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**EUROPEAN CHARTER FOR REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES**

**Seventh periodical report**  
**presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe**  
**in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter**

**GERMANY**



# *Seventh Report*

## **of the Federal Republic of Germany**

in accordance with Article 15 (1)

of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

### **Germany's Seventh Report at a glance**

By submitting its Seventh Country Report, the Federal Republic complies with its obligation under Article 15 (1) to provide the Council of Europe with comprehensive information on the measures taken to implement the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (short: Language Charter) is an international instrument of the Council of Europe that was adopted on 24 June 1992. In Germany, it took effect on 1 January 1999.

The Language Charter aims to protect and promote the regional or minority languages spoken in a Contracting State as part of the European cultural heritage. In Germany, the minority languages protected under the Charter are Danish, Upper and Lower Sorbian, North Frisian and Saterland Frisian, and the Romani language of the German Sinti and Roma; Low German is protected as a regional language. The comprehensive set of rules provided by the Language Charter is designed to guarantee the preservation of these languages and to promote their use in public and private life. This contributes to the promotion of equal living conditions in the predominantly rural regions where regional and minority languages are spoken. Both the Federation and the federal states have taken on an extensive catalogue of concrete obligations, which have been selected in keeping with the situation of the individual languages and which are binding under international law.

The Seventh Country Report for the period from December 2017 to April 2021 describes in detail the measures taken by the Federation and the federal states at the political level, in the field of legislation and in practice to implement the Language Charter. The Report also contains comments on the part of the Federation and the federal states on the current recommendations of the Committee of Ministers.

The national minorities and the Low German language group have been involved in the drafting of this country report, and their comments have been included.

The most important developments in the reporting period include the following:

- Statutory ordinance expanding the application of the Language Charter: Schleswig-Holstein has signed up to additional obligations in accordance with the Language Charter for Danish, Frisian and Low German; these obligations are related to administrative documents, place names and cultural activities.
- Fourth funding agreement for the Foundation for the Sorbian People (Stiftung für das Sorbische Volk): The Federation, the Free State of Saxony and the federal state of Brandenburg have agreed a new funding agreement. Following the signature by the three funding providers, the agreement will take effect retrogradely per 1 January 2021 and remain in force until the end of 2025.
- Secretariat of the Federal Council for Low German (Bundesrat für Niederdeutsch): The Secretariat for Low German which was set up in autumn 2017, is operational and took over the management of the Federal Council for Low German on 1 January 2018. Since then, it has received funding from the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.
- Establishment of the Centre for Low German (*Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH* (LzN)): The federal states of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Bremen and Hamburg established the Centre for Low German with effect from 1 January 2018; the task of the Centre is to protect, preserve and develop the regional language of Low German.
- Establishment of the Foundation for the Frisian Ethnic Group: The Schleswig-Holstein state government established the “Friisk Stifting” (Frisian Foundation) on 30 January 2020 for the purposes, amongst others, of fostering Frisian art and culture, preserving the Frisian language and promoting adult education and local history and geography.
- European Roma - Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) (*Europäisches Roma-Institut für Kunst und Kultur*): In 2020, with the support of the Federal Foreign Office, the Institute, which was founded in Berlin in 2017, launched the “Initiative zur Kulturgeschichte der Roma” (Roma Cultural History Initiative), a key component of which is to promote the Romani language.
- Update of the brochure “Nationale Minderheiten – Minderheiten und Regionalsprachen in Deutschland” (National Minorities – Minorities and Regional

Languages in Germany): In early 2021 and as part of its public relations activities, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community published the fourth updated edition of this brochure which was first published in 2012.

This report is to be examined by the Council of Europe Committee of Experts and will be submitted for adoption to the Committee of Ministers – including, if appropriate, references to implementation deficits and proposals for recommendations to the contracting state.

Subsequently, the country report will be published by the Council of Europe.

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## **A.Preliminary remarks**

The Seventh Periodical Report of the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Article 15 (1) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (the Charter) was prepared by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, BMI) in cooperation with other federal ministries and the responsible state authorities, and in consultation with the organisations/associations of the speakers of the languages protected by the Charter.

The federal associations were invited to share their views about the implementation of the Charter in Germany, which do not have to be in line with those of the authorities. Their comments are included in Section F of this report.

In April 2021, an implementation conference to finalise the periodical report was held in an online format, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report covers the period from December 2017 to April 2021.

The structure of the report is based on the new requirements adopted by the Committee of Ministers which have applied since 1 July 2019. Where this was necessary for illustrative or substantive reasons, sub-sections in Section E have been partially summarised. This applies in particular to the obligations signed up to by the respective federal states, for which there have been no significant changes compared to the previous reporting periods so that a renewed presentation of their activities was dispensed with, providing a cross-reference to the relevant publication reference where appropriate.

General information about the regional and minority languages protected in Germany is included in the First Report of the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Article 15 (1) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages on pages 3 to 28. This report can be accessed on the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community website (<https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/startseite/startseite-node.html>).

## **B. Updated geographic and demographic information**

The geographic and demographic information has not changed in the reporting period.

The obligation pursuant to Article 10 (1) (a) (v) of the Charter which **Schleswig-Holstein** has signed up to for the Danish language, is also implemented in the urban district of Kiel by virtue of the amendment of section 82 (b) (1) (1) of the Schleswig-Holstein Land Administration Act (*Landesverwaltungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein, LVwG*) of 25 September 2018. This means that in derogation from section 82 (a) (2) of the Schleswig-Holstein Land Administration Act, applications may be made and submissions, documentary evidence, certificates and other documents presented in Danish to authorities in the districts of Nordfriesland, Schleswig-Flensburg and Rendsburg-Eckernförde and in the urban districts of Flensburg and Kiel.

This amendment does not affect the geographical scope of the minority language (North) Frisian and the regional language Low German as defined in this paragraph.

## C. General developments

The first part of the report addresses general developments concerning the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages in the Federal Republic of Germany since the previous report which was submitted to the Council of Europe Secretary General on 22 December 2017.

### I. Changed framework conditions

#### 1. Schleswig-Holstein expands the application of the Charter

Schleswig-Holstein has signed up to additional obligations in accordance with the language Charter for Danish, Frisian and Low German; these obligations are related to administrative documents, place names and cultural activities. In 2019, the Head of the Schleswig-Holstein State chancellery had called upon the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community which has the lead on these matters within the federal government, to initiate the necessary notification procedure with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

The declaration expanding the application of the Charter did not require a law within the meaning of Article 59 (2) (1) of the Basic Law. Instead, a statutory ordinance issued by the Federal Government pursuant to Article 2 of the Second Act on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of the Council of Europe of 11 September 2002 was sufficient; the languages in question and the obligations under Part III of the Charter are finally defined and known. Following the consent of the Bundesrat on 18 September 2020, the Federal Government issued the ordinance on 15 October 2020 (Federal Law Gazette 2020 II page 742). The expansion was notified to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 8 January 2021 with effect from 7 January 2021 (notification ref. JJ9160C Tr./148-59).

Schleswig-Holstein has entered into the following new commitments:

- Article 10 (1) (c) for Danish and Frisian
- Article 10 (2) (g) for Danish and Low German
- Article 12 (1) (a) and (b) for Danish

- Article 12 (1) (e) for Low German

## **2. Fourth funding agreement for the Foundation for the Sorbian People (Stiftung für das Sorbische Volk)**

**The Federal Government, the Free State of Saxony and the federal state of Brandenburg** signed a fourth agreement on joint funding for the Foundation for the Sorbian People. Following the signature by the three funding providers, the agreement will take effect retrogradely per 1 January 2021 and remain in force until the end of 2025. Under the fourth funding agreement, the Federal Government will provide €11.96 million per annum, while the Free State of Saxony and the federal state of Brandenburg will contribute €7.97 million and €3.99 million, respectively. The total funding provided to the foundation by the three funding partners thus increases from €18.6 million at present to €23.92 million annually. The funding shares of the three funding partners were continued along the lines of the third funding agreement: three sixths of the funding are provided by the Federal Government, two sixths by the Free State of Saxony and one sixth by the federal state of Brandenburg.

In addition, the Federal Government and the federal states of Brandenburg and Saxony may in accordance with Article 2 of the funding agreement provide benefits beyond those specified in Article 1.

## **3. Structural Reinforcement Act**

On 14 April 2020, the Structural Reinforcement Act for Mining Regions (*Strukturstärkungsgesetz Kohleregionen, StStG*) entered into force, implementing the recommendations of the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment (*Kommission "Wachstum, Strukturwandel und Beschäftigung"*).

Pursuant to section 17 (31) of the Structural Reinforcement Act, the Federal Government supports measures to promote the preservation and development of the language, culture and traditions of the Sorbian people as a national minority.

## **4. Second amendment of the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs/Wends 2018**

In October 2018, the Brandenburg Act on the Rights of the Sorbs/Wends (*Sorben/Wenden-Gesetz, SWG*) was amended for the second time (the text of the act is

available at: <https://bravors.brandenburg.de/gesetze/swg>). An important new feature introduced by the legal amendment is the compulsory appointment of full-time Commissioners for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs in the rural districts of Dahme-Spreewald, Oberpreewald-Lausitz, Spree-Neiße/Sprjewja-Nysa and the urban district of Cottbus/Chóšebuz, each with a full-time post financed by the federal state of Brandenburg. As a result of this legal amendment, the administrative regulations on the SWG were also revised (the text of the administrative regulations on the SWG is available at:

[https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/sorben\\_wenden\\_2019](https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/sorben_wenden_2019)). The amended versions of the SWG and the relevant administrative regulations entered into force on 1 January 2019. The Ordinance on the Reimbursement of Additional Expenses of Applying the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs/Wends (*Verordnung über die Erstattung des Zusatzaufwandes aus der Anwendung des Sorben/Wenden-Gesetzes, ASGKostenV*) has also been revised and entered into force on 2 October 2020. The text of the Ordinance is available at:

<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verordnungen/swgkostenv>).

In November 2018, the Act on e-Government in the state of Brandenburg (*Gesetz über die elektronische Verwaltung im Land Brandenburg, BbgEGovG*) became effective; <https://bravors.brandenburg.de/gesetze/bbgegogv>). This act stipulates among other things that electronic government services must be provided in such a way as to guarantee the rights conferred by the SWG to use the Lower Sorbian language in the administration.

In 2019, the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the SWG was celebrated with a public event in Cottbus/Chóšebuz. The accompanying publication published by the Brandenburg State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture also mentions the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Language Charter.

## **5. Establishment of the Foundation for the Frisian Ethnic Group in the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein (Stiftung für die Friesische Volksgruppe im Land Schleswig-Holstein)**

With the entry into force of the relevant establishment act, the **state government of Schleswig-Holstein** established the Foundation for the Frisian Ethnic Group in the

Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein (Frisian Foundation). It carries the Frisian name “Friisk Stifting”. The purpose of the foundation is to promote culture and the arts; preserve the language; support general education and research as well as to preserve local traditions and customs, all with reference to the Frisian ethnic group in Schleswig-Holstein; and to promote cooperation among the different Frisian groups. The four most important associations of the Frisian ethnic group in Schleswig-Holstein are represented with voting rights on the foundation board which is the foundation’s decision-making body. The Frisian body set up at the state parliament of Schleswig-Holstein acts as an advisory body. The establishment of the Frisian Foundation is an active commitment on the part of the state of Schleswig-Holstein to the long-term protection and safeguarding of the Frisian ethnic group. The Frisian Foundation brings together all funding that is provided by the Federal Government (the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media - BKM) and the state of Schleswig-Holstein (State Ministry for Education, Science and Culture) for the Frisians. The Frisian Foundation started its work with its constituent meeting on 26 August 2020. The first meeting of the foundation board was held on 21 January 2021 to decide on the first project applications.

#### **6. Mina-Witkojc-Prize instituted by the federal state of Brandenburg**

Since 2018, the **federal state of Brandenburg** has been awarding the biennial Mina-Witkojc-Prize as a state prize for special commitment to the Sorbian/Wendish language, especially the Lower Sorbian language. The prize which is worth €2,500 serves to publicly recognize and make this commitment visible.

#### **7. New working bases for Low German in the federal state of Brandenburg**

On 19 February 2018, an agreement providing a basis for the cooperation between the federal state of Brandenburg and the Low German language group was concluded between the Association for Low German in the federal state of Brandenburg (Verein für Niederdeutsch im Land Brandenburg e.V.) and the Brandenburg State Minister for Science, Research and Culture

([https://bravors.brandenburg.de/br2/sixcms/media.php/76/Amtsblatt%209\\_18.pdf](https://bravors.brandenburg.de/br2/sixcms/media.php/76/Amtsblatt%209_18.pdf)).

In this agreement, the federal state of Brandenburg also declares its commitment to the



obligations assumed under Part III of the Charter stating that its actions will be guided by these objectives.

On 20 February 2020, the decree on “Bilingual German-Low German labelling of the traffic sign Z 310 of the Road Traffic Regulations” („Zweisprachige deutsch-niederdeutsche Beschriftung des Verkehrszeichens Z 310 der Straßenverkehrs-Ordnung“) became effective

([https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/z\\_310\\_stvo\\_2020](https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verwaltungsvorschriften/z_310_stvo_2020)), on the basis of which bilingual signposts indicating the names of localities can now also be provided in Low German in the state of Brandenburg.

On 7 May 2020, the new assignment of responsibilities among the supreme state authorities in Brandenburg was announced

(<https://bravors.brandenburg.de/verordnungen/gbol>). Responsibility for matters relating to Low German has now for the first time been made publicly visible and explicitly assigned to the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture.

## **8. New working bases for Romani in the federal state of Brandenburg**

On 1 October 2018, the Berlin/Brandenburg Land Association of German Sinti and Roma (Landesverband Deutscher Sinti und Roma Berlin-Brandenburg e.V.) and the Brandenburg State Minister for Science, Research and Culture concluded an agreement regarding the bases of their cooperation

([https://bravors.brandenburg.de/br2/sixcms/media.php/76/Amtsblatt%2043\\_18.pdf](https://bravors.brandenburg.de/br2/sixcms/media.php/76/Amtsblatt%2043_18.pdf)).

This agreement also contains a reference to Part II of the Language Charter. Given the interests of the German Sinti and Roma in Brandenburg, further measures for Romani are not the focus of the agreement.

## **9. Further changes**

On 25 March 2021, the Brandenburg State Parliament adopted the motion “to introduce a multilingualism strategy for the federal state of Brandenburg and to continue strengthening Brandenburg’s traditional regional and minority languages” (State Parliament printed paper 7/3204-B). Among other things, the motion calls on the state government to consider the assumption of further obligations under the Charter and

other measures for regional and minority languages. A report on the implementation progress will be provided in the next reporting period.

The **federal state of Hesse** reports that on 6 September 2017, a state treaty was signed between the state of Hesse and the Hesse section of the Association of German Sinti and Roma. The relevant law was enacted on 25 November 2017. The existing framework agreement was thus incorporated into a state treaty. From 1 January 2018, funding for the work of the secretariat of the Hesse section of the Association of German Sinti and Roma was increased by €100,000 in accordance with the state treaty.

The **federal state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** reports that based on a mandate issued by the state parliament and with the involvement of the Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V. and the Consultative Council for the Preservation of Regional Traditions and the Low German Language (Beirat für Heimatpflege und Niederdeutsch) at the Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, the State Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalisation in its capacity as the state's supreme transport authority examined the proposal to introduce an extra signpost for Low German place names in the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in accordance with section III (16) (a), third sentence of the General Administrative Regulation on the Road Traffic Regulations regarding sections 39 to 43 (margin number 46) and that in March 2021 it resolved to introduce such an extra signpost for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. The optional use of extra signposts in Low German which refer to traditional Low German place names at the village entrance is intended to fulfil the mandate to promote Low German laid down in Article 16 (2) of the state constitution of Mecklenburg- Western Pomerania.

In **Lower Saxony**, the budget legislature has made available additional budget funds in the year 2020 for the promotion of Low German and Sater Frisian and for the regional associations (Landschaften und Landschaftsverbände); these funds amount to €380,000 per annum, of which €30,000 are earmarked for the Oldenburgische Landschaft for the promotion of Sater Frisian.

Moreover, regional associations (Landschaften and Landschaftsverbände) may obtain regional cultural funding (total volume €2.9 million) for important regional cultural projects, e.g. for the Low German language and the Sater Frisian minority language, below €10,000.

The state government of **Schleswig-Holstein** adopted its Language Policy Action Plan in the context of regional or minority languages for the 19th legislative term (state parliament briefing 19/264) on 17 November 2020 with the aim of strengthening, promoting and raising public awareness of Schleswig-Holstein's unique linguistic diversity. In doing so, it builds on the action plan for the 18th legislative term. With the 2020 action plan, the focus in the priority areas of education, media and added value is now shifting from language acquisition to public perception and visibility of languages. Education remains one of the key policy areas for the preservation and protection of regional and minority languages. In addition, measures are being taken to promote the media presence of regional and minority languages and highlight the added value they create in the fields of work, school, basic and advanced training and voluntary work.

The **Free State of Thuringia** reports that a "Joint Declaration on the Cooperation between the Government of the Free State of Thuringia and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma" was concluded on 2 May 2017, which provides as follows: "The Government of the Free State of Thuringia and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma work to counter any form of discrimination and marginalisation of members of this minority and to ban antigypsyism in society. Members of the minority must be protected from all acts which compromise their ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity. The authorities have a duty to protect minorities in their actions. This includes avoiding discriminatory terms for minorities both in internal and external communications."

## **II. Annual implementation conference**

Annual implementation conferences taking place at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community accompany the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Language Charter. Participants are the federal

ministries dealing with the protection of minorities as well as minority and regional languages, the responsible state authorities, the associations and organisations of the minorities and language groups protected by the Convention and Charter and their research institutions.

Over the past years, the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities also attended the implementation conferences. With a view to preparing the Seventh Periodical Report, the 2019 implementation conference discussed among other things recommendations 1 and 2 that were issued by the Committee of Ministers in response to the Sixth Report of the Federal Republic of Germany on the Implementation of the Language Charter. This meeting was also attended by a representative of the Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as a guest.

Another focus topic of this implementation conference was the implementation of the Online Access Act which makes it mandatory for agencies at federal, state and local level to offer their administrative services also online by the end of 2022. In this context, the inclusion of minority languages in digital application processes was discussed in order to comply with the commitments made under Article 10 of the Language Charter even under these new conditions.

On 12 and 13 April 2021, the last implementation conference to finalise the Seventh Periodical Report took place in a digital format. On the second day of the online event, the conference addressed the focus topic “integrating the transfer of knowledge about the four national minorities in Germany and the regional language of Low German into the curricula for general schools nationwide”; the Standing conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the federal states (Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK) was also represented at this session.

### **III. Secretariat of the Federal Council for Low German (Bundesrat für Niederdeutsch)**

In autumn 2017, the Secretariat of the Federal Council for Low German - the Secretariat for Low German (Niederdeutschsekretariat) with a full-time director in Hamburg providing organisational and conceptual support to the Federal Council for Low German and its volunteer delegates was set up with funding provided by the **Federal Ministry of the**

**Interior, Building and Community** (Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, BMI). As of 1 January 2018, the Secretariat for Low German took over the management of the Federal Council for Low German and has since received funding from the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.

Furthermore, projects run by the Secretariat for Low German also regularly receive project funding from the **Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media** (Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien).

The federal state of **Brandenburg** (Ministry for Science, Research and Culture) provides €5,000 per annum for projects of the Federal Council for Low German that involve more than one federal state and are coordinated and implemented by the Secretariat for Low German.

#### **IV. The Institute for Low German (Institut für niederdeutsche Sprache e.V.)**

As part of information policy measures, two projects run by the Institute for Low German (Institut für niederdeutsche Sprache, INS) were funded by the **Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community** in 2018.

On the one hand, the Institute for Low German drew up a calendar for 2019. The calendar focused on Low German words which are to be explored along various dimensions, highlighting the origin, meaning and use of the words. These etymological excursions were meant to provide knowledgeable and popularised information inspiring not only those with an interest in languages but the general public with a general and non-specific interest for the regional language Low German

On the other hand, the INS presented an exhibition designed to make the diversity of the Low German language accessible to all citizens, using the theatre as an example. The exhibition was opened at the Haus der Bürgerschaft (the seat of Bremen's state parliament) in December 2018 and was subsequently run as a travelling exhibition by the INS.

In 2019, the **Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media** sponsored the “partial re-organisation of the library and updating of the website” project and in 2020 the “establishment of a sound archive” project run by the INS.

The federal states of **Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein** refer to their contributions to the Sixth Periodical Report.

## **V. The State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH)**

Projects run by the State Centre for Low German regularly receive project funding from the **Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media**.

Following the end of the joint inter-state funding that was provided by the **states of Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Bremen and Hamburg** to the Institute for Low German until 31 December 2017, these federal states established the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN) as of 1 January 2018. All four federal states involved tasked the State Centre with supporting them in fulfilling the commitments they have entered into under the European Language Charter.

The State Centre’s activities focus on the protection, preservation and development of Low German. The State Centre coordinates these objectives across federal states, closely involving associations, volunteers and academic institutions. The State Centre’s mission is to transfer knowledge about the Low German language across a wide range of areas. The fields covered by the bodies working in this field include education, church, nursing care and culture. Support for voluntary work and the promotion of young people are further priorities.

The LzN plays a significant role in the fields of education and culture and a more application-oriented transfer from the academic community. In this context, the LzN contributes, in cooperation with the scientific professionals, to the dissemination of information in the field of Low German language and literature studies, encouraging exchange also in this field.

There is also close coordination with the political representatives at federal and state level as well as with the members of the Federal Council for Low German and the Low German Secretariat. The State Centre also gets engaged in overarching issues and public life, developing modern forms of cooperation and formats for teaching Low German in consultation with regional stakeholders.

The State Centre for Low German is increasingly using state-of-the-art technologies, including new media for language learning. For example, it supports the development of audio guides, digital learning environments and offers a broad range of online seminars. It thus plays a key role in anchoring and preserving the Low German language in the communities.

The federal states of Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein jointly fund the State Centre for Low German with a total of €271,000 per annum. All four states hold an equal share in the new corporation and assume their technical responsibility jointly and on an equal footing in a supervisory board.

On the supervisory board, Schleswig-Holstein is represented by the Minister-President's Commissioner for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German.

With regard to the State Centre for Low German established by the federal states of Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, the federal state of **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** has declared that it will not participate but focus its resources on the implementation of its state programme "My home – My modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania" and, in this context, on the development of the competence centre for Low German didactics set up at Greifswald University. In practise, direct cooperation between the State Centre and the competence centre is ensured.

## **VI. Brochure published by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community**

To increase public awareness of the national minorities in Germany and their languages, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community published the brochure "Nationale Minderheiten - Minderheiten- und Regionalsprachen in Deutschland" (National Minorities, Minority and Regional Languages in Germany) for the first time in 2012.

Subsequently, the brochure was updated and its third edition was made available on the Ministry's website in 2015.

This brochure was also published in English in March 2016.

The third edition of the brochure was updated in 2019/2020 and the revised fourth edition was published on 9 February 2021

(<https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/DE/publikationen/themen/heimat-integration/nationale-minderheiten/minderheiten-und-regionalsprachen-vierte-auflage.html>). An English translation is to be published in 2022.



## D. Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers

### I. Recommendation 1

*The Committee of Ministers recommended that the provision of education for lower Sorbian, North and Sater Frisian, Low German and Romani be strengthened.*

#### 1. Lower Sorbian

The **Land Brandenburg** has made available €400,000 each in 2019 and 2020 and €540,000 in 2021 for daycare centres with Sorbian/Wendish educational programmes. This is primarily intended to compensate for the increased staffing costs, including training. The use of funding is intended in particular to strengthen and expand language acquisition services (especially in the adult-language Witaj daycare centres), to keep families and experts alive and to expand their interest in these services, and to support follow-up educational processes in Sorbian/Wendish from the kindergarten to primary school and in the Hort.

#### 2. North Frisian

**By producing teaching and teaching materials for two Frisian dialects, Schleswig-Holstein** broadens the possibility for schools to offer North Frisian in lessons. In 2018, for example, the two primary schools “Paul än Emma snåke Frasch” and “Paul än Emma snaake Fering” were produced for grades 1 and 2 as translations from Low German, “Paul UN Emma snacken Plattdütsch”. Handover materials for the two books are being prepared. The largest desiderate is teaching material for upper-level instruction at the Eilun Feer Skuul in Wyk on Föhr. There is currently no up-to-date teaching material for upper secondary level I either.

It is planned to work with the Nordfriisk Institute to develop analogue and digital teaching materials (see *E.IV.7.a.*).

With regard to the well-known study opportunities at the European University of Flensburg (EUF), please refer to the comments in *E.IV.3.e.* and the comments on *page 80 of the Sixth Periodical Report*. Furthermore, in the view of the EUF, the establishment of

“Frisian as an additional subject” would be desirable. This would solve the problem that you are currently excluded from Frisian studies without the German course (e.g. with the Danish/material tuition combination). The EUF will examine the possibility of setting up an additional subject.

Since the last report in 2017, there has been no change in the range of courses offered by hairdressing at the Christian Albrechts University in Kiel (CAU). In addition to the Bachelor’s and Master’s courses, there is a supplementary subject for the grammar school teacher training course. In recent years, there has been increased interest in the additional subject (with the help of the country expert on Frisian at the IQSH). The problem of the very low addition to the supplement to the Frisian section at the CAU must also be explained by the lack of subsequent assignment options. The deployment area is limited to the district of North Frisian and the island of Helgoland. Wyk on Föhr is home to the only grammar school that Frisian offers.

### **3. Sater Frisian**

At the University of Oldenburg in *lower Saxony*, teacher training students in German can obtain more in-depth knowledge of Low German via a certificate. On the basis of this certificate, Low German is to be offered first as an extension subject or a third subject, and then as a separate subject at Oldenburg University for students with a vocational destination, Lehram, thus giving them the opportunity to attend individual courses on Sater Frisian.

The University of Oldenburg has received additional funding of €350,000 per year from the 2019 budget to equip the expert with material and human resources.

#### Children’s day-care centres

The state government of lower Saxony has been investing in measures for over 14 years to enable skilled workers to provide intensive support for the language development of children in daycare centres and to ensure that language education and language promotion for all children are tailored to everyday needs. The main purpose of the measures is to increase the language skills of teaching staff. They thus also have a

high level of expertise in bilingual kindergarten concepts (e.g. everyday German/Sater Frisian).

The Land does not offer special nationwide further training courses for teachers for language teaching in Sater Frisian, as this only covers certain very limited regions in lower Saxony. Such services must therefore be planned and offered locally at regional level.

In the region concerned, there are dedicated and competent contacts in particular with the Seelter Buund home association Saterland. On this basis, volunteers teach the children the Sater Frisian language once a week in three daycare centres in the municipality of Saterland.

Primary area:

Primary schools are particularly important when it comes to language learning and language nursing in Sater Frisian. In order to build on and continue language skills acquired before enrolment in school, a primary school can teach in regional or minority languages in selected subjects on the compulsory hourly plaque, with the exception of subjects such as German and English. This also applies to pupils who wish to learn the language for the first time. As a rule, subjects are taught bilingually, or using i.a. the immersion method. Language learning is generally possible at all primary schools. The Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs of lower Saxony provides targeted support to primary schools beyond the cross-school measures with school-related measures and projects:

From 2012 to 2019, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs, in cooperation with the East Frisian landscape, implemented the Ostfriesland and Saterland project as a model region for early multilingualism in East Frisian and Saterland. At two primary schools in Saterland, Sater Frisian was taught in various subjects in one class per school year from 1 to 4.

As part of the pilot project, immersion lessons proved both to be an appropriate teaching method for acquiring the target language Sater Frisian and for developing the benefits of early multilingual education.

Since the school year 2018/2019, all project teachers at the participating schools have received one set-off period for immersion lessons from the lower Saxony State school Authority (NLSchB), which has enabled them to consolidate their work at the schools.

Transitional measures in primary school - secondary school I - secondary school II:

Language encounters with Sater Frisian are mandatory for all primary and secondary school types. For more information, see, among other things, their core curricula for the subject of German. When revising core curricula, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs attaches greater importance to developing pupils' skills through content with regional and local links where this appears technically possible and appropriate.

However, long-term success in preserving and promoting a language in line with the intentions of the European Charter for Regional or minority languages can only be achieved if it is possible to learn the language in lessons. As early as 2011, the foundation was thus laid for the acquisition of language skills also in compulsory and compulsory primary education. In order to facilitate follow-up and further learning as well as start-up, the regulations for primary school (language continuation or language acquisition in suitable compulsory subjects) also apply to secondary school types I. within the scope of human resources, they may also apply to elective instruction, compulsory instruction or optional subjects (with the exception of foreign languages), projects and out-of-school offerings at the full-day school. Support for extra-school staff can also be used, especially throughout the day.

Since 1 June 2019, these regulations have also been adopted for secondary level II with the publication of the order "the Region and the languages of Low German and Sater Frisian in classroom instruction" (margin no. 01.06.2019 - 32 - 82101/3-2 - VORIS 22410).

Advice and support:

The Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs and the NLGBT are supporting the schools in a variety of ways. Since 2012, an hourly contingent of 35 hours has been available for programmes and projects (pilot project Frühe Mehrsprachigkeit/Förderung Sater Frisian) to advise and support the

implementation of the language encounter required by the curricula and for measures to acquire the minority language Sater Frisian. As of the start of the school year 2020/2021, hours will also be available for advisory services in secondary level I. The work of the advisors is now supported by four NLSchB desk officers with the specialist task of Low German/Sater Frisian.

Within the scope of the available funds, further training courses for teachers will continue to be offered and suitable teaching materials will be created and acquired for work in schools. In 2020, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs provided €42,000 to produce a school book entitled “Sater Frisian for primary school”.

Projects, certification, other measures:

It is particularly noteworthy that most of the schools in the municipality of Saterland Sater Frisian have already taken part in their school programme and are actively and continuously promoting language learning, in particular through target-language specialist instruction.

Schools that render outstanding and long-term services to Low German and Sater Frisian, i.e. not only language encounter but also acquisition as part of their school mission, can be given the title of a Low German or Sater Frisian school.

#### **4. Romani**

With regard to Romany, a discussion of this recommendation by the Committee of Ministers at the 2019 implementation Conference concluded that, according to the vast majority of Länder experience, it was generally in line with the minority’s wish that the minority language be taught predominantly within the Community in the private sphere, which is partly funded by the Länder, while public education has so far been rejected by the majority.

Please refer to the comments in E.II.4.a.ii.

In addition, the following countries have provided further details:

In ***Baden-Württemberg***, the Treaty between the Land Government and the Federation of German Sinti and Roma, Land Association of Baden-Württemberg e. V. (VDSR-BW) States in Article 1 (rights, joint tasks and obligations) that the aim is to “expand

educational and cultural offerings for Sinti and Roma by the VDSR-BW in order to communicate their language and culture". The VDSR-BW set up a Romani language school in 2018 with the help of the Treaty. There, language courses (also in online format) are offered by the minority for the minority. The language courses offered teach grammar, vocabulary and expressions of the language, but also include a cultural component. Language can thus be seen as a resource of one's own identity and cultural mindsets and traditions communicated. It is an express desire to teach and learn the language only within the minority.

The German Sinti and Roma are a natural part of the population of the ***Land of Berlin***. In Berlin, a demand for dedicated teaching in Romani is not apparent and has not been expressed so far. The parties concerned have not yet wished to receive any special support for any other public use of Romany. With regard to language learning, the need relates to "modern" foreign languages. Due to the integration of the old-established minority, whose members usually grow up on a bilingual basis, there is no need for translation and interpretation. It is therefore not necessary at present to develop framework curricula. This can be applied to all other recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts in this report.

In ***Brandenburg***, there is no need for German Sinti and Roma to provide Romani education.

In the ***free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg***, the school-based Romany services presented in *D.IV in the Sixth Periodical Report* are available. Education advisors from Roma and Sinti backgrounds offer special support and other support services for pupils with a Sinti and Roma background. The task of education advisors is to establish contact with the families of the Sinti and Roma and to support the schooling of children from these families. They promote children in the classroom and in some cases also teach independently in Romany (supplementary mother tongue instruction) and the language, history and culture of the Sinti and Roma. They also advise parents, school directors, teachers and other teaching staff and support regional networking.

Together with the **Association of** German Sinti and Roma, the Land Association of Hesse, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs of Hesse has drawn up and published the guidelines on “Sinti and Roma in Germany and the role of anti-Gypsyism”. The guidelines focus on the history of persecution of the Sinti and Roma. This will provide all schools in Hesse with concrete support for teaching. The guidelines contain didactic materials and a wide range of sources that can be used in various subjects and stages of all types of school. It can be ordered from the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs of Hesse free of charge in printed form and as CD-ROM.

Promoting and appreciating natural multilingualism is particularly important for the **Land of North Rhine-Westphalia**. For this reason, the Land offers state-organised home language instruction (HSU) for pupils who grow up in two or more languages in German and one or more other languages. In 2020, HSU was offered in 26 languages. Romani is also part of HSU’s offer in North Rhine-Westphalia. As HSU is a demand-driven, voluntary offer, it actively encourages migrant self-organisations, associations and families to promote HSU and to expand the language and learning groups in HSU. The same is true of voluntary returns.

Independently of this, the circular “encounters with languages” of the Ministry of Education, Youth and children, now the Ministry of Education, of 6 November 2003 establishes encounters with languages at primary schools in North Rhine-Westphalia as an integral part of the teaching. Encounters with other languages, including minority languages, especially when these languages of origin are used by pupils at primary school, should be included in lessons in a playful way. This meeting is to be possible for all primary school pupils in North Rhine-Westphalia. The individual schools themselves decide how to include encounters with languages in their own work plans.

The **Land Rhineland-Palatinate promotes** multilingualism and is aware of the importance of the language of origin for the learning biography and personal development of the learners. In 2019, the range of courses offered in the home

language classes was increased to 17 languages. However, Romani is not one of the courses offered for language of origin. This is not desired by the Association of German Sinti and Roma (Landesverband Rheinland-Pfalz e. V.), as Romani is not to be taught and learned at state schools. Special measures and projects are also rejected in principle only for members of the national minority in schools and universities, as past experience has shown that this can lead to segregation.

With regard to recommendations Nos. 1 and 2 of the Committee of Ministers, the **Land of Schleswig-Holstein** refers to the position it has repeatedly outlined in recent years in order to increase the provision of Romani education and to make available a sufficient number of appropriately trained teachers for Romani as well.

It is expressly not the wish of the Association of German Sinti and Roma (Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein) that the Romani be communicated to outsiders or that it be spoken in public spaces.

The regional associations of the minority of German Sinti and Roma are currently discussing the fact that the Romani language is taught only orally and the issue of codifying the German version of Romani. At this stage, all regional associations and the Central Council have not yet adopted a uniform position on this issue.

Educational programmes for the Romani language could be organised in the **Free State of Thuringia** in adult education on demand. Another option is – if requested – voluntary working groups in schools. The Thuringian schools have at their disposal a financial budget to finance fee agreements with non-school partners. There are currently no queries in either area.

## 5. Low German

The **Land of Brandenburg** refers to the comments *under E.VI.a*.

The **Free Hanseatic City of Bremen** offers schools the opportunity to teach Low German. In order to underline the binding nature of the offer and to support the implementation framework, the Senator for children and Education will provide



additional hours of teacher week. Teaching is the focus of action-oriented language learning. The basis for this is a guideline and the apprenticeship Paul UN Emma. Four primary schools in Bremen take advantage of the opportunity to establish Low German as part of school life and have designated its Low German offerings as part of the school programme. Best practice examples are shared at network meetings. In principle, other schools can offer Low German.

Secondary schools have the option of offering Low German in the compulsory area of voting, which is used by a grammar school, and other schools are to be motivated to make such a provision available. In cooperation with the LZN, teachers can attend recognised training courses in presence and as web seminars. The courses are wide-ranging and range from language learning to concrete support through materials and concepts for teaching.

In the ***Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg***, the school Low German programme presented in *the Sixth Periodical Report under D.IV* is available.

In 2010, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg introduced Low German at primary schools as a regular subject with a separate curriculum, allocating approved subject hours. Teaching is geared to language learning. The classes, which are geared to language acquisition, are offered in the rural regions of Finkenwerder, Neuenfelde, Cranz, Vier- and Marschlande, which form part of the Low German linguistic landscape. The division responsible for Low German matters at the authority responsible for education developed a textbook for primary schools including guidelines for teachers and an audio CD. "Fietje" consists of a workbook, a teaching guide (see <https://li.hamburg.de/contentblob/3861174/1af64b34aae49b56a363a25c43219600/data/download2014-10-09-niederdeutsch-erlaeuterungen.pdf>) and an audio CD with Low German songs. Since 2014, Low German has also been an optional subject in upper secondary level I. The Low German course at the district school, grades 5 to 7 and at grammar school, secondary level I, is offered at three grammar schools and one district school. The education plan for district school, stages 5 to 11 and the education plan for secondary school I form the basis for this instruction.

**Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** reports that adopting the state government programme *Meine Heimat – Mein modernes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* (My Homeland – My modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania) in 2016 has improved the quality of the protection and promotion of the Low German language. In a period of five years, resources will be used to strengthen Low German language teaching in early-childhood education, primary and secondary school education, occupational and university training, teacher training, and cultural training and project funding.

Furthermore, in March 2017, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) approved the motion to include and develop Low German as a recognised subject for study and examination. As part of regular language courses, Low German is an attractive option because it is a serious offer for those wanting to learn the language in secondary schools. Furthermore, an initiative to promote talent ensures that learning at secondary level II can be continued at specially established profile schools in Low German and completed with the Abitur (higher education entrance qualification). As part of these courses, the country can draw on a modern and comprehensive framework, which has been in force since the 2017/2018 school year. Primary schools with an all-day school approach must include Low German lessons in their profile.

With reference to this question, the Land of Lower Saxony states the following:

#### Children's day-care centres

The state government of lower Saxony has been investing in measures for over 14 years to enable skilled workers to provide intensive support for the language development of children in daycare centres and to ensure that language education and language promotion for all children are tailored to everyday needs. The main purpose of the measures is to increase the language skills of teaching staff. They thus also have a high level of expertise in bilingual kindergarten concepts (e.g. everyday German/Low German).

The Land does not offer special nationwide further training courses for teachers for language teaching in the field of Low German, as this only covers certain very limited regions in lower Saxony. Such services must therefore be planned and offered locally at

regional level. In the regions concerned, there are dedicated and competent contacts, especially with the East Frisian landscape.

On the basis of their educational concept, they are responsible for deciding which structures and concepts children's day-care centres will develop to support and support the language education of the children, and to what extent they will also work in several languages within this framework. The Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs does not centralise the institutions that offer children an offer in Low German or Sater Frisian.

Primary area:

Primary schools play a particularly important role in language learning and in the cultivation of Low German. In order to build on the language skills acquired before enrolment and to continue them, a primary school can teach in the regional language in selected subjects of the compulsory hourly worksheet, with the exception of subjects such as German and English. This also applies to pupils who wish to learn the language for the first time. As a rule, subjects are taught bilingually, or using i.a. the immersion method. Language learning is generally possible at all primary schools.

In addition to the cross-school measures, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs provides targeted support to primary schools through school-related measures and projects:

- From 2012 to 2019, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs, in cooperation with the East Frisian landscape, implemented the Ostfriesland and Saterland project as a model region for early multilingualism in East Frisian and Saterland. At seven primary schools in East Frisian, Low German was taught in various subjects in one class per school year from 1 to 4. The project was headed by the Plattdütskbüro of the East Frisian landscape. She received support from a project coordinator. A teacher with ten credited hours (13 credited hours from the school year 2018/2019) was released for this task. As part of the pilot project, immersion lessons proved both to be an appropriate teaching method for acquiring the target language Low German and for developing the benefits of early multilingual education. The link to the

generation of grandparents and to home also gained a new quality: The children developed a regional awareness through language.

Since the school year 2018/2019, all project teachers at the participating schools have received one set-off for immersion lessons from the lower Saxony State school Authority (NLSchB), which has enabled them to consolidate their work at the schools.

- In 2018, six landscape associations were made available in regional versions of the “Plattsack” primary school curriculum, developed by teachers on their own initiative, in a total of 6,700 copies. The programme was supplemented by input materials sent to the associations in a total of 560 copies.

#### Transitional measures in primary school - secondary school I - secondary school II:

Encounters with Low German are mandatory for all schools and school types in primary and secondary level I. For more information, see, among other things, their core curricula for the subject of German. When revising core curricula, the Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs attaches greater importance to developing pupils' skills through content with regional and local links where this appears technically possible and appropriate.

However, long-term success in preserving and promoting a language in line with the intentions of the European Charter for Regional or minority languages can only be achieved if it is possible to learn the language in lessons. As early as 2011, the foundation was thus laid for the acquisition of language skills also in compulsory and compulsory primary education. In order to facilitate follow-up and further learning as well as start-up, the regulations for primary school (language continuation or language acquisition in suitable compulsory subjects) also apply to secondary school types I. within the scope of human resources, they may also apply to elective instruction, compulsory instruction or optional subjects (with the exception of foreign languages), projects and out-of-school offerings at the full-day school. Support for extra-school staff can also be used, especially throughout the day.

Since 1 June 2019, these regulations have also been adopted for secondary level II with the publication of the order “the Region and the languages of Low German and Sater Frisian in classroom instruction” (margin no. 01.06.2019 - 32 - 82101/3-2 - VORIS 22410).

The number of pupils who have acquired language skills in the so-called “small languages”, as well as the schools that enable them to acquire language, has increased considerably in recent years on this basis. Schools that have made it possible to learn Low German in the primary field show this to secondary schools during the transition from the fourth to the fifth school year. Secondary schools examine the possibility of continuing the language.

#### Advice and support

The Ministry of Education and cultural Affairs and the NLGBT are supporting the schools in a variety of ways. Since 2012, an hourly quota of 265 hours has been available for advising and supporting the implementation of the language encounter required by the curricula and for language acquisition measures in the regional language Low German or the minority language Sater Frisian.

- 130 hours for the work of advisors,
- 100 hours for project and starter schools,
- 35 hours for programmes and projects (pilot project Frühe Multilingualism/promotion of Sater Frisian).

As of the start of the school year 2020/2021, further billing hours of up to 10 teachers for advisory services in secondary school I have been made available.

The work of the advisors is now supported by four NLSchB desk officers with the specialist task of Low German/Sater Frisian.

#### Projects, certification, other measures:

It is particularly noteworthy that many schools have already included Low German in their school programme and are actively and continuously promoting language learning, in particular through targeted language teaching.

Schools that render outstanding and long-term services to Low German and Sater Frisian, i.e. not only language encounter but also acquisition as part of their school mission, can be given the title of a Low German or Sater Frisian school. The Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has now awarded 40 schools in the country a “Low German school”. For the first time, a vocational training school was awarded in 2018. Schools that are on the way to implementing Low German in everyday lessons can also receive relief for a limited period of time as “starter” and “project” schools.

The country has taken numerous other measures to assist schools in further developing or securing the measures that have been set up:

- Since the entry into force of the Ordinance on Master’s degrees for teachers in lower Saxony in November 2007, it has been compulsory for all German students to acquire skills in the fields of language variants, language history, regional language, Low German and the minority language Sater Frisian.
- In three study seminars (Cuxhaven, Nordhorn, Aurich) for teaching at primary, secondary and real schools, the additional qualification “the regional language Low German at school” can be obtained for future teachers. Interested parties are being prepared for teaching and maintaining Low German.
- The decree “the Region and the languages of Low German and Sater Frisian in classroom instruction” made it possible in 2019 to advertise the additional qualification “knowledge in Low German” in the recruitment process for teachers in addition to the required subjects.
- Action “Fredag is Plattdag” (part of the Low German “Platt is cool” image campaign of the landscapes and landscape associations of lower Saxony and the NLSchB): A large number of schools take part in creative activities – for example with games, music, theatre, lectures – or simply with Low German sequences in regular lessons.
- Growth and Competitiveness: Every two years, the Low German school days take place alternately with the Low German reading contest. In 2018, more than 450 pupils took part in the Low German school day; several thousand pupils took part in the Low German reading contest in 2019.

In **North Rhine-Westphalia**, the measures outlined in the previous reporting cycle are still being implemented. The school project “Low German at schools in Münster and Münsterland”, which has been running since 2014, was extended until 2022 and extended to secondary level I (grammar school, general school) as well as primary level.

In **Saxony-Anhalt**, reference can be made to the following efforts to strengthen the provision of Low German education in daycare centres and schools.

Daycare facilities:

Pursuant to Section 5 of the children’s promotion Act (Kinderförderungsgesetz, KiföG), daycare institutions perform their own age - and development-specific care, education and parenting tasks as part of an overall concept designed to promote the child’s personality. They are intended to promote the overall development of the child in an age-appropriate manner and to stimulate the physical, mental and psychological development of the child through general and educational support and education, promote its Community capacity and compensate for disadvantages. The provision of care and support should be geared to the educational and organisational needs of children and their families. Daycare centres complement and support family upbringing and give children experience beyond the family framework.

The institutions in the daycare centres are responsible for implementing the education and education mandate. The education programme “Education: elementary – Education from the outset”, with a special focus on language promotion, forms the binding basis for pedagogical work in all daycare centres.

The day-care centres work according to their individual educational concepts, which may also include educational offerings for Low German. This may be the case, for example, if the children had initial contacts with the Low German language on the basis of their individual experiences in the family environment, thereby arousing their interest in it.

The Low German workshop has developed a plaque and teaching materials for daycare centres and primary schools to help children acquire Low German. It was presented in the field of daycare facilities and was informed that it would be made available to the facilities free of charge upon request.

### Schools

In the light of the fulfilment of the school's mandate, the education and training mission allows the Low German language to be examined. However, due to differences in regional connections and special features, it is not feasible to acquire and deal with Low German across the board and in a regular manner. Instead, it will refer to special and selected educational offerings that can receive regional support and ideal support, in particular through external institutions, institutions, associations, etc., as well as initiated competitions and projects, for example through the Low German job placement.

With regard to existing school curricula, provision has been made to this end by taking account of regional linguistic specificities. For example, the curriculum for teaching German at primary schools states that "regional specificities can be taken into account in addition to adhering to the standard language". The curriculum of further-reaching forms of school, for example, states in the curriculum "German" at secondary school that "pupils develop understanding skills by dealing with a wide range of communication requirements in personal, professional and official contexts, in a situation-appropriate and responsive manner. They use both spoken and written standard language. The pupils have a culture of communication characterised by attentive listening and respectful behaviour, which is incorporated into statements to others, to others and to others.' It takes into account the fact that the specific linguistic features of the regional context can be incorporated into the lessons and incorporated into the implementation of the curriculum. In this context, the teaching of the curriculum may take account of the relevant linguistic characteristics of the Low German language, even if Low German is not part of the official timetable and is not a separate subject of instruction in Saxony-Anhalt.



For this reason, Low German remains a complementary educational provision that can also be provided and supported outside the school, for example through additional work or interest groups or school competitions, especially for interested pupils in schools and, where appropriate, in cooperation and with complementary services. This is being successfully implemented, particularly in the northern part of Saxony-Anhalt, as part of educational offerings on Low German and the organisation of competitions. In the field of primary schools in particular, school-specific services are offered. Primary schools in particular continued to take part in the lecture competition “pupils read PLATT”. It is organised annually by the Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch at the Otto von Guericke-Universität Magdeburg and the Landesheimatbund Sachsen-Anhalt e. V. and is under the patronage of the Minister for Culture. The competition is financed by the East German savings banks Association and the savings banks of Saxony-Anhalt.

In addition, various projects run by the Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch with various primary schools in rural areas were planned for 2020, in which both pupils and teachers were to be made aware of the issue of Low German. In this context, the job had provided films to various interested primary schools as part of a temporary pilot project in order to provide incentives for teachers and school leaders. This significantly increased cooperation between the job centre and schools. This was further intensified as part of a transnational exchange of information with representatives of Brandenburg in February 2020 with a view to expanding networking in the fields of kindergartens and schools and mutual opportunities.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the events “Low German film trip” at schools in Saxony-Anhalt and a teacher training course on “Low German theatre game for schools and age” were postponed to 2021.

**Schleswig-Holstein** reports that in the 2014/15 school year, systematic language instruction for Low German was introduced from the first grade in Low German as part of a pilot project at 27 primary schools in the Land. Since then, the “voluntary Low German offerings” pilot school project has been continually expanded, meaning that since 2020/21 Low German has been taught at 332 primary schools in grades 1-4 and at nine secondary I model schools (two of them grammar schools) in 5 and 6. Is offered

at a stage of the year. So there are currently 42 participating schools with 3,058 pupils, 2,738 of them learning Low German at primary school and 320 at secondary level. Further expansion to 50 model schools is politically desirable and is fundamentally conceivable. This requires qualified Low German teachers.

At the European University of Flensburg (EUF), in addition to the current teacher-training (teaching) Low German priority areas, a supplement to Low German is introduced with a certificate in German studies, which can be chosen by students from all subjects in addition to their regular course of study and is also teaching-training (teaching-training). At the Christian Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel (CAU), teaching skills can be acquired through the additional subject Low German. In their training, all teachers in the training course for the teacher training course at general education schools specialising in German demonstrate the additional mandatory module Low German.

By taking part in certificate courses and other needs-based further training courses run by the Institute for quality Development at schools in Schleswig-Holstein (IQSH), teachers with and without prior knowledge can acquire Low German skills.

The Low German activities at non-model schools will be recorded using the district consultancy services in Low German and the IQSH Land technical consultancy in Low German. This records the specific number of courses in Low German in Schleswig-Holstein.

At the Schleswig vocational training centre (BBZ Schleswig), Low German is offered as compulsory optional course with two hours of lessons per week at the technical school for teachers. Social pedagogical assistants can also attend an optional Low German course with two lessons per week.

## II. Recommendation 2

*The Committee of Ministers recommended that the German authorities ensure that a sufficient number of adequately trained teachers for regional or minority language education are available;*

### 1. Upper Sorbian

**Saxony** is taking a variety of measures to attract teachers to Sorbian language instruction and specialised instruction in Sorbian. The *Land* Office for Schools and Education in Bautzen, together with the Sorbian Schools Association (*Sorbischer Schulverein e. V.*), regularly presents teaching as a career path at the Sorbian grammar school (*Sorbisches Gymnasium*), encourages young people to train as teachers and supports them during their studies. A recruitment agreement may be concluded with graduates of the Sorbian grammar school and Sorbian-speaking graduates of vocational grammar schools who intend to enrol in teacher training at a university. This recruitment agreement guarantees trainees that they will be posted within the Sorbian settlement area once they have successfully completed their studies, if there is a need in the subjects they studied.

Section 6 (2) sentence 4 of the Saxon Act on University Admission (*Sächsisches Hochschulzulassungsgesetz, SächsHZG*) specifies that when deciding on applications for admission-restricted teacher training, the proof of advanced Sorbian language skills must be appropriately taken into account in view of the requirements of Article 6 (1) and Article 11 of the constitution of the Free State of Saxony, if one of the chosen subjects is Sorbian. Accordingly, Saxon universities have specified in their admission regulations that all applicants speaking Sorbian receive a bonus. The average grade for university entrance qualification is increased by one, i.e. a full grade.

### 2. Lower Sorbian

The half-time position for teaching and research in Lower Sorbian didactics at the University of Leipzig, which was established by **Brandenburg** in 2016 with the initial term ending in 2021, is currently being evaluated with a view to adapting basic teacher training for Sorbian/Wendish (Lower Sorbian).

In the school year 2020/21, a pedagogy course was introduced at the Lower Sorbian grammar school in Cottbus/Chóšebuz with the aim of raising and strengthening interest in educational professions requiring Lower Sorbian.

A one-year Lower Sorbian language introductory course began on 18 March 2021 to prepare its eight participating teachers for a new in-service training course in which they will obtain the teaching qualification for Sorbian/Wendish. The training course will start in 2022.

In January 2021, a process moderated by the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture began with a view to developing a certifiable Lower Sorbian language curriculum coordinated among the institutions involved in basic and advanced training for nursery school teachers. The aim is to create a shared basis for these courses. With funding from the programme referred to *in D.I.1*, a language course started on 29 March 2021 for eight nursery teachers, also from nursery schools which do not yet teach in Lower Sorbian.

Please see also the comments in *D.III.3*.

### **3. North Frisian**

**Schleswig-Holstein** continues its efforts to attract and train students to work as Frisian teachers within the available university courses. In Schleswig-Holstein, it is possible to study at the Christian Albrechts University (CAU) in Kiel and the Europa University in Flensburg (EUF). Frisian teacher training continues to be offered at CAU as part of a supplementary course for teaching at grammar schools and in the business education profile. The two-subject bachelor course is intended for students who plan to seek work or continue higher education studies after receiving their Bachelor's degree. The supplementary course is giving students the opportunity to obtain the teaching qualification for a third subject.

See *D.I.2* for information on job opportunities for these teachers.

At the EUF, Frisian is not an independent course of study in teacher training, but an optional specialisation within the subject "German" (Bachelor of Education). It is aimed at students in teacher training who wish to work in North Friesland or who are interested in minority languages and their preservation. They can qualify as Frisian

teachers in parallel to their master's degree. However, this course is open to everyone with relevant prior knowledge, including active teachers. Master students of all subjects training to become primary school teachers have the chance to attend – as a core curriculum option – courses on the Frisian language and the Frisian minority. For details on the general conditions see *E.IV.3.e*. In addition, the EUF is examining the establishment of “Frisian as a supplementary subject” so that students can study Frisian without having to study German as well (e.g. in combination with Danish/basic science instead).

Schleswig-Holstein amended its Ordinance on the appointment of teachers to the preparatory service (Teacher Capacity Ordinance, KapVO-LK) of 8 May 2020, taking a first step towards creating immediate added value for students of Frisian. A successfully completed certificate course in Frisian is now considered a bonus when awarding trainee placements. Moreover, the Language Policy Action Plan of November 2020 aims to further expand the privileges for students of Frisian in order to increase enrolment in the course.

#### **4. Sater Frisian**

In **Lower Saxony**, no teachers are currently being trained in Sater Frisian. In principle, however, the state would be willing to establish a system for language offerings in schools on the basis of regional further training courses.

There are two lower secondary schools in the municipality of Saterland. Due to low demand, the small regional range and the low number of speakers, it is still not planned to set up a separate course of study for Sater Frisian teacher training. It remains to be seen how the number of speakers will develop.

Please also see the comments in *D.I.3* on Sater Frisian instruction in nursery and primary schools.

#### **5. Romani**

With regard to the minority language Romani, please see the general remarks in section *D.I.4*.

**Baden-Württemberg** likewise refers to its comments in *D.I.4*.

In **Berlin**, a demand for dedicated teaching in Romani is not apparent and has not been expressed so far. For the same reason, teacher training in Romani has not been offered either.

**Hamburg** has enough qualified education advisors from the Sinti and Roma community for school instruction in Romani.

**Hesse** will offer training if there is a demand for Romani.

**North Rhine-Westphalia** organises native language instruction in Romani. The following provisions apply equally to all the languages offered in the framework of native language instruction:

Native language instruction is provided by teachers who are qualified under German law to teach the respective language. Teachers qualified under German law who have not studied the respective native language can still teach that language if they can demonstrate proficiency at level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and agree in writing to participate in an advanced training course for native language teachers at primary and lower secondary schools.

Exceptions are possible if there are no teachers available fulfilling these criteria. In that case, instruction may be given by teachers who hold a foreign teachers degree for the native language; teachers who hold a German or foreign university degree in the native language; or teachers who hold a foreign teachers or university degree in a recognised subject from a country in which the native language is spoken. Applicants must demonstrate proficiency at CEFR level C1 and, as outlined in the curriculum, in addition to functional and communicative skills must also possess the necessary intercultural and methodological skills as well as the language skills and awareness.

**Rhineland-Palatinate** provides institutional funding to the Rhineland-Palatinate Association of German Sinti and Roma.

Please also see the to comments in section *D.IX*.

As regards Romani, **Schleswig-Holstein**, too, refers to its comments in section *D.I.4*.

Schools in **Thuringia** do not offer native language instruction. Accordingly, there are no trained teachers for Romani.

The technical schools for social pedagogy do not record whether their students training to become nursery school teachers are Romani speakers.

## **6. Low German**

The University of **Bremen** usually offers two courses on Low German language and culture per year. The courses may be attended by bachelor and master students of German. The module is offered in cooperation with the Institute for Low German. Cooperation between the University of Bremen and the Institute for Low German is based on an agreement concluded in 2005 and regulating support for the Low German language programme at the faculty for language and literature.

At Bremen University, Low German is part of the module “Low German language, literature and culture” (C) of the German bachelor programme for German (including secondary school/*Gymnasium* teacher training) and Master of Education programme for German in primary and secondary schools. According to the dean, Low German language courses are additionally offered at the education faculty of Bremen University from time to time. They may be recognised as key qualifications for teachers who successfully completed these courses. The faculty for language and literature does not offer such courses on a regular basis. However, the teacher training centre (*Zentrum für Lehrerbildung*) recognises language courses as key qualifications.

**Hamburg** has enough qualified teachers for Low German.

The State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development (*Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung*), together with the State Centre for Low German (*Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch*) in Bremen, offers a wide range of advanced training courses for teachers.

**Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** reports that a competence centre will be established at Greifswald University in the framework of the state programme “Meine

Heimat – Mein modernes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern”. The goal of this centre is to support the education of students training to teach Low German as a subsidiary subject and to organise and carry out state-wide in-service advanced training courses on Low German for teachers at day-care centres and schools. Low German is also taught as part of the German studies at the University of Rostock. Please see also the comments in *E.VI.f.2*.

Since 2009, advanced training courses on Low German have been held on the basis of the core curricula at the initiative of the **Lower Saxony Ministry of Education**. They are aimed in particular at teachers at primary schools who have no or only little knowledge of Low German.

In addition, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and in cooperation with Oldenburg University and the Lower Saxony Institute for Quality Development at Schools (*Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für schulische Qualitätsentwicklung, NLQ*), a two-year Low German certification course has been offered for teachers since 2014. To date, three courses have been completed with around 20 participants each.

After attending the course, the certified teachers promote language encounter in their classes, know how to plan a Low German language course and are familiar with strategies for cross-disciplinary immersion.

Additional courses are currently being prepared.

In addition, curricular requirements for Low German were drawn up in October 2020 with the aim of offering Low German as a regular subject in lower and upper secondary education.

In **North Rhine-Westphalia**, nothing has changed in comparison to previous monitoring cycles. Low German language courses are taught at various universities in the federal state, such as Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster.

The Low German Office (*Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch*) in **Saxony-Anhalt** links research with the preservation of the Low German language. It plays an outstanding role in imparting knowledge on Low German – also to teachers and students. The office is



based on long-standing successful cooperation between the Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg and the Landesheimatbund Sachsen-Anhalt e. V. (Union for Local and Regional Traditions in Saxony-Anhalt), which receives institutional support from the state government. Cooperation was further strengthened in 2019 with a new cooperation agreement. The new agreement includes general rules on cooperation between the partners in preserving and researching the Low German language in Saxony-Anhalt. It defines structures and fields of action, including the development of teaching and learning materials and the teaching of Low German as part of the courses of study in German at the Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg.

During the reporting period, seminars on Low German topics were held regularly in the German courses of study at the Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg. Students helped continue the *Plattdüütschbüdel* project (collection of teaching materials and learning materials) and write a children's book in the three Low German varieties of the federal state as well as a Low German initial sound table.

***Schleswig-Holstein*** reports that the Low German language is firmly anchored in the department for Low German language and culture, including teacher training, within the German faculty at the European University in Flensburg (EUF), and thus has visibility within the university and beyond.

The proposed stronger cooperation between the departments in Flensburg and Kiel is being successfully implemented. They actively engage in a fruitful and mutually beneficial exchange, governed by a cooperation agreement between the two institutions, which, among other things, enables students from one university to attend seminars at the other.

In addition, the Low German certificate makes studying Low German more attractive. Students of German at the EUF have been able to obtain the Low German certificate since the summer semester 2010. The number of graduates has grown to 25-30 students per year. The Low German certificate has thus been acquired by around 200 students in Flensburg in the last 10 years.

A supplementary Low German course is being prepared at the EUF so that students training to become teachers in other subjects than German can obtain a Low German certificate as well. The CAU in Kiel is already offering such a supplementary course. In the vocational training sector, no trained teachers for North Frisian and Low German are currently available in Schleswig-Holstein.

Though offerings are increasing, Low German has only just arrived in the transition to secondary education.

By adopting the new language policy action plan on education, media and added value in November 2020, the government of Schleswig-Holstein has taken further important steps towards promoting these languages. In the field of education, the focus is not only on further expanding the model schools of Low German, Frisian and Danish, but also on increasing the attractiveness of the Low German and Frisian teacher training programmes by giving greater value to degrees in this field. A successfully completed certificate course in Frisian is now considered a bonus when awarding trainee placements, based on the amended Ordinance on the appointment of teachers to the preparatory service (Teacher Capacity Ordinance, KapVO-LK) of 8 May 2020. The Language Policy Action Plan aims to further expand the privileges for students of Frisian and Low German in order to increase enrolment in the course.

### III. Recommendation 3

*The Committee of Ministers recommended that German authorities take measures to extend television broadcasting in regional or minority languages.*

According to the constitutional principle of government non-intervention in broadcasting, the government cannot directly influence the form and content of broadcasting. TV and radio broadcasters have the right to autonomously decide on programming. The objectives of the Charter can only be pursued in cooperation with the federal states' public service broadcasters.

Additional statements by the federal states:

In **Berlin** representatives of the national minority of Sinti and Roma – according to the available information – did not submit any requests for broadcasting in Romani to the public broadcaster Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (RBB).

**Brandenburg** reports that according to the RBB, it is currently not possible to expand the Low Sorbian radio and television programme, as there have been almost no freelance contributors of journalistic content, including music journalism, for about five years. Advertised positions in the Lower Sorbian editorial team remained vacant for lack of applications. Exceptions are therefore made to continue the Lower Sorbian programme. For example, staff with language skills continue to work on a fees basis even after they reach retirement age. Cooperation with the Lower Sorbian grammar school to recruit young professionals has not been sustainable so far, as it usually ends with when the pupils leave school.

On the other hand, the broadcasting time of the Lower Sorbian youth radio programme "Bubak", the availability of the Lower Sorbian radio programmes broadcast by RBB and individual programmes online, and the possibility of listening to or downloading Lower Sorbian music produced by RBB via the RBB website have been expanded. Since May 2020, the Sorbian programme has also been available via live stream, and since 19 April 2021 a Sorbian RBB app has been available for download via the App Store or Play Store. RBB not only produces new Sorbian music, but also develops public formats, such as the live Serbpop event in 2019, with hiphop, electro, jazz and pop performances.

**Bremen** refers to the information provided in *E.VI.d.5*.

**Hamburg** refers to the signing in March 2021 of the NDR broadcasting agreement in view of regional and minority languages. Section 5 (2) provides that regional and minority languages are to be regularly and appropriately taken into account in the NDR's programmes.

Given the constitutional principle of government non-intervention in broadcasting, no government may determine programming content. Thus **Hesse** has no way to exert influence on the design or selection of programmes. However, Hesse has informed the broadcaster Hessischer Rundfunk about Germany's obligations and initiated a dialogue between the state public service broadcasting corporation and the Hessian Association of German Sinti and Roma, while respecting the constitutional principle of government non-intervention in broadcasting. According to our information, representatives of the Sinti and Roma have still not asked the state public service broadcaster for any programming in the Romani language.

With regard to public service broadcasting, **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** refers to section 5 (2) of the NDR broadcasting agreement, which provides that NDR must take due account of the diversity of languages in its service area – including regional and minority languages – in its programme. In addition, and also with regard to private broadcasting, the constitutional principle of government non-intervention in broadcasting should be taken into account, according to which television and radio broadcasters have extensive rights of self-management and, above all, programming autonomy. In this way, the possibility of government influence on broadcasters' programming decisions is ruled out. The aims of the Charter cannot be "government mandated" in this area, but only pursued jointly in practice.

**Lower Saxony** draws attention to the constitutionally guaranteed autonomy of broadcasting, which prohibits government interference in the content of broadcasting.

Further comments on Article 11 (1) (b) (ii) from Lower Saxony can be found in *E.V.6* and *E.VI.g.5*.

Section 14 (3) no. 13 of the Südwestrundfunk (SWR) broadcasting agreement between **Baden-Württemberg** and **Rhineland-Palatinate**, which entered into force on 1 January 2014, regulates the participation of the Sinti and Roma minority in the Broadcasting Council. The Broadcasting Council represents the interests of the public at large in the field of broadcasting, thereby taking the diversity of opinions into account.

The Association of German Sinti and Roma also has a representative in the Rhineland - Palatinate broadcasting council and the Rheinland-Palatinate media authority.

**Saxony** complies with the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers by regularly broadcasting the programme “Wuhladko” on Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (MDR) television. The programme focuses on the life of the Sorbian people and on the Sorbian language, culture and tradition. “Wuhladko” is a half-hour magazine with news and studio guests, stories about Lusatia, and numerous event tips. The magazine is broadcast in Upper Sorbian using German subtitles.

As regards the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, it should be noted that the freedom of broadcasting and the press as guaranteed by the Basic Law strictly limits the possibilities of German public authorities to interfere with or determine the programming radio and television broadcasters.

**Saxony-Anhalt** informs that the MDR performs its functions on the basis of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of broadcasting. Under the MDR broadcasting agreement, which has been in force since 1991, its task is to provide an objective and comprehensive overview of international, national and regional events in all key areas of life. Its programme should provide information and education as well as advice and entertainment and must meet the cultural mission of broadcasting. It serves the purpose of free individual and public opinion-forming. Under the broadcasting agreement, the MDR programmes must take account of the concerns of all groups of the population, including

minorities. The broadcaster must carry out this task within the framework of its constitutionally protected programming autonomy.

**Schleswig-Holstein** declares that the language groups, too, have been calling for a stronger media presence for minority and regional languages for years and refers to the unchanged legal situation.

Due to the principle of government non-intervention in broadcasting, the federal states have assumed obligations under Article 11 of the Charter exclusively in terms of “encouragement”. The freedom of broadcasting and the press as guaranteed by the Basic Law strictly limits the possibilities of German public authorities to interfere with or determine the programming radio and television broadcasters. The broadcasters can only be reminded of the need to develop and transmit adequate programmes in the national minority languages. This has already been done repeatedly in the past. The Schleswig-Holstein government has asked the parties to the NDR broadcasting agreement to encourage the broadcaster even more to take account of minority and regional languages in the programme when amending the NDR broadcasting agreement. The draft agreement, to be signed in mid-March 2021 by the heads of government of its four parties, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, therefore calls on the NDR to take appropriate account of regional and minority languages its programmes.

The new NDR broadcasting agreement is currently going through the parliamentary process and is due to enter into force no later than 1 September 2021.

#### IV. Recommendation 4

*The Committee of Ministers recommended strengthening the use of regional or minority languages in dealings with the administration in practice.*

The Act to Improve Online Access to Administrative Services (Online Access Act, Onlinezugangsgesetz, OZG), requires federal, state and local governments to offer the option of using their administrative services online via administration portals by the end of 2022. When implementing the Online Access Act, all stakeholders, including the **federal authorities**, are aware of and understand the concerns of national minorities. It is true that online services are initially only made available in German. In the longer term, however, other languages can also be added. This makes it possible in principle to implement minority and regional languages. In line with the federal principle, the federal states are primarily responsible for implementing measures to promote and preserve the languages of national minorities and regional languages; this includes the translation of application forms and explanations.

As regards the minority language Romani, Baden-Württemberg refers to the reply *to D.I.4*. In the Nazi past, officers learnt Romani to use their language skills against members of the Romani-speaking community. For this reason the minority refuses to use the language in administrative procedures.

**In Berlin**, the national minority of German Sinti and Roma has so far not wished to receive support for the public use of Romani, for instance in dealings with the administration.

**Brandenburg** is including Lower Sorbian in its implementation of the Online Access Act and in the expansion of e-Government. In 2020, the Ministry for Science, Research and Culture provided €41,000 for the pilot project to launch a coordination and translation unit in order to implement the Online Access Act and Brandenburg's E-Government Act with regard to the Lower Sorbian language at the Sorbian Institute Cottbus/Chóšebuz. The aim is to translate application forms and explanations into the Sorbian language and incorporate the translated texts into the online portals. In 2021, this project will be continued with the

participation of the Ministry of the Interior and Local Matters to the tune of around €60,000. A viable sustainable solution involving local authorities is being sought.

**Bremen** refers to the information provided in E.VI.d.4.

**Hesse** reported that the minority still expressed the desire to use the language only within the community, especially as Romany is not a standard written language. Consequently, no cases have yet been reported concerning the use of Romani as a minority language in administrative practice.

**Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** states that the official language is High German. This is crucial when dealing with administrative processes that do not always have a purely regional impact. The obligatory use of regional and minority languages in practice is promoted as far as possible.

**Lower Saxony** explains that the first priority when implementing the Online Access Act is High German, which is the official language in Germany. In the future, the intention is to make it possible to establish services in the regional and minority languages, depending on the technical requirements and available translations.

Please see also the the comments in *E.VI.g.1* and *E.VI.g.4*.

By decree of 22 December 2017, the Ministry for Community Affairs of North Rhine-Westphalia made it possible to add Low German names to signposts indicating the names of localities in North Rhine-Westphalia. This means that councils of municipalities and cities may decide, by a three-quarter majority, to add Low German names. The ministry will examine these proposals.

Approval is conditional on the correct translation and spelling of the names. The amendments must be noted as an additional designation in the municipal statutes (rules on the constitution and organisation of administration at local level) and can be included in the municipal letterhead and on signposts indicating municipal authorities. Additional



designations on local signposts indicating municipal and urban districts were already permitted before the above-mentioned date, by council decision.

**Rhineland-Palatinate** declares that Romany is a language which, at the request of the community, is used only within the community and is maintained and transmitted exclusively within families and family associations. Since Romany is not a standard written language, it is therefore not taken into account in written administrative proceedings. In the current implementation phase of the Online Access Act (OZG) in Rhineland-Palatinate, the use or use of minority/regional languages is not taken into account. Nevertheless, the framework conditions are being created to present different languages throughout the OZG process in future. This will make it technically possible in future to offer minority and regional languages. It will be examined on a case-by-case basis which language(s) to include.

In **Saxony-Anhalt** there is no obligation (pursuant to Article 10 of the Language Charter) to make it possible to use the regional language Low German in administrative procedures. Practical relevance is currently considered not to be a priority compared to other measures.

**Saxony**, led by the State Chancellery, is currently expanding the possibility of using the Sorbian language when using basic e-government components. This year, projects with an estimated financial volume of around €133,500 are being launched to upgrade key basic components.

In **Schleswig-Holstein**, the legal basis for the use of regional or minority languages in administrative procedures was laid down in section 82b of the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act. In 2018, the scope of the act was extended to the urban district of Kiel for Danish, see Section B.

When implementing the Online Access Act, the government of Schleswig-Holstein also takes into account regional and minority languages. The multilingualism of online services has therefore been included as a topic in the project process, and the associated infrastructure will be adapted accordingly.

Corresponding development contracts have been awarded to the IT service provider.

In future, it will be possible to offer online services in regional and minority languages in line with needs by providing translations of the necessary administrative information (explanatory notes, statutory texts, etc.) from the relevant ministries. This will enable compliance with the legal obligation under section 82b of the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act.

## V. Recommendation 5

*The Committee of Ministers recommended that the German authorities intensify cooperation between the federal states in which Low German is protected.*

The State Centre for Low German (LzN), which has received institutional support from the federal states of **Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, the Hanseatic City of Bremen and the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg** since 2018, promotes and strengthens Low German, a task delegated to them by the funding states in compliance with their obligations arising from the Language Charter.

If the federal states of Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and North Rhine-Westphalia, which also have Low German speakers, wish to join the State Centre for Low German, they are free to participate in the network and to cooperate on content. The State Centre for Low German is also closely interlinked with the political representatives as well as with the members of the Federal Council for Low German (BfN) and the Low German Secretariat. The Low German Secretariat has now been established as a secretariat for the Federal Council for Low German, which is responsible for language policy issues. It has been funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior since 1 January 2018.

The federal states of **North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt**, represented by the ministries responsible for the preservation of Low German, meet at least once a year at working level to discuss the current concerns of Low German. To this end, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, as well as representatives of the Low German speakers' group, in particular the Federal Council for Low German and the State Centre for Low German or the Institute for Low German, are invited regularly.

In addition, **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** refers to C.VI.

Following a decision by the state governments of **Brandenburg** and **Saxony-Anhalt**, the two Low German working groups have met once a year since 2019; they included

representatives of the Low German language group in both federal states, and representatives of the Federal Council for Low German and of the competent ministries in both federal states.

On 25 March 2021, **Brandenburg's** parliament decided to look into whether and how it can cooperate with Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony-Anhalt as regards the basic and further training of teaching staff. A report on the implementation progress will be provided in the next report.

In addition, regular exchange takes place with all the federal states concerned in the nationwide bodies (Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Low German Language Group at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, implementation conference at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, consultations between the Federal and state governments on Low German alternately at the missions of the federal states to the Federal Government).

The Advisory Council on the Low German language and the Low German Community was established quite recently at the initiative of the parliament of **North Rhine-Westphalia** and was convened for the first time in June 2019. The Advisory Council initially focused on consolidating the exchange with the bodies of the Low German language community at federal level. A possible institutional exchange at state level would also be conceivable as a topic in the deliberations of the Advisory Council.

In 2016, the universities of Bonn, Münster, Paderborn and Siegen began to record the dialects (or the least standardised ways of speaking) used in North Rhine-Westphalia (as well as in parts of Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate), in the project "Dialektatlas Mittleres Westdeutschland" (Dialect Atlas of Central Western Germany, DMW). The project receives funds from the North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and the Arts.

## E. The Committee of Experts' evaluations

### I. Danish in the state of Schleswig-Holstein

#### 1. Article 6 – Information

Since November 2002, the Federal Government for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities has provided an important link between the Federal Government and national minorities in Germany and the Low German speakers' group. He represents the Federal Government in interacting with the national minorities in Germany and the Low German language group, puts forward their interests and concerns at federal level and promotes their acceptance and recognition among the general public.

Another point of contact within the Federal Government is the specialist division of the **Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community** responsible for national minorities in Germany and the regional language Low German.

At federal level, there are various discussion formats in which public authorities meet representatives of the organisations of the four national minorities recognised in Germany and of the Low German speakers' group to discuss their concerns.

For example, the Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Danish Minority was set up in 1965 to negotiate all issues of domestic policy concerning the Danish ethnic group. The Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Danish Minority comprises three members of the Danish minority in Germany, representatives of the Federal Government, two members of each parliamentary group of the German Bundestag and one representative of the state of Schleswig-Holstein.

Representatives of the Danish minority are appointed on a proposal from the political organisation of the minority, the South Schleswig Voters' Association.

As a rule, the meeting is chaired by the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities.

The committee usually meets once a year.

The umbrella organisations of the four national minorities in Germany – i.e. the Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF) and the South Schleswig Voters' Association for the Danish minority, the Frasche Råd, Sektion Nord and the Seelter Buund for the Frisian

ethnic group, the Domowina - Federation of Lusatian Sorbs and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma – set up the Minority Council in 2005.

The Minority Council represents the common interests of the four national minorities vis-à-vis the Federal Government and the German Bundestag.

The Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities is regularly invited to the meetings of the Minority Council.

The Secretariat for Minorities has supported the Council in its work since 2005. The Secretariat is located in Berlin and receives funding from the **Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community**. Since the last reporting period, funding has been increased to around €120,000.

The Secretariat promotes information-sharing among the German Bundestag, the Federal Government and the national minorities in Germany and helps the national minorities coordinate their positions.

Since 2019, the Minority Secretariat has received approximately €125,000 per year from the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community for the travelling exhibition designed to provide information about the Charter languages and national minorities throughout Germany. The decision to have the travelling exhibition was welcomed in the Charter language petition of the German Bundestag – *see Sixth Periodical Report under C.III*.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the travelling exhibition is to be opened in 2022.

Furthermore, the Committee on Internal Affairs of the German Bundestag usually invites representatives of the Minority Council and – since 2019 – the Federal Council for Low German to such meetings several times during the legislative term to give members of the German Bundestag the opportunity to meet representatives of the umbrella organisations of national minorities and discuss their particular concerns. The implementation conference is generally held annually. For more details see *section C.III*.

The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media provides the Danish minority with regular investment funding of €150,000 a year.

In addition, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community is providing up to €500,000 for a wide range of projects run by the Federal Union of European Nationalities, of which Sydslesvigsk Forening e. V. is a member as the umbrella organisation of the Danish minority in Germany.

Since the establishment of the office in 1988, the Minister-President's Commissioner for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German (Commissioner for minorities) in Schleswig-Holstein has been working as a point of contact for minorities, ethnic groups and groups of speakers of minority languages living in Schleswig-Holstein. He advises the Minister-President on current issues relating to minority policy and mediates between the state authorities and the organisations of minorities on special concerns of minorities. This applies to the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group, the national minority of German Sinti and Roma and the Low German speakers' group.

The implementation of the federal state's obligations under the Language Charter in state laws and decrees and statutory instruments ensures that the individual measures are enshrined in the administrative actions of the authorities at state and municipal level. Examples include the Schools Act, the Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Child-Minding, the Spatial Planning Act, the Libraries Act, the Electoral Act, the Administration Act, or the decree on Frisian at schools in Nordfriesland or the decree on Low German. Regular talks between the Commissioner for minorities and representatives of local government associations and, where necessary, with councillors, mayors or committees in districts and offices are another element for disseminating information on the obligations arising from the Language Charter. In the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein, the division for foreign affairs and national minorities also acts as a point of contact for matters relating to national minorities, ethnic groups and the Low German speakers' group, as well as for authorities and organisations in individual matters.

Schleswig-Holstein's government website portal provides extensive information on state-level minority policy and the foundations of minority rights and the protection of minorities under international law.



## 2. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Constitution of the state of Schleswig-Holstein (*Verfassung des Landes Schleswig-Holstein*) in the version of 2 December 2014 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 344), most recently amended by Article 1 of the Act of 14 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 361), Articles 6, 12 (4) - (7) and 13
  - District Statutes for Schleswig-Holstein (*Kreisordnung für Schleswig-Holstein*) in the version of 28 February 2003 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 94), most recently amended by Article 3 of the Act of 3 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 788), section 1 (2), section 40c, no. 8
  - Offices Statutes for Schleswig-Holstein (*Amtsordnung für Schleswig-Holstein*), in the version of 28 February 2003 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 112), most recently amended by Article 2 of the Act of 3 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 788), section 1 (1)
  - Local Government Law for Schleswig-Holstein (*Gemeindeordnung für Schleswig-Holstein*), in the version of 28 February 2003 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 57), most recently amended by Article 1 of the Act of 3 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 788), section 1 (1), section 45c, no. 8
  - Rules of Procedure of the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament (*Geschäftsordnung des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landtages*) in the version of 8 February 1991 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 85), most recently amended by a decision of the parliament of 22 July 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 661), section 22 (4)
  - Electoral Law for the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament (*Wahlgesetz für den Landtag von Schleswig-Holstein*), in the version of 7 October 1991

(Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 442, p. 637), as last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 14 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 362), section 3 (1).

- Act on the Legal Status of Members of the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament (*Gesetz über die Rechtsverhältnisse der Mitglieder des Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landtages*), in the version as promulgated on 13 February 1991 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 1991, p. 100), most recently amended by the Act of 3 December 2014 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 371) (2) no. 4
- Act on the Legal Status and Financing of Parliamentary Groups in the Schleswig-Holstein Parliament (*Gesetz über die Rechtsstellung und Finanzierung der Fraktionen im Schleswig-Holsteinischen Landtag*) of 18 December 1994 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 1995, p. 4), most recently amended by the Act of 26 May 1999 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 134), section 1 (3), section 6 (3) sentence 2
- Act on the Commissioner for Refugees, Asylum and Immigration of 28 October 1998 (*Gesetz über die Beauftragte oder den Beauftragten für Flüchtlings-, Asyl- und Zuwanderungsfragen*) (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 1998, p. 320), most recently amended by the Act of 23 May 2003 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 280), section 5 (1) sentence 3
- State Ordinance on the Competences of the School Authorities (*Landesverordnung über die Zuständigkeiten der Schulämter*) of 4 July 1994 (newsletter of the Ministry for Science, Research and Culture/Ministry for Women, Education, Training and Sport, 1994, p. 237), last amended by Article 7 of the State Ordinance of 16 March 2015 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 96), section 1 (1), section 2 (1) no. 13
- Schools Act for Schleswig-Holstein (*Schulgesetz des Landes Schleswig-Holstein*), in the version of 24 January 2007 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 39, p. 276), as last amended by Article 3 of the Act of 12 November 2020 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and

Ordinances, p. 808), section 4 (4), section 115 (4) and Chapter III, grants for independent schools of the Danish minority (section 124 ff.), section 135 (3) no. 12, section 150

- State Ordinance on the Elections to the State Schools Advisory Council (*Landesverordnung über die Wahl des Landesschulbeirats*) of 26 June 2009 (newsletter of the Ministry for Education and Women, 2009, p. 182), most recently amended by Article 7 of the State Ordinance of 16 March 2015 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 96), section 11 (1) no. 11
- Schleswig-Holstein Teacher Training Act (*Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein*) of 15 July 2014 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 2014, p. 134), most recently amended by Article 7 of the Act of 11 December 2014, (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 464), section 2 (3), section 12 (3) sentence 5
- State Ordinance on the Organisation of Training Periods and on the State Examinations for Teachers (*Landesverordnung über die Ordnung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die Staatsprüfungen der Lehrkräfte*) of 9 December 2015 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 460), section 6 (2), section 8 (3)
- Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Child-Minding (*Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Kindertageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege - KiTaG*) of 12 December 2019, promulgated as Article 1 of the Act to Strengthen the Quality of Childcare and to Reduce the Financial Burden on Families and Local Authorities (*Gesetz zur Stärkung der Qualität in der Kindertagesbetreuung und zur finanziellen Entlastung von Familien und Kommunen, KiTa-Reform-Gesetz*) of 12 December 2019 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 759) In force pursuant to Article 7 (1) sentence 2 of the Act of 12 December 2019 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 759), most recently amended by the Act to Amend the Act to Promote Children in Day and Child-Minding (*Gesetz zur Änderung des Kindertagesförderungsgesetzes*) of 10 December 2020 Article 25 no. 1 of the Act of 8 May 2020 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 998),

section 9 (2), section 10 (4), section 13 (2), section 16 (2), section 18 (1) and section 19 (1) no. 2

- Directive of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein regarding the Promotion of Regional and Minority Languages in Day Care and Child Minding 2020 - 2022 (*Richtlinie des Landes Schleswig-Holstein zur Förderung von Regional- und Minderheitensprachen in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege 2020-2022*).
- First Act Implementing the Child and Youth Services Act (*Erstes Gesetz zur Ausführung des Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz*) in the version of 5 February 1992 (Gazette of Law and Ordinances 1992, p. 158), most recently amended by the Act of 6 November 2020 (Gazette of Law and Ordinances, p. 804), section 51 (3) no. 4 and (4)
- Act on the Establishment of a Corporation under Public Law “Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein” (*Gesetz über die Errichtung einer Anstalt öffentlichen Rechts “Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein”, OK-Gesetz*), (Gazette on Laws and Ordinances for Schleswig-Holstein, p. 204), section 2 (1) sentence 3, section 6 (2) no. 4
- Act on the Inter-State Treaty on Media Law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz zu dem Staatsvertrag über das Medienrecht in Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein*) of 13 June 2006 (Hamburg Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, 2007, p. 47; Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, 2007, p. 108), in the version of the Fifth State Treaty to Amend the State Treaty on Media Law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein of 2/22 September 2014 (*Fünfter Staatsvertrag zur Änderung des Staatsvertrages über das Medienrecht in Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein* (Hamburg Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 490; Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 487); section 13 (1) sentence 2, section 28a (1) sentence 3, section 30 (3) no. 2, section 32a (1) no. 1 (c)
- Act on the 17th Amended Interstate Agreement on Broadcasting and on the Appointment of a Member of the Television Board of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (*Gesetz zum Siebzehnten*

*Rundfunkkänderungsstaatsvertrag und zur Bestimmung eines Mitglieds des ZDF-Fernsehrates*) of 30 November 2015, (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 406), section 2

- General Administration Act for Schleswig-Holstein (*Allgemeines Verwaltungsgesetz für das Land Schleswig-Holstein / Allgemeines Verwaltungsgesetz*) in the version promulgated on 2 June 1992 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 243, 534), most recently amended by the Act of 13 February 2019 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 42), section 82b
- Decree by the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry for Science, Industry and Transport of 31 March 2009 (VII 423 - 621.121.108) governing multilingual town signs
- Schleswig-Holstein Libraries Act (*Bibliotheksgesetz - BiblG*), promulgated as Article 1 of the Act Governing Libraries in Schleswig-Holstein and Amending the *Land* Press Legislation (*Gesetz für die Bibliotheken in Schleswig-Holstein und zur Änderung des Landespressegesetzes*) of 30 August 2016 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 791), section 2 (2)
- Act on Spatial Planning in Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz über die Landesplanung*) in the version promulgated on 10 February 1996 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 232) most recently amended by the Act of 22 May 1995 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 132), section 5 (5) no. 10, section 21 (1) no. 17
- Language Policy Action Plan of the Schleswig-Holstein government regarding regional or minority languages for the 19th legislative period, of November 2020, focusing on education, media and added value.

ii. Practical measures

- Reference is made to the statements in *E.I.3., E.I.5., E.I.6. and E.I.7*

**b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Amendment of the Administration Act of 25 September 2018 to extend the scope of section 82(b) of said act to the city of Kiel for Danish; cf. also the comments *under B.*

ii. Practical measures

- The authorities continued to apply existing legislation.
- The state government has raised the lump sum payment to cover school transport fees for pupils attending Danish schools from just under €214 to €300, effective under the 2021 budget.

The district of Schleswig-Flensburg had agreed to cover the parents' school transport fees for pupils attending state schools, but had refused to pay for these costs with regard to pupils at Danish minority schools, stating that these had to be covered by the state authorities. Owing to the support of the Commissioner for National Minorities of the Minister-President and the Minister for Education, Science and Culture, the authorities found a solution in the framework of the regulations governing alternative school financing: the school transport allowance per pupil was raised to €300, effective 1 January 2021. Another positive aspect to be mentioned here is that the district of Schleswig-Flensburg made a voluntary contribution to pay for the above-mentioned transport allowance gap until the end of 2020.

c. **Article 7 (1) (c)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

Schleswig-Holstein's constitution guarantees the cultural independence and political participation of the Danish minority and the other national minorities protected in the federal state – a guarantee defined as a task incumbent on the state, the municipalities and municipal associations.

ii. Practical measures

- According to very rough estimates, the Danish minority receives approximately €45 million in funding per year from the Schleswig-Holstein government. The largest amount goes to the schools and child day-care centres run by the Danish Schools Association.
- On top of the additional obligations arising from the European Language Charter which Schleswig-Holstein has taken on and which have been notified subsequently as referred to under *C.I.1*, the state government has

made even more efforts to strengthen Danish lessons at state schools. In the school year 2020/21, a model project Danish was started at seven primary schools, which now offer Danish lessons from grade one. This is in line with the model project Low German, which was launched in the school year 2014/15. The participating schools get two teaching hours per week and grade to be able to provide this tuition. This system will be progressively rolled out so that by the school year 2024/2025, these schools will be providing Danish lessons to all four primary school grades. Following an evaluation of this project, it is conceivable in the medium term that this model project will be continued in grades five and six at lower secondary school level. (For more details see section *E. I.3*)

- The minority and regional languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein enrich the cultural area. For this reason, the state government, in the underlying coalition agreement, pledged to continue the successful cultural work undertaken together with the Frisian ethnic group and the Frisian and Danish minorities. At the same time, it actively supports the preservation of Low German and the related culture, which are important elements of Schleswig-Holstein's identity. Against this backdrop, the state government promotes the acquisition of the minority languages and of Low German in public child day-care centres and schools, and supports multilingualism and linguistic diversity, as laid down in the Language Policy Action Plan.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

On 6 November 2019, the Schleswig-Holstein government and the Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF) signed a target and performance agreement for the period covering 2019 - 2022, which expressly seeks to promote the use of Danish by the minority's associations. Under this agreement, the SSF's youth work (*De unge i Slesvig*) has received €5,000 in funding from the state government.

ii. Practical measures

- The State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein has introduced aspects of minority and regional languages into the state government's human

resources management in order to strengthen the Charter languages. It is now possible to record the language skills of staff members. This includes foreign languages as well as the regional or minority languages protected by the European Languages Charter. The aim is to facilitate the use of the Charter languages, both by citizens in their dealings with the administration as well as within the administration.

- The central training institutions for the public service in Schleswig-Holstein are agreed that the use of regional and minority languages should generally be addressed in cross-cutting training and/or in the training module on diversity/intercultural skills.
- Furthermore, the authorities in Schleswig-Holstein seek to create framework conditions making sure that people with different backgrounds feel comfortable. This means, for instance, that diversity in administration is taken into account when recruiting skilled workers and trainees. This is ensured for example by the use of logos and messages which resonate with people from different backgrounds, including linguistic backgrounds, i.e. with speakers of foreign languages as well as for Charter languages.
- In line with the decree issued by the Finance Ministry of Schleswig-Holstein of 13 November 2019, which seeks to encourage the use of Danish, Danish-speaking employees in the tax offices have stickers on their office doors saying “Jeg taler dansk”.

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

i. Practical measures

- Schleswig-Holstein mainly supports the Sydslesvigske Forening (SSF), an association which promotes contact among the members of the Danish community in the areas addressed by the Charter. The Sydslesvigske Forening receives €476,500 per year as institutional funding.
- Under the above-mentioned target and performance agreement, the following associations receive funding:
  - Den slesvigske Kvindeforening €12.850



- |                                                                                                         |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| ○ DSH – Foreningen af Akrive Kvinder                                                                    | €12.850 |
| ○ Foreningen Norden, Sydslesvig afdeling                                                                | €5.010  |
| ○ Heimdall Hejmdal Blæseorkester                                                                        | €500    |
| ○ Historisk Samfund, Sydslesvigs Amtskreds                                                              | €500    |
| ○ Sydslesvigs danske Kunstforening                                                                      | €5.410  |
| ○ Sydslesvigs Museumsforening                                                                           | €4.280  |
| ○ Sønderjysk Arbejder Forening (SAF)                                                                    | €1.680  |
| ○ Torsdagskoret                                                                                         | €1.420  |
| ○ Fælleslandboforeningen for Sydslesvig<br>(For the operation of the<br>Christian Lassens Minde Museum) | €30,000 |
- Via its state-aided organisations, the Danish minority is a member of various fora and structures fostering the exchange with other minorities and speakers' groups. This includes the DialogForumNorden, the newly established Minderheiten-Kompetenz-Netzwerk (Minorities' Network of Competences), the Berlin-based Minority Council, and the FUEN, as the European umbrella organisation of European nationalities.

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

Please see the information in *E.I.3.* for policy, legislative or practical measures.

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

Please see the information in *E.I.3.* for policy, legislative or practical measures.

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

i. Practical measures

- The Chair for Scandinavian linguistics at the Christian-Ulbrechts-University (CAU) in Kiel carries out in-depth research into the Danish language and publishes its findings regularly. Current projects include practical research on teaching appropriate pronunciation in Danish lessons at schools, a doctoral project on the grammar of Danish spoken in South Schleswig, and a project focusing on the common aspects of the German and Danish dialects. The last-mentioned project receives grants from the German Research Foundation DFG.

- The research into the Danish language carried out at the EUF (Europa-Universität Flensburg) includes multilingualism of children and juveniles, multilingualism and dialect (Sønderjysk) in the new media, and the acquisition of written language in a second language. Research in the field of literature studies includes looking into the Danish literature and culture in the European context.
- Examples of dissertations:
  - Recently completed dissertation at the CAU's ISFAS (Institute for Scandinavian Studies, Frisian Studies and General Linguistics) on teaching Danish pronunciation
  - Ongoing dissertation at the EU Flensburg on the encounters of German and Danish pupils in museums in the Danish-German border regions
- Ongoing research project at the Danish University College Syd on the specific teaching system for neighbouring languages. The project involves the Schleswig-Holstein side.

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

The Danish and Schleswig-Holstein emergency medical services cooperate across the border.

ii. Practical measures

- To improve services for taxpaying cross-border commuters in the German-Danish border area, who live in one country and work in the other, they can contact officers at the tax offices of Flensburg and Leck (in the district of Nordfriesland) who either speak Danish well or have a basic command of the language.
- The crew of the Europa rescue helicopter, which is based in Niebüll and serves the areas on either side of the border, is bilingual.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Members of the Danish minority may use Danish in their written communication with the state and local authorities in the urban districts of Flensburg and Kiel and in the districts of Nordfriesland and Schleswig-Flensburg. They need not pay for the costs of translations that may become necessary.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The measures described in previous reports are being continued.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Child day-care centres need to take into account the minority and regional languages protected in Schleswig-Holstein by the European Languages Charter, as stipulated in section 4 (3) no. 2 of the Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Day-Care Centres (*Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und Tagespflegestellen*) (valid until 21 December 2020) and in section 19 (2) no. 2 of the Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Child-Minding (*Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Kindertageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege* (Kindertagesförderungsgesetz - KiTaG), (valid since 1 January 2021).
  - Section 2 (3) of the Teacher Training Act (*Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz* (LehrBG)) of Schleswig-Holstein emphasises that the importance of the language, history and culture of the national Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the national minority of the German Sinti and Roma, as well as the importance of Low German for Schleswig-Holstein must be included in teacher training.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Minority or regional languages are also included in curricula, textbooks and teacher training, to raise awareness for the language groups.
    - *Fachanforderungen Dänisch. Allgemeinbildende Schulen. Sekundarstufe I. Sekundarstufe II* (Subject-specific requirements for

- Danish. Schools providing general education. Lower Secondary Level. Higher Secondary Level (2016, for instance p. 13/14)
- *Leitfaden Dänisch zu den Fachanforderungen. Allgemeinbildende Schulen. Sekundarstufe I. Sekundarstufe II* (Guidelines for the subject-specific requirements for Danish. Schools providing general education. Lower Secondary Level. Higher Secondary Level) (2019), p. 46.
  - Revision of a textbook for Danish at higher secondary school level: Chapter on the Danish minority.
  - New textbook being drawn up for the lower secondary school level: Chapter on the Danish minority.
  - Danish teacher training: Danish minority addressed as part of the specific teaching system for neighbouring languages
- The introduction of local radio programmes means that regional and minority languages can also be reflected in the broadcasts in up to five regions in Schleswig-Holstein. Section 28a (1) sentence 3 of the Inter-State Treaty on Media Services between Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Medienstaatsvertrag Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein (MStV HH/SH)*) specifies that in the regions in which regional or minority languages are spoken, the respective regional or minority language must be adequately taken into account in programmes and contributions aired.
  - The broadcasting station NDR must also adequately take the regional and minority languages into account. According to section 5 of the NDR Inter-State Treaty, northern Germany and the diversity of its regions, culture and languages must be adequately reflected in the broadcaster's programmes. The state government works to ensure that an amended NDR Inter-State Treaty will cater for the regional and minority languages at least in the same manner. The intention is to make sure that the stakeholders will be more represented in the relevant committees, for instance.

## I. Article 7 (4)

### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Chaired by the Minister-President, the Spatial Planning Council includes one representative each of the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the German Sinti and Roma. (Section 21 of the Schleswig-Holstein Planning Act (*Landesplanungsgesetz* – LaplaG). Section 5 (5) of the Spatial Planning Act provides that associations of the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the German Sinti and Roma are given the opportunity to comment on draft regional development plans.
- This body comprises representatives of the parliamentary groups in the Schleswig-Holstein parliament, local government associations, trade unions, chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of crafts and trades, and chambers of agriculture, industry associations, environmental protection associations, and other individual organisations.
- At the suggestion of Schleswig-Holstein, a member representing the regional and minority languages in Schleswig-Holstein has served on the Television Board of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) since 2015. This member is seconded by mutual agreement by the Sydslesvigsk Forening (SSF), the Frisian Council, the Plattdeutscher Rat für Schleswig-Holstein (Low German Council) and the Schleswig-Holstein association of German Sinti and Roma. The legal basis is the Act on the 17th Amended Interstate Agreement on Broadcasting and on the Appointment of a Member of the Television Board of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen of 30 November 2017 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 406).
- When it comes to drawing up the country reports for the European Language Charter and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and state government's minority reports submitted to the Schleswig-Holstein parliament, the national minorities associations and ethnic groups and the speakers of Low German have the opportunity to comment on the contributions by the state government and on the entire report, under the heading FORUM. Consultation does not take place

in a body especially convened for this purpose, but through letters inviting comments.

ii. Practical measures

- The Spatial Planning Council meets twice a year, as provided by the Spatial Planning Act.
- The ZDF Television Board holds ordinary meetings every three months, in line with section 22 (3) of the ZDF Inter-State-Treaty.

### **3. Article 8 – Education**

#### **a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Promotion of day-care facilities based on section 16 (2) of the Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Child-Minding (*Kindertagesförderungsgesetz - KiTaG*).
  - Directive of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein regarding the promotion of regional and minority languages in day-care and child-minding 2020 - 2022.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Danish minority has a well established system of schools and day-care centres. The body responsible for schools and kindergartens is the Danish Schools Association for South Schleswig (Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig e. V.), with approximately 8,000 members. As per 1 June 2019, it operated 57 day-care centres which were attended by 2,698 children.
  - In addition, the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein provided a total of €542,291.55 in funding for Danish, Frisian and Low German language programmes for children at day-care and child-minding centres. The aim of this measure is to familiarise children at an early stage with the regional and minority languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein. A total of 274 care groups at day-care centres and day-care staff benefited from the additional funding in 2020. In 2021, support for language programmes was increased to €575,000.

#### **b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iv)**

- i. Practical measures
  - In the school year 2020/2021, the number of language-learning pupils totalled 4,622 at 61 public schools at all levels.
  - In the school year 2020/2021, a model school project “Elective instruction in the Danish language” which is designed along the lines of the model school project for Low German, was launched at initially seven public

primary schools. The participating schools get two teaching hours per week and class to be able to provide this tuition.

- On 24 August 2020, the seven model schools involved in the Danish language programme were awarded a model school badge and a logo for their homepage to make the voluntary provision of teaching in the minority language Danish visible.
- This system will be progressively rolled out so that by the school year 2024/2025, these schools will be providing Danish lessons to all four primary school grades.
- The school book “Paul og Emma snakker dansk” (published by Quickborn-Verlag, 2019) is available for teaching at primary school level. The school book and handout material that is available at the IQSH learning network website were funded by the IQSH - <https://paulogemmadansk.lernnetz.de>.
- Following an evaluation of this project, it is conceivable in the medium term that this model project will be continued in grades 5 and 6 at lower secondary school level.

**c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iii)**

i. Practical measures

- Danish lessons in the school year 2020/21 were provided at 61 general public schools, 44 private schools (mainly run by the Danish minority) and eight vocational schools.
- Further figures for the school year 2020/21: 386 teachers with a teaching certificate, 10,367 pupils attended 2,695.1 lessons.

**d. Article 8 (1) (c) (iv)**

i. Practical measures

- Danish is a regular foreign-language subject at comprehensive schools (grades 7 - 10 , and grades 7 - 13 at upper secondary level), grammar schools (grades 9 -13 or 11 -13) and vocational grammar schools (grades



11 - 13) and is taught on the basis of the relevant curricula with the option to take a final exam.

- As a rule, Danish is taught four hours a week and at upper secondary level 3 - 4 hours a week.
- Lower secondary grades (secondary education stage I) A text book is being developed (publisher Klett Sprachen) with substantial start-up funding provided in 2020 by the Schleswig-Holstein state government - upper secondary level II. A thorough update of the text book “Det er dansk” is underway with support in terms of staff and funding being provided by the IQSH.
- Other teaching materials: - Special brochure for lower and upper secondary grades: “Vikingetiden“ (IQSH, 2019) – Special brochure for upper secondary grades: “Dansk syd for grænsen – skole med dansk møder dansk skole“ (IQSH, 2019, in cooperation with Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig und Duborg-Skolen, with financial support provided by the Commissioner for National Minorities of the Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein).
- The IQSH is a cooperation partner of the Regional Secretariat of the Transboundary Region of Sønderjylland-Schleswig (Regionskontor der grenzüberschreitenden Region Sønderjylland -Schleswig) which works intensively to develop a neighbouring language strategy, using INTERREG funds to provide teaching materials that are especially useful for German-Danish school encounters and are used by public schools.  
<http://www.kulturakademi.de/sprache/> und  
[http://www.kulturakademi.de/grenzland.](http://www.kulturakademi.de/grenzland)

**e. Article 8 (1) (d) (iii)**

i. Practical measures

- In the 2018/19 school year, the total number of students who were taught Danish at vocational schools was 1,444. In the 2019/20 school year, the total number of pupils who were taught Danish was 1,192 and in the 2020/21 school year the number was 1,201.

- The decline in the number of pupils is due to the usual fluctuations per cohort and the drop in the number of pupils driven by demographic change.
- The number of hours per week in which the Danish language is taught:
  - At vocational grammar schools, there are starter courses with four hours of Danish language training per week and continuation courses which provide three hours of Danish per week.
  - Fachoberschulen (specialised upper secondary schools) and Berufsoberschulen (two-year full-time vocational schools): four hours per week
  - Berufsfachschulen (full-time vocational schools) III, with a specialisation in economics and a focus on foreign languages: five hours per week
  - Berufsfachschulen III with a specialisation in social professions: two hours per week
  - Fachschule Sozialpädagogik (college for social pedagogy): three hours per week
  - Berufsschule (vocational school): two hours per week

Curricula are available at the types of vocational schools listed above.

**f. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

- At Christian-Albrechts-University (CAU), the number of students is recorded for each academic year. In the current academic year (2019/20 winter semester and 2020 summer semester), a total of 115 students are studying Danish (training course for future grammar school teachers), 91 of whom are enrolled in the bachelor programme while 24 are enrolled in the master programme. These numbers do not include students with Danish as an extension subject in the study programmes for teaching at grammar schools and in the business education profile. Nor do they include students enrolled in Scandinavian studies with a focus on Danish.

- In the 2019/20 autumn semester, a total of 49 students were enrolled in Danish language studies at the European University in Flensburg (EUF). This number includes students enrolled in teacher training courses including special needs education and students studying educational sciences.

**g. Article 8 (1) (f) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
With the 2017 amendment of the Further Education Act (*Weiterbildungsgesetz*, WBG), the tasks and objectives of further education with regard to cultural education were expanded to include “teaching regional and minority languages and imparting knowledge about the cultures of the minorities and ethnic groups living in Schleswig-Holstein” (section 3 (5) of the WBG).
- ii. Practical measures  
*Adult language courses*
  - The “Training bonus Schleswig-Holstein” programme (*Weiterbildungsbonus Schleswig-Holstein*), through which seminar costs can also be financed for Danish courses, has been embedded in the state programme “Landesprogramm Arbeit” (LPA) since 2014. Further training for employees can thus be subsidised with a maximum of €1,500 per measure from funds provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) if the employer assumes at least 50 per cent of the seminar costs. Since 1 July 2020, a cap for the costs of the measure no longer applies. Since 1 July 2020, individuals are eligible to benefit from these subsidies more than just once per funding period. Freelancers and self-employed people who are eligible for funding for the first time in the current funding period, will have to bear the required co-financing themselves. The option to take educational leave provided under the Schleswig-Holstein Further Education Act can also be exercised in combination with the training bonus. In 2017, 22 events related to the Danish language were recognised by the state of Schleswig-Holstein as events for which employees were entitled to take educational leave; in 2018 and 2019 the number was 18

and 16, respectively. These measures promote greater participation in further training events.

- In 2018, there were 347 courses with 7,321 teaching units and an enrolment of 3,075. 61 adult education centres were involved. In the 2019/20 school year (status as of shortly before the end of the season), 319 courses attended by 3,547 participants were expected to take place. In addition, the Danish Schools Association for South Schleswig (Dänischer Schulverein für Südschleswig e.V.) with its adult education department (Dansk Voksenundervisning i Sydslesvig) offers a wide range of courses and activities. These include not only language courses (Danish, Frisian, Italian, Russian) but also gymnastics, literature, creativity and music courses. In all these courses, the language normally used is Danish. Both members of the Danish minority and members of the majority population have access to the course programme.
- The adult education centres run by the state of Schleswig-Holstein, the Jarplund Højskole which is the adult education centre of the Danish minority, established in 1950, and other institutions and organisations providing further education offer Danish language courses. These include employer-recognized courses for which employees are entitled to take educational leave. The latest information about language courses is available at [www.sh.kursportal.info](http://www.sh.kursportal.info).

**h. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please see also the comments in E.I.3.g.
- ii. Practical measures  
Please see also the comments in E.I.3.g. The training bonus and educational leave also promote greater participation in Frisian and Low German courses.

**i. Article 8 (1) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Section 4(6)(3) Schleswig-Holstein Schools Act (Schulgesetz Schleswig-Holstein)

- Section 2(3)(5) Schleswig-Holstein Teacher Training Act (Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein)
  - Section 8(3) of the State Ordinance Governing the Preparatory Service and the State Examinations for Teachers (Landesverordnung über die Ordnung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die Staatsprüfungen der Lehrkräfte)
- ii. Practical measures
- At the schools run by the Danish Schools Association, the history and culture of the Danish minority are firmly anchored in the syllabus for Danish, history, geography and basic science. At Schleswig-Holstein's public schools, the subject-specific requirements for the subjects of history, geography and Danish and the relevant guidelines provide a framework for teachers to address the history and culture of the recognised minorities in Schleswig-Holstein, in particular the Danish minority. This applies above all to the lower and upper secondary stages of the schools with a regional focus on the Schleswig region.
  - The aim of the Danish text book which is to be published by the publishing house Klett Sprachen and has been in the process of being developed since summer 2020, is to align its content, language and media focus with a specific up-to-date language teaching system for the neighbouring languages Danish and German. This language teaching system is derived from the 2016 subject-specific requirements for the teaching of Danish at public schools in Schleswig-Holstein, taking into account also cross-border contacts that are facilitated by the proximity to Denmark and community life with the Danish minority in the Schleswig region.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
- By decree of 28 June 2018, the subject-specific requirements for history and economics/civic education criticised by the Danish minority vis-à-vis the Committee of Experts were suspended for lower and upper secondary levels with effect from 1 August 2018. New subject-specific requirements for these and other subjects will be gradually developed. The current

guidelines for history teaching explicitly address German-Danish history, starting off with the question “Schleswig-Holstein – German or Danish?” and providing an outlook on the future: “Germans and Danes – role model for a Europe that is growing closer together?”

(Subject-specific requirements for history teaching at lower and upper secondary level, page 28 and guidelines on the subject-specific requirements for history teaching at lower and upper secondary level among others, page 32).

- The state of Schleswig-Holstein provides substantial start-up funding to sponsor the publication by Klett Sprachen of a school book which is based on a specific teaching system for neighbouring languages and aligned with the subject-specific requirements for teaching Danish at lower secondary level, thematically involving the Danish minority in the Schleswig region. The IQSH expert department for Danish provides advice and monitors the development of the school book. This school book will replace a 25 year old text book which was at the time developed by an IPTS/IQSH working group. Since the new textbook will be increasingly accessed and used electronically, its development had to be entrusted to a professional publishing house. Given the fact that circulation numbers are small compared to those of textbooks for other foreign languages, there are no other Danish school books for this target group.

**j. Article 8 (1) (h)**

i. Practical measures

- At the beginning of the 2020/21 school year, there were 18 teachers for Danish in the preparatory service which is part of the second stage of teacher training at the IQSH: two primary school teachers, five teachers at lower secondary level and 11 teachers at upper secondary level.
- Christian-Albrechts-University offers training programmes for grammar school teachers and vocational school teachers. Currently, there are no advanced training measures. In cooperation with IQSH, further trainings for teachers are offered as necessary.

- The IQSH specialist portal for Danish offers comprehensive information on Danish language teaching at public schools:  
<https://fachportal.lernnetz.de/daenisch.html>
- At Flensburg's European University (EUF), students can study Danish for primary school teachers (Danish as first, second or foreign language), teachers for children with special needs and grammar school teachers, teachers at comprehensive schools and vocational school teachers (in combination with the subject "health and food"). The relevant study programmes for teachers are the B.A. programme Educational Sciences and the master programmes Master of Education / Master of Vocational Education. The Danish seminar in Flensburg trains teachers for public schools (Danish as a foreign language) and for possible deployment at schools of the Danish minority in the Schleswig region or at schools of the German minority in southern Denmark. The EUF does not offer any further/advanced training for Danish teachers.  
For information on the number of teachers who are currently enrolled in the training programmes please refer to E.I.3.f.

**k. Article 8 (1) (i)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The state of Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments in section E.II.12 b of the Sixth Periodical Report.

**l. Article 8 (2)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The figures listed under E.I.3.b. include 762 pupils at 14 public schools in Holstein.
  - Comprehensive schools grades 7 - 10; grammar schools grades 11 - 13, vocational grammar schools grades 11 - 13, Fachschule (college), Berufsfachschule (full-time vocational school), Fachoberschule (specialised upper-secondary school), Berufsoberschule (two-year full-time vocational school)
  - The number of hours per week in which the Danish language is taught: As a rule, Danish is taught four hours a week, at upper secondary level it is

taught 3 - 4 hours a week, while the number of Danish lessons at vocational schools is lower.

- Danish is a regular foreign language subject at comprehensive schools, grammar schools and vocational grammar schools in Schleswig-Holstein and is taught on the basis of the relevant subject-specific requirements/curricula, with the option to take a final exam.



**4. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

To the extent that documents and evidence drafted in a minority language are presented in a form that excludes misunderstandings or errors stemming from translation, this obligation is already met by the legal situation prevailing in Germany. The federal state of Schleswig-Holstein does not provide any further comments in this regard.

## 5. Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services

### a. Article 10 (1) (a) (v)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Act amending the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act of 25 September 2018 (*Landesverwaltungsgesetz*, LVwG, Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, page 648 )
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - In the remit of the Ministry of Finance, the tax offices, as a direct contact point between citizens and the tax administration, have an important role to play with regard to the Language Policy Action Plan. Some tax offices, especially in the language area of the Danish minority, have staff with Danish language skills so that taxable persons can submit documents in their respective languages.
  
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - In section E.II.1.b of the Sixth Periodical Report, Schleswig-Holstein had reported on forthcoming measures.
  - Meanwhile, the scope of section 82(b) of the Land Administration Act has now been extended to the city of Kiel for Danish; cf. also the comments under *C.I.1.* of the Seventh Periodical Report. This means that applications may be made and submissions, documentary evidence, certificates and other documents presented in Danish. If the authorities there do not have the necessary knowledge of the Danish language, they will have the documents translated at no charge to the applicant.
  - Schleswig-Holstein also refers to its comments *in E.I.5.b* on the newly assumed obligation under Article 10 (1) (c).
  - As regards the inclusion of regional and minority languages in the implementation of the Online Access Act, Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *under D.IV.4.*
  - For encouragement to use the Danish language in the tax offices, cf. also the comments *in E.I.2.d.*

**b. Article 10 (1) (c)**

Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would also like to assume this obligation under the Charter and requested that the necessary steps for notification be taken by the Council of Europe. On 15 October 2020, the Federal Government, with the consent of the Bundesrat, adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation, and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; see *C.I.1* for more details.

## i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Act Amending the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act of 25 September 2018 (*Landesverwaltungsgesetz*, Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, page 648 )

## ii. Practical measures

- The Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act (LVwG) (including section 82b) is to be applied by all public authorities in Schleswig-Holstein. The state of Schleswig-Holstein does not exercise “general supervision” across all authorities at state, county or municipal level or at the level of the municipal associations as to whether and how they apply the LVwG.

The amendment of section 82b of the LVwG is an outflow of the omnibus “Act Implementing the Constitutional Task of Strengthening the National Minorities and Ethnic Groups” (*Gesetz zur Umsetzung des Verfassungsauftrags zur Stärkung der nationalen Minderheiten und Volksgruppen*) of 30 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances. Page 543). It stipulates that the state government must submit a report evaluating the impacts in terms of efficiency and target achievement no later than four years after the entry into force of the law. This evaluation, which is expected to be submitted in 2021, will also address the presentation of documents in regional and minority languages.

**c. Article 10 (2) (g)**

Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would also like to assume this obligation under the Charter and requested that the

necessary steps for notification be taken by the Council of Europe. On 15 October 2020, the Federal Government, with the consent of the Bundesrat, adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation, and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; see *C.I.1* for more details.

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - By virtue of a decree issued by the Ministry of Transport of Schleswig Holstein on 31 March 2009, it is also permissible for name extensions on signposts indicating the names of localities (sign 310 pursuant to Annex 3 of the Road Traffic Regulations (Straßenverkehrs-Ordnung)) to be inscribed in Frisian, Danish and Low German. The municipalities can voluntarily install bilingual signposts indicating the names of localities.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Since signposts indicating the names of localities (Ortstafeln) are official traffic signs which are set up at the instruction of the local road traffic authorities (usually the districts) and there are no corresponding reporting requirements, the Schleswig-Holsten Ministry of Transport has no data on the exact number of applications for and approvals of such bilingual signposts. As a general rule, applications for bilingual signposts indicating the names of localities are approved in Schleswig-Holstein on the basis of the decree referred to above.

It is not known whether and to what extent signs indicating road or street names are provided in two languages.

**d. Article 10 (4) (c)**

- i. Practical measures
  - If a staff member within the Land Administration expresses a wish regarding such an appointment, the scope for complying with the request will be examined. So far, however, there have been no requests to this effect at the state government level.
  - Given the geographic proximity to Denmark, the tax offices in Flensburg and North Friesland take particular care to accommodate the needs of resident taxpayers from the Danish-speaking area. For example when

selecting staff for corresponding jobs at the tax office, care will be taken, where possible, to ensure that there are staff members with Danish language skills who can serve as a point of contact for members of the Danish-speaking community, translate documents where necessary or support meetings.

**e. Article 10 (5)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
In accordance with the Convention on the Indication of Surnames and Forenames in the Civil Status Registers of 13 September 1973 (Federal Law Gazette 1976 II p. 1473), the contracting states, including Germany, undertake to register the names of natural persons uniformly, whatever their nationality.
- ii. Practical measures  
The Unicode Latin characters set is used in the civil status registers, which also includes Danish characters.

## 6. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

#### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

Due to the constitutional principle which prohibits state interference with broadcasting programmes, the federal states cannot and must not take any influence on the content or design of public or private broadcasting programmes. Nevertheless, the state government of Schleswig-Holstein will seek to keep minority languages represented in public service and private media, as stated in the coalition agreement. However, the power of the state government to exert influence is limited due to the programme autonomy of the broadcasters.

#### ii. Practical measures

- Minority and regional languages are used especially in local radio programmes. Following authorisation/allocation by MA HSH, the first commercial local radio station “Systfunk – Söl’ring Radio” went live in the region of Sylt, Niebüll, Leck and Bredstedt on 1 June 2016. Meanwhile, this local radio station was merged with the channel “Antenne Sylt”. The programme covers the Frisian and Danish languages, e.g. in news, event recommendations and time announcements.
- Upon request, the public broadcaster Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) stated that its programme also covers the Danish minority, for example in programmes such as “Ostseereport” (“Baltic Sea Report”) on NDR television or in the programme “Von Binnenland und Waterkant” (News from inland and from the coast) on NDR 1 Welle Nord. In particular, the NDR studio in Flensburg focuses on the border region between Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark. The correspondents speak the Danish language. According to the principle that everyone should use the language in which they feel at home, members of the Danish minority are encouraged by reporters to use their language in interviews. Whole programmes in Danish are broadcast only on special occasions. Nevertheless, the language has its place in everyday reporting. In addition, the Schleswig-

Holstein broadcasting centre prefers hiring trainees who speak a minority or regional language to ensure coverage of these languages also in the future.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Schleswig-Holstein state government has asked the parties to the NDR broadcasting agreement to encourage the broadcaster even more to take account of minority and regional languages in the programme when amending the NDR broadcasting agreement. The draft agreement, to be signed in mid-March 2021 by the heads of government of its four parties, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, therefore calls on the NDR to take appropriate account of regional and minority languages its programmes. The draft agreement, to be signed in mid-March 2021 by the heads of government of its four parties, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, therefore calls on the NDR to take appropriate account of regional and minority languages its programmes. The new NDR broadcasting agreement is currently going through the parliamentary process and is due to enter into force no later than 1 September 2021.

**b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)**

As regards the obligation undertaken in this Article, reference is made to the comments *in E.I.6.a.*

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

As regards the obligation undertaken in this Article, reference is made to the comments *in E.I.6.a.*

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

According to the Committee of Experts, this obligation is fulfilled by the daily newspaper “Flensburg Avis” and the press service of the South Schleswig Association Sydslesvigsk Forening e.V., SSF). The circulation of the Flensburg Avis is approximately 4,400 copies (as of Q1 2019). The media in Germany and Denmark are provided with information about the minority in both the German and the Danish languages by the press service of the SSF.

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

- The Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein film fund supports feature films and unusual television productions in all genres. Criteria for funding include quality of the project and substantive reference to Hamburg or Schleswig-Holstein. Danish-language productions are also eligible for such funding provided they meet the qualitative requirements.
- Between 2014 and mid-2019, the Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein film fund supported a number of German-Danish co-productions including the following films:
  - *Unter dem Sand/Under sandet* by Martin Zandvliet
  - *Aminas Letters/AMINAS BREVE* by Jakob Bitsch
- The film versions of bestsellers by Jussi Adler Olsen which premiered in the Danish language were also presented at the Hamburg film festival:
  - *Erbarmen/Kvinden i buret* by Mikkel Nørgaard
  - *Schändung/Fasandræberne* by Mikkel Nørgaard
  - *Erlösung/ Flaskepost fra P* by Hans Petter Moland
  - *Verachtung/ Journal 64* by Christoffer Boe.
- The Flensburg branch of the Offener Kanal (OK) Schleswig-Holstein broadcasting station regularly produces and broadcasts Danish programmes, which can be received by members of the Danish minority in the coverage area (Flensburg, Schleswig, Niebüll, Kappeln). The cooperation between the OK Flensburg branch and AI-TV, a non-profit making television station in Apenrade, Denmark, also plays a special role here.

**f. Article 11 (2)**

i. Practical measures

To date, Schleswig-Holstein is not aware of any disruptions to the reception of television and radio broadcasts from Denmark.



## 7. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would also like to assume this obligation under the Charter and requested that the necessary steps be taken to notify the Council of Europe. On 15 October 2020, the Federal Government, with the consent of the Bundesrat, adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation, and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; see *C.I.1* for more details.

#### i. Practical measures

- On average 26 theatre performances by Danish artists
- Guest performances (concerts) of the Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester
- Danevirke Museum (UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2018)
- Dansk Centralbibliothek for Sydslesvig e.V.
- Sydslesviks danske Kuinstforening

### b. Article 12 (1) (b)

Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would also like to assume this obligation under the Charter and requested that the necessary steps be taken to notify the Council of Europe. On 15 October 2020, the Federal Government, with the consent of the Bundesrat, adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation, and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; see *C.I.1* for more details.

#### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- The institutions of the Danish minority such as Sydslesvigsk Forening and Dansk Centralbibliothek can request funding from the Schleswig-Holstein government for translating, dubbing, post-synchronising and subtitling works from Danish into German.

#### ii. Practical measures

- As regards support for the SSF and Dansk Centralbibliothek, Schleswig-Holstein refers to the comments under *E.I.2.e.* and *E.I.5.d.*

**c. Article 12 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The institutions of the Danish minority such as Sydslesvigsk Forening and Dansk Centralbibliotek request funding from the Schleswig-Holstein government for translating, dubbing, post-synchronising and subtitling works into Danish.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Furthermore, the Dansk Centralbibliotek receives institutional funding of €172,000 per year from the MBWK.

**d. Article 12 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
With federal state funding, institutions and bodies of the Danish minority ensure that the knowledge and use of the respective language and culture are adequately taken into account in their cultural activities.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The minorities are also invited to participate actively in central celebrations and presentations organised by the state government, such as the Day of German Unity celebrations in Kiel on 3 and 4 October 2019, in order to present themselves to the majority population.
  - During visits by the Federal President (e.g. on 5 October 2017), members of the Federal Government, members of the diplomatic corps on the occasion of Kieler Woche, and of foreign delegations, the state government regularly organises visits to institutions of the Danish minority.

**e. Article 12 (1) (e)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
With the 2017 amendment of the Further Education Act (*Weiterbildungsgesetz*, WBG), the tasks and objectives of further education with regard to cultural education were expanded to include “teaching regional and minority languages and imparting knowledge about the cultures of the minorities and ethnic groups living in Schleswig-Holstein” (section 3 (5) of the WBG).

ii. Practical measures

- Government subsidies for events held by national minorities also include funds used for personnel costs. The full-time staff employed in the field of Danish cultural work speak Danish and German; some of them also speak Low German.
- Organisers of cultural events and their staff can also use the training bonus for, for example, Danish language courses or training courses in the field of intercultural competence.

**f. Article 12 (1) (f)**

i. Practical measures

- The celebrations and events marking the 100th anniversary of the referendum on the drawing of the border between Germany and Denmark and the German-Danish Cultural Year of Friendship in 2020 organised on this occasion have been and still are strongly supported by national minorities in the German-Danish border region, even in times of a global pandemic.
- The SSF and the BDN, whose chairpersons have permanent seats in the bodies set up on both sides of the border specifically to plan and coordinate the anniversary activities (the *Sønderjyske Præsidium* in Denmark and the *2020-Komitee* in Schleswig-Holstein), carry out numerous projects throughout the anniversary year (events, alternatively also digital formats, etc.) and thus publicly pay due tribute to their own founding.
- In addition to German and Danish local authorities, minority organisations were involved in the framework of the Sønderjylland-Schleswig cultural agreement (2017-2020) and the INTERREG KursKultur project (2015-2019).
- The INTERREG successor project KursKultur 2.0 (2019-2022) aims to strengthen and promote citizens' intercultural understanding throughout the German-Danish INTERREG programme region. KursKultur 2.0 focuses on promoting German-Danish micro projects and supports initiatives to

increase interest in the languages of the neighbouring country, i.e. German and Danish. KursKultur 2.0 develops activities that make the joint German-Danish cultural heritage visible. With a focus on children, young people and families with children, throughout its term the project will also highlight the special opportunities associated with life in the border region. (see:

<https://www.region.de/region/de/arbeitsfelder/kultur/KursKultur.php>)

**g. Article 12 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

- Funding contract with the Dansk Centralbibliothek for Syslesvik e. V. (DCB) from 2020 to 2022.

Tasks of the DCB include library work in Flensburg, Schleswig and Husum and two mobile libraries; research in the “Forskningsafddlingen”, which maintains the archives of the Danish minority in the Schleswig region; and “Den Slesvigske Samling”, the scientific collections of North and South Schleswig literature in the five languages Danish, Sønderjysk, standard German, Low German and Frisian.

**h. Article 12 (2)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

In Germany cultural activities complying with the law in force are not subject to any permit procedure or restrictions.

ii. Practical measures

It is solely up to the non-governmental cultural institutions, particularly the organisations of the Danish minority, to decide what to offer outside their respective language area. Since allocated state funding for cultural work may be used for a broad range of purposes, events may be organised also outside the immediate language area. This also applies to the measures described in *E.I.7.a.* taken, however, outside the Danish settlement area.

**i. Article 12 (3)**

i. Practical measures

Schleswig-Holstein has taken steps to involve Danish in the presentation of its culture abroad. For example, cultural groups of the Danish minority such as choirs, orchestras, ensembles and amateur dramatic groups receive government funding for performances abroad, where they present and represent the culture and language of the Danish minority and thus part of cultural life in Germany.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

Members of the state government use their international contacts and visits to present Schleswig-Holstein's special cultural and linguistic diversity as well as its policy for regional and minorities and their languages on appropriate occasions.

The year 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the referendums on the drawing of the border between Germany and Denmark. The anniversary year 2020 is of great importance to the German-Danish border region and the two neighbouring countries. The foreign ministers of Germany and Denmark have therefore declared 2020 to be the German-Danish Cultural Year of Friendship, alongside the activities carried out during the anniversary of the referendums.

A variety of events had been planned in Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark for a long time in advance and with a great deal of commitment. As a member and deputy chair of the federal states' *2020-Komitee*, the minister-president's commissioner for minorities in Schleswig-Holstein has been closely monitoring preparations. Alongside the official events, the aim was to promote German-Danish understanding throughout the region. Many small local events were organised by associations, creatives, and municipalities. Schools, too, have addressed this issue.

In January 2020, a delegation from Schleswig-Holstein, including the President of the Land Parliament, the Minister-President and his Commissioner for Minorities, travelled to Copenhagen for the official opening of the anniversary year at the opera with Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II and Prime Minister Frederiksen.

The COVID-19 pandemic then ended many activities and projects over the course of the year. Nevertheless, the German-Danish idea of peaceful coexistence has been communicated across borders and with a high profile in many, sometimes online, formats.

These include in particular the opening of the new German Museum in Sønderborg; the travelling exhibition “100 år med grænsen”; the art exhibition with stops in Kiel, Tingleff/UK, Rendsburg and Sønderborg; the new exhibition in Danewerk Museum; the live broadcast by the NDR from the Haus Nordschleswig in Apenrade; and the literary encounters between German and Danish authors at the Schleswig-Holstein house of literature.

The joint application by Denmark and Germany “The Danish-German minority model – a framework safeguarding peaceful integration within a diverse region” for UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage submitted in Paris in March 2020 was also supported by the Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein and his Commissioner for Minorities. The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage will decide on inclusion in the UNESCO Register of Good Safeguarding Practices by late 2021.

In addition, Schleswig-Holstein refers to the comments in *E.I.12.a of the Sixth Periodical Report*.

## **8. Article 13 - Economic and social life**

### **a. Article 13 (1) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The applicable laws of the Federal Republic of Germany are in accordance with this obligation. The provision is thus already being complied with nationwide in respect of all regional or minority languages. Therefore, no special measures had to be taken by Schleswig-Holstein.

### **b. Article 13 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The legal system in Germany prohibits such restrictions. The provision is thus already being complied with nationwide in respect of all regional or minority languages.

### **c. Article 13 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Article 2 (1) of the Basic Law
- ii. Practical measures
  - There are various ways in which the state promotes the learning and use of minority and regional languages (see the comments on the various obligations). In particular, efforts are encouraged also among the general public to keep these languages alive by using them within the family and in extra-familiar everyday-life situations.
  - Most of the members of the Danish minority use the Danish language in the private sphere. Danish is predominantly spoken within the organisations of the Danish minority. Constant use and promotion of the Danish language are the basis for all minority-related activities.

### **d. Article 13 (2) (c)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The Danish Health Care Service for South Schleswig (the registered association Dansk Sundhedstjeneste for Sydslesvig e.V.) attends to the social, health-related and charitable matters of the Danish minority. Schleswig-Holstein Association of the Deutscher Paritätischer

Wohlfahrtsverband, a non-denominational welfare association, and as a partner of the public health service, assumes tasks under the Health Services Act. Among others, a nursing home, several residential homes for the elderly, and a number of home health care services are affiliated to Dansk Sundhedstjeneste. The elderly are offered holiday stays at a resthome operated by Dansk Sundhedstjeneste in Denmark. In addition, a social counselling service, charitable services making home visits to elderly people, and numerous senior citizens' clubs offer their services. Dansk Sundhedstjeneste for Sydslesvig e. V. operates as an out-patient nursing service in the Schleswig region and therefore receives a subsidy pursuant to section 6 (2) of the *Land Care Act (Landespflegegesetz)*.

- Two non-profit hospitals in Flensburg and the clinics in Schleswig and Damp offer Danish-language care. At the three hospitals of the district of Nordfriesland, especially in Niebüll, Danish-speaking patients can, at least to some extent, be received and treated in their own language. The website of the Diako hospital in Flensburg is available in Danish.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

- The recommendation of the Committee of Experts to ensure that social care facilities, in particular hospitals, offer the use of Danish cannot be enforced by the Schleswig-Holstein government. The reason for this is that hospitals are commercial enterprises with their own authority to employ and dismiss staff, which cannot be interfered with. Only recommendations can be made.
- As a commercial enterprise, however, hospitals have an interest in being able to communicate with Danish patients.
- The St. Franziskus hospital in Flensburg has a Danish-language chaplain for patients.
- The hospitals in Heide and Brunsbüttel publish the CORONA information sheets in Danish.



## 9. Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

### a. Article 14 (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The obligation is fulfilled through the practical implementation of the Bonn - Copenhagen Declarations of 1955 and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
  
- ii. Practical measures  
As part of the cultural agreement “Kulturvereinbarung Sønderjylland-Schleswig 2017-2020”, signed in February 2017 by representatives of the region, the Danish Ministry of Culture and the government of Schleswig-Holstein, numerous cultural projects in the fields of “talent development” and “culture without borders” received financial support. Representatives of the German and Danish minorities are among the decision-makers in the relevant bodies of the cultural agreement. The “culture without borders” field of activity is intended to promote interest and respect for the cultural diversity of the region and new transcultural networks. Around 140 different nationalities live in the region. Easy-to-understand teaching materials for the different target groups were provided for dialogue on the importance of the border in the past and present. The neighbouring languages in the Sønderjylland-Schleswig region are addressed by the current INTERREG programme KursKultur 2.0, which is also funded by the federal state. The majority of people in the region speak German or Danish, a few speak both languages, others have knowledge of the regional languages Low German and Sønderjysk, or the minority language Frisian. Numerous projects are being implemented. For example, pupils from both countries visit a German and a Danish museum and complete joint tasks. This measure strengthens the intercultural skills of pupils and at the same time helps them learn their neighbouring language. Special brochures are published online and in print. The cross-border teaching portal for schools and day-care centres *Kulturakademie* (cultural academy) offers educational services, materials and activities in order to learn more about the culture and language of the neighbouring country.

The current cultural agreement Sønderjylland-Schleswig 2021–2024 continues this work and focuses on working with the target group of children and young people in the German-Danish border region.

**b. Article 14 (b)**

i. Practical measures

- In June 2001, the Schleswig-Holstein government, represented by the Minister-President, and Sønderjylland Amt, represented by the Amtsborgmester (mayor), signed a Joint Declaration on regional cooperation between Schleswig-Holstein and Sønderjylland Amt. In 2007, this declaration has been updated to reflect the new regional structure on the Danish side (new partner since 2007: Syddanmark region) and continues to apply. Every two years, the partners have since signed a new annual plan outlining the progress made in cooperation, the fields of current and future cooperation and concrete projects. In March 2017, the Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein, together with Stephanie Lose, Chair of the Regional Council (Syddanmark region), signed a renewed Joint Declaration on the continuation of regional cooperation between Schleswig-Holstein and the Syddanmark region and an annual plan for 2017-2018. At Denmark's request, a revised joint "Action Plan 2019/2020" on cooperation was signed in late November 2018, focusing on cooperation in the fields of health care/innovation, education (skilled workers) and regional public transport.
- In the light of the Danish decision to transfer to national economic development structures the responsibility previously attached to the Danish regions for promoting regional economic development, Stephanie Lose, Chair of the Syddanmark Regional Council, and the Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein, agreed at the beginning of 2021 that another revised Joint Declaration on the continuation of regional cooperation should be drawn up and signed by the end of 2021, providing for

- continuing cooperation in the field of cross-border regional development,
- cooperation in the field of health research and rescue; and
- cooperation in the field of environment and climate, while stressing the importance of the forthcoming INTERREG 6 A programme “Germany-Danmark 2021-2027” for cross-border cooperation.

## II. Upper Sorbian in Saxony

### 1. Article 6 – Information

At *federal level*, the Consultative Committee on Issues of the Sorbian People was established in 2002. The Consultative Committee's task is to discuss all issues of the Federal Government's domestic policy that concern or affect the Sorbian people.

The Consultative Committee comprises three members of the Sorbian people, one representative of the Foundation for the Sorbian People, representatives of the Federal Government, two members of the parliamentary groups of the German Bundestag, and one representative of Brandenburg and of Saxony.

Representatives of the Sorbian people are appointed upon proposal from the umbrella organisation of the Sorbian people, Domowina – Bund Lausitzer Sorben.

As a rule, the meeting is chaired by the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities.

The committee usually meets once a year.

In addition, the *Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community* is providing up to €500,000 for a wide range of projects run by the Federal Union of European Nationalities, of which Domowina is a member as the umbrella organisation of the Sorbian people in Germany. The working group on Slavic minorities set up at FUEN, whose work focuses on the preservation and application of the Slavic language, should be highlighted here.

Additional federal measures are described in *E.I.1*.

*Saxony* has provided €20,000 annually to the FUEN since 2007.

## 2. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

The basic rights of the Sorbian people are enshrined in Articles 2, 5 and 6 of the Saxon Constitution of 27 May 1992, such as the use of their own colours and coat of arms, the right to live in one's traditional homeland, the preservation of identity, the preservation of the German-Sorbian character of the settlement area, and the maintenance and development of the traditional language, culture and tradition, in particular through schools as well as pre-school and cultural institutions.

This constitutional mandate is governed by the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs in the Free State of Saxony/Zakoń, wo prawach Serbow Swobodnym staće Sakskej (Sächsisches Sorbengesetz/Sakski Serbski zakoń – SächsSorbG/SSZ) of 31.03.1999 (SächsGVBl. p. 161), most recently amended by Article 59a of the Act of 27 January 2012 (SächsGVBl. p. 130). This constitutional mandate is also implemented by other laws and other state regulations as well as in day-to-day life within the respective competence – at federal state or municipal level.

The 2019-2024 coalition agreement between the CDU, BÜNDNIS 90 / DIE GRÜNEN and the SPD in Saxony mentions strengthening the Sorbian language as a central element of cultural identity among other goals in the chapter on the Sorbian people.

On 18 June 2019, **Saxony** adopted the Second Action Plan of the State Government to encourage and revive the use of the Sorbian language. It contains twelve objectives with a total of 21 projects. The plan follows on from the first action plan adopted in 2012. Link to the second action plan:

<https://publikationen.sachsen.de/bdb/artikel/34403>.

On 6 February 2020, the Sorbian language promotion campaign “Sorbisches? Na klar.” (Sorbian? Of course.) was launched on behalf of Saxony's Ministry of Science, Culture and Tourism. The aim of the promotional campaign is to increase acceptance of the Sorbian language in Lusatia, to convey knowledge about it and thus increase appreciation of its public use. The promotional campaign is an implementation of measure 7.1 from the above-mentioned second action plan for the Sorbian language.

### 3. Article 8 – Education

The measures taken so far in the field of education, as described in previous periodical reports, continue to be implemented. Therefore, these measures are not described again at this point.

#### a. Article 8 (1) (d) (iv)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - If there are enough pupils and if their families so wish, Saxony will provide all or a significant part of the vocational training in Upper Sorbian or include Upper Sorbian as an integral part of the curriculum.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Given the wide range of options and places for vocational training, it is not possible to offer vocational training or a substantial part of vocational training in Upper Sorbian. All options are being utilised to keep up and increase the quality of Sorbian course offerings at the Sorbian technical school for social welfare at the vocational training centre in Bautzen (Sorbische Fachschule für Sozialwesen, Fachrichtung Sozialpädagogik, im Beruflichen Schulzentrum für Wirtschaft und Technik Bautzen).

#### b. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)

In August 2019, a Sorbian language school opened at the State Office for Schools and Education in Bautzen as part of the regional teacher training course (<https://www.lasub.smk.sachsen.de/sorbische-sprachschule-4255.html>).

Language courses are also open to people who work in schools as teachers or in institutions that cooperate with schools in implementing their education and training mandate. Courses are also being held for employees of the State Office for Schools and Education and for staff of the district administration responsible for school affairs.

#### c. Article 8 (1) (g)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - According to section 2 (3) of Saxony's Schools Act, all schools in Saxony are obliged to teach the basics of the Sorbs' history and culture.

Appropriate information thus creates the foundation for tolerance and the protection of minorities.

ii. Practical measures

- In the basic course, the Sorbian Affairs Coordinator at the State Office for Schools and Education (LaSuB) trains all participants coming from other careers in Bautzen on the history and culture of the Sorbs, the Sorbian institutions and the Sorbian school system.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Teaching basic knowledge of the history and culture of the Sorbs is firmly anchored in the curricula of Saxony. The textbooks used in Saxony usually contain topic-specific information on the history and culture of the Sorbs.

**d. Article 8 (1) (h)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Pursuant to section 40 (2) of Saxony's Schools Act (*Sächsisches Schulgesetz*, SächsSchulG), teachers are obliged to regularly attend an appropriate number of advanced training courses, in particular outside school hours. Within the framework of state-run advanced teacher training, Saxony submits measures to maintain, update, adapt and hone existing professional skills with a view to lifelong learning. It builds on the skills acquired in basic teacher training and supports or assists teachers in dealing with complex professional challenges. Advanced teacher training, together with the two phases of basic teacher training, forms the system of teacher training.

ii. Practical measures

- Since the 2016/2017 school year, a one-day advanced training event has been held each year for teachers from all 2plus schools. Teachers attending the event learn new skills and can share experience.
- Since the 2017/2018 school year, the 2plus steering group has come together with the school coordinators, technical advisors and principals for an annual closed meeting in order to discuss the problems with implementing the technical requirements of the 2plus strategy in greater

detail. Under objective 1 “Learning the Sorbian language for all interested parties”, the Second Action Plan of the Government of Saxony to encourage and revive the use of the Sorbian language (*Zweiter Maßnahmenplan der Sächsischen Staatsregierung zur Ermutigung und Belebung des Gebrauchs der sorbischen Sprache*) includes the task of the State Office for Schools and Education to conduct language courses within the framework of regional teacher training and for other interested parties to the extent that resources are available. These language courses are offered at various proficiency levels (beginners, advanced).

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described above.

**e. Article 8 (1) (i)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Schools in the Sorbian settlement area are subject to school supervision in accordance with section 58 of Saxony’s Schools Act. School supervision encompasses all state tasks relating to the content, organisation and planning of the school system. The Saxon State Ministry of Education and Culture (SMK) works closely with representatives of Domowina and the Sorbian Schools Association to further develop the Sorbian school system.
  - Within the framework of school supervision, a full-time policy officer at the State Office for Schools and Education acts as coordinator and contact person for Sorbian affairs.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The implementation of the 2plus strategy has been monitored by a steering group from the outset. Representatives of Domowina and the Sorbian Schools Association are members in this steering group. In addition, in terms of staff, the implementation of 2plus strategy is supported by school coordinators at each of the 2plus schools.
  - Exchange between school coordinators is ensured through a network headed by the State Office for Schools and Education.



- In addition, the specialist advisers for Sorbian are involved. They contribute to professionalising language education in cooperation with the school coordinators, the teachers for Sorbian and the specialist teachers, including by designing needs-based regional advanced training courses and supporting working groups that develop bilingual teaching materials.
  - Dobry start (“a good start”), material produced by the WITAJ language centre in cooperation with the school coordinators at the primary schools, is available to consistently assess language skills before the transition of children from day-care centre to primary school.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Saxony plans to offer all eighth-graders the possibility of obtaining language certificate B1 in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CFER). This measure is intended to motivate pupils, but also to help teachers assess progress in learning the Sorbian language and provide pupils with individual support. The envisaged test phase had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

**f. Article 8 (2)**

- i. Practical measures
- Since 2015, the Saxon State Ministry of Education and Culture and the State Office for Schools and Education have been supporting the “Stup dale” association, which has operated a day-care centre in Dresden since 2013, in establishing a language programme for pupils in Dresden.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
According to the Saxon State Ministry of Education and Culture, this goal is being met. Upper Sorbian education may be provided in areas where there is a need and the number of speakers justifies such provision.

#### 4. Article 9 – Judicial authorities

##### a. Article 9 (1) (a) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The right of Sorbs to use the Sorbian language in the courts in their home districts free of charge and without detriment is enshrined in section 184 second sentence of the Judicature Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz, GVG*) and section 9 of the Act on the Sorbs' Rights in the Free State of Saxony (*Gesetz über die Sorben im Freistaat Sachsen* (SächsSorbg)).
- ii. Practical measures  
This right is unconditionally ensured in practise. Sorbian citizens have the right to present their concerns in Sorbian or in German. At some courts, there are staff members who speak the Sorbian language and can support Sorbian citizens. Where necessary, the use of the Sorbian language can also be ensured by involving an interpreter or translator.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The recommendations of the Committee of Experts were taken note of and examined. For the time being, there was, however, no need to take specific measures.

##### b. Article 9 (1) (a) (iii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*

##### c. Article 9 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.iii.*

**d. Article 9 (1) (b) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*

**e. Article 9 (1) (c) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.iii.*

**f. Article 9 (1) (c) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*

**g. Article 9 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*

**h. Article 9 (2) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.ii.*

## **5. Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services**

### **a. Article 10 (1) (a) (iv)**

#### **i. Practical measures**

The authorities in the remit of the Saxon State Ministry of the Interior are not aware of any enquiries having been submitted in the Sorbian language. In various authorities such as the Dresden branch of the Saxony State Office (Landesdirektion Sachsen - Zweigstelle Dresden), the Görlitz Police Headquarters, the State Statistical Office in Kamenz or the Bautzen branch of the State Office for Road Construction and Transport there are staff members with Sorbian language skills. At the Bautzen branch office of the State Office for Road Construction and Transport for example, there are currently two colleagues in the service unit and a construction manager in Directorate-General 2 with Upper Sorbian as a native language. If letters, applications or enquiries are submitted in the Sorbian language, something that has not occurred in the past four years at least, these colleagues can deal with the matter and/or help the relevant agent with the translation. Last year, the invitation to the inauguration ceremony for a construction project in the Sorbian main settlement area was distributed in a bilingual version. The regional police headquarters in Görlitz takes care to ensure that Sorbian native speakers are deployed in the Sorbian settlement area where possible. This applies both for law enforcement officers who have just finished their training and for later deployments.

#### **ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts**

Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described above.

### **b. Article 10 (2) (a)**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues.

### **c. Article 10 (2) (b)**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues.

**d. Article 10 (2) (g)**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues.

**e. Article 10 (3) (b)**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues.

**f. Article 10 (3) (c)**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues.

**g. Article 10 (4) (c)**

i. Practical measures

- We are not aware of any transfer requests from Upper-Sorbian-speaking staff expressing the explicit wish to be deployed in the Sorbian language area.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The Committee of Experts had recommended that Upper-Sorbian language skills be taken into account when recruiting staff in the Sorbian language area. In this regard it is pointed out that this question has not yet arisen in the jurisdiction of the Dresden branch of the Saxony State Office which is responsible for this area. If the use of Sorbian language skills is necessary for the performance of official duties, this will be specified in the requirement profile of the post to be filled and taken into account as one of the selection criteria. At the Bautzen branch of the State Office for Road Construction and Transport, Sorbian language skills are generally not a key criterion for the selection of staff, since this is a specialised authority and because there are already Upper Sorbian native speakers among the staff. In cases, where several candidates have the same professional and personal qualifications, candidates with Sorbian language skills may be preferred.

**h. Article 10 (5)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
There have been no legal changes here.

The Federal legislator did not change the transfer/use of the female endings as part of a change of name under the Act Governing the Right for Members of National Minorities to Change their Names (*Minderheiten-Namensänderungsgesetz, MindNamÄndG*). Based on a ruling by Cottbus Regional Court (which is entirely consistent with this), the authorities in Saxony responsible for registering such changes have not been issued with any instructions for handling name changes in any other way. This means that the use/transfer of a name into the female form is still not provided for under German name law. If the name was acquired in accordance with foreign name law, it will of course be taken over in this form.

- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The **Federal Government** is still of the view that Article 10 (5) of the Charter does not require Germany to provide the option to change Sorbian surnames to the feminine form. Because German name law does not have strict rules on the use of a name, it is possible to use a common, pen or stage name, or for example the feminine form of a Sorbian name, for general purposes instead of one's legal name.

The **Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection** and the **Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community** have set up a working group on reforming name law. The aim is to simplify, liberalise and thus adapt German name law, including the provisions of the *MindNamÄndG*, to developments in other (Western) European countries. In particular, the Working Group proposed the option of using the surname also in the female form. The key elements developed by the working group are attached. They will be put to the technical discussion.

In the next legislative term, the Federal Government intends to decide on a reform proposal on name law.

Attention is drawn to the efforts of the **Free State of Saxony** to strengthen the use of Upper Sorbian in everyday life and to pass on knowledge about Sorbs to staff in the state and municipal authorities. For example, the University of

Meissen (FH) and the training centre, in cooperation with the Saxony Administration and Economic Academy Dresden (Sächsische Verwaltungs- und Wirtschafts-Akademie Dresden), regularly offers further training on this subject, for which there is considerable demand. In addition, starting with the biennial budget for 2019/2020, the Free State of Saxony has launched a municipal programme providing grants for all (42) municipalities in the Sorbian settlement area to cover additional expenditures in connection with the implementation of bilingualism. Under this programme, each of these municipalities receives a lump sum of €5,000.00 per annum; in addition, a central service centre with two permanent employees based in Hoyerswerda receives €90,000.00 per annum to assist the municipalities in the practical implementation of bilingualism and in actively promoting the Sorbian language in public life, as well as in promoting the Sorbian culture in general.

## **6. Article 11 – Media**

As a matter of principle, it should be noted that the Saxon State Government must respect the freedom of broadcasting also with regard to the constitutional rights of the Sorbs. The core area of the freedom of broadcasting is the broadcasters' programme autonomy, i.e. their freedom to decide for themselves on the content and scope of their programmes. When it comes to the options for extending Sorbian-language services, the public service broadcasting stations are the natural counterpart for addressing this issue.

Due to the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of broadcasting, combined with the principle which prohibits state interference with broadcasting programmes, it is up to the MDR (Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk) to decide on the scope and concrete form of the Sorbian-language offer in its programme. For constitutional reasons, there is no room for state interference in this context.

This also applies with regard to the question of whether an expansion of Sorbian-language services in the MDR, which might be desirable in this context, could be supported with budget funds of the Free State of Saxony. For constitutional reasons, public service broadcasting must not be funded by the state in order to exclude from the outset any state influence on the content of the programme.

### State of play regarding the involvement of a Sorbian representative in the MDR Broadcasting Board:

The Saxon State Chancellery has strongly advocated reserving a seat for a Sorbian representative on the Broadcasting Board. The current draft amendment to the Inter-State-Treaty on MDR also provides for a permanent seat on the Broadcasting Board for a member of the Sorbian people from Saxony. There is no disagreement on this among the states party to the Inter-State-Treaty. However, there are other issues which remain to be resolved when amending the Inter-State-Treaty on MDR so that it is not yet clear whether the next Broadcasting Board will already be constituted under the new regulations.



**7. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues. Therefore, the implementation status regarding these measures is not reported again at this point.

The promotion of cultural institutions will continue (see our comments *under C.I.2.*).

**8. Article 13 - Economic and social life**

The implementation of the measures taken so far, as described in previous periodical reports, continues. Therefore, the implementation status regarding these measures is not reported again at this point.

### III. Lower Sorbian in Brandenburg

#### 1. Article 6 – Information

With regard to the measures taken by the **Federal Government** with regard to the Lower Sorbian language, please refer to the comments *in E.II.1* on the Upper Sorbian language and to the comments *in E.I.1*.

Since 2015, the Brandenburg State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture has provided a bilingual information folder “Sorbian/Wendish rights in Brandenburg – Serbske pšawa w kraju Bramborska” (currently in its 4th edition of 2020) which is distributed free of charge and is available for download. Under the section entitled “Sorben/Wenden – Politik und Recht” (Sorbs/Wends – politics and law), the ministerial website makes reference to the Language Charter (and the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities) and provides links to the relevant Council of Europe websites.

In lectures, discussions and information events (e.g. for the Sorbs/Wends Committee of the Spree-Neiße/Sprjewja-Nysa district, the School for the Lower Sorbian language and Culture, school pupils at the Lower Sorbian grammar school), the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture informs local authorities, administrations and interested members of the public about the rights, the Language Charter and the languages that are protected by it in Brandenburg. The Ministry also promotes publications (e.g. on bilingual signs and on the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends where area-specific promotion measures are applied) that are provided free of charge. Information material on Lower Sorbian educational offerings is also published and distributed free of charge under the responsibility of the state-sponsored WITAJ Language Centre of the Domowina-Bund Lausitzer Sorben e. V. and the Cottbus Office for the Development of Sorbian/Wendish Education (Arbeitsstelle für sorbische/wendische Bildungsentwicklung Cottbus).

Since spring 2020, full-time Commissioners for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs have been operational in all districts of the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends and efforts are being stepped up to better inform local authorities about the rights of the Sorbs/Wends and their application.



## **2. Article 7 – Objectives and principles**

### **a. Article 7 (1) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The 2019 coalition agreement states: “The Sorbian/Wendish culture is also an integral part of Brandenburg and especially of Lusatia. We are committed to preserving and strengthening the Sorbian/Wendish language and the Sorbian/Wendish culture.”
- ii. Practical measures
  - The press relations work of the federal state of Brandenburg regularly refers to the value of the Lower Sorbian language in terms of cultural property, cultural heritage and as a unique selling point.
  - In 2020, Brandenburg hosted the main events to celebrate the 30th anniversary of German Unification. The topic of Sorbian/Wendish language and bilingualism in Lusatia was also addressed at the bilingual open air presentation organised by the federal state which featured an exhibition object specifically dedicated to the Sorbs/Wends

### **b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

- i. Practical measures
  - In bills concerning territorial changes (e.g. district reform) in the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends, an explicit recital regarding the Sorbian/Wendish language has always been included – also with reference to the provisions of the Language Charter. During the reporting period, there have been no territorial changes. The judicial clarifications regarding the inclusion of individual municipalities in the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends are still pending.

### **c. Article 7 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The 2019 coalition agreement provides for a significant increase in funding for the Foundation for the Sorbian People. The 2021 Budget Act provides for an increase of approximately €800,000.

- The by-law of the urban district of Cottbus/Chóšebuz for the promotion of the Sorbian/Wendish language and culture (Wustawki města Cottbus/Chóšebuz k spěchowanjeju Serbskeje rěcy a kultury) entered into force on 24 March 2019.

ii. Practical measures

- Since 2019, the Sorbian/Wendish Action Network, coordinated by the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture, has been advancing questions of language planning and language revitalisation planning. In this context, a public survey on possible goals and approaches was carried out in 2019. The findings and conceptual proposals on how to proceed were forwarded to Sorbian/Wendish associations and institutions and made publicly available via the internet. We are still waiting for a binding feedback.
- The rural district of Dahme-Spreewald increased its annual budget for the promotion of Sorbian/Wendish projects to €15,000 in 2020.
- On 25 March 2021, the state parliament instructed the state government to update the state plan to strengthen the Lower Sorbian language.
- Please see also the comments *in E.III*.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Adoption of the Brandenburg E-Government Act
- Revision of the administrative regulations on the Act Governing Arbitration Bodies (*Schiedsstellengesetz*)
- Revision of the Ordinance on the Reimbursement of Additional Costs Arising from the Application of the Sorbs/Wends Act

ii. Practical measures

- Local authorities in the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends are reimbursed by the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture for costs arising from the use of the Lower Sorbian language. In the reporting period, around €170,000 were disbursed for this purpose.

- On a case-by-case basis, bilingual email signatures, letterheads and signs are used by various authorities and administrations and sometimes internet services are also translated into Lower Sorbian. During the reporting period, this practice was newly applied, among others, by the state parliament administration, the Ministry of the Interior and Local Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and for European Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Climate Action, the Commissioner for Lusatian Affairs at the State Chancellery, the State Office for the Environment and Transport and the district administration of the rural district of Dahme-Spreewald.
- Please see also the comments *in E.III.*

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Council for Sorbian Affairs at the Brandenburg state parliament meets once a year with the Council for Sorbian Affairs of the Free State of Saxony, alternating between Dresden and Potsdam.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The umbrella organisation Domowina maintains similar links within the framework of its state-funded but autonomous work.
  - In 2019, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture funded and supported a fact-finding mission to lower Lusatia by the Association for Low German in the Federal State of Brandenburg to exchange information on Sorbian/Wendish structures and working methods.
  - There is intensive cooperation between the Free State of Saxony and the state of Brandenburg on Sorbian/Wendish issues (Foundation for the Sorbian People, Sorbian Institute, structural development of the Lusatian mining district).
  - The state of Brandenburg cooperates with the Secretariat of the four autochthonous minorities in Germany in Berlin (Minderheitensekretariat) and also supports individual projects of the Secretariat, for example by

providing €5,400 for a technical update of the Secretariat's website in 2019.

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The 2019 coalition agreement provides for the development of a multilingualism strategy involving Lower Sorbian; this strategy is to cover the whole range of education facilities from day care centres to upper secondary schools. A decision adopted by the state parliament on 25 March 2021 formulates further key elements to ensure that regional and minority languages are taken into account in this multilingualism strategy.
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - Together with the Federation and the Free State of Saxony, Brandenburg is funding the "Sorbian in the New Media" project run by the Foundation for the Sorbian People. During the reporting period, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided a total of €202,000 to support the projects "Drawing up a Quality-assured Reference Corpus of Contemporary Lower Sorbian", "Enhancing the Spell Checking Functionality by Including Additional Dictionaries", "Audio Version of the German-Lower Sorbian Dictionary", "Preserving and Developing the Lower Sorbian Language", "Sorbian Online Learning Platform Lower Sorbian", a "Digital Textbook for Lower Sorbian" (Kšac pó kšacu), and "Online Materials for Lower Sorbian Language Education in Child Day-Care Centres and Pre-schools".
  - The Cottbus Office for the Development of Sorbian/Wendish Education which is part of the State Education Office in Cottbus/Chóšebuz, develops teaching and learning materials for Sorbian/Wendish and for bilingual teaching in Sorbian/Wendish in grades 1-12, offers further training for teachers and provides advice on the further development of Sorbian/Wendish education and bilingual teaching in Brandenburg.
  - Please see also the comments *in E.III*.



**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The 2019 coalition agreement provides for the development of a multilingualism strategy involving Lower Sorbian; this strategy is to cover the whole range of education facilities from day care centres to upper secondary schools. A decision adopted by the state parliament on 25 March 2021 formulates further key elements to ensure that regional and minority languages are taken into account in this multilingualism strategy.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The school for the Lower Sorbian Language and Culture is now offering the first language courses supported by Skype which can be attended from any remote location. For further online language courses.
  - Please see also the comments *in E.III.2.f*.

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

- i. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.III*.

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The forum of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), which was held in the Brandenburg state parliament in December 2019, helped intensify cooperation with representatives of European minorities at the beginning of the 7th legislative term.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Brandenburg provides €10,000 annually to the Federal Union of European Nationalities.
  - In the framework of their activities, the associations and institutions supported by the state of Brandenburg (e.g. Domowina, the Sorbian Institute, the School for the Lower Sorbian Language and Culture) maintain intensive cross-border contacts.

- The Ministry of Science, Research and Culture works with FUEN, the ProEtnica Festival and Summer Academy Sighișoara (Romania) and has working contacts on language policy issues with other European regions where minority language communities are present (Ireland, Italy, Austria, Romania).

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- There is no legislation, as there are no discriminatory provisions in state law within the meaning of Article 7 (2) of the Language Charter.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Practical measures
- The state government's press relations and information work
  - Public meetings of the Council for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs in the Brandenburg state parliament and on the ground in the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends, with live-streams of the meetings being provided since June 2020

**l. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- 2020: Revision of the Rules of Procedure of the Brandenburg state parliament, extending the rights of the Council for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs
- ii. Practical measures
- There are intensive working contacts between minority associations and institutions on the one hand and the state government on the other hand. Within the state government, the State Commissioner for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs communicates the interests of the Sorbian/Wendish community. In the state parliament, the Council for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs participates in parliamentary proceedings at its own discretion.
  - During the reporting period, the Council for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs met approximately 30 times. On several occasions, the Council used the

opportunity to take the floor in the plenary meeting of the state parliament to address matters relating to the Lower Sorbian language.

- During the reporting period, the Working Group on Sorbian/Wendish Educational Issues of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport met and other appropriate formats were organised to discuss fundamental education policy issues related to Sorbian/Wendish education offerings with members of the Council for Sorbian/Wendish Affairs at the state parliament and the Sorbian/Wendish umbrella organisation Domowina.

### 3. Article 8 – Education

#### a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)

##### i. Practical measures

- Since 2019, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has provided €400,000 per year for daycare centres offering the opportunity to learn Lower Sorbian. The rural district of Spree-Neisse/Sprjevja-Nysa has increased this programme by providing an additional €65,000. In 2021, the funds provided by the state government increased to €540,000.
- Since 2015, the Ministry has also provided €10,000 per year to promote the teaching of the Sorbian/Wendish language and culture at child daycare centres.
- A multilingualism strategy covering the Lower Sorbian language is currently being developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

##### ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

Given the lack of nursery-school teachers, it is currently not realistic to expand the range of offerings. Some additional daycare centres, however, have expressed interest and are sending nursery-school teachers to a language course in 2021.

#### b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iv)

##### i. Practical measures

- A multilingualism strategy covering the Lower Sorbian language is currently being developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.
- In Brandenburg, 21 schools offer Sorbian/Wendish classes at primary level. Among these there are 20 primary schools and one grammar school (primary level in the advanced skills and talent class/Leistungs- und Begabungsklasse). In general, Sorbian/Wendish classes are voluntary, with the exception of instruction at the Lower Sorbian grammar school, where all pupils are required to take Sorbian/Wendish as a second foreign language.
- In its school development plan, the urban district of Cottbus/Chóšebuz, in its capacity as school operator, provides for the establishment of another primary school with bilingual WITAJ instruction; the school is to be

located in close proximity to the centre so that pupils can continue the immersive/bilingual education course which is offered at the nearby day-care centre, when they move on to the new primary school. Appropriate construction measures are currently being taken as a precautionary measure. Whether such teaching can actually be offered, depends on the provision of the necessary human resources by the state education office.

- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Due to the shortage of teachers, it is currently not realistic to expand existing services. An expansion of digital services would have to be considered. Initial consultations on this matter were held in January 2021.

**c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iv)**

- i. Practical measures
  - A multilingualism strategy covering the Lower Sorbian language is currently being developed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.
  - In Brandenburg, four schools offer Sorbian/Wendish classes at secondary level. These include two secondary schools, a college centre and a grammar school. In general, Sorbian/Wendish classes are voluntary, with the exception of instruction at the Lower Sorbian grammar school, where all pupils are required to take Sorbian/Wendish as a second foreign language.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Given the shortage of teachers, it is currently not realistic to expand existing services.

**d. Article 8 (1) (e) (iii)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The Ministry of Science, Research and Culture is currently evaluating the half-time position for teaching and research in Lower Sorbian didactics at the University of Leipzig, which was established in 2016 and is initially limited until 2021, in order to decide on further measures to increase the attractiveness and improve the quality of the basic teacher training course for Sorbian/Wendish or bilingual instruction.

**e. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)**

## i. Practical measures

- The School for the Lower Sorbian Language and Culture continues to be financed jointly by the state of Brandenburg/Foundation for the Sorbian People and the municipalities. Among other things, it offers language courses for administrative staff (e.g. in Calau/Kalawa). For 2021, the urban district of Cottbus/Chóšebuz offers all staff a specific seminar which provides Sorbian/Wendish language skills and knowledge of the law relating to Sorbs/Wends.

**f. Article 8 (1) (g)**

## i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

On 25 March 2021, the state parliament instructed the state government to include measures for the effective implementation of this obligation in the multilingualism strategy which is to be drawn up.

## ii. Practical measures

- In 2018, the Landesinstitut für Schule und Medien (State Institute for Schools and the Media) Berlin-Brandenburg issued a publication on the integration of Sorbian/Wendish issues into social science classes.
- The information regarding Sorbs/Wends that is available on the Berlin-Brandenburg education server was updated in 2020.

## iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

Reference is made to the comments on the practical measures taken under this article.

**g. Article 8 (1) (h)**

## i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- In 2018, the provision that in-depth knowledge of the Sorbian/Wendish language leads to facilitated access to teacher training courses was introduced in the Brandenburg Act on University Admission.

## ii. Practical measures

- Please refer to the comments *in E.III.3.d.*

- The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has begun preparations for a new edition of a master's course for teachers to acquire the teaching qualification for Sorbian/Wendish. The start of a preparatory language course is scheduled for 2021 and the start of the master course is planned for 2022.
- In 2020, the Sorbian/Wendish Action Network, coordinated by the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture, drew up an inventory of the activities for the recruitment of young Sorbian/Wendish teachers. The next step is to improve these information and recruitment activities in a coordinated manner in order to increase the number of students enrolling in Sorbish/Wendish teacher training courses.
- The Sorbian/Wendish teacher training courses offered at Leipzig University are brought to the attention of potentially interested students by providing more links to Brandenburg websites (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, State School Office Cottbus/Chóšebuz, Lower Sorbian Grammar School, Potsdam University, Ministry of Science, Research and Culture).
- Based on the current needs of individual schools, funding is provided for individual projects that provide advanced and further training for teachers.
- Adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) offer additional possibilities for further training. The Cottbus Office for the Development of Sorbian/Wendish Education regularly offers further training for teachers at a summer university, although demand is low. Sorbian/Wendish is considered a subject with special needs and recruitment criteria, so that all graduates with the teaching qualification for Sorbian/Wendish have been hired so far. There is close coordination between the State School Office and the school directors on the planning and needs-based allocation of weekly teaching hours for Sorbian/Wendish. The allocation is based on the number of students attending in Sorbian/Wendish classes. It is regularly adapted to changing figures over the course of the school year.

**h. Article 8 (1) (i)**

## i. Practical measures

- In Directorate-General 3 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Sorbian/Wendish matters were assigned to the Division Responsible for Managing School Supervision (Division. 37). All Sorbian/Wendish school supervision issues were assigned to two officials at the State Education Office in Cottbus/Chóšebuz.

## ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

Reference is made to the comments on the practical measures taken under this article.



#### 4. Article 9 – Judicial authorities

##### a. Article 9 (1) (a) (ii)

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The flyer entitled “Sorbian/Wendish Rights in Land Brandenburg - Serbske pšawa w kraju Bramborska” which encourages the use of the Lower Sorbian language, is available in the waiting areas of the courts.

##### b. Article 9 (1) (a) (iii)

- i. Practical measures  
The measures already implemented to implement this obligation remain in place.

##### c. Article 9 (1) (b) (iii)

- i. Practical measures  
The measures already implemented to implement this obligation remain in place.

##### d. Article 9 (1) (c) (iii)

- i. Practical measures  
Since the introduction of the VIS 5 version (which was first introduced in 2019), the AUREG IT application used in the commercial register, the cooperative societies register, the partnerships register and the register of associations has supported the UTF-8 standard, which allows entries to be made in the Lower Sorbian character set. This means that companies can now be registered in the Sorbian language.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
This right is guaranteed in principle; the incidents described were isolated cases and due to a lack of knowledge of the legal situation (see also the comments in the *Sixth Periodical Report*). The facts described in the report of the Committee of Experts of 30 October 2018 on page 29, according to which the Cottbus/Chóšebuz Administrative Court had requested that documents submitted in Lower Sorbian be translated into German, prompted the Brandenburg State Ministry of Justice to make the courts and public prosecutor’s offices in its jurisdiction once again aware of the concerns of the Sorbs/Wends. In particular, it was pointed out by decree of 12 June 2018 that Sorbs/Wends in their traditional settlement area are permitted to use the Lower Sorbian

language when dealing with public authorities and courts. Translation and interpreting costs arising in this context may not be invoiced to the parties concerned. In order to maintain awareness among judges and public prosecutors working in the Lower Sorbian language area, they will in future be regularly informed of the special legal situation under section 184 second sentence of the Judicature Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz, GVG*) and section 8 of the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs.

**e. Article 9 (2) (a)**

i. Practical measures

The measures already implemented to implement this obligation remain in place.

## 5. Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services

### a. Article 10 (1) (a) (iv)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Adoption of the Brandenburg E-Government Act
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the information provided *in D.IV*.
  - As part of the redesign of the Brandenburg service portal (service.brandenburg.de), the use of the Lower Sorbian language is facilitated by the implementation of the UTF-8 character set (Unicode 8). Furthermore, the Brandenburg service portal technically supports the display of other languages, such as Sorbian.
  - Local authorities are reimbursed by the federal state of Brandenburg for translation costs.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described above.

### b. Article 10 (2) (b)

- i. Practical measures
  - Local authorities are reimbursed by the federal state of Brandenburg for translation costs.
  - The urban district of Cottbus/Chóšebuz reports that while the number of letters addressed by citizens to the city administration in Lower Sorbian increased during the reporting period, the total number of these letters was small. The number of cases in which citizens made oral representations before the administration was consistently low.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described above.

**c. Article 10 (2) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The rural district of Spree-Neiße/Sprjevja-Nysa was the first rural district in Brandenburg to make use of the possibility of defining its name bilingually. The new statutes of the district have been in force since 2020.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In 2018, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €3,500 for the Sorbian Institute to draw up a bilingual list of place names in the traditional settlement area. The list is made available free of charge to administrations and the general public. The bilingual list of place names was added to the municipal register and the online Brandenburgviewer website by the Land Registry and Geodata Office Brandenburg (Landesvermessung und Geobasisinformation Brandenburg).
  - In 2020, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €8,500 for a project run by the Sorbian Institute to present and disseminate knowledge about Sorbian names as a measure to strengthen regional identity.
  - The Domowina local chapter in Dissen/Dešno initiated a project to preserve, raise awareness for and increase the visibility of traditional monolingual Lower Sorbian estate names. In the period under review, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €11,900 for such signs in Lower Sorbian.
  - Rural districts in the traditional settlement area of the Sorbs/Wends installed new signs at junctions of bicycle paths, which were designed in bilingual form with financial support from the state government.
  - Since the change to the winter timetable in December 2020, the Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg (local transport operator Berlin-Brandenburg) has been using Sorbian station names in its regional railway networks and route timetables.

- In 2021, work started to configure the online procurement platform of the federal state of Brandenburg in such a way as to facilitate the use of bilingual municipality names.

**d. Article 10 (3) (b)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The legal basis for language use and reimbursement of costs (especially the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs) remains unchanged.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Local authorities are reimbursed by the federal state of Brandenburg for translation costs.

**e. Article 10 (3) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The legal basis for language use and reimbursement of costs (especially the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs) remains unchanged.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Local authorities are reimbursed by the federal state of Brandenburg for translation costs.

**f. Article 10 (4) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The legal basis for language use and reimbursement of costs (especially the Act on the Rights of the Sorbs and the Brandenburg Administrative Procedure Act (*Verwaltungsverfahrensgesetz für das Land Brandenburg*)) remains unchanged.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Local authorities are reimbursed by the federal state of Brandenburg for translation costs.

**g. Article 10 (4) (c)**

- i. Practical measures
  - To date, Brandenburg has not received any such requests.

#### h. Article 10 (5)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The rules governing name law are a federal competence.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The federal state of Brandenburg supports the Federal Government's intention to design the name law in such a way as to enable the use of the feminine form of Sorbian/Wendish names (cf. the answer to the parliamentary question, state parliament printed paper 7/1584 and *the Sixth Periodical Report*).
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
 

The **Federal Government** is still of the view that Article 10 (5) of the Language Charter does not require Germany to permit the change of a Sorbian family name to the feminine form. Because German name law does not provide strict rules on the use of a name, it is possible to use a common, pen or stage name, or for example the feminine form of a Sorbian name, for general purposes instead of one's legal name.

The ***Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community*** have set up a working group on reforming name law. The aim is to simplify, liberalise and thus adapt German name law, including the provisions of the Act on Name Changes by Minorities (*Minderheiten-Namensänderungs-Gesetz – MindNamÄndG*), to developments in other (Western) European countries. In particular, the Working Group proposed the possibility of using surnames also in the feminine form. The key elements developed by the Working Group are attached. They will be submitted to the experts for discussion.

In the next legislative term, the Federal Government intends to decide on a reform proposal on name law.

## 6. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Practical measures
  - The public service broadcaster Berlin-Brandenburg (RBB) regularly broadcasts radio programmes in the Lower Sorbian language and provides accompanying internet services. Please refer to the comments *in D.III.*

### b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)

With regard to this obligation, see *D.III.*

### c. Article 11 (1) (d)

- i. Practical measures
  - The state-funded Foundation for the Sorbian People supports networking between Sorbian/Wendish and Lusatian film-makers and took on coordinating tasks in the emerging network “Łužycofilm”.
  - RBB regularly produces songs in Lower Sorbian language and in some cases makes them available for download free of charge.
  - The production of audio products is promoted, among others, through the Foundation for the Sorbian People. During the reporting period, the Sorbian School Association and the WITAJ Language Centre made such products available online, free of charge and especially for educational purposes.

### d. Article 11 (1) (e) (i)

- i. Practical measures
  - With funding provided by the Foundation for the Sorbian People, the Domowina publishing house regularly publishes relevant products.

### e. Article 11 (2)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - There were no changes in the framework conditions for implementing this measure during the reporting period.
- ii. Practical measures
 

There have been no restrictive changes since the previous report.

## 7. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

#### i. Practical measures

- In 2018, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €38,000 for the full digitisation of the 1987 to 2004 issues of the Lower Sorbian weekly newspaper Nowy Casnik which was done by the Sorbian Institute.
- In 2019, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €22,000 for the implementation by the Sorbian Institute of a publicly available search function for quality-assured Sorbian text corpora.
- The bilingual permanent exhibition of the Local History Museum in Dissen was reopened in 2020 following a complete overhaul. Other projects such as the bilingual history timeline in the museum's outdoor area and the accompanying leaflet were funded by the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture in 2019 as part of the project "Grasping Sorbian/Wendish history with all senses" (Mit allen Sinnen sorbische/wendische Geschichte begreifen) with €5,800.
- As part of the state programme "Promoting Child Day-Care Centers which Provide Sorbian/Wendish Educational Offerings" (Förderung von Kitas mit sorbischen/wendischen Bildungsangeboten), the State Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport provided around €20,000 for the production of materials with Sorbian/Wendish children's songs.
- The Wendish Museum in Cottbus/Chóšebuz was reopened in 2020. The refurbishment of the building and the redevelopment of the bilingual permanent exhibition were financed from public funds.
- In 2020, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided some €1,400 for bilingual signs in the German and Lower Sorbian languages at the Jänschwalde/ Janšojce museum.



**b. Article 12 (1) (b)**

## i. Practical measures

- In 2019, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €7,000 for the editing of a source edition of Bogumił Šwjela's diaries and their translation into German by the Sorbian Institute, making them accessible to both Sorbian and German-speaking readers.
- In 2020, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €37,800 to sponsor the development by the Sorbian Institute of a multilingual travelling exhibition entitled "Fresh Start and Disillusionment. The 1918 Revolution, the Lusatian Sorbs and the Long Path to Democracy" ("Aufbruch und Ernüchterung. Die Revolution von 1918, die Lausitzer Sorben und der lange Weg zur Demokratie") which will also be shown in the Czech Republic, Poland and English-speaking countries.

**c. Article 12 (1) (c)**

## i. Practical measures

There have been no restrictive changes since the previous report.

**d. Article 12 (1) (d)**

## i. Practical measures

- Within the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture, cooperation between the departments responsible for culture and minority language policy has been intensified. As a result, the Sorbian/Wendish language and culture are now more visible and more deeply embedded in the strategic processes for the further cultural development in Lusatia.

**e. Article 12 (1) (e)**

## i. Practical measures

- The language courses offered by the School for Lower Sorbian Language and Culture are also attended by relevant stakeholders.

**f. Article 12 (1) (f)**

## i. Practical measures

- The State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture encouraged Sorbian/Wendish representatives to get actively engaged in the ongoing

cultural planning processes for the development of Lusatia; the Ministry also involved them in its own bodies (e.g. Zukunftswerkstatt Lausitz, Kulturelle Heimat Lausitz, Kulturplan Lausitz, sorbische/wendische Zukunft: Lausitz).

- During the reporting period, the rural district of Dahme-Spreewald stepped up its support efforts in this area, involving in particular its Commissioner for Sorbish/Wendish Affairs in relevant processes.

**g. Article 12 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

- The Sorbian Cultural Archives (Sorbisches Kulturarchiv) and the Sorbian Central Library (Sorbische Zentralbibliothek) at the Sorbian Institute (Sorbisches Institut) and the Lower Sorbian Library (Niedersorbische Bibliothek) in Cottbus/Chóšebuz are funded by the Foundation for the Sorbian People.

**h. Article 12 (1) (h)**

i. Practical measures

- This work is primarily carried out by the Sorbian Institute, partly also by the WITAJ Language Centre and the Cottbus Office for Sorbian/Wendish Education Development (Arbeitsstelle für sorbische/wendische Bildungsentwicklung, ABC). These institutions are funded by the Foundation for the Sorbian People or, in the case of ABC, directly by the federal state of Brandenburg.

**i. Article 12 (2)**

i. Practical measures

There are no territorial restrictions on the implementation of such activities.

**j. Article 12 (3)**

There are currently no explicit measures beyond the aforementioned cooperation with other regions.

## **8. Article 13 - Economic and social life**

### **a. Article 13 (1) (a)**

#### i. Practical measures

We are not aware of any restrictions prohibiting or limiting without justifiable reasons the use of Lower Sorbian in documents relating to economic or social life, particularly contracts of employment, and in technical documents such as instructions for the use of products or installations.

### **b. Article 13 (1) (c)**

#### i. Practical measures

The federal state of Brandenburg promotes the wider use of the Lower Sorbian language.

### **c. Article 13 (1) (d)**

#### i. Practical measures

- In order to strengthen the use of Lower Sorbian in church life, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture funded a new edition of the Wendish Bible by the Association for the Promotion of the Wendish Language in the Church (Verein zur Förderung der wendischen Sprache in der Kirche e.V.) in 2020 with €9,400.
- In the context of the structural change in the Lusatian mining region, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture includes the Lower Sorbian language in its conceptual considerations, putting up for discussion a model region for minorities in the German-Slavic context as part of its Strategy for Lusatia. The Sorbian Institute received €24,800 in 2018 to draw up qualified project proposals. The Ministry communicates these ideas in presentations and publications. Sorbian/Wendish representatives and the Ministry are engaged in developing a regional strategy for the future. In February 2020, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) published an edition of the magazine "From Politics and Contemporary History" (Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte) entitled "Lausitz Łužyca, Łužica". In the autumn and summer of 2020, the Lusatia Economic Region published a brochure

entitled “Lausitz Łužyca Łužica. Die Sorben/Wenden – verbinden die Lausitz” (Lusatia Łužyca Łužica – the Sorbs/Wends – connect Lusatia). The publications highlight the added value of Sorbian languages in the context of economic structural change. Within the Federal Government’s immediate action programme for the coal-mining regions, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) is providing €1.5 million in the period from 2019 to 2021 for a project initiated by the Brandenburg State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture to harness the intangible cultural heritage in the German-Slavic context.

- In 2019 and 2020, the State Ministry of Science, Research and Culture launched the competition “Serbski psichod: Łužyca – sorbische/wendische Zukunft: Lausitz” (“Sorbian/Wendish future: Lusatia”). Prizes were awarded to honour best practice examples, and the prize money was used to strengthen civil society, municipal and industry stakeholders in their efforts to develop and implement further ideas. One of the competition’s four categories was “Preserving and Developing the Sorbian/Wendish Language”, and in all categories, one of the evaluation criteria was entitled “relevance to the use, transfer to future generations, development and revitalisation of the Sorbian/Wendish languages”. In both years, 17 prizes worth a total of €50,000 were awarded.
- In public passenger transport, bilingual passenger information is gradually being expanded (Deutsche Bahn Fernverkehr, Deutsche Bahn Station & Service, Cottbusverkehr (the public transport operator for the Cottbus region), Regionale Verkehrsgesellschaft Dahme-Spreewald (the public transport operator for the rural district Dahme-Spreewald) and Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg (regional public transport network for the Berlin-Brandenburg region) are already providing part of their passenger information in a bilingual version).
- At the local level, further multilingual offerings such as Sorbian-language tours through animal parks are being tested in Cottbus/Chóšebuz.

- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described above.

## IV. North Frisian in Schleswig-Holstein

### 1. Article 6 – Information

The Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Frisian Ethnic Group (Beratender Ausschuss für Fragen der friesischen Volksgruppe) was established at federal level in 2004. Its task is to discuss all federal policy issues affecting the Frisian ethnic group in Germany.

The Committee is composed of one representative each of the Frische Rädj – Friesenrat Sektion Nord e. V. (Frisian Council North Section), the Friisk Foriining, the Nordfriesischer Verein (North Frisian Association), the Seelter Buund, the Friesenrat Sektion Ost e. V. (Frisian Council East Section), the Interfriesenrat e. V. and the North Frisian Institute. In addition, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the federal states of Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein and the Secretariat for Minorities in Germany are also represented by one member each.

As a rule, the committee meetings are chaired by the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities.

The members of the parliamentary groups nominated by the parliamentary groups in the German Bundestag to attend the committee meetings are regularly invited.

The Committee usually meets once a year.

Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community is providing up to €500,000 for a wide range of projects run by the Federalist Union of European Minorities, of which Friisk Foriining is a member, representing the Frisian ethnic group in Germany.

With regard to the Federal Government's further measures for the North Frisian language, please refer to section *E.I.1*.

The **Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media** is providing project funding of up to €300,000 per year to the North Frisian ethnic group in

Schleswig-Holstein. In 2021, the regular budget funds appropriated under the parliamentary procedure were increased on an exceptional basis by €55,000 to fund projects for the North Frisian ethnic group in Schleswig-Holstein that are promoted by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. In parliamentary circles, there is support for further increases.

Since the establishment of this office in 1988, the Minister-President's Commissioner for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German (Commissioner for Minorities) in **Schleswig-Holstein** has been working as a point of contact for minorities, ethnic groups and groups of speakers of minority languages living in Schleswig-Holstein. He advises the Minister-President on all current issues relating to minority policy and mediates between the state authorities and the minority organisations in matters that are of special concern to minorities. This applies to the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group, the national minority of German Sinti and Roma and the Low German speakers' group.

The implementation of the federal state's obligations under the Language Charter in state laws and decrees and statutory instruments ensures that the individual measures are embedded in the administrative actions of the authorities at state and municipal level. Examples include the Schools Act, the Act to Promote Children in Day Care and in Child-Minding (*Kindertagesförderungsgesetz – KitaG*), the Spatial Planning Act, the Libraries Act, the Electoral Act, the State Administration Act, the Decree on Frisian at Schools in Nordfriesland or the Decree on Low German. Regular talks between the Commissioner for Minorities and representatives of local government associations and, where necessary, with the chief executive officers or committees at district level or at the level of the municipal associations are another element for disseminating information on the obligations arising from the Language Charter. The contact between politicians and representatives of minorities, in this case the Frisian ethnic group, to strengthen their rights guaranteed by the European Language Charter is also implemented by the Frisian body (Friesengremium) at the state parliament of Schleswig-Holstein which is chaired by the President of the parliament. The Frisian body comprises the Minister-President's Commissioner for Minorities, policy experts

from the parliamentary groups in the state parliament and representatives of the Frisian ethnic group.

At the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein, the division for foreign affairs and national minorities also acts as a point of contact for matters relating to national minorities, ethnic groups and the Low German speakers' group, as well as for authorities and organisations from across the state when it comes to individual matters.



## 2. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Constitution of the State of Schleswig-Holstein in the version of 2 December 2014 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 344), last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 14 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 361), Articles 6, 12 (6) - (7)
  - District statutes for Schleswig-Holstein, as amended on 28 February 2003 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 94), last amended by Article 3 of the Act of 3 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 788) section 1 (2), section 40c no. 8
  - Statutes for municipal associations in Schleswig-Holstein, as amended on 28 February 2003 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 112), last amended by Article 2 of the Act of 3 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 788), section 1 (1)
  - Local Government Law for Schleswig-Holstein, as amended on 28 February 2003 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 57), last amended by Article 1 of the Act of 3 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 788), section 1 (1), section 45c no. 8
  - Schleswig-Holstein Schools Act in the version of 24 January 2007 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 39, corr. p. 276), as last amended by Article 5 of the Act of 16 December 2015 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p.500), section 4 (5), (6)
  - Decree of the State Ministry for Education, Science and Culture of 25 September 2018 (newsletter of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, 2018, p. 471) governing “Frisian at Schools in Schleswig-Holstein.”
  - Schleswig-Holstein Teacher Training Act of 15 July 2014 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 134), last amended by

- Article 7 of the Act of 11 December 2014 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 464), section 2 (3), section 12 (3) sentence 5
- State Ordinance on the Organisation of Training Periods and on the State Examinations for Teachers (*Landesverordnung über die Ordnung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die Staatsprüfungen der Lehrkräfte*) (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 460), section 6 (1), section 8 (3)
  - Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Child-Minding (*Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Kindertageseinrichtungen und in Kindertagespflege - KiTaG*) of 12 December 2019, promulgated as Article 1 of the Act to Strengthen the Quality of Childcare and to Reduce the Financial Burden on Families and Local Authorities (*Gesetz zur Stärkung der Qualität in der Kindertagesbetreuung und zur finanziellen Entlastung von Familien und Kommunen, KiTa-Reform-Gesetz*) of 12 December 2019 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 759) In force pursuant to Article 7 (1) (2) of the Act of 12 December 2019 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 759), as last amended by the Act Amending the Act to Promote Children in Day Care and Child-Minding of 10 December 2020, Article 25 (1) of the Act of 8 May 2020 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 998), section 9 (2), section 10 (4), section 13 (2), section 16 (2), section 18 (1) and section 19 (1) no. 2
  - Directive of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein regarding the Promotion of Regional and Minority Languages in Day Care and Child Minding 2020 - 2022.
  - Act on the Establishment of a Corporation under Public Law “Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein” (*Gesetz über die Errichtung einer Anstalt öffentlichen Rechts “Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein”, OK-Gesetz*) of 18 September 2006 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 204), section 2 (1) sentence 3, section 6 (2) no. 4
  - Act on the Interstate Treaty on Media Law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz zu dem Staatsvertrag über das Medienrecht in Hamburg*

*und Schleswig-Holstein*) of 13 June 2006 (Hamburg Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, 2007, p. 47, Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, 2007, p. 108), as amended by the Fifth Interstate Treaty to Amend the Interstate Treaty on Media Law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Fünfter Medienänderungsstaatsvertrag*) of 2/22 September 2014 (Hamburg Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 490; Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 487), section 22 (2) sentence 5, section 28a(1) sentence 3

- Act on the 17th Amended Interstate Agreement on Broadcasting and on the Appointment of a Member of the Television Board of Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) (*Gesetz zum Siebzehnten Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrag und zur Bestimmung eines Mitglieds des ZDF-Fernsehrates*) of 30 November 2015 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 406), section 2
- General Administration Act for Schleswig-Holstein / State Administration Act (*Allgemeines Verwaltungsgesetz für das Land Schleswig-Holstein / Landesverwaltungsgesetz*) in the version promulgated on 2 June 1992 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 243, 534), most recently amended by the Act of 21 July 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 659), section 82b
- Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (Frisian Act – FriesischG) as amended on 13 December 2004 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 481), last amended by Article 2 of the Act of 30 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 534)
- Decree of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Research, Economics and Transport of 31 March 2009 (VII 423 - 621.121.108) Governing the Use of Multilingual Town Signs
- Supplementary Decree of the State Ministry of Science, Labour, Transport and Technology of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein concerning the Approval of Multilingual Road Signs in the District of Nordfriesland of 16 August 2016 (VII 438 – 621.121.108)

- Schleswig-Holstein Libraries Act (*Bibliotheksgesetz* - BiblG), promulgated as Article 1 of the Act Governing Libraries in Schleswig-Holstein and Amending the State Press Act (*Gesetz für die Bibliotheken in Schleswig-Holstein und zur Änderung des Landespressegesetzes*) of 30 August 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 791), section 2 (2)
  - Act on Spatial Planning in Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz über die Landesplanung*) in the version promulgated on 10 February 1996 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 232), most recently amended by the Act of 22 May 2015 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 132), section 5 (5) no. 10, section 21 (1) no. 17
  - Act on the Establishment of the Foundation for the Frisian Ethnic Group in the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein (Friesenstiftung) and Amending the Act on the Implementation of the First Interstate Treaty on Gambling in Germany of 13 January 2020 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 4)
  - Language Policy Action Plan of the Schleswig-Holstein State Government in the Context of Regional or Minority Languages for the 19th Legislative Term of November 2020, focusing on education – media – added value
- ii. Practical measures
- Act on the Establishment of a Corporation under Public Law “Offener Kanal Schleswig-Holstein” of 18 September 2006 section 6 (4) stipulates that one representative on the advisory board shall be appointed by the Minister-President’s Commissioner for Minorities. Currently, this position is held by Ms Inken Völpel-Krohn, Chairperson of the Association for the North Frisian Institute.
  - As part of the amendment of the 17th Amended Interstate Agreement on Broadcasting and the new rules governing the composition of the ZDF Television Board, one seat on this supervisory body has been assigned to a representative of the Charter languages from Schleswig-Holstein. The amended ZDF Interstate Treaty will provide that the Television Board, which is reduced to 60 members, will in future comprise, among others,

16 representatives from various social groups who are appointed by the federal states. The Schleswig-Holstein state government is using this development to further increase the presence of regional or minority languages in public media. The representative for Schleswig-Holstein is Dr Karin Haug, a member of the Frisian community.

**b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - There are no changes to the statements made during the previous reporting cycle.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The implementation of existing laws continues; there is no reason to take further action.

**c. Article 7 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Schleswig-Holstein's constitution guarantees the cultural independence and political participation of the Frisian ethnic group and other national minorities protected in Schleswig-Holstein. This is explicitly defined as a task for the state, municipalities and local authorities.
- ii. Practical measures
  - According to a very rough estimate, the Frisian ethnic group receives approximately €1,2 million per year from the Schleswig-Holstein government.
  - The minority and regional languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein are a real asset and enrichment for the cultural area. For this reason, the state government, in its coalition agreement, pledged to continue the successful cultural work undertaken together with the Frisian ethnic group. At the same time, it actively supports the preservation of the North Frisian language and the related culture, which are important elements of Schleswig-Holstein's identity. Against this backdrop, the state government promotes the acquisition of North Frisian in the state's day-care centres

and schools, and supports multilingualism and linguistic diversity in Schleswig-Holstein, as laid down in the Language Policy Action Plan.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

i. Practical measures

- The Schleswig-Holstein state government attaches great importance to the private use of North Frisian in families, among young people or in everyday life (e.g. when shopping or on the streets). It supports everyday language use by:
  - promoting the youth choir Jögedfloose and the Frasche Loosche vocal group
  - promoting Frisian language courses for adults
  - supporting Frisian association magazines (e.g. Di Mååringer Krädjer)
  - promoting the translation of children's books (Ik ban Momme an boog önj Nordfraslönj/I am Momme and live in North Friesland!)
  - promoting Frisian youth camps (Friisk Foriining)
- In order to promote the use and visibility of North Frisian in the public arena, an exhibition building has been constructed at the Nordfriisk Instituut with the support of the state of Schleswig-Holstein and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, which provides insights into the North Frisian language as well as the culture of the region.
- The Schleswig-Holstein State Chancellery has included aspects of minority and regional languages into the state government's central human resources management in order to strengthen the Charter languages. It is now possible to record the language skills of staff members in HR management files. This includes foreign languages as well as the regional or minority languages protected by the European Languages Charter. The aim is to facilitate the use of the Charter languages, both by citizens in their dealings with the administration as well as within the administration.

- The central training institutions for the public service in Schleswig-Holstein are agreed that the use of regional and minority languages should generally be addressed in cross-cutting training and/or in the training module on diversity/intercultural skills.
- Furthermore, the state of Schleswig-Holstein seeks to create framework conditions making sure that people with different backgrounds feel comfortable. This means, for instance, that diversity in administration is taken into account when recruiting skilled workers and trainees. This is ensured for example by using logos and messages in recruitment campaigns which resonate with people from different backgrounds, including people with different linguistic backgrounds, i.e. speakers of foreign languages as well as speakers of Charter languages.
- In line with the decree issued by the Finance Ministry of Schleswig-Holstein on 13 November 2019, which seeks to encourage the use of North Frisian, North-Frisian-speaking employees in the tax offices have stickers on their office doors saying “IK snaak Friisk!” (“I speak Frisian”).

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

i. Practical measures

- The Schleswig-Holstein state government is one of the sponsors of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN). Friisk Foriining is a Member of this association. North Frisians thus have contact with the other European minorities. In addition, the Nordfriisk Instituut maintains close relations with the Fryske Akademy in Leeuwarden, West Friesland. As part of its tasks which have been agreed with the state government, the umbrella organisation of the North Frisians, the Frisian Council, maintains contact with the East and West Frisians.
- The following associations, whose objectives include promoting contacts between Frisians, receive institutional support from the state of Schleswig-Holstein:
  - North Frisian Institute: €480,800, from 2021: €494,800
  - Frasche Rädj/Frisian Council North Section: €65,000

- North Frisian Association: €25,600
- Friisk Forining e.V: €25,600

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *in E.IV.3.*

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *in E.IV.3.f.*

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

i. Practical measures

- At Flensburg's Europa University (EUF), there are currently five research projects on North Frisian linguistics and sociolinguistics in North Friesland. In addition to the dissertation projects on the use of Frisian in social media (2018-21), the North Frisian diaspora in the USA (2016-2021) and the historical language policy in Friedrichstadt (2019-21, supported by a state grant), there is a post-doc project on private literacy in the 19th century (supported by the Humboldt Foundation in Bonn) and an independent project on the effectiveness of today's language policy in North Friesland (supported by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, in 2018-20).
- Kiel's Christian-Albrecht-University (CAU) conducts continuous research in the field of Frisian language and literature studies, regularly cooperating with students as part of research-oriented teaching. Every year, "Us Wurk" (the journal for Frisian studies published in Groningen), the North Frisian Yearbook and international journals and research editions publish articles from the department of Frisian studies at Kiel University (see the publication lists of the CAU researchers on the website of the department for Frisian studies). A dissertation on the North and East Frisian Wenker sentences was completed in 2019. A dissertation project on spatial orientation in the North Frisian language will be completed this year (2020).

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *in E.IV.9.a.*



**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- North Frisian is protected by the Constitution of Schleswig-Holstein. See the information *under E.IV.1.a*.
  - The Frisian Act covers support for North Frisian in the public sphere: the use of North Frisian in public authorities and courts; the possibility of making North Frisian language skills a criterion at the regional level for recruitment in public authorities, institutions and foundations; the use of bilingual signs on buildings; bilingual signposting.
  - Further details are laid down in the regulations relating to Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- The state government is committed to the protection and promotion of the regional and minority languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein, see the information *under E.IV.1.a*.
  - The Schools Act (Schulgesetz, section 4 (6)) provides for the respect, understanding and tolerance required by Article 7 (3). “The school promotes understanding of the importance which people attach to their home region, the contribution that national minorities and ethnic groups make to the state’s cultural diversity and fosters respect for the German Sinti and Roma. It preserves and promotes the Low German language.”
  - This requirement is also fulfilled in the media sector by Article 11 d (3), section 25 of the Interstate Agreement on Broadcasting and Telemedia Services (*Rundfunkstaatsvertrag – RStV*).
- ii. Practical measures
- The introduction of local radio programmes means that regional and minority languages can also be reflected in the broadcasts in up to five regions in Schleswig-Holstein. section 28a (1) sentence 3 of the Interstate Treaty on Media Services between Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Medienstaatsvertrag Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein (MStV HSH)*) specifies

that in the regions in which regional or minority languages are spoken, the respective regional or minority language must be adequately taken into account in programmes and contributions aired.

- The broadcasting station NDR must adequately take the regional and minority languages into account. According to section 5 (2) of the NDR Interstate Treaty, northern Germany and the diversity of its regions, their culture and languages, must be adequately reflected in the broadcaster's programme. The state government works to ensure that an amended NDR Interstate Treaty will cater for the regional and minority languages at least in the same manner as before. The intention is to make sure that the stakeholders will be more strongly represented on the relevant bodies, for instance.

#### **I. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Frisian ethnic group in Schleswig-Holstein regularly has the opportunity to voice its interests. Since 1988, the Frisian body (Friesengremium) has met twice a year in the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament under the chairmanship of the parliament's President. This body is supposed to discuss all matters concerning the Frisian community in the state of Schleswig-Holstein, with the aim of cultivating and fostering the Frisian language, education and culture.
  - In Schleswig-Holstein, the Frisian ethnic group can also contact the Minister-President's Commissioner for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German.
  - The representatives of the four Frisian associations (Frasche Rädj – Friesenrat/Section North e. V., Friisk Foriining, Nordfriesischer Verein e. V. and Nordfriesisches Institut e. V.) have their seat on the foundation board of the Foundation for the Frisian Ethnic Group which was founded by virtue of an establishment act in 2020; they are thus represented on the Foundation's decision-making body and have a direct influence on its funding policy.



### 3. Article 8 – Education

#### a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iii)

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Preschool language education is offered in day-care centres run by both the public and the private sector. As described *under E.I.3.a.*, Schleswig-Holstein provided a total of €542,291.55 for language programmes offered by regional and minority groups to children in day-care centres and day-care facilities in 2020. This includes funding for Danish, Frisian and Low German. 274 care groups at day-care centres and day-care facilities benefited from the additional funding in 2020.

This serves to increase the provision of preschool education in North Frisian. In 2021, support for language programmes was increased to €575,000.

#### b. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Funding for day-care centres on the basis of section 16 (2) of the Schleswig-Holstein Act to Promote Children in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities (*Kindertagesförderungsgesetz, KitaG*).
  - Directive of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein regarding the Promotion of Regional and Minority Languages in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities 2020-2022 (*Richtlinie des Landes Schleswig-Holstein zur Förderung von Regional- und Minderheitensprachen in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege 2020-2022*).
- ii. Practical measures
  - In Nordfriesland, a total of 68 care groups benefited from the promotion of minority languages in 2017, whereas this figure had risen to 131 care groups by 2020. However, this cannot be broken down by the regional or minority language promoted. Language instruction ranges from thirty minutes a week to the entire school day.
  - In 2020, Schleswig-Holstein provided a total of €542,291.55 in funding for Danish, Frisian and Low German language programmes for children at day-care centres. The aim of this measure is to familiarise children at an

early stage with the regional and minority languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein. A total of 274 care groups at day-care centres and day-care facilities benefited from the additional funding in 2020.

**c. Article 8 (1) (b) (iv)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

The decree "*Friesisch an Schulen im Kreis Nordfriesland und auf Helgoland*"

(Frisian at Schools in the District of Nordfriesland and Heligoland) entered into force again on 1 August 2018 with the same wording as previously.

ii. Practical measures

- Schleswig-Holstein reports that Frisian is taught as an elective subject at primary level at nine public schools in Nordfriesland. In the same way as the model school project for Low German, these schools are described as model schools for Frisian offering "Elective instruction in the Frisian language".
- The model schools for the Frisian language will be awarded a model school badge and a logo for their homepage in order to increase visibility of the provision of elective instruction in the minority language of Frisian. This award was originally planned for May 2020 but had to be postponed several times due to COVID-19 and will take place as soon as the situation allows for an award event to be held.
- In the 2020/21 school year, 628 pupils at the schools were provided with a total of 53 hours a week of Frisian-language instruction by eleven teachers. The lessons were based on the 2015 guidelines for Frisian teaching at schools in Schleswig-Holstein (primary level). The Frisian teacher on the island of Heligoland (Pinneberg district) has retired, so no Frisian-language instruction is currently provided. Frisian language programmes were also offered at four schools of the Danish minority, three exclusively at primary level and one at primary and secondary level. In the 2020/21 school year, a total of 83 pupils at the schools of the Danish minority were provided with twelve hours a week of Frisian-language instruction by six teachers. The St. Nikolai primary school on the

island of Sylt provides immersion teaching in Frisian in classes dealing with basic science, local geography and history. Immersion teaching in Frisian in other subjects is regularly provided at Risem Schölj, the school of the Danish minority in Risum-Lindholm.

**d. Article 8 (1) (c) (iv)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
 

The decree "*Friesisch an Schulen im Kreis Nordfriesland und auf Helgoland*" (Frisian at Schools in the District of Nordfriesland and Heligoland) entered into force again on 1 August 2018 with the same wording as previously.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The only grammar school in Schleswig-Holstein offering Frisian as a regular subject is the Eilun Feer Skuul (EFS) in Wyk on the island of Föhr. Frisian can be chosen as a subject at both the lower and upper secondary level. Since the 2019/20 school year, Frisian has been available at secondary level at the Öömring Skuul on the island of Amrum (comprehensive school) as a core curriculum option in grades 7-10. In the 2020/21 school year, a total of 70 pupils at the aforementioned schools participated in Frisian lessons at lower secondary level (12 hours a week) and 43 pupils participated at upper secondary level (8 hours a week).
    - Frisian is taught at lower and upper secondary level by four teachers on the islands of Föhr and Amrum.
    - As part of the 2020 *Abitur* (university entrance certificate) examination, five pupils at EFS took Frisian as a voluntary oral examination subject.
    - Frisian is not currently taught at either the comprehensive school or the Friedrich-Paulsen-Schule (grammar school) in Niebüll on the Nordfriesland mainland (lessons discontinued in 2015, see *Sixth Periodical Report*).
    - At the comprehensive schools in Bredstedt and St. Peter-Ording, Frisian lessons at the open all-day school have been discontinued

due to lack of demand. The Frisian teachers at these schools do not currently provide Frisian-language instruction.

*Vocational training*

- North Frisian is currently taught in the general education system in Schleswig-Holstein. It remains to be seen whether and to what extent demand will develop among students in the vocational training system, most of whom are adults.
- No teachers in the vocational training system are currently qualified to teach in North Frisian.
- With pupil numbers also declining in the vocational training system as a result of demographic development, it is already difficult to recruit new teachers with qualifications for specific training areas, professions or subjects. These shortages must be prioritised in order to guarantee and safeguard vocational training. Given this situation, North Frisian may be viewed more as an additional bonus and given comparatively low priority when it comes to teacher training.
- As there is and has been no demand for North Frisian among the students in the vocational training system in Schleswig-Holstein, most of whom are adults, systematically offering North Frisian as an integral part of the curriculum would tie up resources that are not utilised.
- The total number of students in each of the training areas, professions and subjects in the vocational training system is too small for any publisher to produce the corresponding textbook materials. This would mean additional work for teachers.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Schleswig-Holstein refers to the continuation of its measures described *under E.IV.3.d.ii.*

**e. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
 The State Ordinance on Appointments to Teacher Training (*Kapazitätsverordnung Lehrkräfte, KapVO-LK*) of 24 April 2012 was amended on 8 May 2020. A successfully completed certificate course in Frisian is now considered a bonus when awarding trainee placements. Moreover, the Language Policy Action Plan of November 2020 aims to further expand the privileges for students of Frisian in order to increase enrolment in the course.
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - In Schleswig-Holstein, it is possible to study North Frisian at the University of Kiel and the University of Flensburg.
  - Frisian teacher training continues to be offered at the University of Kiel as part of a supplementary course for teaching at grammar schools and in the business education profile. The two-subject bachelor course is intended for students who plan to seek work or continue higher education studies after receiving their Bachelor's degree. The supplementary course gives students the opportunity to obtain the teaching qualification for a third subject. In addition to extensive knowledge of the historical development, geographical distribution and current situation of North Frisian, teaching focuses on grammar, literature, and the position of North Frisian as a minority language in Schleswig-Holstein and Europe. Teaching at the University of Kiel concentrates on the North Frisian dialects of Mooring or Bökingharde Frisian (Mainland North Frisian) and Fering-Öömrang or Föhr-Amrum Frisian (Island North Frisian).
  - At the University of Flensburg, Frisian is not an independent course of study in teacher training, but an optional specialisation within the subject "German" (Bachelor of Education). It is aimed at students in teacher training who wish to work in Nordfriesland or who are interested in minority languages and their preservation. To become Frisian teachers, students complete their Bachelor's degree in education with a focus on Frisian. The seminars focus on areas of linguistics, literature, archaeology and regional studies as well as language teaching aspects. In completing



their studies, students also learn a variety of North Frisian to B2 level. They can qualify as Frisian teachers in parallel to their master's degree. However, this course is open to everyone with relevant prior knowledge, including active teachers.

- Master students of all subjects training to become primary school teachers have the chance to attend – as a core curriculum option – courses on the Frisian language and the ethnic group of Frisians.

**f. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

With the 2017 amendment of the Further Education Act (*Weiterbildungsgesetz*, WBG), the tasks and objectives of further education with regard to cultural education were expanded to include “teaching regional and minority languages and imparting knowledge about the cultures of the minorities and ethnic groups living in Schleswig-Holstein” (section 3 (5) of the WBG).

ii. Practical measures

- It should be noted that, in accordance with section 1 of the Schleswig-Holstein WBG, further education providers and facilities are free to design their syllabus and teaching programme independently. This applies to general, political and vocational training. In a similar way as for the media, the state government cannot prescribe the extent to which the providers and facilities offer further education events relating to minority and regional languages.
- The “Training bonus Schleswig-Holstein” programme (Weiterbildungsbonus Schleswig-Holstein), through which seminar costs can also be financed for Frisian courses, has been enshrined in the state programme “Landesprogramm Arbeit” (LPA) since 2014. Further training for employees can thus be subsidised with a maximum of €1,500 per measure from funds provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) if the employer assumes at least 50 per cent of the seminar costs. Since 1 July 2020, a cap for the costs of the measure no longer applies. Since 1 July 2020, individuals are eligible to benefit from these subsidies more than

just once per funding period. Freelancers and self-employed people who are eligible for funding for the first time in the current funding period, will have to bear the required co-financing themselves. The option to take educational leave provided under the Schleswig-Holstein Further Education Act can also be exercised in combination with the training bonus.

- Adult classes are provided by local adult education centres (e.g. Föhr, Husum, Heligoland). In addition, the Risem Schölj in Risum-Lindholm offers evening classes in Frisian for beginners and advanced learners. These classes were originally intended for the parents of pupils at this school but are open to all interested parties. There is also a Frisian evening class at the Aktivitetshuset in Flensburg. In 2019, the Nordfriesischer Verein (North Frisian Association) launched a course on North Frisian history and culture. Although the information is mainly communicated in German, it is presented in connection with the Frisian language and has met with such strong interest that the course has already been held for the third consecutive time.

**g. Article 8 (1) (g)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

The current subject-specific requirements for all school subjects contain the following paragraph under “Fields of activity of special importance”: “Low German and Frisian: Schleswig-Holstein sees itself as a multilingual state in which regional and minority languages are perceived as a cultural asset. The educational institutions of Schleswig-Holstein are therefore called upon to promote Low German and the Frisian language and to contribute to its further development.”

**h. Article 8 (1) (h)**

With regard to this obligation, Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *under E.IV.3.e.*

**i. Article 8 (1) (i)**

Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments in section *E.II. 12 b) of the Sixth Periodical Report*.

**j. Article 8 (2)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

The decree on “Frisian at Schools in the District of Nordfriesland and Heligoland” applies to the district of Nordfriesland in its entirety and the municipality of Heligoland.

ii. Practical measures

In the 2020/21 school year, Frisian is taught solely at schools in the district of Nordfriesland. Frisian-language teaching on Heligoland has been discontinued as it has not been possible to replace a retired teacher.

#### 4. Article 9 – Judicial authorities

To the extent that documents and evidence drafted in a minority language are presented in a form that excludes misunderstandings or errors stemming from translation, this obligation is already met by the legal situation prevailing in Germany.

##### a. Article 9 (2) (a)

###### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- In 2016, the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (*Gesetz zur Förderung des Friesischen im öffentlichen Raum* (FriesischG)) was amended to clarify that Frisian-language documents and evidence may also be presented to courts in the district of Nordfriesland.

*“Section 1 Frisian language in public authorities and courts  
(4) Citizens in the district of Nordfriesland may present documents and evidence in Frisian language in civil law proceedings, including with the involvement of interpreters and translators as required and providing that this is not considered by the competent judge to hamper the proper administration of justice.”*

- This satisfies the requirement of the Language Charter to enable people to present documents and evidence in their regional or minority language.
- The provision is limited to civil law proceedings because the competent administrative court at state level is located outside the Frisian language area in Schleswig. As regards this branch of the judiciary, it must be pointed out that administrative courts are obliged to conduct ex officio investigations and, where necessary and appropriate, will on their own initiative rely on the services of interpreters. This ensures that the members of a given language community suffer no prejudice due to the use of their language.

## 5. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

### a. Article 10 (1) (a) (v)

- i. Practical measures
  - In the remit of the Ministry of Finance, the tax offices, as a direct contact point between citizens and the tax administration, have an important role to play with regard to the Language Policy Action Plan.
  - Some tax offices, especially in the North Frisian language areas, have staff with North Frisian language proficiency. This means taxpayers can submit documents in the respective languages.
  - The use of “Ik snaak frisk!” stickers in the offices of tax authority employees with North Frisian language proficiency is intended as a means of encouraging the use of the language; decree of the Ministry of Finance on 13 November 2019
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - Schleswig-Holstein refers to the measures listed *under IV.5.d.ii* and its comments *under IV.2.d.*
  - As regards the inclusion of regional and minority languages in the implementation of the Online Access Act, Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *under D.IV.4.*

### b. Article 10 (1) (c)

Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would also like to assume this obligation under the Charter and requested that the necessary steps for notification be taken by the Council of Europe. The Federal Government adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation with the approval of the upper house of the German parliament (Bundesrat) and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; see *C.I.1* for more details.

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Act Amending the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act of 25 September 2018 (*Landesverwaltungsgesetz, LVwG*) (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 648)

ii. Practical measures

The LVwG (including section 82b) is to be applied by all public authorities in Schleswig-Holstein. The state of Schleswig-Holstein does not exercise “general supervision” across all authorities at state, county or municipal level or at the level of the municipal associations as to whether and how they apply the LVwG. The amendment of section 82b of the LVwG arises from the omnibus Act Implementing the Constitutional Task of Strengthening the National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (*Gesetz zur Umsetzung des Verfassungsauftrags zur Stärkung der nationalen Minderheiten und Volksgruppen*) of 30 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 534). It stipulates that the state government must submit a report evaluating the impacts in terms of efficiency and target achievement no later than four years after the entry into force of the law. This evaluation, which is expected to be submitted in 2021, will also address the presentation of documents in regional and minority languages.

c. **Article 10 (2) (g)**

Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would also like to assume this obligation under the Charter and requested that the necessary steps for notification be taken by the Council of Europe. The Federal Government adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation with the approval of the upper house of the German parliament (Bundesrat) and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; see *C.I.1* for more details.

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- The state of Schleswig-Holstein reports that, pursuant to section 6 (1) of the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (*Gesetz zur Förderung des Friesischen im öffentlichen Raum* (FriesischG)) adopted on 13 December 2004, most recently amended by Article 2 of the Act of 30 June 2016 (Official Gazette, page 534), as well as the decree issued by the Ministry of Transport of Schleswig Holstein on 31 March 2009, it is also permissible for name extensions on signposts indicating place names (sign 310 as depicted in Annex 3 of the Road Traffic Regulations (*Straßenverkehrs-Ordnung*)) to be inscribed in Frisian, Danish and Low German. The

municipalities can voluntarily install bilingual signposts indicating place names.

- In addition, section 6 (1) of the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG) says that bilingual signposts indicating place names, signposts for special tourist destinations and routes, signposts for rivers and lakes and directional road signs on roads can be inscribed in German and Frisian. This is implemented in accordance with a decree issued by the Ministry of Transport of Schleswig Holstein on the basis of section 46 (2) of the Road Traffic Regulations on 16 August 2016.

ii. Practical measures

- To date (as of February 2021), a total of 188 bilingual road signs in German and Frisian have been produced on the basis of section 6 (1) of the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG). These traffic signs have been produced on the basis of the list of names set out in the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG).

**d. Article 10 (4) (c)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Section 2 (4) of the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG) is worded as follows:

*“Where possible, the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein and the district of Nordfriesland will meet the requests of civil servants to work in the area in which their form of the Frisian language is spoken.”*

ii. Practical measures

- The draft legislation on the amendment of the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG) that was brought before the state parliament in 2015 also takes into account the respective form of the Frisian language and the speaker’s desire to work in their immediate linguistic environment.
- In the case of North Frisian, this means that decisions on appointments to the state civil service must take into account the appointee’s knowledge of

regional or minority languages if this language knowledge is necessary for a specific role.

- Within the Husum Police Headquarters, which is responsible for the district of Nordfriesland, around five percent of the staff speak the Frisian language at least so well that they are able to converse in this language with the citizens of their community. These officers also indicate their language proficiency on their office doorplates and on lapel stickers.

**e. Article 10 (5)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

In accordance with the Convention on the Representation of Names and Surnames in Registers of Civil Status of 13 September 1973 (Federal Law Gazette 1976 II S. 1473), the contracting states, which include Germany, undertake to enter the names of natural persons uniformly irrespective of their nationality.

ii. Practical measures

The surname is based on the birth date entry and other entries in the register of civil status for the respective person and, where applicable, entries in the register of civil status concerning their ancestors.



## 6. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

#### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

Due to the constitutional principle which prohibits state interference with broadcasting programmes, the federal states cannot and must not exercise any influence on the content or design of the programming of public service or private broadcasters. Nevertheless, the state government of Schleswig-Holstein will seek to keep minority languages represented in public service and private media, as stated in the coalition agreement. However, the power of the state government to exert influence is limited due to the programming autonomy of the broadcasters.

Information on Schleswig-Holstein’s commitment in the context of the amendment of the NDR Broadcasting Agreement (*NDR-Staatsvertrag*) can be found in the comments *under E.I.6.a.iii.*

#### ii. Practical measures

NDR 1 Welle Nord	Topical coverage, regional news from Studio Flensburg	Regularly in German and Frisian
	One-hour special broadcasts	Around twice a year
	“Frasch för enarken” (Frisian for all) in the programme “Von Binnenland und Waterkant”	Every Wednesday
	“Ferteel iinjens” storytelling contest	Every two years since 2001
	Support for “Friisk Funk” on the island of Föhr	Provision of topical coverage in Frisian and free use of archive

Extensive content on the subject of Frisian is also available on NDR 1 Welle Nord’s website (e.g. all the information on the “Friesisch für alle” series in three languages: German, Fering, Frasch). Users also have access to an extensive audio archive (around 300 Frisian radio reports permanently available for listening on demand).

**b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *under E.IV.6.a.*

ii. Practical measures

NDR	“Schleswig-Holstein Magazin” and “Schleswig-Holstein 18:00 Uhr”	Topical reports on Frisian topics and people (some with standard German subtitles or in standard German with original audio in Frisian)
		Reports on Frisian customs (e.g. the Biikebrennen bonfire night, the festival with traditional costumes on Föhr)

iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Please refer to the comments *under E.I.6.a.iii.*

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
In accordance with its statutes and policies, the Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein Film Fund provides funding for documentary and fictional films on the basis of artistic and business considerations.

ii. Practical measures

- New and replacement appointments to the selection panels
- Reorientation of funding policy in favour of new high-end formats and web series

iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The production of audio and audiovisual works in the Frisian language can be supported by the Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein Film Fund on the basis of its current regulations. Funding may also be provided by the Friesenstiftung – Friisk Stiftung (cultural promotion organisation of the state of Schleswig-Holstein for the Frisian ethnic group and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media (BKM)). For example, the audio content of Friisk Funk, which is supported by Schleswig-Holstein, can be found in its media library.

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Committee of Experts acknowledged the newspapers published in Nordfriesland, which are published by Schleswig-Holsteinischer Zeitungsverlag and which contain one page in each of Frisian and Low German approximately once a month. *Flensburg Avis*, the newspaper of the Danish minority, also prints reports in the Frisian language. The Nordfriisk Instituut (funded by Verein Nordfriesisches Institut e.V.) provides the Frisian sections of this newspaper page in full and offers support through to print layout even though this does not form part of its core activities.
  - The state of Schleswig-Holstein also provides regular funding for the association magazine *Di Mååringer Krädjer*.
- ii. Practical measures
 

As previously, the Committee of Experts proposes that the regular publication of newspaper articles, including online articles, in the North Frisian language be made easier. Schleswig-Holstein refers to freedom of the press and freedom of reporting as set out in Article 5 (1) of the Basic Law.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
 

Schleswig-Holstein remains committed to its obligation within the existing legal framework; see the comments above.

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

- i. Practical measures
 

The existing practice from the previous monitoring cycles is continuing. Schleswig-Holstein refers to the comments *under E.IV.6.c*.

**f. Article 11 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
 

The Basic Law guarantees freedom of information, including the reception of radio and television programmes from neighbouring countries. Accordingly, the Committee of Experts considers this obligation to be fulfilled.

## **7. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities**

### **a. Article 12 (1) (a)**

#### **i. Practical measures**

- The obligations are met indirectly through the state funding for Frisian institutions and project funding at federal level (via the BKM). The state supports the Frisian population in its own form of expression and the representation of its own interests. At an institutional level, the state provides funding to Frasche Rådj/Friesenrat Sektion Nord e.V., Verein Nordfriesisches Institut e.V., Nordfriesischer Verein e.V. and Friisk Foriining e.V., which perform a wide range of cultural activities in the Frisian ethnic group. This is accompanied by state funding for projects of the Frisian ethnic group. All in all, state funding for this area will amount to more than €642,100 in the 2020 budget year.
- The Nordfriisk Instituut (North Frisian Institute, NFI) in Bredstedt plays an extremely important role in upholding Frisian language, culture and history. The institute sees its role as a bridge between theory and practice, and between scholarly work and non-specialist research. The institute is involved in developing teaching and learning materials for Frisian lessons and in teacher training. It is especially active in research and publications on the language and history of Nordfriesland and regional studies. Its tasks also include maintaining a specialised library and an archive of newspaper cuttings as well as offering courses, seminars and lectures. With a permanent exhibition space entitled Nordfriisk Futuur, the NFI has also established a showcase for presenting valuable information about all things Frisian and the institute's work to an interested public.

### **b. Article 12 (1) (b)**

#### **i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation**

- Federal and state funding with regard to the implementation of the obligations under the Language Charter.

ii. Practical measures

- The institutions of the Frisian ethnic group, especially the NFI, can also make use of promotional funds of the state of Schleswig-Holstein for the translation, dubbing, post-synchronisation and subtitling of works in or into the Frisian language. The NFI publishes magazines and books in German and Frisian via its own publishing house and in cooperation with other publishers.
- In its almost 70-year history, Verein Nordfriesisches Institut has promoted various forms of access to Frisian-language literature in cooperation with other Frisian associations. This cooperation includes the translation of North Frisian works into other languages. A small number of bilingual books (German-Frisian) have been published. Frisian-language radio content is occasionally dubbed or translated into German; music CDs containing Frisian songs are accompanied by translations into standard German. With one exception, Frisian dictionaries only contain the German equivalents in order to enable access to the North Frisian language.

c. **Article 12 (1) (c)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- The state government of Schleswig-Holstein regularly supports the translation of literary works into Frisian. This contributes to the aim of making regional or minority languages – in this case North Frisian – more visible, including in coordination with the regional broadcaster NDR. The legal basis for this is section 5 (2) of the NDR Broadcasting Agreement: “Programming must adequately reflect Northern Germany and the diversity of its regions, their culture and their language.” Additionally, interviews and similar scenarios are increasingly being broadcast in native language. NDR also supports Friisk Funk by providing current content in Frisian language for use free of charge and by offering employee training. All in all, the public broadcaster is strongly committed to providing employees and interns with basic and further training in regional and minority languages.

- For all regional and minority languages, interview partners are always encouraged to report in their native language. These passages are then subsequently subtitled in German.

ii. Practical measures

- Nordfriesische Institut e.V. and the Ferring Foundation have translated numerous works into Frisian. This includes literature for children and young people, e.g. “Riad ens, hū hal ik di liis mei”, “Det skap Esperanza” and books by Peter Härtling.
- NDR television regularly features items in Frisian with German subtitles, e.g. in the “Schleswig-Holstein Magazin” programme.

**d. Article 12 (1) (d)**

i. Practical measures

By providing federal state funding for the Frisian language community, Schleswig-Holstein ensures that appropriate allowances is made for incorporating the knowledge and use of the respective language and culture in its cultural undertakings.

This applies in particular to the following projects:

- Digitalisation of the association magazine *Di Mååringer Krädjer*
- New edition of the bilingual children’s book “Ik ban Momme an boog önj Nordfräschlönj”/“Ich bin Momme und wohne in Nordfriesland”
- Nordfriesische Liedgeschichte, Vol. 1

**e. Article 12 (1) (e)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- The state government promotes the North Frisian associations. This previously took place via the Inter-Frisian Council as the umbrella association and will take place via the Friesenstiftung from 2021 onwards. Most of the people working for the associations are volunteers and most of them speak North Frisian.
- The offices responsible for organising and supporting cultural activities have employees who speak Frisian. Among other things, this is

encouraged by section 2 of the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG).

**f. Article 12 (1) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Minorities, in this case the Frisian ethnic group, and their cultural identity belong to Schleswig-Holstein. The state government is also committed to this with regard to its public image. For example, minorities were an important element of the state's presentation at the German Unity Day celebrations in Kiel in 2019.
- ii. Practical measures  
At the German Unity Day celebrations, which were organised by Schleswig-Holstein in 2019, minorities had the opportunity to showcase themselves in a dedicated "minorities marquee". Care was taken to ensure that the minorities marquee enjoyed a prominent position next to the state parliament and the state marquee. This also served to illustrate the state's commitment to its minorities for visitors.

**g. Article 12 (1) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Section 2 (2) sentence 3 of the Act on Libraries in Schleswig-Holstein (*Bibliotheksgesetz, BiblG*) of 30 August 2016 states that libraries must contribute to the conservation of cultural heritage and the preservation of regional and minority languages.
  - In addition, section 3 (1) lists Dansk Centralbibliotek for Sydslesvig e.V. as a public library and section 4 (1) lists the library of the Ferring Foundation on the island of Föhr as an academic library.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The state-subsidised Nordfriisk Instituut (North Frisian Institute, NFI) in Bredstedt has a specialised library as well as archives available for the collection, storage or publication of works produced in the Frisian language. The close personal and institutional connection between the NFI and the University of Flensburg's Frisian seminar in terms of teaching

and research (25-40% of classes at the university are taught by NFI employees; university employees are an integral element of individual NFI projects, e.g. the grammar of Fering that is currently being established) means there is a healthy dialogue between the two institutions. The NFI provides the university's ZHB library with a specimen copy of all NFI publications. Students and researchers at the university regularly make use of the research options and the holdings of the NFI's library and archive.

- According to Kiel University Library, Danish language and philology is one of the faculties at the Institute for Scandinavian Studies, Frisian Studies and General Linguistics (ISFAS) at the University of Kiel. The most extensive literature collection in this area is acquired and curated by the Specialised Information Service (FID) Northern Europe at Kiel University Library. Research, teaching and teacher training at the University of Kiel and the work of FID Northern Europe are closely interlinked. FID Northern Europe is funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) and offers a wide range of core services. In addition to operating and developing its own research portal, this includes collecting academically relevant literature on Denmark, Norway (including Svalbard), Sweden, Greenland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Finland (through the FID Finno-Ugric/Uralic Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the Göttingen State and University Library).
- Frisian philology or Frisian studies is also one of the faculties at the Institute for Scandinavian Studies, Frisian Studies and General Linguistics (ISFAS) at the University of Kiel, whose specialised library acquires and collects the relevant literature. In consultation with the faculty, the Central Library of Kiel University Library also offers a small amount of Frisian literature. In particular, this includes all publications from the Estriikken/Ålstråke series, which is jointly published by the Frisian Institute at the University of Groningen and the faculty of Frisian philology in Kiel. In addition to the local holdings of Frisian literature,



relevant publications and additional information can be researched in particular via FID Benelux, which focuses on Dutch studies, Low Countries research, Frisian studies and Afrikaans philology.

- The faculty adds that it maintains a well-stocked library containing all older and newer literature relating to Frisian studies. The North Frisian Dictionary Centre is one of the functions of the Frisian studies faculty at the University of Kiel. Its objectives include documenting the lexicography of North Frisian and comprehensively recording and making available North Frisian text and audio content. Several Frisian texts have been published in the *Estrikken/Ålstråke* series, which is jointly published by the Frisian studies faculties in Groningen and Kiel. The Frisian studies faculty also maintains the Thesaurus of North Frisian, an electronic database containing all North Frisian texts as well as online dictionaries, grammars and bibliographies. Over the years, the thesaurus has developed into a valuable tool for North Frisian research in Kiel and beyond.
- In addition, there is a permanent exhibition space, Nordfriisk Futuur, which allows North Frisian works and projects to be exhibited.

**h. Article 12 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The state government of Schleswig-Holstein promotes the use of North Frisian in documents by awarding contracts to translation services. On 11 January 2019, the current goals and performance agreement with the Nordfriisk Instituut was also signed in a North Frisian version. Furthermore, the statutes of the Friesenstiftung have been translated into Frisian (Frasch or mainland Frisian) and will be published in the Schleswig-Holstein Official Gazette in 2021 in accordance with section 20 (2) of the statutes of the Friesenstiftung.
- ii. Practical measures  
This provision is implemented indirectly through the state funding for the Nordfriisk Instituut. For example, the comprehensive German-Frisian list of place names that is an annex to the Act to Promote Frisian in the Public Sphere (FriesischG) was created in cooperation with the Nordfriisk Instituut.

**i. Article 12 (2)****i. Practical measures**

- In the Federal Republic of Germany, cultural activities falling within the framework of the law are not subject to any approval processes or restrictions.
- Decisions on activities outside the respective language area are at the sole discretion of the free cultural facilities, and in particular the organisations of the Frisian ethnic group. Due to the broad definition of the purpose of state funding for cultural activities, events may also be offered outside the immediate language area.

**j. Article 12 (3)****i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation**

- From the perspective of Schleswig-Holstein's minorities policy, it is important to protect the Frisian cultural and language history as a whole, covering the entire coastal region from Esbjerg to Den Helder.
- A "Joint Declaration of Intent on regional cooperation between Schleswig-Holstein and the northern Dutch provinces of Groningen, Fryslân and Drenthe" was signed in Groningen on 11 November 2016 as a preliminary framework for initiating closer bilateral cooperation. This Joint Declaration of Intent included cooperation in the area of "Frisian culture and language".
- Building on the Joint Declaration of Intent, the then Commissioner for Minority Issues, Renate Schnack, and the former Federal Government Commissioner for National Minorities, Hartmut Koschyk, invited representatives of the provincial governments of Groningen, Fryslân and Drenthe to the Representation of the State of Schleswig-Holstein to the Federal Government in Berlin in March 2017 for a working meeting with representatives of the Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Frisian Ethnic Group in Germany at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, followed by a reception.

ii. Practical measures

- The Inter-Frisian Council, which comprises representatives from West Frisia, East Frisia and North Frisia, represents Frisian culture across national borders. In 2021, the Friesenrat/Frasche Rädj will take over the presidency of the Inter-Frisian Council for another three years.
- The three-yearly Inter-Frisian Congress was most recently held in the West Frisian city of Leeuwarden in 2018. Between these congresses, various events are held to ensure a regular dialogue, e.g. inter-Frisian farmers' meetings, women's meetings and meetings of local politicians, members' assemblies, annual trips to Heligoland, etc.

The Friesenrat plans to use the capacity freed up following the transfer of application coordination to the Friesenstiftung to maintain and intensify inter-Frisian cooperation, among other things.

iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

- Members of the state government use their international contacts and travel to present the particular cultural and linguistic diversity of Schleswig-Holstein, its minorities policy and its language policy concerning regional and minority languages when the opportunity arises.
- For example, the Commissioner for Minority Issues, Johannes Callsen, took the annual meeting of FUEN in May 2018 as an opportunity to visit Leeuwarden during its time as European Capital of Culture.
- Schleswig-Holstein also refers to the comments in *section E.I.12.a. of the Sixth Periodical Report*.

## **8. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

### **a. Article 13 (1) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The applicable laws of the Federal Republic of Germany are consistent with this obligation. Accordingly, the provision is already fulfilled throughout Germany with regard to all regional or minority languages.

### **b. Article 13 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The legal system in Germany prohibits obstacles of this kind. Accordingly, the provision is already fulfilled throughout Germany with regard to all regional or minority languages.

### **c. Article 13 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - In Germany, freedom to use one's own language in private and in public is ensured by Article 2 (1) of the Basic Law, which guarantees the right to free development of one's personality. The use of minority languages in public is generally accepted by the German population. No reservations exist in this respect.
  - There are many and various ways in which the state promotes the learning and use of minority languages (cf. the comments on the various obligations). In particular, efforts are encouraged among the general public to keep these languages alive by using them within the family and in extra-familiar everyday situations. The cultural value of minority and regional languages for social life in Schleswig-Holstein is clearly emphasised with the aim of increasing willingness among the younger generation to learn and pass on North Frisian with a corresponding self-image and knowledge of their own culture.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The North Frisian language still is, to a significant extent, the language spoken within the family and the language for communication in public, especially among Frisians living on the islands and in the northern section

of the mainland (extending from the German-Danish border to the town of Bredstedt). In mixed-language marriages, German and Frisian are increasingly being used as languages of equal rank.

- At the initiative of Frische Rädj/Friesenrat Sektion Nord e.V. and with the support of parties including the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs, the North Frisian Biikebrennen bonfire night was included in the Nationwide Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014. This serves to express not only the cultural identity, but also the linguistic diversity in Nordfriesland.

## 9. Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges

### a. Article 14 (a)

#### i. Practical measures

- The Institute for Scandinavian Studies, Frisian Studies and General Linguistics at the University of Kiel maintains a close and active relationship with the Frisian Institute at the University of Groningen and the Fryske Akademy Leeuwarden. For example, the University of Kiel and the University of Groningen jointly publish a series of scholarly papers. As part of their masters degree course, students of Frisian philology at the University of Kiel complete an internship at either the University of Groningen or the Fryske Akademy, ensuring an active exchange at the level of students. Excursions to the Netherlands are offered for bachelors students to encourage such exchange.
- “Joint Declaration of Intent on Regional Cooperation” between Schleswig-Holstein and the three northern Dutch provinces of Groningen, Fryslân and Drenthe.
- The declaration identifies “Energy transition and climate change”, “Innovation and regional economic development” and “Frisian language and culture” as areas for intensified cooperation. To address the latter point, the Commissioner for Minority Issues cultivated contacts with the provincial government of Fryslân in 2018, the year in which Leeuwarden was the European Capital of Culture, and 2019. (Please refer to the comments *under E.IV.1.j. v.*)

## V. Sater Frisian in the State of Lower Saxony

### 1. Article 6 – Information

The Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media provides the Sater Frisian language in Lower Saxony with regular investment funding of €20,000 a year.

Further measures at federal level with regard to the Sater Frisian language can be found in the comments *under E.IV.1* on the North Frisian language and the comments *under E.I.1*.

In **Lower Saxony**, the budget legislature has made available additional budget funds in the year 2020 for the promotion of Low German and Sater Frisian and for the regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*); these funds amount to €380,000 per annum, of which €30,000 is earmarked for the Oldenburgische Landschaft for the promotion of Sater Frisian.

Moreover, regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*) may obtain regional cultural funding (total volume €2.9 million) for important regional cultural projects, e.g. for the Low German language and the Sater Frisian minority language, below €10,000.

In addition, Lower Saxony funds cultural projects that strengthen the regional identity and encourage active use of the Sater Frisian minority language.

In 2019, Lower Saxony provided €10,000 in funding for two projects of Saterland municipality with total costs of around €29,000. The projects involved the production of a CD with children's songs in the Sater Frisian language followed by a live performance, and the expansion of the Sater Frisian app "Kleine Saterfriesen" with animated Sater Frisian children's songs to sing along with.

## **2. Article 7 – Objectives and principles**

The state of Lower Saxony has implemented all of the obligations that the Council of Europe considers to be satisfied with respect to Sater Frisian and will continue and intensively support these activities in future.

Sater Frisian is recognised as an important part of the cultural wealth of Lower Saxony. With a view to the narrow local limitation on the Saterland municipality and the small number of speakers in particular, promoting the Sater Frisian language enjoys high priority. In particular, such areas include education, culture and the media.

The following section discusses the obligations that have not yet been met or for which there are particular comments and additions.

### **a. Article 7 (1) (f)**

Regarding this obligation and the corresponding recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the general comments *under D.I.3. and the following comments on Article 8*. In addition, the Regional State Offices for Schools and Education assisted the schools in preparing materials and planning and carrying out instruction by providing an extensive consulting and support system.



### 3. Article 8 – Education

Since 2011, a supervisory body has monitored how **Lower Saxony** is meeting the education-related requirements set by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The body is composed of a representative of each of the Ministry of Education (Chair), the Ministry for Science and Culture, the Ministry for Federal and European Affairs and Regional Development, the regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*) and the Lower Saxony Heritage Association (Niedersächsischer Heimatbund). Monitoring is based on the report of the Lower Saxony school authority, which provides information on the activities of the advisers, on how the allotted teaching hours are used and on measures to promote regional and minority languages as intended by the Charter over the previous year.

The supervisory body can make proposals concerning the further implementation of the articles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to which Lower Saxony is a signatory.

Regarding general and vocational schools, reference is also made to the comments *under D.I.1.*

#### a. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)

##### i. Practical measures

- In Lower Saxony, the University of Oldenburg offers German studies with a specialisation in Low German and Sater Frisian. Students training to become teachers have the possibility to attend individual courses on Sater Frisian.

#### b. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)

##### i. Practical measures

According to a survey commissioned by Lower Saxony's Ministry for Science and Culture, some 320 courses on matters related to the Low German language were offered at adult education centres and other institutions providing adult education in 2013. More than 7,200 lessons were provided in this context and about 4,800 participants could be reached. To illustrate the dimension, it is necessary to mention that every year more than 3 million lessons are funded in

the field of adult education. This puts the number of minority language lessons for adults in relation. These figures have remained stable for quite a while now. When it comes to Sater Frisian and Romani in particular, demand is so low that adult education institutions usually do not make major efforts to increase the number of courses. Very often, it is solely thanks to the teachers and their personal commitment that participants want to learn more and courses are continued. If these teachers quit their jobs, it is foreseeable that the participants will lose their interest. Most of the efforts undertaken by adult education institutions to adequately replace such courses are not successful. Instead, it is often a coincidence if new teachers approach these institutions and offer to teach Sater Frisian or Romani although such jobs were not advertised.

According to the aforementioned survey, the number of Low German courses is higher. The main goal is to preserve traditional customs, which is closely connected to language instruction. The volume has remained the same so far and is unlikely to change significantly in the future. A large number of recommendations and suggestions, such as handing out certificates of participation or qualification, do not play a role here. Those involved in the teaching/learning process are not interested in receiving some kind of document certifying their acquired knowledge or even performance. By participating in the language courses and other activities, they aim to maintain their traditional customs. Although educational measures in the field of minority languages represent only a small share of the total volume, the federal state of Lower Saxony is well aware of the significance of these courses. When the volume of adult education lessons is assessed, these educational measures are given a greater recognition factor to increase their value.

**c. Article 8 (1) (i)**

Regarding this obligation and the corresponding recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the general comments *under E.V.3.*

**4. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

To the extent that documents and evidence drafted in a minority language are presented in a form that excludes misunderstandings or errors stemming from translation, this obligation is already met by the legal situation prevailing in Germany. The state of Lower Saxony does not provide any further comments in this regard.

## **5. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services**

The state of Lower Saxony has indicated in the past that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is legally binding. The administrative authorities are bound by the obligations of the Language Charter to which the state of Lower Saxony is a signatory.

With regard to the specific implementation of the obligations in the municipalities, the right to local self-government must be taken into account.

The following information can also be provided with regard to the obligations entered into under Article 10:

### **a. Article 10 (2) (a)**

#### **i. Practical measures**

In order to strengthen the existing efforts of many municipalities in Lower Saxony to conserve regional and minority languages and to advance the use of these languages, the state may primarily approach the municipalities in a soliciting capacity. The municipalities themselves are responsible for promoting the use of minority and regional languages in their administrative functions in the course of local self-government.

Based on the resolution of the state parliament of 21 September 2017 (state parliament document no. 17/8757, “Stabilising and expanding the promotion of Low German and Sater Frisian”) and the related consultation of the state government of 6 March 2018 (state parliament document no. 18/466), the Lower Saxony Ministry of the Interior and Sport informed the municipalities – including Saterland municipality – of this resolution by way of a decree on 11 April 2018 and encouraged the implementation of corresponding measures. However, the response has been somewhat muted. The participating municipalities are primarily those that had previously been active in the promotion of regional or minority languages in the past.

**b. Article 10 (2) (d)**

## i. Practical measures

In Lower Saxony, the real estate cadastre does not include geographical names in the Sater Frisian minority language alongside the standard German names. Old official maps/original maps show the cadastral district names in Sater Frisian (originally recorded in the 1838/1839 land survey). The current record of the real estate cadastre, the Authoritative Real Estate Cadastre Information System (Amtliches Liegenschaftskatasterinformationssystem, ALKIS), only includes these names as individual or isolated plot names.

**c. Article 10 (4) (c)**

## i. Practical measures

- The state of Lower Saxony notes that Saterland municipality has control over personnel decisions and thus decides on the deployment of its employees. Saterland municipality strives to meet the requests of its Sater Frisian-speaking employees to work in an area in which this language is spoken.

## ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The state of Lower Saxony refers to its previous comments on the practical measures regarding this recommendation of the Committee of Experts.

## 6. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - As discussed in previous reports, the broadcaster autonomy and press freedom enshrined in the German Basic Law means that the government is not permitted to influence the respective content. To this extent and within the scope provided by the Language Charter, in 2009 the then Minister-President of Lower Saxony encouraged media professionals from Lower Saxony working in broadcasting and press to continue and intensify their efforts to strengthen regional and minority languages.
- ii. Practical measures
  - For many years, the local studio of the Ems-Vechte-Welle radio station in Saterland has broadcast the “Middeeges” programme in Sater Frisian (and Low German) twice a month/fortnightly on Sunday between 11:03 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. (with a break for the news at midday). This programme will remain a part of the station’s schedule in future.

### b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.V.6.a.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - The regional broadcaster Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), Lower Saxony broadcasting house, has stated that it broadcasts the following content relating to the Sater Frisian language:
    - “Hallo Niedersachsen - op Platt, Marron Curtis Fort - Kämpfer für Saterfriesisch”, on 29 October 2017, 4:15 minutes, typically once monthly on Sunday (30 minutes), information, entertainment
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
 

Regarding the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the aforementioned comments on this article.

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - With effect from 1 January 2018, the funding policy of the joint film fund of the states of Lower Saxony and Bremen, “nordmedia - Film- und Mediengesellschaft Niedersachsen/Bremen mbH”, was modified to state that special consideration is given to projects promoting the use of the Low German or Sater Frisian language [...] in audiovisual works.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In 2019, funding was provided for story and screenplay development for the “Saterland” film project. In addition to standard German and Low German, the planned film will feature the Sater Frisian language.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the aforementioned comments on this article.

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.V.6.a.*

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.V.6.c.*

**f. Article 11 (2)**

The Basic Law guarantees freedom of information, including the reception of radio and television programmes from neighbouring countries. Accordingly, this obligation is considered to be fulfilled.

## 7. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Comments are only made on individual obligations for which there are additions or changes. Reference is otherwise made to the measures described in the previous reporting periods, which are being continued.

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - In Lower Saxony, the budget legislature has made available additional budget funds in the year 2020 for the promotion of Low German and Sater Frisian and for the regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*); these funds amount to €380,000 per annum, of which €30,000 are earmarked for the Oldenburgische Landschaft for the promotion of Sater Frisian.
  - Moreover, regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*) may obtain regional cultural funding (total volume €2.9 million) for important regional cultural projects, e.g. for the Low German language and the Sater Frisian minority language, below €10,000. In addition, Lower Saxony funds cultural projects that strengthen the regional identity and encourage active use of the Sater Frisian minority language.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In 2019, Lower Saxony provided €10,000 in funding for two projects of Saterland municipality with total costs of around €29,000. The projects involved the production of a CD with children’s songs in the Sater Frisian language followed by a live performance, and the expansion of the Sater Frisian app “Kleine Saterfriesen” with animated Sater Frisian children’s songs to sing along with.

### b. Article 12 (1) (b)

The state of Lower Saxony was not made aware of any specific requirements in the reporting period.



**c. Article 12 (3)**

No dialogue in the area of cultural policy with regard to regional or minority languages took place with parties outside Germany in the reporting period.

**8. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

Reference is made to the measures described in the previous reporting periods with regard to economic and social life, which are being continued.

## VI. Low German

### 1. Article 6 – Information

The Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Low German Language Group was established at federal level in 2004. Its task is to discuss all issues of the Federal Government's domestic policy that concern or affect the Low German language community.

The members of the Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Low German Language Group are four representatives of the Federal Council for Low German (Bundesrat für Niederdeutsch) and one representative each from the federal states of Bremen, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community.

The representatives of the Low German language community are appointed by the spokesperson of the Federal Council for Low German.

As a rule, the meetings of the committee are chaired by the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities.

The chair may invite members of the parliamentary groups of the German Federal Parliament to the meetings.

The committee usually meets once a year.

In 2019, the ***Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media*** provided funding for the “20 Years of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” event in Berlin in order to increase awareness of the Charter languages among young people and young adults in particular, to facilitate trans-regional networking and strengthen the linguistic and cultural identity of speakers of the regional language Low German, including through dialogue with representatives and members of minority groups. This implemented another point of the German Federal Parliament's resolution on “25 Years of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – Joint Mandate”.

With regard to the measures at federal level concerning the Low German language, reference is otherwise made to the comments *under C.III, C.IV, C.V, C.VI and E.I.1.*

On its website, the Ministry for Science, Research and Culture of the **state of Brandenburg** states that the regional language of Low German is protected under the Language Charter. Under “Low German”, the Berlin-Brandenburg Education Server also refers to the protected status under the Language Charter.

The federal states of **North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Bremen, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt**, represented by the ministries responsible for the preservation of Low German, meet at least once a year at working level to discuss the current concerns of Low German. To this end, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, as well as representatives of the Low German language community, in particular the Federal Council for Low German and the State Centre for Low German or the Institute for Low German, are invited regularly. In 2019, this meeting was organised by the Ministry for Education, Science and Culture of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania at the Representation of the State of **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania** to the Federal Government in Berlin.

The various measures by the **state of Saxony-Anhalt** included in the report are also intended to provide information on the content of the Language Charter. In particular, reference is made to the resolution of the state parliament of 24 May 2019, “Niederdüütsche Sprook in Sassen-Anhalt wedder opleven laten”, and the Low German working group established by the State Chancellery and Ministry of Culture.

Since the establishment of the office in 1988, the Minister-President’s Commissioner for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German in the **state of Schleswig-Holstein**, also the Commissioner for Low German, has been working as a point of contact for minorities, ethnic groups and groups of speakers of minority languages living in Schleswig-Holstein. He advises the Minister-President on

current issues relating to minority policy and mediates between the state authorities and the organisations of minorities on special concerns of minorities.

The implementation of the federal state's obligations under the Language Charter in state laws and decrees and statutory instruments ensures that the individual measures are enshrined in the administrative actions of the authorities at state and municipal level. Examples include the Schools Act, the Act to Promote Children in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities, the State Planning Act, the Libraries Act, the Electoral Act, the State Administration Act, and the decree on Low German. Regular talks between the Commissioner for Low German and representatives of local government associations and, where necessary, with councillors, mayors or committees in districts and offices are another element for disseminating information on the obligations arising from the Language Charter. Since 1992, contact between politicians and representatives of the regional language of Low German to strengthen the rights guaranteed under the European Language Charter has been implemented by the Low German advisory group in the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament, which is chaired by the president of the state parliament. The Low German advisory group includes the Minister-President's Commissioner for Low German, expert politicians from the parliamentary groups in the state parliament and representatives of the language community.

In the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein, the division for foreign affairs and national minorities also acts as a point of contact for matters relating to national minorities, ethnic groups and the Low German language community, as well as for authorities and organisations in individual matters.

## VI.a Low German in the State of Brandenburg

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The current coalition agreement of the Brandenburg state government lays down the further promotion of the regional language of Low German in day-care centres and schools.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Public relations work, welcome addresses from bodies including the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health, Women and Family Affairs and the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture, among others
  - With the minister having taken on the patronage of the Low German creative competition for children, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has publicly invited school pupils to participate in the competition since 2018 as part of its activities to support and revitalise the Low German language.

#### b. Article 7 (1) (b)

- i. Practical measures
  - The current Low German language area in the state of Brandenburg is not defined. The existing administrative divisions are not known to constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Low German.

#### c. Article 7 (1) (c)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - On 25 March 2021, the state parliament commissioned the state government to examine the development of a Low German Act and the adoption of additional obligations under the Language Charter.
  - Please refer to the comments *under C.I.6*.

ii. Practical measures

- The Low German language association Verein für Niederdeutsch im Land Brandenburg e.V. receives annual funding of €50,000 from the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture. Funding is also provided for other projects organised by the association.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Please refer to the comments *under C.I.6.*

ii. Practical measures

- In 2018, the heritage and museum association Lunower Heimat- und Museumsverein e.V. installed the first Low German street name signs in its municipality.
- In 2018 and 2019, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided funding totalling €10,000 for projects of the Federal Council for Low German with the aim of increasing the use of the Low German language in care homes and care settings.
- In 2019, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €5,800 in funding for a project to expand the Low German library, school and tourism services offered in Prenzlau. It also provided €2,500 in funding for a Low German Day in Havelland district around the topic of Theodor Fontane in 2019.
- In 2020, the town of Wittstock/Dosse became the first municipality in Germany to put up bilingual place name signs in standard German and Low German in the Sewekow/Sävko neighbourhood.
- In 2020, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €7,500 in funding for the development of a Low German place name list by the Low German language association and the Institute of German Studies at the University of Potsdam. This is intended to enable and facilitate the use of Low German place names. The project will be continued in 2021.
- In 2020, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €4,000 in funding for the creation of a Low German almanac by Verein für

Niederdeutsch im Land Brandenburg e.V. This is intended to improve the visibility and networking of Low German activities in Brandenburg. Additional multilingual services are being tested out at municipal level, including Low German guided tours and Low German sayings on plaques in the Prenzlau urban area and Low German supplements to audio guides for a museum in Wittstock/Dosse (in some cases with state funding).

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

i. Practical measures

- The Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provides €5,000 in funding every year for projects of the Federal Council for Low German across various federal states.
- In 2019, it also provided €2,700 in funding to enable school pupils from Putlitz to participate in the Low German reading aloud competition in Saxony-Anhalt.
- The state also supports the dialogue between Low German language communities and Sorbs/Wends.
- Please refer to the comments *under E.III.2.e*.

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

i. Practical measures

In 2019, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport provided a total of €7,700 in funding for the printing of the “1. Brandenburger Plattfibel” textbook, which was developed by the Verein für Niederdeutsch association. The Brandenburger Plattfibel was published in a print run of 500 copies and will be distributed to schools that currently offer activity groups for Low German. It enables school pupils to take their first steps in learning Brandenburg Low German. In 2020, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €5,000 in funding for the establishment of “Low German corners” in four regional libraries.



- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

- i. Practical measures
  - To date, language instruction has taken place in civil society, in some cases supported by municipal adult education centres.
  - The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport has intensified its efforts to integrate Low German into existing school competitions (e.g. promoting the Uckermark youth literature competition via schools and the Education Server, integrating Low German into the state’s school newspaper competition from the 2021/22 school year; the ministry is also seeking to integrate Low German into the “Jugend schreibt” funding programme and the “Theo” literature competition).

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

- i. Practical measures
  - In 2020, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture provided €5,000 in funding for a project of the Federal Council for Low German for the creation of a publication detailing current offers of Low German university teaching and research.

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
There have been no changes compared with the previous reporting period.
- ii. Practical measures  
There have been no changes compared with the previous reporting period.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
There have been no changes compared with the previous reporting period.
- ii. Practical measures  
There have been no changes compared with the previous reporting period.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - On 25 March 2021, the state parliament commissioned the state government to include measures on the effective communication of knowledge about Low German in the multilingualism concept to be developed.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In its public relations work, the state refers to the importance of multilingualism and the relevance of Low German. Part A of the overall school curriculum includes a reference to the regional language of Low German.

**l. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The Low German working group at the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture met three times in the reporting period. Another permanent member on the part of the state is the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.
  - In addition, the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sport has had a Low German discussion group since September 2020, which serves as a platform for representatives of Verein für Niederdeutsch and the ministry to discuss the promotion of Low German.

## VI.b Low German in the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Low German names on place name signs
  - Sauerland Platt project: In 2019, the state government supported “SauerlandPlatt – Sicherung und Bewahrung der letzten plattdeutschen Dialekte im Sauerland”, a project aimed at safeguarding the last remaining Low German dialects in the Sauerland region, with a grant of €100,000 as part of the NRW heritage promotion programme. The project duration was two years. It included recording accounts by local speakers of Sauerland dialects of Low German, archiving the audio material and broadcasting selected accounts on local radio.
- ii. Practical measures  
Reference is made to the practical measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation described previously.

#### b. Article 7 (1) (b)

The measures from the previous reporting periods were continued, thereby ensuring that the existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Low German.

#### c. Article 7 (1) (c)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
In April 2018, the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia established an “Advisory group for the Low German language and the Low German community”. The constituent meeting took place in Düsseldorf on 18 June 2019. The composition of the advisory group, which involves representatives of the state parliament, the ministries, the Low German community and cultural conservation, enables a broad basis of discussion. It is ensured that North Rhine-Westphalia meets and continues to develop its obligations under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Geographically, the advisory group is located in the Münster district government, where a “head office ” has been established in coordination with the Ministry for Regional Identity, Communities and Local Government, Building and Gender Equality of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (the authority responsible for the advisory group at state government level). This office serves as the first point of contact for all matters relating to the advisory group. The first meeting addressed specialist issues relating to content and defined the key fields of work.

Accordingly, the advisory board will address

- the Language Charter (status and desiderata)
- the position of Low German in the media
- projects in Low German for children and young people
- improving communication among the parties involved in Low German language work
- the status and future problems of the Niederdeutsche Bühnen theatres

A conference for schools and teachers that was planned for spring 2020 and another meeting of the advisory group were unable to take place due to the pandemic-related lockdown. In addition, two education projects for the “Schorlemer Alst” Catholic rural adult education centre (LVHS Freckenhorst) and the Niederdeutsche Bühne theatre in Münster, were secured thanks to funding from the Rottendorf Foundation but had to be suspended as a result of the pandemic.

These projects can be realised at short notice once the pandemic-related contact restrictions have been lifted.

- ii. Practical measures  
Please refer to the previous comments *under E.VI.b.1.c.i.*
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Please refer to the previous comments *under E.VI.b.1.c.i.*

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

Regarding this obligation, reference is generally made to the comments *under E.VI.b.1.a. and E.VI.b.1.c.*

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

Regarding this obligation entered into by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.b.1.a. and E.VI.b.1.c.*

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)****i. Practical measures**

- At the Centre for Low German (Centrum für Niederdeutsch, CfN) at the University of Münster Institute of German Studies, Low German teaching materials for primary schools were developed and published (Jürgens/Spiekermann 2017) as part of a school project initiated by the Münster district government. The teaching materials are designed for face-to-face learning and focus on the Münsterland dialect. A follow-up project, “Low German at schools in Münster and the Münsterland region”, has been in progress at the CfN since 2019. In addition to producing new teaching materials aimed at language learning and pupils in grades 5 and 6, the project aims to investigate current language proficiency, patterns of use and attitudes in order to develop a concept for the targeted promotion of Low German.

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

The measures from the previous reporting periods were continued, thereby ensuring that the existing or new administrative divisions do not constitute an obstacle to the promotion of Low German.

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)****i. Practical measures**

- The Centre for Low German at the University of Münster Institute of German Studies pools university activities in the area of research and teaching. The bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes at the Institute of German Studies and the Faculty of Philology at the University of Münster include regular courses on Low German topics and supervision

for degree theses. They also give rise to dissertations on variation linguistics and linguistic history topics in which Low German dialects and other regional varieties in Northern Germany (including North Rhine-Westphalia) play a central role.

- In 2016, the universities of Bonn, Münster, Paderborn and Siegen began recording the dialects (or the least standardised ways of speaking) used in North Rhine-Westphalia (as well as in parts of Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate) in the project “Dialektatlas Mittleres Westdeutschland” (Dialect Atlas of Central Western Germany, DMW). The project receives funds from the North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences and the Arts.
- Please see also the comments *under D.II.2* (on teacher training).

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

- i. Practical measures  
Please refer to the comments *under E.IV.b.1.c*.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Practical measures  
Please refer to the previous comments *under E.IV.b.1*.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Practical measures  
Please refer to the previous comments *under E.IV.b.1*.

**l. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Practical measures  
Please refer to the previous comments *under E.IV.b.1*.

## VI.c Low German in the State of Saxony-Anhalt

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - On 24 May 2019, the state parliament of Saxony-Anhalt adopted the resolution “Niederdüütsche Sprook in Sassen-Anhalt wedder opleven laten”, in which the state of Saxony-Anhalt affirms its responsibility for the preservation and promotion of the Low German language (state parliament document no. 7/4431).
  - In particular, the content of the resolution by the state parliament covers the following aspects:
    - Support for appropriate learning opportunities for the acquisition and cultivation of the Low German language, particularly at nursery schools and primary schools (for more information, see the comments *under D.I.5.*)
    - Promoting the increased visibility of the Low German language in the public sphere by enabling municipalities to also use the Low German versions of their place names (for more information, see the comments *under E.VI.c.1.e.*)
    - Completing the “Middle Elbe Dictionary” that is being compiled at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg (for more information, see the comments *under E.VI.c.1.h.*).
  - In future, the state government will report annually on the measures taken to the committee of the state parliament that is responsible for culture and education.
  - The public plenary debate in the state parliament and the cross-parliamentary support for the resolution can already be seen as an indicator of the degree of recognition enjoyed by the Low German language in Saxony-Anhalt and the efforts to cultivate and preserve it.

**b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - There were no changes in the administrative divisions in the reporting period.

**c. Article 7 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - In Saxony-Anhalt, the preservation of the Low German regional language is primarily the concern of the state heritage association Landesheimatbund Sachsen-Anhalt e.V., which receives institutional funding from the state, and the Low German Working Group (Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch) at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg. For years now, the Low German projects of Landesheimatbund Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. have received 100% funding.
  - In line with its cultural funding policy, the State Chancellery and Ministry of Culture also supports individual projects by local heritage and culture associations dedicated to the preservation of the Low German regional language.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts Regarding the recommendation for immediate action of the Committee of Experts, "Take resolute action to develop appropriate learning opportunities for Low German", reference is made to the comments on learning opportunities under *D.I.5*.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - In implementing the aforementioned resolution of the state parliament, the state government will protect in law the option for municipalities to use a Low German name alongside their municipality name as an additional designation within the meaning of section 14 (3) of the Saxony-Anhalt Municipal Constitution Act (KVG LSA) in order to strengthen the visibility of Low German in the public sphere. As the body responsible for municipal constitution law, the Ministry of the Interior and Sport



prepared a circular entitled “Municipality names in Low German”, which sets out the conditions for approving the use of the Low German municipality name as a designation in accordance with section 14 (3) KVG LSA. This includes details of the documents that municipalities wishing to use a Low German name alongside their municipality name are required to attach to their application, e.g. a phonetic transcription of the pronunciation as currently used locally and a proposal for the spelling of the Low German name prepared in consultation with the Low German Working Group (Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch) on the basis of these documents.

- The circular was coordinated with the State Chancellery and Ministry of Culture and the Low German Working Group. It was published on 16 November 2020 (Ministerial Gazette of Saxony-Anhalt 2020, p. 456) and was accompanied by a public announcement.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the recommendation of the Committee of Experts to encourage the use of the Low German language in the public sphere, reference is also made to the various cultural events that make a significant contribution to achieving this goal, some of which are funded by the state.
- e. Article 7 (1) (e)**
- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
    - Please refer to the comments *under D.V.*
- f. Article 7 (1) (f)**
- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
    - Please refer to the comments *under D.I.5.*
- g. Article 7 (1) (g)**
- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
    - Please refer to the comments *under D.I.5.*

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Reference is made to the general comments *under D.II.* concerning the Low German Working Group (Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch) at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Science and Digitalisation is supporting the completion of the “Middle Elbe Dictionary” with annual funding currently amounting to €80,000. The project is managed at the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg. The current version can be accessed at <https://mew.uzi.uni-halle.de/>. Letters A-O are available. Work on letters P-Schi is currently in progress.

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The state of Saxony-Anhalt is aware that the integration of speakers outside the Federal Republic of Germany is ensured via the Federal Council for Low German.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The state government is not aware of any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of Low German.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Respect, understanding and tolerance with regard to Low German are ensured. Regarding education and media, reference is made to the extensive comments *under D.I.5. and D.III.*

**l. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Practical measures
  - A Low German working group has been established by the State Chancellery and Ministry of Culture and meets regularly. Speakers of Low German actively participate in the working group and contribute their

needs and requests. The working group also includes representatives of various bodies and the state parliament as well as the Low German Working Group (Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch).

## VI.d Low German in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - There have been no changes in legislation compared with the last reporting period.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Promoting the Low German language is not only an obligation arising from the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, but an objective that the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen continues to actively pursue. Culture policy considerations and the desire to continue developing Low German for the future resulted in the formation of the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN) on 6 December 2017 (together with the states of Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Lower Saxony). The central objective of the formation of the LzN is to support Bremen (and the other three federal states) in implementing the obligations entered into under the European Language Charter. The State Centre's activities focus on the protection, preservation and development of Low German. In line with its defined purpose of "promoting the preservation of local traditions and local history" and "promoting education, adult education and vocational training" (section 52 (2) of the German Fiscal Code), the State Centre for Low German has actively pursued and purposefully implemented the following tasks since its formation:
    - Preservation, promotion and development of Low German
    - Communicating practical knowledge about Low German
    - Advising, networking and supporting the committees, advisory boards, organisations, associations and individuals working in this area and government authorities and political bodies with a focus on supporting voluntary activities and improved cooperation

- Initiation and support for projects by the committees, advisory boards, organisations, associations and individuals working in the area of Low German and support for project-related research
- Dissemination of information on Low German taking into account latest scientific findings in cooperation with the committees, organisations, associations and individuals working in the area of Low German and the research experts in the federal states and in partnership with the states involved
- Development of contemporary formats for communicating Low German in cooperation with the committees, organisations, associations and individuals working in the area of Low German, with a primary focus on children and young people

The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen supports the LzN with an annual grant of €80,000. Annual project funding is also provided by the city's culture department. The LzN itself also promotes Low German projects to a significant degree by acquiring third-party funding with political support and the approval of the culture department; the results of these projects can also be seen in Bremen. In this way, the LzN is successfully meeting the founding purpose behind which Bremen and the other Northern German federal states have thrown considerable political support and resources.

**b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

- i. Practical measures
  - There have been no changes in this area compared with the last reporting period. There are no new administrative divisions.

**c. Article 7 (1) (c)**

- i. Practical measures
  - With the formation of the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN), Bremen (together with the federal states of Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Lower Saxony) has taken decisive action in the promotion of Low German. Following the establishment of

the LzN in 2018 and a phase of consolidation in 2019, a number of new project formats, networks and funding instruments that the LzN has initiated, built up and developed in the past three years firmly established themselves in 2020 and demonstrated a sustained impact.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

i. Practical measures

- Please refer to the following comments *under E.VI*.

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

i. Practical measures

- Since its formation in December 2017, the LzN has acted as an important link between various parties involved the promotion of Low German and plays a central role in ensuring the effective networking of the individual players. This includes government authorities, political bodies, committees, advisory boards, organisations, associations and individuals. The LzN also acts as an intermediary between employees and volunteers in an advisory, networking and support capacity.
- The network not only includes the four donor states of Bremen, Lower Saxony, Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, but also encompasses some initial contacts and partnerships with other states in which Low German is spoken. For example, there is a partnership between the LzN and the Competence Centre for Teaching Low German at the University of Greifswald (KND).

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

i. Practical measures

- In 2018, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media provided funding of €29,611 for the “Introduction of e-learning” project of Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH. The funding allowed the LzN, which generated the ideas and was the initiator, coordinator and key driver behind the project, to establish an important funding channel for a wide audience. The LzN used the project to bring together multipliers from all states. The project exemplifies the fulfilment of its coordination

function. With the “Introduction of e-learning for Low German” project, the LzN has created a sustainable, permanent and effective learning platform for teaching Low German across all four states and far beyond.

- Since it was established in early 2019, the platform has been used to communicate knowledge in the form of web seminars. The objective was to establish a range of online language courses in order to activate language proficiency and for professional and general training purposes. To ensure optimal promotion, the LzN operates an e-learning platform that enables speakers and learners of Low German throughout Germany to access beginners’ and advanced language courses and units on selected topics relating to the Low German language, literature and culture free of charge in order to expand their proficiency.
- In the subsequent years up to and including 2020, the range of web seminars was continuously expanded and extended, including language acquisition courses and training for online tutors. The plan is for the range of seminars (including for the care sector) to be expanded further in the coming years.

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

- The LzN web seminar programme described above is also aimed at people who do not speak Low German. The defined objective is for the LzN’s web seminar programme to reach all interested people with internet access. This makes it a low-threshold service that is practical and available free of charge to anyone from any location. Accordingly, it has a wide-ranging impact that goes far beyond the local catchment area. The aim is for young people in particular to be addressed and become actively engaged with Low German.

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

i. Practical measures

- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.1.f, E.VI.d.1.g and E.VI.d.2.d.*

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

## i. Practical measures

- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.1.e.*

**j. Article 7 (2)**

## i. Practical measures

- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.3. and E.VI.d.4.*

**k. Article 7 (3)**

## i. Practical measures

- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.2. and E.VI.d.5.*

**l. Article 7 (4)**

## i. Practical measures

- On 16 August 2019, the Bremen state parliament resolved the continuation of the Low German advisory board that met during the 18th and 19th legislative periods and the allocation and assignment of the Low German advisory board to the president of the Bremen state parliament. The advisory board meets at least once a year. Its purpose is to ensure a continuous dialogue on the preservation of Low German and to provide proposals for the implementation of the Language Charter.



## **2. Article 8 – Education**

### **a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)**

#### **i. Practical measures**

In preschool education in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, the use of Low German is the responsibility of the relevant institutions (day-care centres, day-care centres with an emphasis on literacy and reading, city libraries). They use songs, books, stories and rhymes, sometimes with the help of volunteers. The BremerLeseLust initiative supports the use of books and stories in Low German, offering preschool-aged children initial impressions and understanding of Low German. Demand for books and stories in Low German tends to be low in day-care centres in the city of Bremen; greater interest is found on the outskirts of the city or in parts of Bremerhaven.

#### **ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts**

The Committee of Experts does not consider the requirement to make Low German an integral part of day-to-day activities at day-care centres to be fulfilled for the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen in the last report. The areas of children and education are currently being combined to form a single department. As part of this process, training courses are being harmonised and training is intended to be provided to educators and teachers in future. The implementation of a 0-10 education plan has begun. One of the aims of this plan is close cooperation between day-care centres and primary schools. In this context, it is envisaged that Low German will be suggested as a subject for future day-care centre and primary school tandems.

### **b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iii)**

#### **i. Practical measures**

- Low German is enshrined in the overall curricula for German and local history and geography for primary schools. In line with the quotas for the number of teaching hours per subject, all schools have the option of offering the mandatory Low German teaching components required under the overall curricula during a single term or as part of a project week in order to enable intense learning.

- In Bremen, Low German is taught in depth at four “profile schools” (schools that allow pupils to specialise in certain subject areas). In Bremerhaven, there is currently one primary school that places a strong focus on Low German in its day-to-day teaching and school life.
- The profile schools in Bremen have access to additional teaching hours for systematic and continuous instruction. Depending on the location, this amounts to one or two hours a week per participating class or group. As a curricular basis, these profile schools are provided with guidelines and a common textbook in order to ensure systematic language development.
- Since 2017, these schools have had the option of obtaining profile school certification in order to further enhance their quality. One profile school has utilised this option and was certified in 2018. All the profile schools help to make Low German visible through their presence in their respective neighbourhoods. This is further supported by joint actions such as theatre performances, flashmobs and podcasts.
- A conference organised in conjunction with the State Centre for Low German in order to encourage more school administrators and teachers to establish profile schools was originally scheduled for spring 2020. The COVID-19 restrictions prevented the event from being held, but it will take place as soon as this becomes possible again. The objective is to establish more profile schools.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The Committee of Experts does not consider the requirement to make Low German an integral part of the curriculum to be fulfilled for the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen in the last report. The education authority has gone to great lengths to meet the requirements of the Language Charter and remains committed to making it so that Low German is offered independently at more schools. All other schools integrate Low German as part of regular lessons.

**c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iii)**

i. Practical measures

- Low German is enshrined in the German education plans for comprehensive and grammar schools (lower secondary level): The acquisition of regional language proficiency is extremely important to pupils as a part of their regional culture and identity. For pupils in Bremen and Bremerhaven, the regional language primarily encompasses varieties of Low German. Specifically, all pupils should be able to present examples of typical regional linguistic variants, and Low German in particular, by the end of the eighth grade. Pupils studying at advanced level should also be able to describe the relationship between Low German and English. To further promote Low German, some school locations also offer activity groups or, in Bremerhaven, trips to see Low German theatre productions by Niederdeutsche Bühne Waterkant Bremerhaven e.V.
- The primary school pupils who attend profile schools end up moving to a number of different comprehensive and grammar schools. As a result, it is currently difficult to systematically implement Low German instruction at these schools due to an insufficient number of interested pupils at each individual school. One secondary school that takes in the majority of pupils from the certified primary school established two hours a week of Low German instruction using the Dalton Plan starting from the 2019/20 school year. These classes are regularly attended by 15 pupils.
- The aforementioned conference is also intended to address more school administrators and teachers at secondary school level with a view to expanding Low German at secondary schools. Here, too, the objective is to establish instruction in Low German and build up profile schools.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The Committee of Experts does not consider the requirement to make Low German an integral part of the curriculum to be fulfilled for the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen in the last report. The education authority has gone to great lengths to meet the requirements of the Language Charter and remains

committed to making it so that Low German is offered independently at more schools. All other schools integrate Low German as part of regular lessons.

**d. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Linguistics and Literary Studies faculty at the University of Bremen offers a “Low German language, literature and culture” module as part of its German Studies course. The module is taught via a lectureship in cooperation with the Institute for Low German (Institut für niederdeutsche Sprache e.V., INS).

**e. Article 8 (1) (f) (ii)**

- i. Practical measures
 

In 2018, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media provided funding of €29,611 for the “Introduction of e-learning” project of the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN). With the “Introduction of e-learning for Low German” project, the LzN has created a permanent and effective learning platform for teaching Low German. Since it was established in early 2019, the platform has been used to communicate knowledge in the form of web seminars. The objective was to establish a range of online language courses in order to activate language proficiency and for professional and general training purposes. To ensure optimal promotion, the LzN operates an e-learning platform that enables speakers and learners of Low German throughout Germany to access beginners’ and advanced language courses and units on selected topics relating to the Low German language and literature free of charge in order to expand their proficiency. The platform also serves as a venue for cross-state dialogue. As previously, the range of web seminars was continuously expanded in 2020, including language acquisition courses and training for online tutors. A total of 38 web seminar series have taken place to date. The plan is for the range of seminars (including language acquisition for the care sector) to be continuously expanded further in the coming years.

**f. Article 8 (1) (g)****i. Practical measures**

- The curricula for primary, comprehensive and grammar schools oblige the schools to also address Low German in the context of the regional language and the resulting consequences for development and culture in the region. Primary schools are required to devote attention to Low German as one of the cultural assets of Northern Germany with the aim of establishing and developing concepts of cultural identity. To create a learning culture in this respect, it is necessary for the school committees to agree on internal goals and conclude binding agreements. Primary schools in particular use the quotas for the number of teaching hours per subject to implement single-term teaching or projects in this area.
- Primary schools are well positioned in this respect because regional culture, society and history constitute a significant element of teaching across all grades according to the “education plan for local geography and history”, with these topics being addressed in particular detail in fourth grade.
- The profile schools in particular consider language and culture together. One of the profile schools works in close cooperation with the local heritage museum to ensure that its language classes are closely tied to cultural and historical aspects.
- Other primary schools also work with the “Lüttje Museum”, the Museum of Education and similar providers in order to familiarise today’s pupils with the historical context of Bremen’s culture and history.
- In other areas, primary schools and retirement homes work together to jointly explore the Low German language and culture.
- In cooperation with the State Centre for Low German, a podcast in Low German has been recorded for children and young people, guiding them through Bremen’s historical city centre.

- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Committee of Experts does not consider the requirement to adequately address the history and culture of Low German in lessons to be fulfilled for the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen in the last report. The aforementioned regional links in the respective neighbourhoods have been encouraged and promoted accordingly. The targeted networking of schools and cultural history institutions will be intensified further.

**g. Article 8 (1) (h)**

- i. Practical measures  
The State Institute for Schools continues to support schools that offer Low German as profile schools, in activity groups or as a core curriculum option by providing training courses. These can take the form of language courses or didactic methodological formats. As demand for centralised training courses has declined considerably in recent years, the master catalogue of training courses at the State Institute does not contain any courses in Low German. As it has been scientifically proven that demand-oriented training is significantly more effective than centralised training, the State Institute is happy to provide training courses in Low German as required, including as in-service training.
- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Committee of Experts considers the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen to be making good progress with regard to the requirement to provide teachers who instruct in Low German with basic and further training. Thanks to the flexible format, the State Institute considers in-service training in Low German to be particularly promising.

### **3. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

#### **a. Article 9 (1) (b) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - As discussed in the *Sixth Periodical Report*, the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen remains of the view that the obligation ensures that persons who use regional or minority languages can submit documents in these languages with legal validity and that this does not require any special administrative rules because the Charter has the status of federal law in Germany.
  - Germany continues to meet its obligations with regard to Low German in Bremen in this respect. No further measures have been taken.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.4.*

#### **b. Article 9 (1) (c) (iii)**

Regarding measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation and practical measures, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.d.4.*

#### **c. Article 9 (2) (a)**

Regarding measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation and practical measures, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.d.4.*

#### **4. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services**

##### **a. Article 10 (1) (a) (v)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen remains of the view that the obligation to ensure that persons who use regional or minority languages can submit documents in these languages with legal validity does not require any special administrative rules because the Charter has the status of federal law in Germany.

In April 2011, the Senator for the Interior also informed the authorities and all staff within his area of responsibility of the obligations resulting from the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and called on them to inform their supervisors of any information materials or other documents in their areas of responsibility which seemed suitable for providing also in a Low German version. This applies until further notice.

##### **b. Article 10 (1) (c)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
In April 2011, the Senator for the Interior informed the authorities and all staff within his area of responsibility of the obligations resulting from the Council of Europe Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and called on them to be open to citizens presenting their concerns in Low German and speak with them in that language if possible, or to refer them to other colleagues who do. This applies until further notice.

##### **c. Article 10 (2) (a)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen reports that, in a letter sent in April 2011, the Senator for the Interior explicitly encouraged staff to use Low German in the workplace provided all those involved actually speak Low German and that other staff would not be left out. This applies until further notice.

Visitors to the website of the Senator for the Interior can choose to be greeted in Low German.



**d. Article 10 (2) (b)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen notes that these measures are being continued. For example, visitors to the website of the Senator for the Interior can still choose to be greeted in Low German.

**e. Article 10 (2) (c)**

The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen notes that there have been no changes to the measures in the previous reporting periods.

**f. Article 10 (2) (d)**

The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen notes that there have been no changes to the measures in the previous reporting periods.

**g. Article 10 (2) (e)**

The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen notes that there have been no changes to the measures in the previous reporting periods.

**h. Article 10 (2) (f)**

The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen notes that there have been no changes to the measures in the previous reporting periods.

## 5. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.5.b.*

### b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen reports that the Senate Chancellery, which is politically responsible for media law in Bremen, enshrined the Low German language in television and radio in the most recent amendments of Bremen’s two media acts to the extent constitutionally permitted from the perspective of broadcasting freedom and independence from the state:
    - Radio Bremen Act (*Radio Bremen Gesetz*):
 

Section 2 (3): (The broadcaster’s content) “must also contribute to the fulfilment of the obligations set out in Article 11 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages with regard to the regional language of Low German.”

Section 3 (7): “Broadcasting schedules must include programming in the Low German language regularly and to an appropriate extent.”
    - Bremen Media Act (*Landesmediengesetz*):
 

Section 13 (3): “Private broadcasting schedules must include programming in the Low German language regularly and to an appropriate extent.”

Section 31 (3): “In evaluating the diversity of content, the State Media Authority takes into account the following criteria in particular: (...) the contribution to the diversity of the content as a whole, particularly (...) with a view to the fulfilment of the State of Bremen’s obligations under Article 11 of the European Charter for

Regional or Minority Languages with regard to the regional language of Low German.”

Section 40 (1): “Community media are responsible (...) for encouraging and facilitating the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the regional language of Low German.”

Section 43: “Community media promote citizens’ media literacy in particular by (...) providing assistance for the production of media in the regional language of Low German.”

Section 45 (2): “The State Media Authority reports to the Senate every two years on the fulfilment of Bremen’s obligations under Article 11 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages with regard to the regional language of Low German to the extent that these obligations relate to the scope of provisions of this Act; the deadline for the first such report shall be 31 December 2019. The Senate forwards the report to the state parliament.”

- The Bremen Media Act entered into force on 25 May 2018. Community media refers to radio and TV content organised by the State Media Authority.

ii. Practical measures

- The report of the State Media Authority on the fulfilment of Bremen’s obligations under Article 11 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 20 December 2019 contains the following conclusion:

The above individual comments on the strengthening of the Low German language in the Media Council and the results of the regular monitoring of the radio and TV programmes licensed by the State Media Authority “demonstrate that the proportion of programming in the Low German language has remained stable and, in some cases, increased in recent

years. The Bremen State Media Authority expressly welcomes this development and will continue to observe and support it through regular monitoring.”

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The new provisions of sections 40, 43 and 45 of the Bremen Media Act directly implement the recommendation of the Committee of Experts “to encourage the production and distribution of audio and audiovisual works in the Low German language”. As one of the objectives of community media is to train media professionals, the recommendation “to support the training of journalists and other staff for media” “using Low German” is also implemented.

It is not possible for radio and TV programming to be influenced further, as the broadcasting freedom arising from Article 5 of the German Basic Law prohibits the state from influencing the content of programming in any way. No additional stipulations or interventions in radio and TV programming on the part of the state are permitted in Germany. Accordingly, the state government may not take any further action in this area and will not do so in future.

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Committee of Experts considers this obligation to be only formally fulfilled. As stated *under VI.d.5.b.*, the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen notes that it is not possible for radio and TV programming to be influenced further, as the broadcasting freedom arising from Article 5 of the German Basic Law prohibits the state from influencing the content of radio and TV programming in any way. No additional stipulations or interventions in radio and TV programming on the part of the state are permitted in Germany. Accordingly, the state government may not take any further action in this area and will not do so in future. It should be noted that all broadcasting (private and public) in Germany is not governed or financed by the state. This means that, for reasons of constitutional law, the state is not allowed to intervene in programming or provide funding for individual formats.

Additional direct support of individual productions is not possible because broadcasting is not governed or financed by the state.

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

- In the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, the daily *Weser-Kurier* and its local editions *Bremer Nachrichten* and *Verdener Nachrichten* as well as its Sunday edition *Kurier am Sonntag* are the market leaders among print media. The *Weser-Kurier* publishes a weekly Low German column entitled “De plattdüütsche Eck” and reports on Low German concerns and activities at regular intervals.
- The *Nordsee-Zeitung* is the local daily in the port city of Bremerhaven. It also regularly publishes articles/columns in Low German. On 26 September 2018, the entire front page was published in Low German.
- To reach the younger generation, both the *Weser-Kurier* and the *Nordsee-Zeitung* also offer digital subscriptions.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The requirements of the Committee of Experts, which were previously only partially fulfilled, should now be fulfilled.

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

- Nordmedia is the central media funding agency for Bremen and Lower Saxony. It has promoted the establishment and development of the media industry in the two Northern German federal states since 2001. In recent years, it has consistently provided financial support for audiovisual products in various stages of development, including “Boot un Dood”, “Ritter Trenk op Platt” and “De Windmiller”. Among other things, “Ritter Trenk op Platt” proved to be a great success, opening in cinemas on 18 October 2018 and subsequently being released on DVD. A rough cut of “Boot un Dood”, the first crime caper in Low German, was presented in detail at a Nordmedia business breakfast at the City 46 community cinema in Bremen on 5 November 2019, including a Q&A with the team behind

the film. “Boot un Dood” subsequently enjoyed a successful première at the City 46 cinema on 10 September 2020.

- Any further influence is prohibited by law. Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.d.5.b.*

**f. Article 11 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

- The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen reports that the public service broadcasters also provide basic and further training for journalists and other media staff as part of their production activities. Because the production of content in Low German is part of Radio Bremen’s legally mandated tasks (see also the comments *under E.VI.d.5.b.*), it can be assumed that the necessary skills are taught in this framework. The state government is not able to exert targeted influence on staff training because broadcasting is not governed by the state.
- In November 2019, the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN) also offered a media workshop for young people throughout Germany together with the regional broadcaster NDR with the aim of counteracting the shortage of young media professionals. The media workshop was initiated by LzN, financed solely using LzN project funds and implemented in cooperation with NDR. At the workshop, the young participants worked on an episode of “Vun Binnenland un Waterkant” that was subsequently broadcast on NDR 1. As this workshop met with extremely strong demand among young people, the regular recurrence of this workshop format in the coming years is under consideration.
- In 2020, LzN offered a series of web seminars for young people entitled “Platt im Radio” in cooperation with the Low German commissioner at Radio Bremen and others.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The Committee of Experts does not consider the requirement to train journalists and other staff for media using Low German to be fulfilled. As the state

government is not able to exert targeted influence on the training of journalistic staff because broadcasting is not governed by the state, the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen considers its efforts to adequately fulfil the requirement. Innovative workshop formats and webinars like those implemented by LzN and described above are also helping to actively counteract the shortage of young media professionals.

**g. Article 11 (2)**

i. Practical measures

- There have been no changes compared with the previous reporting cycles.

## 6. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

#### i. Practical measures

- Kulturhaus Walle is one of the institutions in Bremen that has been particularly active in supporting the dissemination of Low German with a wide range of different cultural events in recent years. Monthly formats like “Dat Klöönwark – der plattdeutsche After-work-Schnack”, regular concerts in Low German, readings and cabaret shows, workshops and Low German performances are the formats that have been realised with the aim of reaching a wide audience, including young people. The “Poetry Slam op Platt” format is particularly innovative. In this series, contestants present original texts in Low German which they write within a short, set period of time; if they run into linguistic obstacles, the organisers help with translation.

### b. Article 12 (1) (b)

#### i. Practical measures

- The cultural content and formats offered by Kulturhaus Walle, the LzN and the Niederdeutsche Bühne Waterkant theatre in Bremerhaven are generally designed to be low threshold in order to make the Low German language and culture equally accessible to old and young and to speakers and non-speakers alike.
- In recent years, the LzN in particular has developed a number of innovative low-threshold formats aimed at a new, young audience:
- To mark the Klaus Groth Year in 2019, for example, contemporary new materials (an A3 poster featuring a poem and a teaching handout on the reverse) were created in order to allow school pupils throughout the country to engage with and familiarise themselves with the work of this classic Low German poet. The posters were distributed at teacher training conferences as class sets.
- The poster and explanatory video campaigns “Jugend verkloort Platt I und II”, which were initiated by the LzN in 2019 and 2020, are also aimed at



providing the general public with low-threshold access to Low German in cooperation with young people and experts at various universities.

“Jugend verkloort Platt I”, a 2019 project in which young people created infographics, received €46,132 in funding from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) and a further €3,000 from the Carl Toepfer Foundation. “Jugend verkloort Platt II”, which encompassed 18 short films, received €35,000 in BKM funding. To this end, “Jugend verkloort Platt I und II” is making a considerable contribution to youth development, information and reinforcing the positive image of the Low German language. As well as engaging the interest of young people and serving as visual aids in school lessons, the infographics and explanatory videos are intended to be used in adult learning (adult education centres) or serve as the basis for conversation groups (Klöönkriinks for adults), for example.

- In 2020, the “Lyrik digital” series of web seminars aimed to raise awareness of traditional Low German songs using contemporary forms of presentation in cooperation with the musician and songwriter Gerrit Hoss. The songs are digitalised and presented in the web seminar to an audience including teachers, who serve as multipliers and connectors to school pupils. New revisions of the lyrics give them a contemporary flavour, thus building a bridge to the classroom.
- In addition to institutional funding for the LzN, Bremen’s Senator for Culture is able to submit applications for project funding every year in order to secure financial support for cultural projects in the area of Low German. In recent years, almost all the applications in the area of Low German were provided with financial support by the culture department as long as they complied with the funding guidelines. Like all other areas of project funding, the projects were not always financed in the full amount, but always to a sufficient extent to enable the projects to be ultimately implemented. For example, the Senator for Culture is supporting the Low German festival “Platt! Land! Fluss!”, which will be

held this summer in the heart of Bremen as part of the Aktionsprogramm Innenstadt (API) programme to make the city centre more attractive. Funding of €15,000 is being provided, i.e. the full amount requested.

**c. Article 12 (1) (c)**

i. Practical measures

- Children's books and films are translated into Low German and distributed as part of individual projects and grants.

**d. Article 12 (1) (d)**

i. Practical measures

- Kulturhaus Walle, the LzN and the Niederdeutsche Bühne Waterkant theatre in Bremerhaven are particularly active in this area.

**e. Article 12 (1) (e)**

i. Practical measures

- Kulturhaus Walle, the LzN and the Niederdeutsche Bühne Waterkant theatre in Bremerhaven are particularly active in this area.

**f. Article 12 (1) (f)**

i. Practical measures

- The trust-based cooperation with the LzN, Kulturhaus Walle and the Niederdeutsche Bühne Waterkant theatre in Bremerhaven in planning their cultural activities continues to work extremely well.

**g. Article 12 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

- While demand for Low German plays at Theater Bremen has become increasingly low in recent years, the Niederdeutsche Bühne Waterkant in Bremerhaven regularly stages plays in Low German. Since it was formed on 24 August 1920, the Waterkant theatre has delivered an impressive 200 plays, 270 productions and around 4,200 performances, reaching well in excess of 500,000 audience members. Every season, three plays are staged with professional directors in the small auditorium of the Stadttheater Bremerhaven. Together with 20-25 evening events in the farmhouse surroundings of the Speckenbüttel Geestbauernhaus, an

average of between 90 and 100 performances are held in Bremerhaven every year. For theatregoers with an interest in Low German, some private and state-funded theatres in the area around Bremen also offer plays in Low German.

- Additionally, a cooperation between the Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund Niedersachsen and Bremen theatre association and the LzN was initiated in early 2021. An online language course is offered to members of the association. The LzN provides the learning portal, administers and supports the participants and assists the seminar leaders, including familiarising them with the system and e-learning. The LzN offered the web seminar series “Wi speelt op Platt” (from November 2020 to January 2021) with the actor Christian Richard Bauer. Sketches and other short-form dramatic pieces were developed with the participants and consolidated, resulting in the performance of newly written short scenes.

#### **h. Article 12 (3)**

##### **i. Practical measures**

- Since its formation, the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN) has been successful in its efforts to make Low German visible to the wider public. Speakers of the language, the church, education, cultural life, media, tourism, politics, administration and social institutions are addressed in equal measure. Innovative poster campaigns and projects like “Jugend verkloort Platt”, the publication of comic books in Low German, attractive postcards aimed at the respective target group, the realisation of contemporary explanatory videos, an informative and service-oriented website, the maintenance and expansion of its presence on social media channels, professional public relations and comprehensive information brochures for areas including education and care make a significant contribution to permanently enshrining Low German in the public consciousness. Humour is used to combat negative clichés about the use of the Low German language among young people. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the poster project “Kolle Corona”

provided information about the latest hygiene measures in Low German in a humorous form. This poster campaign attracted attention beyond an audience of active Low German speakers. Campaigns like these combine information and exposure to the language using low-threshold formats.

- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Committee of Experts considers this obligation to be only partially fulfilled.

Bremen remains committed to maintaining the presence of Low German in its cultural policy abroad. In 2020, for example, the International Relations and Development Cooperation department of the State Chancellery reached a wide audience by producing 85,000 beer mats featuring the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in Low German. These were distributed free of charge to bars, restaurants and event promoters. As one way of ensuring that initiatives like these continue in future, the LzN's management is represented in the "City of Bremen Tourism Strategy 2025" committee, which will outline the key action areas for the development of tourism in Bremen in the coming years and the associated external impact.

## **7. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

### **a. Article 13 (1) (a)**

#### i. Practical measures

- There have been no changes to the comments of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen compared with the previous reporting periods.

### **b. Article 13 (1) (c)**

#### i. Practical measures

- There have been no changes to the comments of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen compared with the previous reporting periods.

### **c. Article 13 (2) (c)**

#### i. Practical measures

- The Free Hanseatic City of Bremen reports that some of those who are now of the generation living in care homes used to speak Low German at home. Those who provide services in care facilities are required to take into account the languages spoken by their residents. How they do so is up to them. In some care homes, Low German is used daily: Residents of the Luisental care home run by the Bremen care home foundation like to chat in Low German (“snacken op platt”).
- Efforts are already made during training to ensure that Low German is more widely used in caring for the elderly: Schools providing training to care for the elderly have recognised the importance of learning Low German. Interestingly, this is much more the case in Bremerhaven than in Bremen. The schools have responded by regularly offering instruction in Low German, especially at the two schools in Bremerhaven; some schools in Bremen do as well, with 24 credit hours as part of the 80 credit hours of German instruction. But Low German is not a mandatory component of training to care for the elderly; the schools offer optional training in Low German. The aforementioned overall curriculum implements federal law, so the Bremen senator for social affairs, youth, women, integration and sport is not free to determine its content.

- The representation for senior citizens has published a flyer to inform older Bremen residents about the representation and its work. The flyer is available in Turkish, Russian, English and Low German.
- In 2019, the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN) also initiated and supported the creation of a brochure with the participation of the Carl Toefler Stiftung in Hamburg and the Catholic Academy Stapelfeld and the involvement of the Low German Secretariat (Niederdeutschsekretariat) and the Federal Council for Low German (Bundesrat für Niederdeutsch). The result is a 64-page brochure presenting people who successfully take a stand for Low German in care settings and hence serve as role models. The former mayor of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, Hennig Scherf, took on the patronage for the brochure and the topic as a whole. The brochure also serves as the starting point for additional activities in this area, such as the “Platt in der Pleeg” initiative.

The LzN is offering a new basis for Low German in care settings with a catalogue of criteria for institutions inspired by practice and for use in practice. The aim is to make even more care institutions aware of the topic and for them to ideally apply the catalogue. The LzN recognises this by awarding the “Platt-Hart” seal of approval with the slogan “Hart to Hart mit Platt”. The LzN supports institutions with an extensive range of information and education services, including training courses and presentations. The provision of online training (particularly in this area) was successfully trialled for the first time in summer 2020 and will now be conducted with other inpatient care facilities.

- In addition to recognising care institutions that use Low German, the LzN has issued a Low German activity book for use in work with senior citizens. The activity books are made available in printed form and can also be downloaded from the LzN’s website and printed out. The online version can be adapted to the respective dialect of Low German before being printed out.

- ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The Committee of Experts considers the requirements to be only partially fulfilled.

The aforementioned measures have been taken with the aim of effecting significant improvements in this area.

## VI.e Low German in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

The Senate is and remains committed to the promotion of the Low German language. The practical implementation of the requirements of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is ensured to a large extent by the Bremen-based State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch), which was co-founded by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg and which it continues to co-finance via the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM). This takes the form of services that are available nationwide (e.g. webinars, partnerships with various institutions).

Above and beyond this, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg only reports below on those obligations for which there have been additional changes during the reporting period. Reference is otherwise made to the comments in the reports of the Federal Republic of Germany on the Language Charter for the previous reporting periods.

#### a. Article 7 (1) (c)

Please refer to the comments of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen *under E.VI.d.1.c.*

#### b. Article 7 (1) (e)

Please refer to the comments of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen *under E.VI.d.1.e.*

#### c. Article 7 (1) (f)

##### i. Practical measures

- The education authority of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg has published a wide range of content relating to Low German in Hamburg on the Education Server  
(<https://bildungsserver.hamburg.de/niederdeutsch/>).

#### d. Article 7 (1) (g)

Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.e.2.f* and the comments in the *Sixth Periodical Report*.

#### e. Article 7 (1) (h)

Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.e.2.e.*



**f. Article 7 (1) (i)**

Please refer to the comments *under C.VI* and the *comments on the Sixth Periodical Report*.

## 2. Article 8 – Education

### a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
In the *Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg*, six schools in Vierlande, Finkenwerder and Harburg practice Low German with preschool children. They use Low German books in story time, learn poems together and receive regional support.

### b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iii)

Regarding measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation and practical measures in connection with this obligation, reference is made to the comments *under D.I.5*.

### c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under D.I.5*.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *under D.I.5*.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The *Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg* has developed the Low German education plan as the legal basis for instruction in Low German at lower secondary level. According to the education plan, this is expressly intended to take the form of language lessons rather than language encounter.

### d. Article 8 (1) (d) (iii)

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The *Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg* reports that elements from the Low German culture and language are used or referred to in individual vocational schools. As the core task of vocational schools is to teach skills that relate to the respective vocation, there are no plans to comprehensively integrate Low German into the education plans for these schools.

### e. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)

- i. Practical measures
  - The Low German Language and Literature (NdSL) department, which forms part of the Institute of German Studies at the Faculty of Humanities

at the University of Hamburg, offers various options for studying the Low German language and literature. These include:

- 1. Courses on the Low German language and literature as part of the “German Language and Literature” bachelor’s course, the “German Linguistics” master’s course or teacher training in “German”.
- 2. Course specialisation as part of the courses listed under 1. above.
- Topics relating to Low German are typically integrated into the courses of the Institute of German Studies. The “German language”, “Newer German literature” and “Older German literature” subjects include courses whose content includes or focuses on the Low German language and literature. These courses are denoted with “NdSL”. <https://www.slm.uni-hamburg.de/niederdeutsch/studium/lehrveranstaltungen.html>

**f. Article 8 (1) (f) (ii)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The WiSY database (Hamburg’s further education course portal; see <https://hamburg.kursportal.info/>) includes details of current courses in Low German in general further education.

**g. Article 8 (1) (g)**

- i. Practical measures
  - As Low German is a regional language, it is thematically integrated into as many areas of teaching as possible in Hamburg and “experienced” through excursions. In particular, the language is brought to life by involving local native speakers or through encountering the language at school.

**h. Article 8 (1) (h)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
 

Every two years, the department for Low German issues organises a Low German forum in cooperation with the State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development (Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung) and other changing cooperation partners. This forum is targeted at teachers as well as cooperation partners and institutions outside the school sector promoting the

Low German language. Within the context of advanced training measures for teachers and cultural education programmes, several forms of permanent cooperation, e.g. with the Ohnsorg Theatre, the Low German library, Hamburg's public libraries (Bücherhallen Hamburg), the Carl Toepfer Foundation and the "Kinder brauchen Musik" (Children Need Music) foundation, have been intensified and further developed. The State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development offers a wide range of advanced training courses for teachers in close cooperation with the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch) in Bremen.

The Ohnsorg Theatre, the Carl Toepfer Foundation and the State Centre for Low German in Bremen also offer extensive training.

**i. Article 8 (1) (i)**

- i. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
There are no plans to establish a supervisory body in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. The department for Low German at the education authority coordinates the preparation of curricula and the accompanying guidance and clarifications for teaching Low German as a subject at mainstream schools and the technical cooperation with the State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development, authorities and institutions involved in lesson development for Low German as a subject. The department is also responsible for coordinating the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages with regard to the regional language of Low German in schools.

Furthermore, the department supports the "Jungs un Deerns leest Platt", "Schoolkinner leest Platt" and "Platt-Pries för Hamburg" competitions.

The department regularly participates in the meetings of the State Council for Low German of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (Plattdütsch Root för Hamburg) as a permanent representative of the education authority.

### **3. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

There were no changes to the measures relating to Article 9 compared with the existing comments for the previous reporting period.

Please note that an amendment to section 184 of the German Court Constitution Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz, GVG*) is currently planned with a view to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**4. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services**

There were no changes to the measures relating to Article 10 compared with the existing comments for the previous reporting period.

## 5. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

Any measure in line with this provision would be incompatible with German constitutional and media law.

Please also refer to the comments *under D.III*.

### b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)

The amended NDR Broadcasting Agreement (*NDR-Staatsvertrag*) was signed in March 2021. Section 5 (2) provides for regional and minority languages to be regularly and appropriately taken into account in NDR's programming.

### c. Article 11 (1) (d)

#### i. Practical measures

- NDR continues to broadcast programmes and segments in Low German and continuously updates them in order to also make Low German interesting to new target audiences. With the same goal of bringing the largest possible audience into contact with Low German, NDR intentionally includes Low German in other fixed formats in its programming. Its cultural events, such as the “Poetry Slam op Platt” and the storytelling contest “Vertell doch mal”, are specifically directed at younger people. For example, the storytelling contest in 2017 included a section for persons under 18. In 2017, the NDR state programme and Radio Bremen reached an agreement to continue the Low German radio play programme “Niederdeutsches Hörspiel” which ensures the future of this format.
- NDR's website provides particular added value: All content relating to Low German and the Low German language from NDR radio and television can be found at [www.ndr.de/plattdeutsch](http://www.ndr.de/plattdeutsch) or in the online archive and is available long-term at users' convenience.

- #### ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
- Reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

- The *Hamburger Abendblatt* newspaper includes a Low German column by NDR presenter Yared Dibaba.

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

Regarding this obligation, there have been no changes to the measures compared with the comments for the previous reporting periods.

**f. Article 11 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

- NDR continuously provides extensive training in journalistic, commercial and technical professions. Its internship programme includes mandatory training stints in the regional studios. When selecting candidates for its internship programme, NDR takes care to ensure the greatest possible diversity. Knowledge of the Low German language forms part of this diversity.
- The Schleswig-Holstein broadcasting house gives priority to budding young journalists who speak a regional or minority language when selecting interns in order to benefit from their language proficiency. This also takes place in close cooperation with the universities.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

Reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**g. Article 11 (2)**

Regarding this obligation, there have been no changes to the measures compared with the comments for the previous reporting period.



## 6. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

#### i. Practical measures

- Hamburg's public libraries have the following media holdings in Low German:

	Central library	All libraries
Books for adults	229	500
CDs for adults	30	164
Books for children	69	227
CDs for children	11	15
DVDs for children	1	4
Sheet music/songbooks	20	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>934</b>

### b. Article 12 (1) (d)

Regarding this obligation, there have been no changes to the measures compared with the comments for the previous reporting period.

### c. Article 12 (1) (f)

#### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- The Ohnsorg Theatre, a theatre for Low German, receives an annual subsidy of €2,244,000 from the City of Hamburg. With a target audience primary comprising Hamburg residents and visitors from elsewhere in Northern Germany, it typically offers around 350 performances in Low German in its large auditorium as well as some 100 guest performances of Low German plays.

#### ii. Practical measures

- In the studio space it opened in 2015, the Ohnsorg Theatre now presents around 100 performances for children and young people, thereby making an important contribution to supporting Low German instruction in schools. The theatre has also developed classroom plays which it performs in schools. This has met with an extremely positive response.

- Additionally, the Ohnsorg Theatre is involved in competitions that help to maintain and promote the Low German language, such as the “Vertell doch mal” short story contest in cooperation with NDR or “Schöler leest op Platt”.
- During the pandemic, the Ohnsorg Theatre has made various digital formats available online and re-staged productions for a digital audience. Particular examples include the web series “Platt2Go – Ohnsorgs lütte Platt-School”, which now has a large number of episodes and is becoming increasingly popular.

**d. Article 12 (1) (g)**

Regarding this obligation, there have been no changes to the measures compared with the comments for the previous reporting period.

**e. Article 12 (3)**

Regarding this obligation, there have been no changes to the measures compared with the comments for the previous reporting period.

**7. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

Regarding this obligation, there have been no changes to the measures compared with the comments for the previous reporting period.

## VI.f Low German in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Low German language is protected in the constitution of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania; see Article 16 (2) of the State Constitution of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.
  - The state programme “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” (Meine Heimat – Mein modernes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) that was adopted in 2016 is dedicated to promoting the Low German language in all areas of education, science and cultural life. Item 264 of the coalition agreement for the seventh legislative period in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (2016-2021) provides for intensified support for the Low German language.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments below.

#### b. Article 7 (1) (b)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Low German is a recognised regional language for the entire state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Accordingly, the key policy documents listed *under VI.f.1.a.* apply to the entire state.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments below.

#### c. Article 7 (1) (c)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.a.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments below.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.a.*
  - Please also refer to the deliberations of the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and most recently the initiative for bilingual place name signs: <http://www.dokumentation.landtag-mv.de/parldok/vorgang/32012>.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments below.

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.a.*
  - Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e. V. is considered to be the umbrella association for the Low German language community in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and its work enjoys particular attention and promotion to this extent.
  - The fifth pillar of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme, “Local culture”, expressly provides for cultural encounters. Financial support for cultural encounters is provided as part of a funding programme. Above and beyond this, the promotion of the Low German language entails relationships with standard German language culture and with interested parties from other language areas.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has regularly organised state-wide “round table” events for Low German since 2020 (<https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/unsere-themen/runde-tische-plattdeutsch.html>) and has been working on a Low German atlas for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania since 2019: <https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/unsere-themen/atlas-niederdeutsch.html>.

- The Wossidlo research centre at the University of Rostock supported a Japanese PhD student in 2020: <https://www.uni-rostock.de/universitaet/kommunikation-und-aktuelles/medieninformationen/detailansicht/n/japaner-macht-seinen-doktor-ueber-plattdeutsch-70987/>
- The Representation of the State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania to the Federal Government in Berlin regularly offers Low German content as part of its programme, e.g. performances by the Fritz-Reuter-Bühne ensemble from the Mecklenburg State Theatre or as part of the current event format “Kajüten-Snack”.

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.a* and, in particular, *under VI.f.2*.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments below.

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

- i. Practical measures
  - The Competence Centre for Teaching Low German at the University of Greifswald (KND) offers ALWINE, an online Anki-based learning platform for teaching vocabulary as part of Low German acquisition: <https://germanistik.uni-greifswald.de/institut/arbeitsbereiche/kompetenzzentrum-fuer-niederdeutschdidaktik/niederdeutsch-lernen-erste-schritte>
  - The KND develops additional digital learning platforms with different focal points:
    - “Platt mit Plietschmanns”: These learning sets revisit some of the word lists from different chapters of the book published in 2019 and expand on some of them: <https://quizlet.com/join/VjchBEn3v>
    - Herrmann-Winter audio and textbook: This course uses vocabulary from the “Hör- und Lernbuch für das Plattdeutsche”

audio and textbook by Prof. Renate Hermann-Winter (Hinstorff 2006) in the individual learning sets and is structured according to the sections of the book: <https://quizlet.com/class/7479332/>

- “Paul un Emma schnacken Platt”: The individual learning sets of this course use vocabulary from the book “Paul un Emma schnackt Platt” (Quickborn 2015) in the version for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania that was published in 2018:  
<https://quizlet.com/class/7424651/>
- “Plattdeuschdidaktik der Heimatschatzkiste”: The extensive collection of Low German teaching resources provided in the local heritage “treasury chests” includes lists of useful vocabulary that expand on the book “Paul un Emma schnacken Platt”. Accordingly, the course contains learning sets from “Paul un Emma” as well as additional learning sets structured by topic:  
<https://quizlet.com/join/EEtjY4h7D>
- Grammar: This course contains learning sets with vocabulary on plurals, numbers, pairs of opposites, dates and times, and the base forms of modal verbs: <https://quizlet.com/class/6185146/>
- Nature and environment: This course contains learning sets with vocabulary on plants, animals, colours, the countryside, wind and weather: <https://quizlet.com/class/7058233/>
- Seasons: This course contains learning sets with vocabulary on times of the day and seasons in general, and Easter and Christmas in particular: <https://quizlet.com/class/6657438/>

#### **h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Target agreements with the University of Rostock and the University of Greifswald
  - See also the fourth pillar of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme, “Local education” at universities

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - As a matter of principle, the regulation of transnational cultural exchange does not fall within the federal states' scope of action.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.e.*
  - Scientific exchange is promoted in particular via the Competence Centre for Teaching Low German at the University of Greifswald (KND); examples include the international conference "How to teach the regional language Low German?" in Greifswald on 12/13 April 2018 and the international symposium "Minority Languages in the Digital Age. Usage, Maintenance and Teaching", which was jointly organised by KND and held online on 11/12 December 2020.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.a.* and all subsequent comments.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the previous and subsequent comments.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

Regarding this obligation, please refer to the previous and subsequent comments.

**l. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under VI.f.1.a.* and all subsequent comments.
  - The "My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania" state programme provides for the establishment of an "advisory board for the preservation of local heritage and Low German".
  - An advisory board for the preservation of local heritage and Low German was also provided for in item 264 of the coalition agreement for the seventh legislative period in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (2016-2021).



ii. Practical measures

- The advisory board comprising 15 experts was convened by the Minister for Education, Science and Culture in March 2017 and has since met twice a year.

## 2. Article 8 – Education

### a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - As part of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme, every day-care centre in the state (day-care and after school centres) was provided with a local heritage “treasure chest” in 2019 with the aim of promoting Low German, local education and local identity. This project was realised by the project sponsor Heimatverband M-V e. V.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Low German is taught immersively at day-care centres as part of individual projects.
  - All day-care centres are invited to participate in the biennial Low German competitions.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

### b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Low German is a fixed element of the curricula for primary schools and a fixed element of the concepts for primary schools that operate as all-day schools.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In the 2018/19 school year, the official school statistics recorded 883 primary school children as Low German learners. In the 2019/20 school year, the figure was 893 Low German learners at primary schools.
  - Low German is taught at primary schools in one-hour lessons as part of all-day schooling, as an elective subject, and as an alternative subject.
  - The current curriculum, which is binding from the 2020/21 school year, provides not only for Low German to be considered as a separate subject, but also for it to be taught on an interdisciplinary basis across all subjects.

It also states that learning in extracurricular settings in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, projects, school trips and participation in the Low German competition offer an appropriate framework for implementing the objectives of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- Low German is a fixed element of the curriculum for German as a subject at regional schools, with a focus on language varieties, language history and regional and Low German literature.
  - At the lower and upper secondary level, the new Low German curriculum for the lower and upper secondary levels (2017) provides for Low German language classes. This curriculum satisfies the requirement to offer Low German at regional schools in grades 7-10 and at upper secondary level in grammar schools as a core curriculum option or an elective subject.
  - It is planned to introduce Low German as a special profile subject at the (five) established grammar schools with a Low German profile (from grade 8, or grade 9 at the latest, up to the *Abitur* (university entrance certificate) after the upper secondary level).
- ii. Practical measures
- In the 2018/19 school year, the official school statistics recorded 797 children as Low German learners at lower secondary level. In the 2019/20 school year, the figure was 769 Low German learners at lower secondary level.
  - Low German is taught at regional schools in one-hour lessons as a core curriculum option and an alternative subject.

- The current curriculum provides not only for Low German to be considered as a separate subject, but also for it to be taught on an interdisciplinary basis across all subjects. It also states that learning in extracurricular settings in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, projects, school trips and participation in the Low German competition offer an appropriate framework for implementing the objectives of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme.
  - In the 2018/19 school year, the official school statistics for the state recorded a total of 1,293 children as Low German learners at lower and upper secondary level. In the 2019/20 school year, the state-wide figure was 1,473 Low German learners at lower and upper secondary level.
  - The first (two) pupils successfully completed their *Abitur* (university entrance certificate) in the subject of Low German in the 2019/20 school year.
  - Low German is taught at grammar schools in one-hour lessons as an optional compulsory subject, with two to four hours of teaching (depending on the grade) as a mandatory subject at the five “profile schools”, and in one-hour lessons as an elective subject and an alternative subject.
  - Low German as an *Abitur* subject is strengthened by way of a separate curriculum and the formulation of *Abitur* assignments through the convention of an *Abitur* assignment commission for Low German for 2019/20.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**d. Article 8 (1) (d) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- The curricula for vocational education are currently being revised with a view to including Low German as an interdisciplinary topic.

- ii. Practical measures
  - There are no measures at present as the overall curricula are currently being revised.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**e. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The new Competence Centre for Teaching Low German at the University of Greifswald (KND) strengthens basic and advanced training in Low German. The target agreement with the University of Greifswald reflects this as follows: In this respect, reference is made to the comments *in E.II., Article 8 (1) (e) (ii) of the Sixth Periodical Report.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - “At least ten hours of instruction must be dedicated to on-the-job training of day-care centre staff and teachers for Low German/preservation of local heritage in Greifswald, Rostock, Schwerin and Neubrandenburg.
  - 21 participants are currently utilising the KND’s language acquisition courses (as of October 2020), with twelve taking the beginners’ course and nine taking the advanced course.
  - A total of 31 students at the University of Greifswald were taking Low German as a minor subject in the 2020 summer semester.
  - In addition to teacher training at the KND at the University of Greifswald, the University of Rostock ensures that future Low German teachers are trained thanks to its academic chair for Low German language and literature, which is affiliated to the department of German Philology.
  - Moreover, when hiring teachers, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will prefer candidates who – provided all other qualifications are equal – are able to teach Low German. Since the 2019/20 school year, candidates with a qualification in Low German have also been given priority when it comes to making appointments to teacher training.

**f. Article 8 (1) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Low German is firmly enshrined in all curricula for general subjects as an interdisciplinary topic.
  - The state also supports the promotion of teaching materials and regularly creates training opportunities.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The reader series “Das flache Land” was developed in line with the curricula for German at lower and upper secondary level. This ensures that opportunities to learn about the history and culture of Low German are provided. Copies of the previous volumes of the series have been distributed to public and free regional schools, comprehensive schools, grammar schools, evening grammar schools and vocational schools, with each receiving one set of books.
  - The school book “Platt mit Plietschmanns” was specially developed for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and was published in August 2019. The teaching and learning materials are adapted to the topics and methods set out in the Low German curriculum for grades 7 to 12. An expanded edition reflecting experiences of using the book in practice will be published in 2021.
  - A teaching handbook and an audio CD have been developed to accompany the children’s book “Kaspar und de Klabauterkatt”. The materials are included in the local heritage “treasure chest” and is also made available free of charge to teachers in the state.
  - The Low German workbook “Fang an mit Platt” has been developed on the basis of teaching practice. It consists of various materials on selected topics.
  - The KND is developing supplementary material on the Fritz Reuter book “Kein Hüsung”, including translation tasks and recommendations for teaching at lower/upper secondary level. Different variations of the material are freely available to download from the KND’s website.

**g. Article 8 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.2.e.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - Overview of basic training for Low German teachers for day-care centres and primary, secondary and vocational schools:

	Educator/vocational school	Primary school	Secondary school
Basic training	KND, University of Greifswald (certificate)	KND, University of Greifswald, from the 2020/21 winter semester (certificate/minor subject)  Elective course as part of German studies at the University of Rostock (no certificate)	KND, University of Greifswald (certificate/minor subject)  Elective course as part of German studies at the University of Rostock (no certificate)
Advanced training	KND, University of Greifswald	KND, University of Greifswald  Institute for Quality Development (IQ) M-V	KND, University of Greifswald  IQ M-V
Current figures (as of September 2020)	21 (as of September 2020)	2 teaching posts at primary schools (as of 2021/22 winter semester: KND)	7 teaching posts at comprehensive schools  21 teaching posts at grammar schools

			(as of 2021/22 winter semester: KND)
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- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**h. Article 8 (1) (i)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- The obligation to maintain the Low German language is enshrined in Article 16 (2) of the State Constitution of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.
  - The “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme that was adopted in 2016 provides for the convocation of an independent advisory board for the preservation of local heritage and Low German (before 2016: Low German advisory board). This commitment is set out in item 264 of the 2016-2021 coalition agreement.
  - The state programme is primarily dedicated to the qualitative development of Low German teaching in early childhood and in school, extracurricular and vocational education settings.
- ii. Practical measures
- The advisory board for the preservation of local heritage and Low German was convened by the Minister for Education, Science and Culture in March 2017 as an independent advisory body not bound by instructions. It comprises 15 experts and typically meets twice a year.  
(<https://www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/bm/Aktuell/?id=125707&processor=processor.sa.pressemitteilung>)
  - It is responsible for supporting the implementation of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme and the fulfilment of the state’s obligations under the European Charter for



Regional and Minority Languages. The meetings are minuted but the minutes are not published.

- The implementation of the “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme is currently being evaluated. The results will be presented to the advisory board for comment.

**3. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

Regarding the obligations entered into by the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in connection with this article, there are no changes to the measures implemented compared with the previous reporting periods.

#### **4. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services**

The *state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania* protects and promotes the Low German language in accordance with Article 16 (2) of the State Constitution of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. To this end, the Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalisation, acting on the basis of a mandate from the state parliament, examined the introduction of an additional sign for Low German place names in the state in accordance with section III no. 16 (a) sentence 3 of the General Administrative Regulation on the German Road Traffic Regulations (*Allgemeine Verwaltungsvorschrift zur Straßenverkehrs-Ordnung*) regarding sections 39 to 43 (no. 46) with the involvement of the local heritage association Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e. V. and the advisory board for the preservation of local heritage and Low German convened by the Minister for Education, Science and Culture and, in March 2021, adopted the introduction of an additional sign for Low German place names in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in accordance with section III no. 16 (a) sentence 3 of the General Administrative Regulation on the German Road Traffic Regulations regarding sections 39 to 43 (no. 46). The optional use of extra signs in Low German which refer to traditional Low German place names at the entrance to the town or village is intended to fulfil the mandate to promote Low German laid down in Article 16 (2) of the State Constitution of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

## 5. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - section 5 (2) of the revised version of the Broadcasting Agreement for Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) that is currently in preparation requires NDR to adequately reflect the diversity of languages in its coverage area – and hence also regional and minority languages – in its programming. The revised version had not yet been adopted at the time of this report.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Established formats for Low German radio programmes have existed for a number of years as part of the programming of NDR 1 – Radio M-V. This includes the weekly review “De Woch up platt”, which is broadcast every Friday and Sunday, the talk show “De Plappermoehl”, which is broadcast on the last Saturday evening of every month, the Sunday morning programme “Plattdütsch an’n Sünndag”, the Saturday evening show “De Klönkist”, and radio plays and podcasts, e.g. “Dat Späl von Dr. Faust” (see also <https://www.ndr.de/radiomv/sendungen/Plattdutsche-Sendungen-bei-NDR-1-Radio-MV,plattmv2.html>).

### b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.5.a.i.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - In particular, NDR’s broadcasting window for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the “Nordmagazin”, regularly broadcasts topical items relating to the Low German language, e.g. the call for suggestions for the “Low German Word of the Year” or reports on Low German award ceremonies, with one recent example being the Johannes Gillhoff Prize (see also [https://www.ndr.de/kultur/norddeutsche\\_sprache/plattddeutsch/Plattddeutsch-in-Radio-und-Fernsehen,platt710.html](https://www.ndr.de/kultur/norddeutsche_sprache/plattddeutsch/Plattddeutsch-in-Radio-und-Fernsehen,platt710.html)).
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

Regarding measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation and practical measures, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.f.5.e*.

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- As the principle of press freedom is enshrined in the German Basic Law, the state is unable to influence the content offered by print media. The goals of the Language Charter in this area cannot be imposed by the government, but instead can only be encouraged in ways that increase relevance, e.g. through the promotion of Low German events and projects or the development of programmes such as “My Homeland – My Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania”.

ii. Practical measures

- The three regional newspapers that largely dominate the market for daily print media, the *Ostsee-Zeitung*, the *Schweriner Volkszeitung* and the *Nordkurier*, publish topical reports on Low German topics as well as columns in Low German and guest articles by Low German authors. (See also <https://www.google.com/search?q=Ostsee+Zeitung+niederdeutsch>; <https://www.google.com/search?q=Nordkurier+niederdeutsch>; <https://www.google.com/search?q=SVZ+niederdeutsch>.)
- Low German columns and articles are also published in local newspapers and neighbourhood newspapers (e.g. *Südstern*, the neighbourhood newspaper for the Südstadt and Biestow districts of the Hanseatic and University City of Rostock: [http://suedstern.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/S%C3%BCdstern\\_36.pdf](http://suedstern.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/S%C3%BCdstern_36.pdf)).

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- As a matter of principle, the cultural funding policy of the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Ministry of Education, Science and Culture also enables support for audiovisual productions in the Low German language. This is expressly provided for in the fifth pillar of the “My Homeland – My

Modern Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania” state programme, “Local culture”.

ii. Practical measures

- As part of the state’s support for cultural projects, Low German audio productions are also supported via the local heritage association Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern:
- Audio post-production of the staging of Fritz Reuter’s “Kein Hüsung” by the Fritz-Reuter-Bühne ensemble at the Mecklenburg State Theatre: <https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/unsere-themen/niederdeutsche-sprache/kein-huesung.html>
- A monthly bilingual audio magazine for visually impaired and sighted people, “Dat Hürblatt up platt”: <https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/unsere-themen/dat-huerblatt-up-platt.html>.

**f. Article 11 (2)**

i. Practical measures

- The Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania local heritage magazine *Stier und Grief* has been published twice a year since 2017. Each edition contains numerous articles in the Low German language. The magazine is published by Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern with funding from the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

## 6. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please see also the comments *under E.VI.f.1.a and the subsequent comments*.
  - The cultural funding policy of the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania expressly cites the Low German language as one of its funding priorities: <https://www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/bm/Kultur/Sparten/Niederdeutsche-Sprache/> and <http://www.landesrecht-mv.de/jportal/portal/page/bsmvprod.psml;jsessionid=E669AEC567870F0CD846DD05AD5A597C.jp26?showdoccase=1&st=vv&doc.id=VVMV-VVMV000008916#focuspoint>.
- ii. Practical measures
  - A report on the Low German projects supported as part of the state's support for cultural projects is published once a year: <https://www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/bm/Kultur/Kulturfoerderung/>.
  - Since 2010, the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania has provided institutional funding for the work of the Stiftung Mecklenburg foundation, which focuses on the Low German language among other things.
  - Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e. V. receives annual budgetary funds from the state for the realisation of its own projects in areas including Low German as well as for the promotion of small-scale local and regional activities. It reports on these projects and activities on its website: <https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/unsere-themen/niederdeutsche-sprache.html> and <https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/projektfoerderung.html>.
  - Since 2016, the Ministry for Education, Science and Culture has provided funding for a new online culture portal that also includes information on the promotion of the Low German language in Mecklenburg-Western

Pomerania: <https://www.kultur-mv.de/kunst-kultur/literatur-sprache-niederdeutsch.html>

**b. Article 12 (1) (b)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Funding is generally both planned and possible. Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.1.a.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - To date, the possibility of regional cultural funding from the state has not yet been taken advantage of and the culture department is not aware of any projects of this nature.
  - As a matter of principle, the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania Film Fund also provides for the production of material in Low German. In 2019, funding was provided for story development for a children’s cartoon series, “Platt für Kids”, which aims to entertain children while also arousing their interest in Low German, teaching them some rudiments of the language and ideally making them keen to learn more.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Reference is made to the comments on the practical measures described previously.

**c. Article 12 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Funding is generally both planned and possible. Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.1.a.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - As part of its work with funding from the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V. initiated and realised the translation of a book written in standard German, “Hein Hannemann: Eine Geschichte von der Waterkant”, into the Low German language: <https://www.niederdeutschsekretariat.de/uebergabe-plattdeutscher-uebersetzungen-zum-buchprojekt-hein-hannemann-up-platt/>.



- The Stiftung Mecklenburg foundation, which receives funding from the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, is developing the Virtual State Museum of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in cooperation with the museums association Museumsverband in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V. Users have the option of reading or listening to the exhibition notes in the Low German language: <https://www.landesmuseum-mecklenburg.de/pd/>.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The recommendation of the Committee of Experts is complied with.

**d. Article 12 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.1.a* and below.
  - However, there is no proviso for incorporating the knowledge and use of Low German, as this would be neither proportionate nor enforceable.
- ii. Practical measures
- Allowance is made for the Low German language in all cultural genres, e.g. the performing arts (Darß-Festspiele, Niederdeutsche Bühnen in Schönberg, Wismar, Rostock and Neubrandenburg), music (Kultursegel gGmbH, "Platt beats") and literature (from Fritz-Reuter-Gesellschaft e. V. to Bund niederdeutscher Autoren für Mecklenburg-Vorpommern und Uckermark e. V.). When it comes to funding, cultural undertakings relating to the Low German language are prioritised. Language proficiency is one of the review criteria.

**e. Article 12 (1) (e)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.1.a* and below.
  - However, there is no proviso for incorporating the knowledge and use of Low German, as this would be neither proportionate nor enforceable.
  - When it comes to funding, cultural undertakings relating to the Low German language are prioritised. Language proficiency in the project is one of the review criteria.

**f. Article 12 (1) (f)**

Regarding measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation and practical measures, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.f.1.a.* and *under E.VI.f.6.a.*

**g. Article 12 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Reference is made to the previous remarks regarding the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Competence Centre for Teaching Low German at the University of Greifswald (KND) performs some of these tasks.
  - Reference is also made to:
    - research on the Pomeranian Dictionary at the University of Greifswald: <https://germanistik.uni-greifswald.de/forschung/einrichtungen/pommersches-woerterbuch/>;
    - the academic chair for Low German philology at the University of Rostock, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2020: <https://www.germanistik.uni-rostock.de/lehrende/professorinnen-und-professoren/prof-dr-andreas-bieberstedt/festveranstaltung-100-jahre-niederdeutsch-an-der-universitaet-rostock-rostock-2020/>
    - and the Wossidlo research centre at the University of Rostock, which has a linguistic and cultural history focus thanks to its roots in the Richard Wossidlo collection: <https://www.volkskunde.uni-rostock.de/>.

**h. Article 12 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - As a matter of principle, the regulation of cultural policy abroad does not fall within the federal states' scope of action.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The link to the North German language is established in individual activities with international contacts in relevant areas:

- Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.f.1.e. and E.VI.f.1.i.*
  - The Virtual State Museum of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania provides its information in standard German, Low German, English and Polish:  
<https://www.landeshmuseum-mecklenburg.de/>
  - In developing and presenting its permanent exhibition, Pomeranian State Museum in Greifswald, which is funded by the Federal Government on the basis of section 96 of the German Federal Expellees Act (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*) together with the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and the University and Hanseatic City of Greifswald, refers to the historical linguistic similarities with the descendants of emigrants to the USA or Brazil who still use the Low German language.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
As described previously, the recommendation is followed to the greatest possible extent.

## **7. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

Regarding the obligations entered into by the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in connection with Article 13, there are essentially no changes to the measures compared with the previous reporting periods.

In this report, comments are only provided on measures regarding obligations that the Committee of Experts considers to be “partially fulfilled”.

### **a. Article 13 (2) (c)**

#### **i. Practical measures**

- In 2020, the foundation for volunteering and civic engagement in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Ehrenamtsstiftung MV), which is funded by the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, supported the Low German association “Klön snack – Rostocker 7” e. V. in creating a brochure entitled “Platt in de Pläg. Eine Hilfe im Pflegealltag” on the subject of Low German in care settings (see <https://www.kloensnack-rostocker7.de/files/kloensnack/pdf/Platt.pdf>). Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e. V., which is also funded by the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, is preparing to expand this brochure so that it can be offered throughout the state.

#### **ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts**

Reference is made to the comments on the practical measure described previously.

## VI.g Low German in the State of Lower Saxony

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

The state of Lower Saxony has implemented all of the obligations that the Council of Europe considers to be satisfied with respect to Low German and will continue and intensively support these activities in future.

The following section discusses the obligations that have not yet been met or for which there are particular comments and additions. To this end, reference is made to the comments on the obligations entered into under Part III.

#### a. Article 7 (1) (f)

Regarding this obligation and the corresponding recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the general comments under D.I.5. and the following comments on Article 8. Materials are also provided via the Lower Saxony Education Server at [https://www.nibis.de/niederdeutsch-im-sekundarbereich-i\\_14760](https://www.nibis.de/niederdeutsch-im-sekundarbereich-i_14760).

Work is currently in progress on additional materials to be provided and a social media presence. In addition, the Regional State Offices for Schools and Education assisted the schools in preparing materials and planning and carrying out instruction by providing an extensive consulting and support system.

#### b. Article 7 (4)

##### i. Practical measures

- Since 1999, the state of Lower Saxony has supported the promotion of the use of Low German in various areas of public life through a range of projects and initiatives. One visible expression of this commitment is the option for bilingual place names on signposts indicating place names, which was introduced 16 years ago (sign 310 as depicted in the Road Traffic Regulations (*Straßenverkehrs-Ordnung*)). The aim is to make the traditional place name valid for official use as a secondary name alongside the standard German name, so that signposts also include the place name as it is typically spoken by the Low German-speaking population. This is ultimately intended to reinforce the status of the regional language as an

active example of cultural diversity in Lower Saxony and hence lead to greater self-confidence among the language community.

- With regard to signposts with Low German content, the road authorities in Lower Saxony were informed about the procedure to be applied and the conditions for considering signage of this type for the first time by way of a decree in September 2004. The procedure for bilingual signposts in Lower Saxony is currently governed by our decree dated 19 March 2009 ([https://www.ins-bremen.de/fileadmin/ins-bremen/user\\_upload/landkoort\\_orte/Erlass\\_zweisprachige\\_Ortstafeln\\_Niedersachsen.pdf](https://www.ins-bremen.de/fileadmin/ins-bremen/user_upload/landkoort_orte/Erlass_zweisprachige_Ortstafeln_Niedersachsen.pdf)). Accordingly, the Hanover Region, the rural districts, the urban districts, the independent towns and cities and the independent municipalities as lower-level road authorities are authorised to make corresponding exceptions in line with the General Administrative Regulation regarding section 46 (2) of the Road Traffic Regulations where the conditions set out in this decree are fulfilled.

## 2. Article 8 – Education

Since 2011, a supervisory body has monitored how the *state of Lower Saxony* is meeting the education-related commitments entered into under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The body is composed of a representative of each of the Ministry of Education (Chair), the Ministry for Science and Culture, the Ministry for Federal and European Affairs and Regional Development, the regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*) and the Lower Saxony Heritage Association (Niedersächsischer Heimatbund). Monitoring is based on the report of the Lower Saxony school authority, which provides information on the activities of the advisers, on how the allotted teaching hours are used and on measures to promote regional and minority languages as intended by the Charter over the previous year.

The supervisory body can make proposals concerning the further implementation of the articles of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to which Lower Saxony is a signatory.

Regarding general and vocational schools, reference is also made to the comments *under D.I.5*.

### a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)

- i. Practical measures
  - The federal state of Lower Saxony refers to its comments *under D.I.5*.

### b. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)

- i. Practical measures
  - Students at the Institute for German Studies at the University of Oldenburg in Lower Saxony who are training to become teachers can study advanced Low German and obtain a corresponding certificate. Building on this certificate, the University of Oldenburg initially intends to offer Low German as a supplementary/minor subject before eventually establishing it as a subject in its own right. Students training to become teachers have the possibility to attend individual courses on Sater Frisian.
  - In the 2019 budget, the University of Oldenburg received additional annual finding of €350,000 for securing the necessary material and human resources for the subject.

**c. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)**

i. Practical measures

According to a survey commissioned by Lower Saxony's Ministry for Science and Culture, some 320 courses on matters related to the Low German language were offered at adult education centres and other institutions providing adult education in 2013. More than 7,200 lessons were provided in this context and about 4,800 participants could be reached. To illustrate the dimension, it is necessary to mention that every year more than 3 million lessons are funded in the field of adult education. This puts the number of minority language lessons for adults in relation. These figures have remained stable for quite a while now.

According to the aforementioned survey, the number of Low German courses is higher. The main goal is to preserve traditional customs, which is closely connected to language instruction. The volume has remained the same so far and is unlikely to change significantly in the future. A large number of recommendations and suggestions, such as handing out certificates of participation or qualification, do not play a role here. Those involved in the teaching/learning process are not interested in receiving some kind of document certifying their acquired knowledge or even performance. By participating in the language courses and other activities, they aim to maintain their traditional customs. Although educational measures in the field of minority languages represent only a small share of the total volume, the federal state of Lower Saxony is well aware of the significance of these courses. When the volume of adult education lessons is assessed, these educational measures are given a greater recognition factor to increase their value.

**3. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

**a. Article 9 (1) (b) (iii)**

i. Practical measures

- It was not possible to verify the incident cited by the Committee of Experts in which a notarised purchase agreement in Low German was said to have not been recognised. The Federal Council for Low German,



which reported the incident to the Committee of Experts, was also unable to provide the authorities with details of the corresponding occurrence. A query by the Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony to the courts in its area of responsibility (2020) was similarly unable to verify a corresponding incident. Furthermore, this query did not yield any problems regarding the application of the Language Charter by courts in Lower Saxony.

**b. Article 9 (1) (c) (iii)**

i. Practical measures

- The Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony submitted a query to the courts in its area of responsibility regarding their experiences with the Language Charter in particular (2020). This query did not yield any problems regarding the application of the Language Charter by courts in Lower Saxony.

**c. Article 9 (2) (a)**

i. Practical measures

- The Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony submitted a query to the courts in its area of responsibility regarding their experiences with the Language Charter in particular (2020). This query did not yield any problems regarding the application of the Language Charter by courts in Lower Saxony.

#### 4. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

The *state of Lower Saxony* refers to its comments *under E.V.5*, which also apply to the regional language of Low German.

##### a. Article 10 (2) (a)

###### i. Practical measures

In order to strengthen the existing efforts of many municipalities in Lower Saxony to conserve regional and minority languages and to advance the use of these languages, the state may primarily approach the municipalities in a soliciting capacity. The municipalities themselves are responsible for promoting the use of minority and regional languages in their administrative functions in the course of local self-government.

Based on the resolution of the state parliament of 21 September 2017 (state parliament document no. 17/8757, “Stabilising and expanding the promotion of Low German and Sater Frisian”) and the related consultation of the state government of 6 March 2018 (state parliament document no. 18/466), the Lower Saxony Ministry of the Interior and Sport informed the municipalities of this resolution by way of a decree on 11 April 2018 and encouraged the implementation of corresponding measures. However, the response has been somewhat muted. The participating municipalities are primarily those that had previously been active in the promotion of regional or minority languages in the past.

###### ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

Reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

##### b. Article 10 (2) (b)

Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the comments *under E.Vlg.4.c* above.

##### c. Article 10 (2) (c)

Regarding this obligation entered into by the state of Lower Saxony, reference is made to the comments *under E.Vlg.4.c*.

**d. Article 10 (2) (d)**

Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the comments *under E.Vlg.4.c* above.

## 5. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
As discussed in previous reports of the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Article 15 (1) of the Language Charter, the broadcaster autonomy and press freedom enshrined in the German Basic Law means that the government is not permitted to influence the respective content. To this extent and within the scope provided by the Language Charter, in 2009 the then Minister-President of Lower Saxony encouraged media professionals from Lower Saxony working in broadcasting and press to continue and intensify their efforts to strengthen regional and minority languages.
- ii. Practical measures
  - “Community media” organised under private law have included Low German content in their programming in recent years and continue to do so, e.g.

Radio Ostfriesland	Radio Weser.TV	Ems-Vechte-Welle
<p>“Radio Ostfriesland up platt”, 60-minute episodes, Monday to Friday, news from Ostfriesland</p> <p>“Extrem Plattdeusching”, 90-second episodes, Monday to Friday, comedy</p> <p>“Waas is dat denn?”, 90-second episodes, Monday to Friday, local history and entertainment</p> <p>“Radio up platt”, 60-minute episodes, every</p>	<p>“Plattdeutsche Nachrichten”, every Wednesday on the hour with the exception of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., abridged version on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:40 a.m. and 7:40 a.m., regional and local news</p> <p>“Meta Butendiek”, every Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:15 a.m., regularly scheduled on Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m., featuring a fictional farmer from Wesermarsch district who shares good-natured and humorous anecdotes from her life in Low German.</p>	<p>For many years, the local studio of the Ems-Vechte-Welle radio station in Saterland has broadcast the “Middeeges” programme in Low Frisian (and Sater Frisian) twice a month/fortnightly on Sunday between 11:03 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. (with a break for the news at midday). This programme will remain a part of the</p>

<p>fourth Sunday, talk show in Low German</p> <p>“Septembermonat is Plattdüütschmonat”, recurring elements and items, daily in September, culture</p>	<p>“Das ABC des Sendegebiets”, regularly scheduled as part of the morning programme, items translated from standard German into Low German</p> <p>“Plattdüütsch to’n Koffie”, third Wednesday of every month at 3:05 p.m., magazine show with user-driven content</p> <p>“Versoek dat mal op platt”, once a month on Wednesday from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m., children’s show with user-driven content</p> <p>“Fährtalk op Platt”, no fixed broadcasting slot, Low German talk show on the Weser ferry. Hosted by the commissioner for Low German in the rural district of Wesermarsch, Hans Meinen. Guests from the worlds of culture, politics and society. The series is broadcast by the community stations Radio Jade and Oldenburg eins. A TV edition of the show is broadcast as part of the TV programming of the community station Oldenburg eins.</p>	<p>station’s schedule in future.</p>
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**b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.g.5.a.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - The regional broadcaster Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR), Lower Saxony broadcasting house, has stated that it broadcasts the following content relating to the Low German language via its public broadcasting service:

- “Hallo Niedersachsen - op Platt”, 29 October 2017, 4:15 minutes, typically once monthly on Sunday (30 minutes), information, entertainment
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Internationaler Tag der Muttersprache”, 21 February 2018, 4:00 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Werner Momsen wird UNESCO-Botschafter für Niederdeutsches”, 7 June 2018, 0:49 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Polizeischüler lernen platt- oder: Schandarms lernt platt”, 17 June 2018, 3:27 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Lüneburg: Casting für Lütte Plattsnacker”, 23 June 2018, 1:07 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Schaltung Leer: Finale Plattsounds. Gespräch mit Grietje Kammler”, 20 October 2018, 2:47 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Thema der Woche ‘Muttersprache’/3: Platt auf der Meyer Werft”, 18 February 2019, 3:54 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Thema der Woche ‘Muttersprache’/4: Pflegekräfte aus Paraguay”, 21 February 2019, 3:57 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Auftakt Plattart Festival”, 23 March 2019, 0:59 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Der erste plattdeutsche Spielfilm”, 26 August 2019, 3:54 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information

- “Hallo Niedersachsen - Hinnerk Platt: IT-Spezialist und Manager rappen auf Platt”, 24 September 2019, 3:37 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
  - “Hallo Niedersachsen - Schalte Cuxhaven: Thema der Woche ‘Theater’/4: Niedergang niederdeutscher Bühnen”, 10 October 2019, 2:09 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
  - “Hallo Niedersachsen - Preis für besten Kurzfilm auf Plattdeutsch für Frank Jakobs”, 22 November 2019, 0:50 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
  - “Hallo Niedersachsen - 12-jähriger Nico Weers singt Hannes Flesner”, 9 December 2019, 3:16 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
  - “Niedersachsen 18.00 - Preis für Plattdeutsch an Schulen: Kultusminister Tonne zeichnet aus”, 4 March 2020, 1:03 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
  - “Hallo Niedersachsen -Lilienthal: Yared Dibaba bekommt Plattdeutsch-Preis”, 7 March 2020, 1:02 minutes, typically daily (30 minutes), information
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - With effect from 1 January 2018, the funding policy of the joint film fund of the states of Lower Saxony and Bremen, “nordmedia - Film- und Mediengesellschaft Niedersachsen/Bremen mbH”, was modified to state that special consideration is given to projects promoting the use of the Low German or Sater Frisian language [...] in audiovisual works.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Since 2018, nordmedia has funded the following projects in the Low German language:

- “Ritter Trenk op platt” – rental/marketing/distribution
  - “Vun Insitters un Uppassers – Von Insassen und Bediensteten” – production funding
  - “Ik bün van Marseille - Gesine Frühlings Neujahrskuchen” – screenplay and story development
  - “Boot un dood – Ein Film entsteht” – production funding
  - In 2019, funding was provided for story and screenplay development for the “Saterland” film project. In addition to Sater Frisian and standard German, the planned film will feature the Low German language.
  - “De Windmüller” – production funding
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described previously.
- d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**  
Regarding this obligation entered into by the state of Lower Saxony and its implementation, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.g.5.a*.
- e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**  
Regarding this obligation entered into by the state of Lower Saxony and its implementation, reference is made to the comments *under E.VI.g.5.a*.
- f. Article 11 (2)**  
The Basic Law guarantees freedom of information, including the reception of radio and television programmes from neighbouring countries. Accordingly, this obligation is considered to be fulfilled.



## 6. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

Comments are only made on individual obligations for which there are additions or changes. Reference is made to the measures described in the previous reporting periods, which are being continued.

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - In Lower Saxony, the budget legislature has made available additional budget funds in the year 2020 for the promotion of Low German and Sater Frisian and for the regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*); these funds amount to €380,000 per annum, of which €30,000 are earmarked for the Oldenburgische Landschaft for the promotion of Sater Frisian.
  - Moreover, regional associations (*Landschaften* and *Landschaftsverbände*) may obtain regional cultural funding (total volume €2.9 million) for important regional cultural projects, e.g. for the Low German language and the Sater Frisian minority language, below €10,000.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In 2020 and 2021, Lower Saxony provided a total of €25,000 in funding for the festival for new Low German culture, “PLATTart – 8th Festival für Neue Niederdeutsche Kultur 2021”, organized by the Oldenburgische Landschaft regional association. The festival was held in the Oldenburg Land region from 12 to 21 March 2021 under the motto “#MITNANNER”.

### b. Article 12 (1) (b)

The state of Lower Saxony was not made aware of any specific requirements in the reporting period.

### c. Article 12 (3)

No dialogue in the area of cultural policy with regard to regional or minority languages took place with parties outside Germany in the reporting period.

**7. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

Reference is made to the measures described in the previous reporting periods with regard to economic and social life, which are being continued.

**8. Article 14 - Transfrontier exchanges**

Reference is made to the measures described in the previous reporting periods with regard to transfrontier exchanges, which are being continued.

## VI.h Low German in the State of Schleswig-Holstein

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

##### i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Constitution of the State of Schleswig-Holstein in the version of 2 December 2014 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 344), most recently amended by Article 1 of the Act of 14 June 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 361), Article 12 (6-7), Article 13
- Schleswig-Holstein Schools Act (*Schulgesetz des Landes Schleswig-Holstein*) in the version of 24 January 2007 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 39, corr. p. 276), most recently amended by Article 5 of the Act of 16 December 2015 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 500), section 4 (6).
- Schleswig-Holstein Teacher Training Act (*Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz Schleswig-Holstein*) of 15 July 2014 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 2014, p. 134), most recently amended by Article 7 of the Act of 11 December 2014 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 464), section 2 (3), section 12 (3)
- State Ordinance on the Organization of Training Periods and on the State Examinations for Teachers (*Landesverordnung über die Ordnung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die Staatsprüfungen der Lehrkräfte*) of 9 December 2015 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 460), section 6 (1), section 8 (3)
- Act to Promote Children in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities (*Gesetz zur Förderung von Kindern in Tageseinrichtungen und Tagespflegestellen*) in the version published on 12 December 1991 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 1991, p. 651), most recently amended by the Act of 22 September 2016 (Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 808), section 4 (3) no. 2

- Act to Promote Children in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities (*Kindertagesförderungsgesetz, KitaG*) of 12 December 2019, promulgated as Article 1 of the Act to Strengthen the Quality of Childcare and to Reduce the Financial Burden on Families and Local Authorities (*KiTa-Reform-Gesetz*) of 12 December 2019 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 759). In force pursuant to Article 7 (1) sentence 2 of the Act of 12 December 2019 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 759), most recently amended by the Act on the Modification of the Act to Promote Children in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities (*Gesetz zur Änderung des Kindertagesförderungsgesetzes*) of 10 December 2020, Article 25 no. 1 of the Act of 8 May 2020 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 998), section 9 (2), section 10 (4), section 13 (2), section 16 (2), section 18 (1) and section 19 (1) no. 2
- Directive of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein regarding the Promotion of Regional and Minority Languages in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities 2020-2022 (*Richtlinie des Landes Schleswig-Holstein zur Förderung von Regional- und Minderheitensprachen in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege 2020-2022*).
- Act on the Broadcasting Agreement on Media Law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz zu dem Staatsvertrag über das Medienrecht in Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein*) of 13 June 2006 (Hamburg Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 2007, p. 47; Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances 2007, p. 108), in the version amended by the Act on the Fifth Broadcasting Agreement on the Amendment of the Broadcasting Agreement on Media Law in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz zum Fünften Staatsvertrags zur Änderung des Staatsvertrages über das Medienrecht in Hamburg und Schleswig-Holstein*) of 2/22 September 2014 (Hamburg Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 490; Schleswig-Holstein Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 487), section 28a (1) sentence 3
- Act on the Seventeenth Amendment to the Interstate Broadcasting Treaty and on the Appointment of a Member to the ZDF Television Board (*Gesetz*

*zum Siebzehnten Rundfunkänderungsstaatsvertrag und zur Bestimmung eines Mitglieds des ZDF-Fernsehrates*) of 30 November 2015 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 406), section 2

- General Administrative Act for the State of Schleswig-Holstein (*Allgemeines Verwaltungsgesetz für das Land Schleswig-Holstein*) in the version published on 2 June 1992 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 243, 534), most recently amended by the Act of 21 July 2016 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 659), section 82b
- Decree of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Science, Economic Affairs and Transport of 31 March 2009 (VII 423 - 621.121.108) on the permissibility of multilingual place name signs
- Schleswig-Holstein Libraries Act (*Bibliotheksgesetz, BiblG*), promulgated as Article 1 of the Act on Libraries in Schleswig-Holstein and on the Amendment of the State Press Act (*Gesetz für die Bibliotheken in Schleswig-Holstein und zur Änderung des Landespressegesetzes*) of 30 August 2016 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 791), section 2 (2)
- Low German in Schools (*Niederdeutsch in der Schule*). Ministerial decree of 18 May 2019. Gazette of Ordinances and Decrees of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs 2019, p. 186
- Language Policy Action Plan of the Schleswig-Holstein State Government in the context of regional or minority languages for the 19th legislative period dated November 2020 with the focal areas of education, media and added value.

**b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The state of Schleswig-Holstein is a signatory to the obligations for the regional language of Low German on a state-wide basis.
- ii. Practical measures  
The state of Schleswig-Holstein does not consider there to be any need for special measures.

**c. Article 7 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *under E.VI.h.1.a.*
- ii. Practical measures  
The measures from the previous monitoring cycles are continuing.

**d. Article 7 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - General Administrative Act for the State of Schleswig-Holstein (*Allgemeines Verwaltungsgesetz für das Land Schleswig-Holstein*) in the version published on 2 June 1992 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 243, 534), most recently amended by the Act of 21 July 2016 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances, p. 659), section 82b
  - Decree of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Science, Economic Affairs and Transport of 31 March 2009 (VII 423 - 621.121.108) on the permissibility of multilingual place name signs
  - (Article 13 (2)) of the State Constitution
  - Schleswig-Holstein Language Charter Report 2019
  - Language Policy Action Plan of the Schleswig-Holstein State Government in the context of regional or minority languages for the 19th legislative period dated November 2020 with the focal areas of education, media and added value
  - Based on a resolution by the state parliament, Schleswig-Holstein indicated its desire to expand its obligations under the European Language Charter to the Federal Ministry of the Interior in 2019 and requested that the latter initiate the necessary notification proceedings with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The additional obligations entered into in the area of Low German include:
    - Article 10 (2) (g) for Danish and Low German: the use or adoption, if necessary in conjunction with the name in the official language(s), of traditional and correct forms of place-names in regional or minority languages.

- Article 12 (1) (e) for Low German: in relation to cultural facilities and activities [...]: to promote measures to ensure that the bodies responsible for organising or supporting cultural activities have at their disposal staff who have a full command of the regional or minority language concerned, as well as of the language(s) of the rest of the population.
- ii. Practical measures
- The state of Schleswig-Holstein promotes the use of Low German by funding projects/associations that encourage the use of Low German (the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund, the Centres for Low German in Leck and Mölln, the State Centre for Low German in Bremen).
  - The Platt Beats contest organised by the Centre for Low German in Mölln
  - The Schleswig-Holstein school competition “Schölers leest platt” (every two years in rotation with the “Emmi för Plattdüütsch” award).
  - Low German training courses for teachers and carers in order to enable the use of Low German at day-care centres and in care settings
  - “PlattHart” certificate for institutions (e.g. nursing homes and day-care facilities for the elderly, outpatient nursing services and hospices) that provide some of their counselling, support and care in Low German (cf. Ministry of Social Affairs press release, 27 August 2020)
  - The amendment to the State Administration Act (*Landesverwaltungsgesetz*) enables citizens in the respective language area (see above) to use the respective language in dealing with authorities (orally and in writing) and to receive a reply in the respective language providing that this administrative action does not infringe the rights of third parties or impair the legal capacity of other public authorities.
  - Klaus-Groth-Gesellschaft e.V., a long-standing literary association in Schleswig-Holstein dedicated to the works of the poet of the same name, will be compiling a “Digital Collected Works of Klaus Groth” in the coming years. In realising this project, it is working in close cooperation with the Department of Low German Language, Literature and Teaching at the University of Flensburg. A cooperation with the Centre for Digitisation



and Culture at the Schleswig-Holstein State Library is being pursued. The “Digital Collected Works of Klaus Groth” will gradually explore the Low German and standard German works of the poet, as well as his correspondence and letters sent to him, and make it available in various digital formats as well as optional print versions. The project as a whole has a timeframe of several years and requires fundamental and long-term support. It will make the complete works of the most important Low German poet accessible globally in a revised version that meets the latest editorial standards.

- The State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch, LzN) invites university graduates, students and groups of school pupils to participate in the “Jugend verkloort Platt” project. Participants select the topics themselves and can research them independently. The spectrum ranges from historical topics, such as Low German in the Hanseatic period or Low German texts from the Middle ages, through language comparisons and proverbs to current topics like new Low German music. The first 18 results have already been examined at universities and visualised by graphic designers in the form of infographics that the LzN has been published on its website and as a brochure. The project is funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and the Hamburg-based Carl Toepfer Foundation.
- On its website, the LzN links to all institutions and facilities that promote Low German, thus providing a comprehensive digital overview of the funding landscape in the states of Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein.
- “Plattdüütsch in der Familie”: This is the motto of the new film and internet project of the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund, which is dedicated to the transmission of the Low German language in families and in different regions of the state.
- “Emmi för Plattdüütsch in Sleswig-Holsteen”: The prize for promoting Low German in day-care centres, schools, universities and youth groups,

“Emmi för Plattdüütsch in Sleswig-Holsteen”, was jointly initiated by the state parliament of Schleswig-Holstein, the Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs and the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund (SHHB). Every two years, the prize is awarded by the President of the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament together with the Schleswig-Holstein Minister for Education, Science and Cultural Affairs and the SHHB.

- The use of “Ik snack platt!” stickers in the offices of tax authority employees with Low German language proficiency is intended as a means of encouraging the use of the language; decree of the Ministry of Finance on 13 November 2019.

**e. Article 7 (1) (e)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Article 13, paragraph 2 d;
  - Schleswig-Holstein Language Charter Report 2019
  - Promotion of contact between representatives of the language communities through joint participation in the creation of reports, e.g. Language Policy Action Plan of the Schleswig-Holstein State Government in the context of regional or minority languages for the 19th legislative period dated November 2020 with the focal areas of education, media and added value
  - Participation of representatives of the regional language of Low German and representatives of minority groups in joint projects, e.g. German Unity Day 2019 in Kiel
  - Establishment of a coordinating function for regional and minority languages at the Institute for Quality Development in Schools in Schleswig-Holstein (IQSH)
  - Establishment of a half-time position for an official for regional and minority languages at the Ministry for Education, Science and Cultural Affairs

ii. Practical measures

- Institutional funding for Low German institutions: €12,500 p.a. for each of the Centres for Low German in Leck for the Schleswig region and Mölln for the Holstein region; €42,000 as Schleswig-Holstein's contribution to the State Centre for Low German (Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH, LzN); €5,000 for the Low German Council; funding for Low German projects as part of institutional funding (€255,000) and project funding (€5,000) of the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund (SHHB).
- The state of Schleswig-Holstein provides funding for selected cultural institutions that make an important contribution to the development of society and its cultural identity, including the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund (SHHB). 2016 saw the conclusion of the first three-year contract between the state and the SHHB with the aim of achieving jointly defined goals including the maintenance and promotion of the Low German language. Following a successful evaluation in 2018, a follow-up contract was concluded for the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021 as the basis for a further three years of funding. The SHHB receives an annual grant of €255,000 from the state. Among other things, these funds are used to support the Verein für niederdeutsche Sprachförderung, an association tasked with promoting the Low German language, and the Bevensen Tagung symposium for Low German language and literature.
- Regarding the institutional funding of cultural activities and facilities, such as the Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund theatre association, please see the comments on Article 12 (1) (a).
- "Plattdüütsch Stiftung Sleswig-Holsteen": In 2012, Wilhelm Nehlsen transferred his agricultural property in Pohnshalligkoog on the Nordstrand peninsula to the SHHB. The SHHB took over as the trustee of the trust foundation established by Wilhelm Nehlsen with the aim of promoting and supporting the Low German language, particularly with a view to the young generation. One particular focal point is the funding of

Low German materials for schools and nursery schools in the form of “Low German boxes”, which have been extremely well received. The foundation also provided financial support for the creation of the “Paul un Emma snackt plattdüütsch” textbook for children in first and second grade. Grants for projects like musical performances and youth seminars in Low German are also provided with financial support, as are orders of “language puppets”, which are used in day-care centres.

- The SHHB has also been home to the Low German Council since it was formed in 2000. This lobby for the Low German language community, which was established in connection with the ratification of the Language Charter, is a successful model that represents the interests of Low German in all relevant committees in the state. The Low German Council constitutes the political representation of Low German speakers in Schleswig-Holstein and takes a stand for language policy work at state and federal level. The state government has supported the Low German Council since 2016 in the form of institutional funding of €5,000 that is linked to the SHHB.
- The Ministry for Education, Science and Cultural Affairs concluded target agreements with the Centres for Low German in Leck and Mölln for the first time in 2019. The two centres perform an information, advisory and coordinating function for the promotion and teaching of the Low German language. They coordinate the activities of the associations, groups and initiatives that support and promote the Low German language and develop proposals regarding language and cultural conservation. The Centres for Low German have undertaken to promote synergies and partnerships in line with the activities of the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry for Education, Science and Cultural Affairs. The two centres also support the Low German model school project at a total of 42 schools throughout the state.

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Article 13 (2) of the State Constitution
  - Section 4 (6) sentence 3 and 4 of the Schleswig-Holstein Schools Act
  - Schleswig-Holstein Language Charter Report 2019
  - The Schleswig-Holstein Act to Promote Children in Day-care Centres and Day-care Facilities (*Kindertagesförderungsgesetz*) expressly sets out language learning as an educational goal. The regional and minority languages protected by the state constitution have been explicitly mentioned in the Act since 2016.
  - Language Policy Action Plan of the Schleswig-Holstein State Government in the context of regional or minority languages for the 19th legislative period dated November 2020 with the focal areas of education, media and added value.
  - “*Niederdeutsch in der Schule*” (Low German in Schools), decree of 18 May 2019
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - Since 2017, the state has provided a total of half a million euros in funding for Danish, Frisian and Low German language programmes for children at nursery schools. The aim of this measure is to familiarise children at an early stage with the regional and minority languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein. Low German is offered at 32 nursery schools, 18 of which are members of the border and culture association ADS-Grenzfriedensbund.
  - The revised decree on Low German in schools issued by the state government of Schleswig-Holstein on 18 May 2019 provides for the Low German language to be taught on an interdisciplinary basis. Building on the Language Policy Action Plan of the State Government, the decree provides for systematic language acquisition at primary school level and a gradual roll-out is planned. In addition to the model school system, the decree refers to a completed education in Low German as a sustainable method for acquiring the regional language of Low German: “The aim is to

gradually expand the system so that Low German is taught throughout the education system up to and including the secondary school leaving certificate. Low German must be a consistent teaching principle in all classes at all schools in Schleswig-Holstein.” The decree refers to the principle of immersion teaching in Low German as an effective way of teaching and promoting the language and a means of language acquisition. It also references the option of Low German lessons. The language instruction offered as part of the Low German model school project will be expanded further. The respective school administrators are responsible for ensuring that Low German is included in the schools’ internal curricula. The new decree reflects the positive development of Low German at our schools in recent years and significantly enhances the status of the regional language.

- In the 2014/15 school year, the model project “Voluntary provision of Low German” was introduced at 27 primary schools in Schleswig-Holstein. To enable systematic Low German instruction from first grade onwards, the textbook “Paul un Emma snackt plattdüütsch” was created for children in first and second grade and published in time for the 2015/16 school year.
- “Paul un Emma un ehr Frünnen”, the second volume of the textbook for children in third and fourth grade, was published at the start of the 2018/19 school year. This means there is consistent teaching material for Low German for grades 1 to 4 inclusive. The two textbooks are each accompanied by a comprehensive online handout for teachers which can be accessed free of charge on the IQSH’s learning platform (<https://paulunemma.lernnetz.de> and <https://paulunemma2.lernnetz.de>). The handouts include worksheets, vocabulary lists, audio files and other material for use in Low German lessons. A further volume of the “Paul un Emma” series for lower secondary level is planned.

- The creation of teaching/learning materials for lower secondary level (language acquisition at lower secondary level with no prior knowledge) is also being supported through funding for a book project: At the State Centre for Low German in Bremen, a group of experts from Lower Saxony is currently working on a textbook for pupils at lower secondary level with no prior knowledge of Low German.
- The model school concept for Low German has since been expanded. As of the 2020/21 school year, Low German can be offered from grades 1 to 6 at 32 model primary schools and nine model schools at lower secondary level (including two grammar schools). In total, there are currently 42 participating schools with 3,058 pupils, of which 2,738 are learning Low German at primary school and 320 at lower secondary level.
- Structurally, Low German has an established connection with the Department of Low German Language, Literature and Teaching at the University of Flensburg that is visible both internally and externally. Increased cooperation between the department in Flensburg and the professorial chair in Kiel has now been realised. They actively engage in a fruitful and mutually beneficial exchange that manifests itself in a cooperation agreement between the two institutions and the flexible and reciprocal deployment of employees.
- In addition, the Low German certificate makes studying Low German more attractive. Students of German at the University of Flensburg have been able to obtain the Low German certificate since the summer semester 2010. This supplementary course in Low German may be selected by students of all subjects in addition to their main course of study and also qualifies them to teach the subject. The number of graduates has grown to 25-30 students per year.
- Low German activities at non-model schools are recorded with the help of the district specialists for Low German and the state-wide specialist for Low German at the IQSH. This allows the exact number of Low German learning opportunities in Schleswig-Holstein to be recorded.

- The state is also supporting the Fehrs-Gilde association in developing a contemporary reference work for Low German. The dictionary compiled by Johannes Saß in its various editions has been the formative work for Low German for many years. The SASS online dictionary that is now in development will contain 70,000 standard German and Low German keywords, all inflected word forms and many idiomatic expressions.
- The Centre for Low German in Leck offers multiplier training and workshops for qualified staff and volunteers at day-care centres (“Plattdüütsch för de Lütten”) and for adult education instructors (“Platt lehren lehren”). Funding for the qualification course is provided by the support association of the Centre for Low German in Leck, among others. Assistance for language instruction is provided in the form of language training, the communication of teaching ideas and material for use in lessons.
- In the view of the state government, the culturally sensitive and biographically appropriate promotion of the language includes coexistence in Low German. This approach is also reflected in the numerous events at facilities for the elderly throughout the state, which enrich the social and cultural life of many residents. The state government of Schleswig-Holstein continues to do everything within its power and in cooperation with the relevant associations and institutions to strengthen the use of Low German. To stabilise and expand this funding area, the LzN offers advanced training events on Low German in care settings in the form of training leave, online seminars, presentations and workshops. It acts in an advisory and service capacity as a nationwide point of contact.
- As another measure for reinforcing and expanding the use of Low German in the care sector, the LzN offers “PlattHart” certification for care facilities (such as nursing homes, hospitals, hospices). The heart logo shows that they actively use Low German in their institutions. The cooperation partners are the Carl Toepfer Foundation (Hamburg), the Catholic Academy Stapelfeld, the Federal Council for Low German (Bundesrat für



Niederdeutsch) and the Low German Secretariat (Niederdeutschsekretariat). The LzN is planning to expand “PlattHart” certification for the healthcare sector from 2021 onwards. The catalogue of criteria is being adapted for the respective fields (e.g. conventional surgeries, complementary medical practices, facilities for people with disabilities, etc.).

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *under E.VI.h.2.f.*

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

i. Practical measures

- Two scholarly editions of Low German plays from the 17th century have been developed and published together with groups of students as part of research-based teaching at the Department of Low German at the University of Kiel (“Teweschen Hochtiet”, 2018; “Tewesken Kindelbehr”, 2019). In addition, two current projects are dedicated to recording current Low German language usage and editing it for use in linguistic studies:
  - “Aesop in Low German” (collection of audio recordings of an ancient fable in various Low German dialects)
  - “Corpus linguistic studies of Low German grammar” (creation of a written corpus of Low German texts from the “Vertell doch mal” storytelling contest).
- In another current project, the University of Kiel is working in partnership with colleagues from the University of Frankfurt (Oder) on the second volume of the “Language Atlas of Northern Germany” (Norddeutscher Sprachatlas, NOSA), which documents the dialect shift in Northern Germany on the basis of annotated language maps.
- At the University of Flensburg, project topics include older and newer Low German literary history and the creation of a corpus of older Modern Low German texts. Particular research areas include Middle Low German literary history, the poet Klaus Groth and Low German theatre. Issues

relating to the teaching of Low German are also addressed and teaching materials are created. Low German literacy is a particular area of interest.

- Specific projects include
  - the “Flensburg corpus of Modern Low German literature” / “Schleswig-Holstein corpus”, which aims to digitalise older Modern Low German literature,
  - the preparation of a “Digital Collected Works of Klaus Groth” in cooperation with other partners, and
  - the development of Low German textbooks based on the “Paul un Emma” concept of Low German monolingualism in cooperation with other project partners and with funding from the state of Schleswig-Holstein.
- The Department of Low German is involved in projects of the Centre for Small and Regional Languages at the University of Flensburg.

**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

i. Practical measures

There have been no changes to the comments compared with the previous reporting cycles.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Low German is protected in the State Constitution of Schleswig-Holstein. Please also refer to the comments *under E.VI.h.1.a*. Further details are also set out in the provisions for Part III.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

i. Practical measures

- Mass media:
  - With the introduction of local radio broadcasting in Schleswig-Holstein, allowance is also provided for regional and minority programming to be included in programming in up to five regions of the state. Section 28a (1) sentence 3 of the Inter-State Treaty on Media Services between Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein

*(Medienstaatsvertrag Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein (MStV HH/SH))* specifies that, in the regions in which regional or minority languages are spoken, the respective regional or minority language must be adequately taken into account in the programmes and contributions aired.

- The regional broadcaster NDR is also encouraged to make appropriate allowance for regional and minority languages in its programming. In accordance with section 5 (2) of the NDR Broadcasting Agreement, programming must adequately reflect Northern Germany and the diversity of its regions, their culture and their language. The state government is committed to ensuring that the topic of regional and minority languages continues to be taken into account in future amendments to the NDR Broadcasting Agreement and that the affected persons are more strongly represented in the respective committees, for example.

#### **I. Article 7 (4)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Low German language community in Schleswig-Holstein is given the regular opportunity to make its views known. Chaired by the president of the state parliament, the Low German advisory group in the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament has met twice yearly since 1992. The purpose of the group is to discuss all questions relating to the Low German language community in the state with the aim of supporting and promoting the Low German language, education and culture.
  - The Low German language community in Schleswig-Holstein can also turn to the Minister-President's Commissioner for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German.

## 2. Article 8 – Education

### a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iv)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Promotion of day-care centres on the basis of section 16 (2) of the Schleswig-Holstein Nursery Act (*Kindertagesförderungsgesetz, KiTaG*).
  - Guidelines of the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein regarding the promotion of regional and minority languages in day-care centres and nursery schools 2020 - 2022.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The state of Schleswig-Holstein indirectly supports Low German in early childhood education by funding the Centres for Low German (ZfN) in Mölln for the Holstein region and Leck for the Schleswig region. The Centre for Low German in Leck focuses on in-service training for target groups including nursery teachers.
  - In addition, the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein provided a total of €542,291.55 in funding for Danish, Frisian and Low German language programmes for children at day-care centres. The aim of this measure is to familiarise children at an early stage with the regional and minority languages spoken in Schleswig-Holstein. A total of 274 groups of children at day-care centres and day-care staff benefited from the additional funding in 2020. This funding was increased to €575,000 in 2021.

### b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Under the heading “task areas of particular importance”, the current subject-specific requirements for all subjects of instruction include the following paragraph: “Low German and Frisian: Schleswig-Holstein sees itself as a multilingual state in which regional and minority languages are perceived as a cultural asset. As a result, the educational institutions of Schleswig-Holstein have the task of promoting Low German and the Frisian language and contributing to their further development.”

- The new decree “*Niederdeutsch in der Schule*” (Low German in Schools) was published on 18 May 2019 and entered into force in the school year 2019/20 ([https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/S/schule\\_und\\_unterricht/niederdeutsch.html](https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/S/schule_und_unterricht/niederdeutsch.html)). One of its aims is to expand the provision of model schools in Schleswig-Holstein. The decree on Low German applies to all schools in Schleswig-Holstein.
- ii. Practical measures
- The opportunities for learning Low German on a voluntary basis are being continually expanded.
  - In the school year 2020/2021, 2,738 pupils in grades one to four were learning Low German at 33 model primary schools, and 320 lower-secondary-level pupils in grades five to six were learning Low German at nine model secondary schools. The Low German model schools are assigned two teaching hours per week for each grade in order to be able to provide classroom instruction in Low German. The schools are responsible for organising the classes. Schools are also responsible for exploiting the possibilities of teaching non-language subjects using Low German as the medium of instruction. Further expansion to a total of 50 model schools is politically desirable and conceivable in principle.
  - The teaching of Low German at primary schools is based on the 2013 guidelines on Low German ([https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/S/schule\\_und\\_unterricht/niederdeutsch.html](https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Fachinhalte/S/schule_und_unterricht/niederdeutsch.html)). A revision of the guidelines is planned. The revised guidelines will be based on the two Paul and Emma textbooks, the first of which is for grades one and two and the second for grades three and four. In accordance with the new decree on Low German, each school appoints a Low German commissioner. If a school cannot appoint a Low German commissioner, the responsibility lies with the school administrators. The appointment of all Low German commissioners at schools in Schleswig-Holstein was completed in June 2020. The Low German commissioners

are informed by the state consultation service and district consultation services for Low German about current developments and opportunities for in-service training in Low German offered by the Institute for Educational Development in Schools in Schleswig-Holstein (IQSH) and can receive support for implementation of the decree in schools. With assistance from the district consultation services for Low German, an assessment of the opportunities for learning Low German at schools that are not model schools is also planned. As already stated in the *Sixth Periodical Report (p. 117)*, there are many opportunities for learning Low German at schools in Schleswig-Holstein, but these have not yet been recorded in numerical terms.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The opportunities to learn Low German in Schleswig-Holstein have been fundamentally strengthened. In this connection, please refer to the comments provided by the state of Schleswig-Holstein *in E.VI.h.1.f*.

**c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.VI.h.2.b* regarding the decree on Low German.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VI.h.2.b*.
  - In the school year 2020/21, 320 lower secondary level pupils were learning Low German at nine model secondary schools. The Low German model schools are assigned two teaching hours per week for grades five and six in order to be able to provide classroom instruction in Low German. The schools are responsible for organising the classes. Schools are also responsible for exploiting the possibilities of teaching non-language subjects using Low German as the medium of instruction.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The opportunities to learn Low German in Schleswig-Holstein have been fundamentally strengthened. In this connection, please refer to the comments provided by the state of Schleswig-Holstein *in E.VI.h.1.f*.

**d. Article 8 (1) (d) (iii)**

This Article has not been signed by the state of Schleswig-Holstein in respect of Low German. In practice, however, Schleswig-Holstein draws attention to the following points:

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.VI.h.2.b* regarding the decree on Low German.
- ii. Practical measures  
At the Schleswig vocational education and training centre, Low German has been offered as a core curriculum option at the vocational college for nursery teachers and social education assistants since the school year 2019/20. The course is taught by a teacher. In the school year 2019/20, 58 social education assistants and 26 nursery teachers took part. In the school year 2020/2021, 27 social education assistants and ten nursery teachers attended – as a core curriculum option – a course in Low German.

**e. Article 8 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The State Ordinance on the Appointment of Teachers to Preparatory Training - Capacity Regulation for Teachers (*Landesverordnung über die Einstellung in den Vorbereitungsdienst der Lehrerinnen und Lehrer - Kapazitätsverordnung Lehrkräfte, KapVO-LK*) of 24 April 2012 was amended on 8 May 2020. A successfully completed certificate course in Frisian is now treated as an asset when awarding teacher induction placements. Moreover, the Language Policy Action Plan of November 2020 aims to further expand the possibilities of awarding credits for Low German courses, making them more attractive for students.
- ii. Practical measures
  - In Schleswig-Holstein, Low German can be taken as a supplementary subject for students training to be grammar school teachers at the Institute of German Studies at the Christian Albrecht University of Kiel (CAU). Similar courses are offered by the Institute of German Studies at the European University of Flensburg (EUF).

- Whatever their main subject, students training to be teachers at the CAU can take Low German as a supplementary subject during or after their teacher training. In a number of bachelor's and master's degree programme modules, students taking German as their main subject can choose courses with a focus on Low German. Students taking courses in two subjects, which may include German studies or other subjects, and who are not training to be teachers, can choose to take modules on Low German topics as a supplementary focus, thereby gaining a specific qualification in Low German philology.
- In the two-subject master's degree course in German, which gives students the option of graduating with a Master of Arts degree, it continues to be possible to choose "German: Low German" as an area of specialisation, enhancing students' knowledge of Low German philology.
- At the EUF, students taking a bachelor's educational sciences programme with German as one of their subjects must choose between an introduction to Low German or Frisian in their third or fourth semester. Third-year students taking the bachelor's degree programme in German can choose Low German as a focal area of study, completing their degree with a specialist qualification which is included on their certificate. The teaching certificate for the primary or secondary level, the subject specialisation certificate and the optional additional certificate in Low German, which also qualifies graduates to teach the subject, enable students taking different courses of study to choose Low German as a specialisation. As well as awarding a regular bachelor's degree in educational sciences, with German as one subject, the university also awards a Low German certificate to those who successfully complete the modules. Courses with a Low German specialisation are also open to other German studies students.
- As well as offering a Low German specialisation in teacher training programmes in German (BA and MEd), which qualifies graduates to teach the subject and awards them a certificate, Low German is also being



introduced as a supplementary subject at the EUF. It can be chosen by students of all subjects in addition to their regular course of studies. This course also qualifies graduates to teach Low German.

- On the basis of a cooperation agreement between the Department of Low German at the CAU Institute of German Studies and the Department of Low German Language and Literature at the EUF Institute of German Studies, the universities can exchange lecturers of Low German, and students can attend Low German courses at both universities. The two universities recognise each other's courses and coordinate the content of the courses they offer in Low German each semester.

**f. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The amendment of the Further Education and Training Act (*Weiterbildungsgesetz*, WBG) in 2017 extended the tasks and objectives of further training with regard to cultural education to include “teaching regional and minority languages and imparting knowledge of the cultures of minorities and ethnic groups living in Schleswig-Holstein” (section 3 (5) WBG).
- ii. Practical measures
  - A number of adult education centres offer Low German courses: 32 adult education centres with a total of 89 courses. This leads to a relatively high course enrolment rate, with 970 enrolments in 1,686 lessons in 2019.
  - It should be noted that under section 1 of the Further Education and Training Act of Schleswig-Holstein (WBG), further training providers and institutions have the right to independently design curricula and programmes. This right applies to general, political and vocational further training. As in the media sector, the state government cannot specify the extent to which the training providers and institutions offer further training courses relating to minority and regional languages.
  - The further education and training bonus programme for Schleswig-Holstein, which finances the cost of Low German courses, has been part of the regional development programme for the employment market in

Schleswig-Holstein since November 2014. Further education and training for employees can thus be subsidised with a maximum of €1,500 per course from funds provided by the European Social Fund (ESF) if the employer meets at least 50 percent of the seminar costs. Since 1 July 2020, caps have no longer applied to the costs of such courses. Since 1 July 2020, individuals have also been eligible to benefit from these subsidies more than once per funding period. Freelancers and self-employed people, who are eligible for funding for the first time in the current funding period, are responsible for meeting the cost of co-financing themselves. The opportunity to take training leave that exists under the Schleswig-Holstein Further Education and Training Act can also be used in combination with the further training bonus.

**g. Article 8 (1) (g)**

i. Practical measures

The state of Schleswig-Holstein remains committed to the obligation set out in this Article and is considering ways of implementing it.

All teachers in Schleswig-Holstein who have undergone training to teach German at schools providing a general education are required to take a supplementary module for Low German during their training. The content of this module includes the history of the Low German language and its historical background. The decree on Low German also enables the history and culture of Low German to be taught. In 2019, for example, the Klaus Groth anniversary year was taken up as a topic at some schools.

**h. Article 8 (1) (h)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Article 13 (2) of the State Constitution of Schleswig-Holstein (*Landesverfassung*).
- Section 4 (6), sentences 3 and 4 of the Schools Act of Schleswig-Holstein (*Schulgesetz*).
- Report 2019 of the State of Schleswig-Holstein on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

- The Schleswig-Holstein Nursery Schools Act (*Kindertagesstättengesetz*) expressly provides for language education as an educational objective. Since 2016, the regional and minority languages protected by the state constitution have been explicitly mentioned in the Act.
  - Language Policy Action Plan of the State Government of Schleswig-Holstein in the Context of Regional or Minority Languages for the 19th Legislative Term, November 2020, Focusing on the Areas of Education – the Media – Added Value. The curriculum for students training to become German teachers at primary schools, *Gemeinschaftschulen* (comprehensive schools) and *Gymnasien* (grammar schools) requires them to take a supplementary compulsory module in Low German during their training.
  - Under the heading “task areas of particular importance”, the current subject-specific requirements for all subjects of instruction include the following paragraph: “Low German and Frisian: Schleswig-Holstein sees itself as a multilingual state in which regional and minority languages are perceived as a cultural asset. As a result, the educational institutions of Schleswig-Holstein have the task of promoting Low German and the Frisian language and contributing to their further development.”
- ii. Practical measures
- The IQSH offers a comprehensive range of further training courses for Low German teachers throughout Schleswig-Holstein on various topics and in various formats. Since 2018, an annual Schleswig-Holstein Low German Symposium has been offered. This is aimed at all (Low German) teachers in Schleswig-Holstein, but also enables interested multipliers and teachers from the “northern states” of Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Lower Saxony to take part. Since 2017, there have been language courses (“Plattschool für Lehrers”) for student teachers and teachers of Low German. These blended courses combine face-to-face and online lessons. Successful participation leads to the acquisition of a certificate. Since the school year 2019/2020, a further

modular certificate course (“Plattdüütsch in den Ünnericht”) has offered a wide range of module contents. The course is aimed primarily at teachers who have not studied Low German with a view to preparing them to start teaching the subject. In addition, it is possible to take part in networking afternoons for teachers and practically-based afternoons focusing on a particular topic. The range of further training courses on digital learning and teaching has also been expanded.

Since April 2020, the IQSH’s specialist portal for Low German has provided comprehensive information on training opportunities for Low German teachers as well as Low German classroom material.

(<https://fachportal.lernnetz.de/niederdeutsch.html>).

- The revised decree on Low German in schools of the state government of Schleswig-Holstein of 18 May 2019 provides for Low German to be treated as a cross-cutting task. With reference to the Language Policy Action Plan of the State Government of Schleswig-Holstein, systematic language learning in primary schools is thus possible and there are plans to expand it. As well as the model school concept, the decree on Low German refers to the teaching of Low German throughout a pupil’s entire school education as a sustainable method for learning this regional language: “The aim is to teach Low German throughout pupils’ entire school education up to university entrance level as part of a gradually growing system of teaching Low German. Low German must be a mainstream teaching principle at all schools and in all classes in Schleswig-Holstein.” Reference is made to the principle of immersion teaching in Low German as an effective way to teach, promote and learn the language as well as to the possibility of classroom instruction in Low German. The language instruction offered as part of the model school project for Low German should be expanded further. School administrators are responsible for ensuring that the topic is taken into account in the school’s internal curricula. The new decree takes up the positive developments with regard to Low German at our schools in

recent years and attaches considerably greater importance to the regional language.

- In the 2014/2015 school year, a pilot project offering voluntary Low German courses was launched at 27 primary schools in Schleswig-Holstein.

The textbook *Paul un Emma snackt plattdüütsch* (Paul and Emma speak Low German), published in 2015/2016, was prepared for first and second-grade pupils with the aim of providing systematic instruction in Low German right from the start. *Paul un Emma un ehr Frünnen* (Paul and Emma and their friends), for pupils in grades three and four, the second book in the series, was published at the beginning of the school year 2018/2019. Thus, integrated Low German textbooks are available for grades one to four. There is an extensive teacher handout on each textbook on the IQSH learning websites (<https://paulunemma.lernnetz.de> and <https://paulunemma2.lernnetz.de>), with worksheets, vocabulary lists, audio files and other Low German classroom materials, available to teachers free of charge. There are plans to continue the Paul and Emma series for pupils at lower secondary level.

- The production of teaching/learning materials for pupils starting to learn the language from scratch at lower secondary level is also supported by means of funding for a book project. A group of experts from Lower Saxony are working at the State Centre for Low German (LzN) in Bremen to produce a textbook for pupils at lower secondary level with no prior knowledge of Low German.
- The model school project for Low German has been steadily expanded since the 2014/2015 school year. In the 2020/2021 school year, 32 model primary schools and nine model lower secondary schools (of which two are grammar schools) are offering Low German in grades one to six. There are currently 42 participating schools with 3,058 pupils, of whom 2,738 are learning Low German at primary school and 320 at lower secondary level.

- In structural terms, Low German has become firmly anchored within the Department of Low German Language, Culture and Didactics at the European University of Flensburg, visible both internally and externally. Closer cooperation between the department in Flensburg and the professorship in Kiel has now been achieved. They engage in an intensive, thematically complementary exchange of ideas and knowledge, as demonstrated by a cooperation agreement between the two institutions and the flexible and reciprocal assignment of staff.
- In addition, the Low German certificate makes studying Low German more attractive. Students of German studies at the EUF have been able to obtain the Low German certificate since the summer semester of 2010. Low German as a supplementary subject may be chosen by students in addition to their regular course of study and, upon completing it, graduates are qualified to teach Low German. The number of graduates has increased to 25-30 students per year.
- Please refer to *E.VI.h.2.e* regarding the consideration of students' Low German certificates when allocating teacher induction placements.
- Data on Low German activities at non-model schools are collected with assistance from the district consultation services for Low German and the IQSH state consultation service for Low German. The specific number of courses in Low German offered by teachers at schools in Schleswig-Holstein is recorded.
- The state also supports the Fehrs Gilde, an organisation that promotes the Low German language, in developing a modern Low German textbook and reference book. In its various editions, the dictionary based on the work of Johannes Saß has been definitive for the Low German language for many years. SASS, a High German-Low German online dictionary currently being compiled, is to contain 70,000 entries in each language, including all the inflected forms and many idiomatic expressions.
- The ZfN in Leck offers Low German training courses for multipliers and workshops for specialists and volunteers in day-care centres ("Plattdütsch

för de Lütten”) as well as Low German courses for instructors teaching adult education courses (“Platt lehren lehren”). Such skills development courses are funded by organisations including the ZfN’s support organisation. Assistance is provided for language teaching in the form of language training and through sharing communication ideas and classroom material.

- In the view of the state government, culturally sensitive and biography-related care includes social interaction in Low German. Incidentally, such interaction is a characteristic feature of social and cultural life at numerous events at care homes for the elderly across Schleswig-Holstein, to the delight of many residents. The state government of Schleswig-Holstein continues to cooperate with care provider organisations and other institutions to strengthen the use of Low German, for example in its work in the federal state’s nursing care committee (Landespflegeausschuss). Additionally, to consolidate this funding area, the LzN offers training on the subject of Low German in nursing care in the form of training leave, online seminars, lectures and workshops. It acts as an interstate contact point, offering advice and services.
- As a further measure aimed at anchoring and disseminating Low German in the care sector, the LzN offers nursing care institutions the opportunity to receive a “PlattHart” award, a distinction for institutions that cultivate the use of Low German. This enables nursing facilities (e.g. nursing homes for the elderly, hospitals, hospices) to prove that they use Low German in their facilities. Cooperation partners are the Carl Toepfer Foundation, Hamburg, the Catholic Academy Stapelfeld, the Federal Council for Low German and the Secretariat for Low German. The LzN plans to expand its range of services for the health sector in connection with the “Platthart” award from 2021. To this end, the catalogue of criteria will be adapted to suit the setting (e.g. for medical and therapeutic practices, or for facilities for people with disabilities).

iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The training programme ensures that the number of appropriately trained Low German teachers will increase – the measures contributing to this are listed in detail under (ii) and summarised in the state of Schleswig-Holstein’s comments in *D.II.2*.

**i. Article 8 (1) (i)**

The state of Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments in *E.II.12.b of the Sixth Periodical Report*.

**j. Article 8 (2):**

i. Practical measures

- Schleswig-Holstein continues to provide a wide range of further education and training opportunities for those wishing to keep up or learn Low German. Apart from the Centres for Low German in Leck and Ratzeburg, there are a number of adult education centres that offer Low German courses. In 2019, 28 adult education centres offered 89 Low German courses with 970 places and more than 1,686 teaching units. As well as language-learning courses, there are also discussion groups where participants meet to use the language. The latest information about Low German courses currently on offer can be found at [www.sh.kursportal.info](http://www.sh.kursportal.info). The Nordkolleg in Rendsburg also offers language courses in cooperation with the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund (SHHB).



### **3. Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

Provided that documents and evidence drafted in a minority language are presented in a form that prevents misunderstandings or errors in translation, this obligation is already met by the legal situation prevailing in Germany.

The federal state of Schleswig-Holstein does not provide any further comments in this regard.

#### 4. Article 10 - Administrative authorities and public services

##### a. Article 10 (1) (a) (v)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Act amending the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act (*Gesetz zur Änderung des Landesverwaltungsgesetzes*) of 25 September 2018, Gazette of Laws and Ordinances of Schleswig-Holstein (*Gesetz- und Ordnungsblatt für Schleswig-Holstein*, GOVBl.), p. 648).
  
- ii. Practical measures
 

Within the remit of the Ministry of Finance, the tax offices, as a direct contact point between citizens and revenue administration, have an important role to play with regard to the Language Policy Action Plan. Some tax offices have staff with Low German language skills. Taxpayers can therefore submit documents in the respective languages.
  
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - Continuation of the application of section 82b LVwG
  - The state chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein has introduced minority and regional language aspects into the central human resource management of the state government in order to strengthen the Charter languages. It is also possible to record the language skills of HR management staff. This applies both to foreign languages and to the regional or minority languages protected by the European Language Charter. The aim is to help facilitate the use of Charter languages in dealings with authorities and administrations, as well as within the administration.
  - Low German modules are to be offered in the basic and further training courses for the public service in Schleswig-Holstein and, as well as improving language skills, are also to contribute to the active use of Low German in the administration.
  - The central public service training institutions in Schleswig-Holstein are already very advanced in terms of language policy; this also applies to giving due regard to Low German in the official language. The public service training institutions have already or will soon address this

decision in the relevant bodies (faculty councils of the University of Applied Sciences for Administration and Services, FHVD; training committee of the Bordesholm Administrative Academy, VAB). The Police Department will discuss integrating Low German as an additional studies-related language training option. 30 hours of instruction during the main and final parts of the course would be a possibility. At its meeting on 10 November 2020, the Public Administration Department already included a voluntary studies-related course in its deliberations on re-accrediting the study programme. On 5 November 2020, the Tax Faculty Council decided to include a Low German module as an additional option and instructed the dean's office to draw up a proposal on the scope of the optional module. The VAB training committee dealt with this issue on 3 December 2020. Here, too, there is a tendency to enable voluntary courses to be offered to supplement classroom instruction. There is agreement that any topics relating to languages other than High German should be addressed in cross-cutting instruction or in the study module on diversity/intercultural competence. The administrative competence centre KOMMA, a civil service training centre, will design and offer a seminar on Low German in day-to-day administration, modelled on the seminar "English in day-to-day administration". A seminar entitled "Plattdeutsch im Berufsalltag – Öven mit Vergnügen – Snacken un Verstahn" (Low German in day-to-day administration, practice with pleasure - speaking and understanding) is already offered. In a variety of different ways, Schleswig-Holstein supports the creation of conditions where different people can feel comfortable. For example, the "diverse administration" aspect is taken into account when recruiting skilled workers and young executives. This includes, for example, finding advertising messages that appeal to different people. That also applies to people from different linguistic backgrounds, of course, i.e. to speakers of foreign languages and of languages within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

- On the subject of encouragement to use different languages at tax offices, see the comments *in D.VI.h.1.d.*
- With regard to including regional and minority languages in the context of implementing the Online Access Act (*Onlinezugangsgesetz, OZG*), Schleswig-Holstein refers to its comments *in D.IV.4.*

**b. Article 10 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Act amending the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act of 25 September 2018 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances of Schleswig-Holstein, p. 648).

- ii. Practical measures

The Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act (LVwG) (including section 82b) is to be applied by all public authorities in Schleswig-Holstein. The state of Schleswig-Holstein does not exercise “general supervision” over all authorities at state, district or municipal level or in public offices and other authorities as to whether and how they apply the LVwG.

The amendment of section 82b of the Schleswig-Holstein Administration Act (*Landesverwaltungsgesetz, LVwG*) stems from the omnibus Act Implementing the Constitutional Task of Strengthening the National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (*Gesetz zur Umsetzung des Verfassungsauftrags zur Stärkung der nationalen Minderheiten und Volksgruppen*) of 30 June 2016 (Gazette of Laws and Ordinances of Schleswig-Holstein, p. 534). It stipulates that the state government must submit a report to the state parliament evaluating the impacts in terms of efficiency and target achievement no later than four years after the entry into force of the Act. This evaluation, which is expected to be submitted in 2021, will also address the presentation of documents in regional and minority languages, see also *E.I.5.b.*

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
For the implementation measures, please refer *to E.VI.h.4.a.*

**c. Article 10 (2) (a)**

## i. Practical measures

For the implementation measures, please refer to the comments *in E.VI.h.4.a.*

**d. Article 10 (2) (b)**

## i. Practical measures

If available in the tax offices, stickers on office doors indicate that staff members have Low German language skills.

## ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

For the implementation measures, please refer to the comments *in E.VI.h.4.a.*

**e. Article 10 (2) (f)**

## i. Practical measures

In rural communities, it is not unusual to hold meetings of the local council in Low German.

**f. Article 10 (2) (g)**

The state of Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would like to assume this additional obligation under the European Language Charter and requested that the necessary steps be taken for notification to the Council of Europe. On 15 October 2020, the Federal Government, with the consent of the Bundesrat, issued a statutory instrument accepting the obligation, thus creating the conditions for notification by the Council of Europe.

## i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

Under a decree issued by the Ministry of Transport of Schleswig Holstein on 31 March 2009, it is permissible put additional names on place-name signs (reference 310 in accordance with Annex 3 of the Road Traffic Regulations (*Straßenverkehrsordnung*)) in Frisian, Danish and Low German. Posting bilingual place-name signs is voluntary for municipalities.

## ii. Practical measures

Place-name signs are official traffic signs. As such, instructions for them are given by the local road traffic authorities (usually the districts), and there are no obligations to report them to the Schleswig-Holstein state government. Thus, the Ministry of Transport does not have any specific data on the number of

applications and approvals. As a general rule, however, applications for bilingual place-name signs are approved in Schleswig-Holstein on the basis of the decree referred to above. Municipalities in Stormarn, Rendsburg-Eckernförde, the Duchy of Lauenburg and Dithmarschen are known to have approved the use of Low German on place-name signs.

**g. Article 10 (4) (c)**

i. Practical measures

No such applications have yet been made in Schleswig-Holstein. Nor is this likely, as Low German is spoken throughout the entire state. In addition, the state points out that when employing public service staff, the principle of achievement referred to in Article 33 (2) of the Basic Law is to be taken into account; thus, when selecting applicants, their knowledge of regional or minority languages may be used as a special suitability criterion only for specific vacancies for which this criterion must be met. This is not the case for apprenticeships and traineeships in general public administration or for interdepartmental appointments of young public service executives.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

The state remains committed to the obligations set out in this Article and, in the case of a request, will consider ways to implement it accordingly on a case-by-case basis.

## 5. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Due to the constitutional principle of the detachment of broadcasting from state authority (*Staatsferne*), the federal states cannot and must not exert any influence on the programme content or programming decisions of public or private broadcasters. Nevertheless, the state government of Schleswig-Holstein aims to keep minority languages represented in public service and private media, as stated in the coalition agreement. Due to broadcasters' programming autonomy, the state government has limited influence, however. With regard to the commitment of the state of Schleswig-Holstein in the context of the amendment of the NDR broadcasting agreement, please refer to *E.I.6.a.iii*.
- ii. Practical measures

Regional broadcaster NDR 1, Welle Nord	"Hör mal'n beten to" (Just listen for a bit) (Low German comments on everyday life in northern Germany)	Monday-Saturday, between 10:00 and 12:00
	Low German radio play (crime thrillers, classics, comedies)	Alternate Fridays, 21:05
	"Von Binnenland und Waterkant" (Inland and Seaside Life) (reports, commentaries, portraits in Low German, Low German hour every Monday)	Monday-Fridays, 20:05
	Low German weekend weather	Thursdays, 20:30
	De week op Platt (a satirical review of the week in Low German)	Saturdays, 07:15
	Gesegneter Abend op Platt (thought for the day in Low German)	Mondays, 19:04
	Low German live programmes → "Das plattdeutsche Musikfest" (Low German music festival) → „NDR 1 Welle Nord Poetry Slam op Platt“ (regional broadcaster NDR	Every year in September Several times a year

	1 Welle Nord poetry slam in Low German)	
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**b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
Please refer to the comments *in E.VI.h.5.a.*

ii. Practical measures

Programme of regional broadcaster NDR for the state of Schleswig-Holstein	“Schleswig-Holstein Magazin” and “Schleswig-Holstein 18:00”	Up-to-date and event-related coverage of Low German topics (film articles are written and broadcast in Low German)
	Plattdüütsch mit Vanessa Kossen (Low German version of “Hello Lower Saxony”)	Usually every last Sunday of the month, 11:00 to 11:30
	“Mein Nachmittag“ (My afternoon) (Low German conversations with guests in Low German)	
	“Dinner for one – op Platt” (Low German version of “Dinner for one”)	An integral part of regional broadcaster NDR television’s New Year’s Eve Programme since 1999
	“Neues aus Büttewarder op Platt” (The latest news from Büttewarder in Low German)	

Low German is frequently also the subject of coverage in magazine programmes such as “DAS!” and “Kulturjournal”. On the Internet, regional broadcaster NDR has a special Low German online service, bringing together and presenting on a permanent basis all content on the subject of Low German from NDR television and radio programmes, in particular from radio programmes in the federal states. This includes news in Low German, reviews of premières of Low German



plays, programme tips, and recordings of Low German television and radio programmes.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Please refer to the comments *in E.II.4.a.iii.*

**c. Article 11 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- Article 13 (2) of the State Constitution of Schleswig-Holstein
  - Report 2019 of the State of Schleswig-Holstein on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
  - Language Policy Action Plan of the State Government of Schleswig-Holstein in the Context of Regional or Minority Languages for the 19th Legislative Term, November 2020, Focusing on the Areas of Education – the Media – Added Value
- ii. Practical measures
- With reference to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the state government regularly calls for more media coverage in and about regional and minority languages. The state government missions promote this in the bodies of broadcasters NDR, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. The aim is to improve the presence of regional or minority languages in radio and television reporting.
  - In the field of public service broadcasting, regional broadcaster NDR advocates the dissemination of regional or minority languages. This is also something it is obliged to do so under section 5 (2) of the NDR broadcasting agreement: “Northern Germany and the diversity of its regions, culture and language must be appropriately taken into account in the programme.” The regional broadcaster NDR offers an extensive and diverse range of television and radio programmes, reports and formats in Low German, Frisian and Danish. These include the “Schleswig-Holstein Magazin” and the corresponding programmes at 18:00, “Neues aus Büttewarder op Platt” (The latest news from Büttewarder in Low

German) and reports in magazine programmes such as “DAS!” and “Kulturjournal”.

- This service has been expanded continually in recent years, for example with the Low German series “Hör mal ‘n beten to” (Just listen for a bit) which is broadcast regularly, and “Von Binnenland und Waterkant” (Inland and Seaside Life). The NDR also organises the “Vertell doch mal” (Go on, tell a story) Low German writing contest every year.
- Section 28a (1) of the Hamburg-Schleswig-Holstein media agreement requires all newly-established local radio stations to appropriately incorporate regional and minority languages. The first local radio licence was issued to Syltfunk – Söl’ring Radio in 2016. Since 2019, the channel has continued to broadcast parts of its programme in Danish, North Frisian and Low German in cooperation with Antenne Sylt and can be heard on the North Frisian islands and mainland.
- The state media authority of Hamburg/Schleswig-Holstein has issued further licences in Neumünster and Flensburg. The station in Flensburg has regular Danish contributions to its programme, while the station in Neumünster is required to incorporate regional and minority languages in its programme. Both stations have been on air since 2019.
- Sensitising the NDR to respondents’ use of their mother tongue during interviews and staff training are positive outcomes. New and “old” media help raise the profile of the culture, language and identity of the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the Low German linguistic group. Among other things, the state government is working to ensure that representatives of the regional and minority languages are also established in the bodies of the NDR Broadcasting Council, as is the case in the ZDF Television Council.
- The new media agreement offers public service broadcasters the opportunity to be able to provide contractually protected online services via livestream, in media centres, podcasts and apps. This also opens up new opportunities for our minority languages and Low German. The

speech communities are at liberty to use their own language and users can easily be offered translations by means of subtitles. Thus, the speech communities have great hopes for the possible expansion of on line services, providing them with more opportunities to speak their languages and be noticed.

- The Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch, LzN (Regional Centre for Low German) is increasingly using state-of-the-art technologies, including new media for language learning. For example, it supports the development of audio guides and digital learning environments and offers a wide range of online seminars. It thus plays a key role in anchoring and preserving the Low German language in the communities.
- Another focus of the LzN's work is on promoting young people. This is being done with the close involvement of young people in ongoing projects. In cooperation with the NDR's central editorial office for Low German, for example, the LzN offers a seminar for young people aged between 15 and 25 from all countries to promote young professionals in the media sector.
- In order to raise awareness in schools and among teachers, the Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs supports projects to promote journalism skills among pupils and young people through advertising them, for example, on its website and in publications such as the Ministry's information bulletin for schools, *Schule aktuell*.
- With support from its funding association, the Zentrum für Niederdeutsch, ZfN (Centre for Low German) in Leck publishes work materials and, in cooperation with the Flensburg short film festival, organises the annual Low German short film competition "PLATTSPOTS".
- Vörleestiet – un mehr! (Reading aloud - and more besides!) The ZfN in Leck, in cooperation with children's publisher Quickborn-Verlag, has produced an audio book edition of "Mammut Hansen leevt nich in'n Zoo (Hansen the mammoth does not live in the zoo). Illustrator Heidrun Schlieker and translator Ingrid Straumer have devised various

competitions, puzzles and interactive elements relating to the book, which are available on the ZfN website.

- Low German provides a means of engaging with older people, often opening doors and building trust. It is the linguistic basis that promotes interpersonal engagement and can activate memories. Basic language skills can help people in helper role situations to perform their tasks. In cooperation with the Nordsee Akademie (North Sea Academy), the ZfN in Leck is launching the “Platt hölpt hölpen” (Low German helps to help) training programme, with courses on language acquisition, language training and biographical work.
- Since its foundation in 1994, the ZfN in Holstein has been working within the region and in wider contexts far beyond it. Regional, supraregional and now international cooperation are traditions maintained by the ZfN in Holstein. Since its inception, Low German cultural work has been a key focus of its work. The ZfN in Mölln remains committed to this approach, paying particular attention to the development and expansion of a Low German youth culture. This includes developing and implementing regional and supraregional youth cultural projects such as “Thinktank Plattdütsch” and “Plattbeats”, the Low German song contest in northern Germany, as well as the international cross-border “Platt Together” project.
- Together with game designers from Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, the ZfN in Mölln is developing a video game and video tutorial in Low German, for example on the topic of breakfast.
- The ZfN in Mölln produces its own media articles under the heading “podcast, texts and videos”. In future, this small Low German media centre is to be expanded to include ZfN posts and, in particular, will include links to selected Low German posts relating to Holstein under the keyword “vun anner Lüüd” (about other people).

- “Plattfunk”, is a podcast in Low German and High German by the ZfN in Mölln, which can also be heard in the programme of the Offenes Kanal Lübeck broadcasting station.
  - Conference of authors at the ZfN in Mölln: Within the framework of the 14th meeting of Low German authors in 2020, they read and recorded their own texts (due to COVID 19).
  - Every month, a separate Low German column of ZfN Mölln appears in the customer magazine *Unser Norden* (Our North) of Supermärkte Nord Vertriebs GmbH, reaching many families in Schleswig-Holstein.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
The recommendation of the Committee of Experts to facilitate the production and dissemination of audio and audiovisual works in Low German is implemented by the state of Schleswig-Holstein through the measures referred to in point (ii) below.

**d. Article 11 (1) (e) (ii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
- The newspapers published in North Friesland by publisher Schleswig-Holsteinischer Zeitungsverlag contain one page in Frisian/Low German about once a month.
  - With the support of Johannes Callsen, Commissioner for Matters Related to National Minorities and Low German, work is being conducted during the 19th legislative period to raise media professionals’ awareness of the relevance of the media presence for speech communities. This has been achieved, for example by inviting and involving the government spokesperson in the Media Working Group of the Advisory Council on Low German at the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament.
- ii. Practical measures
- Another instrument is promoting projects to attract young authors to write in regional and minority languages for the print media and radio, for example by supporting the Commissioner for National Minorities at the youth workshop at the Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch in cooperation

with the NDR's "Nachwuchs in den Medien" (young professionals in the media) event, which was held at the International Education Centre Jugendhof Scheersberg from 21 to 24 November 2019. Such initiatives are sustainable and effective as they ensure that there is a young generation of journalists with a command of regional and minority languages.

- In order to make projects promoting journalism skills among pupils and young people better known among the target group, it is planned that in future, in consultation with the Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Education, they be promoted through advertising on the Ministry website and publications in the information bulletin for schools, *Schule aktuell*. This could help raise awareness among schools and teachers.
- With reference to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, the state government regularly calls for more media coverage in and about regional and minority languages. The missions of the state government promote this in the bodies of broadcasters NDR, ZDF and Deutschlandradio. The aim is to improve the presence of regional or minority languages in radio and television reporting.

**e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**

i. Practical measures

Three Low German cinematographic works have been produced with the participation of Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (FFHSH), the film funding institution of the German federal states of Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein:

- Gisela Tuchtenhagen's documentary films in the original language with High German subtitles:
  - BINGO – toletzt entscheed jümmers dat Glück (Bingo – You've got to be lucky)
  - Utbüxen kann keeneen (No-one can escape)
- In 2019, the FFHSH Filmwerkstatt (film workshop) in Kiel supported the Low German version of an FFHSH-sponsored animation film based on Kirsten Boie's children's book:

- Ritter Trenk (Trenk, the little knight) in Low German

**f. Article 11 (2):**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The Basic Law guarantees freedom of information, including the reception of radio and television programmes from neighbouring countries. The Committee of Experts thus considers this undertaking fulfilled.

## 6. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Article 13 (2) of the State Constitution
  - Language Charter 2019 of the State of Schleswig-Holstein
  - Language Policy Action Plan of the State Government of Schleswig-Holstein in the Context of Regional or Minority Languages for the 19th Legislative Term, November 2020, Focusing on the Areas of Education – the Media – Added Value
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs has concluded annual goals and performance agreements with the Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund, NBB (Low German Stage Association). Since 2020, this funding practice has been translated into three-year funding of €50,000 per year. Among other things, this funding is intended to help the NBB to promote the Low German language and stage Low German theatre productions. It is also envisaged that the NBB, as a linguistic multiplier, will also focus on youth work, strengthening youth theatre work and, in the field of adult education/further training, focusing on seminars in the fields of performance, make-up, stage and set design, and work with texts, also in cooperation with youth education. The Low German workshops held at the International Education Centre Jugendhof Scheerstberg have played an important role in Low German theatre for more than 25 years. For this reason, institutional funding of €3,000 has been included in the budget with the support of the Commissioner for Low German.
  - For the ZfN in Leck, the priority areas set out in the goals and performance agreements include the development and support of Low German theatre projects with various cooperation partners in the Low German theatre scene.
  - “Schölers leest Platt” (pupils read Low German): In 2020, 265 schools providing a general education took part in this reading contest, which was



open to entries from the state of Schleswig-Holstein. Children from grades 3 to 10 showed how well they can handle Low German texts in front of an audience. Funded by the Sparkassen (savings banks) and with support from the Büchereiverein Schleswig-Holstein (Schleswig-Holstein library association), the SHHB, in cooperation with the ZfN, the NDR and the Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung an Schulen Schleswig-Holstein, IQSH (Institute for Quality Development at Schools in Schleswig-Holstein), conducts the state-wide reading contest “Schölers leest Platt” every two years. The aim of the contest is to raise awareness of the regional language Low German among children, parents and schools and to promote an important part of Schleswig-Holstein’s culture and identity.

- The SHHB received €30,000 in additional project funding in 2018 and €5,000 in 2019 to support the state’s linguistic diversity. This funding was used for the “Liederaturbuch Schleswig-Holstein” project, which combines folk songs from Schleswig-Holstein with historical background and anecdotes and makes some amazing connections. The book features all the state’s native languages: High German, Low German, South Jutlandic (Sønderjysk), Danish and Frisian.

**b. Article 12 (1) (b)**

i. Practical measures

- The state of Schleswig-Holstein supports various Low German institutions, both institutionally and with project funding, such as the Zentren für Niederdeutsch, ZfN (Centres for Low German), the Schleswig-Holsteinisches Heimatbund SHHB and the Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch, LzN (Regional Centre for Low German). According to the SHHB, it is extremely rare for works in regional languages to be translated into other languages.
- As part of the Klaus Groth anniversary year 2019, the society of the same name organised a series of public symposia. The conference “Klaus Groth in the 19th century: Life, work, context” with a section on “Oral literature in the 19th century” was held by the Klaus-Groth-Gesellschaft (Klaus

Groth Society) in the Schleswig-Holstein State Library on 31 May and 1 June 2019. This event received €5,000 in funding from the Ministry of Education, Science and Cultural Affairs.

- The State Library in Kiel hosted the anniversary exhibition “Klaus Groth – life and works” using its own holdings. It was financed entirely from the regular budget available to the State Library for exhibitions and was open to visitors from 26 April to 14 July 2019.
- The Kulturstiftung Schleswig-Holstein (Schleswig-Holstein cultural foundation) supported the Klaus-Groth-Gesellschaft with a grant of €2,500 for printing the book “Hargen Thomsen: Klaus Groth’s Quickborn – an incredible book career”. The book was presented on 27 April 2019.

**c. Article 12 (1) (c)**

i. Practical measures

- The state of Schleswig-Holstein provides institutional funding for the Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund Schleswig-Holstein e.V. (Schleswig-Holstein Low German Stage Association) and the Landesverband der Amateurtheater Schleswig-Holstein e.V. (Regional Amateur Theatre Federation Schleswig-Holstein), thereby supporting their work as umbrella organisations. These organisations provide services and advice for their member theatres and help them to plan their performance schedules. This involves not only staging existing dramatic works, but also commissioning and staging new translations of dramatic works from High German into Low German.

See also *E.VI.h.6.a*, in particular on the level of financial support for Low German theatre work.

- In addition, access is occasionally provided in the regional language to works originally written in other languages, usually at the private initiative of Low German writers who provide such translations for publication on the book market.

**d. Article 12 (1) (d)****i. Practical measures**

- With state funding, institutions and bodies of the Low German linguistic group ensure that the knowledge and use of their language and culture are appropriately incorporated in their cultural activities.
- The minorities are also always invited to participate actively in central celebrations and presentations organised by the state government, such as the Day of German Unity celebrations in Kiel on 3 and 4 October 2019, enabling them to present themselves to the majority population.
- Schleswig-Holstein also has a large number of Low German theatres which preserve and promote the Low German language and Low German theatre in Schleswig-Holstein together with their umbrella organisations, the Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund (Low German Stage Association) and the Amateurtheaterverband, an organisation representing German amateur theatre. Aims and measures intended to help give Low German greater weight have been agreed with these groups, in particular exposing young people to the Low German language and theatre, providing basic and further training in order to enhance the quality of the theatrical offerings, and fostering networking and cooperation among all stakeholders in the field of Low German theatre across state borders.
- The state government also regularly supports the Niederdeutsche Theatertage (Low German theatre festival) at the Molfsee Freilichtmuseum (open-air museum) and the Bühnentage des Niederdeutschen Bühnenbundes Schleswig-Holstein (theatre festival of the Schleswig-Holstein Low German Stage Association). It enables guest directors to be engaged for the first performances of Low German theatre productions. Since 2014, the Niederdeutscher Bühnenbund has regularly advertised and awarded the Konrad Hansen Prize for new Low German plays.

**e. Article 12 (1) (e) (ii)**

The state of Schleswig-Holstein informed the Federal Government on 3 July 2019 that it would assume this additional obligation under the Charter and requested that the necessary steps be taken for notification to the Council of Europe. On 15 October 2020, the Federal Government, with the consent of the Bundesrat, adopted a statutory instrument accepting the obligation, and the Council of Europe issued the notification on 8 January 2021; *see C.I.1* for more details.

i. Practical measures

- There are staff who speak Low German within the Low German organisations and in the bodies responsible for organising and supporting cultural activities (*see E.I.6.a*).

**f. Article 12 (1) (f) (ii)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

The minorities and the Low German speech community with their cultural identity belong to Schleswig-Holstein. This is also important to the state government in terms of the state's external impact. From the outset, the minorities were therefore an important part of the state presentation at the 2019 Day of German Unity in Kiel.

ii. Practical measures

On the Day of German Unity hosted by Schleswig-Holstein in 2019, minorities were given the opportunity to present themselves in their own "minority tent". Care was also taken to ensure that the minority tent was placed in a very favourable location, next to the state parliament and the state tent. This showed visitors how close the state is to its minorities. Low German with its special significance for the entire state had a place both in the minority tent (represented here by the Länderzentrum Niederdeutsch) and in the state tent (represented by the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund).

**g. Article 12, (1) (g)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Section 2 (2) sentence 3 of the Act on Libraries in Schleswig-Holstein (*Bibliotheksgesetz, BiblG*) of 30 August 2016 specifies that libraries must

contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and the maintenance of regional and minority languages.

ii. Practical measures

- The Low German language is promoted in a variety of ways within the library system of Schleswig-Holstein, including by the Büchereizentrale Schleswig-Holstein (Library Centre of Schleswig-Holstein). This is done by offering and publicising literature in and about Low German and by organising readings by authors in Low German. A special reading department has been set up for this purpose. A comprehensive review of the market - advertising leaflets of publishing houses, magazines, and contacts with the relevant authors - ensures that publications on the non-professional sector are taken into account. These books are reviewed by the reading office, and lists are drawn up of those recommended for purchase by libraries. Literature about and in Low German is kept in a separate category so that readers have quick and easy access to such books.

Mention should be made of the following libraries:

- Schleswig-Holstein State Library

One of the focal areas of the collection in the Schleswig-Holstein State Library is works related to the Low German language and Schleswig-Holstein Low German literature. Books on the Low German language (history of the language, grammar, dictionaries, onomastics/toponymy, dialects, church language) as well as relevant journals have been collected since the 19th century. As far as possible, the aim is to procure all the works of all Schleswig-Holstein authors writing in standard German and/or Low German and the secondary literature on them. In addition, there are collections of Low German sagas, folk tales, nursery rhymes, proverbs and anecdotes, as well as Low German songbooks and works on regional history and geography. The manuscripts and literary estates section of the State Library holds the literary estates of a number of authors writing in Low German

(Klaus Groth, Johann Hinrich Fehrs, Hans Ehrke, Waltrud Bruhn and others) and of ethnologists who left copious notes in Low German (Gustav Friedrich Meyer, Paul Selk and others).

- Kiel University Library

Kiel University Library owns several manuscripts and incunabula in the Low German language. Of particular importance is the Middle Low German *Bordesholmer Marienklage* (Bordesholm Lament of the Virgin Mary), of which a TV production video and a CD are available. In addition, there are several thousands of books, mainly on the subjects of linguistics, literary studies, fiction, poetry and ethnology. The German institute at Christian Albrechts University in Kiel has a department (and chair) of Low German Language and Literature, to which the Klaus-Groth-Archiv for research on early New Low German dialect literature is affiliated. With more than 5,000 Low German titles, the Low German Language and Literature department has one of the largest specialised libraries in the field. Almost half the books are literary works published since 1850 in the Low German language. Also, works on Low German language and literature past and present are collected. The holdings include manuscripts of Low German audio plays. In addition, the department has various collections on Low German.

- Flensburg Central University Library

Flensburg Central University Library has a basic stock of Low German literature, most of which consists of recent specialist literature. The focus is on grammar, dictionaries, linguistics, literary studies, Low German fiction and poetry, and ethnology. All the holdings are listed in an online library catalogue and in the database Gemeinsamer Bibliotheksverbund (GBV), the common library network of the seven German federal states Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony,

Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia and the Foundation of Prussian Cultural Heritage.

○ Lübeck Central University Library

Lübeck Central University Library has a basic stock of Low German literature, most of which consists of recent specialist literature.

The focus is on grammar, dictionaries, linguistics, literary studies, Low German fiction and poetry, and ethnology. All the holdings are listed in an online library catalogue and in the Gemeinsamer Bibliotheksverbund (GBV) database.

**h. Article 12 (3):**

i. Practical measures

- The American/Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society in Davenport, which has more than 32,000 members, has organised Low German conferences annually since 1995, the venues alternating between the USA and Schleswig-Holstein. A conference took place in Erfde, Schleswig-Holstein, in 2016.
- There is also lively cooperation in the field of Low German Philology with scholars from Scandinavia, the Baltic countries, Russia, the Netherlands and Belgium. Student exchange programmes with Ghent, Belgium and Bristol, England complement these contacts.
- Professor Michael Elmentaler (Christian Albrechts University of Kiel) has chaired the Verein für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung, VndS (Society for Low German Studies) since 2017. The society organises an international expert conference during the week after Whitsun (most recently in Kiel in 2018 and Marburg in 2019) in which scholars from Europe, Asia and North America regularly take part.
- The Low German department at the Europa-Universität Flensburg cooperates closely with Low German literary societies in Schleswig-Holstein, such as the Klaus-Groth-Gesellschaft (Klaus Groth Society) and the Fehrs Gilde, a language maintenance society, as well as with relevant associations in other federal states, such as the Fritz-Reuter-Gesellschaft

and the Augustin-Wibbelt-Gesellschaft, with a view to contributing to a critical understanding and discussion of Low German language and linguistic culture. There is also cooperation with other associations such as the Quickborn Society. This includes student engagement.

- Since 2018, Robert Langhanke has been Chairman of the Klaus-Groth-Gesellschaft, which played a leading role in commemorating the 200th anniversary of the poet's birth in 2019. As secretary of the Verein für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung (Society for Low German Studies) since 2011, Mr Langhanke helps to organise annual specialist conferences on Low German.

ii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts

- Members of the state government use their international contacts and trips to present Schleswig-Holstein's special cultural and linguistic diversity, minority policy and language policy for regional and minority languages on appropriate occasions.
- The Commissioner for Matters Related to National Minorities uses his contacts with Denmark and other countries, as well as with European institutions such as the OSCE and its High Commissioner on National Minorities, to present Schleswig-Holstein's special strength, cultural diversity and multilingualism resulting from the Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group, the minority of German Sinti and Roma and the Low German speech community, as well as the close contacts with the German minority in Denmark.
- The state of Schleswig-Holstein refers to the comments *in E.I.12.a*.



## 7. Article 13 - Economic and social life

### a. Article 13 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The applicable laws of the Federal Republic of Germany are in accordance with this obligation. This provision is thus already being complied with nationwide in respect of all regional or minority languages.

### b. Article 13 (1) (c)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The legal system in Germany prohibits such restrictions. This provision is thus already being complied with nationwide in respect of all regional or minority languages.

### c. Article 13 (1) (d)

There have been no changes since the previous reporting periods.

### d. Article 13 (2) (c)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation  
The share of publicly-run retirement and care homes in Schleswig-Holstein has fallen significantly and is now less than 5%. For this reason, there are limited possibilities to exert direct government influence in this area.

The only possibility is to appeal to the private and charitable operators of these facilities to hire Low German-speaking staff to care for residents who are speakers of Low German. This appeal is being made on an ongoing basis to the associations of care facilities within the framework of the federal state's nursing care committee.

- ii. Practical measures  
Care facilities that have firmly anchored Low German in their guiding principles and make appropriate provision for the language in their day-to-day care activities can apply for recognition as a "Plattdeutsche Pflegeeinrichtung" (Low German care facility). In cooperation with the Bundesrat für Nedderdütsch (Federal Council for Low German, BfN), the Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch, LzN (State Centre for Low German) has developed a catalogue of criteria to enable old age care facilities to apply for the "PlattHart" award.

This campaign is supported as far as possible.

- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts  
Regarding the implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts, reference is made to the practical measures described above.

## VII. Romani

### 1. Article 6 – Information

The ***Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media*** provides support for the cultural activities of the German Sinti and Roma on a permanent basis through institutional support for the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma. Funds are provided and approved with a view to implementing the supplementary Federal Government commitments deriving from the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

First of all, the ***Federal Minister of the Interior, Building and Community*** points out that the Romani language spoken by the German Sinti and Roma is only protected under Part III of the Charter in Hesse. Nevertheless, the needs and preferences of the autochthonous minority of Romani speakers are the basis for efforts at federal and state level to implement the Language Charter's provisions on Romani. For historical reasons, many members of the minority have long been opposed to using the Romani language in public.

At the annual implementation conference, the national minorities and linguistic groups exchanged information with the ministries and federal states and engaged in discussions on the Language Charter. Representatives of the national minority of German Sinti and Roma, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma and the Sinti Allianz Deutschland were among those invited to attend. Please refer to the comments *in C.III*.

In 2015, the Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the German Sinti and Roma was set up at the Federal Ministry of the Interior to discuss all federal policy issues concerning German Sinti and Roma.

The Consultative Committee comprises two representatives of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, two representatives of the Sinti Allianz Deutschland, one representative of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, one representative of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, one representative of the Secretariat for Minorities and one representative of each parliamentary group in the

German Bundestag. In addition, each federal state has one representative on the Committee.

The meeting is chaired by the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Ethnic German Resettlers and National Minorities.

The Committee usually meets once a year.

In addition, the Federal Ministry of the Interior provides up to €500,000 in funding for a wide range of projects run by the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), of which the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, as the umbrella organisation of German Sinti and Roma in Germany, is a member.

The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) was founded in Berlin on 7 June 2017. The initiative was launched jointly by the Council of Europe, the Open Society Foundations and the Roma Leaders' Initiative. Since its foundation, ERIAC has been receiving project-based funding from the Federal Foreign Office. ERIAC is committed to the recognition of Roma art and culture across Europe.

In 2020, with the support of the Federal Foreign Office, ERIAC launched the "Initiative zur Kulturgeschichte der Roma" (Roma Cultural History Initiative), a key component of which is to promote the Romani language. Experts with proven experience in the field are to be supported, for example, in developing teaching materials. In addition, the initiative aims to contribute to relearning the language and providing basic and advanced training for language teachers.

In addition, ERIAC is setting up a database for language teachers, translators and interpreters, developing a network of international Romani language schools with the involvement of European universities, and developing a language textbook at A1 level in cooperation with the Goethe-Institut. The International Romani Language Council, which was established at an international conference hosted by ERIAC in autumn 2020, serves long-term research into and promotion of the language

For further measures taken by the Federal Government with regard to the Romani language, please refer to the comments *in C.III. and in E.I.1.*

In **Baden-Württemberg**, the agreement between the state government and the Baden-Württemberg Association of German Sinti and Roma created the Council for the Affairs of German Sinti and Roma in Baden-Württemberg. On a number of occasions, the language courses offered by the Baden-Württemberg Association of German Sinti and Roma have been presented to this body, which meets once a year, and it has discussed the importance of language teaching within the minority. The State Ministry's web page on its cooperation with the German Sinti and Roma includes a link to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

In 2019, the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture of the **state of Brandenburg** provided €5,000 in funding for the production by the Berlin-Brandenburg Association of German Sinti and Roma of the booklet *Sinti und Roma. Geschichte und Gegenwart einer Minderheit in Brandenburg, Deutschland und Europa* (Sinti and Roma. Past and present of a minority in Brandenburg, Germany and Europe). The booklet includes references to Romani languages and to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The information on the Ministry website's page on the Sinti and Roma is limited to a reference to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Under the agreement concluded in 2017 between the **federal state of Hesse** and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, it was agreed that in addition to the regular exchange of information, a "joint body" be established. This body meets once a year. This enables topics covered by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages to be discussed.

In 2005, a framework agreement was concluded between the state government of Rhineland-Palatinate and the Rhineland-Palatinate Association of German Sinti and Roma. It states that in matters of particular concern to Sinti and Roma living in Rhineland-Palatinate, the Association is informed in advance and given the opportunity to comment. On the basis of this provision, the Association is also informed and involved

via its office concerning developments relating to the Language Charter. References to the Language Charter are included in the 2005 framework agreement and are also to be found on the website of the Ministry of the Interior and for Sport of Rhineland-Palatinate (<https://mdi.rlp.de/de/unsere-themen/buerger-und-staat/nationale-minderheiten/>).

The *state of Schleswig-Holstein* reports that the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament established a body for questions concerning German Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein in 2012 under the chairmanship of the President of the state parliament. Like the other contact bodies of minorities and ethnic groups, this body usually meets once a year, but last met on 29 September 2017. The competent state parliament administration is hoping to schedule a new date in late summer 2021. Members of the state parliament, the Minister-President's Commissioner for Matters relating to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, Border Area Work and Low German, staff of the relevant ministries, a representative of the municipal associations in Schleswig-Holstein and three representatives of the minority are represented in this body. Other guests will be invited on specific topics.

## VII.a Romani in Hesse

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

#### a. Article 7 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.6.*

#### b. Article 7 (1) (b)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017
- ii. Practical measures
  - The state of Hesse is not aware of any problems in this regard.

#### c. Article 7 (1) (c)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.2.*

#### d. Article 7 (1) (d)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.6.*

#### e. Article 7 (1) (e)

There have been no changes in this area since the previous reporting periods.

**f. Article 7 (1) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - In practice, implementation has so far proved to be very difficult, as Romani is not a standardised written language.
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - For a number of years, there has been a very close exchange with the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma on possibilities for implementing Romani lessons in the state of Hesse.

**g. Article 7 (1) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments in the *Sixth Periodical Report under E.II.11 on Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)*.

**h. Article 7 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - A Marburg grammar school teacher held seminars on the subject of Sinti and Roma for Marburg university students in a cooperation between the Philipps University of Marburg and the Hesse Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs for which the ministry provided a half-time position. Following the teacher's retirement, a successor has not yet been found, in spite of intensive efforts. Thus, it has not yet been possible to refill the post.



**i. Article 7 (1) (i)**

There have been no changes in this area since the previous reporting periods.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 6

ii. Practical measures

- An anti-discrimination unit has been set up at the Hesse Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017

ii. Practical measures

- The topics of “Sinti and Roma” and “antigypsyism” are part of the current curricula at *Hauptschulen* (secondary modern schools), *Realschulen* (secondary technical schools) and *Gymnasien* (grammar schools) in Hesse. As part of the further development of education standards, it is being examined whether the core curricula could be extended in future to include references to Sinti and Roma. If so, the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma will be involved in the necessary coordination processes.
- To complement the educational material available, a classroom handout has been developed to raise awareness of the genocide of Sinti and Roma.

**l. Article 7 (4)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma of 6 September 2017, Articles 2 and 3

ii. Practical measures

- In the above-mentioned agreement, the establishment of a “joint body” was agreed. It meets once a year.

## **2. Article 8 – Education**

### **a. Article 8 (1) (a) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
  
- ii. Practical measures and implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - In the field of pre-school education, reference is again made to the Schaworalle nursery school in Frankfurt am Main. In a project unique in Germany, most of the children cared for here are Roma children. The Schaworalle nursery school was established in 1996. A crèche (“jek, dui, trin” meaning one, two, three) with 10 places, run by the same organisation, was set up nearby in 2013. The 2018 annual report points out that language education and promotion are an important area of action for the institution. Its educational work is organised bilingually, ensuring that children also learn the German language. Romani, their native language, is the main language. Providing child-care in Romani and resolving conflicts and problems in the children’s native language is crucial because some children have insufficient German language skills, but particularly because language is part of their cultural identity. This is an essential part of the overall strategy. Native Romani-speaking staff are role models, creating trust and self-confidence, providing a sense of security and offering children the opportunity to articulate their experience in their native language. According to its statutes, Schaworalle cooperates with Roma and non-Roma on equal terms.

### **b. Article 8 (1) (b) (iv)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4

- ii. Practical measures and implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - Providing opportunities to offer Romani lessons at schools in Hesse is something that is still very difficult to implement in practice due to the ongoing discourse among the German Sinti and Roma. Nevertheless, the above-mentioned agreement underlined the special importance the state of Hesse attaches to the language of the Sinti and Roma. In particular, the federal state undertook to expand the educational opportunities for Sinti and Roma. In return, the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma agreed to take further measures. Specifically, a regular exchange takes place between the Hesse Ministry of Education and Culture and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma. In this context, the possibilities of providing for the teaching of Romani in schools at all levels are discussed.

**c. Article 8 (1) (c) (iv)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.2.b.*
- iii. Implementation of the recommendation of the Committee of Experts
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.2.b.*

**d. Article 8 (1) (d) (iv)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.2.b.*

**e. Article 8 (1) (e) (iii)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4

ii. Practical measures

- The difficulties of implementation continue to lie, among other things, in the ongoing discourse among German Sinti and Roma on the approach to opening the Romani language. It is therefore very difficult to set up study programmes in Romani. In addition, the implementation of the Language Charter is complicated by the fact that Romani spoken by German Sinti and Roma does not have a standardised written form and that the minority regards it as a kind of ‘insider language’ that should not be taught by state institutions. However, that would be necessary for a course of studies. It is likely that some of the pupils from the Sinti and Roma ethnic group who take their *Abitur* (university entrance certificate) at schools in Hesse will go on to do teacher training at university and will later be qualified teachers with Romani language skills.

**f. Article 8 (1) (f) (iii)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4

ii. Practical measures

- Attempts to establish Romani courses at adult education schools have not been successful. In practice, it therefore continues to be difficult to teach Romani in adult education.

**g. Article 8 (1) (g)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4

ii. Practical measures

- The topics of “Sinti and Roma” and “antigypsyism” are part of the current curricula at *Hauptschulen* (secondary modern schools), *Realschulen* (secondary technical schools) and *Gymnasien* (grammar schools) in Hesse.
- There will be an assessment of whether the core curricula can also include appropriate references to Sinti and Roma in future.

- To complement the educational material available, a classroom handout has been developed to raise awareness of the genocide of Sinti and Roma.

**h. Article 8 (1) (h)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments made in the *Sixth Periodical Report under E.II.1 on Article 8 (1) (h)*.
  - Reference is also made to the comments made *in E.VII.a.2.a* of this report.

**i. Article 8 (1) (i)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Hesse Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs holds the main responsibility for monitoring progress regarding classroom instruction in Romani for the state of Hesse. Of course, developments in this regard also depend on pupil numbers. There is constant contact with the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma on this matter.

**j. Article 8 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017, Article 4
- ii. Practical measures
  - At this point, no contribution is made by the state of Hesse.

### 3. Article 9 – Judicial authorities

#### a. Article 9 (1) (b) (iii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017
- ii. Practical measures
  - The federal state of Hesse has involved judicial practitioners in drafting the Seventh Periodical Report. Accordingly, as already described in the run-up to the *Sixth Periodical Report*, there have still been no cases concerning the use of Romani as a minority language, either in evidence or in the use of interpreters and translators.

#### b. Article 9 (1) (c) (iii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.3.a.*

#### c. Article 9 (2) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Agreement between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, 6 September 2017
- ii. Practical measures
  - Please refer to the comments *in E.VII.a.3.a.*

#### **4. Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services**

##### **a. Article 10 (2) (e)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Article 6.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The competent Ministry for Internal Affairs and Sport of Hesse has no information on the practical use of Romani as a minority language at meetings of the regional authorities. No complaints have been brought to the attention of the state of Hesse about inadequate use of the language.

##### **b. Article 10 (2) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Article 6.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The competent Ministry for Internal Affairs and Sport of Hesse has no information on the practical use of Romani as a minority language in city councils or municipal councils. No complaints have been brought to the attention of the state of Hesse about inadequate use of the language.

##### **c. Article 10 (3) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Article 6.
- ii. Practical measures
  - To date, the state of Hesse is not aware of Romani-speakers ever having made applications to public service providers in the Romani language.

##### **d. Article 10 (4) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Article 6.

- ii. Practical measures
  - The state of Hesse is not aware of any such case having arisen. Should this happen, provisions are in place for examining possible courses of action with the state of Hesse.

**e. Article 10 (5)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Article 6.
- ii. Practical measures
  - Under the Act on Name Changes by Minorities (*Minderheiten-Namensänderungsgesetz*, MinderNamÄndG) (adopted as Article 2 of the Act of 22 July 1997 (Federal Law Gazette (BGBl.) II, p. 1406) implementing Article 11 (1) of the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1 February 1995, last amended by an act of 19 June 2020 (Federal Law Gazette I, p. 1328)), persons to whom both the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and German law governing names apply can already, by making a declaration before the civil registrar: 1. assume a form of their name translated into the language of the national minority or ethnic group, if their name is translatable (conceptual adaptation); 2. change the spelling of their name into a form that matches the orthography of the minority or ethnic group's language (phonetic adaptation); or 3. revert to a name in the language of the national minority or ethnic group that was previously changed into a German form or some other name. It is enough for the declarant to be able to demonstrate in a credible manner that he/she previously held that original name.
  - Declarations under the Act on Name Changes by Minorities are made in Hesse before the registrar in whose district the declarant is domiciled or permanently resident.
  - Rules going further than the Act on Name Changes by Minorities in Hesse and allowing the use or acceptance of surnames in regional or minority



languages at the request of those concerned were not adopted and are not technically necessary, since this obligation already exists under the Federal Act following transposition of Article 10 (5) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

## 5. Article 11 – Media

### a. Article 11 (1) (b) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - See the comments *in D.III*.

### b. Article 11 (1) (c) (ii)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - See the comments *in D.III*.

### c. Article 11 (1) (d)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Article 8.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The state of Hesse promotes projects to raise awareness of the history, culture and fortunes of the Sinti and Roma. Specifically, in 2018 and 2019 the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma carried a news section in Romani on its homepage “Sinti-Roma-Hesse.de” along with a film in 2019/2020 entitled “Everyday racism against Sinti and Roma” (*Alltagsrassismus gegenüber Sinti und Roma*).

### d. Article 11 (1) (e) (i)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.

- ii. Practical measures
    - The minority continues to express its desire to use the language only within the Community. It should also be noted that Romani is not a standard written language. Consequently, the requirement to create a daily or weekly newspaper in Romani will hardly be feasible in practice.
- e. Article 11 (1) (f) (ii)**
- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
    - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
  - ii. Practical measures
    - See the comments *in E.VII.a.5.c.*
- f. Article 11 (1) (g)**
- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
    - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
  - ii. Practical measures
    - If the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma wishes to support the training of journalists and other media personnel, the state of Hesse will examine appropriate options.
- g. Article 11 (2)**
- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
    - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
  - ii. Practical measures
    - The state of Hesse has no comment to make here, as nothing has changed since the previous reporting periods.

## 6. Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities

### a. Article 12 (1) (a)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Articles 3, 4 and 8.
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - Promoting the cultural life of the Sinti and Roma has always been a matter of close personal interest to ministers in the state government of Hesse. Between 2017 and 2020, they sponsored a range of events organised by the *Sinti Union Hesse e.V.* or the *Philharmonischer Verein der Sinti und Roma*. Funding of €10,000 was given for the “Requiem for Auschwitz”, a major work commemorating the Sinti and Roma as a forgotten group of victims of National Socialism. Special funding of €6,000 was provided for an exhibition by the Anne Frank Foundation entitled “Sinti and Roma in Hesse” which helps to raise awareness of the Sinti and Roma and their specific concerns. A project called “Mare Manuscha! Art and culture of the Sinti and Roma” was organised in 2018 jointly with the Faust Culture Foundation and funded to the tune of €15,000, largely from special funds. All funded projects aim to highlight the often-marginalised views of Sinti and Roma in art and society and to break down prejudices. In addition, the *Philharmonischer Verein der Sinti und Roma* has, since 2020, received official funding of €20,000 a year from the Hesse Ministry of Science and the Arts.

### b. Article 12 (1) (d)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
  
- ii. Practical measures
  - See the comments *in E.VII.a.5.a.*

**c. Article 12 (1) (f)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Articles 3, 4 and 8.
- ii. Practical measures
  - See E.VII.a.5.a.
  - In addition, there is an ongoing exchange on this issue with the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.

**d. Article 12 (1) (g)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Committee of Experts' view is that this undertaking has been met. Thus the state of Hesse has no comment to make here, as nothing has changed since the previous reporting periods.

**e. Article 12 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma, Articles 3, 4 and 8.
- ii. Practical measures
  - See the comments *in E.VII.a.5.a.*

**f. Article 12 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - See *sixth periodical report, E.12.a, and E.VII.a.5.a.* in this report.
- iii. Implementation of the Committee of Experts' recommendation  
See *sixth periodical report, E.1.2a, and E.VII.a.5.a.* in this report.

## **7. Article 13 – Economic and social life**

### **a. Article 13 (1) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Committee of Experts' view is that this undertaking has been fulfilled. Thus the state of Hesse has no comment here, as nothing has changed since the previous reporting periods.

### **b. Article 13 (1) (c)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Committee of Experts' view is that this undertaking has been fulfilled. Thus the state of Hesse has no comment here, as nothing has changed since the previous reporting periods.

### **c. Article 13 (1) (d)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Committee of Experts' view is that this undertaking has been fulfilled. Thus the state of Hesse has no comment here, as nothing has changed since the previous reporting periods.

## **8. Article 14 – Transfrontier exchanges**

### **a. Article 14 (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - State treaty of 6 September 2017 between the state of Hesse and the Hesse Association of German Sinti and Roma.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The state of Hesse has no comment here, as nothing has changed since the previous reporting periods.

## VII.b Romani in the rest of Germany

### 1. Article 7 – Objectives and principles

For the minority language Romani in the *state of Baden-Württemberg*, see comments of Baden Württemberg *in D.I.4.*

The *Free State of Bavaria* reports that the Association of German Sinti und Roma – the Bavarian Association since the entry into force of the state treaty in 2017 – has not taken any measures under the Language Charter but is considering taking such measures in the near future.

Continuing reservations about wider public transmission of the minority language, prompted by the minority’s history and experience, explain why there has been hesitancy in this area to date. This has already been addressed in recent periodical reports:

In the Sixth Report (2017) on implementation of the Language Charter, the comment by the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma appended to the report says, concerning E.I.4.c (p. 124): “One response by the federal states to the demand by the Committee of Experts that Romani be taught in class was that, for historical reasons, there was no desire to share the language outside the minority group. In previous comments on the periodical reports the Central Council and the Documentation Centre provided information on this matter. (...)”

Page 49 of the sixth periodical report also states: “The regional associations of the minority of German Sinti and Roma are currently discussing the fact that the Romani language is taught only orally and the issue of codifying the German version of Romani. It is not yet foreseeable which direction this discussion will take within the minority. In the coming years and decades, this development might have the effect that the protection mechanisms of the European Language Charter will cover Romani to the same extent as they cover the other minority languages and the regional language of Low German.”



Several thousand Roma live in the Free State of *Thuringia*, and the trend is slightly upwards. Statistical data are not available. The majority of them are immigrants, especially from Eastern Europe, who have come to Thuringia as families for work reasons. The diversity of the Roma among themselves is reflected in linguistic differences (various dialects of Romani; some Roma do not even speak Romani). Most Roma are willing to integrate, and their children (second generation) grow up in Thuringia and learn German. Due to their employment, Roma are mainly resident in the cities of Thuringia.

**a. Article 7 (1) (a)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Article 2 of the Framework Agreement of 25 July 2005 between the state government of *Rhineland-Palatinate* and the Rhineland-Palatinate Association of German Sinti and Roma e.V. emphasises the recognition of Romani as the expression of a rich cultural heritage and reaffirms the undertaking given to meet the obligations arising from the Charter.
  - The constitution of the state of Schleswig-Holstein guarantees the cultural independence and political participation of the national minority of German Sinti and Roma and other national minorities and ethnic groups protected in Schleswig-Holstein. This is explicitly defined as a task for the state and its municipalities and associations.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The Rhineland-Palatine Association of German Sinti and Roma receives institutional funding from the *state of Rhineland-Palatinate*. Appropriations for education, public relations and cultural work were increased during the period under review.

**b. Article 7 (1) (b)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - Mindful of the sufferings of this minority under National Socialism, the *state government of Rhineland-Palatinate* recommends that local authorities should, in their administrative operations, show reasonable consideration for the fact that relatives of Sinti and Roma were murdered

in the concentration and extermination camps and that, after 1945, the survivors were faced with particular difficulties and hardships, the effects of which are still felt today.

ii. Practical measures

- Members of the minority of German Sinti and Roma live in all regions of **Schleswig-Holstein**, especially in the cities of Kiel, Lübeck, Neumünster, Heide and rural communities on the outskirts of Hamburg or on the west coast. There is, therefore, no clearly defined settlement area.

c. Article 7 (1) (c)

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.a.*

ii. Practical measures

- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.a.*
- The **Schleswig-Holstein** Association of German Sinti and Roma receives project funding of €17,900 to promote cultural and linguistic work.
- The Schleswig-Holstein Association receives €235,000 per year for educational advice to schools in the state.

d. Article 7 (1) (d)

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.a., D.I.4. and D.III.*
- Regarding public use of the Romani language, **Schleswig-Holstein** refers to its comments in *D.I.4.*

ii. Practical measures

- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.a., D.I.4. and D.III.*
- The **state of Schleswig-Holstein** provides institutional support for the Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma and, by funding a wide range of educational and cultural projects, supports use of the Romani language and the culture it expresses within the minority.

e. **Article 7 (1) (e)**

i. Practical measures

- The Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma receives annual funding from the **state of Schleswig-Holstein** of €17,900 for cultural work and und €283,700 for social and public relations work. This appropriation is intended to promote commemorative work, music, dance and sewing courses as well as educational trips to memorial sites. The focus of these projects is on promoting contacts between members of the minority and fostering their culture. In addition, commemorative work in particular targets the majority population too.
- For schools in the **Free State of Thuringia**, language and cultural mediators are available for cooperation with parents and schools under a cooperation agreement with SprIntpool Thüringen. This work is financed by the Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

f. **Article 7 (1) (f)**

With regard to this undertaking, the states of **North Rhine-Westphalia** and **Rhineland-Palatinate** refer to their comments *in D.I.4*.

g. **Article 7 (1) (g)**

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments *in E.VII.b.1.a.*, in conjunction with its comments *in D.I.4*.
- **Schleswig-Holstein** refers to its comment *in D.I.4*.

ii. Practical measures

- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments *in E.VII.b.1.a.*, in conjunction with its comments *in D.I.4*.
- The **Free State of Thuringia** reports that educational offerings for the Romani language in Thuringia can be organised both in schools throughout the day and in adult education on demand. No demand exists at present.

#### h. Article 7 (1) (h)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments *in D.I.4.*
- ii. Practical measures
  - **Rhineland-Palatinate** and **Schleswig-Holstein** refer to their comments *in D.I.4.*

#### i. Article 7 (1) (i)

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - The Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma receives institutional support from the **state of Schleswig-Holstein**. The aim is, among other things, for the Association to represent the interests of its members and members of the minority at federal and European policy level too.
- ii. Practical measures
  - The **Schleswig-Holstein** Association of German Sinti and Roma is a member of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma. The Chair of the State Association is the Deputy Chair of the Central Council. This involvement ensures exchange with the other state associations of German Sinti and Roma in Germany.
  - The Association is also a member of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) and thus part of its pan-European network. FUEN member associations include other Roma organisations, thus ensuring an exchange of views.
  - Finally, the Association is one of the founding members of the Schleswig-Holstein/Southern Denmark Minority Competence Network. The Network's aim is to promote understanding of national autochthonous minorities and ethnic groups as well as their language and culture, and to support exchange of information and experience amongst these national minorities and ethnic groups and with the majority population, primarily in Europe. This objective is to be achieved by coordinating cooperation between local minority associations and by supporting projects, seminars,

encounters and exchanges organised by the Network itself or by its members and taking place in Schleswig-Holstein and/or the Southern Denmark region.

**j. Article 7 (2)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - **Rhineland-Palatinate** and **Schleswig-Holstein** refer to their comments in *E.VII.b.1.a*.
- ii. Practical measures
  - **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.a*.
  - Specific forms of assistance by the **state of Schleswig-Holstein** to the State Association of German Sinti and Roma are developed jointly with the Association. The differences between the regional and minority languages protected in Schleswig-Holstein arise from the different needs of the respective speaker groups, as articulated by them now and in the past.

**k. Article 7 (3)**

- i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation
  - On 25 March 2021, the state parliament of **Brandenburg** instructed the state government to include in the proposed multilingualism strategy for Brandenburg details of effective teaching about Romani as a minority language and the culture of the Sinti and Roma.
  - **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *D.III.3*.
  - Section 2 (3) of the **Schleswig-Holstein** Teacher Training Act (*Lehrkräftebildungsgesetz, LehrBG*) states that special emphasis must be given in teacher training to the importance of the language, history and culture of the national Danish minority, the Frisian ethnic group and the national minority of the German Sinti and Roma, as well as the importance of Low German for the state of Schleswig-Holstein.
  - Section 4 (6) sentence 3 of the Schools Act of Schleswig-Holstein stipulates that schools must promote “the contribution of national minorities and ethnic groups to the country’s cultural diversity and respect for the Sinti and Roma minority”.

ii. Practical measures

- The **Brandenburg** Ministry of Science, Research and Culture also provides information about Sinti and Roma on its website, referring *inter alia* to the Language Charter.
- **Rhineland-Palatinate** refers to its comments in *D.III.3*.
- With support from the **state of Schleswig-Holstein**, the Association of German Sinti and Roma has developed and produced a travelling exhibition entitled “The long road: displacement – exclusion – persecution – integration. Sinti and Roma in Schleswig-Holstein”, which will be shown in schools, official buildings and exhibition sites in Schleswig-Holstein. This project specifically targets the majority population and members of other minorities and language groups, and provides new perspectives on the German Sinti and Roma and their contribution to Schleswig-Holstein’s cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Various Schleswig-Holstein schools, such as the Theodor Storm School in Husum, have organised projects on the history and culture of the German Sinti and Roma, often with the support of the State Association.

I. Article 7 (4)

i. Measures in the fields of policy and/or legislation

- **Schleswig-Holstein** refers here to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.a*.

ii. Practical measures

- Regular meetings are held between the state government of **Rhineland-Palatinate** and the Association of German Sinti and Roma. During the reporting period, the Rhineland-Palatinate Association expressed the wish for the 2005 framework agreement to be further developed as a more comprehensive state treaty. The state government has indicated its willingness in principle to discuss the matter.
- **Schleswig-Holstein** refers to its comments in *E.VII.b.1.j*.
- The state parliament of Schleswig-Holstein has a Panel (*Gremium*) for German Sinti and Roma issues, chaired by the Parliament’s President. Here, the Schleswig-Holstein Association of German Sinti and Roma, as the

principal body representing the minority in the state, can make its wishes and initiatives known directly to politicians, administrators and local authorities.

- The *Dialogue Forum North* (DFN) chaired by the Prime Minister's Representative for Minorities is also a platform where the minority can enlist support for its concerns in dialogue with other minorities and language-speakers. One of the key aims of this civil society alliance is to develop a common position on minority policy issues and to speak with one voice.
- The state government of Schleswig-Holstein involves the minorities' associations in all its reports to the state parliament that have relevance for minorities. Under the heading "Forum", they can present their views on the state's policy in this area and formulate expectations and suggestions for its future policy on minorities.

## **F. Comments by the associations**

The comments by these organisations are included in the present periodical report irrespective of the views held by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (BMI), which has editorial responsibility for the report.



## 1. Comments by the Danish minority



30 November 2020

Danish Secretary General/JAC

E-mail: info@syfo.de

*Revised comments as at 15 April 2021.*

### **Comments by the Danish minority on the recommendations of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers and Committee of Experts regarding implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Germany**

The Danish minority group, represented by the cultural organisation *Sydslesvigsk Forening* (the South Schleswig Association, SSF), *Sydslesvigsk Vælgerforening* (South Schleswig Voters' Association, SSV/SSW) and *Dansk Skoleforening for Sydslesvig* (the Danish Schools Association for South Schleswig), expresses its thanks for this opportunity to comment on the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts on Germany's implementation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The Danish minority is pleased that, after the change in government in May 2017, the new state government made up of CDU, FDP and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Alliance 90/The Greens) announced that it would continue the current federal state policy on minorities. In recent years, the minority policy of the Federal Government and the state of Schleswig-Holstein has generally developed well.

#### **Education**

The draft act amending the Continuing Education Act (*Weiterbildungsgesetz*, WBG) in Schleswig-Holstein plans to strengthen the teaching of regional and minority languages as well as knowledge about the cultures of the minorities living in Schleswig-Holstein.

The recommendation of the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts that pupils and teachers in Germany be better informed about minorities is positive. The curricula of all the federal states should include compulsory teaching about minorities, especially in the most relevant subjects (e.g. history, economics/politics, geography, languages).

Otherwise, the way in which the proposals for the new curricula in history and economics/politics deal with minorities is not best suited to impart knowledge and information about these minorities.

Ad 46: The City of Kiel is now also covered by these rules.

- General financing of the Danish Schools Association:
  - School transport – after the districts took over the payment of parental contributions to state schools, we were promised an increase in the lump-sum allowance. This increase entered into force on 1 January 2021.
  - All-day school – the subsidies are based on 2010 figures and are increased only by the rate of inflation. Applications for ex gratia payments are approved only in exceptional cases. For the most part, we receive no reply or a rejection, often with a referral to state guidelines and the argument that the school operator has already fulfilled its obligations by virtue of its refunds to the state.
- “Our kids only” rule (*Landeskinderregel*):
  - Section 119 (4) of the Schools Act (*Schulgesetz, SchulG*) stipulates that calculation of our cost per pupil rates can only take account of pupils resident in Schleswig-Holstein. With increasing mobility (cross-border commuters), this regime is no longer realistic, and the issue is dealt with differently in the European context and in the courts. However, final clarification is still pending.

## Media

The Danish minority believes, in principle, that the public broadcaster NDR has an obligation to take account of the minority language of Danish in its programming. The South Schleswig Association (SSF) therefore very much welcomes the fact that the new NDR broadcasting agreement (NDR-StV) includes an undertaking to that end. The state governments of Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Lower Saxony have agreed that regional and minority languages will be better taken into account in future.

SSF is expecting to secure its own representation on the Broadcasting Council of NDR so that it can represent the interests of the Danish minority. On the positive side, since 2016, minorities have been given the opportunity to be represented on the ZDF Television Council.

The greater objective is continued promotion of the Danish language, and we would like to encourage funding for outreach work by the minority groups, and, for instance, for “*Flensburg Avis*”, the daily newspaper of the Danish minority.

In the German-Danish border area, the daily newspaper “*Der Nordschleswiger*” of the German minority in Denmark has, for years, been sponsored by both the German authorities and the Danish public authorities.

However, *Flensborg Avis* receives financial support only from Denmark. There is no cross-border equality here, which is a cornerstone of minority policy in the German-Danish border area.

## 2. Comments by the North Frisians



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### Comments by the Frisian Council

First of all, the Frisian Council Section North would like to express its delight that a *Friisk Stiftung/Friesenstiftung* (Frisian Foundation) has been established. Sincere thanks to all those involved at state and federal level. In the run-up to the Seventh Report of the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Article 15 (1) of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, we are happy to respond again on behalf of the North Frisians and break down our viewpoint as follows:

**(1) How important is the Charter considered to be for the preservation and ongoing development of the minority language North Frisian?**

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages continues to provide the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the Frisian language. The majority of efforts and projects aiming to foster and promote the North Frisian language are based on this legal instrument. The Charter is primarily a political instrument and underpins many projects. Basically, it provides important arguments in exchanges with the majority population. Ultimately, however, it is the people on the ground who play a decisive role in preserving and developing the Frisian language. Because it is they who ultimately put the principles of the Charter into practice.

**(2) What specific progress do you consider to be a result of the Charter that took effect on 1 January 1999?**

The 2004 Frisian Act was amended, section 2 of it *inter alia*, with effect from 30 June 2016. This made knowledge of Frisian a requirement in the recruitment of civil servants in the Nordfriesland district and on the island of Heligoland.

The Frisian Council Section North also welcomes the efforts of the state government to implement its action plan on language policy. This will make it easier to use Frisian in official settings. And special language skills, such as Frisian, will be given greater weight in applications for public-sector jobs.

The plan also includes a broader remit for nursery schools, which will now cater for minority languages too. It means that the facilities concerned will qualify for funding in a similar way to foreign-language classes.

Bilingual road signs in the Nordfriesland district are a good and proper step. The Frisian

ethnic group would like to be more closely involved in any further steps.

As mentioned above, a major step forward is the establishment of the Frisian Foundation, which makes for easier planning and is permanent.

The efforts made by the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein to seek amendment of the NDR broadcasting agreement so that more content in regional and minority languages is broadcast are also very welcome.

In the field of education, the Frisian Council welcomes the fact that bonus credits are given for the Frisian certificate course when traineeships are awarded. This external incentive may help to motivate interested student teachers to train as teachers of Frisian.

**(3) Which of the obligations from Part III of the Charter undertaken by Schleswig-Holstein have not yet been fully implemented?**

Although progress has been made as described in paragraph 2 above, the North Frisians – compared with other minorities in the Federal Republic of Germany and minorities in the German-Danish border area – are still a long way from saying that all is well.

There is still certainly room for improvement when it comes to education and the media. At least the state government's action plan on languages shows some movement with regard to Frisian in schools. Other adjustments would certainly be worthwhile in terms of training for teachers and educators. The same goes for the state's recruitment policy, under which Frisian-speaking teachers are recruited regardless of whether they will be deployed in the Frisian language area. This is most regrettable.

It remains to be seen whether NDR will implement the aforementioned amendment of the broadcasting agreement in a way that takes greater account of the Frisian language and Frisian topics in the public-service media. With the exception of the private media, there has been no movement here for years, and talks have become bogged down. It is remarkable to note here that private media focus more on Frisian than public institutions do.

Furthermore, funding is currently quite problematic. The transfer of responsibilities immediately after the national and Bundestag elections continues to mean very sluggish cash flows, which make it very difficult for Frisian projects to continue operating.

The number of pupils studying Frisian is stagnating at a low level. This must not obscure the fact that, especially in secondary schools with the exception of Föhr and Amrum, Frisian lessons are either not offered from grade 5 onwards, or there is no take-up. We are currently a long way from a cohesive system of education from nursery school to university. The Frisian Council considers it essential to make the external environment more attractive, for example by recognising Frisian as a regular subject for instruction and thus integrating it into the morning classes.

There are deficits in schools, particularly regarding the provision of teaching materials. Basically, the Frisian Council notes that there is no organised competence for the design of Frisian teaching and study materials, as is also the case with other language minorities.

The changes in Frisian teacher training are welcomed (see above). Nevertheless, in order to attract enough Frisian teachers, a nationwide campaign would be desirable to draw attention to the possibilities of studying Frisian. The Frisian Council stands ready as a project partner.

**(4) What do you expect over the next five years?**

Based on the frequently mentioned recommendations of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts, we list below the following problems which must be solved if the Frisian language and culture are to survive. It is necessary to:

- recognise the teaching of Frisian as a regular subject at all grades;
- incorporate Frisian lessons into the normal school timetable instead of offering them as an afternoon activity;
- make the external framework for Frisian lessons more attractive to all participants so that more pupils volunteer for them, leading to an increase in pupil numbers;
- clarify who is responsible for providing teaching and study materials for Frisian lessons and ensure that staffing and funding levels are adequate;
- actively promote training opportunities for Frisian teachers and make them known to future teachers;
- increase coverage in public service broadcasting;
- organise the funding of nursery schools in such a way as to provide secure employment in them over the long term;
- secure long-term funding for the Frisian Council headquarters;
- secure long-term funding for the *Nordfriisk Instituut*.

In particular, the Frisian ethnic group hopes that the Frisian Foundation, which has now been established, will speed up and improve the handling of cash flows.

**The long-term survival of the Frisian language and culture will, in any event, require a strong commitment from both the state and the Federal Government.**

Bräist/Bredstedt,  
8 March 2021

### 3. Comments by the Sater Frisians



# Heimatverein Saterland SeelterBuund

Johanna Evers and Karl-Peter Schramm,  
Representatives at the implementation conference  
26683 Saterland

Saterland, 10 February 2021

## **Comments by the Seelter Buund (Sater Frisians) on the Seventh Report of the Federal Republic of Germany on the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

The Seelter Buund supports the recommendations of the Committee of Experts for action to strengthen education services in Sater Frisian at all appropriate levels, particularly in nursery and primary schools, as well as in secondary schools and adult education.

The recommendation to set up a supervisory body to monitor progress on Sater Frisian lessons and publish regular reports is also supported. The urgent need for such support is clear when we look at the current situation regarding Sater Frisian teaching in nursery and other schools:

### Situation in nursery schools:

A Sater Frisian activity group (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, or “AG”) is routinely offered in three of Saterland’s six nursery schools. For the first time in 2021, the municipality of Saterland will be able, thanks to cultural funding, to pay staff who have hitherto worked as unpaid volunteers.

### Situation in primary schools:

There has been no Sater Frisian instruction at Sedelsberg primary school for four years now, as there is no teacher.

The Ramsloh primary school has an AG of just eight pupils, although this is the biggest school in terms of pupil numbers. The teacher has taken part in a further training course for Sater Frisian.

The situation in the Strücklingen primary school is better, as there are AGs in three years with a total of 35 children. However, immersion lessons are no longer taught.

At the Scharrel primary school, 14 children receive immersion teaching, and in the other years there are AGs with 38 children in all. Four children have also taken part in a Sater Frisian music project (CD).

The Ramsloh *HS/RS* (secondary modern/lower technical school) has only one teacher available who trials a language encounter twice a year as part of the grade 5 textiles programme. Frisian as a core curriculum option has not been offered for five years, owing to a shortage of teachers.

At the *Gymnasium* (grammar school) (up to grade 10), the core curriculum option of Sater Frisian has been cancelled for three years owing to a lack of teachers.

At various schools, however, performances and reading competitions are held in Sater Frisian. The recommendation to encourage the production and dissemination of audio/audiovisual works in Sater Frisian is supported. The municipality of Saterland has acted on it, and a number of projects are ongoing, some with musical support by primary school children. (See the Scharrel primary school music project.)

Since Sater Frisian is taught not only in schools, we expressed the wish in our comments on the Sixth Report for a Sater Frisian Commissioner, who could develop and apply for projects independently also outside of school activities. It is important that this work should not be carried out purely on a voluntary basis. That wish was fulfilled in November 2020. Through the cultural organisation *Oldenburgische Landschaft*, the state of Lower Saxony has allocated us a half-time post for a Sater Frisian Commissioner. Mr Henk Wolf is our Sater Frisian Commissioner, operating out of his office at the Saterland town hall. He has already launched initial projects and implemented them despite the pandemic. He also regularly writes columns in the local press and thus ensures that Sater Frisian is spoken in public.

However, there are a number of special requests in Saterland that have been prompted mainly by the situation in nursery and other schools, especially with regard to staffing and general teaching conditions. These requests are addressed primarily to the Ministry for Education of Lower Saxony.

These concern, in particular, the following issues:



- Participation in bilingual lessons is voluntary and dependent on parental consent. This means that, in some years, because of the ministerial decree on class sizes, there are too few pupils for bilingual lessons to take place. We would hope to see more flexible rules from the education authorities here.
- The Seelter Buund also considers training for preschool and school teachers who teach Sater Frisian to be important. In our opinion, this training should be a cooperative exercise involving higher education and teacher training institutions.
- The state of Lower Saxony should renew the decree “*Die Region und ihre Sprachen im Unterricht*” (The region and its languages in classroom instruction), focusing on hours of instruction and pupil numbers.
- Normal lessons at schools require a binding legal basis that must be achievable for the minority languages (numbers, group size, teacher hours).

In cooperation with the municipal administration, we have succeeded in obtaining financial support for the cultural work of the Sater Frisians: thus, unpaid volunteers can at least be reimbursed for their expenses and receive a small amount of compensation for their voluntary work.

The Seelter Buund would be pleased to welcome the report experts on a visit to Saterland. We believe that the special nature of our language and the challenges involved in preserving it can be best assessed on site.

Yours faithfully,

Johanna Evers

Karl-Peter Schramm

#### 4. Comments by the Friesisches Forum e.V.

# Friesisches Forum

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8 March 2021

## **Submission regarding Point F of the Seventh Report on the Implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

**Your ref. HI6-20301/3#8**

**Your communication of 30 June 2020**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on the recommendations and opinions of the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts.

With regard to the recommendations and comments on Sater Frisian in Lower Saxony, we fully endorse the comments of the Seelter Buund dated 10 February 2021. The following remarks apply to Low German in Lower Saxony.

(a) We expressly agree with the general remarks made in the report (paragraphs 54 and 55, pp. 59 and 60 of the report). We also agree with the wording of sub-paragraph (a) regarding the recommendations for immediate action (to “**Further strengthen the educational offer for Low German at all appropriate levels**”). The efforts of Lower Saxony should be significantly intensified here.

With regard to the other recommendations (section II), we wish to make the following specific comments:

(b) Lower Saxony has, in the meantime, met the demand for a supervisory body to monitor progress on Low German teaching and publish regular reports on this (see <https://www.rlsb.de/bu/schulen/unterricht-faecher/schulformuebergreifende-beratung/region-im-unterricht/berichte-1/2020-06-29-jahresbericht-2019-nlschb-zur-umsetzung-der-sprachencharta-in-der-schule.pdf/view>) in conjunction with the circular entitled “The Region and the languages of

Low German and Sater Frisian in classroom instruction” (Culture Ministry circular of 1 June 2019 – 32 – 82101/3-2). The most recent published report by the supervisory body looks at the year 2019 and can be viewed online using the above link. It states on page 3, *inter alia*, that: “The full number of hours requested by the project schools could not be provided in the current school year. High demand meant that the maximum allocation of three hours per week allowed by decree for projects promoting and preserving the Low German language could not be met. As a rule, the allocation was just one or two hours.”

Against this background, we consider it urgent to increase resources so that demand can be met in future.

(c) On this point, we were unable to identify any significant activities by the state of Lower Saxony during the reporting period. The state is supposedly preparing a report with proposals for activities in the coming years.

(d) Our perception is that the provision of regular Low German television broadcasts has been neither expanded nor facilitated. The state should be proactive in its programming here (in conjunction with point (e)).

(e) We can see no sustainable initiatives on this point by the state. Here too the state should put forward an action plan which will not only encourage the production and dissemination of audio and audiovisual works in Low German but also provide the appropriate resources. This point can also be seen as a pre-condition of better compliance with the recommendation under (d).

(f) The comments under (e) apply here *mutatis mutandis*. Here, too, no significant progress will be made without the provision of resources.

(g) On this point, we were unable to identify any significant activities during the reporting period, so here too the finding remains negative.

(h) We have not noticed any activity on this point, which is a federal responsibility (cultural relations policy). The Federal Government must ensure that an action plan is drawn up, backed by the necessary funds.

Yours faithfully,



Arno Ulrichs, President

## 5. Comments by the Bundesrat für Nedderdüütsch

### 1. Current developments on protection of the Low German regional language

In the years between the Sixth Report of the Federal Republic of Germany (2017) and this Seventh Report, the existing structures for the protection of the Low German language at federal level and in the eight federal states which signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of the Low German language have stabilised and proved their worth. The main reason for this success has been the constant dialogue that takes place between the leading actors involved in promoting Low German. Language groups in the federal states can rely on tried and tested structures such as Low German centres, regional councils and homeland associations, which many years ago set about the task of nurturing the Low German language. Of course, the networks in the various states are different and are financed in different ways. The graphics on the homepage of the Bundesrat für Nedderdüütsch (Federal Council for Low German, BfN) and the Low German Secretariat (NDS) provide an initial overview of existing networks in the federal states: <https://www.niederdeutschsekretariat.de/niederdeutschnetzwerke-in-den-laendern>.

The supraregional institutions *Länderzentrum für Niederdeutsch gGmbH* (LzN), *Institut für niederdeutsche Sprache e.V.* (Institute for Low German, INS) and BfN/NDS cooperate on specific topics and projects, e.g. in the field of Low German in care homes and Low German in the current academic world, and on networking the various language groups. Although restructuring in the funding landscape, inevitable after Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein called time on their institutional funding of the INS after 31 December 2017, initially caused alarm and uncertainty for the language group, and not just in those four states, the BfN now believes, three years later, that many if not all speakers of Low German see cooperation by the three institutions as a way of achieving a lot for the language in a range of different contexts. Nevertheless, some issues that were raised in the previous comments in 2017 have still not been resolved, such as the preservation and use of the INS Low German library. Thanks to funding pledged by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media for the PLATO (Low German sound archive) project in 2020, the future of the INS media centre is for the moment secure. LzN, INS and BfN/NDS consult regularly on current priorities and planned projects to be submitted to the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. A joint project is planned for 2021.

The NDS, which began its work of supporting the BfN's language policy activities on 1 November 2017, on the basis of a Bundestag decision and with federal funding (BMI), has since proved indispensable to the otherwise unpaid voluntary work of the BfN. Events such as "Junge Lüüd in Berlin" in the Representation of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony on 5 November 2019 and the principal events held on the European Day of Languages (e.g. in Cloppenburg, Lower Saxony, on 19 October 2018 and in Leck, Schleswig-Holstein, on 27 September 2019) were only possible thanks to solid work by the NDS. Cooperation with minorities on language policy issues has also been strengthened through the NDS, whose Director is in regular contact with the Minority Secretariat. This is reflected, *inter alia*, in the fact that the Low German language group took part

for the first time officially in the “Discussion group on national minorities and Low German language group at the German Bundestag” on 10 February 2020. At meetings of the discussion group, representatives of the four national minorities in Germany and of the Low German language group have the opportunity to address their concerns to members of the Bundestag and representatives of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. The Low German language group also welcomes the fact that a first joint presentation of national minorities in Germany and of the Low German language group is currently under preparation. The interactive travelling exhibition “What does ‘minority’ mean?”, which is being organised under the auspices of the Minority Secretariat in cooperation with the Minority Council and the BfN/NDS, will showcase linguistic and cultural diversity in Germany, the history and role of national minorities and the Low German language group. The exhibition will open in 2021 and will then visit all the 16 federal states. Its website will provide interesting information to supplement a visit to the exhibition itself.

A number of forums have proved invaluable as opportunities for discussion and exchange between the language group and government and administration at federal and state levels: annual meetings of the Consultative Committee on Issues concerning the Low German Language Group, chaired by Dr Bernd Fabritius (the Federal Government Commissioner for Refugees and National Minorities), and the meetings, also annual, of federal and state policy officials, which the BfN attends as a guest. The BfN therefore stresses the need to continue the two discussion groups, even if the pandemic lasts beyond 2020.

In terms of language policy, the BfN estimates that positive structural developments have taken place in some federal states, regardless of whether they protect Low German in accordance with Part II or Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Before we comment on the specific recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, here are some examples of these current developments.

The Part II state of **Brandenburg** declared its commitment to its regional language by signing the “Agreement establishing the basis for cooperation between the State of Brandenburg and the Low German language group” in February 2018. This was the first time that binding regulations were laid down to promote the protected regional language of Low German. Speakers regard this agreement and the state of Brandenburg’s voluntary commitments as a “milestone in cooperation” between the state and the Low German language group.

In the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, the language group welcomes the fact that, in the third legislative term in a row, the *Bremische Bürgerschaft* (state parliament) set up a Low German Advisory Council, attached to the President of parliament. On the negative side, however, representatives of the parliamentary groups often do not attend the meetings of the Advisory Council, so an important function of this body is wasted. The language group also criticises the role of the Ministry of Culture as its chief interlocutor in Bremen, since this Ministry, during the reporting period, failed to offer active political support for speakers’ concerns or engage in constructive dialogue.

In the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, the language group has no information on who has general responsibility for Low German.

In **Lower Saxony**, the interministerial cross-party working group has proved to be an important forum in recent years for developing and implementing a plan of action to strengthen, promote and expand the regional language Low German and the minority language Sater Frisian, in a joint debate between politicians, administration, ministries and speakers. This initiative will continue in the coming years.

In **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania**, the organisation *Heimatverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e.V.*, funded by the State Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, has further demonstrated its commitment to Low German, for example by launching the “Low German Round Table” platform and an “Atlas of Low German”. The Atlas is a database with a virtual map, designed to record and visually present – if possible – all speakers of Low German in the state and thus highlight the widespread use of Low German (<https://www.heimatverband-mv.de/unsere-themen/niederdeutsche-sprache.html>).

In the Part II State of **North Rhine-Westphalia**, the Advisory Council on the Low German Language and Regional Identity was established as part of the state government in 2019 after a long preparatory period. The body operates under the Ministry of Regional Identity, Communities and Local Government, Building and Gender Equality. The BfN welcomes the establishment of the Advisory Council as a body within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Article 7), to which unpaid volunteers and full-time paid individuals, associations and institutions concerned with nurturing the Low German language care as well as political representatives are appointed. However, the BfN also believes that a representative of the Plautdietsch language group, which is organised in North Rhine-Westphalia, should be appointed to the Advisory Council. The language group is keen for this body to discuss the possible signing of Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The Part II State of **Saxony-Anhalt** reaffirmed its responsibility for the preservation and promotion of Low German in May 2019 by the state parliament’s decision on “Low German in Saxony-Anhalt”. Three priorities were identified to flesh out the state parliament’s 1991 decision: support for educational provision, especially in nursery and primary schools, making the Low German language more visible through bilingual local signs, and provision of suitable support for completion of the *Mittleldeutsches Wörterbuch*, a dictionary of German as spoken in the Middle Elbe region.

In **Schleswig-Holstein**, the state government intends to take still greater account of the country’s linguistic diversity in the public sphere. To that end, the cabinet adopted a Language Policy Action Plan on 17 November 2020 (<https://schleswig-holstein.de/sprachenpolitik>). The package of measures continues to focus on education, but also on promoting the media presence of regional and minority languages. It also looks at the added value of minority and regional languages, for example in the fields of work, school, basic and further training and voluntary work. In 2020, Schleswig-Holstein also became the first federal state to assume additional obligations in the state under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of the minority languages Danish and North Frisian and the regional language Low German. For the regional language Low German, the state signed Article 10 (2) (g) of the Language Charter (administrative authorities) and Article 12 (1) (e) (cultural activities and facilities).

## **2. Recommendations of 30 January 2019 by the Committee of Ministers on Germany’s implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages**

Recommendation 1: Strengthen the educational offer for Lower Sorbian, North Frisian, Sater Frisian, Low German and Romani; and

Recommendation 2: Ensure that a sufficient number of adequately trained teachers for regional or minority language education are available

The BfN sees major differences in the implementation of Article 8 of the Charter in the eight federal states, regardless of whether Part II or Part III has been signed.

Since the agreement reached in 2018, official policy in the state of **Brandenburg** has shown acceptance of and support for the concerns of the language group. Notwithstanding the promotion of numerous projects, for example the “Low German children’s creative competition”, financial support for library education work in the form of “Low German corners” (*Plattdütsch-Ecken*), preparation of a *Plattddeutsch-Fibel* (Low German primer) and museum education using audio guides, there is no escaping the fact that, valuable as those initiatives are, Brandenburg still falls far short of its primary duty to facilitate the learning of Low German by every means possible. Admittedly, the framework curriculum for grades 1-10, which came into effect in 2017/18, now allows teachers to incorporate Low German into their lessons. But, apart from the teaching provided by a very few unpaid volunteers, there has been no improvement here. There is currently no teaching in Low German in Brandenburg, although good basic study materials are available, such as the first *Brannenborch Plattfibel*, funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and developed by the members of the Association for Low German in Brandenburg, and the workbook *Plattdütsch för ju*, which has been widely used since 2017 for grades 3 and 4. The main problem here is the lack of teachers for Low German.

However, a paradigm shift is emerging within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MBSJ) as part of the implementation of the mandate set out in the coalition agreement to further promote the regional language of Low German in schools and also with regard to the multilingualism concept currently under development. This trend is borne out by the fact that the consultation first held in September 2020 between the Ministry and representatives of the Association for Low German in Brandenburg in the “Low German Discussion Group” resulted in a comprehensive action plan and is to be repeated.

In the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, the situation at all levels of the education sector remains unchanged and unsatisfactory since the sixth periodical report, notwithstanding the experts’ recommendations. There is still only one primary school that has integrated Low German into its school programme and life. The other two special-focus (“*Profil*”) primary schools offer teaching by activity groups (AGs), but inconsistently. Further learning in lower secondary level fell by the wayside even before the current coronavirus pandemic. Bremen, unlike most Charter states, is not doing any work on suitable teaching materials or curriculum ideas. As before, the authorities cite a lack of demand instead of providing incentives to create demand in the spirit of the Charter. Personal, and individual, engagement encountered in educational administration and schools is valued, but it is no substitute for structurally, materially and substantively equipped pathways to Low German as a school subject.

The Free and Hanseatic City of **Hamburg** was, for many years, a role model for all the Charter states, introducing Low German as a school subject with initial curricula, a first textbook co-financed with the Low German Council (*Plattdütschroot*) and the stated intention of expanding

the subject to all school levels, but the language group now has the impression that Low German plays only a minor role in Hamburg schools. A further difficulty is that the relevant post at the city's Authority for Schools and Vocational Training has remained vacant for a long time. The language group has no up-to-date information on who is responsible for Low German as a school subject. The language group calls for urgently needed communication with the authorities on this matter.

In **Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania**, there is conscious emphasis on Low German at secondary level, so Low German is currently offered as a second foreign language at six *Gymnasien* (grammar schools) and can therefore also be chosen as a subject for the *Abitur*. In pre-school and primary schools, on the other hand, Low German is not offered as a subject or in immersion lessons, but as all-day courses and in AGs working with volunteer Low German speakers. As of the winter semester 2020/21, the situation for the future teaching of Low German at the state's primary schools looks significantly better. Introduction of the new primary school teaching course at the University of Greifswald means that students can opt for Low German as one of their four subjects. Low German will thus have to feature more prominently in primary school curricula than hitherto (Part III of the Charter, Article 8 (1) (b) (iii)).

With the motion for a resolution of September 2017 on promoting and strengthening the Low German and Sater Frisian languages and the Decree of August 2019 on "The region and the languages of the region, Low German and Sater Frisian, in classroom instruction", the state of **Lower Saxony** laid down solid foundations for establishing and strengthening the subject of Low German in schools. Thus, 260 hours of lessons for both lower secondary level and primary schools are permanently budgeted for. Schools can apply to be model schools, but only for a period of one year. From the start of the school year 2019/2020, the pilot project "Low German at lower secondary level" was launched in 16 schools. In response to the recommendations of the Committee of Experts, the language group wishes Lower Saxony to ratify subsequently the undertakings referred to in Article 8 regarding primary and secondary education. Only in this way can the ambition expressed by the state parliament in the motion for a resolution of 21 September 2017 (Printed Paper 17/8757), for continuous education in Low German and Sater Frisian from nursery to primary school and secondary school to university, be properly and sustainably met. The language group regrets that the state of Lower Saxony has so far failed to respond to this call.

The language group also considers that the provision of teaching materials is still insufficient and that the recruitment of trained teachers will be a challenge in the near future. The establishment and occupation of a junior professorship for "Low German literature from a historical and cultural perspective" at the Institute of German Studies at Oldenburg University may have created a good environment for this in 2020, provided adequate consideration is given to teaching the Low German language.

In **North Rhine-Westphalia**, the language group is seeking ways to promote the Low German language in child education, e.g. by the provision of a "heritage treasure chest" for nursery schools, to be funded by the state. The language group is keen to initiate (more) Low German reading competitions, funded by the state, to familiarise pupils with the Low German language.



In **Saxony-Anhalt**, the launch of a pilot project on Low German in rural schools is one of the cultural priorities of 2020. Until now, primary school pupils have encountered Low German mainly in the context of AGs and the Low German reading competition, which is supported by the state and financed by the savings banks. Initiatives to implement the project have so far been taken by the *Arbeitsstelle Niederdeutsch* at Otto von Guericke University in Magdeburg and the *Landesheimatbund Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.*, which is documented in the drafting and provision of teaching materials. There has been a primer since 2004 and work aids since 2018, but sadly no initiatives on the part of the Saxony-Anhalt Ministry of Education. The language group urgently calls for support in this regard, in the form of responsible contacts and a letter from the Education Minister informing schools that they must take proper account of Low German. Otherwise, the language group feels that such work will continue to be jeopardised in the coming years and that carefully controlled efforts to perpetuate the language will fail.

In **Schleswig-Holstein**, the school year 2019/2020 saw the entry into force of a new decree on Low German for general schools, and the number of model schools in which Low German is taught on the same footing as a modern foreign language has increased to 33 primary schools. There are school books designed supraregionally, so that they can also be used outside Schleswig-Holstein. Low German is also taught at nine secondary schools. Thus, the language group considers that the requirement of Low German as a school subject is indeed fulfilled, at least in this model school format. The language group therefore considers it particularly important to work on the planned course of continuous education from nursery school to university and to ensure that training of Low German teachers is well established over the long term. In this context, it would be good to make the study of Low German at the European University in Flensburg permanent, for example by appointing a professor in Low German. The revised Children's Day-Care Centres Act of 2020 (*Kindertagesstättungsgesetz, KitaG*) caters for regional and minority languages with a new funding directive. Upon application, financial support can be obtained from the relevant districts for language encounters involving Low German, Danish or Frisian. Many nursery schools take advantage of this opportunity. The language group has powerful partners for Low German in schools and nursery schools: the Centres for Low German in Leck and Mölln, state advisers of the Institute for Quality Development at Schools in Schleswig-Holstein (IQSH), the *Schleswig-Holsteinischen Heimatbund e.V.*, the *ADS-Grenzfriedensbund e.V.* and the "*Plattdüütsch Stiftung för Sleswig-Holsteen*". It would be good if the Ministry for Social Affairs were to conduct a survey, long envisaged, to obtain up-to-date figures on nursery schools with a focus on Low German.

**In summary, the following requirements can be formulated:**

- Promotion of teacher training through recognised courses of study or accompanying certificates for Low German. In order to meet urgent needs promptly, there should at least be in-service courses leading to a certificate in learning and teaching Low German. To this end, all states should also publicise existing online offerings, such as those of the Centre for Low German teaching at the University of Greifswald, the IQSH and the LzN, and they should recognise certificates. These qualifications must be taken into account when teachers are recruited, or even compulsory in some regions. The extracurricular work of unpaid volunteer speakers of Low German should also be financially rewarded in the education sector.

- Promotion of the provision of teaching materials state-wide and a review of which teaching materials can be used in other states and, in such cases, reduction of state bureaucracy.
- The language group continues to believe that cooperation between the ministries of all eight federal states is necessary.

### Recommendation 3: Take measures to extend television broadcasting in regional or minority languages

Basically, no efforts to expand television services are apparent in any of the Low German-speaking states. Only Lower Saxony has regular programmes: the NDR broadcasts a monthly review in Low German called “*Hallo Niedersachsen – op Platt*”. Apart from that, regional schedules have only the occasional item in Low German. The language group explicitly expressed the wish to see programming expanded in regional schedules in all the federal states, with items broadcast at fixed times.

Members of the language group in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia note that regular programmes are no longer broadcast by the WDR, either on television or radio. In Bremen, the language group welcomes the fact that, in 2020, representatives of the Low German language community were appointed both to Radio Bremen’s Radio Broadcasting Council and the Bremen Media Council for a second three-year term. The Broadcasting Council in particular has enjoyed effective cooperation with the director-general’s office and management. The broadcaster has appointed a Low German Commissioner who is also a member of the state parliament’s Low German Advisory Council. In Schleswig-Holstein, the Low German language group and the minorities are represented on the ZDF Television Council and the Hamburg-Schleswig-Holstein Media Council, with one representative each. The BfN would like to see representatives of the Low German language group being given a seat on all state radio councils.

The language group in Brandenburg reports that the regional television schedulers at *Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg* (RBB) are keen to report sporadically on Low German events. We have no information on whether there is any interest in having fixed slots for programmes in Low German in the regional schedules. Low German speakers believe that cooperation between the NDR and RBB across state borders would have a positive impact on the acceptance of Low German in northern Brandenburg.

### Recommendation 4: Strengthen the use of regional or minority languages in dealings with the administration in practice

In Brandenburg, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Planning issued a decree on bilingual place name signs in 2020, enabling municipalities to emphasise their Low German identity and make it visible. In Saxony-Anhalt, this was also made possible by a decree of 2020, currently being implemented.

### Recommendation 5: Enhance cooperation among Länder where Low German is protected

The BfN notes that the states are taking first steps towards implementing this recommendation. For example, a joint meeting is planned for 2021 between the Low German Advisory Council at the Schleswig-Holstein state parliament and the Low German Advisory Council under the auspices of the President of the Bremen state parliament. The states of Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt are also looking to cooperate more closely on the promotion of Low German (joint cabinet decision of 2019 and regular joint committee meetings), as are the states of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which want to cooperate more closely on education in particular. Joint funding of the LzN by Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein means that there is, in principle, room for cooperation here by these states. In the field of education, this can be seen, for example, in the drafting of a joint textbook for lower secondary level and in meetings between the federal state actors. The BfN welcomes these developments and would like to see them continually expanded.

### **3. Concluding remarks**

The view of the language group is that education continues to be the main field of action for protecting Low German, which accounts for our detailed comments here. Nevertheless, measures in other fields of activity, such as Low German in care homes and in the cultural sphere, are considered as areas where protection for Low German is urgently needed. As in their 2017 comments, the speakers' representatives urge the federal states to work more closely together on strategies for language preservation. As part of this, we very much hope that the meetings of federal and state policy officials on Low German will continue.

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## 6. Comments by Domowina – Bund Lausitzer Sorben e.V.



**DOMOWINA**

**Přidžěło Domowiny – Zwjazka Łužiskich Serbow  
k 7. rozprawje Zwjazkoweje republiki Němskeje  
wotpowědnje artiklej 15 wotrězk 1 Europskeje Charty regionalnych a mjeńšinowych  
rěčow.**

**Pśižěło Domowiny – Zwězka Łužyskich Serbow  
k 7. rozpšawje Zwězkoweje republiki Nimskeje wótpowědujucy artikloju 15 wótrězk  
1 Europskeje Charty regionalnych a mjeńšynowych rěcow.**

**Contribution by Domowina – Bund Lausitzer Sorben e.V. on the Seventh Report of  
the Federal Republic of Germany in accordance with Article 15 (1) of the European  
Charter of Regional or Minority Languages**

### A. Preliminary remarks

Unless reference is made at individual points in these comments to one specific federal state, these comments refer to Brandenburg and Saxony and describe the situation in both states.

Our comments use the terms “Sorbs” and “Sorbs/Wends”, in line with the designations “Sorbs/Wends” used in Article 25 of the Constitution of the State of Brandenburg and “Sorbs” as used in Article 6 of the Constitution of the Free State of Saxony.

In the following remarks, we can only give examples and report on the central part of the problems concerned. See also the comments contributed by the states.

### B. General remarks

#### I. Effectiveness of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as perceived by the minority

The Charter is an important instrument for framing the rights of the Sorbian/Wendish people. It is applied through constitutions, laws and statutory instruments. These create a framework at federal and state level that implements European standards. At the same time, however, we note that knowledge of the European Charter itself and the way in which European standards work is not very important to the general public. We thus recommend that the European and national authorities report more on the European Charter and provide more information about it. It would also be a good idea to operate the Charter not just in the national languages, but in the minority languages too, as a way of making a political point.

The brochure of the European Charter Secretariat entitled “European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages: Giving regional and minority languages a say!” might also be published in minority languages. Likewise the language guide “*Raus mit der Sprache!*” (“Speak the language!”), which is available in many languages, but not Lower or Upper Sorbian.

## II. Ratification

In view of developments and practice in recent years, it is suggested that the states of Brandenburg and Saxony consider the possibility of subsequently ratifying further points in the medium term.

## III. Structural development in Lusatia

The discussion of Lusatia's economic structural change has continued in recent years. As a result of parliamentary deliberations, the interests of the Sorbian/Wendish people have been incorporated into the Structural Reinforcement Act (*Strukturstärkungsgesetz*, StStG), which is a federal law. Section 17 (31) of the StStG names "measures to promote the preservation and development of the language, culture and traditions of the Sorbian people as a national minority" as initiatives eligible for financial assistance. It is suggested that the funds provided be made available as a "Sorbian structural fund" set up in the interests of self-government and autonomy. This would neutralise potential competition with other regional and supraregional interests.

## IV. Legal situation at federal level

Under Germany's federal system, the majority of legislation on minorities is enacted at state level. Nevertheless, there are important federal laws. Reference is made here to the legislative initiative of the states of Schleswig-Holstein, Brandenburg and Saxony. This initiative sought to incorporate the interests of minorities into Article 3 of the Basic Law. But it failed to secure the necessary political majority in the Bundesrat. As at the time of the initiative in 2019, Domowina is in favour of this change to the Basic Law. A decision of this kind would have powerful symbolic significance for the recognition and equality of autochthonous national minorities in Germany.

## V. Digitisation

Digitisation is an issue that has become increasingly important in recent years. The digitisation of language continues to be a prime interest, due especially to the increasing presence of new media and language- and algorithm-driven processes. The Sorbian/Wendish people are unable, or find it difficult, to create equivalent services within the framework of existing digital systems. In particular, large commercial concerns (Facebook, Microsoft, Google, etc.) take little account of the interests of minorities, as these lack market relevance. We ask all levels of policy to communicate Sorbian/Wendish interests to the relevant decision-makers. We recommend that the Committee of Experts initiate a digitisation strategy at European level to support national efforts to foster the use of minority languages.

In this context, we applaud federal and state measures to put additional funding into the creation of additional digital resources.

## C. Remarks on current aspects and proposals regarding individual objectives under Parts II and III of the Language Charter

The following remarks concern individual articles of the Charter.

### Article 6 – Information

Although the Committee of Experts states in its sixth report that "the Charter is well-known to the relevant authorities and the associations of regional or minority language speakers in Germany",

we note that this is not altogether the case at state and municipal level, where Sorbian/Wendish representatives had to work harder to draw attention to the existence of the European Charter and its operating mechanisms. The public relations work done by the federal states is to be applauded here. The Free State of Saxony promotes the interests of the Sorbian people through its campaign “*Sorbisch? Na klar!*” (“Sorbian? You bet!”). The state of Brandenburg uses brochures such as “*Sorbische/Wendische Rechte im Land Brandenburg/Serbske pšawa w kraju Bramborska*” (“Sorbian/Wendish rights in the State of Brandenburg”) to provide information on the legal rights of members of the Sorbian/Wendish people.

## **Article 8 – Education**

During the reporting period, several local parents’ initiatives were launched in Brandenburg and Saxony to improve and expand instruction in the Sorbian language. These can be seen as indicative of a growing need to improve education systems to facilitate learning of the Sorbian/Wendish language. There are various reasons for this need. It is prompted partly by protests against the regulation of class and group sizes, dissatisfaction with teaching methods, too few hours in Sorbian/Wendish or a lack of services. Basically, instruction in the Sorbian/Wendish language is increasingly popular, so that the number of those being taught in Sorbian/Wendish is increasing too. At the same time, however, the proportion of pupils who use Sorbian/Wendish as their actual mother tongue is declining sharply. As already pointed out in the previous report, another problem is the growing shortage of educators and teachers.

Although the federal states’ contention that it is not realistic to expand the range of services offered to date is understandable, it should be pointed out that a further decline in staffing capacities is jeopardising the education systems currently in place. So further alternative measures must be taken.

For example, it is suggested that a package of additional remuneration and further professional skilling and education measures be put in place (for adult education too). This would be in line with measures already applied in other European countries.

We ask the Committee of Ministers to recommend that additional future-proofing measures be taken in the federal states and that additional remuneration be paid to persons demonstrating proficiency in the Sorbian/Wendish language as a necessary skill.

The use of digital resources as a teaching aid should also be pointed out.

All these points are in line with the findings and recommendations made so far by the Committee of Experts and the Committee of Ministers, and the need for action on them has become even more pressing.

Looking at our comments on the Sixth Report, it has to be said that most of the problems identified there in the school and pre-school sectors have still not been remedied, in particular:

- the lack of precision in school records of class cancellations and the related lack of instruction in Sorbian-speaking groups (especially in Brandenburg);
- inadequate guidance on optional subjects (too few hours in Sorbian/Wendish);

- revision of the Ordinance on School Education Matters of the Sorbs/Wends (*Sorben-Wenden-Schulverordnung*, SWSchulV) in Brandenburg, which is still not complete;
- non-comparability of language groups from different school locations forming part of the *Bildungskonzept 2plus* (education plan 2plus) in Saxony;
- lack of quality control and monitoring in school education in the Sorbian/Wendish language; and
- expansion of further offerings in secondary schools, which has still not happened, especially in Brandenburg.

In vocational training, there is a shortage of language instruction, particularly in the social professions, service occupations, healthcare and the trades. Language instruction courses in the education professions are also considered to be too limited.

Brandenburg is advised to consider whether the commitment to vocational training should be ratified.

Future educators in Brandenburg readily avail themselves of the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz*, AFBG/Aufstiegs-BAföG) (overseen by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research). But this sets strict standards for educational planning before a training grant is given, and these make training in Sorbian/Wendish less attractive to future educators. The Federal Government should allow an exception here to promote learning of the Sorbian/Wendish language.

There is one positive example in the field of education: state rules that allow easier access to teacher training for persons proficient in the Sorbian/Wendish language.

A further issue is the inadequate emphasis in school curricula on teaching the history, language and culture of the Sorbian/Wendish people. These topics are commonly undervalued and are often only optional subjects. This means that regional knowledge of the existence and concerns of the Sorbian/Wendish people in the personal and social spheres is not passed on in a fit manner. This is true not only in Sorbian/Wendish schools and non-Sorbian/Wendish schools in the region but also in teacher training. These services should be expanded.

### **Article 9 – Judicial authorities**

With regard to the rules on judicial authorities, we would point out that, in our view, these also apply to federal courts and that the points ratified should therefore also apply before a federal court where this has jurisdiction for the area of Sorbian/Wendish settlement. In the past, Germany has repeatedly argued that the rule applies only to courts in the settlement area.

It appears that the government intention is to extend section 184 of the Courts Constitution Act (*Gerichtsverfassungsgesetz*, GVG) to all four autochthonous national minorities in Germany. Until now, this rule has applied only to the Sorbian people. We are in favour of this change, but we insist that existing rights for the Sorbian people must not be weakened.

## Article 10 – Administrative authorities and public services

A number of positive initiatives during the reporting period deserve a special mention:

- Since 2019, the state of Brandenburg has assumed the costs of the full-time commissioners for Sorbian/Wendish affairs of the rural districts and the urban district of Cottbus/Chóšebuz in the Brandenburg part of the Sorbian/Wendish settlement area. And, in the rural district of Bautzen (Saxony), the length of the term of office served by the commissioner for Sorbian affairs was increased.
- Both Brandenburg and Saxony have taken steps to compensate local authorities for the additional costs of bilingualism. And Brandenburg gives annual lump-sum allowances as well. In addition, pro rata costs of multilingualism may be claimed if they exceed the lump sum. In Saxony, each municipality can claim an annual lump sum.
- In 2020, Brandenburg is supporting the pilot project of a coordination and translation unit to implement the Online Access Act (*Onlinezugangsgesetz, OZG*) and Brandenburg's e-Government Act with regard to the lower Sorbian/Wendish language. A service agency for the Sorbian language is in place (initially until early 2021), financed out of the Saxony state budget. It assists the municipalities of Saxony with any translations needed of official names and publications and with the correct Sorbian renderings of municipal terms. The huge number of enquiries, including those outside the municipality, shows that there is a great need for such services.
- The regional transport network for Berlin-Brandenburg (VBB) has introduced general bilingual signage on all its routes for destinations in the Sorbian/Wendish settlement area. Reference to the bilingual settlement area is thus established throughout the VBB catchment area, i.e. in the whole of Brandenburg and Berlin. The transport associations VVO and ZVON in Saxony are currently working with municipalities in the Sorbian settlement area to produce bilingual signs for all bus stops.

Such initiatives do a great deal to raise awareness of the Sorbian people. These measures have also increased bilingualism in public authorities and administrations.

There is ground to be made up in the area of staff skills and training. The legislator should take steps to instruct municipalities and administrations to add knowledge of the Sorbian/Wendish language as a required qualification in tenders and job vacancies advertised in the Sorbian/Wendish settlement area. In this way, the public sector would be playing a pioneering role. General consideration of the Sorbian/Wendish language in job profiles would define a need for basic and further language training. This could be based on the certification system of the Common *European Framework of Reference for Languages*. In recent years, the WITAJ language Centre, which is run by Domowina, has already produced exercises and tests for levels A1 to B1 and has held examinations. Expansion up to level C2 is planned. If these language certificates could be generally obtained from language instruction in schools and elsewhere, they could be used to demonstrate linguistic aptitudes in the everyday jobs market and in calls for tenders. These certified skills could also, through positive discrimination, be rewarded with extra pay.

Work is currently under way at federal, state and municipal level to implement the new Online Access Act. All application procedures will supposedly be possible online by the end of 2022. As part of this, the minority languages and the regional language of Low German will be added so that applications can be submitted in the language of choice. In our view, the rule in



Article 10 (2) (b) also covers digital processing. The involvement of the minority and regional languages is the responsibility of the respective states.

Although the state laws stipulate consistent bilingualism throughout the settlement area (see section 11 of the Sorbs/Wends Act (*Sorben/Wenden-Gesetz*, SWG) and section 10 of the Saxon Sorbs Act (*Sächsisches Sorbengesetz*, SorbG), several cases were identified during the reporting period of local names not being used in regional or minority languages or being used in a non-equivalent manner.

To give some examples:

- Despite a clear stipulation in the state law, road signs inside the settlement area and displaying destinations outside it are largely in German only.
- The constitutions of the state of Brandenburg and the Free State of Saxony imply that the Sorbian/Wendish language can be used on an equal footing with the majority language. The language on road signs and on public buildings in the settlement area is sometimes smaller in size. We see this as discrimination against the minority language and as unequal treatment.
- When new road signs are put up by the Brandenburg highways agency, the law of the state is not being upheld and, for example, smaller lettering is increasingly being used for the Sorbian language.
- No discernible progress has been made by the regional transport network for Berlin-Brandenburg (VBB) on implementing the required bilingualism for its signage.
- New administrative buildings opened in the rural district of Bautzen had bilingual signage only on the outside of the buildings.

With regard to signage on federal motorways, it should be noted that the Federal Government announced at the Consultative Committee meeting of 19 November 2019 that non-German municipality names resulting from state legislation are also recognised as part of the municipality's official name. The federal authorities are thus aligning with the changed legal situation in Brandenburg and fulfilling the wishes of the Sorbian/Wendish people.

Still unresolved is the question of bilingual signage on public buildings used for purposes designated by federal law. Nothing has changed on this since the previous report.

With regard to the request for recognition of surname suffixes indicating sex and marital status, of the kind customary in the Sorbian/Wendish language, please note the following change: a working group of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry of Justice has submitted proposals for amending German naming law. This would enable Sorbs, in particular, to have a female version of their surname (with a suffix indicating sex and marital status), as is customary in Sorbian/Wendish. But no procedure to amend the naming law has started as yet.

## **Article 11 – Media**

There has still been no revision of the state broadcasting agreement in Saxony. As a result, Sorbs continue to have no chance of a seat on the Broadcasting Council of MDR.

Radio and media services in the Sorbian/Wendish language are regarded as too meagre. Television services are also considered to be inadequate – 30 minutes per month each for Upper Sorbian and Lower Sorbian.

In this respect, reference is also made to the statement in the sixth report of the Committee of Experts in respect of Germany that: “Despite the positive steps taken by the authorities, the presence of the regional or minority languages in the broadcast media, in particular on television, remains insufficient.” Reference is also made to the Committee of Experts’ recommendations for measures to increase broadcasting time on radio and television.

It is argued here by the state media authorities that the lack of new recruitment makes it impossible to extend broadcasting times. We reject this argument as unfounded.

We ask the Committee of Ministers to recommend the creation of additional training in journalism and the media professions. Without enough new blood, there is the risk that existing services will be axed. Similarly, editors broadcasting in a regional or minority language should be explicitly excluded from austerity measures and job cuts in public service broadcasting, as called for by the Committee to Define the Financial Needs of Public Broadcasting Stations (KEF).

Moves in Saxony are to be applauded here. For example, MDR has added one hour per day to its radio broadcasting in the Sorbian language (now totalling 27.5 hours per week). MDR has thus responded to the demands of the Sorbian people on this point.

## **Article 12 – Cultural activities and facilities**

The Foundation for the Sorbian People enables the Sorbian/Wendish people to decide for themselves which cultural institutions and measures are to be promoted. The basis here is a financing agreement with a finite duration. However, representatives of the Sorbian/Wendish people have no say in the drafting of the contracts, as the financing agreement is negotiated only between donors, and representatives of the Sorbian/Wendish people are not aware of the content until it has been finalised.

## **Article 13 – Economic and social life**

With regard to economic and social life, see the remarks on education. We see a need for additional language teaching in the area of vocational training. This is the basis for further action in this area.

See also our comments on structural change and digitisation.

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30 November 2020

## 7. Comments by the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma



### Seventh Report on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Comments by the Central Council and Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma on the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers and the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe

Points 1-4 of the Committee of Ministers' priority recommendations concern language instruction, teacher training, television broadcasting and the use of minority languages in dealings with the administration. See our comments on the sixth periodical report, point E. I. 4. c., which deals with public use of the Romani language and language instruction. Our findings here remain valid: for historical reasons, Sinti-Romani has to be dealt with very sensitively. The majority of Sinti and Roma, but above all survivors of the Nazi genocide, refuse to share their language with those outside their community. This is a stance the Central Council and its associated members cannot and will not disrespect. Nevertheless, it is important to German Sinti and Roma that their language should be preserved and nurtured, so it should be practised and promoted within the framework of the minority group. Romani is an important cultural resource of the minority. Some state associations of the Central Council have formulated language policy goals in the agreements with their states. Smaller Sinti and Roma associations offer language instruction in Romani to young people in particular. Support measures in the education sector, such as homework support, also use the minority language in some cases. These measures often rely on unpaid volunteers. The state association of Saarland reports that, unless funding is provided for them, the language classes that have been held since 2018 will soon have to be discontinued.

Paragraph 45 (p. 15) of the Committee of Experts' report asks whether the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) in Berlin might perhaps host language teaching for German Romani. Indeed, for this year, ERIAC has launched a "Romani language reform" initiative and is looking for experts with – somewhat vaguely – "experience in [...] continuing the cooperation at international level and setting up common strategies and standards". Teaching of the language is also a focus. Textbooks will be produced and teaching units developed for proficiency levels up to A1 for adults. The planning implies that language classes may also be open to non-Roma. Regardless of the problem that there are several and widely differing varieties of Romani, the Documentation Centre will not be participating in ERIAC's language reform initiative, for the reasons set out above.

The Committee of Experts also points to the unveiling of a bilingual poetry anthology. "*Djiparmissa. Klassische deutsche Gedichte auf Romanes*" ("Djiparmissa. Classic German poems in Romani") is a collection translated by the late Reinhold Lagrene. The Documentation Centre arranged for it to be published posthumously in 2018 by Wunderhorn of Heidelberg. Ilona Lagrene, the wife of the linguist, who died in 2016, devised a reading on "*Djiparmissa*", which she gave for the first time at the Heidelberg Literature Days in spring 2019. Numerous other performances followed. Because of the pandemic, the reading is also available to view online. In this way, the Romani language is brought before an interested public, showing that it is a language which, by virtue of its lively diversity, is just as capable of conveying lyrical expression as the language of the works translated.

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## **8. Comments by the Sinti Allianz Deutschland e.V.**

The Sinti Allianz Deutschland e.V. was given the opportunity to comment.

No comments were received during the reporting period which could have been annexed to the seventh periodical report.

## **G. Concluding remarks**

The competent federal and state authorities will address the critical comments made by the representatives of the national minorities and the Low German language group and will describe further progress in the next periodical report. Efforts will continue in improving implementation of the Language Charter.