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**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES**

**Evaluation by the Committee of Experts  
of the Implementation of the Recommendations for Immediate Action  
in the fifth monitoring cycle for  
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 was ratified by Denmark on 8 September 2000, entered into force on 1 January 2001 and applies to the German language (covered by Parts II and III).
2. The Committee of Experts monitors the implementation of the Charter. On the basis of periodical reports presented by each State Party, the Committee of Experts adopts evaluation reports 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 the evaluation report, the Committee of Ministers addresses additional recommendations to the State Party.
3. The State Party must present information only on the implementation of the **recommendations for immediate action** two and a half years after the due date of its periodical report.<sup>1</sup> The Committee of Experts then adopts an evaluation of the implementation of these recommendations. Two and a half years after the due date of the information, the State Party must present its next periodical report which shall contain comprehensive information about the implementation of all Charter undertakings and all recommendations.
4. In accordance with the Committee of Ministers Decisions of 2018 “Strengthening the monitoring mechanism of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” (CM/Del/Dec(2018)1330/10.4e), in the transition period Denmark was expected to present **information on the implementation of the recommendations for immediate action** by 1 January 2020. However, the fifth evaluation report<sup>2</sup> on Denmark of 20 June 2017 did not yet differentiate between recommendations for immediate action and further recommendations. To comply with the spirit of the Committee of Ministers Decisions, Denmark agreed to submit information on the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, for the purposes of this evaluation, these will be considered as recommendations for immediate action. The information was submitted by Denmark on 25 May 2020. This **evaluation** is based on the information received from Denmark as well as from the association representing the German 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 fifth evaluation report. The Committee of Experts will examine the implementation of all of the recommendations concerning German in the next evaluation report.
5. This evaluation was adopted by the Committee of Experts on 8 October 2020.

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<sup>1</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>2</sup> [CM\(2017\)117](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CM/RecChL\(2017\)4](#)

<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

### Recommendation

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

### Implementation measures taken by the Danish authorities

6. The Danish authorities continue to provide to the German-language newspaper *Der Nordschleswiger* a subsidy used for producing news in German and buying airtime on a local radio station. The newspaper also receives, from the Danish media subsidy scheme, an annual subsidy (available to any newspaper in Denmark) for the production of printed or digital content and a grant, under the Finance Act of 2018, to develop digital media.

7. The Danish authorities also refer to the obligations of DR and TV 2, national public service broadcasters, as well as of TV SYD, one of the regional public service broadcasters and of TV 2 for Southern Denmark. Thus, DR and TV 2, pursuant to their public service contract and license, respectively have obligations 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”. In addition, DR is obliged to “put emphasis on the coverage of minorities in the Danish-German border area”. As a result of its public service contract, TV SYD is required to highlight its regional affiliation and therefore its obligation is to “reflect the diversity of culture, philosophy of life and living conditions” in the region. Furthermore, TV SYD has to put emphasis on the living conditions in the Danish-German border area.

8. In a statement submitted to the Committee of Experts, representatives of the German speakers indicate their interest in producing video content and disseminating up-to-date information on the German minority, in German and in Danish.

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

9. The Committee of Experts welcomes the continued support provided to the newspaper *Der Nordschleswiger* for the production and broadcasting of radio news, a long-standing project of the German minority.<sup>5</sup> It nevertheless notes that these news programmes still only amount to approximately two daily two-minute broadcasts in German.<sup>6</sup> This broadcast duration should be significantly increased in order to have a real impact on the promotion of German and meet the Charter requirements with respect to the undertakings in the field of media.

10. As far as television is concerned, the Committee of Experts notes that the obligations of the public service broadcasters to provide information about the minorities in the Danish-German border region do not result in broadcasting television programmes in German.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, they may be relevant for raising awareness about the German minority and German as a minority language throughout Denmark (see below in paragraph 19).

11. Bearing in mind the significant role broadcasting media have for the promotion and protection of minority languages, the Committee of Experts underlines the need for concrete steps to be taken, in close co-operation with the German speakers and taking into consideration their needs and wishes, in order to provide radio and television broadcasting in German at an adequate level, including by using new media.

<sup>5</sup> See 2<sup>nd</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Denmark, ECRML (2007) 6, paragraph 82

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.nordschleswiger.dk/de/unsere-digitale-zukunft/newsletter-jetzt-auch-zum-hoeren>; see also Fifth Opinion on Denmark of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ACFC/OP/V (2019)003, paragraph 99

<sup>7</sup> See also Fifth Opinion on Denmark of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ACFC/OP/V (2019)003, paragraph 96

## Recommendation

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

### Implementation measures taken by the Danish authorities

12. The Danish authorities have taken measures to strengthen knowledge of German, targeting in particular education. They have provided funding to the project *Grenzgenial*, run by the German minority, a digital platform supporting the teaching of German in Danish primary schools. In 2017, a strategy for strengthening foreign languages in the Danish education system was launched. In 2018, the Danish National Centre for Foreign Language was established. An exchange agreement for upper secondary school students is currently being negotiated with the German authorities.

13. In 2018, the “Germany Effort”, a three-year strategy focused on strengthening economic co-operation with Germany, was launched. It aims, *inter alia*, at increasing knowledge about Germany and of the German language and includes initiatives in the education sector and exchange programmes. The “Germany Effort” concludes in 2020 with the Danish-German Year of Friendship, which is co-ordinated with other projects celebrating “The Centenary of the Denmark’s Reunion with Southern Jutland”. However, due to the COVID-19 containment measures, many of the planned actions had to be postponed.

14. In 2019, the Danish authorities decided to nominate the Danish-German minority protection model in the border region to UNESCO’s Register of Good Safeguarding Practices under the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In co-operation with Germany, the file for submission to UNESCO in 2020 is currently being prepared.

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

15. The Committee of Experts welcomes the initiatives, including at bilateral level, highlighting the Danish-German relation. Depending on the way they are designed, such initiatives may be an opportunity to also raise awareness and appreciation of national minorities and their role in the respective countries, in this case the German minority in Denmark. The Committee welcomes the decision to nominate the Danish-German minority protection model in the border region to UNESCO’s Register of Good Safeguarding Practices, which was an initiative of the Danish minority in Germany and of the German minority in Denmark.

16. The Committee of Experts notes, however, that some of the measures taken focus more on Germany and on German as a foreign language. While they may have a positive impact, it is important, vis-à-vis the Charter and the implementation of this recommendation, that measures aim at increasing the awareness of and the appreciation for German as a minority language in Denmark.

17. As already indicated by the Committee of Experts<sup>8</sup>, 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. The purpose is not only to promote knowledge of the existence of minority languages in a country, but 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.

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, 4<sup>th</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Slovenia ECRML(2014)5, paragraph 83, 4<sup>th</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Slovakia, ECRML (2016) 2, paragraph 69

18. As far as education is concerned, it is important to inform both the majority and minority population of the existence and value of minority languages and include the culture and history of minority language speakers in the national curricula.<sup>9</sup>

19. In the field of media, the Committee of Experts welcomes the information on the obligations of the public broadcaster DR to provide information about the minorities in the Danish-German border region. It looks forward to receiving information about how this obligation is implemented in practice with respect to the German minority in Denmark. The interest of the German speakers to produce video content and disseminate up-to-date information about the German minority, in German and in Danish, indicates that there is still a need for awareness raising in this respect.

20. The Committee of Experts was also informed about the request made by the German minority on 11 September 2019 to the Danish authorities regarding the acceptance of additional undertakings of the Charter with respect to German, pursuant to Article 3.2. As this is one its recommendations in previous reports<sup>10</sup>, the Committee of Experts looks forward to further developments in this respect. Such a step would contribute to further raise the awareness and appreciation of German as a minority language and once again confirm the commitment of Denmark to minority language protection and promotion in the spirit of the Charter.

21. In the context of awareness raising, the Committee of Experts emphasises the importance of regular dialogue between the authorities and the national minority representatives. The Danish Contact Committee for the German minority, comprising representatives of all political parties in the parliament, and the technical meetings convened by the Ministry of Culture with different authorities provide the necessary framework. The 56<sup>th</sup> session of the Danish Contact Committee took place in June 2020 in online form. However, according to the German minority, the latter technical meetings, which deal with specific matters concerning the implementation of the Charter, have not been organised for several years. The Committee of Experts considers that these meetings need to be convened regularly in order to allow for a continuous dialogue on the implementation of the Charter and of the monitoring recommendations.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See 1<sup>st</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Croatia, ECRML (2001)2, para. 42; see also Fifth Opinion on Denmark of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ACFC/OP/V (2019)003, paragraph 121

<sup>10</sup> See CM (2017)117, Fifth report of the Committee of Experts in respect of Denmark, paragraph 8, 4th report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter by Denmark, ECRML (2014) 9, paragraph 13, 3<sup>rd</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter by Denmark ECRML (2011) 1, paragraph 13

<sup>11</sup> See also 3<sup>rd</sup> report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Denmark, ECRML (2011)1, paragraph 42, 4th report of the Committee of Experts on the application of the Charter in Denmark, ECRML (2014)9, paragraph 44

## **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 Danish authorities to comply with their undertakings under the Charter, has in its fifth evaluation report (CM(2017)7) made recommendations on how to improve the protection and promotion of the regional or minority languages in Denmark. On the basis of this evaluation report, the Committee of Ministers adopted its recommendations (CM/RecChL(2017)4).

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. For the purposes of the present evaluation, the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers have been considered as recommendations for immediate action. Denmark presented this information on 25 May 2020. 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 Danish authorities to disseminate it to the competent national authorities and relevant stakeholders;
2. reiterate its Recommendation CM/RecChL(2017)4 and invite the Danish authorities to present their next periodical report by 1 January 2023 in the required format.