Part III language

#### Recommendations for immediate action

**a. Take measures to increase awareness of German as a minority language in the whole territory of Denmark, including in the media.**

#### Implementation measures taken by the Danish authorities

11. The Danish authorities state that awareness raising of German as a minority language is currently not part of the Common Objectives (national set of objectives for each subject) for German in Danish primary and lower secondary education, but teachers have extended autonomy to choose subjects and themes for the teaching. Primary and lower secondary schools in Denmark have no national curricula. In upper secondary education, in the guide from the Ministry of Children and Education, in the context of history teaching (A-level), the history of the Danish-German border region is highlighted as an example that can be used as part of a focus on reconciliation processes. There are no plans to further include the culture and history of the minority language speakers in a national curriculum in the future. Denmark has in 2024 also refinanced the German minority project “Grenzgenial” with a yearly funding of DKK 700 000 (€93 750) in the period 2024 to 2027. The project is a digital teaching platform, which aims to support teaching of German in the Danish primary schools.

12. The Danish authorities state that while there is no airtime dedicated to the German minority in public radio or television, the public service contracts concluded by the Ministry of Culture and the two national public broadcasters DR and TV 2 continue to contain the obligation which entered into force in 2019 to provide a broad coverage of Denmark, thereby reflecting the diversity of culture and living conditions in different regions of the country. DR is furthermore obliged to “place emphasis on the coverage of minorities in the Danish-German border area”. This obligation was reconfirmed in the public service contracts concluded in 2024. The Danish authorities equally reconfirm the special obligations of TV SYD, one of the regional public service broadcasters to focus on the conditions within the Danish-German border region and inform of the ongoing programmes in details.

13. The Danish authorities inform of the cultural initiatives they supported, including financially, to promote the history, culture and identity of the German minority. These include a grant of DKK 700 000 (€93 750) to the *Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig* (Sønderborg/Sonderburg), allocated as an operational subsidy from the Ministry of Culture for cultural purposes in 2025.<sup>13</sup> The Danish authorities underline that the museum plays a key role in preserving and presenting the culture and identity of the German minority in Denmark. *Deutsches Museum Nordschleswig* continues to foster dialogue and cultural understanding, providing a space for learning and exchange on the region’s history and heritage.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example: Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendation for Immediate Action (RIA) contained in the Committee of Experts’ seventh evaluation report on Hungary, MIN-LANG(2020)14, para. 6; the Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the RIA contained in the Committee of Experts’ fifth evaluation report on the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man, MIN-LANG (2021)3, para. 7; or the Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the RIA contained in the Committee of Experts’ eight evaluation report on Sweden, MIN-LANG (2024)6, para. 6., and Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendation for Immediate Action (RIA) contained in the Committee of Experts’ seventh evaluation report on the Netherlands, MIN-LANG(2024)14, para. 6.

<sup>13</sup> In 2018, Denmark contributed DKK 5 million (€670 000) for the renovation of the museum.

All activities take place at the museum. The target group comprises Danes and Germans with an interest in history. Moreover, Denmark awarded DKK 300 000 (€40 200) to the German minority project “Poetry slam” in 2024, to support a range of concrete initiatives that celebrate the anniversary of the art form of poetry slam in Denmark. Finally, the Danish authorities refer to the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Copenhagen-Bonn Declarations, on 29 March 2025, through which, they sought to increase awareness of German as a minority language.

14. The Danish authorities inform that on the request of the *Bund Deutscher Nordschleswiger*, the structure of the Contact Committee for the German minority has been changed to a full-fledged parliamentary committee, with the aim of ensuring closer contact between the Danish Parliament, the Danish Government and the German minority in Denmark. The Contact Committee operates now with an allocated budget and is chaired by a member of the Danish Parliament. Speakers of German informed the Committee of Experts that the “new” Contact Committee, which was established in October 2024, is the sub-committee of the Cultural Committee of the Danish Parliament. They equally confirmed the efficiency of its new structure.

### **Evaluation by the Committee of Experts and further action needed**

15. The Committee of Experts commends the regular support, especially the important financial assistance to the speakers of German, as a minority language, including significant allocations for the *Campus Apenrade* project.<sup>14</sup> It regrets, however, that this support continues to be targeted to the Danish-German border region and not in the whole territory of Denmark, and that no new measures were taken aiming at implementing this specific recommendation for immediate action.

16. In line with its views, expressed among others in its previous evaluation of the implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action contained in its fifth evaluation report on Denmark,<sup>15</sup> the Committee of Experts reiterates its position that the extent to which a minority language is protected or promoted is, in many respects, a reflection of the majority language speakers’ approach and perception. Awareness-raising within the majority is therefore of the utmost importance, irrespective of the fact that German as a minority language is protected under the Charter in South Jutland/North Schleswig. The Committee of Experts recalls that the purpose is not only to promote knowledge of the existence of a minority language in the country, but also to inspire the majority population to value the fact that minority language speakers form an integral part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the state with their different languages and cultures. In light of Article 7.3 of the Charter, education and media are especially relevant in this respect. In light of the above, the Committee of Experts calls on the Danish authorities to step up efforts in implementing the recommendations for immediate action and report back on the activities done in this respect in the next periodical report.

17. The Committee of Experts equally recalls that as parties to the Charter, states have a legal obligation to oversee, co-ordinate and support the implementation of the provisions undertaken therein. It also points out the proactive approach state authorities are to take to enhance protection of minority languages.<sup>16</sup> The Committee of Experts welcomes that the Contact Committee for the German minority has been changed to a full-fledged parliamentary committee, and believes that it can provide for a structured and more effective consultation platform between the Danish Government, the Parliament and the German speaking minority, also in view of the effective implementation of the recommendation for immediate action.

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<sup>14</sup> A grant of €670 000 in 2025. The Campus is intended to unite different German minority institutions such as kindergartens, upper secondary school and student housing in Aabenraa (in German Apenrade). The grant is awarded with the purpose of ensuring an expansion of the educational facilities of the upper secondary school.

<sup>15</sup> See: Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action (RIA) contained in the Committee of Experts’ fifth evaluation report on Denmark, MIN-LANG (2020)13, para 17.

<sup>16</sup> See: Evaluation by the Committee of Experts of the Implementation of the Recommendation for Immediate Action (RIA) contained in the Committee of Experts’ seventh evaluation report on the Netherlands, MIN-LANG (2024)14, para 9.

18. Bearing in mind the information provided by the Danish authorities on the Common Objectives for German and History currently in place, the Committee of Experts calls on Denmark to develop, in co-operation with the speakers, a new Common Objective in the subject of German that incorporates the teaching of German as a minority language, including a focus on the history and culture of the German national minority. The Committee of Experts believes that considerations could also be given to integrate the history and culture of national minorities in the subject of History, seizing the opportunity of the ongoing process of revision of the legislation on the different school subjects. The Committee of Experts also points out the need to train teachers and provide for the availability of teaching materials that reflect such a comprehensive approach. In the meantime, it calls on the Danish authorities to encourage teachers to make use of their freedom to include raising awareness of German as a minority language in their teaching.

19. The Committee of Experts recalls that in the framework of awareness raising, media should be encouraged, without prejudice to their independence, to pay more attention to minority languages as integral parts of Denmark's history and culture. In addition, awareness of the minority languages should be raised as a component and as an expected result of mainstream journalistic training.<sup>17</sup> While acknowledging the public service contracts in place, concluded by the Ministry of Culture and the two national public broadcasters DR and TV 2, containing the obligation to provide a broad coverage of Denmark, the Committee of Experts calls on the Danish authorities to take proactive steps that the national public broadcasters are implementing these obligations. Such steps could include airtime dedicated to the German minority in public radio or television, revision of the public service contracts with more precise obligations concerning minority awareness raising, and support to newspaper media for similar initiatives/coverage.

20. The Committee of Experts notes the steps that the Danish authorities are taking in the promotion of German as a minority language in South Jutland/North Schleswig, however the recommendation for immediate action has not yet been implemented.

### **Communication to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

The Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, while acknowledging the efforts of the authorities of Denmark to comply with their undertakings under the Charter, has in its sixth evaluation report (MIN-LANG(2023)23) made "recommendations for immediate action" and "further recommendations" on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in Denmark.

In accordance with the Committee of Ministers Decisions of 28 November 2018 (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), Denmark had to present information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action, which contain the priority measures that should be taken by the state party. Denmark presented this information on 8 September 2025. In the present evaluation, the Committee of Experts has examined the implementation of these recommendations.

In accordance with its Rules of Procedure, the Committee of Experts invites the Committee of Ministers to:

1. take note of the evaluation made by the Committee of Experts of the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action by Denmark and invite the authorities of Denmark to disseminate it to the competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders;
2. reiterate its Recommendation CM/RecChL(2024)1 and invite the authorities of Denmark to present their next periodical report by 1 March 2028 in the required format.

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<sup>17</sup> Evaluation on the recommendations for immediate action from the fifth evaluation report on Slovenia, MIN-LANG (2021)11, para. 27.