Revitalising the use of regional or minority languages in public life

Strasbourg, 17 November 2026

Room 1, Palais de l'Europe

Draft Programme

9.30 – Registration and welcome coffee

10.00 - 10.45

Opening

- Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- Fatmir Gjeka, Minister for Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro
- Aleksandra **Oszmiańska-Pagett**, Chair of the Committee of Experts

Keynote speaker

Sophia Smith Galer, journalist, author of "How to kill a language"

Session co-moderated by: Ambassador Dragana Šćepanović, Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the Council of Europe, and Elise Cornu, Head of the Division of National Minorities and Minority Languages, DGII, Council of Europe

Break

11.00 -12.30

Panel I - A shared vision for the future – from planning to action

Moderator: Albert Branchadell, 1st vice-chair of the Committee of Experts

The panel will focus on the necessary measures which serve as a basis for safeguarding and promoting regional or minority languages. It will highlight the importance of planning, of a structured approach and of the joint commitment of users, authorities and society, while also showcasing success stories of language revitalisation(e.g. Manx Gaelic on the Isle of Man).

Panellists

- Siniša **Bjeković**, Protector of Human Rights and Freedom of Montenegro (Ombudsman), member of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in respect of Montenegro
- Marilena Karyolemou, University of Cyprus
- Chrissy Callaghan, Department of Education, Sport and Culture, Isle of Man
- **Měto** Nowak, Sorbian Institute, Germany

Discussion and questions from participants

12.30 Launching of the exhibition « Living Languages: Minority languages in Public Life in Montenegro», Foyer of the Committee of Ministers

Lunch break

14.00– 15.30

Panel II - Learning a language – from family to education and media

Moderator: Igor **Lakić**, member of the Committee of Experts

The panel will address the role of language transmission in the family and measures to encourage the use of regional or minority languages in private and public life, the contribution of strong educational models to language learning, and of media exposure in supporting language acquisition. It will also examine how "new speakers" play a key role in safeguarding regional or minority languages.

Panellists

- Ruth Kircher, European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)
- Maurizio Tremul, Italian Union, Croatia/Slovenia
- Gwyn Nissen, MIDAS (European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority and Regional Languages)
- Mihaela **Zătreanu**, ERIAC (European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture) Romania

Discussion and questions from participants

Coffee break

15.45 – 17.15

Panel III - Using a language – bringing regional or minority languages in public life

Moderator: Aline Kunz, member of the Committee of Experts

The panel will focus on measures which facilitate the use of regional or minority languages in different domains of public life, such as the private sector, the relations with public authorities, including at local level, courts or cultural life, and create an enabling linguistic environment giving opportunities to use the regional or minority language in daily life. It will also address the role of AI in supporting the use of regional or minority languages in public life.

Panellists

- Anna Jungner-Nordgren, Swedish Assembly in Finland
- Rogeli Montoliu Casals, Catalan Bar Council
- Manon Wynn Davies, Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner
- Cristian Vicol, German State Theatre, Timişoara

Discussion and questions from participants

17:15– 17.45

Conclusions

- Jürgen Pirker, second vice-chair of the Committee of Experts