

ALBANIA ALBANIE ANDORRA ANDORRE ARMENIA ARMÉNIE AUSTRIA AUTRICHE AZERBAIJAN AZÉRBАІDJAN BELGIUM BELGIQUE BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE BULGARIA BULGARIE CROATIA CROATIE CYPRUS CHYPRE CZECH REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE DENMARK DANEMARK ESTONIA ESTONIE FINLAND FINLANDE FRANCE FRANCE GEORGIA GEORGIE GERMANY ALLEMAGNE GREECE GRÈCE HUNGARY HONGRIE ICELAND ISLANDE IRELAND IRLANDE ITALY ITALIE LATVIA LETTONIE LIECHTENSTEIN LIECHTENSTEIN LITHUANIA LITUANIE LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBOURG MALTA MALTE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA MONACO MONACO MONTENEGRO MONTÉNÉGRO NETHERLANDS PAYS-BAS NORWAY NORVÈGE POLAND Pologne PORTUGAL PORTUGAL ROMANIA ROUMANIE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE SAN MARINO SAINT-MARIN SERBIA SERBIE SLOVAK REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE SLOVANIA SLOVÈNE SPAIN ESPAGNE SWEDEN SUÈDE SWITZERLAND SUISSE «THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA» «L'EX-RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACÉDOINE» TURKEY TURQUIE UKRAINE UKRAÏNE UNITED KINGDOM ROYAUME-UNI ALBANIA ALBANIE ANDORRA ANDORRE ARMENIA ARMÉNIE AUSTRIA AUTRICHE AZERBAIJAN AZÉRBАІDJAN BELGIUM BELGIQUE BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE BULGARIA BULGARIE CROATIA CROATIE CYPRUS CHYPRE CZECH REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE DENMARK DANEMARK ESTONIA ESTONIE FINLAND FINLANDE FRANCE FRANCE GEORGIA GEORGIE GERMANY ALLEMAGNE GREECE GRÈCE HUNGARY HONGRIE ICELAND ISLANDE IRELAND IRLANDE ITALY ITALIE LATVIA LETTONIE LIECHTENSTEIN LIECHTENSTEIN LITHUANIA LITUANIE LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBOURG MALTA MALTE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA MONACO MONACO MONTENEGRO MONTÉNÉGRO NETHERLANDS PAYS-BAS NORWAY NORVÈGE POLAND Pologne PORTUGAL PORTUGAL ROMANIA ROUMANIE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE SAN MARINO SAINT-MARIN SERBIA SERBIE SLOVAK REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE SLOVANIA SLOVÈNE SPAIN ESPAGNE SWEDEN SUÈDE SWITZERLAND SUISSE «THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA» «L'EX-RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACÉDOINE» TURKEY TURQUIE UKRAINE UKRAÏNE UNITED KINGDOM ROYAUME-UNI ALBANIA ALBANIE ANDORRA ANDORRE ARMENIA ARMÉNIE AUSTRIA AUTRICHE AZERBAIJAN AZÉRBАІDJAN BELGIUM BELGIQUE BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE BULGARIA BULGARIE CROATIA CROATIE CYPRUS CHYPRE CZECH REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE DENMARK DANEMARK ESTONIA ESTONIE FINLAND FINLANDE FRANCE FRANCE GEORGIA GEORGIE GERMANY ALLEMAGNE GREECE GRÈCE HUNGARY HONGRIE ICELAND ISLANDE IRELAND IRLANDE ITALY ITALIE LATVIA LETTONIE LIECHTENSTEIN LIECHTENSTEIN LITHUANIA LITUANIE LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBOURG MALTA MALTE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA MONACO MONACO MONTENEGRO MONTÉNÉGRO NETHERLANDS PAYS-BAS NORWAY NORVÈGE POLAND Pologne PORTUGAL PORTUGAL ROMANIA ROUMANIE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE SAN MARINO SAINT-MARIN SERBIA SERBIE SLOVAK REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE SLOVANIA SLOVÈNE SPAIN ESPAGNE SWEDEN SUÈDE SWITZERLAND SUISSE «THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA» «L'EX-RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACÉDOINE» TURKEY TURQUIE UKRAINE UKRAÏNE UNITED KINGDOM ROYAUME-UNI ALBANIA ALBANIE ANDORRA ANDORRE ARMENIA ARMÉNIE AUSTRIA AUTRICHE AZERBAIJAN AZÉRBАІDJAN BELGIUM BELGIQUE BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE BULGARIA BULGARIE CROATIA CROATIE CYPRUS CHYPRE CZECH REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE DENMARK DANEMARK ESTONIA ESTONIE FINLAND FINLANDE FRANCE FRANCE GEORGIA GEORGIE GERMANY ALLEMAGNE GREECE GRÈCE HUNGARY HONGRIE ICELAND ISLANDE IRELAND IRLANDE ITALY ITALIE LATVIA LETTONIE LIECHTENSTEIN LIECHTENSTEIN LITHUANIA LITUANIE LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBOURG MALTA MALTE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA MONACO MONACO MONTENEGRO MONTÉNÉGRO NETHERLANDS PAYS-BAS NORWAY NORVÈGE POLAND Pologne PORTUGAL PORTUGAL ROMANIA ROUMANIE RUSSIAN FEDERATION FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE SAN MARINO SAINT-MARIN SERBIA SERBIE SLOVAK REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE SLOVANIA SLOVÈNE SPAIN ESPAGNE SWEDEN SUÈDE SWITZERLAND SUISSE «THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA» «L'EX-RÉPUBLIQUE YOUGOSLAVE DE MACÉDOINE» TURKEY TURQUIE UKRAINE UKRAÏNE UNITED KINGDOM ROYAUME-UNI

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# Assessment report

## Impact of the decentralization reform on national minorities in Ukraine in the selected regions: Chernivtsi, Odesa and Zakarpattia oblasts

Sergiu Constantin

## Contents

- The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities
- Participation of national minorities in decision-making of amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs)

## The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities

- **General assessment of the decentralization reform (DR)**
  - Overall positive (all categories of respondents).
  - More nuanced opinions among representatives of national minorities' NGOs and umbrella organizations (UOs).
- **Access to information, awareness about DR & consultations**
  - Low quality (or even lack) of information; unstable legal framework.
  - Credibility gap, public scepticism, disinformation (Zakarpattia, Odesa).
  - Lack of consultation with minority organisations (Chernivtsi).

## The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities

- **Minority issues in public debates during the amalgamation process**
    - Relevance of “ethnic factor” among criteria for the ATCs establishment.
    - Divergent opinions among NGOs & UOs => both minority-related and context-related factors.
    - Significant differences between Odesa, Zakarpattya and Chernivtsi.
- Odesa:** “ethnic card” and “us vs them” narrative; ATC formation blocked in the southern part; mainly technical & administrative criteria in the rest of the oblast.
- Zakarpattya:** “risk of separatism”; prejudice against the Roma; ATC formation based on technical & administrative criteria + the position of minority communities.
- Chernivtsi:** no harsh debates on minority issues; focus on opportunities, economic development => ATCs based on mainly technical & administrative criteria.

## The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities

- **Positive aspects, hopes and expectations**
  - Decisions closer to community; policies tailored to local needs; financial autonomy; improvement of infrastructure and services; decision-making on minority education, cross-border cooperation etc.
  - Positive aspects reported mainly by representatives of small and/or geographically dispersed national minorities.
- **Negative aspects, fears and concerns**
  - closure/downgrading of minority schools, impact on the use of minority languages in public sphere, loss of cultural identity, less influence on decision-making; lower representation of minorities at ATC level etc.
  - Most respondents mentioned some of these negative aspects, challenges or risks.

## The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities

- **Tentative picture of ethnic composition of the established ATCs**
  - **Chernivtsi:** 52 ATCs; 16 of these ATCs have over 50% minority population.
  - **Zakarpattya:** 64 ATCs; no clear information on their ethnic structure; according to respondents most newly established ATC are polyethnic; at least 2 ATCs have over 50% minority population.
  - **Odesa:** 91 ATCs; no clear information on their ethnic structure; 7 districts and 1 one oblast status city in the southern part have over 50% minority population; 2 ATCs in this area have a significant minority population.

## The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities

- **Use of minority languages in public sphere in the context of DR**
  - Divergent opinions among representatives of NGOs and UOs => different needs and expectations of national minorities.
  - Decentralisation and language policy reforms have different goals but an intertwined effect on national minorities.
  - Lack of awareness in the 3 oblasts about the intertwined impact on the use of minority languages; most respondents did not see changes.
  - Changes regarding the use of minority languages in public sphere => legal framework and language policy; what role for local authorities?

## The impact of decentralization reform on national minorities

- **Education for national minorities in the context of DR**
  - Divergent opinions among representatives of NGOs and UOs => different needs and expectations of national minorities.
  - Decentralisation and education system reforms have different goals but an intertwined effect on national minorities.
  - High level of awareness about education-related issues in the 3 oblasts.
  - Teaching *in* or *of* minority languages in schools of ATCs => legal framework on education + request from local population + proactive role of local authorities



## Participation of national minorities in decision-making of ATCs

- **Effective participation of national minorities** => *representation of, consultation with and influence of* national minorities in decision-making.
  - Without updated and reliable statistical and electoral data, it is hardly possible to assess the level of minority representation.
  - Divergent opinions regarding the impact of DR on representation but shared criticism of new electoral rules.
  - Lack of awareness and information regarding the impact of DR on minority representation; potential negative impact

## Participation of national minorities in decision-making of ATCs

- Lack of awareness regarding how to translate representation into influence on the decision-making process.
- Most respondents noted a low level of activity and effectiveness of existing consultative bodies; but increasing interest in the 3 oblasts in engaging with new consultative and participatory mechanisms.
- Little or no information is available about participation of women, youth and other vulnerable groups.
- Need to enhance the capacities of local civil society and support civic projects and cross-community activities.

Thank you for your attention!

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